TEILHARD IN AMERICA:
THE 1960S, THE COUNTERCULTURE, AND VATICAN II

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ABSTRACT

TEILHARD IN AMERICA:

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Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, visionary priest, paleontologist, and writer, is an important landmark figure in twentieth-century French Catholicism. Especially from 1950 onward, Teilhard also significantly impacted the Catholicism of the United States. The period of 1959–1972 was the crucial age during which Teilhard’s writing and thought were first available in North America; over five hundred primary and secondary works concerning him were published in the US during these years. This period was also the decade of the counterculture, the Second Vatican Council, and the dissolution of the immigrant subculture of the church in the United States.

A full-scale study of the U.S. reception of Teilhard de Chardin in this early period will contribute not only to an awareness of the thought of this important figure and the impact of his work, but will also further develop an understanding of U.S. Catholicism in its religious and cultural dimensions during these years, and provide clues as to how it has further unfolded over the past several decades. The manner in which this reception occurred, including the intensity of this phenomenon, happened as it did at this particular
point in the history of both the United States and the Catholic Church because of the confluence of the then developing social milieu, the disintegration of the immigrant Catholic subculture, and the opening of the church to the world through Vatican II. Additionally, as these social and historical events unfolded within U.S. culture during these dozen years, the manner in which Teilhard was read, and the contributions which his thought provided changed. At various points his work became a carrier for an almost Americanist emphasis upon progress, energy and hope; at other times his teleological understanding of the value of suffering moved to center stage. Most importantly, Teilhard wrote concerning humanity’s desire for the divine, and strove to place that desire for unity within the context of both religion and science. In the end, it has been his attempts to leap the interstice between the secular and the sacred, particularly in terms of his Christology, that remain of value today, and which have had, and which continue to have impact upon U.S. Catholic theology.
Dedicated with love to my husband, Larry Sack
without whom it simply would never have happened;

and also to my wonderful sons, Dan, Joe, Tim and Andy
who put up with so much in the completion.
I first want to express my unending appreciation to my two dissertation advisors, Bill Portier and Dennis Doyle. Thanks for sticking with me through what I know at times seemed like an endless number of years. You taught me so much through your friendship of compassion and encouragement, as well as being mentors extraordinarie. Even despite the sometimes tough times, I hold those memories dear.

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Special thanks to Ursula King, who encouraged me in this work early on, and sent numerous references my way, and to Kathy Duffy, S.S.J., who stepped in late in the process, yet who offered amazing editorial suggestions. You were both wonderful!
In gratitude to Dr. Patricia Ellis who offered her house to me as a writing sanctuary too many times to recall. The memory of those very long days spent staring at a laptop screen, as well as the innumerable phone calls of encouragement will always epitomize friendship for me. What a tremendous gift you are!

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INTRODUCTION

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, visionary priest, paleontologist, and writer, represents one of several important religious and cultural landmarks in the French Catholicism of the mid-twentieth century and beyond. Especially from 1950 onward, however, when he moved to New York City to live, Teilhard also significantly impacted the Catholicism of the United States. The focus in this dissertation is on the US reception of Teilhard’s work between 1960 and 1972. This period, also the decade of the counterculture, the Second Vatican Council, and the dissolution of the immigrant subculture of the church in the United States, was the crucial age during which his writing and thought were first available in North America. These were, therefore, the years in which the first American scholars responded to his theology, and so set the foundation for later interpretations. In fact, over five hundred primary and secondary works were published regarding Teilhard in the United States during these years.

A study of the US reception of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in this early period not only contributes to an appreciation of the thought of this important figure and the impact of his work, but also helps to further develop an understanding of US Catholicism in its religious and cultural dimensions during these years. The primary argument of the
dissertation is that the manner in which this reception occurred, including the intensity of this phenomenon, happened as it did at this particular point in the history of both the United States and the Catholic Church because of the confluence of the then developing social and political milieu, the opening of the global Roman Catholic church to the world through Vatican II, and unique developments within the US Catholic Church.

Additionally, as these social and historical events unfolded within US culture during these dozen years, the manner in which Teilhard was read, and the aspects of his thought which were especially deemed of value changed. At various points his work became a carrier for an almost Americanist emphasis upon progress, energy and hope; at other times his teleological understanding of the value of suffering and exile moved to center stage. Most importantly, Teilhard wrote concerning humanity’s desire for the divine, and strove to place that desire for unity within the context of both religion and science. In the end, it has been his attempt to leap the interstice between the secular and the sacred and to place this within his unique Christological vision that remains of value today, and which has had, and which continues to have impact upon US Catholic theology.

The reader must always be aware that in many ways the thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is linked with the metanarrative of modernity. Like that worldview, it emphasizes universal truths, including a belief in progress and science. Yet Teilhard’s thought ventures beyond a strictly modern metanarrative to a unique romantic, organic and mystical cosmic vision; this is a vision that recognizes the sacral aspects of the everyday as based in and resulting from a union with God, and hence a historical consciousness originating in God yet extending far beyond biblical history, and which includes a teleology that again culminates in God. This position places him in the role of
“bridge” between modern and post-modern forms of thought and life. The paradigm shift between these two occurred in the 1960s in the United States and so these years are crucial to understanding just why Teilhard was received as he was in this country.

Teilhard’s thought takes on far more meaning within the context of his own life and story, and is useful, for example, in understanding his writings about the secular world and suffering. This introductory chapter begins, therefore, with a short biographical sketch of Teilhard that will provide an understanding of the source of his own work and the interest it spurred. Following this biography is an explication of what could be considered the heart of his theological and evolutionary vision, his Christology. Finally, after this the reader will find an overview of the chapters of this dissertation.

A Short Biography of Teilhard

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born May 1, 1881 in Sarcenat, the Auvergne, France, one of eleven siblings.¹ His father, an amateur naturalist, frequently roamed the ancient hills of his homeland collecting samples; his mother was a pious Catholic, particularly fond of the Sacred Heart devotion. Teilhard grew older with these twin loves: that of “matter,” particularly durable geologic matter such as iron and stone which had withstood the ages of time; and that of Christ, the truly durable “Dieu de fer.”² In 1899 he

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² Teilhard’s fascination with the material world, and this search for durability, began at the age of 5, when as sitting by the fire and having his hair clipped he watched the snippets burning in the coals. He says he realized then, traumatized, that he, too, would one day disappear; he was perishable, and so must somehow find some personal security. “Dieu de fer” or “God of fire” was the name Teilhard subsequently assigned to
entered the Jesuit novitiate at Aix-en-Provence, after attending the local Jesuit school with several of his brothers. In a letter to his parents about this decision, he used a significant phrase in talking of it: “I believe God is inviting me to leave the world.” Already the tension between what might on the surface appear to be two dichotomous attractions—the earth and God, the natural and the supernatural—was well noted. To resolve this conflict his decision at the time was that he would simply devote himself and his life to God! In the end however, as we shall see, Teilhard’s Jesuit training offered him the thoughtful stimulation by which to continue his devotion simultaneously both to scientific investigation and to the cultivation of a life of prayer and spirituality.

It was also at Aix-en-Provence that several formative friendships began, particularly that with Auguste Valensin, who had studied philosophy with Maurice Blondel. Teilhard was quite taken with Blondel’s theory of l’action. In 1901, due to yet another anti-clerical movement within the French Republic, the Jesuits along with other religious orders were expelled from France. Teilhard’s novitiate moved first to Paris, then to the English Isle of Jersey. In the interim, in 1902 he took his first vows as a

the collection of small pieces of durables, keys, empty shell casings from the shooting range, the metal top of a banister, pieces of iron, all of which would survive fire, which he hid in a safe place and would ritualistically take out in a childish form of “adoration.” From Lukas and Lukas, 23-24.
4 Teilhard and Blondel would later in 1919 exchange letters over some essays Teilhard sent to Blondel for comment. Blondel warned Teilhard about the dangers of “immanentism” he found present in these, but read them quite closely and was impressed with the thoughts therein. These letters have been collected and edited by Henri de Lubac, S.J. in Blondel et Teilhard de Chardin: Correspondance (Paris: Beauchesne, 1965); the English translation is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin-Maurice Blondel Correspondence, trans. William Whitman (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967). The distinguished Blondel scholar, J.M. Somerville, has said: “Together Blondel and Teilhard created the atmosphere that made Vatican II possible, and they seem destined to carry on and justify its best achievements for many decades to come.” And the equally eminent Teilhardian, Christopher Mooney adds: “This is a remarkable exchange of letters between two men, one a scientist, the other a philosopher; both intensely concerned about the relationship of Christ to human achievement. Blondel had a very significant influence upon the development of Teilhard’s theological thought and this correspondence constitutes a permanent testimony to that influence.” D.L. Jones “Teilhard and Blondel,” La Nouvelle Théologie (blog), August 18, 2005, accessed September 3, 2011, http://ressourcement.blogspot.com/2005/08/teilhard-blondel.html.
Jesuit. It was during this time that death began to haunt his family, as first his younger sister Marguerite-Marie became chronically ill and then his oldest brother, Alberic died; within a few years this was followed by the death of his youngest sister, Louise. These losses definitely affected the young man. For a time while in the novitiate, Teilhard lost heart, turning away from science and the things of the world, toward theology instead. If not for the influence of his former novice master Paul Trossard, his biography might look quite different.

On Jersey, his theological, scientific and philosophical training became more intense; it then continued in Egypt, and in Sussex, England, before he began in 1912 an advanced course of study in paleontology at the Museum of Natural History in Paris. This was the same year he was ordained a Jesuit priest. Consequently he became one of the first of the scientist-priests; certainly he was one of the first to deal with the looming question of evolution.

Teilhard was apparently unaware of the controversies over Darwin, or of the whole subject of evolution until his time at the Jesuit training college at Ore, Sussex. Indeed, in his writings up to this point he remained a believer in the Catholic traditions of creation. In part, this situation can be explained by the fact that little contact existed between French and English philosophy at this time, especially in regards to this particular subject. Or perhaps, one might add, at least no contact existed which a candidate for priesthood was likely to breach, much less study. For Teilhard, Henri Bergson was the first writer to bridge this gap.

Especially for one whom Claude Cuénot, his first and still primary biographer, stated possessed “an incredibly synthetic mind,” it is difficult to unravel the threads of
influence, but Bergson made at least as much of an impact as Blondel. In reading
*L'Évolution Créatrice (The Creative Evolution)* by Henri Bergson, Teilhard met a thinker
who dissolved the Aristotelian dualism of matter and spirit in favor of a movement of an
evolving universe through the ages. For the first time Teilhard truly encountered the
word “evolution.” Within it he found scientific justification for the mystical unity he felt
he shared with all of creation. He connected even the very sound of the word "with the
extraordinary density and intensity with which the English landscape then appeared to
me—especially at sunset—when the Sussex woods seemed to be laden with all the fossil
life that I was exploring, from one quarry to another, in the soil of the World." In
Bergson, then, Teilhard initially discovered his vision of on-going evolution. It was at
this point that Teilhard decidedly committed his life to the pursuit of two distinct, parallel
tracks: science and religion. He began more explicitly to search for the progress he
thought evident everywhere in creation – the development of matter into living
organisms, and the advancement of these organisms into ever more complex life forms; a
process which he later termed “complexification.” Yet, for Bergson, evolution was
continually expanding, “a ‘Tide of Life’ undirected by an ultimate purpose,” whereas for
Teilhard the progression of life was teleological, toward a specific goal. That destination
he later would name the “Omega Point,” and identify with Jesus Christ and the process of
Christification.

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7 Aczel, 75.
8 ATA.
In 1903 while Pierre was in Egypt, Pius X succeeded Leo XIII as Pope. The somewhat forward-looking momentum of Leo was abandoned in favor of retrenchment and attacks on a wide variety of ideas labeled "modernism." These were especially elucidated in the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) and the decrees of *Lamentabili Sane* (1907). Teilhard was completing his novitiate and early philosophical training in England just as the Modernist crisis reached its peak, and conversations about the condemned publications most certainly took place among the Jesuit students.⁹

Among the many new works eventually placed on the Vatican’s *Index of Forbidden Works* shortly thereafter was Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. It would be in this ecclesiastical milieu that Teilhard would attempt to articulate his emerging vision of the spiritual quality of the universe.

In the midst of this time of intellectual growth, in 1911 his oldest sister Françoise, the only other religious in the family, died as a Little Sister of the Poor in Shanghai, China. All too soon afterwards France became involved in the First World War, and in November, 1914, word came that his younger brother Gonzague had been killed in battle. Before he reached the age of thirty, five of his siblings had met death, and those losses deeply affected Teilhard throughout his remaining life.

Shortly after this Teilhard himself received orders to report for duty in a newly forming regiment from Auvergne. After visiting his parents and invalid sister Guiguite at

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⁹ In particular, Teilhard would have been influenced by the condemnation of Alfred Loisy’s books in 1903, and the issuance of *Pascendi Dominici gregis* by Pope Pius X. Pius X declared that Modernism was not only heretical, but even condemned it as "the synthesis of all heresies" (39), because it undermined defined Catholic doctrine in a fundamental way, denying the idea of objective unchanging truth and authoritative teaching. In his later decree *Lamentabili Sane* of 1907, Pius X presented sixty-five condemned and proscribed errors of Modernism.
home, he began his work as a stretcher bearer with the North African Zouaves, the Moroccan Light infantry, in January, 1915.

The experience of war strongly marks his later writings, as against the almost daily battle fires he struggled to make sense of the purpose of violence in the world. Indeed, he began writing extensively at this point, developing his early theories on creation and evolution, as well as of matter itself. Constantly at the boundary of life and death, he sensed an urgency of leaving his intellectual testament, that of something new which he wanted to pass on to others.

From the very first, he wanted to communicate the fire of his vision. He developed his reflections in his diaries and in letters to his cousin, Marguerite Teillard-Chambon, who later edited them into a book: Genèse d'une pensée (Genesis of a thought). He confessed later: "...the war was a meeting ... with the Absolute." In 1916, he wrote his first essay: La Vie Cosmique (Cosmic life), in which his developing scientific and philosophical thought was revealed, just as was his mystical life. The essay was full of images of the universe, God’s involvement in the world and people’s communion with the earth, and of course, evolution.

Although Teilhard received permission to take final vows as a Jesuit in May 1918, his Jesuit Superiors were puzzled by his writings from the battlefield. They especially were concerned about his exploration of such topics as evolution and original sin. Teilhard, though, was impatient to publish and to disseminate his ideas. Over time he began to realize that the greatest need of teachers in the church was, "... to present

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13 Aczel, 78-9.
dogma in a more real, more universal, way - a more 'cosmogonic' way."¹⁴ He feared that without the possibility of publication, his ideas could be disseminated only “by conversation, or as manuscripts passed under a coat.”¹⁵ All too often Teilhard had the sense of "being reckoned with the orthodox and yet feeling for the heterodox."¹⁶ Throughout his life he had faith that if he had truly seen something worthwhile, then an explanation of that seeing would shine forth and be understood despite presented obstacles. As he says in a letter of 1919, "It's not nearly so much ideas that I want to propagate as a spirit: and a spirit can animate all external presentations."¹⁷

In that spirit, following the war and back in Paris, he reentered studies for his doctorate at the Sorbonne, even as he continued to write. He advanced the idea of an evolving, dynamic earth, propelled by God toward himself and the fulfillment of divine destiny. By the fall of 1920 Teilhard had been appointed chair of geology at the L’Institut Catholique, and was teaching students who excitedly knew him as an active proponent of evolutionary thought. In March of 1921, at the age of forty, he defended his dissertation for the doctorate of science from the Sorbonne.

With the degree came numerous invitations to lecture. One was from a theological institute in Belgium, where in 1922 Teilhard presented his ideas on the evolution of mammals, and elucidated his view of original sin, expressing his view that the story of the biblical Adam and Eve could not be read literally. After his return to

¹⁵ Aczel, 78. From a letter between Teilhard and his cousin, Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon, ca. 1919.
¹⁷ Ibid., 281. The entire quote is “What makes me easier in my mind at this juncture, is that the rather hazardous schematic points in my teaching are in fact of only secondary importance to me. It's not nearly so much ideas that I want to propagate as a spirit: and a spirit can animate all external presentations.”
Paris, he worked more on his arguments, building a theological framework that would discard the traditional Christian concept of original sin.

The war against the Modernists initiated by Pius X had somewhat abated at his death in 1914. But the new Pope, Benedict XV, renewed the attack on evolution, on “new theology” and on any number of perceived errors the Vatican Curia considered threatening. Although Teilhard understood that everything he said in public, as well as wrote for publication, would be monitored by Jesuit authorities in France and also in Rome, as his work advanced he increasingly was fascinated with the concept of evolution. Concurrently his superiors became ever more concerned over the direction his thought was proceeding, and encouraged Teilhard to consider some field work experience. While he was absent, they hoped, the hubbub would dissipate. However, Teilhard wasn’t interested. Eventually however, he began to understand that it might be best both for his academic and his ecclesiastical career if he was out of Europe for a while. Perhaps with distance the controversy over his teaching would quiet itself. The opportunity for fieldwork in China had existed since 1919, with an open invitation from the Jesuit scientist Emile Licent who was involved in paleontological work around Tientsin. Consequently, on April 1, 1923, Teilhard sailed from Marseille on his way to China. Never again would he live long-term in his home country.

During these early years in China Teilhard’s major interest was in the natural terrain. Although he greatly interacted with numerous ethnic groups during his travels, he rarely showed an interest in exploring their culture beyond the minimum necessary. In the beginning he considered the Chinese a wretched people, without hope or idealism.\textsuperscript{18} It

\textsuperscript{18} Aczel, 90.
is then perhaps no surprise that an ironic aspects of his career is that the Confucian tradition with its concern for the “realization of the cosmic identity of heaven, earth and men remained outside of Teilhard’s concerns,” at least for a vast portion of his life. In a similar fashion tribal peoples with their “earth-centered spirituality” were considered by Teilhard simply to be at an earlier stage in development.

It was during this first trip to China, on his first paleontological expedition with Licent, that one of his most beloved works, *Mass on the World*, was written. He found himself without either wine or wafer in the Ordos desert on the feast of the Transfiguration, unable to say Mass. Teilhard instead offers up the world as the Eucharistic sacrifice in this prayer, combining religion, science, and nature in a personal mysticism. From this same desert he shortly after wrote to his friend Abbé Breuil: “Mysticism remains the great science and the great art, the only power capable of synthesizing the riches accumulated by other forms of human activity.”

Teilhard returned briefly to France in October, 1924. He resumed his teaching to wildly enthusiastic students, and expanded his thinking and writing on evolution. During this time he began to use the term of Edward Suess, “biosphere,” or “earth-layer of living things,” in his geological schema. Teilhard also expanded this idea to include the layer of thinking beings which encompassed the earth, that layer comprised of the intelligence and thought of all creation which he called the “noosphere” from the Greek word “nous,” meaning mind. Many who interacted with him believed he was the type of Catholic priest who could move the Church forward, one who understood how to synthesize the

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19 ATA. By his return to Europe late in the 1940s this attitude toward the Chinese, as well as other cultures and religions, had greatly changed.
20 Aczel, 93.
21 ATA.
scientific and the religious, the world and the spirit. Additionally, he was now recognized as one of Europe’s first-rate scientists.

However, his thoughts so greatly disturbed some of the conservative French bishops that they again reported him to the Vatican; this in turn put pressure on the local Jesuit superiors to silence him. Also, while he had been working in China the theological reflection concerning original sin which he had written somehow made its way from his desk drawer to Rome where horrified Curia officials sensed heresy. As a result, only a month after his return from China, Teilhard was called into his provincial Superior to repudiate his ideas on original sin. This demand provoked a serious crisis for Teilhard. His lifelong dilemma was now clearly delineated: how did one reconcile the creative and open mind of a scientist and philosopher with the obedience and traditional stance of the Catholic Church and Jesuit order? Numerous friends counseled him to leave the Jesuits, but as was true throughout his life, he was reluctant to do so. While he pondered the choices to be made, he continued to travel and teach. The Jesuits, however, even after Teilhard eventually signed papers repudiating his stance on original sin, continued to press him to work in a province further out of the limelight. He was, after all, a famous Catholic Jesuit scientist who held views which the Church did not espouse. He was not to be trusted. In the end Teilhard was required to give up his home and work at the Catholic Institute in Paris and to continue his geological research in China. This he resignedly accepted, and returned to China in 1926 at the age of forty-five, recognizing that most likely he would remain in exile much of the rest of his life.

Indeed, in China he remained for most of the following eleven years, working with Licent, Davidson Black, and Johan Andersson on geological and paleontological
projects. Concurrently however, he never stopped developing his own theological and philosophical thought regarding the evolution of the universe. Rupturing his contentment at this time was the news that the Jesuit authorities in Rome had revoked his position at L’Institut Catholique in Paris. Partly in an attempt to appease his superiors and show his orthodoxy, he began writing a book which he called *Le Milieu Divin*. He often described this work as “a little book of piety,” and it contains his early suggestions as to how all human activity might be used for the evolution of the world in a positive direction.  

What is necessary for this to occur, however, is that we learn how to “see” God in the world that surrounds us. Only in seeing God in this way will we truly love God, and only through loving God will the universe evolve as it could or should. This mystical way of knowing and worshipping God is the underlying foundation for all of Teilhard’s spiritual and scientific propositions. It serves as the source of integrity binding together what might appear to be the natural dualism inherent between science and religion, the material world and the sacred, a joyful optimism with the realities of life on this earth.

Teilhard was permitted to return to France, the first of five times during this period of exile, in August, 1927. He pushed the Jesuit censors of Rome hard, trying to get *Le Milieu Divin* published. His “geocentric approach,” in which he attempted to reconcile the love of God with love for the planet, was considered irreligious, perhaps even pagan. The Church was suspicious. In June 1928, the assistant to the Jesuit Superior General arrived while Teilhard was still in Paris to inform him that all his theological work must end, or he would be banished to a location even more remote than

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22 Aczel, 127.  
24 Aczel, 128.
China. He was to confine himself to scientific work. Disappointed he returned to China, but only after writing the first several pages of an essay “Le Phénomène Humain,” which would later evolve into what is perhaps his most important book.

Teilhard continued his work in China throughout World War II, while contributing to the creation of an international network of research in human paleontology. These years were also very rich in geological expeditions. In 1929 he traveled in Somaliland and Ethiopia for research before returning to China. He played a major role in the excavation and interpretation of "Peking Man" at Chou-kou-tien in 1929-1930. In 1930 he was a key member of Ray Chapman Andrew's Central Mongolian Expedition at the invitation of the American Museum of Natural History. The following year he journeyed across America. That voyage later inspired him to write *L’Espirit de la Terre*.\(^{25}\) From May 1931 to February 1932 he explored Central Asia with the famous Yellow Expedition, which was sponsored by the Citroen automobile company.

In 1937 he was awarded the Gregor Mendel medal for his scientific accomplishments at a Philadelphia Conference at which he gave several lectures while on one of his trips away from China. During these he explained his evolutionary theory, including his hypotheses concerning that point in human development at which hominids became rational human beings. Unfortunately an article about the symposium which appeared in *The New York Times* on March 20th misinterpreted his thoughts, and stated that they concerned the common ancestry of humans and apes.\(^{26}\) For American

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\(^{26}\) William Laurence, “China Cave a Lead to ‘Missing Link,’” *New York Times* (March 20, 1937): 9. Also, while on this same United States trip in 1937 for a paleontological conference, reporters from *Newsweek*
Catholics, sensitive about the whole topic of evolution, Teilhard tread too heavily on sacred ground.

He had also been scheduled to receive an honorary degree from Boston College, a Jesuit school immediately after the symposium, but the archbishop of Boston, William Henry Cardinal O’Connell, was offended by the reported remarks in the newspaper and refused to appear if Teilhard was honored. At the last minute the school authorities changed their minds and cancelled the ceremony. Upon his return to Paris he was again chastised by his superiors, and after a stint in the hospital for exhaustion and malaria, returned to China.

As a result of this wide-ranging field work, however, Teilhard became one of the world’s most important geologists. This fame, in addition to his original theories on human evolution, made him a valuable presence for the French government throughout the world. His professional undertakings are even more impressive when one realizes the profound personal tragedies that he underwent in the years between 1932 and 1936 when his father, mother, younger brother, Victor, and his beloved sister, Guiguite, all died during his absence.

It was also during this time in China that Teilhard met many of those who would remain close friends throughout the rest of his life. His warmth and ongoing optimistic belief in life seemed to attract many to him, women included. Few knew him as well as Lucille Swan, an American artist, who found herself in the Peking area in 1929 after her divorce from her husband. The friendship between Lucille and Teilhard grew much wondered how a Jesuit could reconcile the religious and scientific beliefs he held. Teilhard said in response: “The lack of understanding that exists in some quarters on the evolution of man can be classified solely as a lack of understanding.” “Portrait,” *Newsweek* (March 27, 1939): 31.
stronger in the years to come; for a long period of time they were in almost daily contact when both were in the area, and a correspondence of more than twenty years was also the result of the friendship. From Lucille as well as from his cousin Marguerite Teilhard de Chambon, Léontine Zanta, Ida Treat, Rhoda de Terra and others, Teilhard developed a true appreciation for *l'éternal féminin* and an understanding of love that surpassed that of most Jesuit priests.  

Teilhard’s final years of exile in China, 1939 to 1946, correspond fairly well to the years of World War II and the loss of Chinese Republican control. The most momentous achievement of this era for Teilhard, however, was the completion of *The Phenomenon of Man* in May of 1940. Of all of Teilhard’s great syntheses between 1938 and 1955, *Le Phénomène Humain* was perhaps the most highly developed. The fundamental themes contained therein had been gestating for a long time, so when Teilhard consciously began work on it in October, 1937, it progressed fairly quickly. In May, 1938 he presented the preliminary sketches, and by August the first chapter was completed as the rest advanced slowly, but surely. By this time he “saw” Christianity as the “spearhead of evolution and Christ as the only term for a universe struggling towards unity.”

Here Teilhard writes of the unfolding of the material cosmos, from creation to the development of the noosphere in contemporary times, to his vision of the Omega Point in

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27 Consider, for example, the chapter “Lucille Swan” in Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 144-54; see also in the same book pages 77-81 concerning Teilhard’s relationship with his cousin Marguerite.

28 Aczel, 188.

29 Cujnot, 209. In 1935, before undertaking this project, he had written that his “spiritual edifice was ‘built on the basis of a complete adherence to the supreme value of what is developing around us, and in us, in the universe.’” In a letter on Feb 8, 1940 to Max Bégouen he comments that he generally could write one or two pages daily. From Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters from a Traveler* (New York: Harper, 1962), 257.
the future. As already noted, he was a leading proponent of orthogenesis, the idea that evolution occurs in a particular, directional, or goal driven way. To Teilhard, evolution was the cumulative process of the development of the universe, from cell to organism to planet to solar system and whole-universe, culminating in communion with Christ. There is no doubt that *The Phenomenon of Man* represents Teilhard's attempt at reconciling his religious faith with his scientific interests as a paleontologist. One particularly poignant observation in Teilhard's book expresses the notion that evolution is becoming an increasingly intentional process. Teilhard points to the societal problems of isolation and marginalization as significant inhibitors of evolution, especially since, in his thought, evolution requires a unification of consciousness. He states that "no evolutionary future awaits anyone except in association with everyone else." This statement can effectively be seen as Teilhard's demand for unity because he believes the future of the human condition necessitates it. He also asserts that "evolution is an ascent toward consciousness," and therefore, signifies a continuous upsurge or progressive moment toward the Omega Point, the teleological end of this universe, a process he referred to as “Christogenesis.”

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30 The noosphere might be considered the skin, the film, or cloud of knowledge that surrounds the planet. It is the “thinking skin” of the universe. More than once parallels have been drawn between contemporary global communications, particularly the Internet, and Teilhard’s noosphere of fifty years previous. See, for example, Philip J. Cunningham, C.S.P., “Teilhard de Chardin and the Noosphere,” CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) Magazine (March, 1997); or the groundbreaking article concerning this, I.H. Shafer, “From Noosphere to Theosphere: Cyclotrons, Cyberspace and Teilhard’s Vision of Cosmic Love,” *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 37 (December, 2002): 825-852.


Teilhard constantly revised the book, however, because he knew that his request to publish it would face strong opposition in Rome. He was searching for a formula that would permit him to say what he needed to say and yet at the same time would ease the path through approval by the authorities. The most important contribution of his work is the way in which it places the emergence of humanity as the pivotal point of earth’s evolutionary process. *The Human Phenomenon* uses a fourfold sequence of evolution: galactic evolution, earth evolution, life evolution and consciousness evolution, to create what “might almost be considered a new literary genre.”

By 1941 Teilhard had a complete version of his book; one copy was sent to Father Edmund Walsh at Georgetown University. A second went to the Jesuit headquarters in Rome, with a letter requesting permission to publish. As Teilhard truly did not expect to receive this permission in a timely manner though, the long delay before he received any sort of response was only to be expected.

Finally in March, 1944, one of the Jesuits reviewing Teilhard’s manuscript wrote a report detailing scores of objections to the work. The report was sent to the Jesuit superior, with a suggestion for denial, yet Teilhard heard nothing about the status of the process until he was finally permitted to return to France in 1946 after the War. In January, 1947, Teilhard met outside Toulouse with those assigned the task of deciding whether the manuscript should be published. After two days of meetings and listening to myriad criticisms concerning the basic elements of his book, it was obvious that

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33 ATA.
34 Aczel notes that this report was written in longhand, and in Latin, and is still kept secret today. When the document was accidentally given to him to peruse for a few moments before it was rapidly taken away, the result was extreme consternation on the part of the Jesuit librarians. Even today, he notes, it appears that for many Jesuits Teilhard de Chardin is an extremely sensitive topic. Aczel, 200.
permission would be denied. Although he was supposedly permitted to publish what he wished about science, the Jesuits claimed this book went far beyond science.

Teilhard, wanting to make one more effort to gain approval, met that September with his longtime friends Monsignor Bruno de Solages and Henri de Lubac in the French Pyrenees at a chateau owned by the Monsignor’s cousin. Over a week’s time the three pored over the manuscript in an effort to counter the objections raised in Rome. Ultimately, however, they were unable to persuade the authorities to change their minds.

During this time Teilhard was nominated as a candidate for the chair in Prehistory at the Sorbonne, soon to be vacated by his friend the Abbé Henri Breuil. By May of 1947 Teilhard was exhausted from attempting to strengthen his position and in dealing with expectations. Maybe as a result he suffered a heart attack at the beginning of June. He was unable to join an expedition to Africa sponsored by the Viking Fund of the Wenner-Green Foundation in New York. He had looked forward to the trip as the trip as a pleasant interlude before the tumult began again with Rome over The Phenomenon and before the position began at the Sorbonne. However, while recovering from this setback, he was honored by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for his scientific and intellectual achievements, and was made an officer in the Legion of Honor.

He had recuperated enough that a year later he did travel to the United States. He was invited to give a series of lectures at Columbia University; however, the local Jesuit Superior would not give his approval. A trip to Rome in 1949 to personally pursue the

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35 Aczel, 204. Monsignor Bruno de Solages and Teilhard met early in Teilhard’s career. The abbé was impressed with how Teilhard was able to integrate Christianity with evolution. De Solages understood Teilhard’s ideas, saw nothing heretical or subversive in them, and became one of his strongest and most powerful supporters. Bruno de Solages served in the Resistance during World War II, spent time in a Nazi concentration camp, and later was the rector of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse. He was also quite close to Pope Pius XII. He and Teilhard remained close throughout both their lives. Aczel, 191 and 203.
subject of the publication of *The Phenomenon* resulted in no further progress. Teilhard came to realize that he would never be permitted to publish during his lifetime; not only that, the position at the Sorbonne was now denied him. The only bright spot was that his works were not placed on the *Index*. Teilhard returned to Paris dejected.

