A Divine Milieu for a *Naufrage*: Teilhard's Sacred Ontology as Spirituality for the 21st Century in Quebec and Other Secular Societies

Diane Wood

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Theological Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts (Theological Studies) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

July 2018

© Diane Wood, 2018

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Diane Wood

Entitled: A Divine Milieu for a *Naufrage*: Teilhard's Sacred Ontology as Spirituality for the 21st Century in Quebec and Other Societies

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Theological Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

_____ Chair
Dr. Marie-France Dion

_____ Examiner
Dr. Christine Jamieson

_____ Examiner
Dr. Jean-Michel Roessli

_____ Supervisor
Dr. Paul Allen

Approved by _____
Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

_____ 2018 _____
Dean of Faculty

ABSTRACT

A Divine Milieu for a *Naufrage*: Teilhard's Sacred Ontology as Spirituality for the 21st Century in Quebec and Other Secular Societies

Diane Wood

The 21st century sees rising interest in 'spirituality' in response to a sense of emptiness in technology-driven, consumer-oriented, secular cultures. Analyzing Teilhard's writings and current scholars' research, I argue that his sacred 'story' of ongoing creation, a scientific-Christian synthesis, is relevant to today's global challenges. This evolutionary Christian ontology is based on the belief that all of creation contains the divine spark and that each individual contributes to the increasing complexity and consciousness of the whole, drawn to greater love and union through the transcendent God. Teilhard's concept of the divinization of human action and his model of differentiating creative union may provide purpose and hope to secular and increasingly pluralistic societies. I use Guillaume Tremblay's 2014 documentary, *L'Heureux naufrage: l'ère du vide d'une société post-chrétienne*, as a point of departure to explore the perception of a spiritual void in Quebec, a society that experienced a rapid shift toward secularization in the 1960s. Analysis of the history of the Catholic Church and its ties to the Quiet Revolution, as well as the work of journalists, historians, theologians, sociologists, artists, and filmmakers demonstrates that Teilhard's *ressourcement* theology speaks to Quebec's cultural heritage and its context in the 21st century. Understanding and practice of Teilhard's ontological thought can be cultivated through culturally appropriate readings, discussion groups, and simple spiritual exercises.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Louis Savary for welcoming me to his home in Tampa, Florida, to discuss the implications of Teilhard de Chardin's work for the 21st century.

Professor Brian McDonough, Director of the Social Action Office for the Archdiocese of Montreal, gave his time and expertise and loaned me books to get my research started. Brian, a special thank you for connecting me to the seminar on *Laudato Si`* at l'Université de Montréal.

Professor Jean-Michel Roessli, you lit the spark of interest in French *ressourcement* theology and gave me the gift of visiting and then assisting with your Introduction to Christian Spirituality class: *un grand merci*.

Professor Christine Jamieson, it was in your ethics course that I first had the chance to discuss Teilhard's possible implications for Quebec's multi-cultural issues today. Thank you!

Thank you to Professor Marie Campbell, for discussing my research plans, for giving me many books and for cheering me on.

Professor Sara Terreault, an enormous thank you for listening, for inviting me to visit your classes, and encouraging my work in Ignatian Spirituality.

I owe gratitude to my spiritual director, my supervisor, and friends at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal for understanding, enthusiasm for my thesis, and prayers.

To my fellow graduate students, especially Robin Stanford, thanks for your serious support and sense of humor that sustained me on this journey.

Finally, to my supervisor, Professor Paul Allen, thank you for your academic excellence and your steadfast guidance through the long writing process.

For James Wood, my husband, who made everything possible, and for my children and grandchildren in hope that the world you live in will become more loving and globally conscious.

“Some day, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire.”

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

« Gens du pays, c’est votre tour de vous laisser parler d’amour. »

-Gilles Vigneault

Table of Contents

Abbreviations of Works by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin[1]

AE *The Activation of Energy*

DM *The Divine Milieu*

FM *The Future of Man*

HE *Human Energy*

HM *The Heart of Matter*

HP *The Human Phenomenon*

HU *Hymn of the Universe*

[1] A glossary of Teilhard's terms and neologisms is on page 120.

A Divine Milieu for a *Naufrage*: Teilhard's Sacred Ontology as Spirituality for the 21st Century in Quebec and Other Secular Societies

Introduction

0.1. The Question

How might the evolutionary, sacred ontology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. contribute a Christian spirituality to the secularized 21st century world?

In the secularized countries of the north we live in an era of plurality, where the options for belief or unbelief are many and where the idea of the 'sacred' has largely vanished from most people's everyday lives. Over the course of the 20th century, many people abandoned the ship of organized Christian religion. Scientific discoveries, especially the theory of evolution, seemed at odds with dogma. Corruption and reports of pedophilia led to distrust and turning away from the Catholic church. Mainstream Protestant congregations split over interpretations and social-political issues. Church, for many, seemed to be more like a club membership than about a sacred, unified life-with-God bringing love or connection across ethnic, gender, and national divisions.

Bernard Lonergan begins his *Method in Theology* with the statement, "A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix."[2] The cultural matrix in the north Atlantic countries of Europe and America is largely consumer-centered, where happiness is "having" and technology is "power." In this age of social networking, there is an ironic sense of disconnection. We are seldom fully present to one another. Global Positioning Systems assist us in getting to our destinations, but we are unsure of our place in life. We live in a post-postmodern era, where people are responding to postmodernism's legacy of "no absolute truth." A number of societies in the northern hemisphere are living in a post Christian age, where more than one generation has grown up with little or no knowledge of the Bible or the teachings of Jesus.

Increasingly, religion is perceived as dangerous; in this era of violent religious extremism we are marked by fears of terrorism. In his convocation message for the *3rd Global Conference*

[2] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), xi.

on World Religions After September 11, Arvind Sharma, Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill University articulates this:

> "The ground may not have shifted under our feet at the moment [of 9-11] but the very concept of religion underwent a paradigm shift for many of us. Instead of standing for virtue, piety, peace and harmony, the word 'religion' was launched on a semantic trajectory which would make it a byword for evil, aggression and terror."[3]

In this thesis, I will research ways in which Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's ideas might mediate between 21st century secularized cultures and Christian spirituality to provide a relevant sacred story that integrates science and religion as it situates humanity in ongoing evolution toward higher spiritual consciousness. I will focus my analysis on the context of Quebec, a society that underwent a rapid secularization process in the 1960s and 70s.

Lonergan was born in Quebec and was both a student and teacher in Montreal in an era when the Catholic church played the central role in society. The cultural milieu that produced Lonergan has all but vanished—although some of its values remain intact, largely disconnected in the social imaginary from formal Christianity. In 2014, filmmaker Guillaume Tremblay created a documentary about these values and the experience of a spiritual void by many people in Quebec. The film's title, *L'Heureux naufrage*, is translated by the director as *Fortunate Shipwreck.* '*Naufrage'* in French means 'shipwreck' or 'catastrophe.' How might the shipwreck of religion be a 'fortunate' thing? This documentary film provides a springboard for my research question. What new approaches to spirituality might the survivors be seeking? Can Teilhard's vision provide a narrative for the 21st century that will inspire a zest for life and hope for the future?

Teilhard's story may be what evangelical theologian Hans Boersma is calling for in *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry.* Boersma's book is a "plea for a retrieval, a *ressourcement,* of heavenly participation…a sacramental mindset where the realities of this world point to greater eternal realities in which they share."[4] Teilhard played an important role in the *ressourcement* movement of the 1940s -50s in France, in the attempt to restore to a scholastic neo-Thomist viewpoint, the deep, spiritual exegesis of the early church

---

[3] Arvind Sharma, "Message from the Convenor of the Conference," 3rd Global Conference on World's Religions After September 11th, accessed September 6, 2016, http://worldsreligions2016.org/welcome-message/ Sharma is Birks Professor of Comparative Religion in the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University, Montreal.

[4] Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 3.

fathers. I agree with Boersma that just as the modernist crisis precipitated a need to evolve Christian spirituality in the 20th century, so the post-postmodernist reaction in the 21st century requires its own spiritual "*ressourcement."* I propose that Teilhard's ideas provide a framework for the reweaving of that sacred tapestry, in a way that is both orthodox and totally relevant to the needs of today's secular societies.

In this thesis, I will use the term 'spirituality' as Philip Sheldrake defines it: "The deepest values and meaning by which people seek to live, based on a vision of the human spirit and what will enable it to achieve its full potential: a quest for ultimate meaning and fulfillment."[5] Spirituality encompasses the search for meaning as the integrating factor in life—life as a whole. The word 'holy' in its origins in Old English '*halig'* contained the sense of 'whole' or 'complete.' Christian spirituality involves both transformation toward life in God and mission, weaving Jesus' teachings on love of God, self, and other into our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Authentic spirituality includes the capacity for self-transcendence. The word '*spirit'* carries the idea of breath—the breath of God bringing to life the total self.

0.2. How I Came to the Question

My thesis question was born in 2014 at a seminar led by Teilhard scholar and author, Louis Savary. Savary, who is skilled at explaining Teilhard's ideas in accessible language, was invited by the Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal to lead us through his book, *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.* Teilhard made the Ignatian Exercises yearly, but in his retreat notes he mentioned that they ought to be 'transposed'—suggesting, "the need to write Ignatian spirituality in a new key and let the instruments of science and evolution express the melody of God's kingdom in a way we have not heard before."[6] Savary was a Jesuit for thirty years; he wrote the book closely following the general structure of the Exercises, but with a Teilhardian viewpoint and changes of wording.

Our weekend began with an introduction to Teilhard's thought. Teilhard had the unique perspective of a paleontologist, looking at the development of humanity over eons, and that of a Jesuit priest, steeped in Ignatian spirituality, practiced at "finding God in all things," and being a "contemplative in action." Teilhard's phenomenology expresses a synthesis between science and religion. Teilhard sees all of creation—inorganic matter and living matter—as charged with

[5] Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Brief History* (Chichester, United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, 2013), 238.
[6] Louis M. Savary, *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2010), x.

the holy and as interconnected. Evolution in the cosmos works through the force of love, the energy that moves separate entities toward union. His *hyperphysics* describes how particles attract at the atomic level, joining together to create more complex and over time, more conscious entities. This pattern of attraction-union-complexity-consciousness over millennia resulted in the evolution of human beings.

Reading Genesis and the epistles of Paul through the hermeneutic of directed evolution, Teilhard sees the resurrected Jesus as the Cosmic Christ, who is part of all creation and is drawing all creation to himself over time. Humans are at the top of a metaphorical arrow representing the evolution of consciousness. Created in God's image, as conscious beings we bear responsibility to be co-collaborators in evolution. We are like cells in the Cosmic Body of Christ, living in what Teilhard calls the *Divine Milieu*. The sacred surrounds us, composes us, nurtures us. The word *milieu* was purposely left in the original French, because it means both a '*center'—mi- lieu,* and *'an environment'* or setting. Teilhard's ontology is relational: It demonstrates connections between self, Spirit, and society, in an evolving system of greater and greater wholes. Connected to one another and to God in this milieu, our task is to unify in love and to move consciousness forward. Teilhard's divine milieu is the environment in which human activities and passivities of growth are sanctified, or *divinized.* This ontology is very much about action--action that depends upon *seeing.*

As I experienced the Exercises that weekend, re-composed through the lens of Teilhard's evolutionary theology, I remembered seeing the website for a documentary film called, *L'Heureux naufrage* that was in process in Quebec. I had seen a preview of interviews with journalists, philosophers, filmmakers, musicians, psychologists, priests, historians, and sociologists. The film was to be an exploration of the spiritual quest in 21st century Quebec. The subtitle was *L'ère du vide d'une société post-chrétienne (The Era of Emptiness in a Post Christian Society.)* Teilhard's ideas resonated in my mind as having the potential to fill some forms of that emptiness.

Spiritual longing has only recently been openly discussed in the media in Quebec. This makes *L'Heureux naufrage* an extraordinary event. In the mid-20th century, Quebec made a rapid and dramatic social shift as it moved from a largely Catholic identity, where the Church managed all social systems, to a completely secular society. The Quiet Revolution that began in 1960 created a state-run health and education system, labor and trade reforms, and more opportunities for lower-income francophone Quebeckers to attain higher education and jobs.

With the goal of building their own utopian secular country, millions of people left a Church that was seen as oppressive and authoritarian.

I returned from the seminar with two goals: to research the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and to find out how his vision could perhaps speak to the search for a sacred, relevant spirituality in today's secular world —most particularly in Quebec.

0.3. Qualifications to Pursue this Topic

As an American teacher of French, I discovered Quebec on a winter field trip with students from Virginia in 2000. Ever since that year, I've plunged into Quebec's history and culture, watched TV5 satellite television where I listened to Radio-Canada news and analysis, and studied folk music, films, and literature—both informally and formally. Our family moved to Massachusetts, where I completed a Master's degree in French and Francophone Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 2005, focusing on Quebec studies. It has been helpful to be able to read Teilhard in the original French; sometimes his expressions are difficult to translate into English without being subtly changed. My study of French history gives me insight into Teilhard's cultural-historical context. My interest in Quebec film and literature opens a window into past and current culture.

In 2012, I moved to Montreal part-time. I became involved at Emmaus Anglican Church and at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, completing the *Spiritual Exercises*. I volunteered at the Open Door, a drop-in center for street people, as well as at the Château Ramezay museum in Vieux Montréal, where I assisted in demonstrating the 'living history of Quebec' for school children. I participated in French language/ Quebec cultural "Meet-Ups" in downtown Montreal. I trained to become a Cambridge certified teacher of English as a Second Language at the ILSC School. I have taught English to immigrants and to Québécois medical researchers. I began training to become a spiritual director through the Ignatian Centre. In 2014 I started my full-time theological studies at Concordia University. I am a member of the American Teilhard Association and attended Teilhard scholar Ilia Delio's lecture at the 2016 conference at Union Theological Seminary in New York. This Master's research topic brings together many years of interest and immersion in Quebec studies and Christian spirituality.

0.4. Methodology

My methodology is hermeneutic and interdisciplinary. I am taking a socio-cultural approach to determine the relevance of Teilhard de Chardin's sacred ontology to 21st century secular societies. Therefore (in Lonergan's terms,) I will be concerned with experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. According to Lonergan's functional specialty of communications, I must "enlarge my horizons to include an accurate and intimate understanding of the culture and the language of the people [I address,] so that the Christian message becomes, not disruptive of the culture, not an alien patch superimposed upon it, but a line of development within that culture."[7] This imperative has informed much of my research. It has helped me to notice connections between Teilhard's ontology and social patterns in Quebec.

I will be linking Teilhard's work as a form of liberation theology to the history of the Quiet Revolution, where he was a strong influence in the thinking of intellectual writer Hubert Aquin and in the formation of *la francophonie,* a world-wide union of leaders, thinkers and artists in the French-speaking world, that included many former French colonies emerging as nations, both in the Antilles and in Africa.

Teilhard's ontology gives rise to a precisely contextual theology that encompasses the Christian social work movement of Lise Baroni, Michel Beaudin, Céline Beaulieu and other co-founders of the Groupe de théologie contextuelle québécoise. This contextual theology, modeled on liberation theology seeks to bring justice and aid to the most vulnerable people in a specific social context, formulating community action in response. There is a long-standing tradition of solidarity in Quebec that is expressed in the *mouvement communautaire* and resonates with Teilhard's concept of the individual being fully personalized within the collective space. In an online article in 2014, this group of Christian activists discussed economic and environmental challenges, observing that if we can raise consciousness of the fact that we are linked to matter and spirit through the immanence of Jesus, we have a way to reconnect to the earth and to each other in the awareness of our common humanity. The article cites an American Teilhard scholar, author and speaker:

> « La théologienne américaine Ilia Delio résume magnifiquement cette perspective dans le passage suivant : 'Une vie saine pour un cosmos sain exige la réceptivité, l'ouverture, et un amour de compassion qui traverse les frontières

[7] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 362.

> des différences et qui accepte l'autre comme une partie de soi, puisqu'ensemble nous sommes un dans le corps cosmique du Christ.' »[8]

Quebec has a self-awareness linked to the search for its identity as a distinctive society within the Canadian federation. There is a consciousness that one can create a future; the utopian dream of a more equal and environmentally protective society, expressed in the phrase *une société en devenir—a society that is becoming, evolving…* This sense of being in process and being conscious of the possible future is a central part of Teilhard de Chardin's theology.

Running through all of Quebec's history, is the thread of the Catholic Church. Sociologist Reginal Bibby has gathered data in Canada on church attendance and belief over decades. He cites statistics showing that although Quebec's nationalism seemed at first to replace the Church in a kind of 'secular faith,' it remains unable to answer deeper questions about the meaning of life or death. Studies indicate that in Quebec, the Church remains a resource for many in the quest for meaning. Bibby has stated that if Quebeckers return to faith, it will likely be through the Catholic church—that the imperative for innovation and invitation is on the Catholic church in Quebec.[9]

If Lonergan's broad statement quoted above, provides a methodological framework, Paul Tillich offers a more precise way to approach the problem:

> "Systematic theology proceeds in the following way: It makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to those questions."[10]

Tillich emphasizes the importance of concrete symbols that must be analyzed and interpreted in "abstract ontological terms." In this thesis, I attempt to correlate questions of secular society today—specifically questions arising in the context of the documentary, *L'Heureux naufrage,* and Teilhard's use of both Christian and scientific symbols in his ontology.

The first part of my thesis is broad in scope. I begin with challenges of the 21st century and the search for a spirituality to meet them. Next, I explore Teilhard's sacred ontology, searching for ways in which it meets those spiritual needs. Finally, I examine the spiritual

---

[8] Michel Beaudin, Céline Beaulieu, et al. "Le territoire et nous 3e partie: Un regard à transformer" dans *Groupe de théologie contextuelle québécoise,* 12 Juin 2014, http://gtcq.blogspot.ca.
[9] Reginald Bibby, "Religion à la Carte in Quebec: A Problem of Demand, Supply, or Both? Special September Issue on Religion in Quebec in the journal *Globe,* Ed.s Martin Meunier and Robert Mager, July, 2007.
[10] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* Vol.1, 62-63, cited in Paul Allen, *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed,* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 184.

situation in 21st century Quebec in depth, taking into consideration history, sociology, politics, language, and the arts. I limit the scope of my Quebec analysis by focusing on the Roman Catholic church and its impact on the development of Quebec's secular society, while acknowledging the presence and influences of the Protestant denominations and indigenous spiritual practices. Using *L'Heureux naufrage,* I look for specific ways that Teilhard's ontology fits the social–spiritual context of today.

0.5. Overview

Chapter One, "Twenty-first Century Challenges: The Search for Spirituality", will examine some of the challenges facing the world and describe conditions of secular society in the west. Charles Taylor's A *Secular* Age, contributes to a working definition of 'secular society' and to the exploration of the larger questions and spiritualities being sought today. Secular society can be understood in at least three ways: in terms of the practice of or reference to religion in the public space; as a turning away from religious belief and no longer attending Church; finally, as the context and conditions of belief—and this third meaning is related to the first two. This thesis will address all three of these viewpoints on secularity.

I will base my discussion of global challenges on data from the United Nations' Millennium Project. This project uses a framework of fifteen global challenges to assess the future of humanity. The challenges are defined as a result of research and collaboration, with data analyzed by more than 4,000 experts. The fifteen challenges fall into three categories: globalization, technology, and environment. The most widely disseminated source for my writing on Teilhard's relevance to the state of spirituality and world challenges in the 21st century is Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si' Praise Be to You,* published in 2015. The Pope's writing is Teilhardian in its expression of the need for global awareness of the connection between God, humanity, and the rest of creation. *Laudato Si'* addresses both the natural and human ecological crises of our time. The Holy Father "would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home."[11]

> "As Christians, we are also called "to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbors on a global scale. It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail

[11] Holy Father Francis, *Laudato Si' Praise Be to You: Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis,* (The Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), 4.

> in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet."[12]

The pope specifically cites Teilhard in a footnote in his message, which describes the universe exactly as Teilhard did, a universe of open systems, containing myriad forms of relationship and participation—and as a sacrament.

This chapter introduces an important theme of the paper: the need for a new story in the 21st century—a metanarrative that offers a larger way to think about God-as-Creator and Christ-as-Redeemer: a story that can include human cultural diversity, the span of time and space, and scientific research. A number of scholars and theologians see this as an urgent need in today's world. Ila Delio, a Franciscan nun, scientist, and Teilhard specialist says,

> "The impasse in which we find ourselves today, the inability of ecclesial and cultural systems to cooperate for the welfare of humankind, bears the lack of a fundamental meta-narrative. We have no overarching story that unites us and instills hope and courage."[13]

The idea of story as all-important to the survival of the planet connects to Teilhard's sacred ontology. His 'story' maintains core Christian foundations at the same time enlarging the vision to an evolutionary 13-billion-year cosmic perspective. It places humans in a privileged position as conscious, thinking beings and offers a place, a purpose, an ethic, and a zest for life to the individuals as a part of the larger group, the vast whole. Donald Gray, professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan University and the original editor of *Teilhard Studies*, calls Teilhard "a storyteller, and a masterful one at that […]

> Creation has been reconceived by Teilhard in light of the evolutionary account as an unfinished process […] A new sacral story is demanded by the conjunction of the old religious story and the new scientific story. Christian spirituality has to be re-envisioned as a creative spirituality oriented toward cooperative participation in the divine creative work. Traditional spiritualities, formulated to deal redemptively with the fallenness and sin of humanity, need now to take up a new

[12] Ibid, 9.
[13] Ilia Delio, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013), xiv. Delio is a former Senior Fellow in Science and Religion at Georgetown University. She uses Teilhard's ontology to examine the idea of 'wholeness.'

> emphasis designed to activate human creative energy in service of the divine creative opus: evolving consciousness."[14]

Chapter One will end with a discussion of Yan Martel's bestselling novel and film*, Life of Pi.* Martel's work centers on the idea of story, God, and universal truth. Martel is Québécois and was inspired as a young man to seek spirituality in his secular milieu. His story about a shipwreck connects symbolically to the *'naufrage'* theme of Guillaume Tremblay's documentary.

Chapter Two, "Teilhard's Sacred Ontology" presents Teilhard's theology of being. In an unpublished essay, "The Heart of the Problem," (1949) included in the collection titled *The Future of Man*, Teilhard writes:

> "…the human world of today has not grown cold, but it is ardently searching for a God proportionate to the new dimensions of a Universe whose appearance has completely revolutionized the scale of our faculty of worship." (*FM*, 268)

Teilhard's objective was to teach people how to see. In *The Divine Milieu* he expresses this desire to

> "recapitulate the eternal lesson of the Church in the words of a man who, because he believes himself to feel deeply in tune with his own times, has sought to teach how to see God everywhere, to see him in all that is most hidden, most solid, and most ultimate in the world. These pages [put forward…] a way of teaching how to see. […] Without mixture, without confusion, the true God, the Christian God, will under your gaze, invade the universe, our universe of today, the universe which so frightened you by its alarming size or its pagan beauty. He will penetrate it as a ray of light does a crystal; and, with the help of the great layers of creation, he will become for you universally perceptible and active—very near and very distant at the same time." (*DM*, 9)

This chapter discusses aspects of Teilhard's sacred story that connect to spiritual seeking. Knowing Teilhard's own background, life story, and timeline is critical to understanding his writings. From his childhood on into early adult life, Teilhard felt torn between his Christian spirituality and his love of the earth, its rocks and minerals and life. The resolution of this

[14] Donald P. Gray, "A New Creation Story: The Creative Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin" in *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth,* ed. Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 28.

imagined split was the motivation for his life's work. Ursula King's biography, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* is my main biographical source.

I will demonstrate the strong Ignatian influence in Teilhard's thinking, the impact of WWI on his vision of the Cosmic Christ and his development of the *Mass on the World.* I will discuss his synthesis of scientific discovery and religion; his Bergsonian vision of directed evolution and the primacy of human consciousness; his 'hyperphysics' of love as the creative energy of the universe, and his idea that we have emerged from and are connected to a web of spirit-filled matter—that we are created co-creators—that evolution's future and that of the planet's is largely influenced by our actions now. Three areas of focus include the cosmic Christ, the divinization of activities and passivities, and union that differentiates.

Chapter Three, "Teilhard and the Search for Meaning in Quebec" uses socio-cultural methods to examine society in the 21st century. The documentary film, *L'Heureux naufrage* serves as a point of departure. I will analyze interviews in the film, pairing questions asked or feelings expressed with key points in Teilhard's sacred ontology.

> "No longer able to trust in the claims of institutional religion or of a political utopia, disillusioned with the promises of economic stability, Quebeckers are facing a loss of meaning and a profound sense of emptiness. We're richer than ever, freer than ever to live our dreams, but something is still missing. Everyone feels it."[15]

This quote from the film's website expresses the sense of emptiness that pervades secular societies without a sacred story, without something larger than self. Teilhard describes it using the word 'being.' He writes, "It is not *well-being*, but a hunger for *more-being*, which, of psychological necessity, can alone preserve the thinking earth from the *taedium vitae."* (*FM,* 304-305) This quest for 'more being' is a recurring theme in film, literature and the arts in Quebec, more explicitly expressed as the loss of a religious grounding in recent works by Denys Arcand and others.

I will sketch a history of religion in the province; focusing on the Quiet Revolution and the role of Catholic Action organizations leading up to it. I will be drawing from Michael Gauvreau's work, *The Catholic Origins of the Quiet Revolution*. I will also refer to Gregory Baum's work in *Truth and Relevance* on the Catholic Church from the time of the Quiet Revolution to the present. Baum, former professor emeritus of theology at McGill University writes on the need

[15] Website *L'Heureux naufrage : L'ère du vide d'une sociéte post-chrétienne,* accessed 11 February 2016, http://www.heureuxnaufrage.com/en.

for dialogue between sociology and theology. In *Religion and Alienation,* he writes a statement that links Quebec's social consciousness with the heart of Teilhard's sacred ontology:

> "The Christian community that tries to understand its mission in terms of solidarity and liberation must engage in contemplation of the mystery of God as matrix, vector, and horizon of human history."[16]

'Identity' is one of the strongest themes running through Quebec's history. I will examine ways that Teilhard addresses the issue of identity and context. I look for ways that Teilhard's ontology speaks to multicultural/multifaith accommodation issues studied by Charles Taylor in Quebec. Charles Taylor is a Montrealer, a professor emeritus at McGill University, and his philosophical work has a local as well as a global application. Interestingly, Taylor's own religious development was stimulated by the French *ressourcement* writings in the early 1950's, to which Teilhard contributed.[17]

I will demonstrate a continuum between Teilhard's divinization of action and experience and *la théologie contexuelle,* as explained in Lise Baroni's *L'Utopie de la solidarité.* Teilhard's ontology contributes both a transcendent and evolutionary perspective to liberation theologies. I conclude this chapter with analysis of recent cultural surveys in Quebec, linking Teilhard's *le goût de vivre* to the most prevalent characteristics of Quebec identity today.

Chapter Four, "Teilhard Today: Interpretations and Praxis" includes a discussion of the context and reception of Teilhard's work. I will explore some of the critique of his thought, including some Catholic and Protestant responses to it. Church leaders have moved from the initial suppression of his work to acknowledgement of its profound relevance today, as evidenced by an official pontifical committee's request to have a monitum removed from his

---

[16] Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation: A Theological Reading of Sociology* (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 2006), 211.

[17] Charles Taylor interview by Ben Rogers in Prospect magazine, February 2008, accessed online 3 October, 2016, http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/charles-taylor-philosopher-interview. Asked how religion came into his life, Taylor described his early experiences, then added," "I think the really decisive thing in my religious development was that around 1950-52, a great deal of new French-written theology—which eventually inspired Vatican II—was circulating through the media in Quebec, *Cité Libre* and so on. I read all this stuff; it gave me a sense of what I felt, what I wanted to believe. At that point, it was a hopeless minority theology. Later, to my astonishment, it became the official story of Vatican II."

works. Chapter Four also discusses methods of teaching and practicing Teilhard's ideas outside of academia, highlighting global interest in Teilhard's work.

The fifth chapter is a brief conclusion, a summary of my findings, pointing to areas for further research. The discussion returns to Tremblay's film title, asking how the shipwreck of religion might be 'fortunate' as a starting point for deep seeking, for salvaging, and for building anew.

Chapter One

21st Century Challenges: The Search for Spirituality

The goal of this chapter is to examine the challenges facing our planet against the backdrop of the phenomenon of spiritual seeking in contemporary secularized societies. Following this global contextual analysis, I will identify ways in which Teilhard's sacred ontology provides a platform for addressing global problems. For millennia, humans have climbed mountains to observe the world from a higher perspective. On Christmas Eve in 1968, a new image from on high changed the way many people imagined their home. The Apollo 8 lunar orbiting mission was taking scheduled black and white photographs of the moon's grey surface, when pilot Frank Borman began to rotate the craft. Suddenly, from one of the small windows, the astronauts saw the earth begin to rise just over the lunar horizon. The contrast of the blue pearlescent sphere against black space was awe-inspiring. They grabbed color film for the camera, and today we would say that at that moment, Planet Earth took its first color 'selfie.' Pierre Teilhard de Chardin did not live to see this image, but it was one that he clearly imagined. This chapter is my attempt to take a picture of our planet today, zooming in to a high definition view of spirituality in secular western societies, then zooming out to analyze global situations that impact spirituality in our times. Like the Apollo 8 astronauts, my view will be limited, in my case, to the relatively small window of a master's thesis. In taking this photo with words, I hope to express the world's need for a larger and more unified spiritual image of itself.

1.1. Defining our Secular Society:

To begin exploring ways Teilhard's sacred ontology meets some of the needs of spiritual seekers in the 21st century, I want to define the term 'secular' society. From the Latin *saeculum*, meaning the span of a human life, a generation, as opposed to *aeternitas,* eternal time, the word *secular* has come to mean 'worldly'—pertaining to things that are not sacred or religious. In his book, *A Secular Age,* Charles Taylor examines three aspects of secular societies that are necessary to understand the social context of our times**.** The first is the absence of religion in the public space, often discussed in terms of the separation of church and state. Religion and its symbols have been removed from most public buildings, including government buildings, courtrooms, public schools, and town squares in many former Christian nations. The removal of

symbols is often controversial. Symbol represents 'story' and carries memory and identity, so at times, non-believers justify religious symbolism in the public space on the basis of its historical value. The question of religion in areas of state authority even extends to the wearing of headscarves or turbans in publicly funded institutions.

The second aspect of secularity is the declining membership in churches. Participation in religious institutions has fallen over the past decades and a rapidly increasing percentage of people define themselves as having no religious affiliation. Known statistically as 'Nones,' they constitute the fastest growing demographic in religious surveys. The number of unaffiliated in the United States is close to 25% in both the USA and Canada in 2017. Europe has higher percentages of unaffiliated-- in the Netherlands in 2016 it was at 50%.[18] This category is well represented in the young Millennial generation. In a Pew Research Center "Religious Landscape Study" in 2014, data was collected in a follow-up to a 2007 study. The Nones had increased from 16% to 23 % in that seven-year period.[19] The Nones are not always non-believers. According to some criteria, Americans are becoming more spiritual. "About six in ten adults now say they regularly feel a "deep sense of spiritual peace and wellbeing and 46% of Americans say they experience a deep sense of 'wonder about the universe' at least once a week, also up 7 percentage points since 2007."[20]

Finally, secularity includes the current philosophy or mind-set surrounding belief, how faith is perceived, what other choices and cross-pressures influence belief or unbelief. Many options exist in secular societies: a person can be atheist, agnostic, a practicing Christian, or can pursue many other forms of spirituality--but in western societies there is, in general, no longer one particular faith representing national, ethnic, or cultural identity. Because of the existence of these many possibilities, each tends to 'fragilize' the others, to open up questions or lead to shifts. Each of these three aspects of secularism has a bearing on belief in a transcendent God. All three meanings feed into and influence the others. This triune definition of secularism provides a comprehensive way to perceive the significance of, not only the absence of religion in daily life in our post-modern world, but to look at the conditions of belief

[18] Paul Rasor at Unitarian Church of Montreal Conference, 19 March 2017. "Is There A Future for Liberal Faith in a Secular World?" Dr. Rasor cited a Pew survey for the USA in 2014, and a CBS Study for the Netherlands in 2016.
[19] "US Public Becoming Less Religious: Modest Drop in Overall Rates of Belief and Practice, but Religiously Affiliated Americans are as Observant as Before" in *Pew Rearch Centre for Religion and the Public Life http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/* accessed 13 May 2017.
[20] Ibid.

and seeking in secular societies today. To complete the picture, it will be helpful to use Taylor's work develop an understanding of the history behind the secular context of western societies today.

1.2. Insights from Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*

Charles Taylor's extensive book is a detailed philosophical and social history of how we moved from a world of widespread belief in God, in 1500, to the 21st century world where there is widespread belief that the purpose of life is nothing more than human materialism. "We have moved from a world in which the place of fullness was understood […] as outside of or 'beyond' human life, to a conflicted age in which this construal is challenged by others which place it (in a wide range of different ways) 'within' human life."[21]

Taylor argues against the commonly held idea that scientific discovery alone brought about this shift. Instead of an abrupt change, the trajectory away from transcendence involved new philosophical constructions that led to a 'disenchantment' of the natural world and cosmos; that allowed a 'dis-embedding' of the individual from a tightly-woven, God-infiltrated social network, and that brought about a 'buffering' of the self against good or evil spiritual influence. These constructions happened over centuries, through a series of changes in religious thought from the Reformation period and Descartes' dualistic rationality through Deism, with its distant 'clockmaker' image of God as creator of the mechanistic cosmos. Deist thought led to the idea of natural law, where the moral order itself could be codified into law. From this impersonal God overseeing natural law, it was a short leap to humanism as an alternative to faith in the 18th century.

Taylor presents Darwin's theory as a strong factor in, but not the exclusive cause of the widespread rejection of religion. He points out that when the 'disenchantment' of the cosmos began increasing in the 17th century and continued with the mechanistic science of the 18th century, "Darwin was not even on the horizon."[22] Darwin's findings did profoundly disturb the earlier concept of a stable universe created by a benign God. Now it was no longer clear that the vast universe was shaped with an overarching plan. Darwin's evolution story, telling of a

[21] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 15.
[22] Ibid., 260.

brutal struggle for survival, and the extinction of weaker forms of life, eroded even the impersonal image of the Deists' benevolent Providence.

