

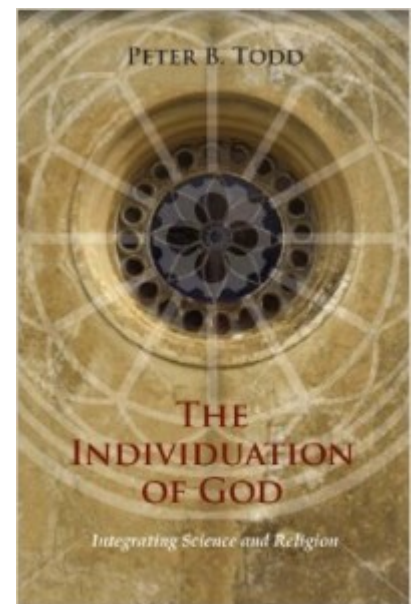
The Individuation of God



You gotta love synchronicity. I was at my local bookstore, listening to a presentation, and happened to glance up. There in the bookshelf was a title, [*The Individuation of God:*](#)

[*Integrating Science and Religion,*](#) by Peter Todd. Peter is a research psychologist at the Neuropsychiatric Institute in Sydney. He is also a psychoanalytic psychologist. I was just barely into the preface when I read this sentence:

” One of the aims of this book is to address the need for a theology that may be less vulnerable to intemperate or militant criticism and also illuminated by scientific perspectives on fundamental issues pertinent to both science and theology, for instance, the psychophysical or mind/matter problem and the understanding of the so-called “arrow of time” and its relationship to timelessness in both post-quantum physics and depth psychology”.



Whew! So here's a psychologist interested in the relationship between time and the timeless dimension of Jungian archetypes and the quantum field AND he wants to draw out the implications for a new theology! Very cool. I'd keep reading. As the book progresses I discover that he is an admirer of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the particular kind of the theology he's interested in is evolutionary in nature. I'm hooked! The bonus is that he is relatively unknown in the evolutionary circles I travel in.

Better yet, I'll be interviewing him on Home for Evolving Mystics in June!

Let me just delve in to one of the Big Ideas of the book, which is, as the title suggests, the individuation of God. God is "entangled" with the universe, in Todd's theology. This is a technical term in quantum physics, referring to experiments showing that once two sub-atomic particles, like photons or electrons, come into relationship with one another, they are forever entangled. If one spins one way the other in complementary fashions spins the other way. So, G_d and the world are entangled. Nice.

Take a look at the featured image of this post. Michelangelo's painting of G_d's creation of Adam in the Sistine Chapel features an Adam that is G_d's physical equal. This image subverts traditional theology in the way that theology presents the human being as insignificant in comparison with the Almighty. It's even a bit ambiguous in terms of who is creating who. Clearly, there is a suggestion of co-creatorhood and an elevation of the dignity of the human being. Michelangelo anticipates the modernist affirmation of the dignity and potential of the human being in our creative capacity.

Humans and G_d are entangled in a dance of individuation whereby each is contributing to the evolution of the other. Individuation is a term coined by the Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung. He discovered in his patients' dreams the spontaneous emergence of archetypes—dynamic, ordering, and timeless images which inform and catalyze the evolution of the psyche. Familiar ones include the King, the Warrior, The Magician, the Lover, but most importantly the Self, which is indistinguishable from G_d. As we develop a conscious relationship with these objective images that show up especially in our dreams, but also in culture, through art and architecture, we *individuate*. That is, we come to both know our essential selves distinct from our personality and

cultural-acquired identities, and evolve into our essential, unique nature. We become unique individuals. Our authentic self/Self emerges and becomes the context for our personalities.

What is fascinating theologically is to consider that we're doing this on behalf of, and as an expression of the Whole/G_d. This suggests the possibility that the whole evolving cosmos is the interior, invisible, timeless dimension of G_d, externalized, so that G_d can come to Self-knowledge and evolve. In other words, G_d is individuating in, through, and as the cosmos itself as it evolves. And what are we if not that part of the externalized expression of the interiority of the divine that has come to conscious awareness in us?