After traveling extensively for the next two years, Teilhard accepted a research position with the Wenner-Green foundation in New York in December of 1951. For the next three years he lived with the Jesuit priests at St. Ignatius Church on Park Avenue, and walked to his office at Wenner-Green, and to the apartment of his secretary and friend, Rhoda de Terra. Even during these last years, his correspondence with yet another friend in France, Father Pierre Leroy, later published as *Letters From My Friend* displayed the lack of bitterness and continued sense of hope that so characterized his life.

In 1951, as he had already suffered one heart attack, his friends suggested that he bequeath his papers to his then official secretary in Paris, Jeanne Mortier, so they might be published one day and did not instead fall into the possession of the Jesuits. This he did. The fear in the latter case was that they would simply be destroyed, or buried forever in a filing cabinet. Hoping to spend his final years in his native country, Teilhard applied once more to his superiors for permission to return permanently to France. He was politely refused and encouraged to return to America. He died Easter Sunday, April 10, 1955 in New York City. His funeral on a rainy Easter Monday was attended by only a few friends. Father Leroy and the ministering priest from St. Ignatius accompanied his body some sixty miles upstate from New York City where he was buried at St. Andrews-on-Hudson, then the Jesuit novitiate.
Time Magazine published this obituary the week of his death: “Died. The Rev. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., 74, world-renowned, French-born paleontologist, co-discoverer (in 1924) of the Peking man, the first actual remains of Paleolithic man found in Asia; of a heart attack; in Manhattan …. ’The significant fact about man,’ he said, ‘is the coming of thought with and through him.’”

Teilhard’s Christological Vision

As was noted above, during his last years Teilhard lived far from his beloved Paris amid the New York City Jesuit community. At the time of his death in 1955, he was known to the public primarily as the “missing link” priest, the aristocratic French paleontologist who helped to unearth and analyze the Peking Man bones found in China in the late 1930’s. Only gravediggers were in attendance when he was finally buried at the Jesuit cemetery on the Hudson River near Poughkeepsie. But another Teilhard also existed, the Jesuit writer and mystic who integrated his scientific and spiritual zeal into an unconventional understanding of the evolutionary progress of the cosmos. His spiritual writings had continued to be circulated and discussed, not publicly or officially, but via mimeographed copies that circulated privately among theologians, scientists and scholars for discussion and criticism. Following his death, through the efforts of his former secretary Jeanne Mortier and what came to be known as ‘The Teilhard de Chardin Foundation,’ the primary sources themselves were posthumously published and translated into several languages. Henri De Lubac, his fellow French Jesuit and friend, wrote numerous treatises explicating Teilhard’s work, and eventually an immense body of

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36 Obrituary, Time (April 25, 1955): 104. Also included in that obituary was this comment: “Father Teilhard regarded the Peking man as a n important link between the anthropoids and modern man, saw no contradiction between Roman Catholic doctrine and scientific evidence of man’s animal origin.”
secondary work sprang up around them. As one commentator put it, “Teilhard virtually became a cult.”

The reasons behind that cultic devotion during primarily the 1960s are what this dissertation will in part explore. However, as will become clear, a reductive understanding of Teilhard’s thought and spirituality was what often drove the fascination with and use of his writing. What was not often understood was that from an early age devotion to Christ’s life, especially to his Sacred Heart and Passion was central to Teilhard’s spirituality. The Jesuits taught him to see God at work in the world even when pain and suffering was the norm. Although he had no easy explanations for the often apparently meaningless suffering intrinsic to human existence, in *The Divine Milieu* especially he wrote about how this is transfigured by God and provides a means by which God may enter into the heart of humankind. God, he wrote, “must, in some way or other, make room for himself, hollowing us out and emptying us, if he is finally to penetrate into us.”

This kenotic spirituality plays a crucial role in Teilhard’s Christocentric vision which numerous scholars would consider at the heart of his life’s work, and which will be a key in understanding his reception in the United States during these years. Indeed, at one point he wrote to a friend: “Exalting Christ over everything; this is all I can be accused of.”

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38 Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 89.
39 Francisco Bravo, *Christ in the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 84. Although Bravo does not provide a reference for this quote, Teilhard wrote in the same vein in 1916 to his cousin Marguerite: “I want to love Christ with all my strength in the very act of loving the universe. Can this be absurdity, blasphemy?” Letter to Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon, March 15, 1916.
Throughout my life, by means of my life, the world has little by little caught fire in my sight until, aflame all around me, it has become almost completely luminous from within…Such has been my experience in contact with the earth – the diaphany of the Divine at the heart of the universe on fire…Christ; his heart; a fire; capable of penetrating everywhere and, gradually, spreading everywhere.40

As an appreciation of this all-encompassing vision is essential for understanding the remainder of this dissertation, it would seem expedient to briefly present it here.

First, however, one must realize Teilhard’s Christocentric cosmology, was not a theological invention of his own design. He is, however, perhaps the only modern Catholic thinker who takes seriously the Cosmic Christ of St. Paul and St. John, as well as some of the Greek Fathers, and makes this thematic in his thought. 41 It is especially in

40 Teilhard, The Divine Milieu, 9n.
41 These would include Rom 8:19-23: “We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies;” Eph 1:9-10: “he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.” 1 Cor 15:28: “When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will [also] be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all” Rev 22:12-13: “Behold, I am coming soon. …I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Col 1:15-20: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross.” And finally John 1:1-4: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race.”

As to his appropriation of the Greek Fathers, consider that Teilhard obviously uses, for instance, the Eucharistic cosmology of Gregory of Nyssa.

Compare:
“Your life is so much stronger than ours that it dominates us, absorbs us, and assimilates us to itself... Although I might have imagined that it was I who held the consecrated Bread and gave myself its nourishment, I now see with blinding clarity that it is the Bread that takes hold of me and draws me to itself.” (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, ‘The Priest,’ in Writings in Time of War, pages 210, 214–15, amended translation), with:
“That body to which immortality has been given it by God, when it is in ours, translates and transmutes the whole into itself... The immortal Body, by being within that which receives it, changes the whole to its own nature... The mere framework of our body possesses nothing belonging to itself that is cognizable by us, to hold it together, but remains in existence owing to a force that is introduced into it.” (Gregory of Nyssa, The Great Catechism, § 37, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, II.5

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the New Testament writings where his teleological anthropocentrism appears to originate.\textsuperscript{42}

As a result, for Teilhard the Incarnation takes on a new hue and importance. In his interpretation Christ the divine and human not only are genuinely blended into one entity, but Christ is by necessity at the center of the universe. Only Christ can give the world a transcendent outlook; because of his Incarnation natural creation is reformed and further directed toward a higher unity. As a result Teilhard finds the duality of the natural / supernatural divide false in many ways, and discerns that matter and spirit are complementary to each other.\textsuperscript{43} Likewise, if one refuses to acknowledge the presence of a superhuman power in Christ, one refuses to believe in the Incarnation. In the Incarnation of Jesus Teilhard finds not just the organizing synthesis of spirit and matter, as well as the subsequent unfolding of events leading to the birth, work and passion of Christ, but that which continues beyond these into a new evolutionary theology. Teilhard therefore understood humanity and the whole of nature as combining incarnationally in an historical progression guided by and drawn forth by the Pauline Cosmic Christ. For Teilhard: “To create, to fulfill, to purify the world is for God to unify it by uniting it organically with himself. How does he unify it? By immersing himself in things, by becoming ‘element’ and then from this vantage in the heart of matter, assuming the

\textsuperscript{42} It is this same teleology and anthropocentrism that Stephen J. Gould later denounced and ridiculed as a “vision with a vengeance” \textit{Natural History} 89 (September, 1980): 16-20.

\textsuperscript{43} Consider, for example the quote: “I saw that the dualism in which I had hitherto been enclosed was disappearing like the mist before the rising sun. Matter and Spirit: these were no longer two things, but two states or two aspects of one and the same cosmic Stuff,” Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, \textit{Heart of Matter} (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1966), 26.
control and leadership of what we now call evolution.” Teilhard saw Christ as giving guidance to the cosmos via evolution.

The metaphysics of Aquinas and the ancient Greek Fathers suggested to him that evolution was not simply random mutations and struggles for survival, but something beyond Darwinism in that it consisted of a convergent progression of life towards an even greater unity in Christ. Teilhard suggested that Christianity, from its beginning, has adopted the notion that in the one who came to earth as Jesus, the whole reason for creation, both its material as well as its spiritual purpose, is to be found. As he put it “The answer to the riddle of the universe is: Christ Jesus.”

Additionally, Teilhard’s cosmology is quite Eucharistic in nature. As the following biography tells us, he was for most of his life an ordained priest who while a young man wrote a thesis on the Eucharist, and who received the sacrament daily. In the Mass the consecrated bread and wine represented for him the whole of earthly matter formed and transformed by human activity through the direction of God. Matter then, becomes something more than just formless “stuff.” Christ’s presence in the stuff of the Eucharist exemplifies Christ’s presence in all the created matter of the earth. It is Christ who sustains this and constitutes it into something more.

So Jesus the man, son of Mary, serves as the historical medium by which humanity’s united efforts can be drawn to Christ, the evolutive force, through both the natural and supernatural dimensions. The Incarnation means the supernatural being of God has assumed a natural form in order to enter our universe; Christ both inspires and claims for himself the natural desires of people. As Teilhard wrote: “There is only one

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44 Teilhard, _The Phenomenon of Man_, 149.
single center of the universe; it is at once natural and supernatural; it impels the whole of creation along one and the same line, first towards the fullest development of consciousness, and later towards the highest degree of holiness: in other words towards Christ Jesus, personal and cosmic both. 46 The Christogenesis described here, in which God first Christifies himself through the Incarnation and through which Christ the “all in all” is then fully formed by drawing into a mystical consummation the entirety of life, is the heart of both Teilhard’s theology and his evolutionary theory.

By contrast, much nineteenth-century theology tended to emphasize Christ’s human nature at the expense of his divine nature. This had been taken to an extreme in various Modernist writings that portrayed Christ as only a human man no different from anyone else. Additionally, despite the writings of St. Paul and the Eastern Fathers, Christ’s power over creation has otherwise primarily been considered in its juridical aspects. In other words, Christ is king because God the Father proclaimed him King. In this thought the organic, physical side of the Incarnation is relegated to the background, so that the idea of the physical control of the cosmos by the person of the Cosmic Christ became quite inconceivable. 47

In this cosmology Teilhard believed Christ becomes far too removed, individualistic, dissociated from the universe. Instead he asked: “How then, may we conceive Christ to be constituted as the cosmic center of creation? Simply as a magnification, a transformation, realized in the humanity of Christ, of that which surrounds every human monad.” 48

Teilhard claims therefore that just as each person is in a continual process of growth, of gradually further becoming himself or herself, so too is the whole cosmos a growing and developing whole. It is the same with Christ. In his human nature he is an individual advancing in wisdom and knowledge as he learns from his mother, teachers, and friends. Through the Incarnation there is consequently something of Christ in every creature. It is the responsibility and the privilege of each to develop the Christ-element within so as to add to the fullness that Christ the divine being already is.

This transformative activity requires human co-operation with God’s own creative action. In his spiritual classic *The Divine Milieu*, Teilhard wrote that in action, ‘I adhere to the creative power of God; I coincide with it; I become not only its instrument but its living extension. And as there is nothing more personal in beings than their will, I merge myself, in a sense, through my heart, with the very heart of God.’ He saw these words as applicable to all created beings.

For Teilhard all the activities of our lives help to complete Christ’s achievement and, move the cosmos toward Christogenesis. Nor is this a solitary, individual achievement, but that of a community, a body united in a spiritualized love which is the primary unifying force.49 As he wrote: “God who is as immense and all-embracing as matter, and at the same time as warm and intimate as a soul, is the center who spreads through all things…souls are irresistibly drawn by the demands of their innate powers…towards a common center of beatitude, and it is in this convergence that they find a first bond that combines them in a natural whole…moreover, grace, which introduces them into the field of divine attraction, forces them all to exert an influence, as they proceed, upon one another; and it is in this relation of dependence…that there lies so astonishingly the ‘cosmic’ mystery of the *Communion of Saints.*” Grace…is more than the common environment…by which the multitude is bound together into one solid whole…the Communion of Saints is held together in the hallowed unity of a physically organized whole; and this whole…. is the body of Christ.” Teilhard, “Cosmic Life,” *Writings in Time of War*, 48.

49 In more detail the quote reads: “God who is as immense and all-embracing as matter, and at the same time as warm and intimate as a soul, is the center who spreads through all things…souls are irresistibly drawn by the demands of their innate powers…towards a common center of beatitude, and it is in this convergence that they find a first bond that combines them in a natural whole…moreover, grace, which introduces them into the field of divine attraction, forces them all to exert an influence, as they proceed, upon one another; and it is in this relation of dependence…that there lies so astonishingly the ‘cosmic’ mystery of the *Communion of Saints.*” Grace…is more than the common environment…by which the multitude is bound together into one solid whole…the Communion of Saints is held together in the hallowed unity of a physically organized whole; and this whole…. is the body of Christ.” Teilhard, “Cosmic Life,” *Writings in Time of War*, 48.
through all things… souls are irresistibly drawn …towards a common center of beatitude,…the multitude is bound together into one solid whole… the Communion of Saints is held together in the hallowed unity of a physically organized whole; and this whole…. is the body of Christ.”

In Teilhard’s spirituality the perfection of the Christian occurs due to the following of Christ, but here it means more than simply attempting to reproduce in one’s own life the various features of Christ’s own mission. Rather than simply the historic Galilean Jesus, the Christ we are called to follow is the Christ who is the head of the evolutionary process, the risen Lord who has shown himself free of the purely temporal and the purely human. Through his birth, personal love, life’s work and passion Jesus associated himself with human life; we are to strive to associate ourselves with him in his more than human role. The role of the Church is as an agent of Christogenesis: nurturing and furthering the crucial phylum of love, building the Mystical Body of Christ, and assisting Christians in learning how to “see” the divine milieu, as well as becoming aware of Christ’s presence in the world.

Finally, Teilhard’s Christology is also exceedingly eschatological. His is an eschatology of hope, of love caught fire through the Christification of all creation. It is focused upon the Parousia, or Second Coming of Christ at the end of time, when Christogenesis is complete. As he writes in conclusion in the epilogue of *The Divine Milieu*:

> Let us believe in Revelation, once again our faithful support on our most human forebodings … tension will gradually accumulate … then will come the end … the presence of Christ, which has been silently accruing in things, will suddenly be revealed – like a flash of light from pole to pole … Like lightening, like a conflagration, like a flood, the attraction exerted
by the Son of Man will lay hold of all the whirling elements in the
universe so as to reunite them or subject them to His body…Such will be
the consummation of the divine milieu.\textsuperscript{50}

**The Chapters of this Dissertation**

This dissertation places the reception of Teilhard de Chardin’s work in the United
States within the social, historical, and theological context of the period between 1960
and 1972. The work proceeds chronologically and each chapter given contextualizes the
reception of Teilhard in the cultural events and pertinent written material of the
designated time period. Note that the primary task here is discuss Teilhard’s reception
rather than to give an exposition of his work. Although the former does require some of
the latter, that is not the primary focus.

The argument of this work is that the manner in which this reception occurred,
including the intensity of this phenomenon, happened as it did at this particular point in
the history of both the United States and the Catholic Church because of the confluence
of the then developing social and political milieu, the opening of the global Roman
Catholic church to the world through Vatican II, and unique developments within the US
Catholic Church itself. Throughout the dozen years discussed within this dissertation, the
manner in which Teilhard’s work was read and the groups of people who utilized it
changed. Yet, in the end it was those who grasped his attempts through an integrated
Christological vision to bridge the gap between nature and grace, between religion and
science, and his embrace of the everyday material world, who were best able to carry his
thought beyond the difficult days at the end of this time period. As a result his work
continues to have impact upon the contemporary US Catholic Church.

\textsuperscript{50} Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 134.
Chapter One gives a cursory examination of Teilhard’s work as it was published posthumously before 1960 in France and England. It includes an overview of his reception in these countries as publication of anything on Teilhard in the United States in this time period was almost nonexistent. As will later chapters, the first chapter will then briefly examine the social and religious milieu in the United States in the late 1950s. Following this will be the means and the reasons by which interest developed in Teilhard in the United States after his death, with an emphasis upon the initial attention shown by Robert Francoeur and those who numerous years later formed the American Teilhard Association.

The second and third chapters, which both discuss the years 1961-1964, reiterate that the oft misunderstood figure of Teilhard de Chardin has indeed had immeasurable impact upon the intellectual history of twentieth-century Catholicism, even as many found his thought a challenge to traditional understandings of the teleology of humankind and the cosmos. His then unpublished works were considered so threatening they were implicitly attacked by Pope Pius XII’s 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*, which warned against certain dangerous opinions concerning evolution. After his death, at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, a *monitum* was issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, which warned of “serious errors [in his work], as to offend Catholic doctrine.” Teachers, theologians, and university officials were, therefore, implored to be aware of the dangers to the minds of susceptible youth regarding Teilhard’s teachings involving the interplay of nature and grace, or religion and science. This warning was reinforced in 1981, at the centenary of his birth, when the Holy See reiterated it against rumors that the *monitum* no longer applied.
When shortly after his death, as mentioned above, friends began to arrange for the publication of his previously suppressed works, the Catholic Church was just entering a new period of freedom stirred by the Second Vatican Council. Teilhard became a theological sensation. His emphasis on evolutionary advancement certainly matched the optimistic, progressive mood of the age. This was particularly true in the United States, where a delight in the material world and an unwavering belief in unending progress dictated by God had been a dominant feature of Americanist Catholicism already for a century.

Beyond this, many would claim that Teilhard had quite an impact upon Vatican II itself, particularly on the document *Gaudium et Spes*, the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Joseph Komonchak argues that prior to the council Roman Catholicism “was in a state of emigration or exile from the modern cultural world, off in an intellectual ghetto.”⁵¹ Along came Teilhard, with his attempt to join ancient ascetical traditions with the contemporary craving for creative activity, the desire for the divine with natural and human evolution, mystical union with science and reason. He taught, or reminded, his readers to embrace the divine presence in the ordinary objects of the daily world. So, Teilhard’s thought, particularly his endeavors to resolve the then existing dualities between nature and grace, the secular and the sacred, and science and faith, paralleled and provided support for the efforts of those who were attempting to do the same in the documents of this council.

Certainly, as Chapter Four shows us, the introduction to *Gaudium et Spes* is full of Teilhardian flavor. Its Christological passages contain his favorite citations concerning...

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Christ as the pattern of the new creation. It rings with Teilhardian optimism: “expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one.”\textsuperscript{52} The introduction reaches out to a secular world by stressing the value of the secular and the wonders of technology and science. It sees scientists working “with a humble and steady mind,” led by God, and Christ as Omega, “the goal of human history.”\textsuperscript{53} All these statements point to Teilhardian themes which will reoccur repeatedly within this dissertation, all of which had tremendous impact on American culture during this era.

In the secular world during the years of 1964 through 1967 especially, a discontent with the dualism of science and spirit, and the increasing sense of a moral vacuum, or a feeling of purposelessness while in the midst of plenty, had greatly increased. This was the era exemplified by Jack and Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Freedom Riders, the beginning of the counterculture and hippiedom. As Robert Ellwood contends, this was perhaps the moment for which Teilhard, with his own brand of Catholicism, his understanding of the value of everyday effort, the drive for unification, and his humanistic and yet spiritual kind of science, was an ideal match: “He opened a lot of windows…and was among the first…and perhaps the best …of the chanticleers of the Sixties spiritual awakening.”\textsuperscript{54} It is perhaps then no surprise that these were the years, as both Chapters Four and Five explicate, that interest in Teilhard’s thought was at its height.

Yet, around 1968, the pace and the direction of his reception within the United States altered. Politically and socially it was a dark year. As a result, other forms of

\textsuperscript{52} Gaudium et Spes, 3:39.
\textsuperscript{54} Ellwood, The Sixties Spiritual Awakening, 91.
theological discourse rose to prominence instead. Chapters Six and Seven explore the question of why this occurred at this particular time. Within the Church itself, Joseph Komonchak argues that although the bishops and theologians at Vatican II were in accord in opposing the prior Neo-Scholastic theological system, they were not in agreement as to what should take its place.\(^5\) It was, therefore, in responding to the unfolding of the council in its various forms that the majority at the council began to divide and fracture. The pre-existing divisions between cohorts had been hidden during the council itself by a common desire and common effort to break what they perceived as a system which was destroying the traditional faith. When that particular structure began to crumble, the solidarity among its opponents also splintered. Perhaps as a result, the previously overwhelmingly favorable response to Teilhard at this same time, if it did not necessarily disappear, at least was somewhat tempered.

It is extremely difficult to separate the political and social upheavals in the United States (in much of the Western world, in fact) from the evolving Roman Catholic ecclesiology of the 1960s. By 1968 certain progressive movements within the country, especially those that might be linked to the “counterculture,” particularly those of racial equality, and the student and antiwar movements, had begun to disintegrate. The sense of optimistic, cohesive progress that had carried them thus far gradually dissipated, just as did interest in Teilhard’s theories. One could possibly claim then, that, as the reception of Vatican II or other progressive moments within this country have evolved and unfolded in complex ways, in many ways so too has the reception of Teilhard’s thought.

These observations raise several related questions. This dissertation is not primarily concerned with Teilhard’s influence on Vatican II. To better understand, however, the reception of Teilhard’s thought it is important to examine why and in what ways his reception is tied to that of this council, as well as the political and social events of the era. What were the underlying questions and interpretations 1960s theologians put to Teilhard’s writings? How did these interpretations intersect with the theology of Vatican II? Did the publication of his work in the early 1960s indeed spur the direction of Vatican II itself, or, conversely, did the opening of the church to the world as a result of Vatican II create additional, phenomenal interest in Teilhard himself? Where do the additional historical events of this time period fit into the puzzle of this reception? How was it that he, and his work, became the locus of the confluence of these changes? What else was occurring that fostered this development? Why did Teilhard capture the imagination and attention of the US Catholic, as well as the secular population, as he did throughout the 1960s?
CHAPTER I

THE MOVE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC: 1955-1960

This first chapter will provide a background for the initial introduction of Teilhard’s thought to the American population. As we shall see, the initial availability of Teilhard’s work in the United States in 1959 intersects with an American society that is poised on the threshold of tremendous political, social, cultural, and religious change.

Why was Teilhard’s thought so overwhelmingly embraced by so many from almost the very first date of publication? This chapter argues that this occurred as a result, at least during these years, for two primary reasons. First, his teleological, optimistic worldview points to a positive future, one that will ultimately prove to be beneficial for all involved despite the change required. As already noted, this is consistent with the “manifest destiny” syndrome already existing in much of American society – or at least that portion of United States society that had previously had the most chance for agency. Secondly, the culture of the United States had from the earliest days of European settlement been focused on the practical, material world of daily life and the potential impact of the individual upon his or her immediate surroundings and ability to control the future. It was, without a doubt, a tremendously “modern” culture in every meaning of that word. The introduction to this work suggested that Teilhard’s thought is the product of the metanarrative of modernity, with its emphasis upon universal truths, and a belief in
progress and science. At least on the surface, therefore, it would appear Teilhard’s thought intermeshed quite readily with these aspects of life in the United States. What particularizes Teilhard however is his added twist of a romantic, organic, and mystical cosmic vision that allows room for the sacralization of the secular, a synthesis of science and religion, and a new, deep, historical consciousness as exemplified by his fascination with cosmic evolution. These three additional aspects of his work will also prove most important during these first, and later, years.

This characterization of Teilhard’s work in many ways places him in the role of “bridge” between modern and post-modern forms of thought and life. The paradigm shift between these two occurred in the early 1960s in the United States lending plausibility to the claim that his work was received as it was during these years primarily as a result of its appearance at this particular time and place.

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins with a cursory examination of Teilhard’s own work. It will also briefly discuss the publishing history of this work before 1960 in France and England, with an overview of its reception in these countries. In this time period, very few articles were written regarding Teilhard in the US beyond brief biographical pieces in primarily popular periodicals such as Time and Newsweek; the first English translation of The Phenomenon of Man occurred in 1959 in London and then New York, and The Divine Milieu in 1960, under the auspices of Jeanne Mortier and the Teilhard de Chardin Foundation in Paris. The chapter then briefly examines the social and religious milieu in the United States in the late 1950s, especially in regards to questions of ecclesiology, Cold War consensus, and the prevailing sense of optimism. Following this will be the
means and the reasons by which interest developed in Teilhard in the United States after his death, with an emphasis upon the initial attention shown by Robert Francoeur and those who later formed the American Teilhard Association.

**Publications in Europe**

Because Teilhard had bequeathed his manuscripts to his former secretary in Paris Jeanne Mortier, at his death the Jesuits could no longer prevent their publication. Mme. Mortier had already brought together an international team of scientists and scholars, *Les Amis de Teilhard de Chardin* under the patronage of the Belgian Queen Marie-José, to oversee the publication of *The Phenomenon of Man* by Éditions du Seuil in Paris in 1955. These five hundred copies rapidly disappeared, and the book went through several reprints, until within six years time over ninety thousand copies were sold. 56 *Letters from a Traveler* followed in 1956, *Le Milieu Divin* in 1957, and *The Future of Man* in 1959. Between 1955 and 1976 all the original books and essays written by Teilhard were published in the original French in thirteen different volumes; other than *The Phenomenon* and *The Divine Milieu* the essays of the collected works were arranged thematically rather than chronologically. In addition, before 1961 over 500 articles and thirty additional books about Teilhard and his work had been published just in France.

Other than a few pieces about his scientific work, one of the first American periodicals to publish a serious look at Teilhard’s theology of evolution was *Cross Currents*, in 1951, with an article (translated from the French) by his friend Msgr. Bruno

Worldwide the number of publications grew from eighteen in 1956 until 1967, the apex of publication, when 399 books were newly available. These publications do not include editions or translations of Teilhard’s writings, or articles in periodicals.

Table 1. Teilhard Publications Worldwide per Year, 1956 - 1971

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1972</td>
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Source: Data from Alessandro Dall’Olio, S.J., “Teilhard de Chardin : Thinker Wedded to Wisdom” The Jesuits 1972-1977, 82.

Note: This is the annual bibliography of publications from the Society of Jesus, in this case with reference to Teilhard De Chardin

The English version of Teilhard’s primary opus was published by Harper Collins in 1959 as *The Phenomenon of Man* with an introduction by Teilhard’s former friend and fellow scientist, Julian Huxley. In the United States, over fifty thousand copies of this

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57 Bruno de Solages, “Christianity and Evolution : an introduction to the thought of Père Teilhard,” *Crosscurrents* (Summer, 1951): 26-37. The name of Monseigneur Bruno de Solages will occur numerous times within this dissertation. De Solages (1895 – 1983) was first a professor and then rector of l’Institute Catholique de Toulouse. For speaking out against racism and the persecution of the Jews during World War II (as well as the Pétain government), he was deported from France in 1944. In addition to his ongoing close relationship with Teilhard, he was actively involved with many of those who espoused the Nouvelle Théologie, especially Henri de Lubac. He was nominated by the state of Israel as a “righteous among the nations,” but his case did not advance, due to a lack of Jewish witnesses.
Numerous other editions followed this one, including a wildly popular paperback edition in 1961 that sold almost one hundred thousand copies in less than five years.

The Cultural Milieu of the Late 1950s

The question remains, however, as to why so many, so early on, were attracted to this man’s thought, when he had died a virtual unknown (at least to most of the Christian world) a scant five years earlier. As already mentioned, the primary answer probably lies in the synchronicity of the publication of these first books in the same years that a massive change was beginning in the United States. It was, one might say, a “perfect storm” of coincidence. In particular during these years through 1960 we can observe change in five areas, each of which contributed to the shift away from modernity already mentioned. I will briefly discuss these before placing those appropriate within the context of the reception of Teilhard’s work: 1. The end of the postwar consensus; 2. The dissolution of the Catholic subculture; 3. The rapid expansion of educational opportunities for all Americans, especially in science; 4. A renewed sense of optimism, especially surrounding the election of John F. Kennedy; 5. The papacy of John XXIII, and his call for an ecumenical council.

The End of the Postwar Consensus

The United States dominated global affairs in the years immediately after World War II. For most of the fifteen years following 1945, there was a broad political consensus concerning the Cold War and anti-communism. Victorious in the great global struggle, its nation intact, the people of the United States were confident of their

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country’s mission at home and abroad. US leaders desired to maintain the democratic ideology they had defended at an enormous cost and to share the benefits of prosperity as much as possible. For them, as for publisher Henry Luce of *Time* magazine, this was indeed the "American Century." ⁵⁹

Still, within two years of the end of World War II, new challenges had arisen to erode at least some of that confidence. By 1948, a new form of international strain had emerged—the Cold War—between the United States and its allies on one hand, and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other. In the next two decades, the Cold War generated many tensions between the two superpowers abroad. Additionally, fears of communist subversion gripped domestic politics at home. As a result, most Americans accepted the need for a strong stance against the Soviet Union and any suspected communists. They sanctioned the growth of governmental authority, encouraged consensus in all forms of political and social life, and enjoyed the postwar prosperity that produced new levels of widespread wealth in the United States.

The Cold War demanded conformity of belief and lifestyle on behalf of the struggle for freedom. For almost fifteen years, most Americans remained sure of this confident approach. Big government and corporations demanded “organization man” behaviors and values and rewarded them. ⁶⁰

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⁵⁹ This term, coined by Time publisher Henry Luce, was used to claim the historical role of the United States during the 20th century. The son of a missionary himself, in a February 17, 1941 *Life* magazine editorial Luce urged the United States to forsake isolationism for the missionary's role. The nation was to act as the world's Good Samaritan, spread democracy, and enter World War II in order to defend the highest democratic values. In terms of the “Americanism” described later in this chapter, one can positively affirm that Luce was indeed an Americanist.

⁶⁰ For an understanding of what an “organization man” is, see William Whyte, *The Organization Man*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956). Whyte was an editor for *Fortune* magazine at the time he wrote this book, which has long been regarded as one of the sociological classics of contemporary times. It was written during the Eisenhower years when corporations appeared in postwar American life marketing.
Socially, the nuclear, but not the extended family seemed to embody the American dream. The ideal was articulated by the word “togetherness.” The family was to be a political functioning unit, with husband out in the work world bringing home the bread, and the wife maintaining the home front. She was to support her partner, through her unpaid labor and emotionally through her appreciation in every way she could.

Throughout the nation a push existed toward a smooth, organizational life in all things that mimicked that ideal of conventional family togetherness. Consensus was the expected norm. A survey of 1950s college students by Philip E. Jacob found that overwhelmingly they conformed to the value of the day as defined by David Riesman’s *Lonely Crowd.* They were “gloriously contented” with things as they are, and “unabashedly selfish” as they “cheerfully expect to conform to the economic status quo.” “Social harmony” and “adjustment” — in other words, conformity — were of great importance, more so than honesty or courage. Jacob found that the students expressed a “need for religion” yet expected their real-life decisions to be “socially determined” rather than religiously guided. The ultimate source of meaning for this

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almost endless new technologies including television, cars, space travel, fast food, and especially the planned suburban lifestyle focused on the nuclear family. A central thesis of the book is that average Americans were increasingly subscribing to a collectivist mentality rather than to the previous American standard of rugged individualism; this shift made Whyte quite concerned. He believed that as people became convinced that organizations and groups could make better decisions than individuals, serving an organization became logically preferable as less risky than advancing one's individual creativity.