From the mid-19th century on, faith in a personal God began to be seen by many as immature.

> "What began to look more plausible was the whole stance underlying the epistemology of materialism, over and against that underlying the epistemology of Christian faith. […] Modern science offers us a view of the universe framed in general laws. The ultimate is an impersonal order of regularities in which all particular things exist, over-arching space and time. This seems in conflict with Christian faith, which relates us to a personal Creator-God, and […] a developing exchange of divine action and human reaction […]"[23]

An important part of the force which drove many people to see science and religion as incompatible was their difference in form: rational, material, empirical, data-driven science versus the Church's un-provable doctrines of creation by a God who intervened in human history. The continuing success of science fostered the sense that the Christian religion belonged to an earlier, more primitive or less mature form of understanding.

Without a God both transcendent and immanent, the spiritual is no longer directly linked to society. Instead we live in a 'horizontal' plane, often within what Taylor calls Closed World Systems. The transcendence offered by religion is key to its powerful ethos: There is some good higher than, or beyond human material well-being. Transcendence offers the possibility of human transformation. "This potential transformation through *agape* requires that we see our lives extending beyond this 'this life.'"[24] For these reasons, Taylor questions the desirability of dismantling religious belief:

> "In view of the importance of Christian universalism and *agape* in the constitution of the modern idea of moral order, ought we really to hope for the utter uprooting of all the beliefs and desires which Christianity has inculcated in our civilization?"[25]

The transcendent possibility is precisely what is missing in a strictly secular humanism. "Exclusive humanism closes the transcendent window, as though there were nothing beyond."[26] Humanism can

[23] Ibid., 362.
[24] Ibid., 20.
[25] Ibid., 626.
[26] Ibid., 638.

lead people to establish just laws, and to obey them, but it is seldom powerful enough on its own to motivate the kind of self-sacrificing of the individual that is sometimes called for to create justice and environmental sustainability.

In modern western cultures, the individual is more than ever considered an autonomous unit, detached from communal values. Taylor identifies our time as the Age of Authenticity, an age of individual expression—he uses the term, '*expressivism*'-- that has taken hold in the past fifty years and has a great impact on the conditions of belief in our societies. Beginning in the 1960s, this focus on the self grew into a mass phenomenon. The phrase, "Do your own thing" became a popular advertising slogan in the 1970s. The message was "Be yourself; find yourself.'" This self-expression includes "finding your own faith"—whatever resonates with you. Consumerism and fashion trends continue to play a central role in this search for self-expression. Total freedom of *choice* becomes the ultimate value in a lifestyle centered on the self. With social media and the proliferation of photography via cellphones, the projected image of the individual takes on an even greater importance. Institutional religion has been viewed as standing against the freedom to create one's self-image or to authenticate one's own spirituality.

Taylor uses the phrase '*social imaginary'* to describe the ways in which ordinary people see their existence within a society, how they fit in with others, and interact with ideas in their milieu. A social imaginary is expressed through stories and images shared by large groups of people. It is a common understanding that makes possible common practice. In the secular west, the modern social imaginary encompasses a wide range of positions from materialist to Christian orthodox to spiritualities of poetry and art. It is a space for coexistence, sifting of options and shifting of positions[27]

In the modern social imaginary there is a powerful and widespread view that religion will gradually disappear because science has shown faith to be false. Religion seems irrelevant in the modern world of medicine and data, and since it is based on authority of a 'higher power, it is seen as 'out of sync' in our democratic age of individual autonomy. This social imaginary is widely accepted in the population as a whole, but especially in institutions of higher education. Taylor notes that

> "[This social imaginary] is very strong among intellectuals and academics. The exclusion of religion is often part of the unnoticed background of social science, history, philosophy, and psychology […] In this kind of climate, distortive

[27] Ibid., 351.

judgments unconsciously engendered out of this outlook can often thrive unchallenged."[28]

Modern secularization theories tend to see social change as causing a complete retreat from religion, but Taylor points out that throughout modern history, urbanization, industrialization, and migrations have not led to the death of God, but to creation of new religious forms. This is not to say that these changes did not have a negative effect on previously existing religious institutions. The established institutions lost power and some groups adopted atheistic beliefs. But many times, the response to change was the creation of new forms of spirituality—such as Methodism in industrial England. In some cases, new organizations or orders arose within the older, established institutions, as did the Franciscan order in response to pressures of medieval urbanization.

There is reason to believe that the same kinds of responses are occurring in the 21st century. Taylor remarks that religion does not remain static; religion today continues in ways that are different from past forms.

> "It is marked by an unheard-of pluralism of accepted outlooks, religious, non-and anti-religious. In terms of religion as belief in a transcendent God, the number of unbelievers is greater than before, but "religious longing, the longing for and response to a more-than-immanent transformative perspective […] remains a strong independent source of motivation in modernity."[29]

Taylor's summary of the state of belief today has an evolutionary perspective:

> "The interesting story is not simply one of decline, but of new placement of the sacred or spiritual in relation to individual and social life. This placement is now the occasion for recompositions of spiritual life in new forms, and for new ways of existing, both in and out of relationship with God."[30]

1.3. 21st Century Global Challenges

Spiritual Seeking

The secular 21st century society described by Charles Taylor is the setting from which we face many challenges today. Christianity in our secular age reveals a greater variety of spiritualities than ever before, "an eclectic, global, ecumenical and radically plural" Christianity.[31] Even as membership in traditional denominations drops, there is a widespread quest for

---

[28] Ibid., 428.
[29] Ibid., 530.
[30] Ibid., 437.
[31] Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Brief History* (Chichester, United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., 2013), 200.

spirituality, a seeking of wisdom and practice that can be seen in the growing number of retreat movements, such as Cursillo[32] and silent retreats at monasteries. The rapid growth of Pentecostal churches worldwide in recent years and the charismatic movement within mainline protestant churches points to the desire for personal encounters with the Holy Spirit. There is growing interest in the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises,* and increased participation in spiritual direction among lay people. The shift from ordained priests or members of religious orders as spiritual directors and retreat leaders to the entrusting of these roles to trained lay leaders is indicative of a continuing trend toward democratization and emphasis on personal spiritual journey.

One of the dilemmas for Christianity now remains how to respond to those seeking 'spirituality' but not 'religion.' To those actively involved in churches, the 'spirituality' versus 'religion' debate seems an oversimplified construct, yet it is part of the social imaginary that views the institutional Christian Church as authoritarian, dogmatic, and intolerant. For many seekers, the dissatisfaction with the Christian Church is due to what they perceive as its limited vision; they seek a spirituality that is at once more personal and experiential, as well as more universal, one that does not exclude devout followers of other religions. Philip Sheldrake states, "The future of Christian spirituality will depend a great deal on whether this situation alters and the Christian Church learns how to unlock its spiritual treasures and to focus more on promoting spiritual wisdom."[33]

Christians will need to develop ways to discern the virtue of the many spiritual options available. The 20th century experience of so-called Christian or false spiritualties such as Hitler's quasi–spiritual Nazism and the Jonestown cult suicides, show the dangers of applying elements of Christian belief to twisted political agendas. Catholic theologian David Tracy has endeavored to provide a systematic set of evaluative criteria for examining spiritualties. I will return to his work in a later chapter discussing the reception of Teilhard's ontology.

At the same time that many are drawn to more tolerant or interfaith spiritualities, there is a phenomenon of pushback against universalism that can be seen in the political arena today and in the return to more narrow, fundamentalist versions of religion as a mantle of identity. People are returning to European pagan spiritualities, such as Germanic neo Paganism, and

---

[32] Cursillo is a three-day retreat for personal spiritual development, originating in the Catholic Church in Spain in 1944 and now offered world-wide through the Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran Churches. National Cursillo Movement USA, accessed September 7, 2018, https://www.natl-cursillo.org/

[33] Ibid., 205.

neo Druidism. In some cases, the choice is about pride in ancient ethnic traditions, but with new ecological values and a respect for all beings. In other instances, splinter groups of these historic spiritual ways are promoting white supremacy. Recent elections, shifts of political power, and a pulling out from larger communities, as in the Brexit decision, seem to indicate anxiety about loss of identity and power. In the shift back toward smaller units of identity, political leaders like Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders gain ground.

The 21st century is witnessing political extremists claiming the banner of a particular religious identity, but not actually participating in the deeper truths of it as members of a church or mosque. There has been much discussion as to whether or not terrorists in groups such as ISIS are actually practicing Islam. Research into that issue is beyond the scope of this thesis, but violence performed in the name of religion is clearly a major challenge to world stability in our century. Because of this connection between belief and aggression, there is a "closed world system" of thinking that assumes that "open-minded" agnosticism will lead to social tolerance and more readily accept plurality. Religion has historically been associated with violence, but current statistics indicate that lack of participation in a faith community can also correlate with intolerance and hatred.

Peter Beinart explores intolerance and secularism in American politics, in his recent article, "Breaking Faith" in *The Atlantic*.[34] There are indications that as church membership declines, American politics becomes more brutal. According to a Pew Research Centre Poll in March of 2016, Trump did best with voters who identified as Evangelical, but did not attend a church. The article cites statistics from PRRI, The Public Religion Research Institute, indicating that since 1990, the number of white Republicans with no religious affiliation has tripled. Also impacting the election were the large number of unaffiliated whites without a college degree. Bradford Wilcox, a sociologist at the University of Virginia found that "since the 1970s, rates of religious attendance have fallen more than twice as much among whites without a college degree as among those who graduated college."[35] This same demographic is more likely to experience financial stress, divorce, and addictions. Extreme political leaders appeal to the fears and resentments of this group. Beinart makes this key point: […] when cultural conservatives disengage from organized religion, they tend to redraw the boundaries of identity, de-emphasizing morality and religion and emphasizing race and nation."[36]

[34] Peter Beinart, "Breaking Faith," *The Atlantic*, April, 2017, 15-17.
[35] Ibid., 16.
[36] Ibid.

Secularism affects the left as well. In the 2016 election, liberals who seldom or never attended religious services were more likely to back Sanders, the candidate who promised 'revolutionary change'. Among African-Americans, the Black Lives Matter movement is led by Millennials, who are three times less likely to attend church than their parents' generation. These leaders want to separate the movement from the Church-led leadership style of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. Their goal is radical change, rather than the earlier search for reform based on an ethic of love and forgiveness. This mood of fear and tribal identity is observed in a 2008 study from the University of Iowa, which noted a correlation between non-attendance of church (Mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Evangelical) and anti-immigration sentiment. This study bears out with similar surveys in Europe.

On both ends of the American political spectrum, some people choose to adopt alternative "pagan" spiritualities connected with their racial ancestry to fortify their political stance, be it for white male supremacy or female black opposition. At both extremes, there is a distrust of Christian universalism, which historically has certainly not always been achieved, but which holds up, as Beinart says, an ideal of love and reconciliation that "crosses boundaries of blood and soil."[37] Despite the tendency to equate secularism with universal humanism, without *agape* love, or a source for transformation, it can also contribute to bitter political divisions worldwide, because it cannot see itself related to the 'other.'

Global Challenges

An effective spirituality for the 21st century must address the major ethical problems of our times. In order to visualize a functional spirituality for our secular-but-seeking times, we need to look beyond the individual's personal well-being within a small community, to the greater human community and the problems confronting it. I will examine fifteen global challenges in three overlapping major areas of concern: Globalization, technology, and the environment. These problems are based on data from the United Nations' Millennium Project's Global Futures Intelligence System.[38] The Millennium Project is a global participatory think tank that produces the annual "State of the Future" reports, the "Futures Research Methodology" series, the Global Futures Intelligence System and related studies and software. Resolving the

[37] Ibid.

[38] "The Millennium Project: Global Futures Studies and Research," accessed May 3, 2017, http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/challenges.html. The 15 Global Challenges are a framework for assessing the future of humanity. Their description, with a range of views and actions to be addressed, include regional views and progress on them is updated each year. The challenges are a result of research, Delphi studies, interviews, and participation of over 4,000 experts from around the world, since 1996.

fifteen challenges will require collaboration among governments, international organizations, corporations, universities and individuals. These worldwide problems are not listed in order of importance. Following a brief discussion of each, I will draw statements from Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato Si', Praise Be to You. Laudato Si'* is a kind of 'state of the world' report that calls attention to the critical state of human and earth ecology. *Laudato Si* is Teilhardian to the core. A theme running throughout the Pope's writing like a golden thread –a thread that is foundational to Teilhard's sacred ontology—is the interconnectedness of all life through systems of relationship and the need to create conscious community to sustain it.

Laudato Si' has had a broad readership and a far-reaching impact, beyond just the Catholic community. The United Nations, the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), government leaders, academics, scientific journals, and many social organizations have responded to the Pope's message calling for serious dialogue on the future of our planet Earth. The encyclical has been widely accepted by many religious leaders: Muslim scholars have embraced the Pope's work, as has the Jerusalem based Interfaith Centre for Sustainable Development, led by rabbi Yonatan Neril.[39]

Globalism, Multiculturalism, Migration

Our century is marked by globalization, multiculturalism, and migrations. Around the world, a global consciousness and more democratic structures are developing as a result of increasing interdependencies and the need to collectively address planetary challenges. World trade has been going on for centuries, but what is different now are the multiplicity of countries involved in the creation of one single product and the speed at which global interactions take place. In speaking of human ecology, Pope Francis refers to a phenomenon he calls, 'rapidification', "the continuing acceleration of changes affecting the planet and humanity."[40] With these rapid changes, there is a *need for global foresight in planning*, compelling experts to integrate information for the purpose of decision-making that impacts human and ecological environments. The potential consequences of high-risk projects should always be measured by organizations before they are started. This needs to become a routine part of most organizations, as common as accounting is today.

[39] "Laudato Si` First Anniversary Interfaith Impact," Radio Vatican News, accessed April 15, 2017, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/06/17/laudato_si_first_anniversary_interfaith_impact/1238023. It is interesting to think about the potential for interfaith unification based on survival of the Earth environment.
[40] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si' Praise Be To You* Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home, (Vatican Press: 2015), 15.

The current world population is 7.3 billion. In order to *bring growth and resources into balance*, annual world population growth would need to drop to fewer than 30 million; the number of hungry people would have to decrease by half; the majority of cities would set goals to be Eco Smart, and the costs of care for the aging reduced.[41]

There is a growing *gap between rich and poor*: In 2014, the wealth of 80 billionaires equaled the total combined wealth of the lowest half of humanity. Although the global middle class is growing, unemployment remains a problem. In 2014, there were 201 million people unemployed, 30 million more than before the 2008 economic crisis, and the trend continues.[42]

There is concern about how to *encourage the emergence of democracies* from authoritarian states. According to Freedom House, about forty percent of the world population lives in countries rated 'free'; 24 % live in 'partly free' countries; 36 % live in countries rated 'not free'. Half of the people in the last demographic live in one country: China[43]. Democracy can be fostered by availability of information and intelligence through the Internet. Communications technologies empower groups to organize into human rights movements.

In world health, *reducing the threat of new and re-emerging disease* is a global challenge. Although the health of humanity has improved, the World Health Organization verified 1, 100 epidemic events over the past five years. Anti-microbial resistance is rising, as are deaths from non-communicable disease.

How can we educate humanity to be both knowledgeable and wise so that global problems can be solved? Policy makers need to encourage democratic usage of online learning systems and universal access to education. Youth literacy rates have improved and much of the world's knowledge is available through technology today. Open access to research data for higher education and programs like the One Child One Laptop initiative in developing countries, as well as making Kindle e-book libraries available for communities affected by poverty have all had an impact. A universal requirement for ethics study in schools could also contribute toward meeting this goal.

Although the vast majority of the world is living in peace and we are having fewer cross border wars, a 2015 Global Peace Index reported that the world has become less peaceful

[41] Millennium Project Global Futures Information System, http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/challenges.html.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

every year since 2008.[44] 'Fragile states' are susceptible to destabilization. There has been a ten-fold increase in yearly terrorism fatalities since 2005. 73 million people are refugees.[45] There are multi-state tensions over maritime boundaries and resource claims. Cyberspace is now a major potential battleground. The challenge is to reduce interstate wars and arms sales, as well as violent crime. *To build peace*, and reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the use of weapons of mass destruction, shared values and new security strategies are needed.

Despite great improvements to women's status, violence against women is the 'largest war' today as measured by deaths and casualties per year. 82 percent of an estimated 800,000 people trafficked annually are women and children, used as sex workers and as exploited labor.[46] *Empowerment of women* through health, education, and opportunity has been shown to be a strong driver of social improvement.

Transnational organized crime takes in an estimated three trillion dollars a year, twice the amount of all military budgets combined. We need a new global system for prosecution of money laundering.

Another challenge for globalization is "*How can ethical considerations become more routinely incorporated into global decisions?"* Organizations of governments are meeting more often than ever, searching for ways to improve the human condition. Despite the natural self-promoting attitudes of states, we see a more global outlook developing through United Nations treaties, inter-religious dialogue, Doctors without Borders, many organizations for refugee relief, and development programs for poor nations. The challenge is to increase our ethical awareness in decision making for the common good of humankind.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* emphasizes the same need for ethics in his discussion of globalization:

> "There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality […]. The structure of nature shows us that everything is connected…" (80)
>
> "Love for society and commitment to the common good are expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals, but also 'macro-relationships—social, economic, and political." (149)

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

From a Christian spiritual point of view, the Pope says that

> "We need to live in awareness that each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us, and the security that Christ has taken into himself this material world and now, risen, is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light." (58)

Technology and Challenges

Technology advances so quickly that its repercussions are hard to predict. The first challenge is, "*How can the global convergence of information and communications technologies work for everyone?*" The omnipresence of cellphones and digital media dominates our lives today. Three billion people are now using the Internet. Communication networks for work, education, and global relationships offer the potential for much that is positive, but real concerns exist about data overload, cyber addiction, and the possible dangerous impact of robotics, nuclear energy, biotechnology, genetic engineering, and artificial intelligence.

No longer science fiction: Chinese scientists have used gene altering technology to change the genome of a human embryo; robots staff a hotel in Japan, a solar plane is now flying, with scheduled stops, around the world; scanning electron microscopes allow us to see the distance between a hydrogen nucleus and its electron, while the Hubble telescope allows us to see 13.2 billion light years away.[47] The Internet of Things is expected to connect 75 to 80 billion items to the Internet by 2020. It is predicted that synergies among synthetic biology, AI, robotics, nanotechnology, tele-everything, drones, 3D printing, augmented reality and collective intelligence systems, will only increase the rate of accelerated change of technologies over the next twenty-five years. We need a global intelligence system tracking science and technology advances and predicting consequences.

A second technological challenge is similar to the first: "*How can scientific and technological breakthroughs be accelerated to improve human conditions?"* The convergence of minds, technology, and information is leading to unprecedented global awareness and action. Collaborative systems are forming themselves into new kinds of transnational democracies that address issues and take hold of new opportunities. Even remote and less developed areas are starting to participate in emerging globalization, due to the falling costs of cellphones and

[47] The Millenium Project Global Futures Information System, Global Challenges: Science and Technology, http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/challenges.html.

computers. E-government websites, online training, and telemedicine are taking place, allowing participation, skills enhancement, and the ability to connect doctors to patients across continents.

Along with all the benefits, this massive technological growth brings uncertainties and new fears. A long-range uncertainty is whether bandwidth capacity can keep up with the rate of growth. Privacy and security issues are key problems, whose complexities are creating new specializations in jurisprudence. Governments struggle with how to define and control 'harmful content.' Worldwide cybercrimes cost an estimated one trillion dollars annually; cyber-attacks were up 48 percent in 2014.[48] Real-time streamed communications bring immediacy for better or for worse, shortening the time for situational understanding in making critical decisions. In order to meet the challenges presented by Internet technology and communications, governments locally and internationally need to create regulations and protocols that anticipate future cyber security issues. According to Microsoft, how well this is done will determine the future of cyberspace.

Pope Francis acknowledges the benefits of "sharing of intelligence and affections through technology," but expresses concern about our use of it. We are more and more shaped by the value of 'immediacy.' He remarks, "We have certain superficial mechanisms, but no sound ethics, a culture and a spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded restraint." And yet, the Pope sees that "an authentic humanity**,** *calling for a new synthesis*, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture, almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door." (Italics mine)

<u>The Environment</u>

In responding to climate change and the environment, the next fifty years will be decisive. Glaciers are melting, disease patterns are changing, coral reefs are dying, and water tables are falling on all continents. The oceans are becoming more acidic as they absorb 30 million tons of carbon dioxide daily. One third of topsoil is estimated to be destroyed, fish stocks have been depleted by 30 percent, and half of the bee colonies of Europe and North America have collapsed in the past decades.[49] Poor countries that are dependent on fisheries and agriculture are especially affected by climate change. It will take more efficient production, changes in agricultural methods, conservation measures, and methods to reduce greenhouse gases to seriously address global warming. The great environmental challenge is the question

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

of *how to achieve sustainable development while addressing climate change.* Effective May of 2017, 144 countries have ratified the Paris agreement on climate change, an international effort toward limiting the emission of greenhouse gases and keeping the global average temperatures at pre-industrial levels. This challenge will be met if the GPD increases at the same time that poverty and greenhouse gas emissions decrease for five years in a row.

Another large and related problem concerns the need for renewable energy. *How can growing energy demands be met efficiently?* The global passenger car fleet is expected to double (reaching about 1. 7 billion cars) by 2035.[50] Research on the feasibility of self-driving cars and production of cars using hybrid forms of fuels will have some impact in this area. The search for renewable energy takes a variety of forms: Japan plans to have a working solar space power system in orbit by 2030;[51] they also are researching a lunar solar cell and electricity transmission system. Fossil fuels can be replaced by renewable sources such as combinations of photovoltaic, solar, geothermal, biomass, and wind technologies. There must be agreement on a focused strategy to initiate change.

How can everyone have sufficient clean water without conflict? In 2015 the World Economic Forum listed the water crisis as the top global risk based on impact to society.[52] Although past goals have been met and over 2 billion more people gained access to safe drinking water since 1990, more than 700 million people lack a reliable source of water. Groundwater is being depleted at the rate of twice the population growth; water tables are falling, aquifers are being polluted, and salinity is increasing in coastal regions. By 2030, global water demand could be 40 percent more than the current supply.

Laudato Si' calls for a global "ecological conversion." To protect our common home, the Pope asks us to consider an economic ecology, an "integral vision." (95) We need transparent political processes with assessment of risks and consequences to the human and biological environment. These primarily ethical decisions must be rooted in solidarity between all people. (114) The Pope looks at climate change through the eyes of the poor, especially on the issue of water, as an indispensable resource.

Based on our human capacity for thinking and reflection, we have a responsibility toward the earth. Pope Francis insists that this ecological conversion be community based, with more

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

far-reaching impact than individual efforts alone. We need to be aware that "we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures but joined in a splendid universal communion." (143) We need an integral and interdisciplinary approach in addressing the problem*s* of the global crisis. In technically advanced societies we must adopt more simple lifestyles. According to the Pope, the problem is that we don't know who we are.

> "Postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared by everyone." (133)

Pope Francis speaks of the goodness of the Genesis story in its symbolic and narrative language*:*

> "Three fundamental and interwoven relationships—God, our neighbor, and the earth itself. We are not God. 'Dominion' has been wrongly interpreted as exploitation. Instead humanity was invited to 'till' and 'keep' the garden of the world. (Genesis 2:15) These words mean 'to plow and work' and 'to care for and preserve.*"* (43)

The pope links human ecology to the notion of the common good, using the definition from *Gaudium et Spes* at Vatican II, reminding us that we are responsible for acting for justice for future generations as well. His language is scientific and spiritual as he emphasizes the linking between individual forms, ecosystems and humans:

"The universe is shaped by open and intercommunicating systems […]"(54)

> *"*The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God […] All creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator." (57)

> "There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology." "If we acknowledge the transcendent and immanent dimensions of our created existence we can begin to heal all fundamental human relationships." (80)

In summarizing the Christian contribution to an Ecological Conversion, the Pope writes

> "The rich heritage of Christian spirituality, twenty centuries of personal and communal experience, has a precious contribution to make to the renewal of humanity. […] I am interested in how such spirituality can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world. A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, ***without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity.*****"** (140-141)
> (Emphasis mine)

In our 21st century multicultural, secular, globalized, technically evolving, and threatened planetary existence, we need a spirituality that will give meaning to our relationships and provide an ethical framework for healing the wounded planet. This spirituality must begin with knowing who we are, as individuals.

1.4. Seeking A New Story

Ilia Delio states, "Religion may be the opium of the masses but atheism offers no new yeast as leaven for the masses."[53] There is a growing consensus among scholars and teachers that we need to tell the story of who we are and how we got here and it needs to be told in such a way that the beauty and truth and goodness in it will bring humanity together as never before. The world is in need of an overarching narrative that includes the story of the universe and links our billions of individual stories to communal ones, embracing diversity, valuing our individual selves, but drawing us out and teaching us how we fit into wider communities in the cosmos. From a Christian standpoint, the new story will need to offer a larger vision of our Creator God and his Redeemer Son and being and love. This story will be an unfinished one, allowing each listener to discover his or her own role in contributing to its ongoing evolution.

The separation of the material from the spiritual, the splitting of the rational from the affective, means that teaching about the evolution of the physical world and the emergence of humans is often dry and un-engaging. How would human relationships to one another and the environment shift if more humans saw a sacred aspect to all of creation, to their identity and place within it? Hans Boersma asks this question about a renewed sacramental outlook in the Christian story. In *Heavenly Participation: Reweaving the Sacred Tapestry,* he tells the early

[53] Ilia Delio, "Evolution and the Rise of the Secular God" From *Teilhard to Omega: Co-creating an Unfinished Universe* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 37.

Christian story of the wholeness of the creation, which is 'charged with God' through its being, citing the works of Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa. He writes on the *analogia entis* developed by Athanasius—a way to say that God is in everything, but that God is also totally different from and higher than it, so that we don't confuse God with creation, but encounter his reflection throughout creation.

It was in returning to these earlier understandings of Christianity that Teilhard found the key to his unified story of evolution and Christian faith. Boersma, an Evangelical theologian writing about a traditionally Catholic perspective, believes that participation in the story of our sacred universe is key to ecumenism. He refers to Irenaeus on the unity that differentiates—a unity that is axiomatic to Teilhard's ontology. The sacramental viewpoint of creation was already lost before the Protestant Reformation—and both Protestants and Catholics need this *ressourcement*. Recognition of the order of created being as sacrament, being part of and also other than the Transcendent God, is the realization that no group is superior to another and that all are worthy of respect and understanding.

Our technologized, secularized world is missing formal processes of initiation, the transmission of story and values of older generations to the younger. Thomas Berry, former professor emeritus of the history of religions at Fordham University, says that we need to help young people to "identify themselves in the comprehensive dimensions of space and time." In order to talk about values and ethics, Berry says we must begin with story. The scientific story that is taught in schools has been generally detached from the psyche, the spirit, while the religious story is missing the physical evolution of matter. He says "the *Summa* that is now being written is the story of the universe in its cosmic-Earth-human phases as this is now emerging into consciousness."[54]

William Rees is a scientist-ecologist and founder of the Canadian Society for Ecological Economics. His teaching and research focuses on the public policy and planning implications of global environmental trends. Rees is best known for inventing the concept of the "ecological footprint." In his article, *Sustainable Development and the Ecosphere: Concepts and Principles,* he writes

> "[…] Sustainability demands that humanity ultimately succeed in overriding primitive behavioral tendencies that can lead only to geopolitical chaos and

[54]Thomas Berry, "The New Story: Comments on the Origin, Identifucation, and Transmission of Values" in *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth,* ed.s Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 87.

economic collapse. We must develop a new global cultural myth that celebrates both the diversity of humanity and the diversity of other life, one that is based on a fairer sharing of the world's limited ecological and economic abundance.

Ironically, compassion for the 'other' may now be the prerequisite for the continuance of civilized society on our finite planet. Cynics may prefer to think of this simply as enlightened self-interest, but whatever we call it, we need a new kind of social glue to bind the world's peoples together in the common purpose of protecting the Earth from ourselves. Success in this endeavor would mark the ascendance of cultural evolution over mere biology and would herald the most significant advance in human evolution since the invention of language."[55]

In popular culture, the desire for story can be seen in a resurgence of books and films on spiritual themes. One of these is Yann Martel's *Life of Pi,* written in 2001. This adventure narrative in the genre of fantastical realism is an international best seller. The story's promise, spoken to its fictional writer by an elderly man in India, is that 'it will make you believe in God.' Martel's survival story probes the mystery of life and the interrelationships of religions, people and animals. In 2012, *Life of Pi* starring Suraj Sharma, became a critically and commercially successful film, winning four Academy Awards.[56]

The main character of the story is an Indian boy, named for a swimming pool in France, "so beautiful that the gods would have delighted to swim in it." Upon entering middle school, the young Piscine decides to go by the name 'Pi' to escape teasing from classmates, "finding refuge in that Greek letter that looks like a shack with a corrugated tin roof, in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe."[57]

Pi's father runs the zoo in the botanical gardens of Pondicherry. Pi grows up there, in "a paradise on earth," observing the relationships between the animals and their caregivers. His father impresses upon his sons the danger of anthropomorphizing animals, at the same time reminding them that the most dangerous animals in the zoo are the humans. The book includes zoological information—at one point discussing humans' anthropomorphic ideas that the animals would be happier if 'free'. Pi, narrating, says,

---

[55] William Rees, "Sustainable Development and the Ecosphere: Concepts and Principles" First published in *Teilhard Studies* no. 23 (spring/summer 1990), in *Teilhard in the 21st Century*, ed.s Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 123.

[56] International Movie Database, accessed 10 September, 2016, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0454876/videoplayer/vi2016977945?ref_=vi_nxt_ap.

[57] Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2001), 24.

> "I have heard nearly as much nonsense about zoos as I have about God and religion […] I know zoos are no longer in people's good graces. Religion faces the same problem. Certain illusions about freedom plague them both."[58]

Pi finds great beauty and spirituality in his own Hindu religion, and thanks Krishna for leading him to meet Jesus Christ in a Catholic church while on vacation with his family. It is the love of Christ that attracts him to Christianity; Pi is baptized. Meanwhile, he admires his favorite teacher, Mr. Kumar, who chooses only to see things through rational lenses and is an avowed atheist. Later, Pi is drawn to the 'Beloved' through meeting a Sufi Muslim with exactly the same name as Mr. Kumar. When his religious mentors deny that Pi can worship in all three faiths, he refutes them, saying: "Bapu (Father) Gandhi said, 'All religions are true.'" Pi is able to embrace different perspectives simultaneously and appreciate scientific rationality along with religious mysticism.

The turning point occurs when Pi's family decides to immigrate to Canada during India's political turmoil in the mid-70s. They board a ship along with a number of their zoo animals that have been sold to zoos in America. In the aftermath of a mysterious explosion, the ship sinks in a stormy sea.

Pi's survival story takes up the rest of the novel. Pi finds himself stranded alone on a lifeboat in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, with a zebra, a hyena, an orangutan, and a Bengal Tiger. After the first several days' terror and shock of watching bloodshed, drawn-out suffering, and carnivorous gorging, survival of the fittest leaves only Pi and the tiger remaining on the boat. He must somehow subdue the tiger, while keeping himself alive. The shipwreck, both as reality and metaphor, is a perfect setting for this story- within- a- story about Story. *Life of Pi* is a reflection on survival instincts, violence, anthropomorphism, and spirituality. Piscine's name and his swimming lessons introduce *water* as a connecting theme that resonates with biblical images of the calm, life giving springs of fresh water contrasted with the chaos of stormy ocean waves forty feet high. The ark symbolism of animals-and-human adrift can extend to an Earth metaphor: Pi's experience trying to survive on the ocean recalls our own 'lifeboat' planet with its many different passengers, its limited resources and challenges. He compares it to the feeling of playing an endgame in chess— "only a few pieces; the stakes couldn't be higher."

[58] Ibid., 19.

More than 200 days after the shipwreck, Pi finally drifts ashore near a remote Mexican village. He is recovering in the hospital, when representatives from the Japanese shipping company come to interview him. Dissatisfied with Pi's story of being alone at sea for months with the full-grown Bengal tiger, they ask him to tell what *really* happened; a *reasonable story*, one they can believe. In the end, the Japanese officials—and the readers—are asked to choose between two stories: a brutal account of savagery and cannibalism among the human shipwreck survivors, or Pi's original narrative with the zoo animals, including the tiger on the lifeboat.

> "Doesn't the telling of something always become a story? Isn't just looking upon this world already something of an invention? […] The world isn't just the way it is; it is how we understand it, no? And in understanding it, we bring something to it, no? Doesn't that make life a story?"[59]

It seems significant that this complex story of religious beliefs and a transcendent God has been so well received.

1.5. Teihard's Sacred Ontology: Place, Purpose, Connection, Hope

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin felt that his story, too, would help people to believe in God—if only they could *see* the sweep of the evolving universe, the patterns in growth, the vast systems created from smaller and smaller systems, and the rise of consciousness over deep time. His narrative grew from his studies of Ignatian spirituality, geology, paleontology and zoology.

Teilhard was born in 1881 in his family's château in the Auvergne, a region of France known for its ancient volcanic mountains, lakes, and mineral deposits. He was the fourth of eleven children. From early childhood, he was fascinated by his physical environment, and collected rocks and minerals on his family's lands. Teilhard was passionately interested in finding the hardest, the most durable substance. His father, an amateur naturalist and his mother, a devout Catholic, encouraged both Teilhard's scientific studies and Catholic religious devotion. Beginning with his cousin, Marguerite, throughout his life, Teilhard maintained close relationships with a number of educated women, with whom he discussed his ideas in person and through correspondence.