What if, in other words, the whole point of the time we have in our physical bodies is to contribute to the evolution and individuation of G_d, in and through our experience and metabolization of life? When we undertake our work of individuation-conscious evolution—the entangled One, G_d, also evolves.

We are in the process of completing G_d, and G_d is in the process of completing us. This is the telos or purpose of the evolutionary process. Or as the Greek Father, Athanasius, put it, God became human, so that humans could become divine. We are being completed so that we might realize what divinity looks like in human form. The church has always affirmed this about Jesus. But in a 21st century evolutionary theology, the edgier conclusion is that we need to affirm this about ourselves. This is indeed the next stage of theology.

Earth Is Speaking to Us



The Story of the Exodus: The God of Freedom

A paradigmatic tale for Jews, and subsequently for Christians, the story of the Exodus begins with enslavement of the Hebrew people by Egyptian pharaohs (kings). In the story, the Egyptian pharaoh, fearing that the Hebrew slaves have become too numerous and thus pose a threat, issues an edict stating that all male Hebrew babies must be killed. When Moses is born, he is saved from this awful fate by what amounts to the first feminist conspiracy. Shiphrah and Puah (two Hebrew midwives), Moses' mother, and his sister, Miriam, outsmart the Egyptians and save him from death by placing him in a reed basket and hiding him by the river's edge. Shortly thereafter he is discovered by the Egyptian princess, who rescues him and raises him as her own.

Years later, the adult Moses witnesses an Egyptian prince abusing a Hebrew slave. He kills the Egyptian and heads for

the hills. There, he encounters a burning bush and hears the call of God telling him to return to Egypt to confront the pharaoh with God's command, "Let my people go." After a series of confrontations with the pharaoh, which result in various plagues and natural catastrophes, the pharaoh relents and the Hebrew people make a dramatic break for it (Exodus 1:6 – 2:10). Taken as a whole, this first metanarrative is one of liberation from oppression.

Cosmological Participation in God's Purposes

The first thing I notice about this story is that creation itself participates in both the awakening of Moses, and in the judgment of the system of oppression. The burning bush is the natural medium through which God speaks to Moses. It's interesting that the way the story is told, God requires Moses to notice the radiance of the bush before issuing the call (Exodus 3:3–4). The radiance of the Holy in and through nature doesn't speak to any of us until we decide, with Moses, "to turn and look at this great sight." Our capacity to notice this radiance is compromised by the history of disenchantment that has shaped our age. But as we grow in our capacity for awe, we may, like Moses, know ourselves to be standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5).

Later in the story, a series of natural disasters and plagues convey God's judgment to the pharaoh. The Nile, a river symbolizing fertility for the Egyptians, is turned to blood. Then come frogs, gnats, flies, cattle plagues, boils, and ultimately hail.

Each of these plagues represent naturally occurring disasters in Egyptian history, but through the eyes of faith they are interpreted as nature expressing God's yearning that God's people be set free. This is not the only place in scripture where we see the cosmos



participate in God's purposes. For the prophets, the earth both celebrated God's purposes and expressed God's judgment on unjust behaviour committed by the people of God. Thus trees clap (Isaiah 55:12) and sing (Psalm 96:12), the heavens proclaim (Psalm 19:1), deserts rejoice and blossom (Isaiah 35:1–2), the valleys and the meadows sing for joy (Psalm 65:13), and stones may cry out in response to the gracious activity of the Holy One (Luke 3:8); justice abides in a wilderness and righteousness in a fruitful field (Isaiah 32:15–16).

On the other hand, the land (Earth) experiences fear and goes silent before God's judgment (Psalm 76:8–9), the land vomits out the people in response to injustice and unfaithfulness (Leviticus 18:25), the land mourns and all who live on it languish, with the animals and birds – “even the fish are perishing” (Hosea 4:3). Perhaps the most vivid expression of the cosmos reflecting the sin of humans is found in Isaiah 24:4–5: “The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.”