61 David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950). Along with C. Wright Mill’s *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962) this is considered to be one of the most important American sociological studies of the time. It considers a shift from a tradition-directed culture to an inner-directed one, then to one that with the increasing ability to consume goods and afford material abundance shifted again to an “other-directed” form of life. How to define one’s self became a function of the way others lived, and to live as others lived of crucial importance. Because large organizations prefer this type of personality, it became indispensable to the institutions that thrived with the growth of industrial corporations and big government in America.

generation was the group, and the ultimate good religion or social milieu was that which promoted those goods.  

Yet a booming population, migration around the country, intense suburbanization, and educational acceleration fueled primarily by the GI Bill also meant the postwar world of the United States would not be simply traditional. A new way to prioritize values was necessary, and religion was the obvious means of choice. Although previously religion itself was synonymous with nationalism, that would shift tremendously in the decade ahead. The religious messages of the time were also communal and consensual in nature, and attempted to adapt to the needs of a rapidly growing and changing society. Still, religious leaders did not generally speak to society in a prophetic or activist manner, but used a therapeutic approach in responding to the individual trying to cope with rapid change, in many cases simply by denying that change was occurring. 

In the end, it was the most visible results of the postwar years, including the new postwar affluence, a young and rapidly growing population, the typical postwar exultation of breeding and family togetherness, and the migration to the suburbs that helped to bring about the end of the Cold War consensus. Not all Americans participated equally in these expanding life opportunities and in the growing economic

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64 Sixties, 18.
65 Sixties, 16. See also Gary Willis, Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion, (Doubleday: New York, 1972), in which Willis contends that this era was in many ways a time of “deliberate blindness,” of pretending not to see the things one should not see, of “doubts that were hidden for the sake of the children” (8). Additionally, in the first chapter of this book, “Memories of a Catholic Boyhood,” Willis argues that a “protective skin” was woven around Catholics that kept the Church living “outside of time,” “stranded in America, out of place.” Indeed, the Church belonged to no age, but was above them all for it had a “special dispensation” from history, which was something it “did not have to undergo” (18).
prosperity. The image and reality of overall economic prosperity—and the upward mobility it provided for many white Americans—was not lost on those who had largely been excluded from the full meaning of the American Dream, both before and after the war.

Gradually these and other Americans began to question the current, dominant assumptions about American life. Challenges on a variety of fronts shattered the consensus. As a consequence, by the mid- to late-1960s such groups as African Americans, Hispano Americans, and American women became more aggressive in trying to win their full freedoms and civil rights as guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. In the 1950s, African Americans launched a crusade, joined later by these other minority groups, for a larger share of the American dream. Additionally, a growing anxiety fatigue existed concerning Cold War threats. The constant brinks of nuclear Armageddon had become wearisome, and already by 1954 extreme anticommunism was questioned on moral and spiritual, as well as factual grounds.

The social and religious underground that existed even in this time of consensus began to speak louder and to be heard by more. "Where," they asked, “does good togetherness end and the evils of collectivism begin? Simply at the limits of the nuclear family?"

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67 Consider for example the school integration case of Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in 1954.
69 Ibid., 15.
The Dissolution of the Catholic Subculture

This decade of the 1950s saw a shift in the way most people understood the religious identity of their own society. In the 1940s-1950s the majority tended to believe Americans still lived in a “Christian country.” From 1945 to 1960 in fact, numerous scholars would claim evidence of a religious revival. More churches were built for more worshippers. During the “Age of Anxiety” and the fear of nuclear annihilation by the communists, one might even claim religion, as it became more therapeutic in nature, helped to produce a healthy, more balanced society. The Christian heritage of the country was yet more explicitly proclaimed, in 1954 for example, with the adoption of the slogan “one nation under God,” in the Pledge of Allegiance. This was the age of the religious intellectuals and public figures, such as Thomas Merton, Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale, and Fulton Sheen. According to Gallup, the highest historical level of church attendance was reached between 1955 and 1958 with 47% of the population attending church services weekly. The highest rate for church construction occurred in 1959. The influence of religion on people’s thoughts was considered to be increasing. Polls said that 99% of Americans believed in God. Seminaries, monasteries, and confidence were bursting at the seams.

But the religion boom coexisted with tensions between Catholics and Protestants and between highbrow theology and lowbrow popular faith. There was also a spiritual

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71 Silk, 31.

underground, represented by the Beats and many others.\textsuperscript{73} As the 1960s went on, many people increasingly declared western society as post-Christian, secular or “pluralist.”\textsuperscript{74}

Accompanying this trend toward a pluralist society was a weakening of the process by which children were socialized into membership in Christian society and given confessional identity and basic knowledge of beliefs. This movement toward secularism crossed all religious boundaries, and certainly was exhibited in American Catholic society.

Over the last century the immigrant Catholics to the United States had built a sophisticated subculture originally centered in the urban US Northeast but extending across the nation. The resulting network of Catholic institutions, including parishes, schools, hospitals and charitable agencies acted as a “buffer” between most Catholics and the other American religious traditions. Although it may have been geographically diverse, this subculture provided a most “distinctive spiritual and intellectual topography” to American Catholic life.\textsuperscript{75} Catholics in America learned over the years consensual forms of worship, discipleship, and ways of being in the world that further set them apart in the culture. The Catholic subculture saw to it the appropriate lines between clergy and laity were drawn, that criticism of priests was muted, and any hint of scandal hushed.

As Mark Massa writes, most Catholics prior to 1960 “lived in a hermetically sealed universe when it came to their faith and religious practices.”\textsuperscript{76} As was discussed above, intellectuals and theologians generally held to some internally consistent system

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{73} \textit{Fifties}, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{74} McLeod, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{75} William L. Portier “Here Come the Evangelical Catholics” \textit{Communio} 31 no.1 (Spring 2004): 35-66.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Mark Massa, \textit{The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties changed the Church Forever} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.), xv.
\end{itemize}
of thought in which everything fell into place. For Catholics following Pius X’s
\textit{Pascendi}, this was neo-Scholasticism.\textsuperscript{77}

Concurrently, as the generations passed by, the subculture Catholics moved up the
economic and educational ladder. This was especially true in the post-World War II
boom years. The growth of labor unions, higher wages, and an expanding economy all
changed the financial standing of the Catholic population, so that by 1964 Catholics
outranked most Protestant groups economically.\textsuperscript{78} In conjunction with these
opportunities for upward mobility, however, many began to consider their constructed
subculture as restrictive, rather than comforting. By mid-century, Catholic elites would
refer to their cultural habitat as a “ghetto.”\textsuperscript{79}

In the postwar years, following the example of their fellow Americans, significant
numbers of Catholics had moved to the suburbs. Ties to the customs and priorities of
immigrant ancestors were diminished or completely severed, as a more than century-old
Catholic consensus began to disappear. Soon, any “demographic difference between
Catholics and other Americans became statistically negligible.”\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77} Leo XIII, \textit{Aeterni Patris} (4 August 1879). This encyclical set the groundwork and structure of neo-

scholasticism in place. Pope Pius X’s \textit{Pascendi Dominici gregis} promulgated the teaching that all Catholic
theology was to be consistent with that found in neo-Thomism. In \textit{Doctoris Angelici}, 1914, Pope Pius X
cautioned that the teachings of the Church cannot be understood scientifically without the basic
philosophical underpinnings of Thomas's major theses.

\textsuperscript{78} William Leahy, S.J., “Catholics and Educational Expansion after 1945,” \textit{Contemporary Higher

Education: Catholic Education at the Turn of a New Century}, ed. Joseph M. O’Keefe (New York &

\textsuperscript{79} Lamenting their “spirit of separatism from fellow citizens of other religious faiths,” John Tracy Ellis
described Catholics as having “suffered from the timidity that characterizes minority groups, from the
effects of a ghetto they have themselves fostered.” “American Catholics and the Intellectual Life,” \textit{Thought
30} no. 116 (Spring 1955): 388.

\textsuperscript{80} Portier, 46.
The Rapid Expansion of Educational Opportunities for all Americans

Building on the economic base left after the war, American society became more affluent in the postwar years than most Americans could have imagined in their wildest dreams before or during the war. Public policy, like the so-called GI Bill of Rights passed in 1944, provided money for veterans to attend college, to purchase homes, and to buy farms. The overall impact of such public policies was almost incalculable, but it certainly permitted returning veterans to better themselves and to begin forming families and caring for their children in unprecedented numbers. Additionally, World War II increased contact between Protestants and Catholics; this in turn reduced barriers and fostered mutual understanding and acceptance. This persuaded yet more Catholic families to ensure the education of their children at Catholic schools. Catholics attending college in the 17-25 year age group went from 19% percent in the 1930's to 45% in 1960s, 2% above the national average.\(^{81}\)

On top of mounting social pressures, institutions of higher learning in these years were in danger of drowning in their own success. For example the student population attending Boston College increased from 2,000 in 1945 to over 11,000 less than twenty-five years later.\(^{82}\) Similarly, in 1953, Jesuit administrators of higher education from the Midwestern United States admitted that unless they were able to admit more freshmen, their institutions faced a mounting public relations problem. Additionally, these officials


\(^{82}\) Leahy, 51.
warned, “It is a fact that when the public makes demands, we must try to meet the
demands, or be in danger of going out of existence.”

The rate of increase for graduate programs was much higher yet. To meet the
demands, post-secondary institutions expanded, especially in regions where they were
previously lacking. In addition, graduate programs were added, particularly in the fields
of history, psychology, social work, and the natural sciences. Among Catholic institutions
the rate was even higher than in the secular schools. The thought was that graduate work
in these disciplines at non-Catholic places seriously endangered the faith of students.
This type of educational growth also offered the possibility of the expansion of Catholic
thought to a wider audience, thus extending Catholic influence in society. Fostering a
social, political, and intellectual environment guided by Catholic teachings had always
been a fundamental part of the Catholic educational commitment. But such an
evangelical focus became a higher priority after WWII, as secularism spread in Western
civilization. The deepening of “the ideological conflict between democracy and
communism” also contributed to this sharpened focus.

Then, on October 4, 1957, Sputnik was launched by the Russians. A disastrous
counter-attempt by the United States to launch a satellite followed in December of that
year. While the nation seethed, the rest of the world gloated at the humiliation of a
country all too ready to brag of prowess and righteousness. That fear and rage, of
course, originated in the hatred of the Russian communists cultivated over the last

83 Ibid., 52. Due to the population crunch at Catholic institutions and the lack of certain curricular and
professional programs, Catholic students constituted 25% of Columbia’s undergraduate population in 1964,
and 18% of the freshman class at Princeton in 1970.
84 Ibid., 53.
85 Ibid., 54.
86 Fifties, 185.
decade. The search for scapegoats and a resurgence of the old Cold War fear of sudden annihilation commenced. The hysteria grew, everyone saying to everyone else “Do something!”

In an interesting twist, the Christmas, 1957 Newsweek holiday essay was titled “And the angel said unto them, Fear not…” It spoke of this “particularly troubled time,” in which many are “beset with feelings of fear and anxiety…perplexed and unsettled by sudden shifts of world power” and by “domestic uncertainties” all of which “threaten to blight the bright optimism of American life.” The essay offered consolations from various theologians to the effect that the antidote to fear is trust in God, as it hinted that “peace of mind” therapeutic religion was not enough. One must delve deeper.

Similarly, immediately following the launch of Sputnik the journal Living Church had offered the thought that material well-being does not necessarily demonstrate moral superiority.

What was instead necessary was a better education for all, social progress, and money for education, science and military budgets. As Ellwood stated, “Fresh emphasis on education, properly an open-ended enterprise, was actually the dawning of the new optimism that would characterize the Kennedy Camelot and the Great Society years of the first half of the next decade.” This was fostered by the perfect storm generated by the Sputnik imperative, the baby-boom population bulge —which made for an extreme increase in the college population and a new youth culture — and the emergence of

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87 “Sputnik’s Wake,” America (October 26, 1957): 94.
88 “And the angel said unto them, Fear not...” Newsweek (Dec 23, 1957): 52-53.
89 “Man’s moon,” Living Church (October 20, 1957): 14. This response to the fear of change was addressed by Wills on page 22 in Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971): “Perfect faith and trust would quiet the soul in a peaceful attitude of rest. After all, if one possess the truth already, any change is liable to be a departure from that truth.”
90 Fifties, 187.
Galbraith’s “affluent society” to pay for it all.\footnote{John Kenneth Galbraith, \textit{The Affluent Society}, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958). This book sought to delineate the numerous reasons that post-World War II America was becoming increasingly wealthy in the private sectors of the economy, but remained poor in the public sector, was lacking social and physical infrastructure, and continued to perpetuate income disparities.} “In the end,” commented Ellwood, “the change was spiritual.”\footnote{Fifties, 188.}

This change was fostered by the renaissance of a new liberalism in the US in the late 1950s as exemplified by the drive for racial justice and school integration. The Sputnik debacle reinforced this with its indirect insistence that science and education, rather than McCarthyism and restrictive consensus, were the straightest routes to a Cold War victory.\footnote{Fifties, 175.}

\textbf{A Renewed Sense of Optimism}

One result of the “world-come-of-age” secular theology of the 1950s — which grew out of neo-orthodoxy or Pian Catholicism — was an increased sense of optimism. Those of faith, rather than looking toward the supernatural for signs of reassurance, took hope in their capable care for the world on their own, prospering now as they never before had done.\footnote{Fifties, 188.} The late 1950s therefore were spiritually optimistic years. Although some were concerned about the “priests of science” and the increasing emphasis upon technology, most believed the worse was past; the large, new generation moving through the burgeoning high schools were getting ready to come into their own in a new world. America was once again moving upward and onward.

Some would consider the Fifties as the last “modern” decade, particularly if one defines modernity as that which, in the spirit of Jean-Francois Lyotard, includes the
metanarrative of the emancipation of humanity through progress and universal truths.\textsuperscript{95} Robert Ellwood, for example, writes that since the time of the Enlightenment the educated have believed themselves capable of freeing humanity from its shackles through better knowledge and the application of that knowledge. This knowledge is primarily found in the generalized, abstract, rational ways of thinking found in science. Within the metanarrative of modernity the particular is subordinated to the abstract, the old is inferior to the new, and the local submits to the universal.\textsuperscript{96} The modern world especially placed power in the hands of knowledge-holding elites like professionals, teachers, civil servants, and religious leaders.

It is important to remember, however, that as widespread as this metanarrative of optimism may have been, large groups of people in the United States remained on the outskirts of it. As has already been mentioned, a real boom in the economy and in the growth of knowledge did indeed exist in the US in the 1950s and early 1960s. It might seem that almost everyone benefited from this. But there were significant segments of people—in particular the masses of black people and even the middle class of black people—who were largely and essentially locked out of that; which constituted one of the major and most explosive social contradictions of that time. This contradiction was one among several that would eventually help to crumble, as already mentioned, not only the postwar American consensus but also the metanarrative of Americanist progress.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Fifties}, 228.
The Election of Pope John XXIII

The last year of Pope Pius XII’s pontificate, 1957, signified the last year of an age of Roman Catholicism reaching back to the Counter-Reformation. Until this point the church stood unflinching and unchanging, ready to do battle with atheism and modernity, but never to change colors. This was the age of Catholic confidence and Catholic triumphalism.97

The intellectual surety of universal truth was interconnected with surety about leadership, one that extended beyond papal or episcopal leadership. As a result, the Fifties are seen by Jay Dolan as the culminating decade of the “golden age of American Catholic priesthood.”98 What the Church had locked away as its most well-guarded secret, though, was change. Now in the late 1950s not only was the historical consciousness of the Church slowly awakening with the realization that actually the Church of the Apostles did look a little different from St. Peter’s, it was also soon to be shaken by an unexpected Vatican Council that would plunge it into an uncertain life.99

Within days of the election of Pope John XXIII, all of Rome and the world were astounded that the Church had not only a new pope but also a new kind of pope, a prelate as cheerful and visionary as it appeared his predecessor had been dour and inflexible. His mental agility and kindness captured the imagination of all who encountered him. His January, 1959 call for a new ecumenical council laid out his vision for the future in his

97 Fifties, 202.
99 For more on this idea of the historical awakening of the Church, see especially Garry Wills Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion, 21. Wills also writes “The church’s secret, hidden away in official teaching, minimized when it could not be ignored, was change. Other things came and went, captive to history. But the gate of hell would not prevail against this church, and the gates of hell often looked like history, or the latest products of history: ‘modernism,’ science, rationalism” (20).
statement that: “We…open our heart and arms to all those who are separated from this Apostolic See.” The council would look at the whole life of the church, including theology, canon law, discipline, worship, and perhaps most importantly of all, the role of laity.

In so doing this council would address the reigning question of just what was the role of the Church. During the consensus years of the mid-1950s Cardinal Spellman could insist that Catholicism more than any other religion upheld American democracy, and the Catholic public believed therefore that Catholicism was the most American of religions, and America, the most Christian of nations. Less than five years later, however, cracks were appearing in the consensus society, including among the Catholics. As has already been noted, as they rode the escalator out of the immigrant “ghetto” into middle-class America, the boundaries that demarcated their identity were dissolving. The world of the parochial school, Catholic labor unions and Forty Hours devotions would soon no longer exist in a way that sufficiently defined United States Catholics as Catholic. A new way of being Catholic would soon be imperative; the desire for something more grew almost palpable, and the willingness, at least on the part of some increasingly vocal splinter groups, to pursue a new way, increasingly evident. The Sixties were getting closer, and the hope of at least some American Catholics was that the upcoming Council would fulfill that desire.


The American Reception of Teilhard: 1955-1960

The US reception of Teilhard’s work was deeply impacted by this social context and cultural matrix, particularly the ferment that was the late 1950s, as has been described. Perhaps the best way to explain this impact is to first place it within the context of one man’s story.

Robert T. Francoeur was born in the early 1930's in Detroit, Michigan, and at the time of his introduction to Teilhard was a seminary student from the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio pursuing a master’s degree in Theology at St. Vincent’s College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. He was, as he later wrote, one who after eight years of Catholic elementary school was part of the “bulge” of young men who entered the seminary during the religious heyday of the 1950s.\(^\text{102}\) His thesis advisor had just criticized his master’s thesis on Lecomte du Noüy as far too subjective when Francoeur found a copy of *Cross Currents* probably purposely left sitting, by an anonymous Benedictine monk, on the library table where he usually worked.\(^\text{103}\) In this journal was the aforementioned article on Teilhard de Chardin’s theory of evolution by Msgr. Bruno de Solages. This happened to be the first article on Teilhard’s work published in English (although

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\(^{102}\) Robert Francoeur in an email to author, June 24, 2008. Francoeur (1931-2012) was born in Detroit, Michigan. He was, for a time, a priest in the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio. He was laicized in the mid-1960s and thereafter married. After obtaining a PhD in experimental embryology at the University of Delaware in 1967, and an A.C.S. in sexology at the Institute of the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in 1979, he taught for many years at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. He was the author of twenty-two books and the author of or contributor to over one hundred other publications.

\(^{103}\) Lecomte du Noüy (1883-1947) was a French-born biophysicist and religious philosopher, known in scientific circles for his work on the properties of liquids. He was an associate member of the Rockefeller Institute, head for ten years of the biophysics division of the Pasteur Institute and the author of some 200 published papers. His 1942 book *Human Destiny*, in which he uses a particular view of thermodynamics, makes an attempt to argue that the second law of thermodynamics does not apply to humanity and that God is synonymous with anti-chance. It is therefore improbable that living things could have been formed by random chance out of the material of the universe.
translated from the French) in an American journal.\textsuperscript{104} Francoeur not only recognized the kinship between Lecomte du Noüy and Teilhard, but, because of his background in biology and interest in both religion and evolution, he became quite entranced with the work of the latter.

With the encouragement of his mentor, Demetrius Dunn, O.S.B., Robert Francoeur wrote to de Solages in Toulouse, and a long-term correspondence ensued. Eventually this circle grew to also include Claude Tresmontant, a lay philosopher-theologian living in Paris who had recently written a book on Teilhard.\textsuperscript{105} Just for his own knowledge, Francoeur translated Tresmontant’s book into English.

As he was in the process of doing so, Francoeur also initiated a correspondence with the Jesuit priest Walter Ong, who had lived across the hall from Teilhard in Paris while Ong was doing research for his own dissertation.\textsuperscript{106} A correspondence between the two dated Nov 19, 1957 and addressed to “Mr. Francoeur” talks about Francoeur’s plans to translate Tresmontant’s book. Ong suggests contacting Macmillan Publishing, since one of the editors at Macmillan was then interested in “building up their publications in the ‘Catholic intellectual field.’” Absolutely no doubt exists in the minds of the two that Tresmontant’s book deserves translation and immediate publication, as it was far better than others being put out, and far more appropriate for an American audience.\textsuperscript{107} Ong continues on to warn Francoeur: “There is also this factor: Père Teilhard’s thought is


\textsuperscript{106} Father Walter Jackson Ong, S.J. (1912-2003) was a Professor of English Literature, an American cultural and religious historian, and a philosopher. He lived with Teilhard at Études, 15 rue Monsieur, Paris (VII') in 1950-1951, while Teilhard was briefly in residence in Paris.

\textsuperscript{107} Walter Ong to Robert Francoeur, Nov 19, 1957. Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lauinger Library Archives, Georgetown University (hereafter LLA).
particularly fecund once you have begun to share it. Like any thinking worthy of the name, it grows in being transmitted, so that it is often difficult if not impossible to separate one’s own interpretation or maturing of something suggested by Père Teilhard from his own thought.”

Still, Ong writes, “I pray…that this interest of yours continues and matures. Unless we can lay hold of contemporary knowledge and thinking in a more positive and creative way than we have done, Christ’s kingdom will suffer horribly once again from our own maladroitness and smugness. But you have filled out for yourself a very large order.”

Following the receipt of this letter, Francoeur happened to see an advertisement for a forthcoming edition of the same book by another translator, put out by Helicon Press of Baltimore. He convinced the editor that the proposed book would lack a glossary and bibliography but needed one, and so was hired to supply these items as well as to review the translation. The resulting book, *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: His Thought*, was published in 1959, the first book on Teilhard in English in the United States.

Demetrius Dunn and Walter Ong both also put Francoeur in touch with Madame Dorothy Poulain, an American woman married to a French man, who was then living in

108 Ibid., Ong also writes in this letter: “The relationship between Bergson’s, Lecomte de Noüy’s and Teilhard’s thought will be something you will have to puzzle through. You are quite right, I believe, in your view that the three are operating with similar insights, made possible by our own place in time, which have to do with similar phenomena but that the influence of one on the other is not to be accepted until proved.” Also, “The history of cosmological or evolutionary thought which you propose as the first part of your outline will prove to be a nightmare. I should suggest rather a correlation between Pere Teilhard and Father Mersch’s work on the Mystical Body, or Monsignor Guardini as a more feasible project than the larger one you propose.” As someone who has also written on Mersch’s work on the Mystical Body, I find this notation fascinating, and something which had also occurred to me.

Paris. Dorothy Poulain was already very active in *Les Amis de Teilhard* in France, and was eager for a similar organization to be formed in her home country. By late 1957 she was already writing to Francoeur and encouraging him to do this, so that he would be able to publish the results of the various conferences concerning Teilhard already taking place around Europe.  

The correspondence between Francoeur and Poulain continued for almost the next ten years, through many changes in Francoeur’s life. A letter from her to Francoeur in September of 1959, however, is most telling and typical of those supporting the spread of Teilhard’s thought through this period: “I am so happy to see the interest beginning to be shown in Teilhard’s work and thought in the U.S. My little article in the *Commonweal* brought me letters from quite a number of people, avid to know more about Teilhard and so grateful to learn that such a thought was to be found in Catholic circles – something most of them had despaired of. The desire for such as he offers is so strong, and growing daily.”  

The 1959 article in *Commonweal* to which Poulain refers concerned a conference held in 1958 on “La Pensée de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin” at the Chateau de Cerisy at the Abbaye de Pontigny. As Poulain notes, for the first time since 1955 a group of scientists, philosophers, and theologians met to discuss the thought of Teilhard; the group included people from the Ivory Coast, Algeria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain.  

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110 Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur, October 27, 1957. Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 7, LLA. Poulain was married to a French writer.

111 Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur, September 10, 1959. Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 7, LLA. Formatting is Poulain’s.

112 Dorothy Poulain, “Christ and the Universe,” *Commonweal*, LXIX no.18 (January 30, 1959): 460-64. Those attending this conference included Madam Jacques Madaule, who wrote one of the first Theses on Teilhard for the Institute Catholique; Paul Chauchard, neurophysiologist and Assistant Director of the École des Hautes Études, as well as author of *La Création Evolutive*: Père François Russo, commenting on
The intention of the dialogues that took place was to show how Teilhard’s work responded “to the anguish of the modern world and to a humanism closed in on itself” such as that found in Marxism and existentialism. The fact was mentioned that Teilhard abandoned the scholastic vocabulary to make his work more accessible to the world of today; also noted was that it was in part this which disturbed his critics in the classical tradition.

Henri de Lubac, Teilhard’s fellow Jesuit and friend, closed the conference with a seminar on *The Divine Milieu*. De Lubac commented that: “With the universe expanding before eyes, it is more than time for Christians to pay some attention to the universality of Christ, and the hopes resulting from this. The primary question is —where are we heading?” Yet, as he further wrote, misinterpretation of Teilhard’s work occurs not only because of concern over his treatment of evil and suffering, but because of “the fatal hostility of those who, unable to perceive what is the essential question at any given moment of the world’s history, see no reason why the question should be posed.”¹¹³ Those who are unable to see the world as Teilhard does, see no reason to ask the questions he does. What is especially important to note in this comment is de Lubac’s reference not only to “seeing,” a common Teilhardian theme, but to hope, and especially

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¹¹³ Henri de Lubac in Dorothy Poulain, *Commonweal*, LXIX no. 18 (January 30, 1959): 462. De Lubac commented further that Teilhard’s work demands a frame of reference in terms of time more vast than previously ever considered. The primary difficulty is how to deal with Christ the human. “Here Teilhard finds the astonishing and liberating harmony between a religion of the Christic-type and an Evolution that is convergent. Were the world a static-cosmos, relations of a conceptual or juridical order could be invoked to establish the primacy of Christ over Creation — because He has been so declared.” But, he continues on, as Teilhard discovers, that is simply not the case. This is an early mention by de Lubac of Teilhard’s Christology which, as has already been discussed, will within another decade be a decisive factor in the reception of his work.
to hope within the context of Christ’s universality. These latter two points will occur frequently throughout this work and prove quite significant in regards to Teilhard’s later reception.

One of the first to “see” what Teilhard was about was the scientist Julian Huxley. As noted earlier, Huxley wrote the introduction to the 1959 edition of Teilhard's *The Phenomenon of Man*. At the November, 1959 Centennial Darwin Conference in Chicago, Huxley predicted a new, evolutionary kind of religion that appeared to have its foundation in Teilhard’s thought. This new religion would be synthetic in nature, narrowing the divide between the sacred and the secular, the material world and the spiritual. One of the first *Time* magazine articles published about Teilhard in December of that year noted that an American foundation was being formed for the study of his works and their translation into other languages.¹¹⁴ Scientists, it states, for the most part welcome Teilhard's daring attempts at synthesis—though few go as far as Omega. Some Catholic theologians, on the other hand, were having difficulty with many of his theses.

Indeed, the *Time* article notes that in the previous spring of 1959, the Pontifical Roman Theological Academy devoted an entire issue of its quarterly *Divinitas* to attacks on Teilhard de Chardin’s ideas, calling them "a maximum of seduction coinciding with a

¹¹⁴ “Religion: Toward Omega.” *Time*, December 14, 1959. Retrieved from http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,894362,00.html#ixzz1QKk1HWJ . Retrieved June 22, 2011. The complete notation in the article from Huxley’s introduction to *The Phenomenon* is: ““A very remarkable work by a very remarkable human being,” Also, "His influence on the world's thinking is bound to be important . . . He has forced theologians to view their ideas in the new perspective of evolution, and scientists to see the spiritual implications of their knowledge . . . The religiously-minded can no longer turn their backs upon the natural world . . . nor can the materialistically-minded deny importance to spiritual experience and religious feeling.” The article states that many Catholic theologians take a dim view of what they believe to be Teilhard's neglect of the Creator aspect of God, his virtual omission of any idea of original sin and Christ's redeeming sacrifice, and his sidestepping of the doctrine of monogenism which states that all mankind descended from a single couple.
maximum of aberration." But, said the Latin foreword to the issue: "We will not apply the mark of heresy, which he perhaps does not deserve subjectively because of his good faith."

Huxley’s comments and the resulting *Time* article are the first in a large collection of articles that suggest that much of US society, at least, was eager to hear the thought of a scientific visionary who looked at the world through spiritual eyes, eyes that considered it possible to bridge the gap between God and material existence.

Another article along these lines was one also published in *Jubilee* magazine in December, 1959 by Wilfrid Sheed. Titled “The Christian Phenomenon: Père Teilhard’s View of Evolution” it questioned what he termed the current “panic over evolution.” The subtitle was: “A Jesuit paleontologist presents a unique statement about man’s place on the evolutionary scale.”

Sheed’s article asks what has happened in the years since *Humani Generis* which as a “high water mark…discusses evolution as a so far unverified hypothesis calling neither for glib condemnation nor too great a trust.” Will Catholics now only accept evolution “with bad grace?” In *Humani Generis* Pope Pius XII was also sounding a challenge, asking Catholics to take this hypothesis into “fullest consideration” without arrogance or fear. Yet so far the only one who has attempted to meet the challenge to do so is Teilhard de Chardin. He created of himself an “exposed outpost in the no man’s land between the conventional boundaries of science and religion.” In so doing, Teilhard

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117 Sheed, 42.
has come under fire as much “from scientific rigorists as from religious ones.” Sheed asserts that it is the overall vision of *The Phenomenon* that is most important, in large part because it “plays throughout on the reader’s capacity to wonder.” He argues that *The Phenomenon* is not recommended for readers “who are incorrigibly uneasy in the world of speculation. Evolution is a hypothesis: Teilhard answers it with another, richer one. His opinions are not definitive.” In an ever-expanding age of science and technology, he notes, many question the direction of the future, as well as the truth about the past. Perhaps here is an answer.

Additionally, Sheed notes another important point; the book was published at a most opportune moment as talk in the Church builds about a revival of Catholic intellectualism. If Catholics are really serious about this, then reaction to *The Phenomenon* will indicate as much. As Sheed remarked: “It will also indicate whether we have mastered our squeamishness about science, religion and evolution.”

