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Why Evolution is First and Foremost a Religious Belief — Part 2

The New Age Movement

The New Age movement boasts a move away from traditional religions to something new, although at times its followers do not know what that something is. One thing is certain: this movement is built upon the rock of biological evolution – with a spiritual twist, of course. Each follower is entitled to do his or her own thing, but for any religious movement to have some bedrock some leaders must become its leaders. Gary Kah, critic of global governance, says that one name which is continuously praised in New Age writings is that of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit priest.¹⁹ In 1965, John Kobler put Teilhard's total book sales over a million copies. In France, the Association of the Friends of Teilhard de Chardin, which boasted roughly a thousand members, sponsors lectures, symposiums, and week-long conventions. Cult-like followings celebrated him in Italy, Germany, England, Belgium, and South America. The Paris Museum of Natural History opened a wing full of his documents and memorabilia. Despite negative reactions to him among Christian conservatives, the Vatican pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair included his portrait in a gallery of the century's greatest men.²⁰

19. Gary Kah, *The Demonic Roots of Globalism: En Route to Spiritual Deception* (Lafayette: Huntington House, 1995), 85.

20. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Building the Earth* (New York: Avon, 1965),

What disturbs some Christians is that, for Teilhard de Chardin, evolution is not some mere hypothesis but the key to the whole meaning of existence as an irreversible process planned by God. Its goal is development from the primordial state called "Alpha" to the "Omega Point" which is equivalent to God. Kobler states that what is bothersome in Teilhard de Chardin's theology is that nowhere does he acknowledge spontaneous creation by God. If evolution achieves the transition from the primitive to absolute perfection, what remains of the divine grace that we need for salvation? His critics also attacked him on scientific grounds because he ascribed consciousness to matter in a way that is more like mysticism than science.²¹

21. Teilhard de Chardin, *Building*, 22, 26-27.

The following two paragraphs express his faith not in God as sovereign Being, but in evolution and the world:

If, as a result of some interior revolution, I were to lose in succession my faith in Christ, my faith in a personal God, and my faith in spirit, I feel that I should continue to believe invincibly in the world. The

world (its value, its infallibility and its goodness) – that, when all is said and done, is the first, the last, and the only thing in which I believe. It is by this faith that I live. And it is to this faith, I feel, that at the moment of death, rising above all doubts, I shall surrender myself.²²

If we Christians wish to retain in Christ the very qualities on which his power and our worship are based, we have no better way ... of doing so than fully to accept the most modern concepts of evolution.... By disclosing a world-peak, evolution makes Christ possible, just as Christ, by giving meaning and direction to the world, makes evolution possible.... Now I realize that, on the model of the incarnate God whom Christianity reveals to me, I can be saved only by becoming one with the universe. Thereby, too, my deepest “pantheist” aspirations are satisfied, guided, and reassured.²³

22. Teilhard de Chardin, *How I Believe* (London: William Collins Sons, 1969), 19-20.

23. Teilhard de Chardin, *How I Believe*, 79-81.

Teilhard de Chardin was also mentioned in Marilyn Ferguson’s *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, which was about a spiritual transformation in the 1980s led by a powerful but leaderless network. As mentioned earlier, there are two brands of evolution – gradual and rapid – and advocates of both oppose creationism. Ferguson admits that gradual evolution has proven inadequate to explain life’s origin and development and leans toward punctuated equilibrium as a model. She joins this to the concept of “holism,” which is a drive toward greater complexity and integration between various parts. In Ferguson’s religion, those parts are all of us in a union in a semi-divine New Age god. This world view supposedly induces greater cooperation because we learn that we cannot harm other people if our actions turn around and harm us.²⁴ Well, the 1980s have come and gone and the world is just as dangerous as before which makes the promises in her book unfulfilled.

24, Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1980), 156-162.

Teilhard de Chardin influenced Barbara Marx Hubbard, a former Jewish agnostic, who described herself before New Ageism as in “a spiritual tabula rasa – a blank slate with no religious beliefs.” Her family gave her no help either. When she asked her father what religion they were, he merely said they were Americans and she was to do her best. However, what she was to do her best at remained unanswered.²⁵ Like humanists, she believed more scientific knowledge allowed humans to make progress toward a better civilization. However, the dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan ruined her beliefs because she realized with more knowledge could come more power to destroy. She was a woman looking for a valid religious faith.

25. Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential* (Novato, California: New World Library, 1998), 22.

Hubbard describes her exploration of Teilhard de Chardin's words as an "epiphany."²⁶ Still not satisfied with any of the existing religions, in 1980 she rented a house in Santa Barbara to write a book on the evolutionist perspective. Near a monastery she claimed to hear the voice of Jesus which told her that she had the power "of a natural Christ." (When New Agers reference Christ, they are not referring to the person of Jesus as God but to a semi-divine ability they possess.) Gary Kah believes that she was in touch with evil spiritual beings just as I do.²⁷

26. Kah, 119.

27. Kah, 120-121.

Hubbard's religious philosophy is pantheistic – a belief that derives from evolution. A designing, creative intelligence animates the universe. It is symbolized by the core running through the evolutionary spiral. As we mature on a personal and spiritual level, this intelligence becomes personal and conscious through us. God, the creative force of the universe, becomes person as us, yet is never subsumed or limited by us. When we look at the intelligence of the whole system – the design of every atom, molecule, and cell – there appears to be something more at work than can be attributed to particles alone. The assumption here is that there is a system of consciousness that transcends its parts, is imminent within them, yet is more than those parts.²⁸

28. Hubbard, 91.

What Hubbard is saying is that the universe is alive and has consciousness. As we follow the same path of evolution that brought about our existence, we become aware of this consciousness which guides us and enables us to evolve even further.

UFOs and their occupants are also a major part of the New Age religion and subject to the same evolutionary progress as us. However, New Agers suppose that by the time messages are received by these aliens, they will be more advanced than we are – technologically, socially, and morally – thanks to constant Darwinian progress, of course. Thus, New Agers believe that we ought to trust them, not God, for guidance.

I've noticed that not only New Agers but nonreligious evolutionists as well write about these aliens as if they were an object of worship. For instance, Robert Jastrow (whom I previously quoted as a philosophical materialist) suggests that as we contemplate a future message from aliens, "we must remember that when the eagerly awaited message arrives, it is likely to be from a nonhuman form of intelligent life – creatures as far removed from humans in the evolutionary scale as humans are removed from the crawling creatures of the sea."²⁹ Similarly, James Christian says, "in countless cosmic ecosystems there will be some species that have evolved into complex forms and attained advanced stages of perception, consciousness, awareness, and abstract rational capability plus qualities of consciousness quite beyond what man has so far developed or can at present imagine."³⁰ The reason that they write this way is because once humans no longer believe in God as savior, they must embrace something else. For them, highly evolved aliens fit this role.

29. Robert Jastrow, *Journey to the Stars* (New York: Bantam, 1989), 195.

30. James Christian, "The Story of Life: Earth's Four-Billion Year Beginning," *Extra Terrestrial Intelligence: The First Encounter* (New York: Prometheus, 1976), 21.

There is also a segment of the New Age movement that embraces more personal divine power. Science fiction fans may have caught Patrick Stewart's introduction to the movie *X Men: "Mutation*. It is the key to our evolution. It has enabled us to evolve from a single-celled organism into the dominant species on our planet. This process is slow, normally taking thousands and thousands of years. But every few hundred millennia, evolution leaps forward." New Agers agree with this precept and, I believe, that Ben Zeller adequately sums up their position:

Though numerous other understandings of human nature exist within the New Age movement, all agree that some form of the divine exists within the self, and all similarly look to practices of self-development as central to cultivating knowledge of that divine essence. This fact reveals one of the most important commonalities across all New Age approaches: the New Age possess a strong belief in individual human evolution. Evolution within the New Age worldview does not mean biological evolution in the Darwinian sense. Rather, New Agers believe that individual human beings ideally evolve over their lifetime (and multiple lifetimes), achieving greater and greater awareness of their divine natures.³¹

31. Benjamin Zeller, "Human Nature and the Purpose of Existence," www.patheos.com/Library/New-Age/Beliefs/Human-Nature-and-the-Purpose-of-Existence.html (accessed January 1, 2013).

The New Age movement, then, is a religion which prides itself on each member doing what feels best to him because its members aren't happy with any existing religions. They do, however, desire power – whether it's through ESP, telekinesis, or simply the ability to create your own reality *a la* Shirley Maclaine. However, they mistakenly think that with more power comes more peace, and this ignores the innate sinfulness of man.

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