This may be nothing more than the anthropomorphizing of nature (attributing human characteristics to the natural world). Or it may reflect a deeper premodern sensitivity to the biospiritual connection between the humanity and the earth. In a panentheistic worldview, creation is in God, and God is in creation. From this perspective, we shouldn't think about creation's participation in celebration and judgment as the action of an external God manipulating nature for God's purposes.

Rather, a sacred immanent Presence holistically manifests and is reflected *in* the relative states of health of all of the earth's systems: biological, social and cultural, and spiritual. It is a basic premise of evolutionary theology that

Spirit is the connecting thread and ground of all realms. In this light, we would expect that injustice would impact all realms simultaneously; that is, that all realms would express, through their own capacities, the presence of this injustice.

We don't typically make such connections because we've been immersed in a worldview that absolutely separates the realm of the human from the realm of the non-human. What we do in the human realm is disconnected from the non-human biological realm.

Climate Change and Global Warming



According to the International Panel on Climate Change scientific evidence for the warming of our climate system is unequivocal. Throughout history Earth's climate has changed, as part of our natural cycle. But the current trend is unprecedented in the last 1300 years. The levels of greenhouse gases (which trap the sun's heat and cause Earth's surface to warm) are now at historically unprecedented levels. This causes, for example, sea levels to rise as the polar ice caps melt. Global sea level rose about 17 centimeters (6.7 inches) in the last century. The rate in the last decade, however, is nearly double that of the last century. This poses real threats to coastal cities, and imminent danger to low-lying island populations such as the Maldives and Saychelle which are already threatened by rising sea levels.

The increased incidence and intensity of tsunamis, hurricanes, and droughts, understood within an emergent panentheistic theology, are not *literally* the divine judgment of an angry God. Rather, they are natural manifestations of a sacred, evolutionary process being thwarted by the willful ignorance of humans. In this sense, and in this sense only, ecological

catastrophes can be interpreted as a judgment upon humanity. They may be seen as both a natural warning that our ethic of domination has dire consequences, and as the call of God to end the oppression we're enacting upon the planet.

We have placed ourselves in the role of pharaohs upon the earth. The earth herself may be the new Moses. The "firmament" proclaims not just God's "handiwork," but also our failure to fit in with earth's biosystems. As the psalmist says, "day to day pours forth speech," although there is no speech and there are no words (Psalm 19). The mode of communication is depleted fish stocks, massive rates of extinction, melting glaciers, toxic whale blubber, and increased incidence of asthma from pollution. Using her own voice, creation is groaning to be set free (Romans 8:22).

[Differentiating from Dowd](#)

Michael Dowd and I are both associated with evolutionary Christianity. I'm not sure I even like the tag, but it probably will stick for awhile. Michael asked me to give him some feedback on his excellent recent youtube videos and Tedx talk, and I decided to respond to him with a blog post. My hope is that Michael will respond with his own post on this site. I've had an itch for some time related to Michael's work, and this gives me an opportunity to scratch it.



Over the past few years I have noticed some significant differences between Michael and myself. That is to be

expected. I'm finding it important to publicly declare that I don't see us doing the same thing. Michael and his wife, Connie Barlow, have become friends over the years. I first met them when I was giving a presentation at Chautauqua Institute in Up State New York. They rolled into town in their van, the same week that I was the presenter. And it was a fabulous connection between brothers whose lives had been changed by the insights of Father. Thomas Berry, Teilhard de Chardin, Brian Swimme, and others, who helped us all to see the intrinsic luminosity of an unfolding cosmos. As well they were a great support to me when I was going through a big life transition recently.



Michael and Connie famously travel throughout North America, and have done so for the past 12 years or so, in a van they affectionately call Angel, spreading the gospel of evolution. They see themselves as bridge builders between the scientific community and the church, sometimes taking heat from both communities in the process. Folded into these presentations is a passionate concern for climate change. Suffice it to say that these two souls are "all in" in their passionate commitment to helping the church not be afraid of science (particularly evolution). I celebrate and applaud their commitment.