About this same time Harper & Row was attempting to publish the first English translation of *Le Milieu Divin*. A January 18, 1960 letter to Robert Francoeur however, makes it clear that this was not an easy task. The current hope was that it should appear

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118 Ibid., 48.
119 Ibid., 49. Sheed also writes in this paragraph that It is incidentally a compliment to love and a tribute to Teilhard’s poetic force that he can make exciting such an apparently arid definition as this — ‘love is the highest form of radial energy.’ “For those comfortable with speculation, and/or troubled by the evidence of evolution, Teilhard offers not only an interesting hypothesis but a point of vantage from which God and evolution can be seen in the same picture...he had put together that rarest of compounds, a synthesis of scientific knowledge and religious experience which outrages neither and which is completely free of quackery.” This is yet another statement concerning the synthesis that was Teilhard’s thought, and the understanding of many that the gap between religion and science must be breached.
120 Sheed, 49.
121 Hugh Van Dusen to Robert Francoeur, January 18, 1960. Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 6, LLA. The original English title was to be *The Realm of the Divine*. The title was of course later changed. This translation was not, however, approved by Jeanne Mortier and the Paris Committee and the lack of approval was delaying publication. Van Dusen also notes in this letter that *The Phenomenon* had been named Book of the Month by the Marlboro book club.
in the autumn of 1960, to be followed by *Lettres de Voyage*, and *le Group Zoologie*, with nine months to a year separating each, subject to approval from Madame Mortier and the French committee of *Les Amies de Teilhard de Chardin*.

Hugh Van Dusen also mentions that the American edition of *The Phenomenon* was in its third printing of five thousand copies at this point, and selling more each day. He remarks on how unusual this is for this kind of book; at the same time however, “it is not easy to classify, so perhaps that is part of the appeal.”

Another letter from Van Dusen in April of that later year assures Francoeur that the English translation of *Le Milieu Divin* is now complete and approved, and Harper & Row hopes to publish it in October, 1960. He asks for advice from Francoeur as to “the importance of this book in relation to other works of Father Teilhard.” Some, he comments, who are familiar with the French edition believe it “the spiritual counterpart to *THE PHENOMENON OF MAN*, others deny this and find it more important.” He asks Francoeur as to how the book should be presented, as they find it beyond their competency to judge. Van Dusen also comments that *PHENOMENON* has just gone into a fifth printing and that something over 16,000 copies had already been sold. The interest in the book has remained steady.

This is clarified by a press release two days later from Van Dusen at “Harper & Brothers” to the “Friends of Father Teilhard.” It states that *The Phenomenon* is in its fifth printing, for a total number of copies of 25,000 with about 17,000 sold. The following table of sales figures is also included:

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Table 2: Sales Figures for *The Phenomenon of Man*

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<td>Books sold</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>2716</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>2988</td>
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*Source:* Hugh Van Dusen to “Friends of Father Teilhard,” April 7, 1960. Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 6. Lauinger Library Archives, Georgetown University

His letter adds that “The way in which the book does better with each succeeding month is most heartening to all of us, and quite the reverse of the usual pattern with a new book, especially of this type. The sales numbers are really quite amazing.”

The press release also remarks that *THE REALM OF THE DIVINE* is definitely to be published in October. The translation of this is by Alexander Dru, and is approved by the French committee. The hopes are that it will do even better than the *PHENOMENON*. Additionally, a biography of Teilhard by Claude Cuenot is to be published by Helicon Press, Baltimore, in the fall of 1960. An English translation of Nicolas Corté’s *Teilhard de Chardin: His Life and Spirit* is announced in Britain for spring publication. No American edition is planned yet. An English translation of Oliver Rabut’s *Dialogue with Teilhard* will be published by Sheed & Ward, perhaps also in the Fall of 1960. Finally, the Tresmontant book by Helicon Press will be published in Britain with a new translation. These further publications are mentioned here so that note is taken of what must have been increasing demand for further secondary source publications on Teilhard and his thought.

Later that fall, Francoeur received yet another letter from Van Dusen, apparently in response to some earlier, ongoing correspondence regarding Harper & Brothers’
Van Dusen wrote that “I’m delighted that you found the translation of *The Divine Milieu* smooth reading. Unfortunately, quite serious criticism has come from other sources but, as you know, Teilhard is unusually difficult to anglicize."

It was apparently the news of the publication of these other works as well as his correspondence with many in the “Teilhardian circle” that encouraged Francoeur in his own writing and editing efforts. In early to mid-1960 he began to contact several others regarding what would become *The World of Teilhard*, a collection of essays edited by himself.  

What is perhaps most interesting in this initial collection, however, is that Francoeur, as well as John LaFarge, who wrote the preface for the book, explicitly notes the organic nature of Teilhard’s work, and the desire to replicate that in this initial American book of essays. Therefore, the hope is that each essay, coming from across various disciplines, should approach its own discipline in the manner of Teilhard’s unique methodology.  

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123 Hugh Van Dusen to “Bob” Francoeur, November 7, 1960. Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 6, LLA.  
124 Robert Francoeur, ed. *The World of Teilhard* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961). Hereafter *World* The book includes a preface by John LaFarge. The letter just previously mentioned, from Hugh Van Dusen to Francoeur (Nov 7, 1960) comments on this editorial effort of Francoeur with a note that in regards to publishing anything Teilhardian: “I am afraid you will find the French committee a very difficult nut to crack, but the way may be eased for you if you assure them that you have the cooperation of such men as Father Ewing and perhaps Father Ong. They recognize Father Ong as a Teilhard specialist but I don’t believe they are as familiar with Father Ewing’s work as they ought to be.” This comment is today rather ironic, in light of the later, far more numerous works of Ewing than Ong on Teilhard, and Ewing’s various involvements in his cause.  
125 “Granted that specialization is unavoidable, we must avoid the prime danger that threatens any specialist: the loss of balance and perspective, and the inability to assimilate and co-ordinate the findings of other fields.” *World*, 186. Concerning the preface written by John LaFarge, S.J., in a letter dated September 23, 1960, from ‘Edgar’ [Bruns] to ‘Bob’ Francoeur, Bruns writes: “Did you give any thought to my suggestion regarding Fr. LaFarge? Upon re-reading Teilhard’s correspondence I noted that they had indeed known one another and Teilhard refers to LaFarge as his ‘protector,’ as well as one of his closest friends.”
should ordinarily call “science” and yet it does not fall into the category of metaphysics or theology. Sometimes poetic to an extreme, it is more than mere fantasy and different from mystical ecstasy.” Francoeur remarks that Teilhard calls it a “phenomenology,” yet actually, none of the commonly known categories of human knowledge fits this work. It is, perhaps, closest to the thought of the ancient Greeks, in which the divisions between the “various branches of knowledge” are not so definite as we might make them today, but far more organic and unified. Classifying Teilhard’s thought in airtight boxes is not possible, “for his synthesis is not a ‘system’ nor a closed syllogistic discipline of one branch of knowledge.” It is instead “fecund, open, free, and all-inclusive.” Yet, at the same time, it is a synthesis that moves quite purposefully in a particular direction. With those thoughts in mind, Francoeur concludes, readers who attempt to approach Teilhardian thought from other than this direction, those who have no desire or who refuse to “see” in this way, will most likely be sorely disappointed and confused.

The essays included in this book, therefore, are interpretations that attempt to portray and develop the thought of Teilhard “while always remaining faithful to his spirit.” Perhaps, Francoeur, admits, time will show that some of these reflections are not really in keeping with Teilhard’s mind; with so little of his writings yet published, this is inevitable. But, if the essays encourage and awaken minds to the expanding dimensions of time, if they bring hope and optimism and enable more to see the possibility of a bridge connecting diverse disciplines, then the work has served its purpose. To this end,

friends here in N.Y.” J. Edgar Bruns to Robert Francoeur, 9/23/1960, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 4, LLA. Born in 1880, John LaFarge, SJ, worked for interracial justice in the first half of the 20th century, and also had a vast interest in interfaith, ecumenical efforts. The Jesuit John LaFarge was a long-time editor and writer for America magazine. He died in 1963 just a few months after participating in the Civil Rights March in Washington, D.C.
the book contains fifteen essays from several of Teilhard’s closest friends, intellectual compatriots, and United States intellectuals, each of which attempts, from the author’s own standpoint, to build bridges between the disciplines of theology, science, philosophy, and the social sciences.126

An example of such bridge building is the essay by J. Edgar Bruns titled “Theology and the ‘Ultraphysics.’” In an early letter to “Father Francoeur” detailing a draft outline of this essay, Bruns makes note of Teilhard’s synthesis of basic Christian doctrines and the similarity of his theology, including his “Omega Point,” to that of the Greek Fathers, especially Gregory of Nyssa, and their conceptions of the parousia and evolution.127 Bruns ends his letter by reemphasizing the necessity of Teilhard’s thought in redirecting Catholic theology in the contemporary world. This early article of Bruns therefore, was one of the first to point to Teilhard’s Christology as foundational in understanding his evolutionary worldview.

Walter Ong contributed the opening endorsement for the frontispiece of Francoeur’s The World, and it speaks volumes concerning how Teilhard’s work was

126: These include George Barbour, the geologist, who worked extensively with Teilhard in China (and wrote his own book In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin [New York, Herder and Herder, 1965] a few years later about exactly this), the aforementioned priest/writer John LaFarge S.J., the ecclesiologist Gustave Weigel, and the French cultural studies expert Arthur Knodel. Others included are the theologian J. Edgar Bruns, philosophers John V. Walsh and James Reilly, Jr., and numerous American scientists including psychiatrists, chemists, biologists, and medical doctors.

127: J. Edgar Bruns to “Father Francoeur,” June 15, 1960. Robert Francoeur collection, Box 1 Folder 4, LLA. The letter was addressed to Francoeur at Saints Cyril & Methodius Church, Deer Park, NY. Bruns at the time was teaching Scripture and theology at St. John’s University, New York. Bruns’ outline included a short summary of Teilhard’s synthesis in so far as it affected basic Christian doctrines: God as Omega; creation, Matter and Spirit, original sin, incarnation and parousia; the development of doctrine in general; the similarity between Teilhard’s views on cosmogenesis and his theological understanding of implicit revelation; transcendence versus immanence in sacred scripture; God as Omega in the prophets and in the apocalypse; matter and spirit in Hebrew; dogmatic considerations and a tentative resolution of difficulties; meaning and derivation of the Gospel title “Son of Man;” its relationship to the development of the Pauline vision of a Cosmic Christ and the circumstances behind the construction of Paul’s and Teilhard’s synthesis; recapitulation in the Fathers, especially Gregory of Nyssa, Point Omega and their Parousia; Christ as Redeemer, original sin, sin and evolution; and the directing influence of Teilhard de Chardin in the necessary reorientation of Christian theology.
already perceived, particularly in the United States: “Father Teilhard’s thought has for a large and growing number of individuals been the most fecundating they have ever encountered within our present world. His thought is mankind’s: persons on the most diverse fronts of activity find it giving life to their own intellectual and spiritual endeavors. The present collection bears direct witness to what his thinking has meant to a wide range of intellectual leaders. It is more than a critique of Father Teilhard’s thinking: it is its continuation.”

This edited collection, therefore, is of significance as it was the first attempt in the Catholic United States to use Teilhard’s own organic conception of knowledge to create a unique, forward-thinking, teleological and paradigmatic vision of culture and Church for a rapidly changing population. The next eight years would see this vision expand yet more, and Teilhard’s work would be in the thick of it all.

**Chapter Conclusion**

The early and unexpected sales figures for *The Phenomenon* point to its tremendous popularity, first in Europe, then after 1959 in the United States. As we shall see, that trajectory will continue with the remainder of the primary and secondary sources about Teilhard. Additionally, a look at the political and social history of the era shows us that at the end of the 1950s, the Cold War era, the political, religious and social consensus of the United States began to crack due to a number of factors. These included increasing education, prosperity, and the resultant changes in family structure, the workplace, and Americans’ religious understanding of themselves. Inklings of the

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128 Walter Ong to “Father Francoeur,” August 23, 1961. Robert Francoeur collection, Box 1 Folder 8, LLA.
change that would dominate the 1960s were already in the air; almost tangibly the question already was ‘where are we headed?’ Included within this were numerous concerns, particularly in light of the nuclear bomb and the space race, over the trajectory of science. Also, Pope John XXIII’s actions were already not just shaking the unchanging Catholic Church but also drawing the attention of the entire world. The paradigm was shifting, but in what direction? How?

Teilhard’s optimistic teleology had a possible answer many willingly embraced. We are indeed moving in a positive direction, it stated, we are progressing, evolution is occurring, and all this is good.

Still, the desire remained and the need existed to integrate and synthesize these changes into the American and Catholic worldview. How does one incorporate the new sciences, particularly evolutionary science? Is it possible to create a synthetic fabric of knowledge from the new data that is being gathered and created on a daily basis? In answering these questions Teilhard’s integrated, organic view of the world served as a exemplar for many.

In addition, as United States society became increasingly middle class and prosperous, increasingly secular and materialist, as the immigrant Catholic “ghettoes” dissolved into suburbia, questions over how to continue to live a spiritual life abounded. The American public would increasingly attempt to determine how the spiritual could inform the secular, and the material world the sacred. At a time when the emphasis was still on the nuclear family, the means by which one who was quite involved in ordinary suburban family life could “find God” without leaving their family and their comfortable life must necessarily be determined. In response to these issues, Teilhard the mystical
scientist who “loved the world” exemplified a contemplative form of life that saw God in potentially all aspects of the everyday. Even in these early years his spiritual thought attracted, and would continue to draw many who understood that “we are spiritual beings living an earthly existence.” With this in mind then, it does not seem unfeasible to argue that his work was received as it was during these years primarily as a result of its fortuitous appearance at this particular conjecture of time and place.

Finally, the first articles published about Teilhard in US journals point to several themes that will continually reappear in discussions of his work even down to this day. The first might be the inability to adequately classify Teilhard’s thought. It does not neatly or solely fit into any category, whether philosophy, theology, or science. Those who insist that it must meet the expected standards of one or the other and are unwilling to embrace its boundary transcending aspects tend to be among Teilhard’s strongest adversaries.

This leads to Teilhard’s theses concerning evolution and spirituality themselves. As Sheed wrote in his article in Jubilee, those who do not deal well with speculation and hypothesis will be uneasy with what Teilhard is attempting. There is very little of the clearly defined, black-and-white, walking the expected party line in Teilhard. Those who are not comfortable with shades of grey will struggle.

Finally, the inability to classify Teilhard’s work will cause his thought not only to be misinterpreted, but misrepresented in the future. Yes, in many ways his thought is an exemplary example of the modern, scientific mind; yet it is far more than that. One might say that his work itself is an evolutionary step beyond modernity, yet not necessarily in the direction of post-modernity, for its synthetic, tradition-rooted nature
belies that trajectory. Although it is a sublime vision of the future, it was formed amidst the ancient volcanoes of France’s Massif Central of his homeland in Auvergne, in a childhood devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Eucharist, the practice of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and in the Jesuit tradition of loyalty to Church and Pope. Its mystical Christological nature transcends scientific modernity and, as with all aspects of the mystical life, is not easily captured in word or picture. This is a crucial reason for Teilhard’s continual use of syllogism and diagram.

It is perhaps most of all this inability to wrap one’s hands around an easy, prosaic summation of Teilhard’s work that both fascinates and exasperates those who read it, and which repeatedly attracts those willing to encounter it with an open mind. Certainly, as the next chapter will show, it is this that was the source of fascination and also exasperation for those, like Robert Francoeur, who appointed themselves guardians of its heritage, and who tried to ensure that its own evolution and unfolding was true to Teilhard’s thought.
CHAPTER II

CORRESPONDENCE AND CONTROVERSY DURING THE EARLY YEARS:

1961-1964

During these early years of the 1960s Teilhard de Chardin’s thought spread further throughout the United States, spurred onward by a rising American Catholic optimism fueled by both global and national events as well as a new generation of young Catholics. This chapter will discuss in detail several of the first publications in the United States that further disseminated Teilhard de Chardin’s work, as found in the popular, ecclesial, and scholarly press, and including the early editions of Teilhard’s own manuscripts. In addition, some of the early controversy over Teilhard’s work will be examined.

Chapter One of this dissertation already introduced Robert Francoeur’s edited volume, *The World of Teilhard* from Helicon Press, Baltimore, published in 1961. This book is representative of many subsequent Teilhardian publications, the essays exhibiting the synthetic worldview exemplified by Teilhard himself. They span many of the disciplinary fields in which Teilhard’s thought was applied later during the 1960s, including psychology, philosophy, biology, physics, anthropology, social theory, and of course, theology. Here, during a time of bomb shelters and classroom drills, Teilhard presented a way of visioning life in which science cooperated with religion, rather than each acting as an antithesis of the other. This unitive vision proved irresistible to many both within and outside of the Church. It was almost certainly a primary reason for the
fascination of many in the United States with Teilhard and the underlying reason for many of the articles discussed here.

Teilhard’s vision was unitive not only in that it transcended the division between the sacred and the secular, nature and grace, but also because it was written specifically for those “who loved the world,” and who may, for whatever reason, subsequently feel themselves beyond the walls of Christianity. His message, therefore, appealed to an extremely wide and diverse population, particularly those seeking an understanding of the unfolding of the natural world through evolution.

At the heart of Teilhard’s spirituality is his incarnational Christology; his love for the material world and his understanding that, rather than being an obstacle, material reality “is indispensable for our service and knowledge of Christ” flows from that Christology. The material world is redeemed by using it for Christ’s service, and similarly, by our actions we can assist in realizing a universe where all things are recapitulated in Christ. Even though Teilhard’s thought is supremely Christocentric, in a country built on the myth of hard work and love of the material, these themes are tantalizing beacons indeed.

For the most part readers appeared content with the somewhat nebulous and mystical aspects of his thought, even though some considered it confusing, or even limited. It was understood that the process of synthetic progress often transcends established patterns and language, and so allowance must be given. Particularly in the United States, progress has always been considered golden. Teilhard’s writing

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overflowed with an optimism that declared that somehow this wonderful material world was progressing toward something far better, and Americans were enthralled by this message.

The wisdom of Teilhard, particularly since it was presented in idiosyncratic terminology, “could not fail to disturb some members of the Catholic hierarchy.”

This was thus delaying its positive acceptance. Throughout this time period, as this chapter will show, Teilhard’s work remains a “hot potato,” successively praised and condemned by the Jesuits, the Church hierarchy, and by independent scholars. That controversy itself drew interested readers to his publications. Ironically, the monitum concerning Teilhard’s writing which was issued by the Holy See during these years also encouraged many among the curious to seek out his works.

Mention will soon be made of how publication of various books and book reviews, including Francoeur’s, were delayed by concerns similar to this warning; in a similar fashion, so too was formation of a formal Teilhard organization. This chapter will address the struggle to create the first of the United States Teilhard Associations at Fordham with Francoeur and several of his collaborators, including the responses of those persons most involved in presenting Teilhard to the populace.

One primary focus of the Church at this time was the ecumenical council called by Pope John XXIII. This chapter and the next will consider then how the time leading up to the Second Vatican Council and its outcome were interpreted by scholars and Catholics in the United States, particularly in regards to Teilhard’s influence upon it. Some of those who were hoping for definitive change in the Church as a result of the

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Council will be among those most interested in Teilhard’s thought. Many hoped that the Council would bring a new manner of the Church’s presence in the world, something more than “the dead inertia of merely conventional Christianity” against which Teilhard and others, including some introduced in this chapter, protested.\textsuperscript{131} This hope is addressed here, along with the question of whether such a thing would be permitted within the Church.

**Early Teilhardian Interest**

What follows is a sampling of some of the earliest and most important commentaries on *The Divine Milieu* and *The Phenomenon*, which reiterate several common themes regarding these works and their early reception in the United States. Reviewers regarded Teilhard’s writing as poetic or mystical, scientific or philosophical in nature, depending upon their own proclivities or worldview. Transcending how they interpreted this work, almost universally they recognized its revolutionary synthetic quality, for here was a scientist who wrote from and about a cosmology that although obviously not pre-modern in nature, managed to integrate the material world with the spiritual within a context amenable to contemporary society.

Additionally, that Teilhard specifically wrote to those who “love the world” gave him greater access to and agency with those skeptical about Christianity and the spiritual life. His work and his life exemplified how it might be possible to find rapprochement between a deeply lived Christianity and life in the contemporary world.

As an example, one of the best-known Catholic authors of the mid-twentieth century, Thomas Merton, wrote a review of Teilhard’s *Divine Milieu* in the fall of 1960.

When the review was completed, Merton as usual sent it on to the censors for perusal, who, given the controversy surrounding Teilhard, passed it on to the Abbot General. In response the Abbot demanded that Merton read a critical attack on Teilhard, one penned, in Merton’s words, “by a rather second rate theologian.” Merton would neither read the other book nor alter his own review, and as a result his work was only published posthumously in 1979. In light of this, quite appropriately, the author’s note later added at the beginning of his book review states: “The following is an attempt at a positive and sympathetic appreciation of a much discussed writer who is certainly not without confusions and limitations. This particular essay is concerned with the spiritual implications of his scientific-religious mystique.”

Even though it was published later than the years this chapter will discuss, this review is highly significant to a historiography of Teilhard at the beginning of the 1960s. That Merton, living in a monastery hermitage hidden deep in the American Midwest had Teilhard’s *Divine Milieu* suggested to him as a “good read,” and that he was so taken with the author and the book’s content to write a positive review was one thing. That Merton’s publication was delayed speaks to the ongoing controversy at the time regarding all things Teilhard, as this chapter will further discuss. Finally, in this essay Merton proficiently delineates and explores not only Teilhard’s primary theological themes, but also the attraction that so many people in the United States were experiencing for his work at this time.


133 Additionally, Merton later wrote a review of Henri de Lubac’s *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, a review which was first copyrighted in 1967, and then included as “Teilhard’s Gamble” in the above volume, *Love and Living*, 185-191. This article will be further explored later in this chapter.

Merton notes in his essay that Teilhard was probably the first Catholic who successfully integrated a modern scientific world view into an “authentically Christian” and mystical form of life. From his viewpoint Teilhard was “too profound a thinker” to concern himself with any superficial reconciliation of science and religion.\textsuperscript{135} Instead, Merton expounded, if a conflict ever had existed in Teilhard’s own mind, it had been resolved in a “higher contemplative vision” that far superseded any other “absurd compromises.”

In his essay Merton was reviewing Teilhard’s \textit{Divine Milieu}, which he thought was far less controversial than \textit{The Phenomenon}. He does admit though that it is still “independent in its thought” and so might “trouble minds” who fear any vestige of originality and see such a thing as “somehow dangerous.” “But I do not think any responsible theologian who takes the trouble to interpret the author’s true meaning will find in it anything he can possibly condemn.”\textsuperscript{136}

Within the very first section of his essay on Teilhard’s \textit{Divine Milieu} Merton notes that Teilhard begins his book by confronting the accusation that Christianity is an “entirely negative religion which seems to prescribe a complete alienation from life, from human values and from the world.”\textsuperscript{137} In that worldview the Christian is to live a life of passivity and indifference, dismissing challenges, and blindly submitting to the will of God. God, therefore, exerts nothing more than an inexorable, “authoritarian pressure.” For this sort of Christian all material things are dangerous, temptations that might lead one away from union with God. However Merton notes that Teilhard agrees that this

\textsuperscript{135} Merton, “The Universe as Epiphany,” 171.\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 172.\textsuperscript{137} Merton, “Christian Humanism,” \textit{Love and Living}, 135-150 at 137.
belief system is not actually Christian at all, for a disembodied Christianity belies the Incarnation, the central dogma underlying it all. For Teilhard, humanity exists for Christ, but at the same time materiality exists for humanity in Christ. Not only are “things” not obstacles to our union with Christ, but they are necessary and indispensable for our service for Christ. Humanity’s vocation, therefore, is not to escape the world, it is instead to be “in the world” but not “of the world” by “being Christ” in the world and offering the whole world — including one’s own work of whatever sort that is and whoever one might be — to the Father.

In an era of immense scientific, social and intellectual creativity, many in the United States could also resonate to Teilhard’s declaration that we are to share the aspirations, ”in essence religious,” of those people who strongly feel the beauty and potential of the world, and the “sacred value of every new truth.” This we do not for the sake of progress itself, but because these living developments are clues to God’s will for our future direction. They manifest, each in their own way, an expectation of the Parousia. Not to act in this manner is to exhibit infidelity and distrust in God.¹³⁸

These insights of Merton’s offer many clues as to why Americans of this era were so taken with Teilhard’s work. That interest is exemplified by what was happening in New York City. At the very beginning in the early 1960s, the locus of Teilhardian studies in the United States was at Fordham University in New York. These focused studies started slowly at first, as Dr. Louis Marks in Biology and Joseph Donceel, S.J. in Philosophy introduced Teilhardian thought in their classes. J. Franklin Ewing, S.J., a former associate of Teilhard, began a “Teilhard Circle,” the objective of which was to

¹³⁸ Merton, “The Universe as Epiphany,” 183.
encourage critique of his work through an anthropological lens. Ewert Cousins, another contributor to Francoeur’s book, went to Fordham in 1960 to teach in the Classics department and discovered an already active interest there.\textsuperscript{139} Francoeur himself, in part as a result of his Teilhard ties, did graduate studies in biology at Fordham from the summer of 1962 through 1964, after first teaching biology in Baltimore.

Even before Francoeur’s \textit{The World of Teilhard de Chardin} was published, a sign of the growing Teilhardian interest was a television program on Teilhard’s thought sponsored by the Knights of Columbus in Baltimore in early Spring, 1960. Already, Teilhard had gone multimedia! Gustav Weigel, S.J., J. Franklin Ewing, S.J., Dr. John Walsh and Robert Francoeur all took part and Walter Burghardt S.J. acted as commentator.\textsuperscript{140} The transcript of the show “Evolution, science and religion” was later published in \textit{Jubilee} magazine.\textsuperscript{141} Burghardt posed three questions to his panelists: 1. What is the present state of scientific knowledge regarding evolution? 2. What has Teilhard added to that knowledge? 3. Is Teilhard simply a scientist in a restricted sense of the word or is he more? How did he link his science to the other elements of his thoughts?


\textsuperscript{140} Weigel was then Professor of Theology at Woodstock in Baltimore (which is also where Helicon Press, publisher for Francoeur’s book, was located); John Walsh was a lay professor of history at Pace College in New York City.

\textsuperscript{141} “Evolution, science and religion,” \textit{Jubilee} (May, 1960): 48-51. Thomas Merton, Edward Rice and Robert Lax were the original editors of \textit{Jubilee}, which was the first monthly pictorial magazine for a Catholic audience in the United States, published initially in 1953. The stated goal for the journal was “to produce a Catholic literary magazine that would act as a forum for addressing issues confronting the contemporary church together with a practical discussion of issues that Catholics dealt with in their daily lives.” The magazine was to be about ordinary people and the value of their everyday lives, a concept that Teilhard would most heartily endorse, so it was perhaps no mere coincidence that the transcript of this show was published in this particular magazine.
In response to question two, Francoeur in particular commented that Teilhard was a combination of both the old and the new, for even Paul of Tarsus also spoke about the world being directed toward some supernatural goal. Teilhard has the same Christological viewpoint as Paul, but he also incorporates contemporary scientific knowledge. Walsh responded to the third question by stating that Teilhard’s greatest achievement was his synthetic ability, “gathering together several lines of convergence — scientific, social, historic, and also religious — and seeing them in a common vision, perhaps for the first time on this scale by a Christian thinker who was also a very great scientist.”\(^{142}\) It is his vision therefore, that sets him apart.

Francoeur added that Teilhard had gone so close to philosophy and theology at times in his writing that you “have to watch your step in reading the book!”\(^{143}\) For Francoeur what was of major significance in Teilhard’s efforts was the discovery of a direction and goal for evolution: the world evolves not just by chance, but in a purposeful manner which involves Point Omega, Christ. For Ewing, it was Teilhard’s genius, that he could take scientific thoughts and reconsider them in terms of humanity and God, and “inspire them with poetic enthusiasm.” Teilhard gives people hope that “one can be a modern man, one can be an evolutionist, and one can be a Christian.”\(^{144}\) Here already in early 1960, a few people were aware of and were attempting to disseminate the Christ-centered focus of Teilhard’s thought. Unfortunately, as the popularity of his work grows, those who can understand the Christology located within the evolutionary science

\(^{142}\) “Evolution, science and religion,” 49.
\(^{143}\) Ibid., 50.
\(^{144}\) “Evolution, science and religion,”51. In regards to his comments about hope, Ewing specifically mentions here the people of France.
and so contextualize Teilhard's spirituality accordingly will prove to be limited in number.

This television show was at least in part commissioned and viewed by many as a result of articles found not only in the secular *Time*, but also because of those found in journals such as *Catholic World, Commonweal, America*, and the more academic *Theological Digest* and *New Scholasticism*, which were at the forefront of the deluge that would become Teilhard.

Early in 1960, J. Edgar Bruns, who also contributed to Francoeur’s later volume, wrote an article on Teilhard for *Catholic World*. One highlighted point was that “Teilhard de Chardin claimed that the only God we can worship ‘in spirit and truth’ is a synthesis of the Christian ‘God up above’ and the Marxist ‘God up ahead.’” Additionally, Bruns asked “Can the new evolutionism of Chardin win back the dechristianized intellectuals of the space age by liberating theology from the old cosmology?”

The author noted the hostile trepidation in the Catholic world concerning Darwin, as well as Copernicus and Galileo. Yet, he commented, the Church, even as it was faced with challenges to traditional concepts and insisted on a doctrine of special creation, had to admit that the idea of evolution was not new at all. Gregory of Nyssa, after all, had noted that “all things were virtually in the first Divine impulse for creation, existing as it were in a kind of spermatic potency sent forth for the genesis of all things.” But this line of thought, which built upon the Apostle Paul’s own writing, did not gain ascendency

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146 Ibid, 23.
147 Ibid.
in the ancient Church. Teilhard, he pointed out, uses these ancient texts, particularly 1 Corinthians 15:28 and Colossians 1:15-20. Unfortunately, he noted, when the theory was reintroduced in the 19th century, it was complicated by the work of the materialists, who desired to discredit God and the Spirit. “It is perhaps only a man entitled to include Pascal and Voltaire among his ancestors,” Bruns wrote, “who could reconcile in himself so many disparate vocations and who could conceive of a synthesis of materialism and religion that is impressive enough to be labeled ‘seductive’ by its opponents.”

Bruns conveyed three concepts in this article that he considered vital to understanding Teilhard (and which he feared many would miss): 1. Teilhard’s understanding of the essential unity of all life; 2. The continual evolution of the universe; and 3. The convergent direction that this evolution has been and is taking. He also added that Teilhard’s phenomenology can be reduced to one word “Spiritualization. ‘Spirit’ is the ‘stuff of the universe.’”