Teilhard's ontology is written in both scientific and theological terms. He remains difficult to categorize; he claimed not to be a theologian, yet in *The Human Phenomenon*, the writing that

[59] Ibid., 302.

he insisted was only scientific is tinged with his sacred 'hyperphysics.' Teilhard is a storyteller whose work actually creates a new genre: It is science, philosophy, theology, poetry and prayer. His story is a cosmic, evolutionary adventure saga, where "everything belongs," as theologian Richard Rohr expresses it. God created a self-creating, evolutionary universe continually changing in an ongoing genesis. Every birth comes from inter-connections, mutual or reciprocal dependence—even at the subatomic level. Matter and spirit are not two separate substances, but two aspects of one single element. Nothing is outside of 'the divine milieu'—matter and spirit, science and Christianity, people of all faiths and of no faith. "By virtue of the Creation and still more, of the Incarnation, *nothing* here below is *profane* for those who know how to see." (*DM*, 30)

Philip Sheldrake places Teilhard's work in the category of 20th century 'reconciliation theology.' Teilhard's story of being not only reconciles religion with science, but the sacred with the secular. *The Divine Milieu's* dedication page reads: *'SIC DEUS DILEXIT MUNDUM (For God so Loved the World): For Those Who Love the World.* "It is written for the waverers both inside and outside; that is to say for those, who instead of giving themselves wholly to the Church, either hesitate on its threshold or turn away in the hope of going beyond it." (*DM*, 3) The 'waverers' of the 1920s are comparable to the seekers of 'spirituality-but-not-religion' today. In writing this text, Teilhard states that he is not writing a treatise on theology; he is only sharing his insights about his own spiritual thinking. In his words, *The Divine Milieu* is an "essay on life or on inward vision." Teilhard himself had a strong attraction to matter, to the physical aspects of the earth that for many years he tried to reconcile with his deep faith and devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus. Pierre Leroy, a close friend, described Teilhard as being most at home in the least religious settings—among scientists and in intellectual circles. His simultaneous love of God and the world led him to see one story that includes them both. The purpose of his essay is to teach people to *see.* He reassures those who fear religion:

> "No, Christianity is not, as it is sometimes presented and sometimes practiced, an additional burden of observances and obligations to weigh down and increase an already heavy load or to multiply the already paralyzing ties of our life in society. **It is, in fact, a soul of immense power which bestows significance and beauty and a new lightness on what we are already doing."** (*DM*, 34-35) (My emphasis)

Even as early as the 1920s, Teilhard was aware of a "collective awakening" of the world; more people were beginning to have a sense of living as "citizens of the universe." He writes,

> "*The enrichment and ferment of religious thought in our time* has undoubtedly been caused by the revelation of the size and the unity of the world all around us and within us. All around us the physical sciences are endlessly extending the abysses of time and space, and ceaselessly discerning new relationships between the elements of the universe." (*DM*, 7)

Teilhard, one hundred years ago, saw the need to enlarge religious horizons in order to encompass our expanding understanding of the universe. He asks the question, "Is the Christ of the Gospels, imagined and loved within the dimensions of a Mediterranean world, capable of still embracing and still forming the center of our prodigiously expanded universe?" (*DM*, 8) He turns to Paul for the answer, finding in Acts, and in the epistles, the resurrected, cosmic Christ, in whom we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:22-32) Teilhard sees this cosmic Christ as the 'divine milieu.' He asks the reader to imagine two stars in the sky, one representing the physical world, scientific thought and the rational understanding of the universe, the other star representing the Christian understanding of God and Jesus of Nazareth. He invites the reader to place himself next to Teilhard, where his point of view is "from the solid platform built by 2,000 years of Christian experience […] you will see how easily the two stars, whose divergent attractions were disorganizing your faith, are brought into conjunction." (*DM*, 9)

Teilhard uses water metaphors in this work, describing "a positive confluence of Christian life with the natural sap of the universe." (*DM*, xiv) Teilhard's ocean imagery fits the shipwreck story of *Life of Pi* and the metaphorical *L'Heureux naufrage, (Fortunate Shipwreck),* documenting spiritual seeking in Quebec. He describes the divine milieu as every living being and all of creation swimming in a divine sea of God's love and grace. This sacred ontology gives identity to humanity, locating them at the tip of a trajectory of 13. 7 billion years of development through evolution on planet Earth. Because every individual is genetically and experientially unique, he or she has a unique contribution to make toward the future. The task is to be in relationship, to love one another, to work together to "build the planet". Teilhard, in line with the Ignatian idea of being contemplatives in action, provides a spiritual framework that accomplishes two main things: it sheds light to help one see and provides energy to accomplish the work one does that God 'divinizes'.

To summarize, Teilhard's sacred ontology locates humans in their context, as individuals and as parts of larger systems. His story emphasizes relationship, ecology, and the responsibility that humans now have, with our technological superiority, to be co-collaborators with God in caring for the planet. Whatever work we do, whatever suffering we endure will not

be wasted, but will be used to move human life and consciousness forward through God's divinization of our activities and passivities. Because love is given primacy, humans are to love God, one another, and all life, with a great hope for the future, in the belief that when human consciousness is united in its focus on that love, the Parousia will arrive. This culminating moment in the evolution of human consciousness is called the Omega Point.

The urgency of Teilhard's insight seems only to have increased in the past century. As with Pi's last days in his lifeboat, we on planet earth may be facing our own 'endgame' with diminishing resources. As Teilhard said in the foreword to *The Divine Milieu,* "The day is not far distant when humanity will realize that biologically it is faced with a choice between suicide and adoration." The following chapter will explore Teilhard's ontology as a sacred story that could equip humanity to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Chapter Two: Teilhard's Sacred Ontology

2.1. Development of Teilhard's Ontology: Influences and Experiences

In this chapter I will examine twelve major strands of Teilhard's theology, focusing on three important aspects of his ontology: his concept of the Cosmic Christ, his thoughts on the divinization of human action and passion, and his notion of union that differentiates. These concepts relate directly to basic human psychological needs that drive the search for spirituality: the need for identity/autonomy, the need for meaning and purpose, and the need for belonging. The first part of the chapter is concerned with the development of Teilhard's ontology in the context of his experience as a French Jesuit, a paleontologist, a stretcher-bearer in World War I, and in exile. The second part examines his ontology through his major writings.

Ignatian Spiritual Training

Much of Teilhard's theology demonstrates Ignatian thinking**,** a strongly incarnational way of perceiving the world. The Ignatian concepts of "Finding God in All Things" and being "Contemplatives in Action" are central to Teilhard's sacred story of being. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) encouraged the use of imagination and the five senses in the prayerful reading of scripture in the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises.* Teilhard's descriptive writing demonstrates his familiarity with 'composition of place' in his use of visual imagery that enables his readers to 'see' both the vast reaches of space and time in the evolution of the biosphere and the minute inner workings of a cell. Ignatius developed the reflective *Examen* prayer to encourage the habit of reviewing details of the past day: looking for moments of awareness of God's presence, observing one's patterns of behavior, seeking forgiveness and cultivating an active response to God's love, before looking ahead to the next day. In developing his sacred story, Teilhard engages in a similar dialectic with past and present that is like a cosmic-scale, evolutionary *Examen* prayer.

He was formally introduced to Ignatian spirituality at age 11, when he went to study at the Jesuit boarding school near Lyons, Notre Dame de Mongré. This was one of the top schools for the sciences, especially physics.[60] Here he was taught that "religion sanctifies science and science serves religion"—a point of view that soon came under attack by conservatives in the Catholic church reacting to Modernist philosophy.[61] By the time he was sixteen, Teilhard had

[60] Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 10.
[61] Ibid., 12.

discerned his desire to become a Jesuit priest. In his era, Ignatian training was dry and abstract; it was a 'manualist' system, where theology was taught through manuals of doctrine, rather than from primary sources. Teilhard and others would later urge a return to the sources of Church doctrine and the exegesis of the early Church Fathers. His ontology derives in part, from his desire to bring Ignatian thought into the 20th century. Teilhard saw the potential in *The Spiritual Exercises* for inspiring contemplation and action in the world, but the *Exercises* needed to be updated from the 16th century to encompass contemporary knowledge of the evolving cosmos. In a letter to Pierre Leroy, in 1950, he wrote: "What we need is a complete transposition of the Ignatian scheme in terms of organic universe (a growing universe) as we understand it today. I think such a transposition perfectly possible, and sometime I may sketch one out […] The problem with the *Exercises* only reflects in miniature the whole tragedy of the present-day Church."[62]

After the year at Aix, he moved to Laval (France) to start his juniorate studies. Here he met two lifelong friends, Auguste Valensin and Pierre Charles, who would both become well-known theologians and whose correspondence with Teilhard provides a record of his thought process and work. He experienced his first exile in 1901, when anticlerical laws in France forced the closing of religious communities. In 1880, a year before Teilhard's birth, Jules Ferry had secularized the schools; the Jesuits were no longer allowed to teach. They began establishing schools in coastal England. For the next four years Teilhard lived and studied at the Jesuit college, Maison St. Louis, on the island of Jersey in the English Channel. Exploring the island's rugged rock formations, he became more aware than ever that through nature he felt immersed in God.

1902 was a pivotal year for Teilhard: his oldest brother died of tuberculosis and his younger sister was diagnosed with incurable spinal tuberculosis. Shortly after this, another younger sister died of meningitis at age 13. Teilhard began to have doubts about continuing his scientific studies, thinking, in his grief, that perhaps he should devote himself totally to a contemplative life. He went to his old novice master for direction. His director told him that he should continue to pursue his deep interest in science and combine it with his religious studies, because "what the God of the Cross was looking for in me was the 'natural' expansion of my being as well as its sanctification." (*HM,* 46). In the Ignatian tradition of discernment of vocation, one prayerfully

[62] Pierre Leroy, *Letters from my Friend, Teilhard de Chardin: the 1948-1955 Correspondence Including the Letters Written During His Final Years in America*, Mary Lukas, trans. (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 63.

examines one's deepest desire to discern what is most life-giving. This Ignatian concept of discernment of vocation through prayerful consideration of one's natural interests deeply impressed Teilhard. Over the following years, he observed that just as in biological systems, human social systems benefit from the natural diversity of human experience. The pursuit and development of an individual's interests and skills contribute to and enrich the complexity of the larger organism or society, helping humanity not only to survive, but to become more fully conscious.

Following three years of teaching science at a Jesuit school in Cairo, Teilhard returned to England to complete his studies in theology at Ore Place, in Hastings. In 1905, the French Jesuits had bought a large manor house and transformed it into a school. Here, students and professors from both the Fourvière school in Lyons and from Paris worked together in a climate of theological openness to inquiry. The academic standards were high. David Grummet writes, "Personal exile from their own country gave a whole generation of theologians a very particular stake in issues surrounding secularity and the defense of the supernatural."[63]

The foundations of Teilhard's ontology were formed in this school that produced several of the other great thinkers of the thirties and forties, including Pierre Charles, Henri de Lubac, Pierre Rousselot, and Auguste Valensin. Each of these theologians contributed to the *ressourcement* of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century that contributed to the Second Vatican Council. David Grummet states, "[…] The full importance of theological formation at Ore Place for Teilhard and other French Jesuits of his generation has rarely been recognized."[64] In contrast to the Suarezian scholasticism of St-Louis on Jersey, the philosophical atmosphere at Ore Place was more open: discussion of readings was encouraged. Henri de Lubac was younger than Teilhard, but also spent two years at Hastings and wrote:

> "Anyone who did not live at Ore Place did not know in all its fullness the happiness of being a 'scholastic.' There we were really rather far from the world, away for a while from nearly all the responsibilities of the apostolate; alone among ourselves, as if in a big ship sailing, without a radio, in the middle of the

[63] David Grummet, "Teilhard at Ore Place, Hastings 1908-1912" (Journal Compilation of The Dominican Council/ Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2009), 690, accessed online May 20 2017, http://www.readcube.com/library/88010985-4203-4b2f-9101-641a85b2303a:bcb62426-4781-4b94-a0fa-f9cced7a135a.
[64] Ibid., 687.

> ocean. But what an intense life within that ship, and what a marvelous crossing!"[65]

In addition to his theological studies in England, Teilhard pursued his passion for geology, meeting local geologists and searching for fossils in the cliffs. Here he was beginning to have a spiritual awareness of evolution.

Bergson

At this time, Henri Bergson's work sparked Teilhard's wholistic vision of the evolutionary process. Bergson (1859-1941) developed a process philosophy, which rejected static values in favor of values of motion, change and evolution. He abandoned Darwinian mechanistic theories after having an insight about 'duration'—the way time is lived by humans, rather than scientific time. He was interested in the immediate data of consciousness and explored the body-mind relationship. In 1907 he wrote *Creative Evolution*, in which he describes an energy of evolution he calls the *élan vital,* operating on all of life. He notes that philosophy in the past failed to appreciate nature and the importance of *becoming*. Bergson's phenomenology was personalist, asserting that the real is personal; the features of personality make the pattern of all reality. Teilhard wrote:

> "It was during the years when I was studying at Hastings (that is to say, immediately after I had experienced such a sense of wonder in Egypt) that there gradually grew within me, as a presence much more than as an abstract notion, the *consciousness of a deep-running, ontological, total Current which embraced the whole Universe in which I moved*. […] I can remember very clearly the avidity with which, at that time, I read Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. […] The effect that brilliant book had upon me was to provide fuel at just the right moment, and very briefly, for a fire that was already consuming my heart and mind." (Emphasis mine) (*HM*, 35).

Bergson's work contributed to Teilhard's vision of wholeness, encouraging his desire to bridge the growing division between modern science and the religious hierarchy.

The French Jesuits were not only distrusted by the French government, but also the leadership of the Catholic church at this time, with Pope Pius X suspicious of "Modernist" theology and excommunicating those priests who were sympathetic to it. All seminarians and clergy were forced to sign the Anti-Modernist Oath in 1907. Teilhard was able to sign because he was convinced that human evolution must include the development of spirit. He felt the importance of expressing his

[65] Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances that Occasioned his Writings* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993), 15. in David Grummet, "Teilhard at Ore Place, Hastings 1908-1912", 691.

thought in a unitive way, drawing on philosophical, scientific and theological language. Grummet cites Teilhard's essay on « *L'homme* » in the *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* as an early example of recurring themes of his ontology: Humans are composed of matter and spirit, body and soul. Humans live in a state of mutual interdependence, each one a centre of action that reflects the greater whole. Evolution is not only the outcome of natural processes but is the result of a vital act (*acte* vital) and has a creative drive (*poussée* créatrice) as its source. Everything has a within (*le dedans)* and an outside, or without (*le dehors*.) Matter is a principle of multiplicity and spirit is a source of unity.[66] The *Dictionnaire* was an interdisciplinary effort to describe church teaching on each topic, bringing it alongside scientific teaching for the purpose of defending its coherence and meaning. Teilhard had come to the conclusion that *theology expresses the deep truth of reality, but only can do so if it remains attentive to current secular theory and discourse*.[67] (Italics mine)

Ore Place, Hastings, was an important center for studies in Pauline Christology. One of Teilhard's teachers, Ferdinand Prat, was especially influential. He published *The Theology of Saint Paul* in two large volumes in 1908 and in 1912, writing that all things are in Christ, because creation is his work; God connected the world of nature and of grace with his son in advance.[68] Another teacher who inspired Teilhard was Albert Durand, who specialized in Johannine literature. There was a tendency in this era to emphasize the similarities between Paul's epistles –especially Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians---and the philosophy and mysticism of the gospel of John.[69] Teilhard reflects this thinking in his frequent citations of both John's gospel and the letters of Paul to develop his high Christology. Teilhard completed his studies at Ore House and was ordained in 1911. Although the war would stimulate the expression of his sacred ontology, Teilhard's "thought and mission were firmly rooted in the French Jesuit intellectual and community milieu of the early twentieth century."[70]

[66] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, « L'homme » in « L'homme devant les enseignements de l'Église et devant la philosophie spiritualiste. *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* Vol II (Paris : Beauchesne, 4th ed., 1912), 501-514 cited in Grummet, "Teilhard at Ore Place, Hastings.", 694
[67] Grummet, 695.
[68] Ibid., 696.
[69] Kropf, Richard, *Teilhard, Scripture, and Revelation* (Rutherford, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980), 209.
[70] Grummet, 698-699.

Blondel

Philosopher Maurice Blondel, (1861-1949) inspired many of the theologians of the French *ressourcement.* He was a major force behind Teilhard's work on the divinization of human action. Blondel wanted to overcome what he saw as the unnatural separation between faith and reason. His book, *L'Action* was a philosophical account of the dynamic source of human action, exploring the meaning of life and articulating how God's truth is received in what humans make and do. He saw humans as moving forward by acts of natural faith through wider and wider circles of social involvement. He felt that "Catholics provided a 'leavening' through whom life and love might circulate in a secular environment, renewing French society by spiritual means."[71]

World War I

The First World War began just as Teilhard, aged 33, was about to begin his graduate studies in Paris. He continued his scientific research until he was called to active duty in December of 1914. One month earlier his younger brother, Gonzague, had died at the front. Teilhard requested a post as stretcher-bearer. He was assigned to a Moroccan ambulance unit with a regiment of Zouaves and Tirailleurs (light infantry) made up of Tunisians, Moroccans, and European settlers in North Africa.[72] They were engaged all along the front: Teilhard carried the wounded and dead in the most violent battles of World War I, including Ypres, Arras, Dunkirk, Verdun, and the Marne. He lived the physical and emotional challenges of trench warfare and felt a sense of camaraderie with soldiers from all parts of the French colonial empire. Instead of the blue uniform of the French field soldier, he opted to wear the Zouave's khaki outfit and red fez, to be in solidarity with the men in his regiment, many of whom were Muslim. [73]

Teilhard wrote throughout the war, between battles, composing essays and corresponding with his cousin, Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon. He wrote in the field, sitting on packing cases or in bombed out sacristies of ruined churches. Seeing the vast, organized effort of many peoples coming together, Teilhard experienced:

> "…the very definite conviction that, among other results of the war, will be that of mixing and welding together the peoples of the earth in a way that nothing else, perhaps, could have done."[74]

---

[71] William Portier, "Twentieth Century Catholic Theology and the Triumph of Maurice Blondel" *Communio* 38, No. 1 (Spring 2011), 103-37.
[72] Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 49
[73] Ursula King, 52
[74] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Making of a Mind: Letters from a Soldier-Priest* (London: Collins, 1966), 125. The book is a compilation by Pierre's cousin Marguerite Teilhard Chambon.

Although he was not officially a chaplain, Teilhard served in this capacity whenever he could, saying mass before battle or offering his service as priest where villagers still remained and were in need of one. He lived at the edge of life and death, never knowing whether he would make it until the next day, assisting the wounded and the dying. His comrades called him *Sidi Marabout*, which meant a North African living in France and "a man closely bound to God, a saint and ascetic blessed with divine favor."[75]

His war experiences served as a catalyst for clarifying the essence of his thought. "A window is opening onto the hidden mechanisms and deep strata of what man is becoming," he wrote in 1917 in "Nostalgia for the Front," one of a series of essays describing the physical reality around him and the vision of the future that he could see through that reality. He noticed a sense of freedom and peace that came from being at the point of imminent death. He also observed that soldiers at the front sensed themselves as individuals but tightly woven into a larger group effort. He frequently experienced and witnessed in others "the joy of staying alive." He believed that for one who survived, it was as though the well-being spreading over his soul, "is a sign of a higher life into which the survivor has just been baptized." The sense of an enlarged vision and a changed ethic among those at the front contrasted with the vision and ethic of people who did not share this experience.

In Dunkirk, in 1916, facing violent conflict, Teilhard wrote a statement of his belief, in the form of a longer essay called, "Cosmic Life." It begins with the statement: "There is a communion with God, and a communion with earth, and a communion with God through Earth."

> "I am writing these lines from an exuberance of life and a yearning to live; it is written to express an impassioned vision of the earth, and in an attempt to find a solution for the doubts that beset my action—because I love the universe, its energies, its secrets, and its hopes, and because at the same time I am dedicated to God, the only Origin, the only Outcome, and the only End. I want to express my love of matter and life, and to reconcile it, if possible, with the unique adoration of the only absolute and definitive Godhead."[76]

"Cosmic Life" is Teilhard's first attempt at presenting a coherent 'sacred story'; it is the embryo of his ontology, a story that remained basically unchanged, but more clearly expressed in his future work. In a section devoted to the Cosmic Christ, he reveals his thoughts on biblical exegesis:

> "For all its apparent modernity, this Gospel of the Cosmic Christ, in which the salvation of our own times may very well lie, is indeed the word handed down from

[75] Ibid., 53.
[76] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, excerpt from "Cosmic Life" in *FM,* 306.

> heaven to our forefathers; it is the new treasure stored with foresight side by side with the ancient riches. If we read scripture with openness and breadth of mind, if we reject the timid interpretations of the narrow common-sense that is ready to take the words of Consecration literally (because faith obliges us to do so) but in all other contexts looks for the meaning with least impact, we shall find that it speaks in categorical terms. The Incarnation is a making-new, a restoration of all the universe's forces and powers: Christ is the Instrument, the Centre, the End, of the whole of animate and material creation; through him everything is created, sanctified, and vivified."[77]

The final paragraph of this essay is a succinct statement of his ontology, a paragraph that he would spend a lifetime developing and elaborating:

> "To live the cosmic life is to live dominated by the consciousness that one is an atom in the body of the mystical and cosmic Christ. The man who so lives dismisses as irrelevant a host of preoccupations that absorb the interest of other men: his life is projected further, and his heart is more widely receptive. There you have my intellectual testament." (24 April, 1916 Fort Mardik, Dunkirk)[78]

Teilhard received the *Médaille militaire* for courageous service, and by request of his regiment was made a knight of the French Legion of Honor. He took his final vows as priest in 1918 and he was able to return to Paris to complete his doctorate.

Teilhard taught geology classes at the Institut Catholique and gave public lectures. His ideas were eagerly received and discussed. Letters he wrote to friends circulated among wider audiences. Friends distributed mimeographed copies of his essays among interested people. His classes were so popular that the Jesuit leadership, in this era of the Modernity Crisis, became concerned that Teilhard might be teaching heterodox ideas. When Teilhard gave talks on human evolution, he was often questioned on the subject of original sin. In 1922 a colleague who was a professor of dogmatic theology asked Teilhard to write his explanation of original sin. Teilhard responded with a brief essay, "Note on Some Possible Historical Representations of Original Sin."[79] His thesis is that in light of knowledge of the evolutionary origins of humanity, we can no longer take it as fact that there was a single human sin event in a garden of paradise. Somehow, this essay, written for private discussion among colleagues, was sent to the Superior General of the Jesuits in Rome. Teilhard's writing on evolution and original sin was seen as unorthodox and threatening to Church doctrine. This event was a turning point in his life. As a result, after 1925, Teilhard was no longer allowed to teach at the Institut Catholique, nor to

[77] Ibid., 58.
[78] Ibid., 70.
[79] Ursula King, 107.

publish writings of a religious nature. Instead, he was officially sent by the Museum of Natural History to join Émile Licent S.J., on a geological expedition along the Yellow River in China.

Exile in China

Teilhard had been working at the Natural History Museum in Paris, sorting and identifying fossils shipped from a French geological outpost in China. Licent had gathered a collection of bones, fossils, and archaeological finds in the port city of Tianjin, formerly (Tientsin), near Beijing. Tianjin was opened to foreign trade in the 19th century, so a large number of Expatriates from Europe, America, and Asia lived in settlements there. The Jesuits had built a small museum for Licent's collection. The year that Teilhard arrived, they had just opened the High Institute of Commercial and Industrial Arts to train Chinese in technical subjects for economic development.[80] This would be Teilhard's home base, from 1923 until after the second world war.

Soon after he arrived in China, he and Licent set out for the Ordos desert, first sailing along the Yellow River, and then travelling by mule for four months across mountains and desert. They found so many well-preserved fossils that they made another trip, to the Gobi, further north in Mongolia, the following spring. In this sweep of isolated landscape, Teilhard was inspired to complete the writing of a Mass that he'd begun in the trenches of war. He called it "The Mass on the World." "The Mass" is Teilhard's sacramental prayer consecrating the earth to God, expressing his conception of the immanence and transcendence of God. He interprets the communion of individuals with God as a eucharistic recollection that humanity lives in a divine milieu, the cosmic body of Christ.

2.2. Teilhard's Synthesis of Science and Religion

Teilhard's life was dedicated to solving the problem of God and the world: How can love of God and love of the world be reconciled? This same conflict and question arise for those in the 21st century, who seek spirituality. All of Teilhard's life experiences had led him to see an organic unity between Christ-consciousness and cosmic reality. His scientific study demonstrated that evolution of the universe is a movement oriented toward a central point. His theological study showed him Christ's function as center and head of creation, whose law of love is the spiritual energy of union, and who is drawing all of creation to himself. To facilitate understanding of Teilhard's ontology, Louis Savary lists seventeen key Teilhardian concepts.[81] I

[80] Ursula King, 93.
[81] Louis M. Savary, *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2010),13.

have rephrased and condensed these into twelve strands of thought that comprise Teilhard's vision. First, Teilhard sees science and religion as contributing to one another for the fullest understanding of reality. The universe has history, a structure, and is evolving toward higher consciousness through unification. The creative energy of the universe is love. We live and move and have our being in a divine milieu. All matter has both exteriority and interiority, the potential--even rudimentary--for life and consciousness. The law of complexity-consciousness describes the growth of complex systems that become more conscious. Union differentiates. A unifying transcendent and personal force evolves life to higher consciousness, drawing creation toward a culminating union with itself. Teilhard calls this force *Omega*, envisioning the Cosmic Christ, both Immanent and Transcendent, the *Alpha* and *Omega*. In this evolutionary ontology, the focus is on creation, Incarnation, and redemption, rather than on sin. Evolution is now occurring in the *noosphere*. Due to the increasing impact of humans on the planet, the future of evolution on earth depends on human collaboration with God. Individuals each have the ability to integrate their action, experience, and suffering in a higher consciousness of spiritual unity. Humanity's task is to love: to love the entire universe, to love the invisible, and to love the "not yet."

The Human Phenomenon

Teilhard's most detailed explanation of his synthesis of natural science and religion was written from 1938 to 1940 in his book, *Le Phénomène humain.* Originally translated as *The Phenomenon of Man,* it was the first of Teilhard's works to be published (the English edition in 1959) after his death. Teilhard's objective is "to develop a homogeneous and coherent perspective of our general experience extended to the human being," for the purpose of "increased vision and thus an increase of consciousness." (*HP*, 6). He examines the human as an evolving biological and global event that has impacted the past and whose present life is tied to the future transformation of the planet. A more recent, 1999, translation by Sarah Appleton-Weber corrects many errors in the first, includes some sections that were left out, and restores a more natural tone to the phrasing. Her text is more precisely titled, *The Human Phenomenon.*

In this book, Teilhard writes in language that is mostly scientific, but often uses poetic descriptive passages. He notes that his book represents only the beginnings of a "pendulum-like dialectic" that is "precisely classical apologetics—but (in conformity with modern views) transposed from a static Universe to a Universe in movement—from a Cosmos to a Cosmogenesis." (*HM*, 149-150). *The Human Phenomenon* acts to restore the 'enchantment' of the universe through descriptions of the beauty and wonder of the process of human evolution,

as Teilhard himself sees it. As a phenomenologist, he describes the scientific phenomenon he observes, but he insists, "the *whole* phenomenon." He often uses scientific processes as analogies for social and psychological processes. The phenomenological approach considers that "all experience, however objective, is enveloped in a system of hypotheses as soon as the scientist attempts to formulate it." (*HP*,1). Two central hypotheses form the basis for his synthesis of evolution and incarnation: first, the *primacy of thought and the psyche* in evolution of matter, and second, that the *roots of human social development are biological*.

As a paleontologist researching artifacts of the distant past, Teilhard envisions time on a vast scale. He describes himself as "a pilgrim of the future on his way back from a journey made wholly in the past."[82] In *The Human Phenomenon*, he looks at the past as an observer from the summit of evolution, and from there, based on his findings, extrapolates the future. He centers his story on humans, moving back in time, then forward, from Pre-life to Life to Thought. Teilhard's doctoral work involved examining the fossil record of carnivores and primates in southwestern France. Over the course of his research, he became aware of an evolutionary pattern: lines of life that became successful had evolved larger capacities for complex thought or larger brains. This discovery seemed to affirm his hypothesis: Evolution is continuous and has a direction*.* Over the great span of many millennia, life had tended to survive better when it had more intellectual capacity for spontaneous action and higher consciousness. He uses the term *orthogenesis* to express the concept of evolution in a focused direction toward higher thought, evidenced by the increase in cephalized forms and the differentiation of nerve tissues.

Teilhard's term, *hyperphysics,* describes the general evolutionary trend toward *more being* in the universe, with an emphasis on relationality and growth, rather than the old *metaphysics*' picture of a stable and unchanging cosmos. In his preface, Teilhard insists that he will not be writing a metaphysical essay or a theological work, but that "Just like meridians as they approach the pole, so science, philosophy, and religion necessarily converge in the vicinity of the whole." (*HP,* 2). Observed from only the material science of the "outside," the human is only one of a myriad of other life forms on earth. But shifting to an integral point of view that includes observing the capacity for thought and consciousness, the human can be seen as the current culmination of the evolution of life forms on earth. Teilhard says that far from being just tiny

[82] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters from a Traveller,* trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 60.

elements lost in an immense cosmos, humans are “the axis and the arrow of evolution…which is much more beautiful.” *(HP*, 7).

Teilhard has the reader visualize human evolution in reverse, beginning in the present, and imagining the changes as one moves back through deep time. Going back billions of years, one would see a reduction of ‘human’ matter to its simplest elements, a slow dis-integration, until “the last fibres of the human composite merge in our sight with the very stuff of the universe: atoms, radically particulate, yet basically connected and active.” (*HP*, 14). He examines three aspects of matter: plurality, unity, and energy. “The cosmos in which we humans find ourselves engaged constitutes a *system* in its multiplicity, a *totum* in its unity, and a *quantum* in its energy. Systems are made of interconnecting and integral parts. The order and design appear only in the whole—it is a structured whole.” (*HP*, 14-15). Teilhard sees everything in terms of systems. There are no isolated things in the universe, only elements of a whole in process. People’s inability to see the whole, to only see fragments, leads to the belief that life and the world are absurd. Teilhard’s entire scientific and spiritual focus can be seen as seeking to understand the relationship of the part to the whole.

The Law of Complexity-Consciousness is central to Teilhard’s ontology because it describes the phenomenon of systems-building. He observes that the natural history of the world seems to be a mass in process of transformation. Evolution of matter is a building up, by increasing complexity, of various elements. He notes that from the beginning, particulate matter has had a tendency to attract and bond, creating new substances that are more complex, and over vast time, more conscious. The complexity it refers to is that of a deeply organized structure, a new combination, like polymers—not a simple formation like crystallization. The crystal has organization and order, but not real unity: when it breaks apart, each piece remains a particular crystal. Carbon-based organic molecules are formed when smaller molecules join in chains of covalent bonds that cannot be broken apart without destroying the molecule itself.[83] Teilhard applies this same law to evolving human social patterns and to the development of spiritual consciousness. It can be helpful to envision this law as Louis Savary does, in expanded terms that reveal its full function: the “Law of Attraction-Connection-Complexity-Consciousness.”[84]

[83] Kathleen Duffy, *Teilhard’s Mysticism: Seeing the Inner Face of Evolution* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 52.
[84] Louis M. Savary, “Expanding Teilhard’s ‘Complexity-Consciousness’ Law” *Teilhard Studies* Number 68, Spring 2014, 1-18.

There is an energy that draws individual elements to join, a form of union that retains individual identity while creating a new, more complex, and over time more highly conscious substance.

After moving the human back in time to the origins of the universe with its Big Bang, Teilhard reverses direction, recounting the gradual evolution of the universe. He visualizes plotting the activity of the cosmos on a graph in four-dimensional spacetime to provide a kind of map through mathematical representation.[85] Teilhard sees elementary particles shooting out like fireworks, as scattered points on a three-dimensional plot. (*HP*, 17). As particles weave among each other, each one leaves a thread-like curve, interacting to form gases. As time progresses and the universe cools, nuclei attract electrons and atoms are created. Still later, atoms unite and form molecules and these gather to form polymers. These large organic compounds are the basis of the cell. They proliferate and will eventually become life forms. The tapestry of evolution that Teilhard presents in *The Human Phenomenon* "highlights […] the amazing energy at work in the heart of the cosmos and models beautifully not only the interconnectedness and interdependence of all matter, but also matter's inclination toward union. […]"[86]

His work as a geologist-paleontologist involved studying rock formations. He had learned to read their strata, identifying the age of each layer, so it was natural for Teilhard to understand the earth's formation as a series of layered spheres. His story of evolution moves from the complexifying particles to the building of the spherical layers of the earth: barysphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere…and to the moment of life. He describes how the cell found a new method of incorporating a larger mass of matter into a unified whole. Teilhard follows the development of cells and more complex structures with vivid poetic and scientific descriptions of the great variety of life forms in the biosphere and exults in "Such a luxurious unleashing of fantastic creations!" (*HP*, 50.) Later, he notes the increasingly complex nervous systems that evolve: "Fibers and ganglions on the surface; consciousness deep within." (*HP*, 95.) Consciousness in living matter is:

> "…not simply formed from an aggregate of parcels fortuitously caught in the same net. It represents an interdependent mass of infinitesimal centers structurally interconnected by their condition of origin and their development. […] The condition of unity is plurality." (HP, 38).

As the biosphere grows, eventually *anthropogenesis* occurs. Humans appear and for the first time, *hominization*— "evolution becomes conscious of itself." "The change of biological state

[85] Kathleen Duffy, *Teilhard's Mysticism: Seeing the Inner Face of Evolution* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 58.
[86] Ibid.

ending up in the awakening of thought […] affects life in its organic totality, and consequently it marks a transformation that affects the state of the whole planet." (*HP*, 123).