Michael sees himself as leading an "evidential reformation" as significant as Luther's Protestant revolution hundreds of years ago. He summarizes his work in a tidy little manifesto: (1) Reality is my God, (2) Evidence is my scripture, (3) Big History is my creation story, (4) Ecology is my theology, (5) Integrity is my salvation ... Beautiful.

These pithy summaries represents decades of synthesis. Right off the top let me say that the Youtube videos and the TEDx talks are characteristically lucid and Michael is his passionate and articulate self. Kudos.

But when I look at the manifesto, it could have been written by an atheistic materialist. It reflects a scientific, modernist worldview and doesn't require anybody holding that worldview to contend with your Christianity, Michael. My question to you is whether this is this truly a bridging mission? I can see how you are challenging and inviting Christians to take science seriously. But it's less clear how the scientific community is being challenged to take Christianity seriously on its own terms. The bridge is actually a one-way street.

I know that you have a reaction to the word "materialism" to describe a worldview in which everything is a reconfiguration of matter, including mind- the belief of mainstream science today that the great story of the cosmos is not unfolding within a pervasive and primordial heart and mind. For the record I believe that it is. To repeat, I can see the challenge that you are putting to Christianity, which I support, but I don't see how you are actually challenging science with a robust articulation of Christianity.

I hear you saying, *G_d is Reality*. But that just begs the question: what is Reality? And as far as I can tell from what you are putting out, Reality is what science is able to confirm about physical reality. Physical reality is truly awesome, and here I'm in agreement with you that the church needs to become scientifically literate. The story of the evolving cosmos is truly another scripture, as Thomas Berry affirmed. ("The heavens declare your handiwork and Earth your glory, day to day pours forth speech, etc."- Psalm 119) But it's a lot less clear how you are wrestling with that other scripture (the Bible) as a valid expression of truth. (You know of course that I'm no biblical literalist and realize

that there are truly nasty bits that need to be contextualized).

I hear and appreciate your referencing these ancient texts as “night language” or “private revelation”, versus the “public revelation” or “day language” that science offers. But you privilege and validate, as far as I can tell, the public revelation over the private. This is the so-called “evidential revolution” you are leading. It would be helpful for me if you would occasionally critique, a la Thomas Kuhn, the limits of the scientific epistemology as a way of knowing, with its inherent problem that we don’t see the world as it is, but as we are. You can’t extract mind from the equation. The quintessential postmodernist wisdom, supported by quantum physics, shows us that we participate in the construction of reality.

The biblical writers themselves enjoyed a different way of knowing and interpreting the world, and there is much wisdom that’s not available to current scientific method. Pre-modern philosophers and theologians, including Thomas Aquinas and the Greek philosophers, wrote about seven or eight senses, not just the five that we’re familiar with and through which science limits its inquiry. These other senses were related to the soul’s way of knowing a reality deeper than the physical. They approximated what today we call intuition. These intuitive senses “saw” and “felt” a Wholeness animating every part, every atom of the universe. An early scientist, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) inspired many non-materialist scientists including biologist, Rupert Sheldrake and physicist, Henri Bortoft. As a religious man, he studied plants, and began with the premise of an underlying, animating Wholeness. He intuitively got the wholeness, and his method of doing science, was, in part, a conscious alternative to the reductionistic scientific method of Sir Isaac Newton.

This Wholeness or Coherence (or Mind, G_d or Buddha Mind or the Christ Mystery) *lived* the universe and is living the

universe. Intuition reveals a synthesizing, whole-making presence and activity, weaving patterns from the chaos. This perception of wholeness or deep patterning is what Plato meant by "beauty", which transcended but included physical or aesthetic beauty. Paul (or a scholar in his lineage) used this intuitive capacity when he declared that Christ was the one "in whom all things are held together" (Colossians 1:15-20).