In April of 1960 one of Teilhard’s own dearest friends, the Jesuit priest François Russo, wrote a review of *The Phenomenon* in *America* magazine. He mentions in his review that *The Phenomenon* was one work Teilhard really wanted published, as it brought together the essential or guiding ideas of his worldview, one which first dated from 1916, but which he continued to refine throughout his life. He gives a brief overview of Teilhard’s primary principles, then stresses how it is impossible to overemphasize how important is this effort at synthesis. It is necessary to bring together

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148 Bruns, 24.
149 Ibid.
150 François Russo, S.J. “The Phenomenon of Man,” *America* CIII no. 5 (April 30, 1960):185-9. Russo was a much younger friend and correspondent of Teilhard’s during his New York years, and was also the editor of the French Jesuit review *Les Études.*
scientific data, but also to permit the integration of man into cosmology. Teilhard’s is not
a mere intellectual game, but “is also poetry, which in this case is a genuine method of
the phenomenological study of reality. His thoughts might be daring, but are rooted in
fact and reality.” One can compare Teilhard’s work to Descartes or Leibnitz, as he is
“haunted by the desire to grasp reality in a truly profound new way,” as were they.151

Indeed, his idea of transformation is a major contribution to thinking about
cosmology, and opens “great windows to faith” for people of a new age. And it must be
pointed out, Russo insists, that in contrast to the Marxists Teilhard is adamant that
science “cannot find its fulfillment except in a spiritual dimension.”152

Finally, in Commonweal early that same year, John Whitney Evans also wrote on
Teilhard’s efforts.153 Yes, he agrees, Teilhard was pious, loyal, courageous, patient, and
brave, as well as a great scientist with an extraordinary power of insight and a gift for
expression. Still, questions can be asked about the value of his work. Teilhard wrote on
the level of phenomenology, with its restricting view of reality as to what could be
involved in a system of space and time. If one wants to write of “the whole phenomenon
of man,” is this not an impossible task, he questions. That task would involve earth,
humanity, thought, God, destiny — the sum total of which goes far beyond the merely

151 Ibid., 187. Russo notes that Teilhard relies mightily upon the scientific method, but not in the same way
as it is used in scientific treatises. In this work one cannot neatly distinguish between the scientific and the
philosophical, as it is an attempt to understand life itself, which is in itself both scientific and philosophical.
Perhaps, Russo concedes, Teilhard approves too easily the idea of evolution, and relies overly much upon
this. But, we must remember that he has not attempted to give the entire truth, but only his own set of
views. In so doing, his teaching always allows room for the teaching of the Church. He most definitely
does not rule out the transcendence of God.

152 Russo, 189.

John Whitney Evans was priest, historian, and long time professor at Duluth College and St. Scholastica in
Minnesota.
phenomenological. So instead, Teilhard “hedged at his own stated limits and has offered more than a mere inspection of reality.”

As a result Evans concludes that Teilhard is employing poetic expression, and should not be discussed too logically. One must realize: “His thought is impelled by a greater force than that which arises simply from “the logic and coherence of facts.” Still, Teilhard is more than simply a naturalist arriving at conclusions that could be described as “transparently Christian.”

The greatest conclusion expounded by Evans in this review is that “man is greater than any science alone.” To understand mankind it is necessary to unify all given truths and to work toward synthesis. What results, Evans concludes, is the fact observed by Michael Polanyi in also writing on the Phenomenon: “a text that is so ambiguous that people whose views on its subject matter are diametrically opposed can read it with equal enthusiasm cannot be wholly satisfying.”

Robert Francoeur responded to Evan’s review in the same volume of Commonweal. The Phenomenon, asserts Francoeur, gives only an incomplete picture of Teilhard. The complexity and depth of his work ensures that it will take quite some time for the world to understand his real vision. The word “vision” is quite descriptive of his thought, for Teilhard was:

. . . one of those rare men who combined the attitude of the scientist with the visionary qualities of a mystic and the warmth of a great humanness

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154 Ibid., 439.
155 Ibid., 440.
156 Evans, 441.
157 Ibid.
158 Robert Francoeur, “A Call to Greatness,” Commonweal, LXXII no. 19 (1960): 441-3. Francoeur begins with a contextualization of Teilhard with the biologist Jean Baptiste Lamarck, who published Zoological Philosophy, “the first ‘complete’ scientific study of evolution” in 1809. He also mentions the influence of Darwin and Henri Bergson’s Creative Evolution.
to study man and his place in the evolving universe and then to synthesize the findings of modern science with the light of supernatural revelation is the whole purpose of Teilhard’s vision. To see man in his true place in our evolving world is the aim of *The Phenomenon of Man*.  

According to Francoeur, the basis of Teilhard’s vision is the hypothesis now at the foundation of all modern scientific advancement: the general theory of evolution.

Materialists have forced a one-sided theory of evolution, which fails to synthesize the spiritual with the material, and ignores the direction behind the random processes of Darwinian natural selection. By contrast Teilhard tries to view the work of creation as a whole; he sought a perspective unifying all of the world’s phenomena.

Such a synthesis of knowledge must be incomplete, and must be the work of many scholars. Teilhard admitted his thought is tentative. Critics maintain his work is neither science nor phenomenology. Where is the theology, others ask? Where is the Scholastic terminology, with a worldview and a vocabulary they can understand? But we must remember, Francoeur insists, that Teilhard was writing as much (or more so) for atheists and agnostics as for those well within the Church.

What is especially noteworthy, Francoeur writes, is that Teilhard is the first since Aquinas to attempt a synthesis of human knowledge on such a scale. In that synthesis of scientific with spiritual, he sought the basis of the unity of the living universe. His discoveries explicated the ultra-sacramental nature of that same universe, and situated it in a Christology that has as its foundation the Mystical Body of Christ. Why is this

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159 Francoeur, *Commonweal*, 441.

160 In so doing Teilhard found a law of recurrence — the law of complexity-consciousness. “With the birth of reflective thought with man — the course of evolution is involuted. . . . evolution begins now to converge on itself.” However, convergence has to be focused on a point, and for Teilhard this is the Omega Point, the Incarnate Christ, “a point at which the whole Universe along with mankind is drawn into an ultrasynthesis where God, as St. Paul says, ‘will be all in all.’”
significant? Francoeur notes that fifty years ago Bishop John Ireland said: ‘This age will not take kindly to religious knowledge separated from secular knowledge.”

From another perspective, in his article for *New Scholasticism* published in 1960, Bernard Gilligan notes that *The Phenomenon of Man* was widely acclaimed as “THE publishing event” of 1959. “Reviewers predict it will remain a classic and be read assiduously for decades to come. The great publicity and fulsome praise it has received are well deserved. It affords the reader a unique opportunity for a great intellectual and emotional experience.”

Gilligan lavishly praises the book, commenting that it contains “a brilliant synoptic vision of total cosmic and human evolution,” one that is quite consistent with traditional Christianity. This vision is completed only by what “the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ” supplies.

Gilligan also affirms that Teilhard provides a synthesis of science and theology; the natural /supernatural question is suggested “implicitly” toward the end of the book, in a move that is bold but orthodox. He assures readers that “a profound spirituality can be discerned as inspiring [Teilhard’s] scientific thought . . . his thought and personality were

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161 Francoeur, *Commonweal*, 442. Additionally, on page 443 Francoeur has French Cardinal Emmanuel Souhard noting: “Modern inventions (and knowledge) which have increased at an ever-growing pace cannot be for Christians just another news item or a mere scientific curiosity. They have their value as pointers and they must henceforth be integrated into the Christian’s apostolic vision of Redemption. For they are something more than empty symbols: They are the making of a new universe. And this is the Universe we are called upon to save.” Emmanuel Célestin Souhard (1874 -1949) was Archbishop of Paris from 1940 to 1949, during which time he was detained in his episcopal residence for a while for speaking out against the Vichy government and the Nazis. He was also spokesman of the Church in France in the last years of his life. Prior to this he served as professor of philosophy and theology at the Grand Seminary at Laval.

162 Gilligan, Bernard B., review of *The Phenomenon of Man*, *New Scholasticism*, XXXIV (1960): 515. Gilligan was a Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University at the time this review was written.

163 Gilligan 515.

164 Ibid.
According to Gilligan, Teilhard’s synthesis not only was between science and religion, natural and supernatural, but also attempted to bridge the gap between Christianity and the secular world. It is very much bilingual by nature. As he wrote: “The whole adds up to a mystical vision ranging over the entire universe with great intellectual acumen and profound emotional responsiveness.”

Weighing in with another theological opinion was the Jesuit priest Cyril Vollert, who commented on Teilhard’s work in Theology Digest, also in 1960. Teilhard, he writes, was above all a thinker and a prophet. His Influence on contemporary thought is already great, and is only bound to grow. What was Teilhard about? Vollert enumerates three points by which to understand Teilhard’s achievement in The Phenomenon. First that his methodology was scientific; his intention was to stick to experimental observation complemented by hypotheses. Second was his interpretation of the past and future in light of present knowledge. Finally, perhaps most important and also the source of much controversy, was his attempt to synthesize the conclusions of the scientific study of reality with Christian knowledge gained through faith and an experience of Christ. Teilhard’s primary objective, according to Vollert, was simply to rescue evolution from materialism, and return it to the spiritual realm.

165 Also on 515 Gilligan adds that the fact that Julian Huxley wrote an enthusiastic introduction to the volume is indicative of the almost universal esteem with which Teilhard was held by the scientific community.
166 Ibid., 516.
167 Vollert, Cyril, S.J. “Toward Omega: the vision of man,” Theology Digest VIII no.3 (1960): 133-136. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Jesuit Father Cyril O. Vollert (1901-1980) graduated from and then taught classics at Marquette University before leaving to study and teach in Rome both before and after World War II. For more than twenty-five years he taught dogmatic theology and was Dean of the Divinity School at St. Mary’s College in Kansas. He rejoined the Marquette faculty as a professor of Theology in 1968. He also founded the journal Theology Digest in 1953 at St. Mary’s with Father Gerald Van Ackeren, S.J. This was a quarterly digest of abstracts and summaries of selected articles from over 400 theological journals, as well as including a survey of published books.
168 Vollert, 133.
Another Jesuit, J. Franklin Ewing, wrote about *The Phenomenon* in *Theological Studies* early the following year. Ewing, of Fordham, had taken part in the aforementioned Knights of Columbus show. He notes in this book that although Teilhard’s books had excited vast numbers in Europe, most probably the same would not happen in the United States. Vast differences exist in the reading publics in particular, the United States did not experience World War II, and so cannot relate as Europe did to the message of hope so rampant in Teilhard’s work. Still, Ewing notes that this is “a book which showed that one could be a modern (indeed, a scientist) and a believer in God.”

Ewing is another who believes that the most profound influence of Teilhard for many is his attempt at a synthesis of “various areas of reality, with evolution as the prime key to an appreciation of the workings of God and His universe.” He would like the reading public to remember that Teilhard was a prose poet and a mystic. For many, his conversation is ennobling, if overly original. Still, his work exhibits the extreme empathy that was characteristic of the man himself.

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170 Ewing, 86. Ewing notes *The Phenomenon* is selling very well in the United States. In particular, teachers of philosophy and theology should know about the book as most likely they will be asked about it at some point in the near future.

171 Ibid., 87. Ewing comments, however, that because Teilhard was not permitted to publish during his lifetime, his work is very experiential, rather than scholarly. For example, many of his doctrines come close to those of biblical scholars, but Teilhard apparently never read these as he never references them. Doubt about his orthodoxy was only exacerbated in the minds of the authorities when his work was published outside the norms of the Jesuits and the Church after his death. Yet this too has drawn many to his writings.

172 Ewing includes a quote here from Teilhard’s coworker and friend George Barbour: “Most accounts of his life fail to mention Teilhard’s most striking characteristics — his humility and his warm sympathetic humanity. He was utterly without conceit or self-interest, and had a marvelous sense of humor. He found it well-nigh impossible to think ill of any man, at least for long, even when others took advantage of his forbearance and generosity. He just continually gave himself away.” George Barbour, memorial to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., *Proceedings Volume of the Geological Society of America, Annual Report for 1955* (July, 1956), in Ewing, 170-171. George Barbour was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1890. He earned a Ph.D. From Columbia University in 1929, and then taught geology at a number of institutions.
Ewing recognizes that these personality traits and the story of his life spent primarily in exile have tended to sacerdotalize his work and make of him a missionary. As his friend George Barbour also noted, he “suffered greatly, and could not understand why others might not follow his manner of acting and thinking.” Ewing observes that at the time many have tremendous empathy for Teilhard and his life story, and this too fed interest in his writings. As he concludes, “perhaps the author did not succeed in being a twentieth-century Aquinas, but no one else has come so close to achieving this enviable position.” Teilhard’s efforts are therefore, he believes, a powerful incentive for modern people to rethink our ideas about the universe.

Already this early in the decade several common themes can be discerned regarding the reception of Teilhard’s thought in the United States. His work was variously regarded as poetry, mysticism, or philosophy. The synthetic quality of it was easily recognized, and both this and his love for both Christ and the material world appreciated. His life itself was an example of how a modern contemporary attempting to balance work and faith might manage this.

**Popular Media**

Journalists in the broader popular press had also encountered this burgeoning fascination with Teilhard, and were beginning to explore facets of his life and work. An article in *Time* magazine on February 1961 was the first of several to do so. The

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including Yenching University, China (1923-1932) and the University of Cincinnati (1938-1960). Barbour worked with Teilhard and their common friend Père Licent on the Geological Survey of China during the 1930s, particularly at the Xiaochangliang archeological dig, the site of the earliest paleolithic remains in East Asia. They afterward remained lifelong friends.

173 Ewing, 102.


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opening lines quote the *Divine Milieu*: “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?”

It is interesting to note that the unidentified author of this piece, in beginning with this quote, appears to already comprehend the Christocentric nature of Teilhard’s cosmology. The article then suggests that one who not only asked but answered those questions well was Teilhard. The author comments that the recent publication of some of his “philosophical writings,” in particular *The Divine Milieu*, has sparked a posthumous cult of "Teilhardism" in France.

This *Time* article also notes that the book’s audience is not primarily fast and true Christians, but "the waverers, both inside and outside" the church, "whose education or instinct leads them to listen primarily to the voices of the earth." After all, his book’s dedication is: "For those who love the world.”

Teilhard most certainly would have placed himself within that category, for Christianity, Teilhard believes, teaches that the things of the world all play their role in the continuing work of God with humanity through the spiritualization of the universe. As the article points out, even the evils of the world have their part in this process, for God “transfigures them by integrating them in a better plan—provided we trust lovingly in Him.”

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176 “Passionate Indifference”.
177 The true Christian, according to Teilhard, does not renounce the world, nor does he embrace it wholly; he neither puts his trust in action nor resigns himself to acceptance. Instead the Christian rejoices in all the world’s potentials, including that of surrender; if any words might best describe the “intoxication” felt for the world, those would be “passionate indifference.” Hence the title chosen for this examination in *Time*. Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 118-20 quoted in “Passionate Indifference.”
A letter dated February 7th, 1961 from Hugh Van Dusen of Harper & Brothers to “Friends and Admirers of Father Teilhard de Chardin” shares the news that on Sunday, Feb 19 at 1:00 p.m. there would be a half hour television program devoted to Father Teilhard, his life and writings.\(^{178}\) The script for this program was written by Michael Novak, “a brilliant young Catholic at Harvard.”

Additionally, Van Dusen adds that the Harper edition of *The Divine Milieu* (formerly *The Realm of the Divine*) had already sold almost 9,000 copies since publication at the end of October, and *The Phenomenon* is almost at 30,000 and has been selling much more briskly since the appearance of *The Divine Milieu*.\(^{179}\) It was planned that *The Phenomenon* would be published as a paperback that next August.\(^{180}\)

Subsequent to the distribution of these two, according to Van Dusen, the next volume scheduled for publication in English was the *Letters*, possibly combining the two volumes of *Lettres de voyage*. Other books by Father Teilhard already published in France were in the process of translation into English at that moment. Books and articles about Teilhard continue to appear in France and Germany. Van Dusen notes that in a recent Blackwell’s catalogue he noticed four more. Additionally, Claude Cuénot’s

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\(^{178}\) Hugh Van Dusen, notice of February 7, 1961. Harper & Row correspondence, Robert Francoeur collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Lauinger Library Archives, Georgetown University (hereafter LLA).

\(^{179}\) The English translation of the title of this book was hotly debated, as is indicated in a letter in late 1960 from George Barbour, Teilhard’s dear friend of many years, to Robert Francoeur which asks: “Have you seen the just published English version of *The Divine Milieu*, for which they apparently adopted the title I suggested as an improvement on Cuénot’s wording “Divine Environment,” which misses the point entirely.” “Wednesday Night, November 1960: From Cincinnati.” George Barbour Letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA.

\(^{180}\) The paperback edition of *The Phenomenon* was actually finally published as a Harper Torch book in 1965.
biography of Teilhard was still being translated and was expected to appear from Helicon Press later in the year.\textsuperscript{181}

In closing Hugh Van Dusen notes that “We are still hoping for a feature article on Father Teilhard in LIFE.” Although not a feature article, mention of Teilhard’s thought and influence did occur numerous times through the years in \textit{Life}, the first in an editorial, “The Spirit is at Work,” on March 31, 1961.\textsuperscript{182} In a few paragraphs the editor comments in regards to Teilhard that whereas his friends knew him for his “selfless charm,” and the scientific community for his admirable work, only today is “his influence spreading wherever men take seriously the ultimate questions of their origin, nature and destiny.”

It is noted in this article in \textit{Life} that Teilhard was not only a Christian mystic, but also a French rationalist, proud to be related to Voltaire. It comments that: “Teilhard used Darwin and genetics the way Aquinas used Aristotle, weaving them into the fabric of a comprehensive theology.” Along the way he reconciled science and church dogma by transcending both. Slowly the realization is dawning in both church and society that he is “one of the ‘great thought shapers’ of the century, because he could find the poetry hidden in science’s dustiest facts.” In an age of technology, the article notes, Teilhard has helped to place man back at the center of God’s creation.

**Increasing Controversy and Repercussions**

Despite this positive assessment of Teilhard’s impact, others were not so quick to promote his theories. Father Robert Francoeur, for one, was already feeling heat over his espousal of Teilhard’s thought in conjunction with his desire for change within the

\textsuperscript{181} Published as Claude Cuénot, \textit{Teilhard de Chardin: A Biographical Study} (Helicon Press, 1965).

\textsuperscript{182} “The Spirit is at Work,” \textit{Life} (March 31, 1961): 30. Actually Teilhard is made note of — either in passing or extensively — ten times in \textit{Life} between 1961 and 1972. However, no feature article was ever written.
Church. Mention of his forthcoming *The World of Teilhard* was made in a footnote to an article that appeared in early 1961 in the *American Benedictine Review*, a small magazine with a circulation of perhaps 800. As a result of that citation, however, even before the book was in print, a *monitum* concerning it was issued by the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Archbishop Egidio Vagnozi, prohibiting its reading by American seminarians. After much correspondence with the Apostolic Delegate, the book was finally published. Although it was well received, it never did receive an *imprimatur*.

This small battle was indicative of the greater turmoil surrounding the publication of Teilhard’s writings, as well as subsequent additional texts. A cover story Francoeur penned concerning Teilhard in the popular journal *Catholic World* in September, 1961 well illustrates this. Titled “For Teilhard, No Flight from Time,” Francoeur addresses Teilhard’s critics, some of whom Francoeur comments condemned him as “an inventor of a new gospel.” He notes that reviewers tend to consider *The Phenomenon* as either “pure charlatanism” or a “truly masterful vindication of the spiritual in a materialistic world.”

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184 Robert T. Francoeur, “For Teilhard, No Flight from Time,” *Catholic World* 198 no.1158 (September, 1961):367-73. Hereafter *Catholic World*. This was the cover story for this particular issue. From 1961-1962 Francoeur was a professor of biology at Mt. St. Agnes College in Baltimore. There he became friends with Gustav Weigel, S.J. and John Courtney Murray, S.J., both of whom would be influential spirits in the Vatican Council.

185 The quote that begins the article is “The trend that gained momentum with Darwin finds its apex in Teilhard.” One might argue that to highlight such a quote was perhaps not a politically expedient move, at least if one is attempting to soothe the ruffled feathers!
Francoeur contends here that many of Teilhard’s critics harbored nostalgia, or a desire for regression back to a pre-modern, pre-scientific society, and some way to escape from the passing of time that ushers in change. By contrast, Teilhard views time as a way to reach the infinite, and speaks a language the contemporary world can understand.

In the article the author notes that *The Phenomenon* sold over ninety thousand copies in France, and in both England and the United States over fifty thousand in thirty months. In the five years since its first publication in France, over five hundred articles and thirty books had been written in French concerning Teilhard and his work. Obviously, his work was meeting some need in contemporary society.  

Francoeur perceives that Teilhard has taken the traditional synthesis of Catholic knowledge and woven into it new concepts and ways of expressing that knowledge so that some readers see his work as “an entirely ‘new gospel.’” This in itself has caused consternation and fear among the more conservative. Still, the overwhelming spiteful reaction of some gives Francoeur pause. The reactions have “run the gamut of emotion and sense and it will be a hundred years before we will be able to sift the diamonds of critical study from the rubble of nonsense. But even with this fact in mind and allowing for it, there is still a very disturbing element in some of these reactions which can be quite dangerous to the true progress of our understanding of this world of ours.”

Do these reactions indicate a craving for an escape from time, or a desire on the part of some to avoid forward progress in both society and the Church? Francoeur

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188 Ibid., 368.
189 Ibid., 373. Entire quote states: “One might be tempted to put these views down as the responses of conservative minds, but it might be more accurate to describe them as
argues that attempting to hide from the possibilities created by science and research is “not a healthy sign of a vigorous intellectual life.” If truth exists in new vistas, it must be found; if it is in error, it must be corrected. However, this can only be done by moving forward. Teilhard saw all time, work, and research as ascending to an end point, not standing still. In contrast, many of his critics’ reactionary stances against Teilhard offer no alternative answer to the problems he raises.190

Francoeur quotes Nicholas Corté, one of Teilhard’s friends and biographers, as suggesting two types of reactions: critics and “sympathetic voices.” However, he himself finds not much distinction between the two: “When you add it up, there is not, perhaps, a very great distance between the two positions, but only, to put it thus, a change in perspective.”191 In other words, as proposed already in Chapter One, Corté suggests certain people are simply better able to “see,” and to accept the movement of time as described by Teilhard.

So, Francoeur concludes, the refusal to follow the course of knowledge as it moves onward and an obstinacy in the notions of the past, or “the flight from time and history itself, are points which seem to play a large role in some of the more violent and bombastic criticism of Teilhard.”192

ultraconservatives, or even better, as “reactionaries.” These writers have reacted to the message of Teilhard with great vehemence. Yet, obvious in the remarks quoted above, is more than an ordinary negative reaction. There is not true vitality in their remarks, no serious approach to the difficult task of evaluating and appreciating the thought of Teilhard. They only condemn.”

190 Ibid.


192 Francoeur, Catholic World, 373. See also the first chapter of Gary Wills’ Bare Rained Choirs for a further exemplification of the arguments of those exasperated with Teilhard’s vision, particularly in regards to the Roman Catholic Church. A quote from page 18 particularly seems appropriate here: “[The Church] belonged to no age or time, but was above them all; it had a ‘special dispensation’ from history. History was a thing it did not have to undergo.” The development of historical consciousness then, particularly the deep historical consciousness which Teilhard was advocating, was an immense struggle for many within the Church — hierarchy and lay people both.
He ends his article by suggesting that simply because a reviewer does not find Teilhard’s writings, approach, or treatment helpful does not mean they are not perfectly orthodox. Indeed, it “will take patient, serious, honest and courageous study along with the prudence of a Solomon to separate the wheat from the chaff. But the results thus far obtained clearly indicate that the effort is well worthwhile.”

The Teilhard Controversy in Europe

Although Francoeur might write publicly that the effort was worthwhile, as pressure from Church authorities mounted in these years before the Second Vatican Council against the further publication of Teilhard’s work and vitriolic criticism grew, at times he must have privately wondered if this was truly so. Francoeur’s struggle however, was a small indication of the dissonance brewing in the universal Church, particularly in Europe. This disharmony did involve Teilhard, but he was only one small piece of the inevitable jerky movement being taken toward opening the Church to the modern world. It would seem to be worthwhile then, to stop and discuss through the lens of two particular people, Henri de Lubac and Dorothy Poulain, the European background of some of the Teilhardian controversy and their own particular contributions to the reception of Teilhard in the United States.

The Role of Henri de Lubac

De Lubac was first contacted by Monsignor Bruno de Solages in April 1936 about some of Teilhard’s writings, and the need to gather all these in a publication of some kind before they were lost. He notes, however, that after Teilhard’s death in 1955 the

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193 Ibid.
194 Henri de Lubac, At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances that Occasioned His Writings. Trans: Anne Elizabeth Englund. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 103f. De
Jesuits did not wish to publish anything of Teilhard’s except some very select and carefully chosen texts, which publishers considered impractical to manage, so nothing was done.

In 1957 de Lubac was taken to the Teilhard gathering at Cerisy-la-Salle in La Manche with which Dorothy Poulain was involved, and where he gave an impromptu talk on *Le Milieu Divin*. This then led to a written text, *Du bon usage du milieu divine*, which was copied and distributed around Europe. A similar article was later published in Paris, and was signed by Father Eugene d’Oncieu, the Jesuit national chaplain, breaking the “law of silence” under which de Lubac had been forced to live.

By 1961, however, everything had changed. In April of that year the Jesuit Provincial of the Lyon Province, Blaise Arminjon, reminded de Lubac of the interdiction against writing about Teilhard; however, later that same summer, he was called into Father Arminjon’s office and received a very different message. The Society of Jesus was concerned that all sorts of “nonsense” was being written about Teilhard, both in support of and against him. With the publication of several of his books already by *Les Amies de Teilhard*, the Jesuits (including at least the four Provincials of France and the General Superior) had decided it was necessary that “one who knew him well, who has followed his thought, bring his testimony to bear about him [Teilhard]; there are very few left in this world who can do so; we have decided on you.” As a result, de Lubac was to

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Lubac notes here that he considered the editions he provided of the works of several people, including Father Auguste Valensin, Maurice Blondel, and Teilhard de Chardin “one of the most useful tasks ever given to me to accomplish.”
free himself from his other occupations and set to work quickly on a text of his own conception.  

The immediate result was *La Pensée Religieuse du Pere Teilhard de Chardin*. Concerning relations with “Rome” in writing about Teilhard, de Lubac later noted that “I gave my opinion clearly, and I was not asked to suppress or change a single word.”

Cardinal Ottaviani of the Curia asked to have this Teilhard book of de Lubac placed on the *Index*, but when the matter was brought before Pope John XXIII, the papal response was “No.” A condemnation was not going to happen. De Lubac saw this response as in line with a public *monitum* that had very “vague formulas.” However, the book was indeed immediately attacked by Philippe de la Trinité, editor of *l’Osservatore Romano*, a conservative mouthpiece, and one at least in part responsible for the *monitum* itself. As a result, at the end of June de Lubac was informed that any new editions or translations of his book were forbidden.

This ban on any new editions of his initial book required de Lubac to produce yet another volume to correct further misconceptions on Teilhard, *La Priere du Pere*

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195 De Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 104. As regards the “nonsense” being written about Teilhard — this will continue to be an issue for years with many of those who knew Teilhard well, and who saw his thought being used in a manner inconsistent with the beliefs and attitude of the man they knew. Consider, for example, the comments of George Barbour, and later his son Ian, in the chapters following.


197 De Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 105. For example, de Lubac included a comment by Teilhard “about the integrist theologians.” Teilhard had written that “They keep us from adoring and loving deeply, they would like to keep God from growing in our eyes.” *At the Service of the Church*, 112.

198 De Lubac, however, was somewhat mollified by a note of support from the Jesuit Father General who stated that in regards to Trinité’s review: “It is not hard for me to understand that his article was painful for you; but for the moment an intervention on my part with the Holy Office seems inopportune. At this time, the cause of truth will be better served by our silent suffering than by untimely clarifications. In a little while — a few months? — we shall see. Many here and elsewhere are hoping for a change . . . I am fully in agreement with you; your book constitutes a first, very important elucidation of the work of Father Teilhard, and in the very spirit of the *monitum*, a “warning” against possible extrapolations of Father’s thought, not in conformity to the doctrine of the Church.” *At the Service of the Church*, 106.
Teilhard de Chardin published in 1964. After 1961 and throughout the next dozen years, de Lubac became increasingly involved in controversies surrounding Teilhard, as he also published or edited another seven volumes concerning Teilhard. He later commented that “All these works on Teilhard, which were not of passionate interest to me, took much of my time over a period of twelve years or so and brought me many difficulties.”

He noted later though, that in regards to his efforts in this matter:

In order to understand certain orientations and emphases of his thought, in order to do justice to what was both most daring and most timely in it, a work of historical reconstruction had become necessary . . . Neither the denigrators nor the admirers of Teilhard ordinarily perceived the historical importance of his effort to establish . . . a spiritual interpretation of universal evolution that included the transcendence of man, the value of personal being, freedom, openness to God, and consummation in Christ.


200 These include Teilhard, missionaire et apologist (1966) from conferences given in Rome; two collections of letters: Lettres d’Égypte 1905-1908 (Paris: Aubier Éditions Montaigne, 1963) and Lettres d’Hastings et de Paris 1908-1914 (Paris: Aubier, 1965). The first of these was translated into English by Mary Ilford and published in New York by Herder and Herder in 1965, the second was translated by Judith de Stefano, with an introduction by de Lubac, and published by Herder and Herder in 1968. In addition he was involved with Écrits du temps de la guerre 1916-1919 (Paris: B. Grasset, 1965) with an introduction by both Bruno de Solages and de Lubac. He also contributed a chapter to Teilhard de Chardin in the Réalités series (at the last moment five pages written concerning the Christology so crucial to understanding Teilhard’s thought were suppressed), and a commentary on The Eternal Feminine; a study on the poem by Teilhard de Chardin, followed by Teilhard and the problems of today (New York: Harper and Row, 1971). Several of these publications will be discussed later in this dissertation. The last of the series was Lettres intime Auguste alensin, Bruno de Solages, Henri de Lubac, 1919-1955, (Paris: A. Montaigne, 1973).

201 De Lubac, At the Service of the Church, 109.

202 De Lubac, At the Service of the Church, 110. As additional commentary on this point, de Lubac notes on the same page that in his journal in 1963 Mircea Eliade wrote in regards to Teilhard: “What a joy to rediscover in a Western theologian, a ‘man of science,’ the optimism of the Rumanian peasants, who were themselves Christians but who belonged to that ‘cosmic Christianity’ that has long since disappeared in the West. The peasant believes that ‘the World is good,’ that it became so once again after the Incarnation, death and Resurrection of the Savior.” Mircea Eliade, No Souvenirs: journal, 1957-1969, trans. Fred H. Johnson, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).
The Role of Dorothy Poulain

Madame Dorothy Poulain of France was one who both knew Henri de Lubac and who remained in correspondence with Francoeur throughout these years, sharing her own concerns from Europe. As was mentioned in Chapter One, she was an American married to a French writer and living in Paris at this time, was very active in Catholic Church circles, knew Madame Mortier well, and was a member of the French *Les Amies de Teilhard*. In the years to come her support of both Robert Francoeur and the American Teilhardians will prove crucial.

In October 1961 she wrote Father Francoeur from Paris to thank him for a copy of the September issue of *Catholic World*. She noted that she appreciated his article with its analysis of the “conservative reaction to Teilhard.” Surely, she wrote, he would succeed in making those who criticize Teilhard in this manner “look very much like a certain long-eared species!”