Teilhard defines the word, *consciousness* in its broadest sense, "to describe every kind of psyche, from the most rudimentary forms of interior perception conceivable to the human phenomenon of reflective consciousness." (*HP*, 25). He acknowledges the difficulties of grouping spirit and matter together in a rational perspective and notes the need for an integrated science. Based on the fact that life evolved from inorganic material particles, Teilhard writes, in italics, "*In a coherent perspective of the world, life inevitably presupposes a pre-life before it, as far back as the eye can see."* Just as there must have been a primordial potentiality for life in the primary particles, there must also have been a potentiality for consciousness, in order for it to emerge later. For the purposes of his study, Teilhard proposes the idea of two forms of energy in evolution: physical, called *tangential*, and psychic, called, *radial.* Tangential energy links the element with others of the same order, while radial energy draws the element "toward greater complexity and centricity." The evolution of matter and spirit are two parts of a single process. Thus, human consciousness is not a random evolutionary event, but is the defining emergent quality of matter itself.[87]

In this epic of earth creation, Teilhard marks two pivotal events: the development of living forms and the rise of reflective consciousness when "Life…becomes Life Squared!" He writes that if we could measure psychic radiation as much as light or heat, "the primary characteristic of our planet certainly would not seem to be how blue it is with seas or green with forests—but how phosphorescent with thought." (*HP*, 124). With the spread of human thought and technologies over the earth, humans have become "co-collaborators in creation"—they impact the future of species and ecosystems.

Teilhard applies the functioning of systems to the concept of the *noosphere*, and to the idea of a supreme collectivity of "consciousnesses." The spherical planet on which we live forces us to coalesce; the nature of our thinking souls is working toward an "energetic concentration of consciousnesses." […]—a "network […] around the surface of the earth" (*HP*, 170-171). Evolution is now taking place in the *noosphere*, a sphere of human consciousness networking above the biosphere. Teilhard says "a thinking layer is developing and intertwining its fibers over its whole expanse, not to blend or neutralize them, but to reinforce them in the unity of a single

[87] John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker "Introduction" in *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth*, Ed.s Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 5.

tissue." This leads to more complexity and more consciousness. Matter and the tangential energy involved with it follow the second law of thermodynamics, dissipating with entropy, but significantly, radial energy and the growth and development of consciousness do not.[88] The increase in radial energy, the energy of consciousness, led Teilhard to suggest that consciousness is the goal of evolution. Teilhard insists that the union and convergence into a higher consciousness will not be for an elite group or a particular race, but for all of humanity, "where all can rejoin and complete one another in a spiritual renewal of the earth." (*HP*, 173). Evolution is a rise toward higher consciousness and it must culminate ahead in some kind of supreme consciousness. (183).

Teilhard identifies love as the radial energy that draws entities together to create more conscious being. Love is the creative energy of the universe. Love may not have shown itself as such at the beginning of life on earth, but love, along with life and consciousness, would have to have a rudimentary existence that could manifest in love-attraction in higher life forms later on.

> "Love has always been carefully eliminated from realist and positivist concepts of the world; but sooner or later we shall have to acknowledge that it is the fundamental impulse of Life, or […] the one natural medium in which the rising course of evolution can proceed." (*FM*, 45-46).

In this context, Teilhard's understanding of love includes all three 'types' of love: *eros* as a strong longing for wholeness and expressed as sexual love; *philia* a love of mutuality, cooperation, and community; *agape* as the self-giving love, a willing of the good for the other*.*

> "[…] we need only to observe the rising confluence of consciousnesses around us to see its presence everywhere. Plato had already sensed this and given it immortal expression in his Dialogues. Later on, with thinkers like Nicolas of Cusa, medieval philosophy technically returned to the same idea. Driven by force of love, the fragments of the world are seeking one another so the world may come to be." (*HP*, 188).

After looking back at the evolution of the cosmos and the development of human consciousness, Teilhard would write: "Love is the most universal, the most tremendous, and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces…the physical structure of the universe is love." (*HE*, 72)

2.3. Sin and Redemption

After making his 'cosmic review' of the history of creation, Teilhard writes in *The Human Phenomenon* that after visualizing the evolutionary process of consciousness toward the

[88] Ilia Delio, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013), 39.

human, one might still feel doubts about the future "which is linked to the apparent incoherence of the human world at this present moment." Teilhard has been accused of being too optimistic in the face of suffering and evil. He must be read in the context of his era and his mission: The full expression of his evolutionary ontology was birthed in the trenches of World War I as he was caring for the wounded and dying on stretchers. That devastating loss of life—estimated at one million, four hundred thousand deaths of French alone—caused a widespread response of existential despair among writers, artists and philosophers of Teilhard's generation.

He personally experienced family tragedies in deaths of six of his siblings. His exile, first in China, where he spent the years of World War II under Japanese occupation, and finally in New York, was devastating. Forbidden to publish any of his theological work, he bequeathed his books, essays, and journals, to his secretary, who began to have it published in the years following his death in 1955.

Rather than denying the evil and suffering on earth, Teilhard's purpose is to incorporate a participatory Christian spirituality into the evolutionary story of the universe in light of the early Church Fathers' interpretations of creation and the Trinitarian *exitus reditus*. Teilhard is concerned that a widespread sense of hopelessness or meaninglessness in life, would bring the evolution of the human spirit to a halt.

For Teilhard, evil and sin are the reverse side—a kind of negative photographic image-- of evolution toward wholeness. A close reading of Teilhard's work reveals passages where he decries the wasteful destruction of war, pointing out that totalitarian regimes (specifically naming Communist and Nazi systems) enchain humanity and represent the evil reverse side to complexity-consciousness organized through the choice to love and unite. Teilhard sees totalitarian regimes as perversions of the rules of *noogenesis*—although they demonstrate the potential of unified human effort, they force an unnatural, distorted collectivity that fails because it recognizes neither person nor spirit. He also criticizes analytical science and modernism that does not consider the interiority and wholeness of beings.

Teilhard sees in the vast and violent disturbances of the 20th century, the 'birth pains' of a new rising consciousness of the need for world peace and mutual understanding. He describes the immensities of time and that from our limited perspective, it appears that spiritual progress is at a standstill:

> "Has it not taken half a million—perhaps even a million years for life to pass from the pre-hominids to the modern human; and shall we now despair because less than two centuries after this same modern human has glimpsed an even

> higher state above, humans are still in the process of struggling with themselves to be free? In spite of all evidence to the contrary, humanity may very well be advancing all around us—but it will be advancing as all very large things do--imperceptibly slowly." (*HP*, 180-181).

Teilhard felt that to maintain the Christian view of Christ as redeemer of the world, we must keep original sin as large as the world, not limiting it to one act in a garden. In an evolving world that is incomplete, Christ is the "active Agent, the unifying Center, of the creative and redemptive process"[89] Jesus of Nazareth models the life of the individual element in communion with the whole, whose death was for the sake of the whole. Through his resurrection and as part of all creation, he energizes and unifies, overcoming the destruction of fragmentation. Teilhard's interpretation emphasizes the constructive aspect of the redemption story: the victory over evil, while allowing for human participation in the redemption of the world.

> "Evolutionary science is […] a disturbance and a stimulus to theology because it logically requires that we think of paradise (or the 'essential') as something more than a condition to be restored or returned to after our having been exiled from it. Instead of nostalgia for a lost innocence, evolution allows a posture of genuine hope that justifies action in the world."[90]

Since God creates by unifying and making 'the multiple' more conscious, "Evil is the very expression of a state of plurality that is not yet completely organized […] Evil is not an unforeseen accident in the universe. It is an enemy; the shadow God raises by His very decision to create."[91] Teilhard distinguishes two types of evil, decomposition (sickness, suffering, and death) and sin. For Teilhard sin is a return to the multiple, a descent from a more unified state to a less unified; this is evil at the level of moral consciousness as a choice of the will away from union. "Statistically, at every stage of evolution, evil is always and everywhere implacably forming and reforming itself in and around us." (HP, 225). Despite the statistical presence of evil, Teilhard emphasizes that humans have the freedom and responsibility to choose the good.

In the context of evolution, the focus is on creation, incarnation and redemption, not on sin**.** Teilhard sees creation, incarnation and redemption as three integral parts of one single process: the unification of all things in Christ. The cross itself is not solely a symbol of redemption, but also of the terrible cost of evolution for humanity. The cross means going beyond the frontiers of the world of matter and the senses. Jesus on the cross symbolizes and is the reality of the

---

[89] Donald Gray, "The Phenomenon of Teilhard" *Theological Studies,* vol. 26, No. 1 (March 1975),33
[90] John Haught, "In Search of a God for Evolution: Paul Tillich and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin" *Zygon*, vol. 37, no.3 (September 2002), 551.
[91] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Christologie et évolution" cited in Faricy, 557.

"immense labor of the centuries which has little by little raised up the created spirit and brought it back to the depths of the divine *milieu.* […] He is creation, as upheld by God, it re-ascends the slopes of being." Teilhard writes at the end of *The Human Phenomenon: "*[…] nothing resembles the way of the Cross as much as the human epic."

> "Far too often the Cross is presented for our adoration, not so much as a sublime end to be attained by transcending ourselves, but as a symbol of sadness, of limitation, of repression. The Christian is not asked to swoon in the shadow, but to climb in the light, of the Cross." (*DM,* 73).

Christ's Incarnation is an ongoing movement that transforms the world and creates the historical reality it enters. Its final purpose is the redemption of the whole cosmos.[92]

2.4. Toward the Omega Point

Teilhard, having reviewed the developmental history of humans, now looks to the projected future, based on what has come before in his evolutionary ontology:

> "In order to grasp the truly cosmic scope of the human phenomenon, we have had to follow its roots back through life to the first of the Earth's envelopments of itself. But if we want to comprehend the specific nature of the human and divine the human secret, the only method we have is to observe what reflection has already provided and what it announces *ahead."* (*HP,* 129.)

His vision of the future is founded on humanity working in love to unite and reach toward *Omega*. Upon the maturation of humanity, in the fullness of evolutionary time, humans will reach what he calls the *Omega* Point—a maximum level of complexity and consciousness toward which the universe seems to be evolving. Christ-*Omega* will meet humanity to complete and perfect what it could not accomplish on its own. Teilhard presents a redemption that is both personal and universal as the culmination of the evolution of spirit.

Donald Gray applies Kant's three questions in his *Critique of Pure Reason,* to Teilhard's sacred ontology:

> "What can I know?" Evidence indicates that evolution has a direction and a final meaning. "What ought I to do?" We should cooperate with the development of individual and collective consciousness, unifying to care for one another. "What may I hope?" We may hope for the joy and fulfillment of *Omega*, the arrival of union with God.[93]

---

[92] David Grummet, "Teilhard de Chardin's Evolutionary Natural Theology" *Zygon,* vol. 42, no.2 (June 2007), 525.
[93] Donald Gray, "The Phenomenon of Teilhard," *Theological Studies,* Vol. 36, No. 1 (March, 1975), 23.

Teilhard's ontology offers hope in several ways. First, there is hope through the scientific fact of being at the tip of evolution's eons of effort: we are being created in the image of the supremely loving and conscious God. Second, because we are in-process-of-becoming, we should not be discouraged by the sin and evil in and around us, but instead cultivate hope in the further growth of the human spirit. One of our evolutionary tasks as humans now is *to love the not-yet.* Third, we are not alone and powerless, drawing only on human resources, but our source of energy is in God, in the Cosmic Christ, our sustaining and loving Center, who is drawing us forward from the 'Ahead' in human history and upward toward the 'Above' of higher consciousness in one evolutionary movement. Fourth, we live within the Cosmic Body of Christ in the divine milieu, where we participate in the efforts of evolution now, centering ourselves on love and union. This is very different from a 'catastrophic' apocalyptic vision, whose inexorability paralyzes humans in an attitude of fatalism for the earth and its human community; where all we can hope to do is endure. In Teilhard's ontology everything that we think and do and suffer can build toward deeper human understanding of one another and God, inviting the coming Pleroma as we mature spiritually.

Hope is the most essential factor in Teilhard's thinking—necessary to inspire human action and creativity. Responding to the 'critical minds' of his era, who no longer believed in the future or the possibility of human improvement, he wrote:

> "They seem to believe that although it were deprived of light, hope, and the attraction of an inexhaustible future, the cycle of life would continue peacefully on. That is just where they are wrong. Perhaps the flowers and fruit would continue out of habit for a few years longer. But the trunk would be cut cleanly and truly from its roots. Even on stacks of material energy, even under the spur of immediate fear or desire, without *the zest for life* humankind would soon stop inventing and creating for a work it knew to be doomed in advance. […] If progress is just a myth; that is, if faced with our work we could say, "What's the use?" our effort will collapse, dragging all evolution down with it, *because we are evolution.*" (*HP,* 162).

Although evolution seems to have slowed or stopped in the human morphologically around the time that higher consciousness emerged, it is now happening at the global, collective level of inter-relationship. *Evolution is now going on in the noosphere*, the integrating network of thought that humanity is building as a communication sphere of mind-spirit. Teilhard explains his concept:

> "It is the appearance of a collective memory of the accumulated experience of mankind passed on through education. It is the development of a generalized 'nervous system' through increasing rapid transmission of thought, emanating

> from certain defined centers and covering the entire surface of the globe. It is the emergence, through interaction and ever-increasing concentration of individual viewpoints, of a faculty of common vision." (*FM*, 125.)

This ongoing evolution of unified thought is of a different quality than evolution before: it is largely human-directed and it involves education. It relies on global communication, transportation—the rapid exchange of information: ideas, knowledge, history, cultures, --as well as resources, material goods—and understanding. Today, the Internet can be seen as Teilhard's 'generalized nervous system.' It is important to distinguish the Internet from the *noosphere*, which is the shared thought and spirit of humanity, some of which is stored and shared through the Internet. The Internet demonstrates a growing awareness of the power of communal thought. Humanity may still lack a common vision, but how much easier is it today, than when Teilhard wrote, to understand that "All around us, tangibly and materially, the thinking envelope of the earth –the noosphere –is adding to its internal fibers and tightening its network"? (*FM*, 125). Teilhard felt that computers would enhance the retrieval and processing of information—but he also saw that technology could enhance spiritual energy through the convergence of the human collective mind-spirit.

While Teilhard was thrilled with technological innovation, he also saw its dangers. Recognizing the fast-growing gulf between technical and ethical progress, he calls for a "moral ordering of invention."

> "The ethical principles which hitherto we have regarded as an appendage, superimposed more or less by our own free will upon the laws of biology, are now showing themselves—not metaphorically but literally—to be a condition of *survival* for the human race." (*FM*, 200).

The theological task now is to promote the development and application of ethics, calling people to consider the deeper purpose and meaning of technology and its relationship to the human future. Teilhard's vision of the eventual end of earth evolution is that of a peaceful convergence, but he leaves open the possibility that "evil, increasing at the same time as good, will reach its paroxysm in the end, and it, too, in a specifically new form." (*HP,* 206).

Teilhard sees humanity moving toward what he calls a *hyperpersonalization*. He finds that each consciousness has the property of partially centering everything around itself; of always being able to center further on itself; by this *supercentration*, of being led to join with all the centers surrounding it. Teilhard sees each human experiencing parts of the universe through the interplay of our senses and our reason. We are "gathering up the universe" at each moment. Through our communications and interactions, we cooperate and participate in a "human

weltanshauung." "Are we not experiencing the first symptoms of an assembling of an even higher order, the birth of some kind of unique focal point from the converging fires of millions of elementary focal points scattered over the surface of the thinking Earth?" *(HP,* 184).

It will not succeed unless it is motivated by love. Humans are being drawn to converge—through physical compression of limited earth territory and growing population, as well as through attraction, the love-energy that unites disparate fragments. This Center of convergence must be personal, must be an "*Ego* at the summit of the world, for the consummation, without confounding them, of all the elemental *egos* of Earth." Teilhard continues, "Was it not Camus who wrote in *Sisyphe*, 'If Humanity found that the Universe could love he would be reconciled'?" (*FM*, 288). *To love the entire universe* is psychologically possible, Teilhard says, and it is the only and complete way in which we can love. But the universe must be personalized. "Let the universe take on, ahead of us, a face and a heart—become personified for us and then in the atmosphere created by this focal point the elementary attractions will unfold." (*HP*, 190).

Omega functions to "initiate and maintain the unanimity of the world's reflective particles under its radiation. How could it carry out this action if it were not somehow already loving and loveable, right here and now?" (*HP*, 191). To be supremely attractive, *Omega* must be already supremely present. "Omega in its ultimate principle *can only be a distinct Center radiating at the core of a system of centers."* (*HP*, 186). *Omega* has four attributes, according to Teihard: "autonomy, actuality, irreversibility, and finally, therefore, transcendence." (*HP*, 193). In death, the radial energy escapes the tangential and is freed from it. There is an escape from entropy by a sudden reversal toward *Omega*. In order to function, *Omega* must be independent from entropy. *Omega* is thus both inside and outside the process of evolution.

Teilhard's radical discovery is that, contrary to the way things appear, total stability lies in the spiritual, in what he calls the *ultrasynthetic,* rather than in solid matter. This is why an important task for humans is to love the invisible. Christ redeems the world in a transformation from material life to nonmaterial, transcending the forces of decay and death on matter. Teilhard draws on the cosmology of Irenaeus to posit that the *Omega* point will occur when humanity's faith in Christ extends beyond faith in itself; at that moment in time, faith and the human spirit will be consummated.[94] Omega emerges from the rise of 'consciousnesses' and it simultaneously has *already* emerged. (*HP*, 193).

[94] David Grummet, "Teilhard de Chardin's Evolutionary Natural Theology" in *Zygon,* vol. 42, no.2 (June 2007), 527.

2.5. The Divine Milieu, the Cosmic Christ

Teilhard wrote his first book, widely considered to be his spiritual masterpiece, *Le Milieu Divin, (The Divine Milieu)* in 1926 and 1927 in Tianjin. He introduces it as an essay on his own inner life and vision of Christ, to demonstrate the possibility of living as a Christian in a way that satisfies both the intellect and the spirit—a reconciliation of secular and spiritual life. He continues the theme of the Cosmic Christ that had been developing in his vision of the Eucharist. He explains his belief that there is "a certain co-extension of Christ with the Universe," and that "meritorious action can be performed with the consciousness of acting in union with the whole universe." (*HM,* 201). The title in French is *Le Milieu Divin*. Translators chose to keep the word, *milieu,* because it expresses more than an environment; it is also a center, a *mi-lieu*. David Grummet describes the divine milieu as "literally a middle space of perception existing between the universe and God."[95] This can be seen as the space for Christ Incarnate.

Incarnation

Teilhard views Christianity as the religion of the Incarnation. "The Word was made flesh" leads him to reflect on the relationship between matter and spirit, stating, "Christ, *through his Incarnation*, is interior to the world, rooted in the world, even in the heart of the tiniest atom."[96] Teilhard identifies his ontology as based on a Scotist view of the Incarnation. He recognizes that nature and God can only be bridged by the action of Christ. Incarnation was from the beginning, a revelation of God, not contingent upon the Fall. Incarnation is necessary "to perform the functions of gathering and uniting the created order." (*AE,* 150). Teilhard sees the Incarnation as the renewal and restoration of the created universe and he speaks of the "sense of mutual completion of God and the world that makes Christianity live." He contrasts his theology of physical or embodied reality with a juridical interpretation of Christ, like that of Augustine's in *The City of God.* Here, Teilhard critiques the image of God's relationship to humanity as a conventional ruler, a governor. For the same reason, Teilhard criticized the vineyard parables that "present God as an absentee landowner, administering his estates."[97] Teilhard was concerned that these images lead to theologies of reparation and atonement and limit a conception of Christ Immanent, active in the world. In contrast to the juridical viewpoint, in *The*

[95] David Grummet, *Teilhard de Chardin: Theology, Humanity, and Cosmos* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2005), 9. Grummet notes that Teilhard, like Aquinas, seeks to understand creation through God, and sees that science and philosophy are "one enterprise."
[96] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Science and Christ'' (1921), 36. Cited in Grummet, 119.
[97] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, ''Sketch of a Personalistic Universe, *''HE,* 91. Cited in Grummet, 112.

Divine Milieu, he presents an embodied ontology of the Incarnate Christ," [who] immerses himself in the waters of the Jordan, symbol of the forces of the earth. These he sanctifies. And, as he emerges, in the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, with the water which runs off his back, he elevates the whole world." (*DM*, 80).

Trinity

Using the concept of the Trinity as God-in-relationship and active, Teilhard develops the idea of 'creative union.' Being always derives from union in Teilhard's ontology. In a rare reference to the Trinity, he comments on the aspect of its "oneness": "If the concept of the Trinity is properly understood, it can only strengthen our idea of divine oneness, by giving it the structure […] which is the mark of all real living unity, in our experience."[98]

Although he uses the Trinity as a model of perichoresis, the deepest structure-in-motion of unity, Teilhard's ontology is highly Christocentric. In a very concrete way, "for God as well as for us, creation is creation in Christ." God is therefore present and active in all that he has created. The resurrected Christ is the Pleroma, the fullness of God and of the creation. The expressions "Universal Christ," "Total Christ," and "Cosmic Christ" used by Teilhard refer to Jesus of Nazareth, resurrected, co-extensive with all of time and space, in the function of *Omega*, the focal point of evolution. This function is to unite humanity and the universe with Himself through his power of creation and redemption. In order to analyze any aspect of Teilhard's theology, this concept of Christ Immanent and Transcendent, who "holds all things together" and in whom we live and move and have our being, is essential.

Cosmic Christ

For Teilhard, Christ is the answer to the question, "What is it that holds matter and spirit together so that action and experience become possible?" Christ is that external, unifying power, originating outside of the universe and operating within it. Teilhard's ontology of substance was influenced by Blondel's writing on Leibniz' discussion of Eucharistic consecration.[99] In considering the transubstantiation of the host, Leibniz theorized a bond that he called the *vinculum substantiale*. This *vinculum* functions to create and preserve all substances. Blondel argues that the *vinculum substantiale* is part of the Incarnation, whose action extends beyond eucharistic transubstantiation, uniting the body with the soul. Teilhard identifies Christ with the *vinculum substantiale*, writing in *The Divine Milieu*,

[98] CE, 157-158. Cited in Grummet, (2005), 130. Grummet notes that in Teilhard's time (1919) immanentist Trinitarian theology was not current.
[99] Grummet, (2005), 108.

> "What is the supreme and complex reality for which the divine operation molds us? It is revealed to us by St. Paul and St. John. It is the quantitative repletion and the qualitative consummation of all things: It is the mysterious Pleroma, in which the substantial *one* and the created *many* fuse without confusion in a *whole* which, without adding anything essential to God, will nevertheless be a sort of triumph and generalisation of being." (*DM*, 95).

Teilhard described his perceptions of Cosmic Christ in a vivid, symbolic way in a short fictional story he wrote just before the battle of Douaumont, in 1916, under the heading, *Christ in the World of Matter.* In "The Picture," a soldier had been preoccupied with the philosophical problem of Christ in the world today. He recounts a mystical experience that happened as he entered a church to pray:

> "[…] my gaze had come to rest without conscious intention on a picture representing Christ, offering his heart to men […] I began to ask myself how an artist could contrive to represent the holy humanity of Jesus without imposing on his body a fixity, a too precise definition, which would seem to isolate him from all other men, and without giving to his face a too individual expression so that, while being beautiful, its beauty would be of a particular kind, excluding other kinds."
>
> "As I allowed my gaze to wander over the figure's outlines, I suddenly became aware that these were melting away: they were dissolving […] It was as though the planes which marked off the figure of Christ from the world surrounding it were melting into a single vibrant surface whereon all demarcations vanished." […]
>
> "First of all, I perceived that the vibrant atmosphere which surrounded Christ like an aureole was no longer confined to a narrow space about him but radiated outwards to infinity. Through this there passed from time to time what seemed like trails of phosphorescence, indicating a continuous gushing-forth to the outermost spheres of the realm of matter and delineating a sort of blood stream or nervous system running through the totality of life."
>
> "*The entire universe was vibrant!* And yet, when I directed my gaze to particular objects, one by one, I found them still as clearly defined as ever in their undiminished individuality. All this movement seemed to emanate from Christ, and above all, from his heart." (*HU*, 43-44).

Teilhard chooses words like *fixed, isolated*, *particular, excluding*, *marked off*, and *confined* to represent a too narrowly-interpreted historical Jesus. Teilhard synthesizes the Antiochene and Alexandrian emphases on the identity of Christ.[100] Jesus, born of Mary is the mystical, universal Christ of Paul, as Teilhard insists: "We never depart from the Jesus of the Gospels. On the contrary, we feel a growing need to enfold ourselves ever more firmly within his human truth." (*DM*, 78-79). This same historical Jesus, resurrected, and now the eternal Cosmic Christ, is developed here in motion and color, as *a living system*, *a kind of blood stream*, or *nervous*

[100] Ibid., 123.

system, a *single vibrant surface*, *infinite, radiating, phosphorescent*. The very specific portrait becomes inclusive of the immanence of God's love in everything, as a sacred network of relationality that permeates the universe and allows for undiminished individuality.

Eucharist

The Eucharist is the clearest expression of the totality of Teilhard's ontology. Teilhard describes his "Mass on the World" as an *extended sense* of the Eucharist, and wrote of an *extended sense* of the priesthood, that "each Christian has a sacred priestly vocation."[101] Our lives, our growth, our activities, and all the suffering we experience, up to and including death—form an ongoing communion with God. Later, he would write,

> "In our hands, in the hands of all of us, the world and life (*our world, our life*) are placed like a Host, ready to be charged with the divine influence, that is to say with a real presence of the Incarnate Word." (*DM,* 111)

In the *Offering* part of "The Mass on the World" Teilhard writes:

> "Over there, on the horizon, the sun has just touched with light the outermost fringe of the eastern sky. Once again, beneath this moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and trembles, and once again begins its fearful travail. I will place on my paten, O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labor. Into my chalice I shall pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from the earth's fruits. My paten and chalice are the depths of a soul laid widely open to all the forces which in a moment will rise up from every corner of the earth and converge upon the Spirit. Grant me the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to the new day." (*HU*, 19-20).

In Teilhard's prayer of consecration, he sees the action of Christ's body in all human works toward growth. In all of human suffering, diminishment, and death, he sees the blood of Christ. The eucharist for Teilhard encompasses the two great themes of evolutionary existence: the growth and development of life evolving—and entropy, the counter-force of material decomposition and death. "The Mass" is a poetic, mystical expression of human communion with God through the Cosmic Christ, whose body comprises matter and spirit. A phrase that echoes throughout Teilhard's work is from the Latin Mass, *Hoc est corpus meum,* This is My Body:

> "Over every living thing which is to spring up, to grow, to flower, to ripen during this day, say again the words: This is my Body. And over every death-force which waits in readiness to corrode, to wither, to cut down, speak again your

[101] Thomas King, *Teilhard's Mass: Approaches to "Mass on the World"* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), x-xi.

> commanding words which express the supreme mystery of faith: This is my Blood." ("The Mass on the World" *HU*, 22-23).

Teilhard speaks of one communion, ongoing from the moment of creation throughout the universe. The sacramental Species are *formed by the totality of the world* and *the duration of the world is the time needed for its consecration*. (*DM*, 149). The transformation of matter takes place through a change in the strength and appearance of the bond of substance. The eucharist also transforms human vision, allowing the communicant to *see* Christ in the world. The world around the communicant takes on a sacramental quality.[102]

Throughout "The Mass on the World" and in much of his opus, Teilhard uses fire imagery for the Holy Spirit. In *Communion*, he shifts perspective, presenting a different point of view of eucharistic participation, remembering that it is God who seeks us, God who prays through and works through our lives, an idea which is central to Teilhard's thinking on human action and union.

> "If the Fire has come down into the heart of the world it is, […], to lay hold on me and to absorb me. Henceforth I cannot be content simply to contemplate it or by my faith intensify its ardency more and more in the world around me. What I must do […] is to consent to the *communion which will enable it to find in me the food it has come to seek."* (*HU*, 29) (My emphasis)

The motivation that draws humanity into love, union and God, comes from God. In this sense, God *communes with humanity* through matter and acts in the world through humanity.

2.6. Action and Union

Action

Teilhard frames the evolutionary movement of creation as a genesis and a building up of conscious unity in Christ, using the term *Christogenesis.* We live and participate in this divine milieu like cells in the Body of Christ. What we do and what we undergo can become cooperation with God's creative action in the building of consciousness toward the Pleroma. In *The Divine Milieu* Teilhard introduces a syllogism to describe this concept:

> "At the heart of our universe, each soul exists for God, in our Lord. But all reality, even material reality, around each one of us, exists for our souls. Hence, all sensible reality, around each one of us, exists through our souls, for God in our Lord." (*DM*, 19).

[102] Grummet, (2005), 136.

This is a radical vision for material science—that in the unseen, interior world of mind-spirit, our reality is taken up to God and endures. In the universe, every movement of material growth is ultimately in the direction of spirit, and every movement of spiritual growth is ultimately for Christ. In Teilhard's ontology, human activity shares in God's creative action. "For Teilhard, the criterion of truth for any understanding or theory of creation is precisely this: to what extent does the theory give us a *meaningful vision of creation and at the same time somehow activate us?"* (Emphasis mine)[103] In *The Divine Milieu,* he writes about the value of 'being' in Christ and of the "divinization" of human actions and passion. He believes that all effort toward personal growth and human progress can be used toward the development of the Body of Christ. "In the divine milieu the totality of human actions, even apparently insignificant ones can be sanctified."[104]

> Human action, according to Teilhard, contributes something permanent to the fulfillment of Christ. "[…] He awaits us every instant in our action, in the work of the moment. There is a sense in which he is at the tip of my pen, my spade, my brush, my needle—of my heart and of my thought." (*DM* 28).

For Teilhard, matter is the means by which the soul ascends to God; the soul provides matter with its organizing principle. Similar to Bonaventure in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Teilhard visualizes the soul as the first rung on matter's ascent. He places human action at the heart of his theology. Although Teilhard was inspired by Blondel's theory of action, he departs from Blondel's idea of voluntarism, whereby the human and divine wills are merged. Teilhard's theology of action retains the agency of the individual soul.

Teilhard divides human life into two categories for the purpose of analysis: activities, (actions) the things we do, and passivities, (passions) or life situations that we undergo or do not actively choose—and this includes suffering. All that humans experience and all that they do are a combination of activities and passivities, of growth or diminishment. Immense and complex systems of biological interactions, of inheritance and experiences impact human beings. In turn, human action and passion impact spheres of interconnections radiating outward from their individual selves. Centering our fully experienced, unique lives on God, with our activities and passivities, we are united through spirit to Christ's Body and these are divinized. All human work—not only work in religious communities or in the clergy--becomes sanctified.

---

[103] Robert Faricy, "Teilhard de Chardin on Creation and the Christian Life" in *Theology Today* 23, no. 4 (Jan. 1967): 505-520, 508.
[104] Louis M. Savary, *The Divine Milieu Explained: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 40.

Union

Extending the idea of Christ as the bond, Teilhard, through a scientific analogy, explains how the transcendent and immanent God links units of created matter to one another and to himself. When individual particles attract, connect, and create something more complex, it is because their union enhances the unique qualities of each component. Rather than absorbing each one, union *super-personalizes* its members. Teilhard applies the concept of differentiating union to the human social group:

> "Whatever the domain—whether it be the cells of the body, the members of society, or the elements of a spiritual synthesis--*"union differentiates."* In every organized whole the parts perfect and fulfill themselves. By failing to grasp this universal law of union, so many kinds of pantheism have led us astray in the worship of a great Whole in which individuals were supposed to become lost like a drop of water, dissolved like a grain of salt, in the sea. If we apply it to the sum total of consciousnesses, the law of union frees us from this dangerous and ever-recurring illusion. No, in confluence along the line of their centers, the grains of consciousness do not tend to lose their contours and blend together. On the contrary, they accentuate the depths and incommunicability of their *ego. The more together, they become the other, the more they become 'themselves.'* How could it be otherwise since they plunge into *Omega*? Can a center dissolve? Or rather is not its own way of dissolving precisely to supercenter itself?" (*HP*, 186) (Empahsis mine)

Transcendent and Immanent, Christ the Incarnate cannot be separated from discussions of eucharist, human action and suffering, or creative union. It is one completely interwoven story of God creating *ab ante*, as Teilhard liked to say, from 'up ahead,' drawing creation into spirit, into the future and into the ultimate union. Teilhard's sacred ontology of creative union has profound implications for individual identity, for purpose, motivation, and for belonging in a 21st century world beset by problems and seeking spirituality. He restores a vision of beauty and holiness, not just to natural creation, but to humanity, in its flawed and fragmented attempts to construct its home. His metanarrative demonstrates humans evolving into the image of a conscious, loving, God for the purpose of developing consciousness and connection in a converging world. Through his organic Christian theology, Teilhard opens the revelation of God to all people-- and offers the insight that their love and everyday actions can build the divine milieu.

Chapter Three: Teilhard and the Search for Meaning in Quebec

3.1. L'Heureux naufrage

How might Teilhard's ontology speak to a specific culture of spiritual seeking in Quebec? The doorway to this exploration is the 2014 documentary*, L'Heureux naufrage*, an expression of contemporary spiritual questioning in Quebec*.* The interviews in the film demonstrate how the powerful historical presence of the Catholic Church influences attitudes about religion and identity today. Following analysis of the documentary, I will briefly sketch the history of religion in Quebec, limiting my focus to the exodus of participation in the Catholic Church. I argue that Teilhard's *ressourcement* thinking connects to movements in 20th century Quebec which ultimately led to the Quiet Revolution. An examination of the Quiet Revolution is necessary to understand the problematization of religion in Quebec and the aspirations of its people in the 1960s. These aspirations included social, economic, and educational reforms, along with the protection of the majority French linguistic identity. Recent historical research reveals the roots of this *Révolution tranquille* in Quebec's Catholic Action movements.

In this chapter, I will present Teilhard's ontology as both intersecting with Catholic Action viewpoints and offering a possible model for the practice of contextual 'liberation' theology in Quebec today. Teilhard's ontology with its concepts of evolving faith, 'building the world' and the future contributes a transcendent Christian perspective to theologies of liberation. Teilhard's work on union and action helped inspire the development of *la Francophonie*, a network of French-speaking countries, promoting the diverse cultural expressions of former French colonies, that linked Quebec's thinkers in the early 1960s to those in emerging African and Caribbean nations. Teilhard's confidence in humanity's future rests on what he calls, *le goût de vivre*—the taste for life-- that is a recurring theme of his work and one of the socially distinctive identity markers of Quebec culture. Expanding on these themes, my goal is to demonstrate that Teilhard's sacred ontology of love, union, and action is an important part of a line of development of Christian thought in Quebec. Beyond the filling of a spiritual void, Teilhard's concepts of creative union and the divinization of action can be used to address issues of secularism, identity, and the practice of contextual theology in 21st century Quebec.