Yes, it's night language, but only night language can capture what science in its current iteration of metaphysical materialism will never be able to reveal. To put the question bluntly to you, is there a dimension of Reality that includes and permeates, but transcends the physical, and does this Mind and Heart interact with the physical realm, in-forming it, influencing, and supporting it?

It seems to me that if the scientific world is truly going to be challenged in the way you are challenging the church, you might want to present a *nuanced* theology of providence—that this Whole-Making activity is actually non-coercively at work within the evolutionary process, leading it all/us all into greater degrees of freedom, beauty, truth, goodness. And that this is all an expression of the Mystery that religions called G_d. There is no true religious sensibility without some kind of felt sense that the universe is purposively unfolding toward, yes, an indeterminate (or emergent) future, but biased toward a completion of love. I'm not talking about traditional notions of predestination, but rather the subtle interplay of Spirit with a world that enjoys freedom, particularly in human. To repeat, I don't see you challenging the scientific world to contend with a robust, credible theology.

So while that part of your manifesto "ecology is my theology" has a nice ring to it, ecology isn't actually theology. I could support your argument that there is nothing more important than ecological repair. However, your choice not to have a theology (implicit in the statement "ecology is my

theology") feels, again, like you are catering to the scientific (and materialistic) community. Rupert Sheldrake comes to mind here as a pan-psychic, non-materialist and religious biologist, who has truly and courageously taken heat from the scientific community for his theory of morphogenetic fields.

Let's be clear, theology that's worth the ink is not the same as mere beliefs, understood as arbitrary intellectual assertions that may or may not be true. Theology, at best, is an articulation of a transcendent experience that is real and life-changing. Even philosophically, I hear no metaphysics (that which transcends, but includes physicality) in your work. Especially in recent years, I sense a shift away from theology and metaphysics. This is a real problem, because until we understand first principles, we cannot understand the basis of our actions as a species. More about this below.

This leads me to your presentation of the evolutionary role of religion in human civilization. Along with Robert Wright and others, you conclude that religion served and serves an "adaptive" function, in a kind of neo-Darwinian way, helping humanity to survive, to stop killing each other, to establish moral frameworks for community, etc. I find this position overly simplistic and reductionistic. It reduces pre-modern people's experience of the Numinous, of G_d or the gods, to an instrumental role, a mere means to an end, unconsciously driven by blind instinct to give us a better shot at surviving.

But I would reverse it. The experience of the Numinous is not a means to an end, but an end in itself and the beginning of an authentic life. It is contact with the true Nature of "Reality". It is a genuine "I-Thou" experience, and not merely, as you claim, a personification of what a pre-modern mind couldn't yet understand because the scientific method hadn't yet emerged. I know that you validate the "I-Thou" experience in your presentations, but again, Michael, it seems

as though the "Thou" is a projection of the human psyche, in line with Feuerbach's philosophy. This takes me back to the question of theology. What for you is the "Thou" in this experience?

A last point about this experience of an over-arching, implicate order, or Wholeness/Mind that weaves beauty from chaos, truth from falsehood, and goodness from evil. It rarely serves an adaptive function. If it is authentic it doesn't adapt to culture, but explodes it. Jesus, for example, interrupted consensus reality, re-ordering it in the direction of a deeper expression of what it means to be human. And that true humanity is only revealed in relation to the One he called Abba. The direction of evolution he effected was not in accordance with the dominant culture's trajectory, but rather subverted its moral order.

Politically, the abolition of slavery, women's rights, the rights of workers all came out of the Jesus' lineage, (and thereby through Judaism) inspired and initiated by those who had an authentic experience of the Numinous "Other", calling them to interject and correct the trajectory of evolution away from the privileged and toward rights of the invisible and marginalized. I contend that they *actually* encountered the Christ Mystery and were transformed. Not that they just didn't understand or that it was an inner voice that got projected on to G_d, but that a reality, a transcendent Heart and Mind (implicate in the cosmos), more subtle than the physical apprehended them. Would you agree? Or how would you put it? I'm not too concerned about the words we use for it, but that whatever they experienced is ultimate Reality, even though you can't do an experiment to prove it.

