

Interview with Peter Todd

[Peter Todd](#) from [Bruce Sanguin](#) on [Vimeo](#).

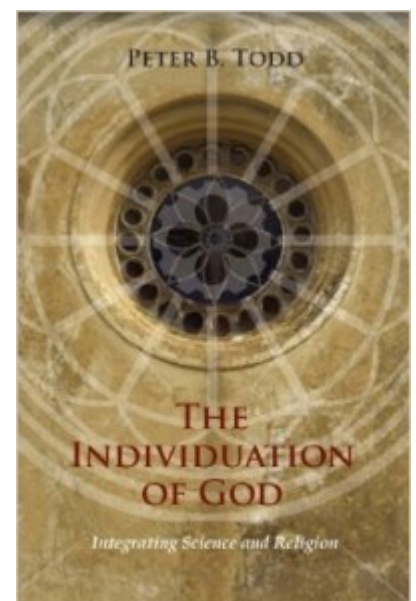
The Individuation of God



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.

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