L'Heureux naufrage : l'ère du vide d'une société post-chrétienne was released on September 12, 2014 in Montreal. I attended a workshop on the film while it was in production and was present at the initial screening at the Église St-Jean Baptiste in the Plateau-Mont Royal, which was filled to capacity for that event. I have studied the 47-minute documentary on DVD as well

as the seven-hour-long, Special Edition film containing the full interviews with thirty of the speakers in the film. My analysis is based on those interviews as well as on the biographies of each of the speakers, available on the film's website.

Guillaume Tremblay, 32 years old, directs the film and his wife, Xavie Jean-Bourgeault, is the producer. This project developed from their interest in seeking meaning, in addressing an emptiness that they themselves experienced, and in creating a space for reflecting on existential questions. In Quebec, these questions were largely avoided in the media for many years. Only in 2007, with the establishment of the Bouchard-Taylor commission on reasonable accommodation, did the subject of religion rise to the surface. *L'Heureux naufrage* was released at a time when religious discussion was again at the forefront in Quebec, as the Parti Québécois proposed Bill 60, the Quebec Charter of Values.

"Even if dogmas 'exasperate' director Tremblay and fundamentalists 'scare' him, he believes that whether we like it or not, in Quebec there is something essentially Christian in our ways of being, as individuals and as a society."[105] With a goal of stimulating reflection and helping the Québécois reconcile with their past, the husband-wife team interviewed leading thinkers in Quebec as well as several French philosophers who are influential in Quebec. Tremblay's own quest for meaning is echoed in the reflection of artists and intellectuals whom he admires: filmmakers Bernard Émond and Denys Arcand; philosophers André Conte-Sponville, Eric-Emanuel Schmitt, and Jean-Claude Guillebaud. Whether agnostic or believing, each expresses a need for the Absolute, similar to that which inspired Tremblay to make the film.

Guillaume Tremblay was born in Lac Saint-Jean and feels that many of his generation share a sense of the lack of meaning in life:

> "*Comme tant d'autres, je me distance de plus en plus de cette société d'abondance, de prêt-à-porter, et d'instantanéité. Autour de moi, je constate un vide profond, derrière les apparences du bonheur et de l'amour. Malgré toutes les possibilités et ma grande liberté, quelque chose me manque. Je le sens et* ***beaucoup*** *de gens de ma génération vivent la même chose*. »[106]

[105] "L'Heureux naufrage : l'ère du vide d'une société chrétienne," accessed 22 February 2018, www. heureuxnaufrage.com/en/the project.
[106] « L'Heureux naufrage, » accessed 23 February 2018, www. heureuxnaufrage.com/fr/demarche-réalisateur. "Like many others, I distance myself more and more from this society of abundance, of carry out, of instant speed. I'm aware of a deep emptiness around me, behind the appearances of happiness and love. In spite of all the possibilities and my great freedom, I am missing something. I feel it, and **many** of my generation live this also." (my translation.)

When asked about the film's paradoxical title, "*Fortunate Shipwreck*", the director says that it describes his personal experience. He himself lived through a painful period of feeling shipwrecked. In the process of creating the documentary, he connected with others who were questioning. In the end, this *naufrage* is what led him to rediscover spiritual meaning, so he sees it as a happy, or fortunate experience.[107]

Tremblay works almost like an archeologist, sifting through pieces of Quebec's rejected Catholic past, searching for core truths that can help people to live today, not only as individuals, but as a society. This searching, finding, and building are conveyed through the film's animations by Richard Vallerand, animations that weave between the interviews, giving the viewer a non-verbal space for reflection. The animated segments begin with wind blowing, leaves swirling, and a little boy and his parents entering a church to the sound of ringing bells. The child daydreams, looking out the window, and then his eyes and face mature and a young man is shown, head in hands, sadly pensive. The story continues as the young man enters the desolate, empty church. He finds himself in a space of ruins, of bits of candlesticks, statues, and altars. Using these, he begins to build a structure.

L'Heureux naufrage does not hesitate to address the issues that drove many away from the Church of the past. The film is interlaced with historical black and white clips from news films as well as music videos. It makes the bold, if oversimplified, statement that "In 1960, after 100 years of serious abuse committed by the Church, Quebec society abandons *en masse* the ship of Christianity." *L'Heureux naufrage* is careful not to prescribe a particular solution; one of Tremblay's goals was to open a gentle dialogue between believers and atheists who explore the same questions about meaning, spirituality, and God. The film moves from a discussion of the spiritual void in contemporary secular society to the second part, in which the interviewees contribute thoughts on addressing the emptiness. A variety of points of view are offered: agnostic, believing, Christian, each with a common interest in cultivating the integration of spirituality into life. Many of them speak of the importance of values inherited from the Christian religion—for the individual, the community, and the world. The film ends quietly, and as the generics roll past, a voice sings, "*C'est dans l'obscurité que la lumière est belle*."

The husband-wife team invested all of their own savings into making the film. They were pleased by generous crowd-funding for the project as well as by the enthusiastic response to

[107] Clément Farly, « Guillaume Tremblay et Xavie Jean-Bourgeault : L'heureux naufrage, » accessed 23 February 2018, www. cheminsdevie.ca/guillaume-tremblay-et-xavie-jean-bourgeault-lheureux-naufrage/.

the film itself. Each time they present the documentary, Tremblay and Jean-Bourgeault open the floor afterward, for discussion and questions. People are often visibly touched and many affirm the relevance of this subject in Quebec.[108] The documentary is available for order as a DVD on the website; a kit with twelve thematic capsules to facilitate group discussions can be ordered as well. In addition to being aired on television on several programs in Quebec and Canada, Tremblay and Jean-Bourgeault have personally shown the film throughout Quebec and in Europe.

A Distinctive Void

The interviews in *L'Heureux naufrage* focus on several themes: the sense of a void in life, the challenges of life in a postmodern secular world of globalization, high speed technology and materialism; the importance of values, especially collective, unifying values, and the question of God. Many of the speakers discuss a kind of deep emptiness--a sense of something missing. The sense of a spiritual void is common to many secular postmodern cultures, but in Quebec the void often carries a nuance of "loss" of something experienced in the past. Filmmaker Denys Arcand says the sense of emptiness is a Western phenomenon, not just Québécois, "but with characteristics that are different in Quebec."[109] Singer-songwriter, Stéphane Archambault notes that Québécois are now starting to talk about the emptiness. "At a certain moment, one has to take one's emptiness in hand—and I find that idea beautiful: *taking one's emptiness in hand*."[110] He is a co-founder of the popular group, *Mes Aïeux*, and wrote the best-selling song, "Dégénérations" which explores shifting values in Quebec over the past three generations. In the film interview, Archambault elaborates:

> « *Le Québec a longtemps été chapeauté de très près par la religion. On nous disait ce qui était bien, ce qui était mal, ce qu'il fallait faire, ce qu'il ne fallait pas faire et du jour au lendemain on a été abandonné [sic] Cet abandon-là fait qu'on a quelque part arrêté de chercher. […] C'est-à-dire qu'il y a tellement de vide autour qu'on s'est concentré sur autre chose et on a arrêté de regarder notre vide dans les yeux.* »[111]

[108] Ibid.
[109] *L'Heureux naufrage : l'ère du vide d'une société post-chrétienne*, directed by Guillaume Tremblay (Ovizion), 2014.
[110] Ibid. In quoting from the film, I will use the English subtitle translations. In quoting from the special edition interviews, I will translate from the French and note this.
[111] Ibid. "For a long time, Quebec was tightly controlled by religion. We were told what was good, what was bad, what we must do, what we must not do, and overnight we abandoned this. That abandonment brought a halt to searching […] That is to say, there is a great emptiness surrounding us, that we've concentrated on other things and have stopped looking our void in the eyes." (my translation.)

Stéphane Laporte, a journalist, asks, « *Comment trouver un sens à notre existence ? […] Il y a un GPS en tous ; je pense que les Québécois sont en train de chercher* ».[112] Several in the film use the French expression for "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" to describe the widespread rejection of the Church, which for many included all forms of its spirituality. Journalist and political commentator Denise Bombardier sees this as a result of frustration with a religion "that was full of religiosity, of the pressure to conform, of absurd, even stupid, rules. […] By rejecting our religion, we French Canadians, meaning both Canadian and French, lost half of our identity."[113]

Songwriter Jonathan Painchaud's music video, *Pousse-pousse,* is featured near the beginning of the film, showing how people try to fill the void by working out, by joking or distracting themselves. « *Tout le monde le sent ; il y a quelque chose qui cloche* », he says. Singer Mario Pelchat comments, « *Réussir dans la vie n'est pas la même chose que réussir la vie. Tout le monde est en quête d'amour, de paix, de vrai* ».[114] Pierre Maisonneuve, journalist with Radio Canada for 40 years, describes the void as silence, and remarks that the entire population is orphaned, and "*on est orpheline de piste*".[115]

Psychologist Guy Corneau describes the start of the quest for meaning: "*C'est parce qu'on boite qu'on cherche un équilibre.*" [116] Engraver, sculptor, and painter, René Derouin claims that the 1948 artists' manifesto, *Le Refus Global,*[117] which 'denounced religion and responsibility', was a rejection of practically the totality of who the Québécois are as a people. He compares the spiritual void to his rural Quebec countryside in the winter: There is an uninhabited solitude, but solitude is a space for creativity.

---

[112] Ibid. "How to find meaning in our existence? There's a GPS in everyone; I think that the Québécois are in the process of searching." (my translation.)
[113] Denise Bombardier, *Le Soleil*, 23 March 2004, cited in L'Heureux naufrage, accessed 22 February 2018, www.Heureuxnaufrage.com/en/the project.
[114] Guillaume Tremblay, *L'Heureux naufrage*, 2014. Painchaud: « Everyone feels it; something isn't right." Pelchat: "To succeed [financially] in life isn't the same as having a successful life. Everyone is on a quest for love, for peace, for truth." (my translation.)
[115] Ibid. Maisonneuve: "path-less orphans" (my translation.)
[116] Ibid. Corneau: "Because we're limping, we're trying to regain balance. One has the impression that something is missing […] A questioning begins; one seeks the fulness of humanity, a deep connection with the universe. To become conscious that one has this emptiness—that's a 'fortunate shipwreck.' Finally, one has this space of questioning that becomes a space for re-creating. Humans are seekers of meaning, of relationship and this is at the root meaning of the word religion." (my translation.)
[117] See documentary by Manon Barbeau, *Les enfants du Refus global,* (Office National du Film, 1998.) Manon and her brother were among a group of children of the signers of the manifesto who were abandoned in the name of 'freedom' for their artist parents.

Rose Dufour, an anthropologist and founder of *Maison de Marthe*, feels that there is a crisis today: a loss of deep contact with self and with others. “In the Quiet Revolution, she says, we lost spirituality, religion, and morals because we never made a distinction between the institutional Church and these aspects of faith.” She doesn’t like the film’s title; in her view, a shipwreck is never happy, and she remembers the pain of losing her faith. “*C’était tellement douloureux. Je suis toujours en quête de quelque chose. C’est la condition humaine.* »[118]

Alain Crevier is a journalist and animator of the Radio-Canada television program *Second regard*, which examines spirituality and religious issues. Crevier sees in Quebec the phenomenon that Charles Taylor describes as “a quest in all directions” at this time.[119] Crevier is one of the rare journalists who specializes in the religious domain in Quebec and who still dreams of a Church reformed: “*Il y a quelque chose que l’Église doit régler avec elle-même: sa façon d’aborder la modernité*.”[120]

Solange Lefevbre, anthropologist, professor at l’Université de Montréal, and theologian, describes the distinctiveness of the spiritual void in Quebec, a void that is sometimes experienced as a kind of nostalgia. “The Québécois have a complicated relationship with the Catholic Church. There was a “*utopie chrétienne*” here up until the second world war. We have an ambivalence about the Catholic Church. One cannot characterize the history of Quebec as a story of complete rejection of it.” She points to the fact that even after the Quiet Revolution, most parents opted for a confessional education for their children. “They seemed to be saying, YES to the transmission of Christian values, but NO to an overreaching authoritarian Church. We have a troubled religious memory here, for valid reasons or for fictitious ones. Our relationship to the Church has been a mixture of criticism, of rupture, and of adherence.”[121] Several speakers in the film mention feeling a need to ‘reconcile’ with their religious heritage. The verb *reconcilier* seems to indicate the desire to forgive past institutional wrongs in order to find some core tenets of the Christian faith that enrich and give meaning to life today. Reconciliation would involve looking more deeply into history to see that the Church itself was

---

[118] Guillaume Tremblay, *L’Heureux naufrage*, 2014. Dufour: “It was so painful. I am still in search of something. It’s the human condition.” (my translation.)
[119] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 299. Crevier’s ‘search in all directions’ refers to Taylor’s description of the many options for belief and unbelief today: “It’s as though the original duality, the positing of a viable humanist alternative, set in train a dynamic, something like a nova effect, spawning an ever-widening variety of moral/ spiritual options…This phase extends up to the present.”
[120] “L’Heureux naufrage,” accessed 9 February, 2017, www.heureuxnaufrage.com/participants Crevier: “There’s something the Church has to come to terms with: its way of addressing modernity.” (my translation.)
[121] Ibid.

divided and that a *ressourcement* strand of clerical thinking was already encouraging questioning and reform at the time that has been simplistically painted as "The Great Darkness."

Sacramental Ontology to Fill a Void

Teilhard called it the Divine Milieu, *seeing* the universe as a sacramental space where all of creation, nature and humanity, scientific research, philosophy, and the arts—as well as scripture, can be places of divine revelation. Cultivating this way of *seeing* responds to the need for deeper contact with self and others and an increased connection to awareness of a transcendent aspect of the universe. Bringing evolutionary science into union with the Great Tradition of the Catholic Church, Teilhard's sacred ontology could a path for restoring a sense of the sacred to the heritage of Catholic symbols and values. Is Quebec's 'shipwreck' of institutional participation actually an evolutionary step toward a deepened religious awareness and a return to meaningful Christian action in community?

An Emphasis on Values

Almost every person interviewed in the film speaks of the need for values; many express the desire for *collective* values and for *community*. The feeling of being 'unmoored' has arisen since the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Recent decades have seen the near collapse of both institutional religion in most people's lives, and of promised governmental utopias. In the global reality of the 21st century, communism has failed and neo-liberalism with its unregulated market economies and emphasis on the individual has failed to adequately address social problems. French philosopher Jean-Claude Guillebaud puts it succinctly: "We have ended up confusing what counts with what can be counted."[122] The word *valeurs* was used many times in the interviews, referring to what is valuable in life, as well as to ethics, a moral code that would bind individuals into community.

Djemila Benhabib is a journalist, feminist and political activist in Quebec who speaks about this need for a unifying moral code in *L'Heureux naufrage*. Benhabib says that people now realize that materialism can't console them; that collective values are needed. Beyond individual religious beliefs, there is a growing need for a transcendent unity that will support the collective project of humanity. Eugénie Francoeur, a journalist and philanthropist, agrees. She has taught meditation for 12 years and says "the wind is changing…Québécois are becoming more and more interested in spirituality, in *les valeurs intérieures.* They want to build something within, a state of mind with more peace, more generosity."[123]

[122] Ibid., « On a confusé ce qui compte avec ce qui se compte. »
[123] Ibid.

Anthropologist and filmmaker, Bernard Émond, cites the Sermon on the Mount as a foundation for ethics, relevant to society today and still alive among many Québécois:

> "Kindness has not been eradicated by neo-liberalism […] There are still people who will give their lives for others. There are still young people who will give up their seat to an older person on the metro. Every morning in Montreal, thousands of volunteers get up to sit beside the beds of the sick in hospitals. This gives me hope. And it still exists, despite messages urging us to consume more and more. *Ça existe encore.*"[124]

Many of the speakers in the film acknowledge that in the West, the democratic concept of human rights is derived from Christianity. Some speakers go as far as linking Christian values to Québécois identity. Guillebaud notes the Judeo-Christian origins of the western belief in individual liberty and equality of people, saying that his friends who say they are against Christianity share, nevertheless, the values that come from Christianity—values that come from ancient Greek, Jewish and Christian traditions. This moral code was central to life for the early Christians who were persecuted for going against the status quo, who lived in communities where wealth was shared and love was the rule. Critics and mystics passed the values on. Guillebaud references Paul Ricoeur, saying that we must remember the sources of our strongest values, otherwise, "like cut flowers no longer rooted, our convictions will wither."[125] Guy Durand, theologian, jurist and ethicist, remarks that Quebec has been 'globally marked' by Christianity, stating that the Church assured the survival of the Québécois and that the Quiet Revolution was accomplished by Christians. He sees the Québécois search for universal values and Christianity as the richest source for these: Faith, not just in God, but in humanity, hope, and love. "*C'est aux fidèles de prendre responsabilité. N'attends pas Dieu ; c'est à nous et il s'agit de la conscience sociale*. »[126]

Pierre Maisonneuve comments on some of the positive values in the legacy of the Catholic Church in Quebec, ways of living that have had a strong impact on its intellectuals and artists. He speaks about Gilles Vigneault, poet laureate, celebrated singer and songwriter of Quebec, who acknowledges the role of the classical Jesuit education that opened the world to him. He tells how *Jeunnesse ouvrière Catholique* and other organizations invited laypeople like him to help foster social change. Maisonneuve

---

[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid. Guy Durand: "It's up to the faithful to take responsibility. Don't wait for God; it's up to us and it's about social consciousness."

has edited a spiritual biography, *Vigneault : un pays intérieur.* In an interview that prompted Maisonneuve to write his biography, Gilles Vigneault was asked, "What is there hidden within you?" He responded, "Faith, prayer, and the sacred." Maisonneuve was struck by the response and wondered "Why must these words be hidden?"[127] Vigneault agreed to meet with him for a series of interviews that developed into the biographical book.

Writer and historian, Paul-Emile Roy thinks that the 'shame' of being a believer arises because people no longer know what it means to be Christian. "They imagine the Church in the 19th century". He says they are ignoring the work of priests like Yves Congar, French priest and a leading *ressourcement* thinker, who supported the concept of Catholic worker-priests, as well as ecumenism. A number of priests in Quebec held the same point of view. Roy notes that much of the criticism of Christianity comes from an ignorance of the difference between Christian culture and Christianity, insisting that the Christian culture is no longer in the 19th century in Quebec. He, too, cites Gilles Vigneault, who says that we only know what we love, "*on ne connaît que ce qu'on aime*." We have to find again the deeper meaning of Christianity, Roy says: "*Il faut aller vers un renouvellement de la foi*."[128]

Priest and historian, Benoît Lacroix, grew up in a remote town in Quebec, "a world of the forest, of mysteries and legends." His family was poor and he was raised near indigenous peoples. From childhood, spirituality was for him about being interested in others.

> "Love the other…I don't believe in the "Grande Noirceur" (a term that has been used to describe the 1930s to 1960 in Quebec, a term that portrays the Catholic Church as only abusive, overreaching, and politically repressive.) *For us it was the Grande Clarté—the combat for a new day dawning* […] We're too severe on our history. We tend to despise the era before the current one […] Today, I'm seeing the birth of a new society, not necessarily politically, but deeper, a return to the spiritual, a personal choice made in liberty of conscience."[129] (emphasis mine)

According to Solange Lefebvre, religious communities in Quebec who formerly managed health services, education and welfare continue to play an important role in community organizations supporting the defenseless and providing assistance to

[127] Ibid., referring to Pierre Maisonneuve, *Vigneault : un pays intérieur* (Montreal : Les Éditions Novalis, 2012)
[128] Ibid., "We have to move toward a renewal of faith." (my translation.)
[129] Ibid.

immigrants. The values they inherited are still alive. She says that the Québécois need to re-examine their Christian *patrimoine* with adult objectivity. Her thought is echoed by Derouin. In the rejection of religion, he sees a negation of the 'we'. "I want to make art that reconnects with the values of my grandfather and my great-grandfather," he says.[130] Drouin wants to rediscover community. He feels that without the continuation of values of compassion for the collectivity, we are in danger of regressing to barbarism. In our consumer society it is necessary to transmit these values, to reflect on them.

Alain Crevier thinks that many Québécois might say they are less religious today, but more spiritual, in the sense that religion gives answers to questions and that spirituality is deeply living those questions. "Christian values have left their mark here: our sense of community was given by the Church. Faith does not equal the Vatican. We have the authority to appropriate something deeper in our faith. We are the Church. I think that the Québécois are becoming more spiritual."[131]

Alexandra Pleshoyano is a professor of Theological Studies at the Université de Sherbrooke in Quebec, whose post-doctoral project analyzes religious symbols in the work of poet-singer-songwriter, Leonard Cohen. She finds the image of shipwreck a magnificent symbol for spiritual search: something broken that is being washed. On life's journey, we descend to the depths of ourselves, and then we become more open. She finds this theme in the films of Denys Arcand and Bernard Émond. *"Vivre l'éternité ici, maintenant en communauté […] Une foi qui n'est pas vécue en communauté est une foi qui va disparaître. On est fait pour être en relation, en communauté. »*[132]

Pleshoyano speaks of the need for a religious heritage in Quebec, without a complete return to the past. "What can we highlight from our heritage? What has meaning? It has to have meaning…We are more creative than we think…we can build something. I have hope."[133]

<u>Teilhard and Christian Ethics</u>

Djemila Benhabib's words seem to cry out precisely for Teilhard's ontology: "Beyond individual religious beliefs, there is a growing need for a transcendent unity that will

[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., (my translation.)
[132] Ibid., "To live eternity here, now and in community […] A faith that is not lived in community is a faith that will disappear. We're made to be in relationship, in community." (my translation.)
[133] Ibid., "Qu'est-ce qu'on peut mettre en valeur de notre héritage, qui fait du sens ? Il faut que ça fait sens…nous sommes plus créateurs que nous imaginons…Bâtir quelque chose. Moi, j'ai l'espérance. »

support the collective project of humanity." Every culture in the world today is faced with the same need: How do we retain our individual identities and at the same time unify with others to participate in the nurturing of the natural and human eco-system? In pluralistic, post-colonial societies, how do we love one another across the boundaries of language, province and nation? Teilhard's molecular model analogy of union that differentiates is one of the most significant aspects of his ontology. It provides a vision of essential individual contributions to larger and more complex groupings to promote the spiritual evolution of the earth's inhabitants. For Teilhard, more than just a question of 'doing good,' ethics is a relational task. Because God is the "fundamental and substantial unity of the universe," the path to greater being and greater goodness is through union.[134]

The Question of God

The speakers in the film discuss the Transcendent cautiously. Their faith runs the spectrum from belief to doubt to atheism, but most are agnostic. Many more of them are open to the idea of Jesus—Jesus as a great teacher of values and especially of an active form of love. More than one person mentioned the importance of Jesus as showing how to 'go beyond' religious institutions.[135]

Denys Arcand, filmmaker, writer, and producer, is internationally known for his series of fictional films that examine aspects of secularized life in Quebec over the past three decades, films including *Les Invasions barbares* (2003) and *L'Âge des tenèbres* (2007.) In 1986 he wrote *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, a comedy and social commentary on what he perceived as a shift from politics toward self indulgence. This was followed by *Jésus de Montréal* three years later. In Arcand's film, a struggling young actor named Daniel takes on the role of Jesus in a passion play in the gardens of a large church. He gathers a few friends to play the disciples, and he does extensive research on the historical Jesus. As the plot develops, so do the parallels between Daniel's life and that of Jesus of Nazareth. Arcand, who identifies himself as atheist, says "The person of Jesus is precious in our heritage […] When I was young, I had a special attachment to Jesus in the Gospels. It was his teachings on love. Compassion in Christianity is active. There is this concept of compassion that is *active* in Christianity… and that touches me."[136]

---

[134] Edward Vacek, "An Evolving Christian Morality*: Eppur si muove*" in Ilia Delio, Ed. *From Teilhard to Omega: Co-creating an Unfinished Universe.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014), 124.
[135] Ibid., As in the words of Jean-Claude Guillebaud : « C'est le christianisme qui a permis la sortie de 'la religion.' »
[136] Ibid.

Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief of the Cree Nation of Canada for thirty years, politician, and environmentalist, expresses the need for indigenous peoples to forgive those who wronged them in the past. “I choose to forgive the church officials who tried to kill my language and my culture, and who wanted me to be ashamed of who and what I am. Things happen—divorce, incest, violence, rape—not only in residential schools, but in our own homes.” He urges people to stop blaming and move forward. He emphasizes the distinction between faith and institution. “What’s bad are the people, not the faith. The people made the religion bad.” It is the aspect of forgiveness demonstrated and taught by Jesus that most impresses Coon Come. “We need to give young people hope, beyond the government and jobs. There is a creator and we can find inner peace. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”[137]

The concept of forgiveness is also important to the young Algonquian composer-and-rapper, Samian, whose name is a translation of ‘Samuel.’ He has come to believe that spiritual meaning comes from the creator, while ‘religion’ comes from humans. He believes that Jesus really existed and that he died for the good of humanity. Samian speaks of forgiveness as the key to liberation.[138] Although he was traumatized by institutional religion’s images of hell in his childhood, he came to faith through the example of his grandmother, who forgave the people who’d hurt her. He believes that it’s up to this generation to break the circle of despair and addiction, to rebuild the nation. He senses a time of renaissance in Quebec.

Well-known throughout Canada, Ginette Réno, is an author, composer, singer, and actress. She has created a foundation to support non-profit organizations, especially those that help women and children. Ginette struggled with addictions and mental illness before coming to a sense of awareness that God loved her, a love that she experienced as liberating. She speaks of people’s need to actually sense God’s love, a specific love for the uniqueness of each individual: “I needed to know about the light of God that was in me, the love of God that was a part of me.”[139]

---

[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., Samian dit : “C’est dur de pardonner…mais c’est la clé de la libération […] Ça prend du courage. » Samian goes on to say that Louis Riel, Métis prophet and political leader in the mid-19th century, predicted that there would be a renaissance of the Indigenous and Métis people one hundred years after his execution.
[139] Ibid.

Stéphane Laporte echoes Réno's belief in the centrality of God to life. "*Pour moi, Dieu c'est la vie […] Il y a un Dieu dans le sens qu'il y a une création. Nier l'existence de quelque chose ne fait pas de sens. C'est sous nos yeux.* » Rose Dufour speaks of a transcendence that is also immanent. She sees this transcendence in the lives of the women she helps move out of prostitution. « *Il y a une transcendance dans l'être humain, éblouissant. Ce n'est pas nous—c'est Dieu.* »[140]

Benoît Lacroix crystallizes the conversations of many in *L'Heureux naufrage* when he says: "[Quebec] went too fast; we shipwrecked…is the current still taking us somewhere? There is an emptiness inside. We can't live without rites, without intention, without thought, without dreams." Denise Bombardier's comments make a fitting conclusion to this discussion: "We have lost our collective values. We have to find, to get back, something inside of ourselves. I'd say that there's a spiritual revolution to get underway now in Quebec."

The Cosmic Christ and Omega

From the immanence of Jesus to the transcendence of the risen Christ in the gospel of John, to the Cosmic Christ of Paul, to the Omega Creator-and- Evolver, Teilhard searched for ways to express the idea of God to secular agnostics. His words seem to respond to the reflections in *L'Heureux naufrage*:

> "So long as we wish to impose a ready-made Divinity from outside […] we shall be preaching in the desert. There is only one way of enthroning God as sovereign over the people of our time: and that is to embrace the ideal they reach out to; it is *to seek, with them,* the God whom we already possess but who is as yet *amongst us* as though he were a stranger to us. Who is the God whom our contemporaries seek, and how can we succeed in *finding him, with them*, in Jesus?" (*HM*, 211.)

Teilhard emphasizes the need for a God who is not only immanent, but transcendent and working with and through humanity:

> "The God for whom our century is waiting must be: 1. as *vast* and mysterious as the Cosmos. 2. as *immediate* and all-embracing as Life. 3. As *linked* (in some way) *to our effort* as Mankind. A God who made the World less mysterious, or smaller, or less important to us, than our heart or reason show it to be, that God, --less beautiful than the one we await—will never more be He to whom the Earth kneels." (*HM,* 212.)

[140] Ibid., Laporte: « For me, God is life […] there is a God in the sense that there is a creation. To deny the existence of something makes no sense. It's right before our eyes." (My translation.) Dufour: "There is a transcendence in the human being, dazzling. It isn't us; it's God." (My translation.)

3.2 A Brief History of the Catholic Church in Quebec

In order to connect Teilhard's ontology to a new 'spiritual revolution' in Quebec, the historical context of religion and politics in this society must be considered. Historian Guy Rocher describes history as both memory and mirror in the constantly evolving framing of identity.[141] The history of Catholicism in Quebec is essential to understanding attitudes toward religion here today. In Quebec, no institution has had a greater historical significance than the Roman Catholic Church. It played a central role in the French exploration of Canada, the founding of Quebec, the establishment of missions, including the mission city, Ville-Marie, now Montreal. The Church provided education, health care, and welfare, and influenced relations with the indigenous peoples and the economy of trade. Before the formal establishment of French royal government in La Nouvelle France in 1663, the Catholic Church served as the State in many ways. Its role was so important that the early period of the founding of the colony takes on a kind of mystic, quasi- legendary quality in even in today's secular society.

After the British conquest in 1760, the position of the Church shifted dramatically. It became of necessity, an ally of the governing power, urging the French Canadians to submit to the authority of government and fostering conservative political views. The British quickly realized that the Church could regulate the people. Partially as a result of the changing roles, the Church from very early days experienced internal conflict between Gallicanism and Ultramontane philosophies. These two strands of thinking came to a collision in the *Patriote* Rebellion of 1837-38.

The parliamentary system, in 1791, had given a voice to a rising French Canadian middle class that was frequently anti-clerical, liberal and progressive, seeking more democratic governance and freedom of thought. When the British parliament refused their demands and authorized colonial governors to spend their assembly's funds without the assembly's authorization, opposition took form in the *Patriote* party. Fearing a rebellion, the British arrested *Patriote* leaders. Rioting broke out, and in a massive suppression by the government, 100 people were killed, dozens executed, and many exiled. The Church also condemned the *Patriotes*' actions, seeing their ideas as radical and dangerous. It is interesting to note that this is the time period when *sacres* began to be used in swearing. Unique to Quebec, words for tabernacle, Calvary, the ciborium, and the Host, became verbally empowering expressions

[141] John Miesel, Guy Rocher et al. *As I recall ; Si je me souviens bien : Historical Perspectives.* (Quebec: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1999), 19.

against the sanctity of the Church. After the rebellion was crushed, the Church came into a long period of power and prestige, building many classical colleges, and founding 18 new congregations of nuns and monks between 1837 and 1896.[142] During this era, ultramontane beliefs took precedence under Bishop Bourget; the church became overtly political and promoted a form of nationalism.

This ultramontane Church emphasized *la survivance* of the French-Canadian people through the three foundations of identity: Catholic faith, French language, and French institutions, such as French civil law. Agriculture was preached as the ordained work of the Québécois. Evils to avoid included commerce with the materialistic Protestant English, and urban living, where one could be contaminated with English liberal thought. A kind of xenophobia was in this way subtly encouraged. An excerpt of a letter from the bishops of Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa read to the parishioners in 1894, emphasizes the importance of remaining faithful to a French Catholic agricultural destiny: "In the factories and businesses of the city, the man of the fields comes into contact with the impious, with perverted hearts. He loses bit by bit the spirit of faith and religion […] His beliefs and his morals are *un triste naufrage*…"[143] The ideals of modern France and the United States were considered dangerous. In its power over the people and its administration of all social services including health, education, and welfare, once again, the Catholic Church by the end of the 19th century had become a virtual State.

Although the Church continued to operate with power as it informed every aspect of life, it was not uncontested. Beyond anti-clerical folk songs and swear words, pockets of liberal thought persisted. Stronger opposition arose in the 20th century in the conscription crises—in both World Wars. Many Québécois protested against a Catholic Church, which complicit with the government, was working against the wishes of its pacifist French Canadian population. The seeds of the Quiet Revolution were present from the 1918 conscription riots onward, although they would not fully ripen until the 1960s.[144]

---

[142] Claude Bélanger, *The Roman Catholic Church and Quebec: Readings*, accessed 13 September, 2017, faculty.marianopolis.edu/c. belanger/quebechistory/readings/church.com.
[143] *'un triste naufrage'* or a 'sad shipwreck', William Johnson, *Anglophobie: Made in Québec* (Montreal: Les éditions internationales Alain Stanké, 1991), 67-68. It is interesting to contrast this *triste naufrage* with Tremblay's *heureux naufrage* film title.
[144] Marion Scott, "Quebec's Conscription Crisis Divided French and English Canada" *Montreal Gazette*, July 25, 2014, accessed July 15, 2017 http://ww1.canada.com/home-front/quebecs-conscription-crisis-divided-french-and-english-canada.

Catholicism and Quebec's *Révolution Tranquille*

Michael Gauvreau traces the Catholic origins of the Quiet Revolution to the Church's response to deepening poverty in 1930s Quebec. Looking at history through a cultural lens, Gauvreau argues that Quebec's modern secular state is an outgrowth of radical Catholic thought fostered through the Catholic Action movement that was introduced from Europe at that time.[145] Catholic Action had started in Belgium and spread to France and other European countries, creating groups of young workers and students to promote the Catholic faith, to improve working conditions, and as a resistance to Marxism. Although under the supervision of bishops, an innovative aspect of Catholic Action was the formation of groups under lay leadership in every milieu: urban and rural youth, working class people, married couples, and women's groups. *Jeunnesse Ouvrière Catholique* and *Jeunesse des Agriculteurs* were among many others that did relief work and served as Catholic labor unions.