Owen Barfield wrote his book, *Saving Appearances*, precisely to correct the modernist flatlander[1] tendency to see only "appearances", but miss the dimension of Wholeness living in and through the appearances. Historically, this lack of intuitive capacity led to what ancient Judaism called

idolatry, which led to devotion to objects, rather than the indwelling Subjectivity that was the source of physical beauty and reverence. The objects themselves could not carry the freight of the numinous. And this tendency is what leads precisely to the mess that the modern worldview has made of the world. This is why theology and metaphysics are, in fact, so critical. When we ascribe a numinous dimension solely to the material, we worship (unconsciously) the material world of objects. We gather to ourselves tokens of the numinous (bigger houses, a second or third car, more sound systems, better vintage wines, designer clothes). And we do so as individuals, leading lives of disconnected excess, because we do not feel the Mind and Heart that connects (or the "pattern that connects" to use Gregory Bateson's third person metaphor). This is precisely what we would expect from a modernist worldview that voided the universe of both a pervading and primordial consciousness, soon to be followed by voiding it of any intrinsic cosmic meaning or purpose. Stripped of the sacred, numinous dimension, matter and its various artifacts, attains god-like status, and our devotion manifests unconsciously in lives of material excess, which is at the heart of our ecological crisis, including climate change.

Deepak Chopra is directly challenging the scientific community to come to terms with consciousness or mind as a fundamental reality, and not only an emergent or epi-phenomenon. This is perhaps "the" issue for science in the 21st century. You have chosen not to sign his challenge, claiming that ecology is more critical to Christians than such issues. I disagree, and given your mission of bringing science to Christians, how can this be excluded as unimportant? In fact, for reasons outlined above, it is critically important.

Deepak calls it this originating mind "consciousness". Christians call it G_d, and ascribe deep, ontological personhood (G_d as personal, but not "a" person). But whatever name it goes by, there is a lot at stake, and it is

precisely an ideological battle between materialist metaphysics, and the theology and metaphysics that honour a Transcendent Mystery.

I could say more, brother. But I leave it there for now. Both of us experience ourselves as embodiments of the creative unfolding of the cosmos, with the capacity to consciously participate in the emergence of a new and better future. I honour your commitment and your rare passion for this evolving project. Both of us affirm that there's an emergent quality to this process, that nothing is predetermined, and that the future needs us to show up in our co-creatorhood. What I experience is that this great cosmic emergence itself emerges out of and is grounded, not solely in the physical, but in the ultimately mysterious interplay and polarity of Spirit and matter. Both poles are actual. For me, this is where the numinous, awesome nature of reality lies. I look forward to your response.

[1] "Flatlander" is a term that integral philosopher, Ken Wilber, uses for the modernist worldview which denies interiority or a subjective dimension to reality. This subjectivity (or mind) pervades the universe, including matter. Matter is not "lower" than mind, rather it is mind's outside dimension.

Welcome

Being Christed



I came across the term “Christing” in my inbox the other day. It was coined, most recently, by Saniel Bonder. But the idea has been part of the tradition for a long time, especially in the mystic lineage.

We are in the process of being Christed—that is, of incarnating, of realizing that we are enfleshed Spirit/Spirit enfleshed. Can’t be one without the other. At least, not if you are a human. I’m sure that there are other beings happily occupying different realms who are one or the other, but our divine nature is discovered precisely in this union of spirit and matter. Christing also involves the competency of manifesting our ideals and our vision.

The majority of Christians want to reserve this privilege for Jesus of Nazareth. “The” incarnation happened 2000 years ago. But early in the church’s life, the community hadn’t yet forgotten that Jesus taught something along the lines of: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do. . . .” (John 14:12). The greater work is done by following the primordial curiosity and work of what it means to be in the process of becoming fully human. Which is another way of saying that we are being awakened to the nature of our incarnation.