The following January, 1962 she wrote to Francoeur “Your account of the ‘coup de frein’ launched against Teilhard or writings on him in the US is simply following a consecrated pattern — exactly the same as that in France where even today none of his works are allowed in the seminaries or houses of study.” How though, she asks, was *Commonweal* or *Catholic World* able to publish their articles? She mentions that she has a letter from Father John Sheerin, the editor of *The Catholic World*, which mentions that

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203 Dorothy Poulain to Father Francoeur, September 24, 1961, from Paris. Madame Poulain correspondence, Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA.
204 Dorothy Poulain to Father Francoeur, January 23, 1962. Box 1 Folder 9, Madame Poulain correspondence, Robert Francoeur Collection, LLA. The phrase “coup de frein” might literally be translated as a sudden “putting on of the brakes.”
although *The World of Teilhard* had aroused little popular interest, it had irked some of the hierarchy, particularly the Apostolic Delegate.\(^{205}\)

She goes on to remark that since the Holy Office knew nothing of science and even less of Teilhard, they asked for judgment from others, including Monsignor de Journet of Fribourg. As those of his like are still rampant, until they disappear or are “converted” by those more qualified and understanding, Poulain notes that “we can periodically expect this sort of thing.” She then encourages Francoeur (and mentions that Madame Mortier feels the same) not to be downcast, but to lay low. After all, “remember what happened after ‘Humani Generis’ when Congar, de Lubac & Co. all went into the silence . . . well, behold them up and coming right into the Vatican Council preparations!”

On the first of February, Poulain wrote again with the news that Cardinal Ottaviani had decided not to “crack down on Père Teilhard as someone has evidently convinced him that Teilhard brought so many into the Church.”\(^{206}\) About a week later a follow-up missive explains that the Papal Legate to Senegal learned of Teilhard’s ant-

\(^{205}\) John Basil Sheerin (1902-1992) was editor of *The Catholic World* from 1948 –1972. A Paulist Father, in August, 1962 he was one of the first two Catholics appointed by the Vatican as official observers at the World Council’s Central Committee meetings. He was also a leading member of the panel of American bishops and experts that briefed the press in Rome during the 1962 and 1963 sessions of the council. During the fourth session in 1965 he served as a theological adviser. In this same letter Poulain also shared that apparently numerous eyebrows were raised over the lack of an imprimatur. However, she asks, why was one imperative, as the book was a collaboration between Catholics and non-Catholics alike?

\(^{206}\) Dorothy Poulain to Father Francoeur, Feb 1, 1962, from Paris. Box 1 Folder 9, Madame Poulain correspondence, Robert Francoeur Collection, LLA. Emphasis is the author’s. Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani (1890 – 1979) was an Italian cardinal of the Catholic Church, named by Pope Pius XII in 1953. He served as Secretary of the Holy Office in the Curia from 1959 to 1966, at which time this was reorganized as the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith of which he was Pro-Prefect until 1968. Ottaviani was a prominent figure in the Church during his time and was the leading conservative voice at the Second Vatican Council. As such he engaged in heated debates concerning religious liberty, the sources of divine revelation, and the liturgy. Indeed, in September, 1969, Ottaviani and Cardinal Antonio Bacci wrote a letter to Paul VI in support of a study by a group of theologians who under the direction of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre criticized the new Order of Mass and the new General Instruction that was promulgated in April of that year. This letter became widely known as the “Ottaviani Intervention” and is often appealed to by Traditionalist Catholics as support for their opposition to the revision of the Roman Rite Mass.
Marxist influence in his country. This has apparently made Rome feel that if Teilhard is a sort of “anti-communist bulwark” maybe their restrictions and concerns are for naught. She also mentions that during one of the Crespy conferences on Teilhard held annually in France, in response to a question from a participant as to why Teilhard’s works were forbidden in seminaries, a priest present explained that the concerns of the hierarchy did not necessarily imply a **condemnation** of Teilhard’s works. It was simply considered more prudent to expose seminarians to the more classical systems (“Thomism of course”). This would give them a solid foundation, as Teilhard’s ideas were not yet able to be classified in this category.

**Controversy Concerning an American Teilhard Organization**

As will be explored in further detail in later chapters, Francoeur and others primarily at Fordham were quite interested in starting an official Teilhard organization patterned along the lines of Madame Mortier’s *Amies* in Paris. By this point, Francoeur had been in correspondence with Poulain and Mortier concerning this possibility for at least two years. Finally, in late February of 1962 Poulain wrote Francoeur to let him know that she had obtained permission for him to “organize the American branch of the *Association des Amis de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.*” For the first time an organization would have the “right” not only to publish, but also to call official conferences concerning Teilhard and his work.

Francoeur responded to both Madame Poulain and Madame Mortier expressing his interest and pleasure in his development, but also and again his concerns regarding

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207 Dorothy Poulain to Father Francoeur, February 10, 1962, from Paris. Madame Poulain correspondence, Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA.

208 Dorothy Poulain to Father “Bob” Francoeur, February 26, 1962 from Paris. Madame Poulain correspondence, Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA.
the direction the US hierarchy appeared to be traveling concerning Teilhard. Madame Mortier replied in very early March with the news that in her view the situation appeared to “be less strained with Rome since Father Danielou was able to put out his article on Teilhard in Études without restrictions.” Also, Père de Lubac suddenly received authorization to publish his book La Pensée religieuse de Teilhard, after an earlier refusal.

Madame Mortier also speaks of a former provincial of Paris, a Father Bith, who commented to a friend:

We are witnessing a veritable Teilhard tidal wave and we Jesuits are the first to be surprised by it; in Africa, all the independent States are asking us for colleges and praising us among their own people; they tell us that it is because of our Teilhard; we must realize that Fr. Teilhard knew how to speak the language of our time, that of human hope; he brings a concrete ideal; we are going to have to adapt to this need that we did not understand — we underestimated Teilhard.

As an example of the volatility of this position, however, only two days later Madame Poulain informed Francoeur via letter that “for the time being you will have to wait until the Council gets well underway before attempting anything in the U.S.”

Concern about the refusal to issue imprimaturs for anything to do with Teilhard had confirmed for many in France that this is not yet “le moment juste.” Therefore, Francoeur is to “halt all proceedings and not put any machinery in motion.” Continue to think about it, of course, and to pray. Father Ong would be in Paris soon and more

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209 This letter is not extant in the correspondence at Georgetown, however Poulain’s letter in return makes note of Francoeur’s comments.

210 Madame Mortier to “My Father,” March 4, 1962 from Paris. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 7, LLA.

211 This book would be published in summer, 1962 in France. It was later translated into English and published as The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin (New York: The Desclee Company, 1967).

212 Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur, March 6, 1962. Madame Poulain correspondence, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA. Emphasis throughout this letter is hers.
discussion concerning this would take place then, as he could give a clearer picture of what was happening in the United States. For “penance” she suggests “an attentive reading of Americanism: A Phantom Heresy —it’s most instructive. You will understand.”

The capricious nature of the debate is further illustrated in a letter in late April from Madame Mortier to “Mon Père Francoeur.” She relates that Father de Lubac, who had just returned from Rome, seems to hope that the prohibition of the imprimatur in the United States to anything Teilhard is from some old directives of just a few Cardinals. De Lubac expects a loosening of this after the Council. At the moment the Jesuit Fathers can publish on Teilhard and take part in conferences concerning his work, which until now had been forbidden.

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213 Félix Klein, Americanism: A Phantom Heresy. (Crantford, NJ: Aquin Book Shop, 1951). Reference is to the book that was the primary text fairly recently published at this time concerning Americanism. It was the fourth volume of the autobiography of Klein, and was translated into English by the Paulist Joseph McSorley. In so doing McSorley enlisted the aid of Dorothy Poulain who translated chapter twenty-five of The Phantom Heresy. Through McSorley, Poulain became a sort of “guardian angel” to the old Abbé Klein (1862-1953). She helped him transcribe letters, organize his materials, and secure needed information for the English version. McSorley frequently asked both of them to check various points for accuracy. From Margaret Reher, “Phantom Heresy: A Twice-Told Tale,” in “The Americanist Controversy: Recent Historical and Theological Perspectives,” special issue U.S. Catholic Historian: 11:3 (Summer, 1993): 93-105. See also Dorothy Poulain, “Evening Star,” Ave Maria 77: 5 (January 31, 1953): 135-41. The term “Americanism” itself refers to a group of related “heresies” which were broadly concerned with the supposed endorsement of the separation of church and state as the ideal for Catholicism. These doctrines were apparently held by and taught by many members of the Catholic hierarchy in the United States in the 1890s, although whether this was actually the case and to what extent has been the subject of much conjecture throughout the last 120+ years. The topic of Americanism will be discussed in more detail later in the next chapter as a possibly important underlying reason for the reception Teilhard received during the 1960s.


215 Less than a week later, however, Walter Ong wrote “Bob” from Paris and suggested that in regards to establishing an American branch of Les Amies, it would be best to move slowly. “Worthwhile ideas” concerning this project could continue to multiply while they waited; a formal organization was not yet really necessary, “especially if there is serious opposition.” Walter Ong to “Bob” Francoeur, May 5, 1962, from Paris. Ong Letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 7, LLA.
At the same time, George Barbour was writing Francoeur concerning the same organization. He was interested in this idea, but what would such a group do, he asks: “If an American branch had been alive before the two publishing houses of Helicon and Harper got into the business for commercial reasons it might have done something of the kind Cuénot and the Fondation were able to do.” Instead, things in the US are scattered everywhere with no oversight, and “McManus is sticky and afraid of the hierarchy. Otherwise he would never have asked whether my story could somehow recall whether Père Teilhard ever said Mass!”

Barbour also tells Francoeur that he had been informed in a letter that *The World of Teilhard* had attracted the attention of the bishops and made the Vatican excited. Most likely, he concludes, it is because the book’s essays were not all written by Catholics, and so the book could not wholesale be given an *imprimatur*.

The *Monitum* and its Interpretation

The controversy over Teilhard reached its apex on June 30, 1962 when a *monitum* was issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office of the Vatican. The admonition warns that Teilhard’s recently, posthumously-published works contain numerous ambiguities and errors. As a result, the Holy Office was exhorting superiors of

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216 George Barbour to Father Francoeur, May 4, 1962 from Duke University. George Barbour letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA.
217 David McManus was founder of and editor-in-chief of Helicon Press of Baltimore from the late 1950s through the 1960s.
218 *Warning Considering the Writings of Father Teilhard de Chardin*, Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, June 30, 1962. Full text reads “**Admonition**: Several works of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, some of which were posthumously published, are being edited and are gaining a good deal of success. The above-mentioned works abound in such ambiguities and indeed even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine. For this reason, the most eminent and most revered Fathers of the Holy Office exhort all Ordinaries as well as the superiors of Religious Institutes, rectors of seminaries and presidents of universities, effectively to protect the minds, particularly of the youth, against the dangers presented by the works of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin and of his followers.” Signed by Sebastianus Masala, Notarius. This *monitum* was specifically addressed in *L’Osservatore Romano* in a long article in the December 29, 2013 which eulogized Teilhard and his thought.
religious institutes, rectors of seminaries, and university presidents to protect minds from the “dangers presented by the works of Father Teilhard” and his followers.

The aftermath of this was a flurry of letters flying between the United States and France. Just a few days later the Jesuit J. Franklin Ewing wrote Father Francoeur, “I am just as much in the dark as you. All I know is that the thing happened. And all I have seen is what appeared in the newspaper. I am waiting to get the exact wording.”

He mentions that a rumor is going around about a letter prohibiting any new editions or translations of Henri de Lubac’s book on Teilhard. This would hold up the American edition. On the other hand, it could always have been worse! After all, the works were not placed on the Index.

Madame Mortier also wrote Francoeur within the week, to let him know that the monitum was all over the news in France and it was impossible to send all the clippings. She added “Let me say on the best authority that this new onslaught is simply the same old theme song that we have had over here like a recurring fever for the past seven years. There is really nothing new in it.” She also comments that this latest action “represents the ‘revenge’ of the conservative Divinitas group who are boiling

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219 Franklin Ewing S.J. to Father Francoeur, July 1, 1962. Robert Francoeur Collection, Folder 5 J, LLA.
220 The Index Librorum Prohibitorum (in English, the List of Prohibited Books) was a list of publications prohibited by the Catholic Church. A first version of this list (the Pauline Index) was started by Pope Paul IV in 1559, which completely banned the works of some 550 authors. A revised, and slightly less strict, form (the Tridentine Index) was approved by the Council of Trent in 1564. The final (20th) edition appeared in 1948, and it was formally abolished on June 14, 1966 by Pope Paul VI. The avowed aim of the list was to protect the faith and morals of the faithful by preventing the reading of immoral books or any texts with theological errors. Ewing closes his letter by sharing that he did send de Lubac a note of congratulations on his book, hoping that might cheer him up some. Also, his “remaining hope is that there will be a very large number of missionary, more open-minded Bishops at the Council! Keep in there fighting!” Franklin Ewing S.J. to Robert Francoeur, July 1, 1962. Robert Francoeur Collection, Folder 5 J, LLA.
221 Madame Mortier to Robert Francoeur, July 6, 1962. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 7, LLA.
because of Père de Lubac’s book (he definitely has his enemies).”

Apparently reference to *Divinitas* in the book raised their ire. Madame Mortier claims this is the usual “thomist reaction,” but a bit nastier than in the past. Those who do not realize the history are “understandably perturbed and troubled — which is exactly what the group is aiming at. On the positive side, Teilhard’s works have sold astronomically as a result; still this is the time for prudence.”

In regards to prudence and any American branch of the “Amies,” Madame suggests that Father Francoeur must exercise even more patience. Not only that, but “to say it plainly, Father, you will simply have to disappear into the weather for quite a while for the Apostolic Delegate’s letter of last September has made of you a marked man. You are too young and inexperienced and without titles and authority to cover you (see what has happened to Père de Lubac!) and if you don’t heed my warning, you may get yourself into serious trouble.”

In July, Francoeur also heard from J. Edgar Bruns. Bruns seems to think the *monitum* was inevitable, as “the die-hards seem to be winning out.” Like Ewing, however, he finds it important to consider the kind of censure involved; it would have

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222 *Divinitas* is a conservative theological journal published in Rome. The reference is in de Lubac’s *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* to a quote in the chapter “The Basis in the Tradition” from Teilhard’s “The Priest” (1918) about allowing God to grow within us. Apparently someone at *Divinitas* (1959, 344) commented that this was “trusting to the resources of one’s will to power.” De Lubac saw this response as “a gross misconception.” Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Desclee, 1967), 56 n. 3.

223 She also notes that both Father Ong and Claude Cuénot agree that great prudence is now necessary in planning for an American organization. It should not have a single priest’s name on the organizing Committee; it should be comprised only of laymen. Continue to “plug away quietly and prayerfully.” She sends her encouragement, and tells Francoeur to realize “you are only seeing and having the experience that ... the veterans of Teilhard know only too well.”

224 J. Edgar Bruns to “Bob” Francoeur, July 14, 1962. George Barbour Letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA. Bruns begins his letter with the comment that he missed the news item about Teilhard; unlike in Paris there was little fuss about it, most likely because they did not “know what it was all about (or is that an unpardonable provincialism?).”
been almost as easy just to put all his works on the *Index*. Still, the censure does make it
difficult to defend Teilhard on the grounds, “which are true,” that his work is
misunderstood. Look at all those, like the Jansenists, who have claimed this in the past!
If those interested in salvaging Teilhard could join together in petitioning the Pope for
dialogue on what the specific concerns are, that might prove to be useful, but “who is
going to suggest that they stick their necks out?” Now though that the “ultras” (ultra-
conservatives) have “succeeded in putting Teilhard’s works under a cloud,” perhaps the
matter will subside.

Bruns continues to reassure Francoeur that just as his previously-mentioned
article in *Catholic World* noted, those responsible for the admonition would like to put
back the clock; still, this will not come about. They would like to pretend Teilhard never
existed, but “the deeper they dig the grave the more their efforts are noticed and
mocked.” He too suggests that Francoeur be more discreet in his writings, “but with
those who honor the pursuit of truth, your devotion to Teilhard will be a
recommendation.” Additionally, as the furor grows, so are the curious attracted!

The next day Ewing wrote again, with the heading: “Last Minute Flash!”225 He
reports that he had a phone conversation with an old friend from Rome who is now a
Vatican official visiting in New York City. He said that “he thinks the censure of the
Holy Office is all thunder and no lightning and that probably, in ten years Teilhard will
be hailed as the new Aquinas.”

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225 Franklin Ewing to Robert Francoeur, July 15, 1962. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 5 J, LLA.
The Catholic Messenger of Davenport, Iowa published an explanation of the *monitum* on July 26, 1962 by theologian Gregory Baum, OSA. Baum had attended a conference at Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois, and was then a consulter to the Secretariat for Christian Unity. He commented that Teilhard’s *monitum* perhaps marked a new way of handling the censorship of books for the Catholic Church. When people were forbidden to read certain books with dangerous tendencies, they could not profit from the positive elements in those works, and also did not understand the problems or reason that they were considered dangerous. Baum criticized the Index as an inadequate educational device failing to make Catholics critical readers. Perhaps then, in his mind, this new process would be more satisfactory, as the author is not accused of unorthodoxy or bad will, and without totally rejecting his thought, certain tendencies of concern are singled out as dangerous and described in detail.

In Teilhard’s case, Baum remarks, even the writers who shared some of his interests would agree that the theological details for much of what he wrote had not been worked out, nor the scriptural basis established. Since “modern Catholics are only beginning to reflect on the meaning of the world,” too much emphasis on Teilhard’s approach may veer too far away from the gospel itself. This then, “is what the warning asserts.” Rather than forbidding Catholics to read Teilhard, they are asked to read critically, and to search for new solutions for the problems raised by him. This warning then “combines the Church’s concern for protecting truth with the modern ideal of academic freedom and inquiry.”

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In early August Francoeur also heard from George Barbour, who was now in Cincinnati. Barbour comments that he was glad to know the recent news about the censorship taking place. He adds “I assume that you have followed in Teilhard’s steps and suffered for your beliefs . . . others have before now had to suffer in like fashion. I pray that the road ahead be revealed to you. Wherefore I am sure you will find yourself in good company.”

In regards to further inquiries from Francoeur about a possible book, Barbour wrote again in mid-August that Charles Raven had been urging him to write a full-length biography. Barbour hesitates at this though, as in his opinion much of what had thus far been written had been done too hastily. “I do not wish to be doing that kind of shoddy job again. It is not right to Père Teilhard.” Especially since he is working with some of
Teilhard’s original letters, rather than Barbour’s own thoughts and interpretations, he does not wish to throw it “out of focus,” as has occurred with some of the other letters.  

This concern by one who knew him well over what is published about Teilhard should be noted, as it will prove important for his future reception. Indeed, unlike the others, a copy of the response of Francoeur to this and Barbour’s subsequent letter was available, which perhaps shows its importance. Francoeur replied that he too is concerned about the “junk” appearing on Teilhard. He commented: “It was shocking as I went through my files and saw the dull repetition and nonsense in the majority of ‘Teilhardiana.’” He also mentions that the latest news is that Père de Lubac gave a ‘private’ talk on Teilhard de Chardin at one of the Roman churches during the Council. The ‘private’ talk was reported in the newspapers. This development Francoeur speculates, perhaps exemplifies the attitude of Pope John XXIII against Cardinal Ottaviani. 

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230 In early December Barbour wrote Francoeur once again, offering to him the letter of Teilhard mentioned above — the one written just before his final trip to Rome to plead for publication of The Phenomenon. Barbour hopes that whoever else it was that wrote about Teilhard’s relationship with Rome has sensitivity and spiritual insight, someone who knew Teilhard and will not just analyze what others have said. “The enclosed letter is something very precious, that almost needs to be handled with reverence.” Nothing else like it exists in print, except the one from which Pierre Leroy quotes. He notes hesitation in allowing it to be published in Cross Currents, Francoeur’s vehicle of choice, as that journal is primarily considered a Catholic publication, whereas Teilhard also hoped to touch the non-Catholic world. Barbour also is concerned with having the letter combined with work by other authors, some of whom stress aspects of Père Teilhard involving ideas he himself would most likely not espouse, for example some of the psychological stuff that “seems written primarily to let the authors exploit their own little egos by pinning them to a great soul who despised such doings.” George Barbour to Father Francoeur, December 4, 1962 from Cincinnati. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA.  

231 Robert Francoeur to George Barbour, December 5, 1962, from St. Peter’s Church, Steubenville, Ohio. Barbour Collection, Box 2, Woodstock Library, Georgetown University.  

232 In his Memoires, Henri de Lubac noted that both Pope John XXIII and later Paul VI expressed favorable opinions of Teilhard de Chardin, an opinion shared in a speech he gave entitled “Tradition and Innovation in the Position of the Problem of God in Father Teilhard de Chardin,” before an assembly of theologians at the Sixth International Thomist Congress, in the Roman Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas in October, 1965. In Teilhard Posthume, de Lubac writes, “I referred to a conference that I was asked to make on him in Rome in 1965. The invitation had been extended to me by Fr. Charles Boyer, Prefect at the Gregorian at the bequest of Pope Paul VI. I have just come across his letter. When we realize that Fr. Boyer
In the meantime, Father Francoeur continued to be under scrutiny due to his past work with Teilhard, and association with others who were similarly involved, including Dorothy Poulain. In a letter dated mid-September 1962, she makes note of Francoeur’s problems with Vignozzi, the papal legate to the United States, as well as Father Francis Fenton. What about hopes for the Council to start in just a few weeks? “The general impression of everyone returning from Rome is rather pessimistic. I had a private talk with one of the big figures at the Secretariat, whose name I naturally can’t disclose, but someone I’ve known for a long time, and he intimated that if things continue as at present we may be heading for a real ‘crise dans l’Eglise’.” Additionally, she comments, the French, because of fears of a recurring Gallicanism, aren’t trusted, and so leadership in opposition is falling to the Dutch and German, followed by the Africans and French. “We’ll see what we’ll see . . . what a time to be alive! Convergence? Or the opposite?”

was formerly Teilhard's greatest adversary in Rome (and just as much mine!), this letter takes on its full meaning.” From Henri de Lubac, *Teilhard Posthume*, (Paris: Fayard, 1977). The letter, addressed from “The Roman Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas and of the Catholic Religion” and dated June 10, 1963 states: “Reverend Father, Pax Christi. You must have already received the notice concerning the sixth International Thomistic Congress. I well understand that your various occupations have prevented your taking any interest in it. But here is the reason that I venture to bring it to your notice once again. Having been received by the Holy Father [Paul VI] in the last few days, I have had the opportunity to see for myself the high esteem he has for yourself and for your writings. At the same time, he expressed, albeit with certain reservations, an opinion on Fr. Teilhard (de Chardin), which would not have displeased you. Further considerations on this matter have led me to think that, at this Congress, we should hear an exposition casting a favorable light on Teilhard de Chardin's thought on our theme (‘de Deo’). No one could do this better than yourself. I beg you, therefore, to simply participate in our congress which will take place just prior to the opening of the fourth session of the Council . . . (If you prefer), you could come for the last days (of the congress), and if too pressed for time, you could merely read a paper on the subject.” From Henri de Lubac, “Memoirs Concerning My Works,” *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings*, 451.

Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur, Sept 16, 1962, from Paris. Madame Poulain Letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA. Francis Fenton (1918 – 1965) was educated at Fordham and the Catholic University of America (under Monsignore Clifford Fenton, no relation) and after several decades as a parish priest became a conservative writer and lecturer, one of the first in the United States to oppose the Vatican II reforms. In 1980 he became editor of *The Athanasian*, a Traditional Catholic publication.
Edgar Bruns wrote Francoeur just a few days later, also noting the general disillusionment of the times. He comments, “What a life! Everyone seems to be dispirited these days and little is expected from the Council. Lyonnet & Zerwick have both been forbidden to teach at the Biblical Institute in Rome (you can add their names to your list of victims) . . . I can assure you that neither one is, or even resembles, a radical!”

Those negative thoughts were followed though just a week later by a short note from Poulain who wrote: “I have a hunch that having tossed a few bones to the hunting dogs they haven’t the slightest intention of really cracking down on Teilhard’s works.”

Dorothy Poulain also was preparing a piece on Teilhard for publication, this one in *Jubilee*. In a letter to Francoeur in late 1962 she notes, however, that at the moment *Jubilee* was withholding publication. The editors insist that no problem exists concerning Teilhard, as people continue to read him. However, as the controversy concerning his work has finally calmed down in the States, “it would seem unwise to make an issue of it at the time.”

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235 Fathers Stanislaus Lyonett and Maximilian Zernick were biblical scholars at the Biblical Institute at this time who were questioned and accused for their use of form criticism in regards to the historicity of the gospels, particularly the Annunciation and primacy of Peter. Both were suspended from teaching responsibilities in biblical studies in 1962, a decision not revoked until October, 1964.
236 Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur, September 22, 1962. Madame Poulain correspondence, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA.
237 Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur, November 30, 1962. Madame Poulain correspondence, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, LLA.
238 Concerning this, Poulain comments that “My personal feeling is that Price (editor of Jubilee) has had an attack of what a well-known writer friend of mine calls “Editorial Rabbitry’ (just plain cold feet!).” Note that she is here referring to Edward Rice. She continues on to ask how the “Committee” who gave permission for her to write the article can take American Catholic publishing seriously, after such a way of acting?” Apparently Cuénot is not the “only one to complain of U.S. editors, many of whom coolly cut a text or ‘fix’ it in order to avoid censorship.”
Chapter Conclusion

Despite any “editorial rabbitry” that may have existed, it is obvious that millions in the United States were attracted to Teilhard’s thought during this time period. As this chapter has attempted to explicate, these readers and scholars were overwhelmingly attracted to his synthetic worldview, a meta-narrative that managed to integrate science with a Catholic mystic’s spiritual poetry. Additionally, in Teilhard’s work they saw an affirmation of the value of the natural world, and the importance of everyday life for humanity’s progress, both of which were especially prized by the American populace. This point will be further developed in the next chapter.

This sampling of some of the earliest and most important commentaries on *The Divine Milieu* and *The Phenomenon* point to reiterations of several common themes regarding these works and their early reception in the United States. Reviewers regarded Teilhard’s writing as poetic or mystical, scientific or philosophical in nature, depending upon their own proclivities or worldview. Transcending how they interpreted this work, almost universally they recognized its revolutionary synthetic quality, for here was a scientist who wrote from and about a cosmology that although obviously not pre-modern in nature, managed to integrate the material world with the spiritual within a context amenable to contemporary society.

Additionally, that Teilhard specifically wrote to those who ‘love the world’ gave him greater access to and agency with those skeptical about Christianity and the spiritual life. His work and his life exemplified how it might be possible to find rapprochement between a deeply lived Christianity and life in the contemporary world.
Those in the United States, like people worldwide, were also fascinated by his optimistic sense, fostered by his Christology, that progress toward an organic whole, toward some form of greater unity is inevitable, even when that progress is marred by apparent stumbling blocks, such as the difficulties described in this chapter. Not only his writing, but also his life was a lived example of Christian hope prevailing against all odds, even in times of war, exile, and darkness. As several of the letters quoted in this chapter indicate, Teilhard’s character, his warmth and compassion as much as his ability to “speak the language of our time,” attracted people.

In parallel with Teilhard’s thought, progress despite stumbling blocks appeared to be inevitable in the acceptance of the concepts he espoused. Why did controversy rage over his thought? At least in part this was due to the difficulty in classifying his work, and hence in discerning with what vocabulary and theoretical models it should be approached. He was not a Thomist, and he had no use for scholastic concepts. His Christology diluted boundaries between the natural and supernatural, the secular and the sacred. In addition, as has been discussed, Teilhard was a man of innate historical consciousness, serving and writing in a Church that was not yet quite sure it wished to admit to any historical development.

Yet, changes in the structure of society and the Church were inevitable and rampant during this decade. Those changes, as discussed in the next chapter, will lead to a shift in the reception of Teilhard both in the Church, as well as in the larger, even non-Catholic, United States population.
CHAPTER III
AMERICAN TIES AND RECOVERY DURING THE EARLY YEARS: 1961-1964

This chapter will explore several societal movements that begin in earnest during these years and their significance for the reception of Teilhard. In addition, noteworthy journal articles, academic or public conferences, and literary work that speak to this growing attention and the recovery of Teilhard in the United States in the years following the issuance of the *monitum* will be examined.

Several recurring themes can be established in regards to the reception of Teilhard during these years. Perhaps primary among these is the appreciation in the United States for his acceptance of, or even more strongly, his love of the material world. In a complementary sense this also pertains to his views regarding the secular world and everyday life. For Teilhard, what happens in daily life, the work people do and their response to what comes along, really does matter in a spiritual and evolutionary framework. Also, as we have already seen, Teilhard’s positive stance toward progress and science is crucial for his popularity in this time period; in conjunction with his love of the material world this attitude correlates powerfully with the American propensity toward an almost naive optimistic trust in pragmatic scientific progress and human endeavor. For American Catholics a propensity toward the latter as it pertains to the Church manifests itself in what at times has been termed Americanism; Teilhard’s
thought, if not actually favorable toward Americanism, was interpreted in this way by
many. An important underlying reason for this interpretation is Teilhard’s evolutionary
understanding of change. In his worldview, change is intrinsic to ongoing life. Therefore
for the Church to survive, for example, it must indeed change and evolve. In an era when
a new historical consciousness is rocking the bastions of the Catholic Church, this

We shall also see during these years that a few observant commentators will
commence to recognize, beyond the synthetic nature of his work, the importance and
implication of Teilhard’s emphasis upon “convergence” and unity. Although conjecture
will continue as to how his thought might be classified, the emphasis begins to shift to
methods by which to make use of his ideas within a practical, humanistic standpoint.
These tactics are particularly useful not only in academia, their original area of
application, but also in light of the American political and social milieu, for example the
call to service of the administration and in the battle for racial justice.

A select few will also comprehend and attempt to convey the mystical
foundations of Teilhard’s Christological worldview and its possibilities for both being
Church and “doing” Church. For this group of people his mystical relationship with
Christ, rather than confidence in certain scientific or social progress, is understood as the
source of Teilhard’s ever present optimism.

\textbf{The Social Context of the United States in the Early 1960s}

Within the social context, the first years of this time period in many ways
continued to be a carryover of the themes of the Fifties, and those concerns addressed in
the Chapter One certainly still prevailed. However, earlier religious motifs were also under increasing pressure from the Civil Rights movement, the Kennedy presidential years and later assassination, and the eagerly anticipated changes of the Second Vatican Council. Robert Ellwood, for one, considers the decade of the 1960s as the era the apocalyptic “children of light” were in battle with the “children of darkness.”

Dualisms abounded; consider for one, the Cold War image of communism versus Americanism. This apocalyptic battle is symbolized well in the civil rights crusade of African Americans against “Bull” Connor and George Wallace. In just a few years the “children of light” will be transformed into the communities of light and unity active in the antiwar movement, the counterculture, communalism, and the post-Vatican II church.

This chapter will show that as this moment of transformation in American society gained momentum, so too will public interest increase in Teilhard. So many hoped at the time that new doors were opening, new ways of being were becoming available; one sees this, for example, in the hope that the Second Vatican Council will bring a new manner of the Church’s presence in the world, something more than “the dead inertia of merely conventional Christianity” against which both Teilhard and Thomas Merton protested. Teilhard’s vision was seen as one that offered a pathway by which dualisms could be resolved and the future obtained.

Francoeur’s attitude toward Rome, as discussed in the previous chapter, seems typical of some in American Catholic circles at this time. Jay Dolan would have us believe by the early 1960s that being Catholic was “compatible with being American,”

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and “reasons for Catholic pride” and confidence were everywhere.\textsuperscript{242} Although perhaps not the universal truth, it is undeniably true that a new age and a new people were demanding a new Catholicism. The calls for reform and renewal were coming more frequently from around the world, and certainly from progressives in the United States. When Pope John XXIII in January, 1959, declared “We announce to you, indeed trembling a little with emotion, but at the same time with humble resolution of intention . . . an ecumenical council for the Universal Church.” However, already the American Catholic world was not in agreement as to whether such a happening was desirable.\textsuperscript{243} This division, as somewhat displayed already in Chapter Two of this work, will certainly not disappear in the years to come.