Teilhard was not directly involved in politics or social movements, but his *ressourcement théologie*, influenced by Blondel's social action theory, had political impact. He corresponded with and influenced friends who were activists in Christian social movements. Two of his colleagues were leaders of the Association Catholique de la Jeunnesse Française—one was the national chaplain for the group. Teilhard shared the draft manuscript of *The Divine Milieu* with them and wrote that he hoped his work would "contribute to a spiritual revival within the movement."[146]

In the 1930s, Catholic Action promoted a philosophy of engagement called Personalism, developed in France by Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950.) Personalism called on individuals to transform the social order by taking an active role—simply living the Gospels in a communitarian way, to "humanize humanity."[147] The starting point of personalism is the individual, whose significance is the gift of self to other in an essentially relational, communitarian dimension. Through the personalism of Catholic Action groups, "modern" cultural ideas such as the nuclear family as a space of emotional fulfillment; sex education and birth control, and a more egalitarian, less hierarchical view of family were first expressed in Quebec. In secular Europe, Catholic Action served as a Christian resistance movement against Marxism and growing atheism. In Quebec, however, the group's environment was that of a Catholic

[145] Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution: 1931-1970*. (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2005), 353.
[146] Grummet 2009, 249.
[147] Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism*, (London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 2007 ed.), Introduction, xi.

majority, where virtually every French institution was Catholic. Rather than rallying Catholic Québécois against Marxism, there was a conviction that a "spiritual revolution" was needed and would be led by young people. The Catholic Action groups for youth in Quebec promoted "a collective youth identity based on a frank sense of spiritual and moral superiority over the older generation."[148] The idea of youth as a separate social category that was superior to the previous generations, set up an oppositional relationship between youth and parents and subverted the traditional role of the Church as a bridge between generations. Now, under the auspices of Catholicism, young Québécois pursued a rupture with the past to create a modern vision of personal identity and community. Gauvreau concludes that despite the presence of powerful conservative elements in the Church,

> "…If the historical specificity of post-1930 Quebec is to have any meaning, what distinguished that society from others in North America and Europe was that for three critical decades many aspects of its encounter with modernity, both ideological and institutional, were mediated through varieties of Catholicism."[149]

3.3 The Quiet Revolution

This strong current of lay involvement and social action continued until after World War II, when an elite group of intellectuals, journalists, and social scientists began to shift the discourse of Catholic Action. The 1949 Asbestos Strike was a turning point for Quebec's Catholic leadership. The Québécois mineworkers were members of Catholic trade unions and were supported by Montreal's Archbishop Charbonneau and others. Fearing collaboration between Christians and Marxists, conservative Catholics called on the Duplessis government to engage its connections in the Vatican to eliminate any links to Marxism in Quebec's Catholic leadership. Charbonneau was removed and replaced by Paul-Emile Léger. Léger denounced the political and social activism of Catholic Action and specifically in the *Jeunnesse Ouvrière Catholique*. Many lay Catholic militants felt that their hopes for a renewed Christian social order had been crushed. A group of intellectuals who had been involved in the strike, including Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier, created the journal *Cité libre*, free from any clerical constraints. Catholic Action, which had engaged Catholicism with reform of family relationships and feminist goals, now became a more male-centered platform for political critique.[150] Claude Ryan, president of the Montreal chapter of the movement, added his moderate perspective to the

[148] Gauvreau, 25.
[149] Ibid., 358.
[150] Ibid., 355.

increasingly divided French-Canadian intellectuals. In the early 60's, sociologist-theologian Fernand Dumont expressed his views through the Dominican Order's monthly journal, *Maintenant.* Dumont argued that democratic Quebec nationalism, supported by Catholic values would seek to transcend class differences and create a more just human community.

After Duplessis' death in 1959, the Liberal government of Jean Lesage was elected, ushering in a decade of rapid change, including nationalization of resources, secularization of health care, and a shift toward social identity based on the French language. Even though they supported the secularization of major institutions, the people of Quebec voted by a large majority to maintain religious instruction in the new public schools. As late as 1964, the government established a state public school system that was "confessional," Protestant and Catholic, with the French-speaking Catholic Public Schools teaching Roman Catholic religion at primary and secondary levels. Only in 1997 were the public schools officially de-confessionalized. Gauvreau's discussion of the school debate in Quebec presents an important counterpoint to the popular narrative of the Quiet Revolution: Nationalism, in the 1960s, far from seeking to completely remove Catholicism from the public sphere, viewed the boundary between religion and nationalism, church and state as quite porous.[151] It was during this same period of massive social transformations in Quebec, that Pope John XXIII announced the creation of the Second Vatican Council, which was held from 1962 to 1965.

Author and theologian Lise Baroni Dansereau describes the early 1960s in Quebec as an intersection of two identity crises: that of the Catholic Church and that of society.[152] She describes the hope and excitement felt by many socially engaged Catholics as the Church itself seemed to be undergoing a spiritual revolution. Vatican II returned to an early Christian model of emphasizing lay pastoral care in community. This recognition of the laity was seen as a seed of democratization in the Church. Meanwhile, the schools shifted from the traditional *Petit Catéchisme* to one more oriented toward developing a personal and free conscience. Liturgical changes made possible the first celebration of Eucharist in French in March of 1965.[153] By the end of the 1960's, there were many *communautés de bases* (CEB) established in Quebec, similar to those in Latin America, which involved supporting the poor through social and political action.

[151] Ibid., 250.
[152] Lise Baroni Dansereau, « Une Église Québécoise Bouleversée » in *Relations*, no. 730, (February 2009), 1-3.
[153] Ibid., 1.

> Ces transformations diminuent l'autorité disciplinaire et l'encadrement hiérarchique de l'Église au profit d'une nouvelle forme de présence évangélique proposée à la sécularité québécoise émergente. Plusieurs y expérimenteront une solidarité mutuelle dans la quête d'une nouvelle identité sociale et ecclésiale, d'un nouveau rapport entre le monde et l'Église.[154]

Unfortunately, the rapid changes were seen as too dangerous by the authorities. The Church leadership, no longer in control of family planning, of work, of hospitals, of literature or film, saw their power diminished even in the base communities. Only a year after the Vatican Council, they cut funding of the Catholic Action groups. *Humanae vitae,* the encyclical against artificial birth control, was released in 1968. Disillusioned, the *Jeunesse étudiante chrétienne* (JEC) group of *Action Catholique* cut ties with the Church.

The late 60s into the 70's in Quebec witnessed a massive abandonment of religious practice among Catholics for multiple and intertwined reasons. In an attempt to restore contact with the people, the bishops commissioned Fernand Dumont to survey former Catholics in a spirit of reconciliation, but it was too late. Gauvreau points to bitterness and confusion among the older Catholics, who felt that their form of religious practice was derided by the new young leaders who urged a break with the past and an adoption of a new, 'authentic' spirituality. There was anger and disappointment among Catholic feminists at the Vatican's prohibition of birth control. Liberal-thinking theologians were censored, women could not be ordained, divorced people could not remarry, and liberation theology was suspect. At the same time, radical social changes were sweeping the western world and these also impacted society in Quebec. De-clericalization was accompanied by a sense of de-sacralization. Identity as attached to the French language and culture replaced identity as Catholic, and the slogan of the earlier Lesage campaign, "maîtres chez nous" seemed to invite a freedom from authority of all types. Lucien Lemieux notes that secularism and 'state-ism' coincided with the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec shedding its 'triumphal' cape. "For most Catholics in Quebec, the changes came too quickly. They weren't ready to follow Church leaders who seemed to have fallen from their pedestal. They preferred to align themselves with the tenants of a new Triumphalism."[155] This new 'triumphalism' of the state became associated with political sovereignty in the 1970s.

---

[154] Ibid. "These changes are diminishing the disciplinary authority and hierarchical framework of the Church to the benefit of a new form of evangelism in line with an emerging secular Quebec. Many people will experience mutual solidarity in the quest for a new societal and ecclesiastical identity, a new rapport between Church and world." (my translation.)

[155] Lucien Lemieux, *Une Histoire Religieuse du Québec.* (Quebec : Les Editions Novalis, 2010), 120. « L'Eglise catholique romaine québéquoise se dépouille de son manteau triomphaliste. […] Pour la plupart des catholiques du Québec, le passage est cependant trop brusque. Ils ne sont pas prêts à suivre

If the past does serve as both "memory and mirror," the reactions of Québécois to religious symbols reflect their complex relationship to a deeply religious past largely, if not completely, abandoned. The pervasive presence of the Catholic Church in Quebec's recent past helps explain a conflicted concept of secularism that would prevent the wearing of religious symbols in government funded workspaces and at the same time allow a crucifix to remain prominently posted on the wall of the National Assembly in Quebec. In her book, *Beheading the Saint,* Geneviève Zubrzycki writes about the concept of "re-sacralization" of formerly religious symbols as part of the "*patrimoine culturel"* in Quebec. Formerly religious symbols, objects, and practices become *national* symbols, objects, and practices. She suggests that this is an attempt to preserve "a social state in which Catholicism and secularism are united within a single national project."[156] Religious researcher and sociologist Reginald Bibby similarly concludes that a majority of Québécois retain identity ties to Catholicism, even when they no longer attend Mass regularly.[157]

French Philosophy, Teilhard, and Quebec's Quiet Revolution

From the time of its inception as a colony, Quebec maintained philosophical ties to French thought, for socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural reasons.[158] For many years, Thomist Catholic philosophy held reign, but around 1960, there was an explosion of European philosophy--mostly French--in Quebec. There were exchanges, visits, and lectures by many key French thinkers, including Maritain, Mounier, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur. These philosophers directed dissertations by Québécois students, either in Quebec or in France. All of these interactions left their mark in publications. The period from 1960 to 1980 saw a gradual shift of thinking, which Jean-Claude Simard describes as a series of steps: a bursting out of orthodoxy, a diversification, and a complete heterodoxy that constituted nationalist philosophy: "…*d'abord la 'décolonisation spirituelle', ensuite le débat entre croyance et athéisme, enfin, l'irruption*

leurs dirigents, tombés en quelque sorte de leur piédestal. Ils préfèrent s'aligner sur les tenants d'un nouveau triomphalisme. »

[156] Geneviève Zubrzycki, *Beheading the Saint : Nationalism, Religion, and Secularism in Quebec*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 375. As an example of a secularized practice, Zubrzycki details the controversy over a prayer opening the Saguenay city council meetings, which was held to be a 'patrimonial practice' until this decision was overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2015. (386-398)

[157] Reginald Bibby, "Religion à la Carte in Québec: A Problem of Demand, Supply, or Both?" *The Globe, Special Issue on Religion in Quebec* Ed. Martin Meunier and Robert Mager (September 2007.)

[158] Jean-Claude Simard, « La philosophie française des XIXe et XXe siècles » in *La pensée philosophique d'expression française au Canada : le rayonnement du Québec*. (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998), 45-118.

massive du politique en philosophie."[159] The first step was a quest for an authentic, humanist Christianity. A series of French thinkers contributed to this search in Quebec, from the late 1950s to the beginning of the 70s. From Blondel's moral inspiration to Mounier's personalism; from Lavelle's spiritualism to Bergson's vitalism, and Teilhard's evolutionism, French philosophers were at the forefront of Quebec's philosophical revolution.

Simard includes Teilhard among the most influential French philosophers in Quebec, even though his work was not officially available until 1955. In 1962, Jean Langlois and Gaston Hétu founded the Centre Teilhard de Montréal. French biologist Claude Cuénot, author of a Teilhard biography, notes that a significant number of early studies on Teilhard's works were done in Quebec. The positive reception of Teilhard's work in Quebec was partly due to the fact that Bergson had been so popular: his *élan vital* prepared the way for Teilhard's orthogenesis, just as Ricoeur and Merleau-Ponty prepared the way for Teilhard's phenomenology.

Although space does not permit a thorough analysis of Teilhard's impact on Québécois literature, one significant writer of this period must be mentioned. Gabrielle Roy, whose *Bonheur d'occasion* (translated as *The Tin Flute*) was the first Québécois novel to win an American literary prize, met Teilhard de Chardin in 1947 while visiting friends in Paris. His thinking greatly influenced her writing and her spirituality. Roy contributed the Teilhardian theme to the Expo '67 world's fair at Montreal. "Terre des hommes" was based on a work by St-Exupéry, inspired by Teilhard and grounded in the essay she wrote in the hopes of a harmonious future between peoples and between people and the earth.[160]

3.4. Teilhard and Contextual/ Liberation Theology in Quebec

L'Heureux naufrage demonstrates Quebec's Christian heritage as key to understanding the particularities of the society's response to religion today. Teilhard's concepts of individual personalization through union and the divinization of action can be seen as part of a continuum of Catholic communitarian thinking in Quebec. This ideal is practiced today as *théologie contextuelle*, a community solidarity movement in Quebec that applies aspects of liberation theology to meeting social needs within local contexts. Dansereau echoes Teilhard's thinking on the impact of action :

[159] Jean-Claude Simard, 16. « First a spiritual de-colonization, next debate between belief and atheism, finally a massive eruption of politics in philosophy." (my translation.)
[160] Expo '67 was the first World's Fair to host an Ecumenical Christian pavilion.

> "*Je suis convaincue que la plus petite action visant le Bien de tous se trouve en parenté directe avec le salut promis par Dieu*. […] *Au Coeur de cette aventure spirituelle, une théologie capable d'habiter la dynamique profonde de tels contextes m'apparaît essentielle*."[161]

L'Utopie de la solidarité au Québec: Contribution de la mouvance sociale chrétienne is a book about the myriad forms of contextual theology practiced by a number of Christian groups who continue to work with marginalized people. The editors define contextual theology as an "authentic application of Latin American liberation theology." Its target is achieved through a process of social reconstruction and therefore implies political engagement. It is militant and demonstrates solidarity. "The marginalized become our friends, our resources, our partners, and our guides in reflection. Their context, their suffering, their joy and their life and death become the principal text of our theology."[162]

One of the founders of this style of liberation theology is Peruvian philosopher, theologian, and Dominican priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez, whose central ideas are expressed in his book*, A Theology of Liberation* (1973), a work often cited by the practitioners of contextual theology in Quebec. Gutiérrez affirms Teilhard's criticism of anti-progressive theologies and social theories that preserve the status quo, but he interprets Teilhard's theology as developmentalist, describing incremental changes within a single framework, and therefore ineffective as a liberation theology.[163] Context and liberation theology acts on the need to overturn the social framework itself, at times with dialectical and revolutionary force. Yet, evolution, as Teilhard defines it, is not only gradually incremental 'development', but includes radical qualitative changes as exemplified in the leaps from *geogenesis* to *biogenesis* to *noogenesis*. Baltazar points out that Teilhard's liberation theory is comprehensive, including not just the noosphere, but the bio- and geo- spheres as well, in the spirit of Paul's writing on the ultimate liberation of all creation.[164] Rather than as a dialectical change, where one term is absorbed or annihilated in synthesis, Teilhard sees evolution advance as 'Creative Union.' (*HM*, 205.) When opposing terms are unified through love, centered on the love of God, each retains its true characteristics

---

[161] Lise Baroni Dansereau, "I am convinced that the smallest action aimed toward the Good for all is in direct alignment with the salvation promised by God. […] At the heart of this spiritual adventure, a theology capable of living the deep dynamic of such contexts seems to me essential." (my translation.) « Forum Québécois théologies et solidarités » Paper given at this forum, accessed online 10 April 2016, http://cjf.qc.ca/revue-relations/publication/article/pour-une-spiritualite-de-laction-solidaire/.

[162] Lise Baroni Dansereau, Michel Beaudin, et al. ed.*s L'Utopie de la Solidarité au Québec : Contribution de la mouvance sociale chrétienne* (Montreal : Paulines, 2011), 344.

[163] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation,* 173, cited by Eulalio Baltazar in "LiberationTheology and Teilhard de Chardin," Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John Ed.s, *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003),169.

[164] Eulalio Baltazar, "Liberation Theology and Teilhard de Chardin," 170.

and something greater than either of the individual terms is created. This would be a true liberation, a life-enhancing one.

Teilhard's ontology can be useful in addressing two central problems in liberation theology: the relationship between immanence and transcendence and the reliance on Marxism as a method for social analysis.[165] Liberation theologians are often accused of immanentism and politicization of the Christian faith. Based on French *ressourcement* thought, Vatican II's marked shift in emphasis from 'other-worldly' to 'this-worldly' presents a single history of salvation, in contrast to the previous emphasis on a metaphysical realm separated from the material and temporal realm. From this single history theology comes the problem of how to situate the transcendent within history. This problem has been largely ignored by the liberation theologians in Central and South America, faced with the challenge of combatting oppression and poverty. "It is important for liberation theologians that the immanent and transcendent be understood as part of the same process […]"[166] Teilhard's ontology reinvigorates immanent/transcendent action of social engagement through the concept of participation in the development of the Cosmic body of Christ.

Marxism as materialist, based on class struggle, and often historically expressed through atheist totalitarian regimes, seems at odds with Christian concepts of a transcendent God who asks humans to love even their enemies. When liberation theology is integrated with Teilhard's ontology of creative union and the divinization of action in the divine milieu, these problems are resolved. The tendency of liberation theology dependent solely on a Marxist model to remain material and political is overcome by the concepts of matter supporting spirit, love as the creative energy of evolution, and a Transcendent God who participates within material, historical time and also outside of it, drawing creation forward in the immanent plane and upward in the transcendent plane through creative union.

Senegalese president and poet Léopold Sédar Senghor integrated these aspects of Teilhard's ontology in developing his political vision of *la Francophonie,* the cultural and intellectual exchange among French-speaking peoples across the world, and *la Négritude*, a global movement created by black intellectuals in Paris to develop solidarity, pride in literary achievements, and to resist French Imperialism. "Through Teilhard, Senghor found a sophisticated philosophy that supported and influenced his ideas on *la Négritude* and its future,"

[165] Ibid., 167-180.
[166] Dean Williams Ferm, *Third World Liberation Theologies*, cited in Baltazar, 167.

emphasizing dialogue and exchange among other cultures, rather than reactionary, anti-white sentiment.[167] Senghor played a central role in the establishment of an independent Senegal in the early 1960s. The first African member of the *Académie Française,* Senghor is regarded as one of the most influential African intellectuals of the 20th century. Catholic, he was president of Senegal, a majority Muslim country, from 1960 to 1980. He rejected the non-spiritual and anti-Western aspects of Marxism. Teilhard's vision of the human person in community resonated with Senghor's vision of African values. Senghor proposed a federation of independent former French colonies that would remain connected to France. He articulated his theory of politics in his book, *Teilhard de Chardin et la politique africaine.* He foresaw a future where cultures would come together as equals in a "*rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir,*" a moment of exchange where each could choose what they needed from another and all would be enriched.[168] Africa could integrate the spirit of research and analytic reason, while Western Europe, imprisoned in the dehumanizing worship of machine and material wealth, could benefit from Africa's contribution to emotional and spiritual development. This was one way that *la négritude* could contribute to the future of universal civilization. The legacy of Senghor's efforts can be read in the relative political stability of Senegal, which is one of the few African nations to have always had a peaceful transfer of power.

La Francophonie enabled Hubert Aquin (1929-1977) to encounter Senghor's application of Teilhard's thought. Aquin, political activist, novelist, editor and filmmaker, was one of the leading intellectuals in the movement for Quebec's independence. He cites Senghor's book on Teilhard and African politics in his political essay, "La fatigue culturelle du Canada Français." Published in the journal *Liberté* in 1962, Aquin's article not only opens with an epigraph by Teilhard, but its last pages are devoted to Teilhard's concept of unity built on love. This essay was a response to Pierre Elliott Trudeau's essay against Quebec's nationalism in *Cité Libre*. Aquin called for a synthesis of Marxism, de-colonization, and a new vision of nationalism:

> « Je crois sincèrement que l'humanité est engagée dans une entreprise de convergence et d'union. Mais ce projet d'unanimisation, comme le décrit Senghor d'après Teilhard de Chardin, doit ressembler, pour s'accomplir, à un projet d'amour et non de fusion amère dans une totalisation forcée et stérile. La dialectique d'opposition doit devenir une dialectique d'amour. »[169]

---

[167] Janet Vaillant, *Vie de Leopold Senghor : Noir, Français, et Africain*, trans. Roger Meunier. Originally *Black, French and African: A Life of Leopold Sedar Senghor* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1990), 313.
[168] Ibid. "an encounter of giving and taking" (my translation.)
[169] Hubert Aquin, "La fatigue culturelle du Canada français » *Liberté*, Vol. 4, no. 23, mai 1962, 299-325, accessed 18 May 2018, id.erudit.org/iderudit/59892ac. "I sincerely believe that humanity is engaged in the

Aquin wanted to delineate a different, more open nationalism for Quebec than the historic, Catholic, ethnic-based and agricultural one promoted by Lionel Groulx. Aquin highlights the already multi-ethnic, multi-cultural aspects of francophone Quebec. Teilhard's concept of difference within unity was key.

Teilhard addresses the perceived conflict between the development of the Kingdom of God on Earth through human social efforts, such as Marxism, and the ultimate development of the Kingdom of God at the Parousia in an unpublished essay, "The Heart of the Problem." The essay begins with an epigraph:

> *"Some say, 'Let us wait patiently until the Christ returns.'*
> *Others say, 'Let us rather finish building the Earth.'*
> *Still others think, 'To speed the Parousia, let us complete the making of Man on Earth.'"*

Teilhard reminds us that ever since Galileo's discovery in the Renaissance, the cosmos has been increasingly seen as a dynamic *cosmogenesis* and now, since Darwin, the human is tending to be identified with an *anthropogenesis*—a humanity in process. Where earlier, humans could only attain to a fuller life by rising 'above' the material zones of the world, toward some kind of a transcendent, now we see the possibility of a completely different line of progress. *(FM*, 262) Should we now look to a future 'ahead' in the evolutionary future of humanity? 'Above or ahead, or both?' is for Teilhard the central question at the root of the problematization of religion in an evolutionary age. He writes:

> "[…] The unity of which we dream still seems to beckon in two different directions, toward the zenith and toward the horizon, we see the dramatic growth of a whole race of the "spiritually stateless"—human beings torn between a Marxism whose depersonalizing effect revolts them and a Christianity so lukewarm in human terms that it sickens them." (*FM*, 265)

To illustrate his ontological solution, he includes a simple diagram of the conflict with a horizontal line (OX) representing 'the modern forward impulse' and at right angles to it, a vertical line (OY) representing the 'traditional upward' impulse of religious worship. (*FM*, 263) He writes:

> "To render the problem more concrete, it is stated in its most final and recognizable terms, the coordinate OY simply representing the Christian impulse and (OX) the

work of convergence and union. But this project of unanimity, as Senghor writes according to Teilhard de Chardin, in order to be accomplished, must be a project of love and not of bitter fusion in a forced and sterile totality. The dialectic of opposition must become a dialectic of love." (my translation.)

> Communist or Marxist impulse[170] as these are commonly manifest in the present-day world."[171]

Looking at this diagram, it appears to show two modes of being that are in irreconcilable conflict. Teilhard argues that neither of these two forces can achieve its full development without the other. Humanist faith in the world can only function as if it were a faith, that is by "sacrifice and the final abandonment of self for something greater"—and this implies an element of worship, of something "divine." (*FM*, 266) Christian faith, "by the fact that it is rooted in the Incarnation, has always based a large part of its tenet on the tangible values of the World and Matter." Teilhard urges the reader to consider the possibility that the Parousia, the consummation of the Kingdom of God on earth, may be awaiting a certain evolutionary state of collective maturity of humanity:

> "Let there be revealed to us the possibility of believing at the same time and wholly in God and the World, the one through the other; let this belief burst forth, as it is ineluctably in process of doing under the pressure of seemingly opposed forces, and then, we may be sure of it, a great flame will illumine all things […]" (*FM*, 267)

He adds to his diagram, a broken line (OR) that bisects the angle YOX at 45 degrees. "OR represents Christian Faith "rectified" or "made explicit" reconciling the two: salvation (outlet) at once Above and Ahead in a Christ who is both Savior and Mover, not only of individual humans, but of anthropogenesis as a whole." (*FM*, 269) Teilhard's theology of the divinization of human action toward the Immanent ahead and the faith of Christians in the Transcendent above, form a context for action toward social justice that is at once material and spiritual, based not on a 'half measure' of each, but on a sacrifice to that which is greater than self.

3.5. Teilhard's Ontology and Quebec: A Taste for Life

"Writing in 1971, sociologist Guy Rocher observed that 'unbelief' had now become the cultural mainstream in Quebec society. He was, however, quick to point out that this phenomenon could not be construed as a simple absence of religion; rather "it bears an extraordinary witness of a hope beyond all hope: it is animated by such a serious disposition, a willingness to search for truth and authenticity in the face of humans and their destiny, that it forces religious faith to justify itself."[172]

---

[170] Teilhard includes this footnote in his essay: "An unfavorable simplification where OX is concerned, inasmuch as Marxism and Communism (the latter a thoroughly bad, ill-chosen word, it may be said in passing) are clearly no more than an embryonic form, even a caricature, of a neo-humanism that is still scarcely born." (*FM*, 263)
[171] Ibid.
[172] Gauvreau, 340.

The creation of a Teilhardian praxis and the sharing of Teilhard's thinking in Quebec "to justify religious faith" must connect to the current culture in order to be fruitful. In 2016, economist and researcher Jean-Marc Léger co- authored *Cracking the Quebec Code: The Seven Keys to Understanding Quebecers*. Based on years of values surveys, market research, and current semiometry analysis, the book offers a profile of Quebec's cultural tendencies. Much has been written about Quebec as a distinctive society within the Canadian federation; these authors identify seven specific traits that lead to better understanding Quebecers. These traits are shown as circular, with the qualities of one leading to the next, beginning and ending with the strongest trait of all, *Joie de Vivre*. "*Joie de vivre* is the anchoring point and fundamental identity trait of Quebecers. This trait covers 25% of all information about Quebec's identifying behaviors. They are a fundamentally happy people who live in the moment."[173] The manifestation of *joie de vivre* in Quebec includes a sense of the wholeness of life, that there is more to life than making money, that there needs to be time and space for family and friends, for lingering over a meal and for celebrating. The search for meaning, for something sacred and life-giving beyond the material may be a current manifestation of a deeper *joie de vivre* in Quebec.

Teilhard often used a similar phrase, *Le goût de vivre* in his letters and essays. Teilhard's biographer, Ursula King, claims that it is a 'generative theme' of Teilhard's work, an idea that touches people so deeply that it can stir them into action for creating profound social change.[174] Translated into English, it is "Zest for Living," the title of an essay Teilhard wrote on the activation of human energy. A zest for living can be a sense of awareness, of enthusiasm, of playfulness, joy, or curiosity. Teilhard felt that it was critically important to cultivate these traits because they contribute to growth, to spiritual development and to the future. He defined the phrase in a talk that he gave in Paris to *L'Union des croyants*, a French branch of the World Congress of Faiths in 1950.[175]

> "By 'zest for living' or 'zest for life,' I mean…that spiritual disposition, at once intellectual and affective, in virtue of which life, the world, and action seem to us, on the whole, luminous—interesting—appetizing."[176]

---

[173] Jean-Marc Léger et al., *Cracking the Quebec Code: The Seven Keys to Understanding Quebecers.* (Montreal: Juniper Publishing, 2016), 222.
[174] Ursula King, "The Zest for Life: A Contemporary Exploration of a Generative Theme in Teilhard's Work" in Ilia Delio Ed., *From Teilhard to Omega: Co-creating an Unfinished Universe*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 185.
[175] Ibid., 195.
[176] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Activation of Energy*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970), 231.

A sense of futility, an existential despair or the idea that life is absurd causes people to lose hope, which is the essential motivation for the evolutionary human project.[177] Far from being trivial, the appreciation of life, the urge to live fully, overcomes the enormous odds against survival. Teilhard expands on this in his essay, "The Activation of Human Energy."

> "[…] from the moment when man recognizes that he is in a state of evolution, he can no longer progress (as we have just seen) unless he develops in himself a deep-rooted, passionate zest for his own evolution: and […] it is precisely this dynamic zest that could be vitiated beyond repair and annihilated by the prospect, however far ahead it may lie, of a definitive and total death." (*HE*, 391.)

Quebec's national poet, singer, song-writer and former Latin teacher, Gilles Vigneault seems to embody the québécois *goût de vivre*. His celebrated song about love, *Gens du pays,* is sung on St-Jean Baptiste Day, la *Fête Nationale*. « *Gens du pays, c'est votre tour de vous laisser parler d'amour. »*[178] For many people in Canada, this song is about Quebec nationalism, a local love for one political point of view. From a Teilhardian viewpoint, these lyrics are seeds for a larger vision of love. Teilhard's idea of love as the creative energy of the cosmos connects the local with the larger and ultimately, with the universal. Teilhard's ontology is based on a love that enhances identity by falling in love with the other. Only through the powerful life-current of love from the transcendent God can this falling in love happen. Only with *le goût de vivre* can the people of Quebec and other secular societies truly carry out their mission: to love the universe, to love the invisible, and to love the 'not-yet.'

Conclusion

The documentary, *L'Heureux naufrage* presents Quebec's quest for meaning through discussions of an experienced 'emptiness' and a desire for deeper values than those of material well-being. The film expresses a desire to reclaim a lost identity and to create a deeper sense of community. To achieve these goals, many speak of a need to reconcile with the historic Catholic past. I have argued that Teilhard's ontology of sacred union and divinized action provides a way to restore a lost 'catholicity'—a central part of the historic French Catholic identity in Quebec that includes actualization of the individual within the larger collective. A retrieval of Teilhard's theology could restore a sense of the sacred to the secular, a sense of the transcendent to

---

[177] Current medical and psychological research supports this in studies of individual mortality rates. See E.S. Kim, "Optimism and Cause-Specific Mortality: A Perspective Cohort Study" *American Journal of Epidemiology* Vol. 185 Issue 1 January 2017, 21-29, accessed 21 May, 2018, https://academic.oup.com/aje/article/185/1/21/2631298 .

[178] Gilles Vignault: "People of my country, it's your turn to let yourselves speak of love." (my translation.)

contextual theology, and a challenge to continue to build a society that is not only just, but fully conscious of its evolutionary global role.

Chapter Four: Teilhard Today: Interpretations and Praxis

4.1. Reception of Teilhard's Work

Introduction

If Teilhard's theology is relevant, why hasn't his work been more widely adopted by Christian thinkers or discussed by scientists? This chapter presents several responses to and critiques of Teilhard's writings. It examines the proliferation of Teilhard's work today, as well as some misunderstandings of it. The third part of the chapter demonstrates that Teilhard's thinking can be made available to interested people outside of the academy and practiced as an inclusive, activist form of Christian spirituality.

Circumstances Surrounding the Critique of Teilhard's Work

Teilhard de Chardin's work has been compared to a lightning rod, attracting both fiery criticism and shining praise. "The phenomenon of 'Teilhardianism,' as the body of 'orthodoxy' that was created by many of his most ardent disciples has been termed, needs to be distinguished from the theology of Teilhard itself so that the latter can be subject to proper scrutiny."[179] To make sense of the extreme and varied reactions to his work, it is important to understand the circumstances surrounding its publication. Teilhard's writing coincides with a period of conservative thought in the higher leadership of the Catholic Church. His writings on original sin in 1923 occasioned an ongoing investigation into his teachings. In 1925, his Jesuit superior, siding with conservatives in Rome, ordered Teilhard to sign a second repudiation of his ideas, to resign his teaching post at the Institut Catholique, and to leave France. After seeking advice from his Jesuit colleagues, including Auguste Valensin, Teilhard agreed to sign, as a symbol of his obedience. It was July of 1925, the same week that the drama of the Scopes Monkey trial played out in Tennessee.[180]

Throughout his years in China, Teilhard corresponded with his superiors, sending his work to Rome with letters of explanation. Henri de Lubac was one of a group of theologians from whom Teilhard sought advice and with whom he shared manuscripts and revisions. Each time Teilhard returned to visit France, he met with these colleagues and spoke as an invited lecturer at youth clubs and other private organizations. After WWII, Teilhard received permission to return to

[179] David Grummet, (2005), 1-2.

[180] John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Teilhard de Chardin: A Short Biography" in eds. Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John, *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 22.

France for a short time. He wrote many articles for the journal *Études* and revised *Le Phénomène humain.*

Dominican Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, a leading proponent of 'strict observance Thomism' was most critical of Teilhard's thought, denouncing it, along with what he called the *Nouvelle Théologie*, as unorthodox modernism. Garrigou-Lagrange was influential in Rome, where he taught at the Dominican Pontifical University of St. Thomas. His 1946 article, "*La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle*?" in *Angelicum,* named Teilhard and several other prominent *ressourcement* theologians, including De Lubac, criticizing selective excerpts of their work.[181]

In 1948, Teilhard was denied permission to accept the position of Pre-history Chair that had been offered to him at the Collège de France. Permission to publish *Le Phénomène humain* was also denied. He was asked to leave France. He decided to accept a research position at the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York and moved into a room in the Jesuit house at St. Ignatius Church.

"Despite the fact that the Church prevented Teilhard from publishing his religious-philosophical works, many of these works were widely known in Catholic circles because Teilhard authorized multiple copies to be made and distributed—these were known as '*clandestins*.'"[182] Before Teilhard's death, conservative Catholic theologians used these to criticize Teilhard's ideas.

In 1950 Pope Pius XII's *Humani Generis: Concerning Some False Opinions Threatening to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine* was the Vatican's response to the perceived threat of *ressourcement* theology to scholastic Thomism. The encyclical begins with a description of the trends in 'modernist' thinking at the time:

> "If anyone examines the state of affairs outside the Christian fold, he will easily discover the principle trends that not a few learned men are following. Some imprudently and indiscreetly hold that evolution, which has not been fully proved even in the domain of natural sciences, explains the origin of all things, and audaciously support the monistic and pantheistic opinion that the world is in continual evolution. Communists gladly subscribe to this opinion so that, when the souls of men have been deprived of every idea of a personal God, they may the more efficaciously defend and propagate their dialectical materialism."[183]

---

[181] Joseph Komonchak, "*Humani Generis* and *Nouvelle Theologie"* cited in Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, *Ressourcement: A Movement of Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2011).
[182] Ilia Delio, ed., *From Teilhard to Omega: Co-creating an Unfinished Universe* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014), 243.
[183] Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Humani Generis*, 12 August, 1950 accessed online 13 June 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis.html.