For some time now my intuition has been telling me that all that was written about Jesus in the first century was the

necessary externalization or objectification of the mystery of incarnation itself. But this mystery had to be projected on to Jesus (the doctrine of “the” Incarnation) so that we could see it, and it’s taken a couple thousand years to take back the projection and realize that every thing we said about him is actually about the future human—Human 2.0. He was what we are becoming. And what we are becoming potentially will be greater than what he was—at least if you believe the Jesus of John’s gospel. His metaphorical ascension to the right hand of G_d symbolizes the ascension of entire species. We are in the process with Jesus of being lifted “up” (or drawn) to realize the next stage of what it is to be Human.

Perhaps the archetype of the Child of Wisdom, or the “Son of the Human One” , popped in Jesus, and through him (and others) is now popping (being constellated and expressed) in an increasing number of humans—some of whom are actually in the church! □ The challenge of being Spirit/flesh, flesh/Spirit is in holding, rather than resolving, the polarity of heaven and earth, spirit and matter.

One of the fundamental challenges of incarnation centers around the issue of control. Having emptied the human experience of spirit, secular modernism’s bottom line is that we are out of control in a rudderless universe. We are the product of a very long process of evolution biased toward mere survival in a milieu of hostility. The universe is essentially against us. This kind of modernism is



Robert Cook

all ground, all flesh, all materiality, lacking in transcendence, deep purpose, or a “pattern that connects”.

The intellect is too often brought to bear solely on the project of meaninglessness. The presence of tragedy merely confirms that the universe is going nowhere, at a pretty good rate. In the extreme form of this worldview, humans are little more than physical material arranged accidentally after 13.8 billion years in the form of humans valiantly making meaning in a universe that is itself void of it.

A lot of new age spirituality, on the other hand, lacks grounding (the fleshy, rooted part). All is spirit. The universe is, in every detail of our live, good or bad, *for* us. The shitty, chaotic, tragic aspects of reality are glossed over or re-framed within a cosmology in which “everything happens for a reason”. Synchronicity swallows all, and everything is a “sign” of Spirit’s guidance. Modernism compensates for the belief that we are out of control in a universe that it going nowhere with gestures of radical technological control—over the birth process through endless forms of intervention with drugs and technology; over the dying process through what Stephen Jenkinson calls the “death

racket"; over food systems with GMO, fast foods, etc., essentially displaying a breathtaking distrust of natural processes. New Age spirituality deals with being out of control through what amounts to a hyper-anxious superstition of synchronicity. (This is not to say that all of our experience, especially crisis, is potentially a teacher depending upon how we choose to respond).

How to dwell in the polarity of spirit/flesh without resolving the mystery in favour of one or the other? How do we inhabit our lives knowing that our lives are comprised of this exquisite dance of chance and order? Out of control though we may be, we are nevertheless being danced to the "end of love" (Leonard Cohen). Holding this tension may just be the secret to the competency of incarnation. One of the keys may lie in giving up the need for certainty, predictability, and absolute forms of knowing, which some forms of modernity and some forms new age spirituality are grasping at in different ways.

My own hunch is that the process of evolution is a Christing process that is ultimately mysterious and beyond our control. And yet, in our best moments, even when we cannot make sense of it all, we know that we are the presence of this Spirit-enlivened, evolutionary current in the flesh, and that this process is Love realizing itself.

Jesus is one spiritual teacher who found a way to hold the tension and fashion a life that was grounded in engaging the domination system of his day, and yet who looked upon those he met with eyes that beheld and called forth the already present but yet-to-be-realized wholeness in each human being. His example is that it is possible to be firmly rooted in reality, and engage that reality as a new kind of human.

Even though his spirit-enfleshed self could not avoid execution by the very powers he felt called to redeem, he trusted the Dance that was dancing him. This is what Paul was on to with his metaphor of the “second Adam”. That holy gaze with which Jesus beheld the world, still draws us 2000 years later to become the love out of which all emerged and continues to emerge. This is the Christing we are all undergoing.

John Haught