Those Catholics seeking change, though, similarly rejoiced two years later in January, 1961, when the Catholic John F. Kennedy took the presidential oath of office. He spoke of a new frontier, of the necessity of sacrifice for the good of the country, and of the strength of America. He stirred up the idealism especially of the young people—what we today would call the oldest “baby boomers” born after World War II—who


\textsuperscript{243} The text of Pope John XXIII’s speech given to seventeen cardinals in the Basilica of St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls on January 25, 1959 was as follows: “Venerable brothers and our beloved sons! We announce to you, indeed trembling a little with emotion, but at the same time with humble resolution of intention, the name and the proposal of a twofold celebration: a diocesan synod for the city, and an ecumenical council for the Universal Church. For you, venerable brothers and our beloved sons, there is no need of abundant illustrations concerning the historical and juridical meaning of these two proposals. They will lead happily to the desired and awaited bringing up-to-date of the Code of Canon Law, which should accompany and crown these two tests of the practical application of the provisions of ecclesiastical discipline, as the Spirit of the Lord will suggest to us little by little along the way.” Retrieved from \url{http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/announcement.htm} on February 22, 2014. Although Jay Dolan writes that the majority of American Catholics eagerly anticipated any changes an ecumenical council might bring to update the Church, by contrast Patrick Carey in \textit{Catholics in America}, suggests just the opposite. “Neither American bishops nor laity had any clear ideas of what to expect from a council, and perhaps few saw the necessity for one in the first place. Catholicism in America was strong institutionally. Like Cardinal James McIntyre of Los Angeles, many American Catholics saw ‘no need for change.'” Patrick Carey, \textit{Catholics in America} (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 112. Final quote from Philip Gleason “A Browser’s Guide to American Catholicism, 1950-1980,” \textit{Theology Today} 38 (October 1981): 375. See also Jay Dolan, 417-418.
appreciated his vision, intelligence and wit. Kennedy did not hesitate to tackle the religious issue head-on, and at a meeting of Protestant ministers in Houston he stated that he would take orders from the people of the United States, rather than from the Pope. He would accept and operate as President within the parameters of separation of church and state.244

Although Kennedy won the election, he did so by the slimmest of margins; still, he put to rest the notion that a Catholic could not be elected to high office. Additionally, his obvious education, poise, wealth, and admired wife were all signs that American Catholics truly had come of age and were now well integrated into American society.245

To begin this section we will consider the implications of three already mentioned major American events upon the reception of Teilhard—the election and subsequent assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the popularity of Pope John XXIII and his commencement of the Second Vatican Council, and the Civil Rights Movement. All these, however, are placed within the context of a 1960s rendition of Catholic “Americanism” which must first be examined.

Concerning Americanism

It is not the purpose of this study to examine in detail the issues and historiography of Americanism as it has been understood over the last century.246 What follows, therefore, is a hopefully succinct background for an understanding of how Americanism influenced the reception of Teilhard in the United States in the 1960s. As

244 Both an audio and written version of John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address can be found at https://archive.org/details/JFK_Inaugural_Address_19610120. His Address to the Houston Ministerial Association in Houston, Texas in September, 1960 can be found in McKeowan and Avella, Public Voices: Catholics in the American Context, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999): 361 – 64.

245 Dolan, 422.

246 A good place to start that study would be “The Americanist Controversy: Recent Historical and Theological Perspectives,” special issue, U.S. Catholic Historian 11, No. 3 (Summer, 1993); or Hecker Studies : Essays on the Thought of Isaac Hecker, ed. John Farina, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983).
was already mentioned in the previous chapter, Dorothy Poulain, friend of Teilhard, Henri de Lubac, and Robert Francoeur, was more than aware of the concept and its history, and without provocation shared the parallels she saw between Americanism and Teilhard’s thought, as well as the manner in which both were received, at least by some, in the United States.  

The original leaders of the movement that eventually would be labeled “Americanism” were not, according to the scholar Thomas McAvoy, consciously pursuing a national American Catholicism. They were instead attempting to “solve the problem of Catholics in the United States.” They initially wished to adapt Catholic practices, especially those foreign traditions that had accompanied the recent Catholic immigrants to this country during the mid-nineteenth century. The question, one might say, was “how to acclimatize Catholic practices to the American milieu.” Those who favored adjustment were the Americanists, while those opposing felt this move was heretical. Ultimately, as McAvoy asserts, this became a theological and cultural battle.

During the nineteenth century American Catholicism became quite different from Catholicism in England and Europe as the governmental, geographic, and economic culture of the new country was singular.

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247 The French ties of the Americanists are another reason to not only examine the similarities between their thought and Teilhard’s, but to discuss both Poulain and Henri de Lubac’s involvement in Teilhard’s American reception. With thanks to William Portier for the comment that in many ways Teilhard’s reception in America is the reversal of Isaac Hecker’s reception in France.
249 Ibid., x.
250 McAvoy, x. Additionally, McAvoy comments later at 354 that without a doubt, “American Catholicism has been always essentially the same as any European, Asiatic, or African Catholicism, but at the same time it has almost always had some qualities brought about by circumstances of time and place which make it American.”
Abbé Bricourt, editor in the late nineteenth century of the journal *Revue du Clergé Français*, wrote that what defined American Catholicism was first love of science, and secondly, love of democracy.\(^{251}\) The “Americanist” bishops of the late nineteenth dreamed of evangelizing American culture, even while trying to convince the surrounding culture that Catholicism could be more than simply an alien force in a democratic, pluralistic society. Instead, they and millions of other immigrants implicitly recognized that the freedom of the United States gave them “a chance to live their Faith to the fullest,” thus making of American Catholicism something quite distinct in the Church.\(^{252}\)

When *The Life of Father Hecker*, a biography written by Hecker’s disciple and fellow Paulist Walter Elliot was translated into French and published in 1896, it set off a heated controversy, particularly in Europe.\(^{253}\) Abbé Felix Klein asserted in the preface he wrote for the translation that Hecker was the exemplary priest for the times, and suggested that the Church should adapt itself to “the age.” As a result, in 1899 Pope Leo

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\(^{251}\) J. Bricourt, “Américanisme” in *Revue du Clergé Français*, XV (June – August, 1898): 416-35 in McAvoy, 359. Bricourt was the editor of this journal.

\(^{252}\) McAvoy, 365.

\(^{253}\) In his book *New Experiment in Democracy* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1987) Dennis McCann comments that the Hecker biography came under Vatican surveillance primarily because the French translation (and Klein’s introduction) was taken so seriously by French liberals (the “Gallicans” to whom Poulain refers elsewhere) seeking to work out an accommodation with the new French Republic. They were in turn opposed by the conservative Catholic French monarchists (10). Teilhard was a firm believer in progress and evolution, yet in a resolutely Christian manner, similar to that of the Americanists of the late 19th century. One might recall the writings of Walter Elliott, friend and disciple of Isaac Hecker, himself founder of the Paulists, who consistently claimed Christ as the culmination of the providential workings of history. Christ’s activity was centered not above and beyond time, but in, through and at the final end of it. The links that Elliott made between creation, humanism, and the unifying aspects of Christ’s love was common among the Americanists. Teilhard would have been studying among the Jesuits in 1897 when Elliott’s biography of Hecker was translated into French as *Père Hecker: Est-in un Saint*? Most likely he heard, and maybe participated in, the intense discussions concerning *l’Americanisme*, and later incorporated some of the same general themes into his own work. Perhaps then, it is these underlying, if unrecognized, similarities between the Americanists and Teilhard’s work that American Catholics in particular found so intriguing and satisfying.
XIII issued the Apostolic Letter, *Testem Benevolentiae*, addressed to Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore.\(^{254}\)

Catholic leaders in the United States denied at the time that they held the views addressed in this letter. The Americanists at whom the letter was aimed stated that the condemned doctrines were "phantoms" created by their enemies and had no basis in fact. However, we must also be aware that at the turn of the century many Americans still viewed the United States as the shining city on the hill, a blessed nation full of optimism and teeming with opportunity.

That understanding of their country as providentially chosen for a special divine destiny has deep roots in the American past, beginning with the seventeenth-century New England Puritans.\(^{255}\) Whether Puritanism evolved into or greatly influenced political Americanism, the cultural worldview of Americans as God's new chosen people, living in God's new promised land—in short, as God's new Israel—remained rampant throughout the first half of the twentieth century.\(^{256}\)

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\(^{254}\) In this Apostolic Letter Pope Leo XIII addressed the alarm some conservative Catholics had taken at what they considered to be symptoms of modernism or "Liberalism," pointing out that the faithful could not decide doctrine for themselves. They needed instead to rely upon magisterial teaching rather than individual initiatives and feelings. It was necessary to preserve "in the multitude a submissive spirit." (see David O’Brien, “The American Laity: Memory, Meaning and Mission,” *America* [3/7/87]: 189-193). He worried that the so-called Americanists wished to introduce into the church “a certain liberty” so that "limiting the exercise and vigilance of its powers, each one of the faithful might act more freely in pursuance of his own natural bent or capacity.” One should also keep in mind that this apostolic letter followed upon that of *Longinqua Oceani*, promulgated in 1895 which lamented an America where church and state are "dissolved and divorced," and wrote of his preference for a closer relationship between the Catholic Church and the State, along European lines. He noted that American Catholics have a tendency to believe that the American church is somehow a ‘purer’ or ‘better’ version of the Catholic Church. This is so as it has supposedly received a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and represents progress.


This disputation, coupled with the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* of 1907, which condemned the heresy of modernism, encouraged any inherent American Catholic tendencies toward Americanism to instead become focused on the “practical and concerned with the everyday, and this practicality became sacramental. It was not dogmatic or even too liturgical.” As Joseph Chinnici has discussed, the reaction from Rome subsumed the Americanists’ and especially Hecker’s holistic worldview to neoscholasticism’s “two perfect but separate orders” of Church and society. This fractured view held sway in the American Catholic Church until the 1960s, at which time due at least in part to the work of Teilhard, whose work was itself so well-integrated, movement toward synthesis became more pronounced.

For David O’Brien, among others, the tradition associated with Hecker and Ireland continued in modified form in the work of liberal Catholics like John Burke, John A. Ryan, Michael Williams, John Courtney Murray, and George Shuster. He suggests that although they offered considerable ethical reflection on economics and politics, for them it was a matter of pragmatic philosophy and ethics, rather than of theology and grace.

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257 McAvoy, 365.
258 Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M., ed., *Devotion to the Holy Spirit in American Catholicism* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 78-84. Chinnici suggests that *Testem Benevolentiae* forced the severance of Isaac Hecker's doctrine of the Holy Spirit from any connection with everyday, social activity or even ecclesiastical reform. As a result, his holistic belief in the unity of personal, social, religious and political reform through the guidance of the Spirit was lost to Pope Leo XIII's pronouncement of church and society as two perfect but quite separate orders. See also Living Stones, 119-136 and 120 where he contrasts the vision of the "Immigrant Church" with the "Americanist Vision." See also, Margaret M. Reher, “Phantom Heresy: A Twice-Told Tale,” in “The Americanist Controversy: Recent Historical and Theological Perspectives,” special issue, *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 11 no. 3 (Summer, 1993): 93-105.
Still, as Philip Gleason has written, most of these Catholics, in addition to many other Catholic scholars of the 1950s, supported the policy that deprecated Catholic "separatism" and encouraged them to instead "break out of the ghetto" and immerse themselves into the mainstream of American life. He comments: “The congruence between this policy and the views of the Americanists of the 1890s is obvious.” As Gleason additionally noted, the sudden outpouring of scholarship regarding the Americanists during the 1950s provided the historical precedent for midcentury Catholic liberalism, the acceptance of the Vatican II reforms, and the future rapprochement between American Catholicism and modernity.\(^{260}\) In so doing they helped to set the stage for a positive reception of Teilhard, and for the secular Catholic John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, four central Americanist themes will be referred to often; these will serve our purposes well. They are: 1. The world is in an era of radical change; 2. America is at the cutting edge of change, and is indeed the very embodiment of the future; 3. the Catholic Church is obliged to change with the times; and 4. the Catholic Church in America has been given a divine mission to point American society toward Christ and the Church.\(^{261}\)

**The Cultural Situation in the United States**

**The Election and Death of JFK**

Despite Vatican denouncements, pragmatic Americanism continued underground throughout the early and into the mid-twentieth century, culminating in the election of the


first Roman Catholic president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, in 1960. With the rise of the two “Johns,” the other being Pope John XXIII, American Catholics found the “shining city on the hill” image once again quite apt. The understanding of at least many that they had been given a special mission to point American society toward Christ and the Church was greatly heightened.

Robert Ellwood suggests that at first the Sixties were the ultimate expression of modernism. If one agrees with Lyotard’s two metanarratives of modernity, which are first, the emancipation of humanity by progress both political and scientific, and also the unity of knowledge in a way amenable to rational, scientific abstraction and technological implementation, then the late 1950s brought examples of the fulfillment of both. Certainly for American Catholics the election of Kennedy, the space race, the immense increase in attendance at Catholic universities, and John XXIII’s announcement of the future Second Vatican Council could be construed as the fulfillment of these metanarratives. The first Americanist theme, that the world is in an era of radical change, certainly appeared to be true. Additionally, the increasing drive to complete a progressive agenda through civil rights, the space race, even the Vietnam War with its democratic concerns in Southeast Asia were seen as expressing a “universal” commitment to American-style democracy. America was indeed at that moment at the

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262 The “two Johns” reference is from Wills, chapter 4, “The Two Johns: Rome and the Secular City.”
263 Sixties, chapter 1.
264 In Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Post-War Paris 1919-1933 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) Stephen Schloesser suggests the idea of “modernity” as the invention of linear time: of a setting of oneself over and against “traditional” visions of the world, and embracing the notion that the world is (a) materialist, (b) fated to be always progressing (i.e., an inversion of the “Great Chain of Being”) and (c) composed of autonomous individuals. In contrast, although Teilhard embraced temporality, his conception of progress hinged upon the understanding that free will allows each person to contribute toward the “Christification” of the universe (the ultimate teleology of “progress,” or its dissolution. In a similar fashion, the apex of the world is the unity of individuals in solidarity. “Our hope can only be realized if it finds its expression in greater cohesion and greater human solidarity,” Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Mankind, (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 9.
cutting edge of change, and embodied the future; JFK and Martin Luther King, Jr. were the elites devoted to the high ideals of modernism, symbols of progress and a communal, spiritual awakening.²⁶⁵

When he chose to run for the Democratic nomination in 1960, Kennedy knew that his Catholic background would be a problem. His campaign speeches emphasized that his religion, a private matter for him, would not get in the way of his public office. Certainly a significant moment occurred when in September of 1960 he addressed a group of Protestant ministers in Houston, Texas and received a standing ovation after stating “I believe in an America where separation for church and state is absolute.”²⁶⁶ He pledged that if ever he encountered a situation when he felt unable in conscience to carry out his political duty he would resign.

Gary Wills maintains that the Catholic liberalism that was on the rise at this time contended that church teaching properly understood was identical to American political ideas—individualist, because based on the rights of each man’s conscience; pluralist, protecting all consciences as the way to protect any one person’s; and secular, making the division between church and state a matter of conscience.²⁶⁷ Catholics who supported Kennedy were delighted that others now recognized that separate spheres for action made Catholic politics the most American kind of politics, as well as the most effective kind, and that they had an educated, secular and affluent Catholic who exemplified this so well.²⁶⁸ The affluence of the Kennedys spoke to all those other upwardly mobile, young,

²⁶⁵ Sixties, 19.
²⁶⁶ Wills, Bare Ruined Choirs, 79. See the text of Kennedy’s Address to the Houston Ministerial Association in September, 1960 in McKeowan and Avella, Public Voices: Catholics in the American Context, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 361-64.
²⁶⁷ Wills, 84.
²⁶⁸ Ibid., 88. Another, similar perspective on the importance of President John F. Kennedy to some American Catholics can be found in Andrew Greeley, The Catholic Experience: A Sociologist’s
and newly-suburban Catholics of the age of the endless possibility of progress, of making all things new and shucking off the old. Kennedy’s ability to compartmentalize his religious faith from his politics speaks not only to the separation of church from state resulting from *Testem Benevolentiae*, but also to the increasing secularization already seen at the beginning of this decade. It also both assumes the third Americanist theme that the Catholic Church is obliged to change with the times, and will at the same time encourage other American Catholics to adopt that same assumption.

During his inaugural address Kennedy acknowledged that the Cold War era had pitted America against her ideological rivals, but insisted also that the nation’s real common enemies were “tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.” The young were to serve their country and all of humanity in order to progress toward a better America.269

The impact of this “Ask not” speech derived not so much from what was said, but the manner in which it was said, and the visual portrayal of the media. “There, coatless and hatless on a bitter January day, stood a vibrant young leader looking steadfastly into the future and challenging the nation to realize its destiny. That was the kind of authenticity so many young Americans yearned for.”270 Similarly, the new space program reasserted American technological supremacy. Through this Kennedy

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*Interpretation of the History of American Catholicism* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 280-98. Greeley first suggests in this last chapter of his book that “in another age . . . John Kennedy would be hailed as a saint” (280). However, as that was not likely to happen today, perhaps instead he could be acclaimed as a “hero of the Church” (281). Or, he asks, what of naming him a “Doctor of the Universal Church?” (282). In another nod to the Americanist thesis explored in this chapter, Greeley notes numerous similarities between John Kennedy and Bishop John England. He argues that the “election of a Catholic president offers an opportunity of the sort found only in 1820 with John England and in 1885 with the Americanists.” Kennedy’s presidency, however, might have been the last such opportunity (298).


32 Lytle, 106
reaffirmed the American sense of possibility, progress, and promise implicit in the first two Americanist assumptions.\textsuperscript{271}

Then he was dead. Would the country feel confidence and hope for the future ever again? Perhaps even more than his election, Kennedy’s assassination was the decisive watershed that marked the real beginning of the Sixties for many.\textsuperscript{272} When he was murdered on the streets of Dallas in 1963, it was not just Catholics who wept at his passing. This event was just the first in a series that would temporarily decimate the Americanist optimism about historic destiny which was still building in 1962. It also, according to Mark Lytle, galvanized the youth of the age who in increasing numbers began to look for answers to the question of “Why?” In both the optimism and the seeking, Americans would turn to Teilhard for inspiration.

\textbf{Moving Toward Vatican II}

In the early 1960s a neo-Scholastic dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, religion and science, clergy and laity still existed on each side of the Atlantic, at least officially, but John XXIII had changed the atmosphere.\textsuperscript{273} This was still the age of Faith, despite all the talk of secularity. As Robert Ellwood commented, the decade did not so

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{271}Ibid., 139. Again, those two Americanist assumptions were that the world is in an era of radical change and that America is at the cutting edge of change, and is indeed the very embodiment of the future. Therefore, for example, America MUST win the space race. Some within the Kennedy administration, particularly Sargent Shriver, his brother-in-law, found Teilhard’s thought so amenable to Kennedy “Camelot” politics that Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense, put Teilhard’s name on a list of most valued authors for the administration. See Wills, 98. In recognition of the ready reception of Teilhard’s thought by the Kennedy administration Wills also notes later in his book that “This strange priest in the French army [Teilhard] was preparing the rationale for a weird American optimism, voiced . . . a decade after Teilhard’s own death. He became the posthumous theologian to Camelot.” 117.
\item \textsuperscript{272}Sixties, 102. See also Philip Jenkins, \textit{Decades of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Mark Lytle, \textit{America’s Uncivil Wars}.
\item \textsuperscript{273}An examination of the pre-Vatican II Church can be found in Gregory Baum, ed., \textit{The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), particularly chapter 2; also Victor Consemius, “The Condemnation of Modernism and the Survival of Catholic Theology,” 14-26; and Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S. “The Impact of Vatican II,” 158-172. An examination of the lived spirituality of the Catholic population during these decades can be found in James P. McCartin, \textit{Prayers of the Faithful: The Shifting Spiritual Life of American Catholics}, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010), 71-138.
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much “secularize the sacred as sacralize the secular.” It turned “its causes into crusades and its activism into liturgies . . . the [young] especially knew no dearth of sacraments and sacramentals.”

Then “Pope John’s Revolution” began. Four centuries after Trent the Counter-Reformation epoch came to an end. Two great encyclicals Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris, in conjunction with the Second Vatican Council, would again open the conversation with the modern world that had been stifled for almost a century.

Certainly the dominant religious figure in the world at this time was Pope John XXIII. His calls for aggiornamento or updating the life of the Church gladdened all hearts, but the true revolution, Ellwood writes, was in his warm, spontaneous natural personality. Suddenly the emphasis became love over legalism, grace over gravity. In 1959 he called for a General Council, a “New Pentecost” that was to eventually radically change the face of Roman Catholicism, just as Martin Luther King’s words would for black Americans. This council was to deal with the relationship of the church to the modern world, eventually including liturgical reform, the relationship between church and state, religious freedom, greater collegiality between bishops and Vatican, and perhaps even ecumenical reunion.

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274 Sixties, 19. The next chapter in this dissertation will explore this topic in much greater depth.
275 Mater et Magistra is one of the encyclicals written by Pope John XXIII, this one on the topic of “Christianity and Social Progress.” It was written to mark the seventieth anniversary of the encyclical Rerum Novarum, and was promulgated on May 15, 1961. The title means "Mother and Teacher," referring to the ideal role of the church in the world. It concerns the need to work towards authentic community in order to promote human dignity, and is also especially concerned with the role of the state, noting that at times the state must intervene in human society in matters of health care, education, and housing. Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty was John XXIII’s other encyclical, issued in April, 1963. The Pope died from cancer just two months after its completion. Pacem in Terris was the first encyclical that a Pope addressed to "all men of good will," rather than only to Catholics. In this work, John XXIII reacted to the Cold War political situation, pleading for peace. It was published only two years after the erection of the Berlin Wall and a few months following the Cuban Missile Crisis.
276 Sixties, 66.
277 Ibid., 85.
For Catholics around the world, the Second Vatican Council was yet another spark of optimism that was to grow into a full-fledged fire. For the first time the Catholic Church leaders were attempting to come to grips with the issues of modernity in a positive, constructive manner. Numerous American Catholics of the past, particularly those Americanists such as John Carroll, Isaac Hecker and John Ireland, had made the same attempt. By the 1960s, however, Catholics were far more ready to accept the Americanist idea that the Church must change with the times, whether in theology, liturgy, or attitude toward the world. It is no surprise that Teilhard, who had eagerly pursued the integration of modern science with Catholicism, and who had especially intended his book *The Divine Milieu* for modern people who “loved the world,” would be caught up in this catholic revolution.

Additionally, far more pastoral than the Popes of the recent past, John XXIII also pleaded for movement toward Christian unity. As a result, when the council opened in the fall of 1962, Protestants for the first time ever attended an ecumenical council as invited observers. This was a small step, but one that pointed in a far more dramatic way to a new perspective. The neo-Scholastic worldview was slowly, often reluctantly (as obvious from the impatient comments about particular Council bishops in the letters to Francoeur that are discussed later in this chapter) opening to one with a more modern, historical perspective. This could only bode well for those, like Teilhard, who saw and wrote in this manner forty years before the Council even began.

Although both Johns died within five months of each other in 1963, Pope John’s successor, Paul VI, took up where his predecessor left off and brought the Council to a successful conclusion in the fall of 1965. The Council produced sixteen documents,

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278 Dolan, 424.
which together sought to revitalize both church and world. The results of the council will be discussed in much more detail in the next chapter.

In terms of controversy, as the previous chapter alluded, the Council showcased the emergence of dissent and change within the Church. At the very first session of the Council in 1962, a number of the bishops protested the proposed agenda, the people selected for major committee positions, and the initial prepared documents. John XXIII did so also. The newspapers covering the Council were quick to pick up on this and expounded upon fissures within the foundations of what had previously seemed a static, unchanging institution. “Divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations,” expounded Pope John in his opening message; it was time for the Church “to bring herself up-to-date where required.” Aggiornamento would occur in the Church. Rather than consider what the future might bring as something to fear, “we feel that we must disagree with these prophets of doom, who are always forecasting disaster as though the end of the world were at hand.”

As Wills notes, many considered Vatican II as the vindication of Teilhard. The next chapter will further explore how his themes of unity, progress, and hope were rampant in the final documents of the ecumenical council.

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280 The entirety of the quote from Wills is “Many call Vatican II the vindication of Teilhard, considering him its absent but presiding genius.” (99). Note that Wills does not reference who the “many” are. It should also be explained here that Wills’ purpose in writing on Teilhard was certainly not to justify his thought, but instead to note his proclivity to the Kennedy administration, the Americanists, and the Vatican II era. The title for his chapter on Teilhard is “Omega, the New Frontier,” and he begins it with the quote from John F. Kennedy’s Nomination Speech: “I tell you the New Frontier is here whether we seek it or not . . . I believe the times demand invention, innovation, imagination, decision.” An underlying thesis throughout the chapter is his argument that in a large sense Teilhard glorifies war, and that his primary spiritual formation came not from his Catholic faith and religious experience, but from the novels of the author Robert Hugh Benson. Teilhard read these during World War I, and Wills argues he later incorporated Benson’s primary themes into his own work. Benson (1871–1914) was an English Anglican priest who
Another sign of progress toward unity and optimism was the Civil Rights movement. By 1960 civil rights became imperative for many, who saw the years of nonviolent sit-ins and the Freedom Rides of 1960-1961 as its greatest glory. Certainly one could also include in this category the March on Washington under Martin Luther King in 1963, leading up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Ellwood would argue that the Civil Rights movement itself began as an upsurge of modernity fed by the belief in progress. As the movement progressed however, certain achievements were won and consequently more demands arose; the then prevalent modernist agenda could not respond adequately to the demands of the population. The result was inner-city riots, the rise of the Black Panthers, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Malcom X, and Bobby Kennedy, a splintering into factions of previously united groups, and a subsequent loss of hope.

Still, Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech at the March on Washington in 1963 touched many hearts. His call for a new form of unity for all, a new, greater vision for the future, a brotherly love healing all wounds of race and slavery and bringing all peoples together—even if much anticipated—spoke volumes to the younger generations especially. It was a time when a sense of unity prevailed, if only briefly. Even the Beatles rhapsodized about a new feeling of love which had to do with spiritual well-being; it was love as an existential quality. That kind of love “brought to the

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281 Ellwood, 71.
282 Lytle, 136.
283 In fact, a soundtrack remix album of music recorded by the Beatles in the 1960s, and actually given the title “Love,” was released in November, 2006. It features tracks such as “Eleanor Rigby,” “Because,” “I
world a higher sense of harmony and goodwill, a sense of brotherhood and communal feeling not unlike the ethos advocated by the integrationist faction of the civil rights movement.”

As Mark Silk has commented, the Civil Rights movement itself was often tied up with religion. The religion of the civil rights movement, Ellwood also contends, was in some ways very distinct from the rest of the Sixties religious scene. It was rooted in the traditions of the Black church, and was not theologically adventurous like the more secular theologies, but was instead biblically rooted, emotional, and communal. Unlike the later mysticism of the counterculture, it was more interested in the practical than in transcendental visionary experiences. Participants preferred to reflect upon how their faith lives were to be a force for social and inward freedom, for salvation from social oppression. A quote from Martin Luther King expresses this well: “If today’s church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.” Teilhard wrestled with this same concern for decades before his death, questioning what his Christological worldview might have to offer the beloved people of his Church who so often found Christ and faith superfluous to their life. Indeed, he had written in 1953: “Christianity still to some degree provides a shelter for the ‘modern soul,’ but it no longer clothes it, nor satisfies it, nor leads it.

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284 Lytle, 146.
285 Silk, 3.
286 Ellwood, 80.
287 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Silk, 3.
Something has gone wrong—and so something more in the area of faith and religion, must be supplied without delay on this planet.”

**Reconciliation and the Recovery of Teilhard**

Even before anything explicitly concerning Teilhard’s influence on the Council, or any official ‘softening” of the powers that be toward him was published, those aware intuitively understood that movement toward reconciliation was occurring. A letter from Dorothy Poulain to Robert Francoeur in March of 1963 suggests just this. Poulain is delighted that some “rumpus” like Americanism is at last occurring again in the States. This, “plus the US Bishops’ eye-openers at the Council, maybe will start what all Europe has been yearning for: The breaking of the spell under which the ‘American Giant’ has been sleeping for so long! And may he ROAR! This, my fellow-countryman is your ‘Gold Opportunity.’ Every enlightened Catholic everywhere will be cheering you heartily.”

One must suppose that the “all Europe” to which Poulain refers here is primarily her fellow French Teilhardians; it is interesting that at this point in Catholic history it appears she and her fellows themselves acknowledge, with a twist, the implicit Americanist tenet that in some fashion American Catholics have a divine mission to lead the global Catholic Church in a particular direction.

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288 Teilhard, “God and Evolution,” *Christianity and Evolution*, Rene Hague, trans. (New York: Harcourt, Inc.), 237. In another essay from the same volume titled “What the World is Looking for from the Church of God at this Moment: A Generalizing and a Deepening of the Meaning of the Cross,” Teilhard argues that it is time that a new meaning for the “cross” and the Paschal Mystery of Christ be found for the contemporary world, one that moves away from a mistrust of humanity and matter and a “catastrophic conception” of the world because of original sin, toward one that can co-exist with a human nature very much at home in a changing world. “This cross should present itself to us as a sign, not merely of ‘escape’, but of progress.” It must be not just about purification, but a sign of the ongoing evolution or cosmogenesis of the world. This cross is not a sign that minimizes the role of sacrifice, but adds to the “already existing pain of expiation” the yet more demanding pain of sharing in what Teilhard calls “the universal labor which is indispensable to its accomplishment.” Thought of this way, he writes, even more weight must be given to Jesus’ summons: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9: 23). (216-19).

Indeed, as the year of 1963 went along its way, the rumpus did increase. As preliminary news of the proposed Council reforms leaked out into the general population, interest in these Teilhardian themes exploded across the United States, and not solely within the Catholic population. In a sense, therefore, Americanist Teilhardians did indeed point the larger United States society toward the Catholic Church.

As an early example, in the fall of 1963 the first formal conference on Teilhard occurred at Fordham University. Sponsored by the newly formed “Human Energetics Institute,” six lectures by Maurits Huybens on “Teilhard de Chardin and the Future of Man” averaged an amazing weekly attendance of six hundred people.290

The vast interest in this lecture series in turn prompted a plethora of responses.291 One of special significance to Robert Francoeur and the Teilhard disciples in the United States was a letter from Madame Mortier written in October that speaks of the sacrifices Francoeur has already made for “the cause,” and the current, optimistic state of Teilhardian studies in the Church. Mortier thanks Francoeur for his perseverance and patience, and pledges to send money to help create an American Branch of the Teilhard “Amies.”292

290 Maurits Huybens, S.J. was the Belgian editor of the International Philosophical Quarterly. Father Heybens was a philosopher working on his dissertation on Teilhard. He had suggested to Beatrice Bruteau, Managing Editor of IPQ and also a doctoral candidate in philosophy, that he give some lectures to introduce Teilhard’s thought to American students. The chair of the Philosophy Department at Fordham, James Somerville, S.J. agreed, and the overwhelming response startled everyone involved. See Winifred McCulloch, A Short History of the American Teilhard Association, 6. Hereafter referred to as ATA.