Teilhard wrote a response to the encyclical, explaining the scientific evidence against monogenism and a letter expressing his fidelity to the Church and sent them to Rome. Under pressure from the curial office and Jesuit Superior General Jansenns, from 1950 to 1958, Henri de Lubac and other *ressourcement* theologians were removed from their teaching positions at Fourvière in Lyon; their writings were censored. Letters from friends poured in supporting Teilhard. Karl Rahner later referred to the Curia's suppression of Teilhard's cosmology:

> "In reprimanding Teilhard de Chardin and repressing his endeavors it manifested too little understanding for an ontology in which created being is conceived in principle and in the very beginning as being which is in the process of becoming with an entire evolution of the cosmos, which is still in the process of evolution."[184]

Denied the right to publish his theological works during his lifetime, Teilhard, in 1951, bequeathed all of his writings to his secretary in Paris, Jeanne Mortier, to have it published after his death. She began gathering an international committee of scientists and intellectuals to oversee the publishing. Teilhard visited France for the last time in 1954 and requested permission to stay but was denied. He died the following spring, on Easter in 1955.

The order of publication proved to be problematic. First was *Le Phénomène humain*, published within the year of Teilhard's death. The English translation, *The Phenomenon of Man*, did not follow until 1959. The book became a bestseller and led to popularization of Teilhard's ideas without an understanding that his theology forms the hermeneutic of the entirety of his thought.[185] Teilhard's scientific works were collected from scientific journals and published in a set of eleven volumes.[186] Teilhard's works continued to be published in French, between 1955 and 1976, with English translations coming afterward. The fact that they were not published in chronological order, that his essays were grouped together somewhat arbitrarily, and that some translations were not accurate made his opus challenging for critical scholarship. Although much of his correspondence has been published, more remains to be. "Few modern thinkers have left so large a body of […] material behind them: some 9,000 letters going back to boarding school days, some 200 self-explanatory essays, eight volumes of diaries, and two major books […]"[187]

---

[184] Karl Rahner, "Natural Science and Reasonable Faith," Theological Investigations, Vol. V, (New York: Crossroads, 1974), 25 cited in Grummet, (2005), 206-207.
[185] David Grummet, (2005), 5.
[186] Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 237.
[187] Mary Lukas, "Teilhard and the Piltdown 'Hoax,'" *America,* accessed online 5 June 2018, May 1981, 424.

As Teilhard's work became popular, in 1962 Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani called for a monitum to be issued on it, so that it could not officially be taught as Catholic doctrine. Adding to the difficulty, Teilhard addresses some of his writings to a Christian audience and some to a secular or scientific one. These many obstacles in the publishing, translation, and dissemination of his work have led to significant misinterpretations of it.

In 1999, Sarah Appleton-Weber created a new edition and translation of *Le Phénomène humain*, correctly translating the title as *The Human Phenomenon*. She made a careful study of Teilhard's work, reading his essays in chronological order, as well as drawing from three previous manuscripts of the book. She restored Teilhard's method of phrasing, paragraphing, and his 'kinematic' style of arranging a progression of ideas. As a poet, she was sensitive to the nuance and rhythm of Teilhard's original wording. This text makes possible a more precise understanding of Teilhard's thought in the twenty-first century.

Interpretations of Teilhard's Work

During the years of the second Vatican Council, the *ressourcement* theologians were re-accepted and returned to their work. Henri de Lubac felt it urgent to defend and offer his analysis of Teilhard's work. He published three books and a number of articles defending Teilhard's theology and specifically addressing critics Philippe de la Trinité, Dom Frénaud, and others in their biased misinterpretations of his work. De Lubac knew and worked with Teilhard, through correspondence and in person, over a period of thirty years. He made a thorough reading of his work and was well-positioned to give his theological opinion of it. De Lubac notes that Teilhard never claimed to be creating a complete theology, citing Teilhard's words: "I am trying out this road as a possible line of approach to one of the aspects of truth." And again: "A spiritual tendency has been trying to shape itself in me, that others, later will define more successfully than I." De Lubac cites Karl Rahner's defense of Teilhard's effort, as well as Etienne Gilson's. Importantly, De Lubac sets out the criteria for fair evaluation of Teilhard's work:

> "His writings undoubtedly form one whole in a way that few other thinkers' do, and the imprint of his personality can constantly be recognized in them. They are basically in two parts: the first, in which the line of thought is still scientific, or philosophical; the second, more strictly mystical and religious, is often explicitly based on the data of Christian revelation. "Central to the first is *The Human Phenomenon*, to the second*, The Divine Milieu*." The first, in Teilhard's eyes, always

http://www2.clarku.edu/~piltdown/map_prim_suspects/Teilhard_de_Chardin/Chardin_defend/teilhardandpilthoax(lukas).html.

> led to the second. To study the one without the other is to "mutilate Teilhard's thought."[188]

Bernard Lonergan affirmed Teilhard's efforts to relate the place of humanity and its creation in *imago Dei* to our current understanding of the universe:

> "For centuries the Christian's image of himself and of his world was drawn from the first chapters of Genesis, from Jewish apocalyptic and Ptolemaic astronomy, and from the theological doctrines of the creation and immortality of each human soul. That image has been assaulted by novel scientific traditions stemming from Copernicus, Newton, Darwin, Freud, Heisenberg. It has been the great merit of Teilhard de Chardin to have recognized the Christian's need of a coherent image of himself and to have contributed not a little towards meeting that need."[189]

Thomas Merton wrote an article on *The Divine Milieu* that was turned down by the Cistercian censors in 1966. At first, Merton had assumed that Teilhard, emphasizing the active life, was against monasticism. Reading *The Divine Milieu*, he encountered the higher value Teilhard places on human passivities. In reference to this he wrote: "No finer and more contemplative page has been written in our century. And it gives us the key to the mysticism of Teilhard, showing us that in this above all, he is an authentic witness to the Christian tradition."[190] In summarizing *The Divine Milieu*, Merton wrote of Teilhard:

> "He is above all a priest, and the deepest concern of his book is the concern of a priest, a minister of Christ, one sent by Christ, with a mission to "love the world" as Christ has loved it, and therefore to seek and to find in it all the good which is hidden there and which Christ died on the Cross to recover. Only in these priestly and eucharistic perspectives can we really understand the great work of Teilhard de Chardin and his profound sympathy for everything human and for every legitimate aspiration of modern man, even though that man may sometimes be a misguided and errant thinker, a heretic, an atheist."[191]

Karl Barth, who admittedly only read *The Divine Milieu*, "and having no desire to read further" nevertheless passed judgement on Teilhard in a letter to professor Georges Casalis in August 1963: "[…] it seems unmistakeable to me that in Teilhard de Chardin we have a classic

---

[188] Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, trans. René Hague (London: William Collins Sons & Ltd., 1967), 13-14.
[189] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 315.
[190] Thomas King, S.J., "Thomas Merton on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin," accessed 7 June 2018, merton.org/ITMS/Seasonal/10/10-4 King.pdf.
[191] Thomas Merton, "The Universe as Epiphany" in *Love and Living*, eds. Naomi Burton Stone and Patrick Hart (London: Sheldon, 1979), 183-184 cited in Grummet (2009), 134.

case of Gnosis, in the context of which the gospel cannot possibly thrive."[192] Concerned that his daughter-in-law was captivated by Teilhard's thought, he wrote to her in the same month:

> "Now it seems at first quite harmless […] but then […] he moves on at once from his scientific observations to the unfolding of visions of a cosmos that is rising up from darkness to light; to the concept of a gigantic development in whose context Christ too plays an important role at certain places—but in such a way that he too must accept being evaluated and understood in terms of the context. This is precisely what Gnosis in every age has done with Christianity […] Always new and giant snakes by which the poor gospel of the Old and New Testaments must be let itself be gulped down—and always with eulogies on the way this will help to spread it among the children of the world. Believe me, dear and good Marie-Claire, the *Milieu divin* of your Teilhard de Chardin is a giant gnostic snake of this kind […]"[193]

A number of conservative theologians after Barth have picked up on this colorful expression and on his accusations. Among them is Douglas Farrow, professor of Theology and Christian Thought at McGill University in Montreal. In his 2011 book, he describes Teilhard's theology as "dated, but still popular" saying: "Karl Barth rightly described it as a giant gnostic snake since it remains immanentist through and through."[194] Farrow's concern is that "Christ and Church, indeed Christ and cosmos become confused and run together. This leads inevitably to a distortion of all three but generates a seductive vision of the Church as on the cutting edge of evolution." He accuses Teilhard of "blasphemy" in "overturning the Eucharist" referring to *The Mass on the World* and Teilhard's comments about God seeking humans, working through human lives, divinizing human action and union, cited in Chapter Two of this thesis. Farrow sums up his assessment of Teilhard rather bluntly: "The spirit of Teilhard de Chardin is at once grand and silly, triumphalist and despairing."[195]

Teilhard's use of language can occasionally lead to misunderstandings of its theological basis. Henri De Lubac discusses this in his defense of Teilhard's work as resting within Catholic orthodox tradition. He notes "[…] we must recognize that Père Teilhard sometimes seems unnecessarily to exaggerate the originality of his teaching […] In this enthusiasm for the new prospects opened up by generalized evolution, he over-emphasizes […] the contrast between 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow.' On such occasions, one would like to be able

---

[192] Karl Bath, *Letters* 1961-1968, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, eds. Jurgen Fangmeier and hinrich Stoevesandt, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 119-20 cited in "Karl Barth Society Newsletter" archive.org/stream/karlbarthsociety3120karl/karlbarthsociety2120karl_djvu.txt accessed 8 June 2018.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Douglas Farrow, *Ascension Theology*, (London: T & T Clark International, 2011), 54.
[195] Ibid., 56

to say to him, 'Why do you make it seem as though you want to be an innovator, whereas all you are trying to do is to be a rejuvenator?"[196] De Lubac points out that Teilhard was doing exactly that restorative work, going to biblical and patristic sources for a rejuvenated ontology that did contrast radically with the 'manualist' neo-Thomism that was Catholic theology in Teilhard's time. De Lubac also had sharp words for those who critiqued the concept of a cosmic Christ, saying: "If we hold that 'from the standpoint of human reason the 'cosmic Christ' is necessarily an expression tainted with pantheism and contradictory of a personal God' we are even more certain to be attacking the great Apostle [Paul] while under the impression that we are only criticizing his interpreter."[197]

Comparing Teilhard, Tillich, and Tracy

Unlike Karl Barth, Protestant theologian Paul Tillich finds much in common with Teilhard in seeking to adapt the Christian message to the modern mind, without compromising its 'essential and unique character.' In developing his correlational method, Tillich's goal is to make the Christian faith meaningful to contemporary people, emphasizing the power of biblical symbols, especially the symbol of Christ.[198] His idea of the symbols of an age mediating God to humanity is shared by Teilhard. One can sense Tillich's frustration with a 'too small' institutionalized concept of God in his writing of a 'God above the God of theism.' Like Teilhard, Tillich speaks of a union with that God that retains the individual's self:

> "The acceptance of the God above the God of theism makes us a part of that which is not also a part--but is the ground of the whole. Therefore, our self is not lost in a larger whole, which submerges it in the life of a limited group […] This is why the Church, which stands for the power of being-itself or for the God who transcends the God of the religions, claims to be a mediator of the courage to be. […] A church which raises itself in its message and its devotion to the God above the God of theism without sacrificing its concrete symbols can mediate a courage which takes doubt and meaninglessness into itself."[199]

Tillich read *The Phenomenon of Man* after writing about life and nature in Volume III of his *Systematic Theology*. He realized that "theology must relate its understanding of mankind to an understanding of universal nature, for man is a part of nature and statements about nature underlie every statement about man."[200] He wrote of Teilhard, "It encouraged me greatly to

---

[196] Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (1967), 216.
[197] Henri de Lubac*, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and his Meaning*, 1965, 89.
[198] Paul Allen, *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, T & T Clark, 2012), 185.
[199] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press 1952), 187-8 cited in Allen, *Theological Method*, 185.
[200] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (3 vols.; University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), 5 cited in Grummet (2005), 14.

know that an acknowledged scientist had developed ideas about the dimensions and processes of life so similar to my own. Although I cannot share his rather optimistic vison of the future, I am convinced by his description of the evolutionary process of nature."[201] Perhaps that less optimistic perspective is reflected in Tillich's vocabulary. John Haught notes the different symbolic terminology used by Teilhard and Tillich. Tillich uses earthy terms such as 'ground of being,' 'depth', and 'abyss,' contrasting with Teilhard's 'cosmic Christ' or 'Omega,' and the symbolic forward and upward motions of God creating *ab ante* rather than *a retro*. Despite this difference, Tillich also speaks of a 'right to hope' that completely affirms Teilhard's own emphasis on loving the 'not-yet':

> "Where there is genuine hope, then that for which we hope has already some presence. In some way, the hoped for is at the same time here and not here. It is not yet fulfilled and it may remain unfulfilled. But it is here, in the situation and in ourselves as a power which drives those who hope into the future. There is a beginning here and now. And this beginning drives towards an end. The hope itself, if it is rooted in the reality of something already given, becomes a driving power and makes fulfillment, not certain, but possible."[202]

Hope is a primary concern of theologian David Tracy, whose work focuses on theological method and pluralism. Tracy is concerned with unity in diversity and ways to apply what he calls the 'analogical imagination' to interpret Christian classics in correlation with contemporary situations. To mediate Christianity to a religiously fragmented, secular world, he calls for cosmological theologies to join with liberation theologies in a conversation to reflect "on a central category of the Christian theology of history itself: the category of hope."[203] Tracy cites Teilhard as "merely one well-known instance of this increasingly fruitful relationship."[204] Interestingly, Tracy shares some of Teilhard's expressions:

> He describes the theological vision "now recognized to include not only the always-already reality of the incarnation but also the not-yet realities manifested in the ministry and the cross and hope for all history and nature disclosed in the resurrection. It is the stark dialectic of this always/already/not-yet Christic actuality which can inform all Christian theological construals of God, self, and world."[205]

---

[201] Ibid., 5, cited in "A Theology for Evolution: Haught, Teilhard, and Tillich" in Zygon, vol. 40, no. 3 September2005, 737.
[202] "The Right to Hope: A Sermon" in *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries* (London: Collins, 1987), 327 cited in Grummet, 2005, 260.
[203] David Tracy, *On Naming the Present: God, Hermeneutics and Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 78-79.
[204] Ibid., 75.
[205] Ibid., 80.

Scientific critique of Teilhard

Teilhard's language, not just his French vocabulary and syntax, but his philosophical language of continental phenomenology and his use of science as analogy caused problems in communicating to the English-speaking world of analytical science. In a now famous book review in the journal *Mind* in 1961, British Nobel prize-winning research biologist Sir Peter Medawar wrote a scathing critique of *The Phenomenon of Man*. Although he makes some valid claims, Medawar makes evident his cultural biases, biases that would be unacceptable in scientific journalism today: "French is not a language that lends itself naturally to the opaque and ponderous idiom of nature-philosophy, and Teilhard has accordingly resorted to the use of that tipsy, euphoristic prose-poetry which is one of the more tiresome manifestations of the French spirit."[206]

American paleontologist and writer Stephen Jay Gould used Medawar's essay as a basis for his critique of Teilhard. Gould, who was agnostic and opposed the concepts of socio-biology and the evolving noosphere, perpetrated unfounded (and later proven false) accusations of Teilhard's involvement in the Dawson Piltdown Hoax. In 1997 Gould wrote an essay titled "Non-overlapping Magesteria" in which he proposes an 'entirely conventional resolution' to the conflict between science and religion: that each is a separate domain where one form of teaching holds appropriate tools for meaningful discourse and resolution.[207]

> [In NOMA], "science tries to document the factual character of the natural world, and to develop theories that coordinate and explain these facts. Religion, on the other hand, operates in the equally important, but utterly different realm of human purposes, meanings, and values—subjects that the factual domain of science might illuminate, but never resolve."[208]

Gould was co-author of a landmark paper in paleontological studies developing the theory of punctuated equilibrium, the observed long periods of stasis in the fossil record after the appearance of a species. Associated with periods of great environmental change, a 'punctuated' rapid splitting into new species can occur. Contrasting with phyletic gradualism, Gould's concept of punctuated equilibrium actually strengthens the analogical use of Teilhard's evolution of consciousness in liberation theology, in that it allows for periods of rapid evolutionary change to occur in circumstances of crisis. Gould himself, despite his avowed separation of social evolution from biology, remarked that "his leftist upbringing and participation in the Civil Rights

---

[206] Peter Medawar, "Critical Notice" in *Mind* (Oxford University Press, 1961) accessed online January 22, 2018, bactra.org/Medawar/phenomenon-of-man.html, 1.
[207] Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magesteria" *Natural History* 106 (March 1997),16-22.
[208] Ibid.

Movement enabled him to recognize the importance of 'punc eq's' patterns of sudden and discontinuous evolutionary change."[209] At the time of the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001, Gould lived in Soho, in lower Manhattan. Despite the fact that he was fighting cancer, his words in the last article he wrote for *Natural History* were optimistic, and ironically, very similar to Teilhard's writings on the evolution of humanity:

> "Gould noted the high relative frequency of human decency in the weeks following 9/11. 'Ground zero,' he noted, 'is a focal point for a vast web of bustling goodness, channeling uncountable deeds of kindness from an entire planet. […]' Gould devoted his final column in *Natural History* to his grandfather [a Jewish immigrant in New York in 1901, who raised his children to value fairness and kindness.] Gould argued that the countless ordinary stories like [his grandfather's] 'will outshine, in the brightness of hope and goodness, the mad act of spectacular destruction that poisoned his life's centennial.' Gould closed his essay with these words [written under the rubric 'Tough Hope']: 'We will win now because ordinary humanity holds a triumphant edge in millions of good people over each evil psychopath. But we will only prevail if we can mobilize this latent goodness into permanent vigilance and action.'"[210]

The rest of this chapter will examine ways that Teilhard's ontology is being used to 'mobilize latent goodness into permanent vigilance and action.'

4.2. Teilhard Today

There is a resurgent interest in Teilhard's works in the 21st century. A Google search offers more than one million, two hundred thousand results for 'Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.' Teilhard has made world news recently: *Forbes* magazine, as well as many other news sources in 2017 told the story of leaders at a meeting of the Pontifical Council for Culture in Rome officially requesting that Pope Francis lift the monitum from Teilhard's work. In November, the council met to discuss the theme "The Future of Humankind: New Challenges to Anthropology." An excerpt from the letter to Pope Francis states the importance of Teilhard's writings today:

> "In discussing models of Christian anthropology that can best fit the current situation, we highlighted the unavoidable necessity to take into account the essential characteristics of the modern cosmological model, in particular its holistic evolution that relates our own consciousness to its history. […] The discussion advocated a reconciliation among science, philosophy, theology and the humanities in the quest for a credible anthropology. On several occasions […] the seminal thoughts of the Jesuit Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, anthropologist and eminent spiritual thinker, were evoked. We unanimously agreed that, albeit some of his writings might be

[209] Matthew Lau, "Remeasuring Stephen Jay Gould" Jacobin 5 May 2017, accessed online 4 June 2018, https://jacobinmag.com/2017/05/stephen-jay-gould-science-race-evolution-climate-change.
[210] Ibid.

> open to constructive criticism, his prophetic vision has been and is inspiring theologians and scientists. Explicit references to his work can be found in several magisterial documents, from Popes Paul VI to John Paul II to Benedict XVI and to Your Holiness.[…] We believe that this [waiving of the monitum] not only will acknowledge the genuine effort of the Jesuit to reconcile the scientific vision of the universe with Christian eschatology, but it will represent a formidable stimulus to all philosophers, theologians, and scientists of good will to cooperate towards a Christian anthropological model that, along the lines of the Encyclical *Laudato Si`*, fits naturally in the wonderful warp and weft of the Cosmos."[211]

On May 21, 2018, Teilhard's words about the power of love to create a planetary shift as great as the discovery of controlled fire were heard by millions around the world in the Rev. Michael Curry's sermon at the royal wedding at St. George's Chapel. Hearing an African-American priest speak about the power of love to heal and create union drew tremendous enthusiasm from listeners, expressed in 40,000 Tweets per minute, as people responded to Teilhard's Christian vision of hope.

At the 50th anniversary of Teilhard's death in 2005, celebrations of his work were held at the United Nations in New York City. World leaders sent messages to this event, whose speakers included the director of UNESCO, the head of the UN Environmental Program, and Michael Camdessus, former head of the International Monetary Fund. Both anti-poverty advocate Jeffrey Sachs, director of Earth Institute at Columbia University, and Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel prize-winner Wangari Maathai spoke with urgency about the application of Teihard's ideas toward solutions to social and environmental crises of Africa.[212] Teilhard's influence in west Africa continues. In her article "The Global Reach of Teilhard's Legacy," Charlotte Walker-Said names two Cameroonian Catholic theologians, Jean-Marc Ela and Fabien Eboussi-Boulaga, who found in Teilhard "a potentially persuasive code to which all African Christians, Protestant as well as Catholic, could adhere in order to build consensus around a Christian approach to decolonization."[213] Walker-Said notes that although many of Teilhard's works emerged in the period of decolonization, his theology had an even greater impact in the 1980s and 1990s, when the African clergy sought to interpret Christianity in a way that would bring coherence to a period of economic problems and political unrest. "What is striking to the scholar

---

[211] Vatican Pontifical Council for Culture website, accessed 10 June 2018, http://www.cultura.va/content/dam/cultura/docs/comunicatistampa/Letter%20to%20the%20Pope%20to%20waive%20the%20Monitum%20on%20Teilhard%27s%20works.pdf.

[212] Arthur Fabel, "Teilhard 2005: Retrospects and Prospects" *European Journal of Science and Theology*, Dec. 2005, Vol 1., No. 4, 22-23.

[213] Charlotte Walker-Said, "The Global Reach of Teilhard's Legacy" *The Teilhard Project,* accessed 18 June 2017, www.teilhardproject.com/global-reach-teilhard's-legacy.

of African Christianity is Teilhard de Chardin's ability to help African theologians locate the 'indigenous' or the 'local' in Christianity and incorporate it into the world system."[214]

The Teilhard Project is a two-hour television film on Teilhard's life, currently in production, to be broadcast in 2020 through the Oregon Public Broadcasting company in the United States.[215] The project will be the first English film on Teilhard in fifty years. Its website features film clips of Teilhard's life, biographical information and blog space, where people can share information about events, ask questions, and participate in the promotion and funding for the documentary.

Teilhard scholar Ilia Delio has created *The Omega Center*, "an online forum for education, formation, and inspiration in the converging fields of science and theology." Thematic essays and forums make available exchange of information about Teilhard's work. Teilhard Associations operate in cities throughout the world, fostering discussion and presentation of Teilhard's thought. These associations' impact moves rapidly from local to global via online communications.

Teilhard's work continues to inspire in the world of the arts: a graphic novel, several documentaries, piano pieces, a symphony, choral pieces, a stained-glass window, paintings, sculptures, and even architecture and plays have been created in honor of his work. A recent play in France, written by a doctor, André Daleux, who is also the director of the Centre Teilhard de Chardin in Lille, is based on Teilhard's writings. Daleux's play brings Teilhard's Christian ontology together with a French translation of Canadian author Joseph Boyden's novel, *Born with a Tooth*, about Cree cosmology and spirituality in northern Quebec. French actor and director Jean Quercy co-authored the play. On *The Teilhard Project* website, a writer asks if anyone has seen the script and can translate it into English. In the world of interconnected thought, is this a Cree drama, a Canadian novel, a Quebec story, or a Parisian play? It is one small example of the culturally interconnected and evolving noosphere.

On a much larger scale, *Journey of the Universe*, a film with companion book, by Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker (Yale University Press, 2011) depicts the evolution of the universe that inspired Teilhard. There is a website about the project with links to a TED talk and the book, *Living Cosmology: Christian Responses to Journey of the Universe* (Orbis Books, 2016.)

---

[214] Ibid.

[215] The Teilhard Project, accessed 9 June 2018, http://www.teilhardproject.com/the-project/.

Teilhard's theology continues to be studied and discussed by many scholars, including David Grummet, Ilia Delio, Ursula King, John Haught and Kathleen Duffy. His ideas are disseminated through daily email readings and meditations by Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation. Cynthia Bourgeault, Episcopal priest, Teilhard scholar and a faculty member of the Center, recently wrote a series titled "Teilhard for Troubled Times" in which she writes:

> "The haunting prayer woven into Teilhard's reflection on faith in *The Divine Milieu* makes clear that it is no cheap optimism he is dispensing here, but a wrenchingly honest acknowledgement of our human predicament and an unfailing fidelity to seeing God in every aspect of the earth, even in our human suffering."[216]

Teilhard's concepts of convergence and complexity in evolution are supported by several scientists. Simon Conway Morris, author of *The Runes of Evolution: How the Universe Became Self-Aware* (2015), is a professor of Paleobiology at the University of Cambridge. He is known for his studies of the Burgess Shale. Conway Morris, a Christian, is interested in evolutionary convergence and its implications; he spoke on this topic in his Gifford lectures of 2007. A critic of materialism and reductionism, Simon Conway Morris writes that his research findings do not lead him to believe that evolution excludes the possibility of God. He is working on an online mapping project that will allow access to thousands of examples of evolutionary convergence.[217]

Although they self-identify as atheist, two scientists have developed research that supports important concepts of Teilhard's. One is Steven Pinker, Harvard professor of cognitive psychology and linguist. Pinker's data analysis on war, homicide, pollution, and poverty indicates improvement in each of these categories over the past thirty years. He warns that progress is not inevitable, but that challenges such as climate change should be regarded as motivation to problem-solve, to apply human knowledge to enhance life, rather than signs of inevitable catastrophe. His 2018 book, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*, offers evidence to support evolution of the noosphere toward greater human collaboration.

If Pinker's research reveals human social progress, Philosopher Thomas Nagel reinforces Teilhard's insights on the importance of directionality in the evolution of human consciousness. Nagel's book, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* is not overtly about defending the idea of a creator God, but it echoes

---

[216] Cynthia Bourgeault, "Richard Rohr Meditation: Teilhard for Troubled Times" *Center for Action and Contemplation*, Meditations@cac.org, October 15, 2017.
[217] Simon Conway Morris, *Map of Life,* accessed 11 June 2018, www. Mapoflife.org.

Teilhard's writing. Nagel sees thought, emotion, and idea as something that actually exists—something that is beyond the electrical firings of neurons in the brain. If thoughts arising from living things have a distinct realm of existence, then strictly material theories about the origin of life cannot be correct. Any theory of the universe will need to demonstrate "how the natural order is disposed to generate beings capable of understanding it." This theory would be teleological, a "programmed or built-in tendency in the universe toward the particular goal of fulfilling the possibilities of mentality […] Each of our lives is a part of the lengthy process of the universe gradually waking up and becoming aware of itself."[218]

Finally, physicist David Bohm's (1917-1992) work with quantum physics and the idea of implicate order contributes to understanding Teilhard's concept of union and wholes made of up centered and joined parts. Bohm saw the entire universe as a single indivisible unit, whose underlying structure is not mechanical, but relational and in movement. He writes in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*:

> "The notion that all these fragments are separately existent is evidently an illusion, and this illusion cannot do other than lead to endless conflict and confusion. Indeed, the attempt to live according to the notion that the fragments are really separate is, in essence, what has led to the growing series of extremely urgent crises that is confronting us today."[219]

Critique of Teilhard's work also continues—less about the issue of his orthodoxy or his evolutionary science, and more about the application of his ideas to environmental protection. Lisa Sideris, in *Consecrating Science: Wonder, Knowledge and the Natural World* (2017) questions the assumption that a meta-narrative will bring the world together in a shared ethic of responsibility for the planet's well-being. She is concerned that science is being placed in a consecrated role, replacing religions with pure rationality and a 'Big History' that is overwriting what she calls 'petite narratives.' She cites Teilhard as a key thinker, a source and inspiration for these Universe stories, but bases her understanding of Teilhard solely on secular-scientific interpretations of his work. In doing so, she overlooks Teilhard's wonder at the beauty and complexity of nature, the awe that inspired his interest in science. Seemingly unaware of Teilhard's explicitly Christian writings, she does not acknowledge Teilhard's message of interconnection through bonds of love and action motivated by God. Sideris fights hard against

---

[218] Richard Brody, "Thomas Nagel: Thoughts Are Real" *The New Yorker*, (July 16, 2013) accessed online June 11 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/thomas-nagel-thoughts-are-real.
[219] David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1-2, cited in Ilia Delio, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 29.

the idea that we are living in the Anthropocene era, an era where the human is placed too much in the center of creation. I argue, on the contrary, that Teilhard observes the crucial role of humans in the future of the planet and wishes to restore the sense of 'humanity created in the image of God,' a concept that faded when Darwin introduced his theory of evolution. In Teilhard's writings, this privileged evolutionary position of humans is both 'la *grandeur et la gravité*' –the greatness, the gift--and yet the grave responsibility that humanity bears in its capacity to control the future evolution of so many systems on earth. He addresses the need for humans to recognize:

> "the obvious source of an increasing responsibility; since, […] besides consciousness and evil, there is also *solidarity*, and these are the three magnitudes that cannot escape the necessity of increasing (in intensity, even if not, in the case of evil, in quantity) simultaneously with an increase in the organic arrangement, both particulate and global, of a convergent system."[220]

4.3. Cultivating Vision: Praxis

Given the difficulty of understanding Teilhard's language and the need to read his works fully, consideration must be given to ways that it can be interpreted and practiced. Teilhard wrote several times about transforming the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius to make them understandable and vibrant in the lives of contemporary seekers. He wrote to his superior general in October of 1951 saying, "You can count on me to work for the Kingdom of God, which is the only thing I can see and that matters to me in Science."[221] Continuing, he wrote that Ignatius composed "exercises designed to conquer one's self and one's disordered affections; I dream of exercises to shatter the narrowness of one's views, one's desires, one's egoism." In a letter from Peking in June of 1932, he wrote: "The whole theory of the Supernatural […] is discussed in a field of thought that most people have left behind them. It is essential to transpose it into a system where things are represented in a way that is intelligible and living to us."[222]

Louis M. Savary, a Jesuit for thirty years, has worked for decades to make Teilhard understandable to those outside of academia. Savary holds doctorates both in mathematical statistics applied to the social sciences and in spirituality and theology. Two of his books, *The Divine Milieu Explained* and *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de*

---

[220] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "The Evolution of Responsibility" *AE*, 212.
[221] Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* trans. René Hague (London: William Collins Sons & Ltd., 1967), 118.
[222] Ibid., 120.

Chardin, are tools for teaching Teilhard's thought with spiritual exercises for cultivating the Ignatian vision: seeing God in all things; being both contemplative and active in the world. His website, *Teilhard for Beginners*, offers more information and links to resources.[223] Savary describes *The Divine Milieu* as "an utterly contemporary and revolutionary" book of spirituality, yet "Christian in its roots and to its core."

> "It is joyful, hopeful, and full of enthusiasm, as any Christian spirituality should be. It expresses a love for nature, a delight in scientific discoveries, a rejoicing in human progress, and an underlying, almost childlike trust in a benevolent universe evolving in the unconditional love of a benevolent and all-forgiving God."[224]

Savary's book stands alone, but he suggests that it serves best as a companion text to Teilhard's *The Divine Milieu*. Citing Luke 8:21, where Jesus states that his family consists of those who 'hear the word of God and do it,' Savary created a book that would help people to practice Teilhard's way of seeing and acting through love. Few writers have tried to translate Teilhard's ideas into spiritual practice, except perhaps, Thomas Berry, who applied Teilhard's concepts to environmental protection and sustainability. Savary brings attention to the central focus of *The Divine Milieu*: Responding to God's love for the world. He offers a brief discussion of John 3:16, noting that Teilhard emphasizes the first half: If God so loves the world, we must also. Savary words it simply: "[…] the best way to open your eyes to this divine milieu is to put all your effort and strength into loving and serving this evolving world."[225] He takes the reader through *The Divine Milieu* by paragraph and section, following its outline and providing commentary. After each section, he offers a spiritual reflection to help 'personalize and concretize' Teilhard's insights.

"The History of Your Hand" is a spiritual exercise that uses analogy to deepen understanding of Teilhard's concept of the divinization of action as participation in the Body of Christ. Thoughtfully reading through it, one is taken through the evolutionary process with the human hand as a visual example. "Your hand contains the story of our planet's evolution. In its first stages, the planet Earth was a fiery molten ball of metals and gases. Some of those same metals and gases are essential to the bones and blood in your hand today." Savary describes the mineral components, the eighty percent water content, the cells and the independent microscopic life forms living on the hand's skin. Thought allows use of the hand as both a tool

---

[223] Louis Savary, accessed March 12, 2015, www.teilhardforbeginners.com.
[224] Louis Savary, *The Divine Milieu Explained: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* (New York: Paulist Press: 2007), x.
[225] Ibid., xvii.

and as a means of expression. “Finally, Earth gave birth to spirituality. Your hand expresses the feelings of your spirit, as when you bless someone, hold their face so you can kiss them, or grasp the Eucharistic bread.”[226]

Teilhard’s journals and letters often refer to his ‘making the Exercises’ on his yearly Jesuit retreats. By the end of World War I, he was more than ever aware of the importance of focused contemplation and action in the development of his Christian vision and practice:

> “I am now more sharply aware that for the rest of my life my task is to develop within myself, humbly, faithfully, doggedly—and at the same time to impart it as much as possible to others—the sort of mysticism that makes one seek passionately for God in the heart of every substance and every action. Never have I so clearly seen how God alone, and no personal effort, can open our eyes to this light and preserve this vision in us. And never, on the other hand, have I understood so fully how much the practice of this particular science of divinizing life calls for the diligent co-operation of every form of activity I engage in. It needs the sacraments, and prayer, and study: all these directed to the same concrete, very precise, end.”[227]

It was from this point of view that Louis Savary wrote *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.* Savary begins by acknowledging the impact of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*. The techniques of prayer, the contemplation employing the senses and imagination, methods of discernment, and the idea of journaling have made the *Exercises* an evolutionary force for spirituality ever since the sixteenth century. Savary’s book follows, in general, the basic structure and organization of the original one. It differs in that the evolution of life in the cosmos is integrated into the idea of ‘building the Mystical Body of Christ.’ Savary makes the Kingdom Meditation vividly contemporary, describing building the Kingdom of God under the leadership of Jesus as ‘The Christ Project.’

> “In the first part of the kingdom meditation, instead of an earthly king, Teilhard might ask us to imagine ten thousand leaders, men and women spread all over the cities and villages of the Earth, people of all races and classes, of all religions and no religion, young and old, rich and poor, in storefronts and boardrooms, in homes and churches, in classrooms and picket lines, in laboratories and offices, who represent ten thousand different caring groups, all rising above their daily difficulties, finding ten thousand different ways to improve Earth and the beings on it. […] These people are committed to achieving human rights, feeding the hungry, ending poverty, […]”[228]

---

[226] Ibid., 71-72.
[227] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Making of a Mind* cited in Henri de Lubac, *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and his Meaning* trans. René Hague (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1965), 86.
[228] Louis Savary, *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 77.

Savary cites Paul Hawken's research finding "at least two million organizations worldwide—people with good hearts—working toward ecological sustainability and issues related to social justice":

> "These separate organizations form a global, leaderless conglomerate that reaches to every corner of the world. This movement is 'dispersed, inchoate, and fiercely independent.' It is taking place in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, companies, deserts, fisheries, slums, and even hotel rooms. From an evolutionary perspective, this movement is, without a doubt, the most complex association of human beings ever assembled. Most people know only the organizations they happen to be linked with. But its global database is mammoth. […] How it appears to function as a coherent system is even more mysterious."[229] (Basic Principle 8)[230]

'What I see' says Hawken, are ordinary and some not-so-ordinary individuals willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in an attempt to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world.'[231] "For those who have eyes to see," writes Savary in *The New Exercises,* "collectively, this unnamed movement, this healing life force striving for social justice and planetary concern under and through and around national boundaries, is the Spirit at work in the Christ Project. It is a conspiracy of love."[232]

The Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal has made available a handbook combining Savary's *New Spiritual Exercises* with John Veltri's *Orientations* for those directing the Exercises.[233] Savary's materials are introducing people to Teilhard's vision and opening possibilities for practicing it as part of a Christian spirituality in Quebec and elsewhere.

Conclusion:

Despite the difficult circumstances of its publishing, Teilhard's work is relevant to our time and interest in it is growing. The statement of the Pontifical Council on Teilhard's full official rehabilitation makes it clear that his work is essential for expressing Christian cosmology in the 21st century. Louis Savary's texts and spiritual exercises provide a starting point for bringing

---

[229] Ibid., 75.
[230] Ibid., 13. Savary lists "Seventeen Basic Teilhardian Principles that Give Rise to the New Spiritual Exercises." #8 is "At present, evolution is focused in the 'noosphere.'"
[231] Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 4 cited in Louis Savary (2010), 75.
[232] Louis Savary, 2010, 76.
[233] Jonathan Kilgannon et al., *The Spiritual Exercises for Today: Experiencing God in the Style of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, John Veltri SJ, Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, and Louis Savary* (Copyright 2016. Johnathan Kilgannon, Julian Paparella, Donald Paré.)

Teilhard's ontology to a wide audience of seekers.[234] In Quebec, using varied approaches, Teilhard's work can be presented to groups already practicing contextual theology or to interested people outside of a church context. Book and film discussion groups can be developed, using a Teilhardian hermeneutic, with care always to respect the linguistic and cultural context of the group. One example out of hundreds of workshops, retreats and special events focused on Teilhard's theology: a cosmic pilgrimage, held at a church in the city of Quebec this year, as part of a 'Five Days of Christian Prayer' project. Participants walked through a measured labyrinth representing billions of evolutionary cosmic years, listened to a talk on Teilhard, discussed his thought using Savary's list of Teilhardian concepts, and reflected on God, creation, and purpose.

[234] As of this writing, Louis Savary's books have not been translated. I have begun an unofficial French translation of *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,* but much remains to be done.

Conclusion: A Divine Milieu for a *Naufrage*

This thesis contributes an original analysis of spiritual seeking in a specific secular culture in the 21st century and offers Teilhard's ontology as one possible response to that seeking. I began by proposing a connection between two things: a Québécois documentary film, *L'Heureux naufrage: l'ère du vide d'une société post-chrétienne,* and *The Divine Milieu*. One is a film documenting the spiritual void in secular Quebec, a quest for meaning and connection and higher values, and a reconsideration of the question of God. The other is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's story of an evolving universe created by and charged with God, and an earth evolving in the direction of greater connection toward higher consciousness—a sacred ontology of being-in-union. Findings from research into secular theory, the United Nations Millennium Project, the papal encyclical *Laudato Si`* and the work of many theologians, scientists, and social historians have made it possible to bring these two stars, as Teilhard would have put it, into conjunction.

Research into Charles Taylor's secular theory reveals that historically, religion does not disappear in times of great social change; instead, its forms evolve to meet new social and spiritual needs. The United Nations' Millennium Project's "Fifteen Global Challenges" and the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si`* demonstrate the need for a metanarrative powerful enough to unite people and motivate collaborative, self-sacrificing behavior to bring about social justice and environmental sustainability. This need is evidenced by environmental scientists as well as theologians and is supported by a resurgence of books and films with spiritual themes, such as Yann Martel's *Life of Pi.*

Teilhard's ontology, giving primacy to union and to evolving consciousness offers a way to re-envision Christianity and to mediate hope to the secular world of fragilized and fragmented beliefs. He sees science and religion as contributing to one another and states that due to creation by God and the incarnation of Christ, the cosmos in which we live is a divine milieu. A unifying transcendent and personal force creates through evolution, drawing creation toward a culminating union with itself, *Omega*, the cosmic Christ, God both immanent and transcendent. Humans can integrate their actions into a higher consciousness of spiritual unity and are called to love: to love the universe, the invisible, and the 'not-yet.' One hundred years ago, Teilhard wondered who would restore Christian faith, hope, and love to the disheartened postwar world in an era of technological invention that increasingly rejected formal religion. Teilhard, as a philosophical theologian, brings his Ignatian outlook, his paleontological perspective and understanding of evolutionary biology to the 20th century *ressourcement* project. His story, officially suppressed by the conservative Catholic leadership of the 1930s- to 1960, eventually

was received and became part of the story of the Second Vatican Council. In 2017, the Pontifical Council on Culture has stated the importance of Teilhard's prophetic work. His ideas have been referenced by Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis, and continue to inspire theologians and scientists today.

Guillaume Tremblay's *L'Heureux naufrage* portrays a quest for meaning in Quebec that develops from a deep sense of emptiness and a desire for deeper values for living. The film provides a base to explore connections between Teilhard's sacred ontology and the 21st century search for meaning in this specific secular culture. I have presented Teilhard's theology as intersecting with personalism and activist thinking in the historic Catholic Action movement that lies at the roots of the Quiet Revolution; his thinking is part of a line of development of Christian thought in Quebec. I have shown that Teilhard's ontology offers a model for the practice of contextual 'liberation' theology in Quebec today. Teilhard's *ressourcemen*t thought is a possible means for Québécois to reconcile with their Catholic heritage—a need expressed in the documentary. His concept of 'creative union,' union that differentiates, provides a vision for identity and multiculturalism for Quebec's secular society today.

Developing Practice: Further Research

Teilhard's life mission was to "teach how to see God everywhere, to see him in all that is most hidden, most solid, and most ultimate in the world." Beyond the limitations of my thesis, work remains to be done in developing methods of teaching Teilhard's way of seeing to those outside the academy. Louis Savary's condensation of Teilhard's work into a list of principles offers a useful approach to understanding a complex and far-reaching oeuvre. Savary summarizes Teilhard's evolutionary construct by naming it the law of "Attraction-Connection-Complexity-Consciousness." His spiritual exercises develop a way to understand and practice Christian spirituality through Teilhard's vision. Translation of Savary's works into French would make possible its use not only in Quebec and France, but in much of Africa as well.

Two areas of further research seem promising for a Teilhardian praxis of Christian spirituality: embodied Christian spirituality and developmental psychology. Teilhard's theology of the body, recovered from ancient Christian sources, offers a way to see the body and its relationship to spirit, as "microcosm reflecting in itself a cosmic story."[235] John Main's Christian

[235] Andrew Louth, "The Body in Western Catholic Christianity" in Religion and the Body, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 129 cited in David Grummet, 2005, 264. Grummet notes that Teilhard's determination to develop a coherent theology of the body is lacking in mainstream contemporary Christian religion, with the result that seekers move away from Christian spirituality to 'privatized' forms of embodied spirituality in yoga or other practices.

contemplative prayer, using a mantra, might be a way of connecting Teilhard's theology of the body to active contemplation.

Interdisciplinary research into the work of epistemologist and developmental psychologist Robert Kegan could contribute to the understanding of individual human psychological evolution. Kegan, professor of adult learning and professional development at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, has charted the evolving upward movement of consciousness, describing how the self transforms through the subject-object relationship. Kegan was motivated by the question, "What order of consciousness will allow human beings to respond positively to the demands of a pluralistic postmodern culture?"[236] He posits a 'drive' within living forms, including humans, to shape reality and create ever more satisfactory connections or relationships with the universe. When asked about the source of this drive, Kegan responds that it can be seen as a religious question and that "God moves all this—where God is the name of the ceaseless, restless, creative flow of energy in the universe."[237]

'Fortunate' Shipwrecks

How might the shipwreck of religion be fortunate? Through *L'Heureux naufrage*, Guillaume Tremblay's sense of a religious *naufrage*, or 'shipwreck' has grown into a documentary about the search for meaning in contemporary Quebec—and this speaks to thousands of viewers. The fortunate aspect of the 'shipwreck' of institutionalized religion is that it breaks open the horizon of exploration. Tremblay's film reinforces a sense of communion in the search. Many Quebecois, no longer content with bobbing in their individual lifejackets, are reaching out to others –and may be creating a life-raft to share—not yet a fully-formed spirituality, but a statement that they are searching, and an acknowledgement that they have been profoundly influenced by their Christian heritage.

Out of his own sense of being spiritually 'shipwrecked,' Quebec author, Yann Martel wrote his story about a shipwreck—a world-acclaimed story and an award-winning film. Martel's comments in a 2005 interview resonate with many comments in *L'Heureux naufrage*. Asked whether his book, *Life of Pi,* reflects his own spiritual quest, Martel responds:

> "Like most people, I am trying to make sense of life. […] What is my role here? Every writer comes from a certain context. I had an agnostic upbringing in Quebec, in a strongly anti-clerical, anti-religious culture. At university, where I studied philosophy,

[236] Robert Kegan, interviewed by Elizabeth Debold: "Epistemology, Fourth-order Consciousness, and the Subject-Object Relationship or…How the self Evolves." Accessed online November 20, 2017, http://image.jesuits.org/OIS/media/171026%20Epistemology%20and%20the%20Fourth%20Order%20of%20Consciousness.pdf

[237] Ibid.

> part of my training was to cut to shreds all proofs of God. A spiritual perspective was missing from my life and so I started attending mass at a Catholic church."[238]

Martel read the major texts of several religions and traveled to holy sites throughout the world. He describes his view of life as presented in his work:

> "Like '*pi*', life is not finite. And so, I didn't make the title, *The* Life of Pi: I deliberately left out the definite article […] This book is not escapist fiction. It's to do with discovering life through a religious perspective. Religion doesn't deny reality, it explains it. Secular critics ask, 'How can you believe?' This question doesn't faze people with faith. Rationality is only part of the picture. Science and religion don't have to collide—I see them as complementary, rather than contradictory. Science can be a gateway to the greater mystery."

In three simple sentences, Martel summarizes his message: "Life is a story. You can choose your story. A story with God is the better story."[239]

The Divine Milieu: A Story with God for the 21st Century

Teilhard offers the story of the evolving creation of the universe and vivid imagery for an active, ecumenical, multi-faith Christian spirituality. The mystery of life and the beauty and intricacy of the creation process foster reverence. The concept of self-transcendence through self-giving love for the purpose of unity and in the name of a higher consciousness is an invitation to all who love. This removes the focus from conversion and 'membership' to the recognition that all who love belong. In the *divine milieu*, evangelization becomes living in love with the knowledge that there is something sacred in all being and that its Source is higher than all being. The Christ-gift that Christianity brings to the world is the faith in God, who is love, both transcendent and immanent. Teilhard elaborates this concept through his emphasis on the continual Eucharist, where matter is in process of becoming spirit and the energy of love is, unlike matter, not subject to entropy.

Teilhard predicted a global convergence of thought and spirit. One small example of this growing tendency is a free Internet application called *Insight Timer.*[240] In addition to the timer for prayer, it offers music, mini courses in guided meditation and Christian contemplative prayer. This app provides connection to a worldwide community of meditators. The data of the individual user's meditation history is recorded, to be shared or not. When an individual completes their timed session, the screen shifts to a page of avatars, small circular images

[238] Yann Martel, interview by Jennie Renton, accessed 14 May 2015, htpp://textualities.net/jennie-renton/yann-martel-interview.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Christopher and Nicholas Plowman bought the app in 2015 and removed the paywall. It was originally developed in 2008 by Brad Fullman. Accessed 15 June 2018, https://insighttimer.com/.

representing all the *Insight Timer* users in the world who were meditating at the same time. Touch an avatar and it expands to a rectangle with a notice, for example: 'Dave in Melbourne, Australia finished meditating one minute ago.' One can then send Dave the simple message, "Thank you for meditating with me." The community of *Insight Time*r users now numbers three million. At any time of day or night, one becomes aware that as one is praying, thousands of others are, too, at the same time, in places as varied as the Netherlands and Brazil. This is not just a vague sense of world connection, but is situated in the very particular, concretely, in named individuals. There is a 'Nearby' feature, which sorts to the people meditating in the vicinity of the individual's own location. Awareness that all of these individuals have consciously decided to sit in the stillness of their individual-and-yet-shared, present moment, in and across time zones, brings into view a growing world consciousness of spiritual connection.

Creative Union

I suggest that the most important contribution that Teilhard offers, not just for Quebec, but for the secular world today, is a model of immanence, union, and transcendence built through bonds of love. He uses the analogy of a human molecule and sees humanity as linked to the body of the cosmic Christ. He sees love as the creative energy of the universe, building greater and more complexly conscious systems. The model of union that Teilhard demonstrates is a bonding that enhances the individual even as it embraces the other and births a new complexity. This is crucial for our times. It is a model that offers a path to overcome both dualistic thinking and absorption into the greater whole. In the case of Quebec, it would be an interesting model for re-imagining language and political divisions, as well as multi-cultural and religious differences. Union that differentiates makes possible ecumenism, multi-faith, social justice, and environmental initiatives.

Jean Daniélou expresses the essential implications of Teilhard's thought for Christian spirituality in a secular world:

> "The meaning and significance of the work of Teilhard is thus before all to find a way out of a certain number of impasses, to re-establish channels. This is to be done in respect to the opposition of science and faith, the unification of the world and personal life. It brings back the possibility of unity to a fragmented world, and does so not only in terms of divine, but indeed also human, hope. Or rather, it shows that human hope is indeed a duty, that it is the flesh of divine hope, body striving after spirit. His work restores the catholic harmony of nature and grace.
>
> Looked at another way, Teilhard's message has two aspects. He recalls to the Christian the seriousness of terrestrial tasks […] But he recalls to the non-Christian that the service of God forms part of terrestrial tasks, that is to say, that worship is a constitutive dimension of the human, of the city, of the cosmos. His work is the most radical condemnation of false secularism, the impassioned contestation of the claim

> that a city without God could be an authentic city. The value of his humanism lies in its being integral."[241]

Teilhard's sacred story of being is an integral Christian theological expression that addresses the complexity and rapid changes of life in the 21st century. It is an inclusive expression of hope, whose power lies in the anchoring of evolutionary science in a transcendent and immanent God in whom all beings participate, centered on Christ's love, enabled to love one another. His ontology offers the potential to restore sacred meaning to secular life and to motivate ethical human action toward a holistic future.

[241] Jean Daniélou, "The Meaning and Significance of Teilhard de Chardin" *Communio* 15 (Fall 1988), 359-360. Originally "La signification de Teilhard" *Etudes* 312 (February 1962).

Glossary

Teilhard's Terms and Neologisms

- **Activities** Things humans do by choice or by effort, in contrast to **passivities,** things that happen to us, or that we must endure. In *The Divine Milieu*, Teilhard writes about the *divinization* of human activities and passivities. We can choose (always through God's grace) to perform an action of *growth*, aligning with evolution through the animating centre (God,) who is drawing all humanity to unite in love for others. Acts that turn away from God and others are *activities of diminishment.*

- **Cosmic Christ** The term Teilhard uses to describe the risen Christ, whose body is continually evolving along with the consciousness in the universe, because he is the Centre of the universe and is drawing all things to himself, in love. Teilhard uses Paul's epistles from an evolutionary perspective.

- **Christogenesis** Christ as the cosmic Person, the communal Whole, coming to birth in evolution. All of creation is centered in Christ, is a part of him, and as consciousness evolves in the created universe the Body of the Cosmic Christ is built.

- **Divinization** The sanctification of human activities and passivities is called *divinization* in *The Divine Milieu.* Teilhard cites Paul's exhortation to "do everything as though you are doing it for the Lord Jesus Christ." Teilhard uses a syllogism to argue for the enduring quality of our 'opus.'[242]

- **Hominization** The evolution of humans with the capacity for reflective thinking and collaboration can be seen as the conscious reflection of the universe in the human. Teilhard described this as 'evolution become conscious of itself.'

- **Law of Complexity-Consciousness** Teilhard's axial law, stating that evolution is the process of attraction of individual entities, (such as elementary particles) to bond, and in doing so, to become more complex and more conscious. Louis M. Savary expands the wording of the law to clarify Teilhard's evolutionary vision, calling it the Law of Attraction-Connection-Complexity-Consciousness.[243]

- **Milieu** This concept emphasizes the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of God through his presence in and through his creation, which he is drawing to himself. Teilhard emphasizes the divine omnipresence of God in his created *milieu*, and encourages his readers to begin to *see* it, in the Ignatian sense of finding God in all things. Teilhard sees Christ as the Divine Milieu in the sense that Paul speaks of: In him

[242] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001), 16-26.
[243] Louis M. Savary, *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Mahwah, New Jersey: 2010), 17.

we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:22-31) Nothing that exists can be outside this divine milieu—matter or spirit, physical beings, thoughts, wishes, prayers—all are held in the milieu.

- **Noosphere** A neologism based on the Greek word for 'mind'—*noos,* developed by Teilhard de Chardin, (and used by Edouard Leroy, and Vladimir Verdansky) to describe the sphere of human thinking/consciousness that is in the process of developing over the sphere of planet Earth. Teilhard discusses evolution in terms of the chronological order of created levels: the lithosphere, the hydrosphere, the biosphere, and the noosphere. The noosphere is the site of human evolution now; it 'continues in a global process of cerebration.' Savary refers to it as the reflective mind and heart of the planet, or humanity's psyche. Teilhard describes the noosphere: "Like a halo around the biosphere […] a corona of reflective, peri-terrestrial substance."[244]

- **Omega Point** The final threshold when evolution moves toward its highest form of union, personalization, and spiritualization, drawn through love, culminating in the end that was present at the beginning of creation—Alpha and Omega—the Omega Point.[245] God-Omega is the goal of conscious personal life that finds fulfillment in an emerging unity, a human community of love whose convergence on its center, invites the parousia.

- **Panentheism** The idea that God is in all things. As opposed to pantheism, panentheism considers God and the world to be interrelated, with the world being in God and God being in the world, while maintaining the distinction between God and created things.[246] Teilhard posited that there is a "within" in all forms of matter, a potential for emergent consciousness that exists even in inorganic matter. In this way, he relates spirit to matter in the evolving consciousness of the universe.

- **Planetization** "The enfolding on itself of a network of virtual species around the surface of the Earth; a totally new mode of phylogenesis."[247] We must advance from individual consciousness to collective consciousness because we humans have filled the Earth and our impact on it and on one another is pervasive. Teilhard felt that the spherical shape of the planet would foster inter-communication. The goal is not the communication technology; it is a deepening of our capacity to love. "We should consider inter-thinking humanity as a new type of organism whose destiny it is to realize new possibilities for evolving life on this planet."[248]

---

[244] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Heart of Matter* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1978), 36-39.
[245] John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker's "Introduction" in *Teilhard in the 21st Century*, Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John, Ed.s. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 6.
[246] Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism/) 27 February 2017.
[247] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Human Phenomenon,* Trans. Sarah Appleton-Weber (Brighton, England: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), 171.
[248] Teilhard de Chardin, Trans. Normand Denny *The Future of Man,* (New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 2004), 20.

- **Radial Energy and Tangential Energy** Teilhard said that there is neither spirit nor matter in the world, rather, "all that exists is matter becoming spirit"[249] Matter is not a thing in itself but is a concentrated form of energy with a mass or weight. Tangential energy attaches matter-to-matter and radial energy moves matter forward (in the evolution of consciousness.) "Love is radial energy (spirit) that draws tangential energy (matter) to something more than itself; that is, radial energy is a vector of tangential energy […] "Being" is energy and hence relational."[250]

[249] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Human Energy, 57; Christianity and Evolution, 105* cited in "Evolution and the Rise of the Secular God," *From Teilhard to Omega*, Ilia Delio, Ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 42.
[250] Ibid. Ilia Delio, Ed., 42.

Bibliography

Allen, Paul. *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed.* London, T&T Clark, 2012.

Aquin, Hubert. « La fatigue culturelle du Canada français » *Liberté*, vol 4, no. 23 (May 1962) : 291-325, accessed 18 May 2018, id.erudit.org/ierudit/59892ac.

Baroni, Lise et al. *L'Utopie de la solidarité au Québec : contribution de la mouvance sociale chrétienne.* Montréal : Paulines. 2011.

Baroni Dansereau, Lise. « Une église québécoise bouleversée » *Relations*, no 730 (February 2009) : 1-3.

Baum, Gregory. *Religion and Alienation: A Theological Reading of Sociology.* Ottawa : Novalis, Saint Paul University, 2006.

Baum, Gregory. *Vérité et pertinence : Un regard sur la théologie Catholique depuis la Révolution tranquille* [*Truth and Relevance : Catholic Theology in French Quebec since the Quiet Revolution*]. Trans. Richard DuboisGroupe Fides inc., French translation (in accord with McGill-Queen's University Press), 2014.

Beinart, Peter. "Breaking Faith." *The Atlantic*, April, 2017.

Bélanger, Claude. "The Roman Catholic Church and Quebec: Readings," accessed 13 September, 2017, faculty.marianopolis.edu/cbelanger/quebechistory/readings/church.com.

Bibby, Reginald. *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada.* Toronto: Irwin Publishing Company, 1987.

Bibby, Reginald. *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada.* Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company, 1993.

Bibby, Reginald. *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada.* Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company, 2002.

Bibby, Reginald. "Religion À la carte in Québec: A problem of Demand, Supply, or Both?" *Globe-Special Issue on Religion in Québec* (September 2007). .

Boersma, Hans. *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.

Brault, Denis. 1998. *Les Enfants de Refus global.* [documentary film] Montréal.: Office national du film du Canada, 1998.

Brody, Richard. "Thomas Nagel: Thoughts are Real." *The New Yorker* (July 16, 2013), accessed June 11, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/thomas-nagel-thoughts-are-real.

Carr, Paul. “A Theology for Evolution: Haught, Teilhard, and Tillich.” *Zygon* vol. 40, no. 3 (September 2005): 733-738.

Conway Morris, Simon. *Map of Life*, accessed 11 June 2018, www.mapoflife.org.

Daniélou, Jean. “The Meaning and Significance of Teilhard de Chardin” *Communio*, vol. 15 (Fall 1988): 350-360.

Danzin, André and Jacques Masurel. *Teilhard de Chardin, visionnaire du monde nouveau*. Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2005.

Delio, Ilia, ed. 2014. *From Teilhard to Omega: Co-creating an unfinished universe*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014.

Delio, Ilia. *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love.*

Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013.

De Lubac, Henri. *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, trans. René Hague. London: William Collins Sons and Ltd., 1967.

De Lubac, Henri. *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and his Meaning,* trans. René Hague. New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1965.

Duffy, Kathleen, SSJ. *Teilhard’s Mysticism: Seeing the Inner Face of Evolution.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014.

Fabel, Arthur. “Teilhard 2005: Retrospects and Prospects.” *European Journal of Science and Theology* vol. 1, no. 4 (December 2005): 22-23.

Fabel, Arthur and Donald St. John, editors. *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003.

Faricy, Robert. “Teilhard de Chardin on Creation and the Christian Life.” *Theology Today,* 23, no.4 (January 1967): 505-520

Faricy, Robert. “Teilhard de Chardin’s Theology of Redemption.” *Theological Studies,* 27, (December 1966): 553-579

Flynn, Gabriel and Paul D. Murray. *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology.* London: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Francis, Holy Father. *Laudato Si’ Praise Be to You*: *Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis.* The Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015.

Gauvreau, Michael. *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution: 1931-1970.* Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005.

Gould, Stephen Jay. “Nonoverlapping Magisteria.” *Natural History* 106 (March 1997): 16-22.

Gray, Donald. “The Phenomenon of Teilhard.” *Theological Studies*, Vol. 26, No.1 (March 1975):19-51

Grummet, David. “Teilhard de Chardin’s Evolutionary Natural Theology.” *Zygon*, vol. 42, no.2 (June 2007)

Grummet, David. “Teilhard at Ore Place, Hastings 1908-1912” Journal Compilation of The Dominican Council/ Blackwell Publishing, Ltd, 2009, accessed May 20, 2017, http://www.readcube.com/library/88010985-4203-4b2f-9101-641a85b2303a:bcb62426-4781-4b94-a0fa-f9cced7a135a.

Grummet, David. *Teilhard de Chardin: Theology, Humanity, and Cosmos.* Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2005.

Haught, John. “In Search of a God for Evolution: Paul Tillich and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.” *Zygon*, vol 37, no. 3 (September 2002): 551.

Haught, John. “More Being: The Emergence of Teilhard de Chardin,” *Commonweal,* (June 5, 2009): 17-19

Johnson, William. *Anglophobie : Made in Quebec.* Montreal : Les éditions internationales Stanké, 1991.

Kegan, Robert, interview by Elizabeth Debold. “Epistemology, Fourth-Order Consciousness, and the Subject-Object Relationship, or…How the Self Evolves,” accessed 20 November 2017, http://image.jesuits.org/OIS/media171026%.

Kilgannon et al. *The Spiritual Exercises for Today: Experiencing God in the Style of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, John Veltri, SJ, Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, and Louis Savary.* Copyright 2016 Johnathan Kilgannon, Julian Paparella, Donald Paré.

King, Thomas. *Teilhard’s Mass: Approaches to “Mass on the World”.* New York: Paulist Press, 2005.

King, Thomas. “Globalization and the Soul—According to Teilhard, Friedman, and Others.” *Zygon,* vol. 37, no.1 (March 2002)

King, Ursula. *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996.

Kropf, Richard W. *Teilhard, Scripture, and Revelation.* Rutherford, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980.

Larochelle, Jean-Louis, o.p. *Etat de la société contemporaine face au discours religieux.* Presented 13 April, 2013 at the Colloque Lonergan sous le thème *“Discours religieux et modernité”.* Centre Culturel Chrétien de Montréal.

Lau, Matthew. “Remeasuring Stephen Jay Gould.” *Jacobin* 5 (May 2017), accessed 4 June 2018, https://jacobinmag.com/2017/05/stephen-jay-gould-science-race-evolution-climate-change.

Lebel, Pierre. *Imago Dei : Devenir pleinement humain.* Québec : Les Editions La Clarière, 2006.

Leger, Jean-Marc, Jacques Nantel and Pierre Duhamel. *Cracking the Quebec Code: The Seven Keys to Understanding Quebecers.* Montreal: Juniper Publishing, 2016.

Lemieux, Lucien. *Une histoire religieuse du Québec.* Quebec: Les Editions Novalis

2010.

Lemieux, Raymond et Micheline Milot. *Les Croyances des Québécois : Esquisses pour une approche empirique.* Québec : Université Laval. Les Cahiers de recherché en sciences de la religion. Vol. 11, 1992

Leroy, Pierre. *Letters from my Friend, Teilhard de Chardin: the 1948-1955 Correspondence Including the Letters Written During His Final Years in America,* trans. Mary Lukas. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.

Lonergan, Bernard. *Method in Theology.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.

Lukas, Mary and Ellen Lukas. 1977. *Teilhard: The Man, the Priest, the Scientist*. Garden City: Doubleday.

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi.* Toronto: Vintage Canada Edition, 2011; originally published by Penguin Random House Canada, Ltd.

Martel, Yann, interview by Jennie Renton, accessed 14 May 2015, http://textualities.net/jennie-renton/yann-martel-interview.

Medawar, Peter. « Critical Notice » in *Mind.* Oxford University Press, 1961, accessed January 22, 2018, Bactra.org/ Medawar/phenomenon-of-man.html.1.

Meisel, John et al. *As I Recall; Si je me souviens bien: Historical Perspectives.* Edited and published by Institute for Research on Public Policy, Canada, 1999

Metcalfe, Jeffrey. “The Quiet Revolution and the Church: A Cultural Schism with Intra-Catholic Origins.” *Catholic Commons* online, (December 15 2012): 1-12. Accessed June 9, 2015. http://catholiccommons.ca/2012/12/15/the-quiet-revolution-and-the-catholic-church

The Millennium Project: Global Futures Studies and Research. Accessed 29 June 2018. www. Millennium-project.org.

Mounier, Emmanuel. *Personalism*. London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 2007.

Portier, William. “Twentieth Century Catholic Theology and the Triumph of Maurice Blondel.” *Communio* 38, No 1 (Spring 2011): 103-37

Reynhout, Kenneth. *Interdisciplinary Interpretation: Paul Ricoeur and the Hermeneutics of Theology and Science.* New York : Lexington Books, 2013.

Richard, Louis-André. *La Nation sans religion ? Le défi des ancrages au Québec.* Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université de Laval, 2009.

Rohr, Richard. *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See.* New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2013.

Savary, Louis M. *Teilhard de Chardin* "The Divine Milieu" *Explained*. New York: Paulist Press, 2007.

Savary, Louis M. *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Teilhard de Chardin*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2010.

Savary, Louis. "Expanding Teilhard's 'Complexity-Consciousness' Law." *Teilhard Studies*, no. 68, (Spring 2014):1-18

Savary, Louis and Patricia Berne. *Teilhard de Chardin: Seven Stages of Suffering: A Spiritual Path for Transformation.* New York: Paulist Press, 2015.

Seljak, David. "Why the Quiet Revolution was 'Quiet': The Catholic Church's Reaction to the Secularization of Nationalism in Quebec after 1960" *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Journal Historical Studies* 62 (1996):109.

Sheldrake, Philip. *Spirituality: A Brief History*. Chichester, United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons. Ltd. 2013.

Sideris, Lisa. *Consecrating Science: Wonder, Knowledge, and the Natural World*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017.

Simard, Jean-Claude. « La philosophie française des XIXe et XXe siècles » in *La Pensée philosophique d'expression française au Canada : le rayonnement du Québec.* Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Activation of Energy,* trans. René Hague. San Diego : Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1970.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Divine Milieu*. Originally "Le Milieu Divin", 1957; William Collins/ Harper and Row, 1960; Perennial Classic Edition 2001. Trans. Bernard Wall. New York : HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *L'Energie humaine*. Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1962.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *Hymn of the Universe* [*L'Hymne de l'univers*]. As 'L'hymne de l'univers' 1961, Editions du Seuil; William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., and Harper and Row. Trans. Gerald Vann.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *Letters from a Traveller*, trans. Bernard Wall. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Making of a Mind: Letters from a Soldier-Priest*. Edited and translated by Marguerite Teilhard Chambon. London: Collins, 1966.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The phenomenon of man* [*Le Phénomène humain*].As 'Le Phénomène humain',1955, Editions du Seuil; English translation 1959, William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. and Harper and Row, Publishers; Trans. Bernard Wall. New York: Harper Collins, 2008

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Human Phenomenon* [*Le phénomène humain*]. As 'Le Phenomen humain', Editions du Seuil, 1955 ; English translation, 1970 HarperCollins, Inc. ; This Trans. Sarah Appleton-Weber, ed. Sarah Appleton-Weber. Sussex Academic Press, 1999.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Future of Man*. Trans. Norman Denny. ['L'Avenir de l'homme' 1959, Editions de Seuil ; English Translation 1964], HarperCollins; Image Books 2004.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *Le milieu divin*. 1957. *Le milieu divin*. Paris : Editions du Seuil.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *Le phénomène humain*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1955

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Heart of Matter* [*Le coeur de la matière*]. 1978. Trans. René Hague ; San Diego : Harcourt, Inc. "Le Coeur de la matière" 1976, Editions de Seuil ; William Collins Sons & Co., Ltd.and Harcourt, Inc. ; San Diego : Harcourt, Inc.

The Teilhard Project, accessed 9 June 2018, http://www. Teilhardproject.com/the-project.

Tremblay, Guillaume. *Heureux naufrage*, ed. Heureux Naufrage Le Projet. Vol. DVD. Montreal: Ovizion, 2014.

Tracy, David. *On Naming the Present: God, Hermeneutics, and Church*. Maryknoll, NY : Orbis Books, 1994.

Vaillant, Janet. *Vie de Léopold Senghor : Noir, Français, et Africain*, trans. Roger Meunier. Originally *Black, French, and African: A Life of Leopold Sedar Senghor.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1990.

Vatican Pontifical Council for Culture website, accessed 10 June 2018, http://www.cultura.va/content/dam/cultura/docs/comunicatistampa/Letter%20to%20the%20Pope%20to%20waive%20the%20Monitum%20on%20Teilhard%27s%20works.pdf.

Zubrzycki, Geneviève. *Beheading the Saint: Nationalism, Religion, and Secularism in Quebec.* Chicago: University of Chicago Pres, 2016.