291 Halfway across the country from Fordham a similar initiative was under way at tiny Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa. An article written by a Sheila O’Connor in the Clarke Alumna newsletter of 1964, under the title of “The Phenomenon of Man” mentions that during the academic year of 1963-64 a group of female junior and senior chemistry and biology majors, with faculty members from those departments in addition to the departments of philosophy and theology, met every three weeks to discuss The Phenomenon of Man, “one of the most controversial books of the current intellectual life.” Those participating, Miss O’Connor writes, found the time spent quite worthwhile, and their understanding of life “vastly expanded.” From the Barbour Collection, Box #2, Woodstock Library, Georgetown University.

292 Madame Mortier to Robert Francoeur, October 16, 1963. Robert Francoeur Collection, LLA. The initial group that formed consisted of Francoeur, as well as Dr. Theodosius Dobzhansky, Dr. Loren Eiseley, Dr.
Also, another example of the increasing interest expressed by the larger US society regarding Teilhard was a *Saturday Evening Post* article which appeared that same month of October, 1963, by which thousands more were introduced to Teilhard’s work.\(^\text{293}\) John Kobler in “The Priest who Haunts the Catholic World,” wrote that “over eight years after his death, Teilhard’s many books are creating fierce controversy and influencing thousands, including numerous princes of his church presently meeting in Rome.”\(^\text{294}\) Kobler notes that two extremes existed regarding Teilhard: at one end he is “acclaimed as ‘the St. Thomas Aquinas of our age . . . a new Galileo,’ whereas at the other extreme he is denounced as ‘the Trojan horse of Catholicism,’ or ‘a man with dangerous theories in which maximum seduction coincides with maximum aberration.”\(^\text{295}\) The article also mentions that while the Second Vatican Council never openly referred to “the forbidden Jesuit,” his influence definitely lurked beneath. Kobler adds: “An Italian expert on the council goes so far as to predict that the outcome will either reflect the Teilhard spirit or it will accomplish nothing of influence.”\(^\text{296}\)

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294 Kobler, 43.

295 The “Trojan horse” reference concerns theologian Dietrich Von Hildebrand’s statements and later book *Trojan Horse in the City of God: The Catholic Crisis Explained* (Franciscan Herald Press: Chicago, 1967) regarding, at least in part, Teilhard. The book is principally a defense of conservative, neo-Scholastic Catholicism and an indictment of "progressive" or "liberal" Catholicism. The author exposes the "progressive" Catholic agenda and the dangerous heresies it promotes. He finds these contrary to traditional Catholic truth. The book also condemns Teilhard’s influence on the Vatican Council, particularly his inability to separate the secular from the sacred, the natural from the supernatural and his misuse of Scholastic concepts, and his “misuse of language” in general.

296 Kobler, 45. This was perhaps the first public affirmation that Teilhard’s thought was indeed influential at the Council.
Kobler also adds that at this time bibliographies concerning Teilhard already list more than 1200 titles globally. This torrent of books, he believes, is the largest stimulus to Teilhard’s name recognition. According to the article, Louis Marks, then Associate Professor of Biology at Fordham, contended that “Teilhardism will become the Church’s new philosophical system.” Still, Marks cautioned, as the monitum suggests, students should approach Teilhard’s writings with prudence and some education.

The article also comments that despite what might appear as deviations from orthodox Christian doctrine as well as scientific logic, both theologians and scientists agree that Teilhard fills an urgent need in both areas. Scientific materialism, at least for now, is on the wane as is religious isolationism.  At the same time, progressive clergymen, including those at the ongoing Vatican Council, feel “the church must readjust its outlook to the discoveries of modern science, if it is to remain a vital influence.”

As a specific example of Teilhard’s influence in the popular sphere, Kobler’s article mentions that the French mint has struck a medallion just recently with the inscription “Everything that rises converges.” Kobler also quite interestingly mentions in this widely read article that in contrast to Europe, in the United States no official Teilhard organization yet exists, principally because of pressure by the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi. The article suggests that Robert Francoeur, the primary proponent behind efforts for such an organization, has been obliged to abandon his efforts to create a Teilhard center; Francoeur’s own book, The World According to Teilhard, has been forbidden in seminaries in this country. When questioned about this by Kobler,

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297 Kobler notes that as science more thoroughly probes nature, the less likely it seems that it can explain everything. It becomes more difficult to state convincingly that “superhuman power” plays no part. (48).
Francoeur’s response was the quote from Teilhard concerning those who do not understand: “they’re not ripe yet!”

Almost concurrently another article entitled “Teilhard de Chardin: A Cathedral for the Wasteland,” appeared in *Show* magazine, a popular journal of the arts. The author, Mary Lukas, with her sister Ellen Lukas, would fifteen years later write one of the American biographies on Teilhard, as well as several articles defending him against accusations brought concerning the Piltdown Hoax. The article questions what the source is of Teilhard’s attraction for people; that, Lukas concludes, is a complex issue. Almost everyone would agree, however, that at its heart is the thought of this religious man who was an evolutionist, and one who sought to integrate faith and science. With this in mind, Lukas concludes that it is probably most accurate to account for this attraction to qualities within Teilhard himself, especially “that ardent hunger which made him reach beyond forbidding surfaces for the coherent, the beautiful and the lovable in

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298 Kobler, 50. Kobler closed his article on the same page with a hint of Teilhardian optimism: “Let truth appear but once to a single soul, and nothing can ever stop it from invading everything and setting everything ablaze.”

299 Mary Lukas, “Teilhard de Chardin: A Cathedral for the Wasteland.” *Show: A Magazine of the Arts*, 3 no. 12 (12/1963): 100-1,162-63. *Show* was published from at least 1961 through 1971, although its publication history was rocky throughout that entire period.

300 Mary Lukas and Ellen Lukas, *Teilhard* (New York: McGraw- Hill Book Company, 1977). See also Mary Lukas, “Teilhard and the Piltdown ‘Hoax,’” *America* 144 (May, 1981):424-27. This was Lukas’ response to Stephen Jay Gould’s articles “Piltdown Revisited,” *Natural History* (March, 1979): 86, and again “The Piltdown Conspiracy,” *Natural History* (August, 1980):8-28 concerning Teilhard’s possible involvement in the Piltdown man hoax. Lukas commences her article by noting that *The Phenomenon* had sold over 75,000 copies in the United States alone by the December, 1963. Within less than a decade since its first publication in France it had been translated into eight languages, including Finnish, Russian and Japanese. Additionally, Teilhard study groups were springing up everywhere, including in Lisbon and Melbourne.

301 Lukas adds a note here, however, that others, including Gerald Heard and Lecomte du Nouy had similar visions. Henry Fitzgerald Heard, commonly called Gerald Heard, lived 1889 through 1971. He was an historian, science writer, educator, and philosopher, writing numerous articles and over thirty-five books. Heard was also a guide and mentor to numerous well-known Americans in the 1950’s and 1960s, including Clare Boothe Luce and Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. His work was a forerunner of, and influence upon, the consciousness development movement that has spread in the Western world since the 1960s.
the cosmos.” These attributes were formed “by resistance, pain and loss, like the upward-striving earth he wrote about.”

Additionally, his intuitive powers were immense, and “were prior to his rational synthesis.” He had always been one of those natural mystics whose consciousness was subject to an overwhelming unitive force. But, Lukas comments, an understanding of this way of looking at the world is difficult for modern readers, who are far more used to “getting their science in the laboratory, their poetry at the ladies’ cultural society and their religion—what there is of it—in an hour at church on Sunday. Our age is definitely not used to mystics.”

Lukas notes that Teilhard wrote out of the natural mystic’s unitive impulse toward everything. He had that Christian perception that “behind the impersonal appearance of things there was a ‘Face’ and ‘Heart’ that could be found.” He also urgently desired to heal the agony he saw in those around him. Teilhard was trying to work out a viable alternative to the results of exposure to an increasingly complex, impersonal, and bureaucratic world.

He wished to share his vision of a Christian optimistic hope, his understanding that mankind was in its infancy, “man is young,” and that the potential achievements of humanity were only beginning.

Another publication from about this same time frame, one of the first to explore Teilhard’s mystical nature, was R.C. Zaehner’s *Matter and Spirit: Their Convergence in*

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302 Lukas, *Show*, 100. As we shall see later in this project, this last point will prove to be quite important, for it is an understanding that Teilhard’s inherent optimism owes to something more than an easy life and amenable personality, and is, perhaps, more than simple “optimism.”

303 Lukas, *Show*, 101. Lukas also suggests that perhaps Teilhard’s most distinctive characteristic was a certain honesty and vulnerability which made prevarication and hesitation almost impossible for him. He did not shrink from addressing scientific and religious (as well as personal) problems with a transparency and an almost innocence, which most found quite unique.

304 Ibid.

305 Ibid., 162.
Eastern Religions, Marx and Teilhard de Chardin. Zaehner argues that *The Phenomenon* supplied an antidote to the existentialist disease too often prevalent at the time; it encouraged man to look out upon the world of which he was part rather than just contemplating the “nasty mystery of his own individual being;” Teilhard urged the reader to think less about his own salvation than that of the entire world, especially the need to build up the mystical body of Christ here on earth through daily tasks and participation in the Paschal Mystery. His mysticism is not just about visions and transports of individual souls, but is the mysticism of the integration of souls with all things through God. For Zaehner the greatest service of Teilhard is that he has put the concept of growing into the fullness of the Mystical Body of Christ in his Church into the forefront of all the concepts of Christianity. He has therefore diverted attention from a focus on one’s own soul to the communal roles we must all play. In a decade in which social activism is an omnipresent reality, as for example in the racial justice movements already discussed in this chapter, it is not difficult to understand why a mystical worldview would be found attractive; this is particularly true during a time period that views these roles as crucial and necessary for Christians.  

Just a month or two later, in December of 1963, the popular Catholic journal *America* published an article titled “The Importance of Matter” by Robert J. Roth. The

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306 R.C. Zaehner, *Matter and Spirit: Their Convergence in Eastern Religions, Marx and Teilhard de Chardin*, from the series Religious Perspectives, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen (Harper & Row, Publishers: New York, 1963). Zaehner stresses that with the publication of Teilhard’s work religion can no longer be seen as the enemy of science, but its culmination instead; science itself is now “tinged with mysticism and charged with faith.” In Catholic terms, what Teilhard writes of here is the Communion of Saints (16). According to Zaehner, “His was an integral and therefore ‘Catholic’ vision of reality,” corresponding to a very real need which conventional religion had failed to supply (18). One might want to refer back to note 50 in this chapter with its discussion of Teilhard’s essay “What the World is Looking for from the Church of God at this Moment: A Generalizing and a Deepening of the Meaning of the Cross,” from 1953, with its discussion of the meaning of the cross and the need of Christians to live the Paschal Mystery.

opening blurb for this article states it is “An assessment of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s appeal for the American mind,” and it explored the ties between Teilhard’s thought and the concept of materialism as essential to the American experience.

Perhaps Roth also had recently read *Americanism: A Phantom Heresy*, since parallels between the Americanist precepts and Teilhard’s themes abound in his analysis. He notes that the people of America find tremendous confidence in their involvement with matter, which they overwhelmingly consider to be good, especially now that evolution has reached its culmination in man. The affinity they have for Teilhard must spring from this contemporaneous emphasis. Roth states that Americans concur that all future progress will be made in relation to humanity’s personal growth, and such growth, “though moving along moral and religious lines, will depend on man’s continued interaction with the world.” 308 This world includes inorganic matter, as well as social institutions, cultural development and, of course, science. So, Roth finds that respect for matter, not as in sensual gratification but as a means of human growth, is essential to the American experience. In this, Americans find great affinity with Teilhard’s message.

As he concludes: “The thought of a man like Père Teilhard is more congenial to the American temperament than to that of any other people. We do not need to have the importance of matter proved to us. This orientation has been native to us from our beginnings.” 309 One might add that the orientation toward matter has been native to the people of the United States for they are a nation established in modernity, and with therefore a modern mindset. 310

308 Roth, 793.
309 Ibid., 794.
310 “Modern” in this context refers to those descriptors of modernity provided by Stephen Schloesser in note 26.

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These three articles in the popular press had numerous ramifications. A letter from Robert Francoeur to George Barbour in early December of 1963 elucidates several of them. Francoeur mentions that the lecture series had been held at Fordham in the fall of 1963 coinciding with the Post article. The results of both the lectures and the article “were so phenomenal that it was decided to take advantage of the resulting explosion here.”\(^\text{311}\) As a result, with the aforementioned encouragement of Madame Mortier in Paris, the American Association of the Friends of Teilhard became more visible, and a Teilhard Research Institute at Fordham, a five-week summer research institute, and an international congress on Teilhard scheduled for August 14-21, 1964 were all planned.

Barbour replied to Francoeur almost immediately, encouraging the formation of an American Teilhard association of some sort, and noting his honor at being requested to serve on the scientific committee.\(^\text{312}\) Several days later Barbour also wrote Dr. John Walsh of Pace College. He offered his thanks and his congratulations in finally getting an “American Père Teilhard society” off the ground. He himself felt the time was appropriate, as until that point American interest had lagged badly behind that of Europe, but the previous ten months, particularly since the start of the Council, had shown the beginning of a change.\(^\text{313}\)

\(^{311}\) Robert Francoeur to George Barbour, 12/10/63. The Barbour Collection, Box 2, Woodstock Library, Georgetown University.

\(^{312}\) Barbour to Francoeur, December 11, 1963. George Barbour letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA. Barbour suggests Francoeur be cautious as to who is likewise asked, as certain biologists have “strong attitudes,” and could easily sway the opinions of the American public and even of Catholic bishops. Dobzhansky should be included, as well as Hallam Movius, and John T. Robinson of Wisconsin. Furthermore, Barbour found the Lukas article far more discriminating than Kobler’s. A few months later, on 16 April 1964, Barbour again wrote from Cincinnati to “Father Francoeur.” By this time Francoeur had received a graduate assistant position at Fordham and was traveling around the country talking about Teilhard. In special significance to those residing near Cincinnati, Barbour comments that he himself had promised to “speak about Pierre” at Earlham, the Quaker school in Richmond, Indiana in May, “if I have the courage!”

\(^{313}\) Barbour to John Walsh, December 15, 1931, from Cincinnati. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA.
In the same letter Barbour mentioned that he intends to send a provisional draft of his book in progress, In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin. He had been writing this as it bothered him that almost everything of significance regarding Teilhard had started overseas, and he felt it was time it was recognized that people on this continent also were aware of and embraced his work. Additionally, before it became too late someone who personally knew Teilhard needed to write some things about him first-hand, rather than just another article of what he meant or not. Barbour commented, “As I have some dozen and half personal letters which have not yet been printed, I can speak to this in a way others cannot.” He suggested that if it met with Walsh’s approval and seemed worthy of Teilhard, perhaps the Association would want to sponsor this book in the publication series they would eventually no doubt create.\textsuperscript{314}

In addition to the fall lecture series in 1963 previously mentioned, a year-long series of university-wide faculty seminars scrutinizing Teilhard’s thought was already underway at Fordham.\textsuperscript{315} The Human Energetics Institute arranged with Fordham’s radio station to broadcast all these lectures, and then sponsored yet another Spring Lecture Series from January through May, 1964 to examine the possible trajectories of the Teilhardian vision.\textsuperscript{316}

\textsuperscript{314} Barbour to John Walsh, December 15, 1931, from Cincinnati. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1 Folder 3, LLA.

\textsuperscript{315} This discussion was held every three weeks in the faculty lounge. Each session introduced papers given by representatives of various fields of knowledge. This continued into the spring of 1964. Beatrice Bruteau, the doctoral student mentioned above, suggested to her chairperson at Fordham that an interdisciplinary research institute be founded “to illuminate our experience of an evolving reality in a way that is appropriate to the evolutionary process itself.” Her resulting proposal suggested the institute was to make a critical study of Teilhard’s work, and then “pass on to ‘new questions, new criteria, and new fields of investigation.’” \textit{ATA}, 7. Information regarding all these initiatives also was explained in more detail in a mimeographed brochure produced by the Human Energetics Institute found in the Barbour Collection, Box 2, Woodstock Library, Georgetown University.

\textsuperscript{316} The brochure that discusses these initiatives in more detail mentions that the Fall-Spring faculty workshop was restricted to professionals who wish to explore critical problem areas in Teilhardian thought. This workshop would serve as a pilot project for other long-range research programs. A representative
In contrast to the later faculty workshops, the August convention was open to the public via prior registration. The Summer Institute was taking place in collaboration with the American Teilhard Association, and prominent specialists were being invited to come spend three or five days in a discussion about the possible synthesis of Teilhard’s thought. The first week would deal with “pre-life,” the second with the biosphere, the third with man, the fourth with an attempt to determine man’s future, and the fifth with some overall evaluation of the synthesis. In addition, a team of some ten representatives from around the country, experts in various fields, would engage in ongoing discussion and research to provide continuity during this process.317

The purpose of this institute is “to achieve some coherent vision of man and of his place in reality, some ‘public philosophy’ to guide the concerted action the age requires of us. The institute would concern itself with the rift between “two cultures, the scientific and the humanistic—between the secular and religious.” This rift displays the fervent need for cross-disciplinary study, which is “the first aim of this institute.”318 The second is to promote a reciprocal understanding and cooperation between the university

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317 The American Teilhard Association could operate under this name because it was not associated with a religious educational institution, and because it had a layman, Dr. John Walsh, as its president. Those who participated in the Conference in August included J. Franklin Ewing, S.J., Robert Johann, S.J. Father Thomas Berry, who spoke on “The Threshold of the Modern World, Barry Ulanov speaking on the humanist expression of Teilhard, Petro Bilaniuk on Teilhard’s Christology, Werner Stark, presenting on Teilhard and human autonomy, Gwen Garrigan on “Chemical Evolution,” and John Page, S.J. speaking on “The Phenomenon of Urbanization and Teilhard.” The conference was financed by contributions, including one from Henry Luce, who attended. ATA, 9.

318 Emphasis found in original brochure.
and the world-at-large, and the third to provide a permanent institute where ongoing collaborative research can take place. The focus of some research might be on such topics as the interdependence of technology and culture, the role of business as a carrier of culture, ethical questions about nature and ecology, and international and intercultural communication.

Just about the time the August conference was ending, an influential article appeared in the Religion section of Newsweek magazine. It noted that the conference had taken place, and that it focused on the theory that man through technology, culture, and his power to love, advances evolution. In so doing, man is engaged in an essentially religious act. ¹³¹⁹ ³¹⁹

Following a discussion of some of Teilhard’s writing and the publishing history of his work, the article argued that when Teilhard died he left behind a foundation for “an extraordinary new synthesis of knowledge based on an original Christian understanding of evolution.” Unlike many materialistic evolutionists, the article explains that Teilhard, a radically committed Catholic, asserted that man is the crown rather than the accident of evolution and that, through man, evolution is humanizing the entire cosmos.

So, the article explained that the previous week at Fordham twenty-seven scholars from philosophy, theology, science, and literature concluded a five-week intensive workshop on Teilhard. As the article put it, they “reverently dissected Teilhard’s cosmic system.” And what emerged from all the “cerebration” was the feeling that Teilhard’s thought “may ultimately lead to the most radical re-dressing of Catholic philosophy since St. Thomas Aquinas introduced Aristotle to the medieval church seven centuries ago.”

¹³¹⁹ “The Noosphere around Us,” in Religion, Newsweek (8/31/64): 70-1.
Josephine Wtulich noted in the article that applying Teilhard’s evolutionary synthesis to American social problems “raises as many questions as it answers.” Certainly Teilhard was aware of the many difficulties facing contemporary society, but “he didn’t realize all the implications of his theories.”

Another presenter, theologian Petro Bilaniuk of St. Michael’s College in Toronto stressed Teilhard’s Christocentric vision. Teilhard placed everything, he argued, in relationship to the mystery of Christ, as well as to evolution. This is in contrast to the static, ahistorical vision common in the past. “From Teilhard on, theologians cannot any longer ignore evolution in their thought or work.”

The closing comments in the article are from Robert Francoeur, who notes that almost everyone educated in the Catholic tradition is trained to think in static categories, but Teilhard challenges them to “think in evolutionary terms—and the challenge is just starting.” Indeed, already in 1963 the torrent of publications concerning Teilhard is just beginning, and will not peak until 1968. Note that those already discussed in this work were found in both the popular press and academic journals; the intended audience was both Catholic intellectuals and those with no Christian background whatsoever.

Teilhard’s ecumenical appeal was already immense.

**Literary Responses to Teilhard**

**Catherine Aller**

The Summer Institute discussed above was the first sizable conference on Teilhard in the United States, and the coincidental journal articles spurred yet more

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320 Josephine Wtulich was at the time a sociologist-anthropologist at Baltimore’s College of Notre Dame.
interest.\(^{321}\) Attesting to its ecumenical appeal, the conference itself attracted many from outside the university population, including those from beyond Catholicism. One such person was Catherine Aller, a published poet, housewife, and non-Catholic Christian from Connecticut. She first made contact with George Barbour in August, 1963; at that time she was attempting to write an explanatory statement for the general public on *The Phenomenon*, and was looking for feedback regarding her efforts. Barbour in turn referred her to Robert Francoeur, who was then updating a Teilhardian bibliography. This action precipitated a several year correspondence between the three, as well as Aller’s ongoing association with the later efforts at Fordham and the American associations.

In September of 1963, Aller wrote Francoeur directly and commented that the kind of friendship she felt with Dr. Barbour was typical, she believed, of the “gradually drawing together to be found amidst the ‘Les Amis de Teilhard.’”\(^{322}\) She was creating her own work, which was “meant to go out to Christians who do think but would not be likely to study Teilhard as they must, to get his deep meaning. As I am an unknown it is a bit difficult to find a reliable publisher.”\(^{323}\) Aller comments that after coming to know Teilhard, she thinks it difficult to find any other writer who can compare for insightful and incisive statements, as well as inspiring suggestions. She also notes that the situation

\(^{321}\) A large percentage of the papers read at this conference were published by the Human Energetics Research Institute as *1964 Fordham Conference Proceedings* (Fordham University: Bronx, N.Y., 1964). As the next chapter will discuss, the Research Institute continued under this name and in this direction for a few more years before its reconfiguration.

\(^{322}\) Catherine Aller to Robert Francoeur. September 15, 1963. Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. LLA. She also noted that she was very interested in the formation of an American “Friends of Teilhard,” and knew many others who would be, also. On stationery imprinted with “Mrs. Howard Lewis Aller, Lane’s End, Lakeville CT.” Catherine Aller published a book of poetry in 1948 titled *Lane’s End*.

\(^{323}\) This work was initially published in 1964 as *The Challenge of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Exposition Press). A second edition was published in 1967.
with Teilhard is perhaps only to be expected, for it is “a movement of Evolution surely as we think on these things.”

She also questions the “Tout ce qui Monte” insignia that Francoeur uses on his stationary. She notes that it puzzles her more than it illumines. “It is individual ascent towards God—but individuals who converge. Can that be put in any geometric pattern? It seems necessary, for those who are not theologians or philosophers, to have some sort of pictorial representation of these things!”

Found within the Catherine Aller letters in the Francoeur Collection was a Christmas card to Francoeur dated in December, 1963. This card perhaps exemplifies the desire for a visual representation of Teilhard’s work as noted in their previous correspondence, as well as the interest in the general public in incorporating Teilhard’s concepts into their own daily lives. The card is small, perhaps 2.5” by 3”, stamped with a colored print of three kings on camels. The opening verse reads: “As with gladness men of old did your guiding star behold, So the wise men of today seek the truth in their own way; Bringing it to human sight, less in cloud and more in light; All that is made one in Thee. Blessed are the eyes that see.” What follows is:

SEEING–THE WHOLE OF LIFE LIES IN THAT WORD

Today we are seeing the sweep of a movement infinitely transcending all human knowledge. To it all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow if they are to remain from henceforth true and worthy of research and adoration.
EVOLUTION IS A LIGHT conquering one after another all the fields of science and uniting them with religion. To the Christian it is offering today a more magnificent means of discovering his God in all

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324 Underlined comments here are the author’s.
325 “Tout ce qui Monte” translates as “Everything that rises,” a reference to the famous Teilhard quote “Everything that rises must converge” from The Future of Man (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 186.
326 In the Catherine Aller letters, Robert Francoeur Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, LLA. Although very professional, the card and contents gave the impression of having been designed by Aller herself.
327 Capitalization as found on card.
the length and breadth of creation; in every inch of space every instant of history, every idea in consciousness. It draws man toward a great Presence, a supreme Personality, infinite in love, power and intelligence.

The annotation follows: Teilhard de Chardin, from The Phenomenon of Man.

The card is signed simply “Catherine Aller.”

In late December, 1963 Aller again wrote to Francoeur in response to what must have been an intervening, no longer extant letter. She writes: “I am sorry to learn of law suits and deviations of various kinds, but I suppose in this stage of our way such things must be expected. There is of course only one way to meet them as did Teilhard—to walk in love, without personal condemnation.”

Aller notes that her own book is now off the press. “My whole intent was to spread the thought of Teilhard further in a very simple way to those who will want it simply explained. I hope I have not mis-interpreted Teilhard’s words. Of course I know he does go far deeper, wider, higher than as simple a work as mine could discuss.” Still, she believes that as interest in Teilhard continues to grow in so many walks of society, among so many different groups of people, the need for such a work seems immense.

Aller also comments about the implication of Teilhard’s thought regarding one recent national event:

It struck me as most significant that the thought of all the world was focused for a while on the tragedy of Kennedy’s death. For at least an hour there were millions of minds virtually in that emergency room. That means something in the Noosphere! That never has happened in history—could not happen until the inventions of modern science made it possible. Does this not mark a definite move forward in Evolution?

328 Catherine Aller to Robert Francoeur, December 31, 1963. Catherine Aller letters, Robert Francoeur papers, Box 1 Folder 2, LLA.
The final letter from Aller to Francoeur in these years was written in February, 1964 while the lecture series was underway at Fordham. She comments that she had attended with her son and a friend, and thoroughly enjoyed the discussion of all the many scientists, theologians, and philosophers who were the catalysts for Teilhard’s thought. Still, “he is the one who has finally alerted word [sic] thought and brought us to our present stage of comprehension. Even I recognize this!”

Aller believes that Teilhard’s flame burns brighter and stronger as more are drawn to it. “None who see this can go back to yesterday’s individualized circles of science, religion or activity.” As to her book, she realizes it is a very simple primer for beginners, but it continues to steadily make its way, humble though it is. The letter is signed “Faithfully yours for every move toward ecumenical [sic] stability.”

Finally, several months later in a letter addressed to “Mr. Francoeur” Aller comments on the “inevitable revolution in Christian thinking” towards which the United States was heading. In all the lectures and discussions she attends she listens with hunger for mention of Teilhard, and is seldom disappointed. Without the precision of his thought, the discipline of his words, and above all, without the spiritual élan and depth of his personality everything else seems diluted and weak, or overburdened with the human

329 Catherine Aller to Francoeur, February 2, 1964. Catherine Aller letters, Robert Francoeur collection, Box 1 Folder 2, LLA. In the last paragraph she notes with poetic imagery that “he stands out against the background of all world thinking as an eagle against a stormy sky . . . his thinking . . . is confined to no present circle.” We grope for what he presents, she writes, and “that groping is the cutting edge of God’s law of Evolution.” The letter is addressed to “Mr Francoeur – or should I say, rather, Father Francoeur?” Elsewhere Aller comments that the latter is an address which “is rather foreign to my way of thinking.”

330 Ibid.
intellectuality. “Surely,” she contends, ‘the Holy Spirit is leading these efforts.” Her short note ends with the comment: “Thank God for Teilhard and those who love him.”

**Flannery O’Connor**

Another published female US author who found herself increasingly influenced by Teilhard’s thought in the early 1960s was Flannery O’Connor. As a result of her mounting difficulties with lupus and the subsequent return to her Milledgeville, Georgia home, Teilhard’s writing brought her both solace and hope for the future. In particular, Teilhard’s ideas about diminishment helped her progress through the last stage of her life and her preparation for death.

O’Connor wrote a review of *The Phenomenon of Man* (February 20, 1960) and of *The Divine Milieu* (February 4, 1961) in *The Bulletin*, the local Catholic diocesan newspaper. She suggested that these should be read in just this order, noting that:

After reading both books I doubt his work will be put on the Index, though I think some of the people who latch upon his thought and distort it may cause certain propositions in it to be condemned. I think myself he was a

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331 Catherine Aller to “Mr. Francoeur,” May 8, 1964. At this time Francoeur was starting the process of laicization. Catherine Aller letters, Robert Francoeur correspondence, Box 1, Folder 3, LLA.

332 Flannery O’Connor, born March 25, 1925, died August 3, 1964, is considered by many one of America's greatest Southern fiction writers and one of the strongest apologists for Roman Catholicism in the twentieth century. Born of the marriage of two of Georgia's oldest Catholic families, O'Connor was a devout believer whose small but impressive body of fiction presents the soul's struggle with what she called the "stinking mad shadow of Jesus." O’Connor wrote two novels and thirty two short stories, as well as a number of reviews and commentaries. Her writing also reflected her own Roman Catholic faith, and frequently examined questions of morality and ethics. Her *Complete Stories* posthumously won the 1972 US National Book Award for Fiction. In part extracted from http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-498

333 Steven Watkins, *Flannery O’Connor and Teilhard de Chardin: A Journey Together Towards Hope and Understanding about Life* (New York : Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 2009), 11. O’Connor was introduced to Teilhard via her editor, Robert Giroux from Farrar, Straus, who mentioned in May, 1959 that he had known Teilhard in New York before he died, and that a book on his thought would be published shortly. Giroux suggested that O’Connor would be “very impressed.” Over the next five years as she conducted an intensive study of Teilhard’s thought his influence upon her became increasingly evident. (11).

334 By the time of her death O’Connor owned copies of all Teilhard’s books thus far published, as well as studies and biographies by Nicholas Corté, Oliver Rabut, Charles Raven and Claude Tremontant. She wrote reviews of all these books, and in fact reviewed more of his works than any other writer between 1959 and 1964. (23).
great mystic. The second volume [The Divine Milieu] complements the first and makes you see that even if there were errors in his thought, there was none in his heart.³³⁵

In regards to his influence on her own life, in a letter of February, 1963, Flannery O’Connor wrote that “Pere Teilhard talks about ‘passive diminishment’ in The Divine Milieu. He means those afflictions that you can’t get rid of and have to bear. Those that you can get rid of he believes you must bend every effort to get rid of. I think he was a great man.”³³⁶

In addition to Teilhard’s concept of diminishment, she was fascinated with his ideas of convergence, and the relationship between these two. These offered Flannery a “positive” and intriguing perspective of discerning God in a new and illuminating way in her illness; they offered an answer to the crisis of lupus in her life, and provided material for her varied stories in her last collection. The title of that posthumously published collection, Everything That Rises Must Converge, is a phrase of Teilhard’s which he uses in describing his theory of continuing evolution.³³⁷

³³⁶ Flannery O’Connor, Habit of Being, 509 from a letter to Janet McKane, February 5, 1963. The Habit of Being is a selection of O'Connor's letters written primarily to Sally Fitzgerald. Steven Watkins suggests that rather than “passive diminishment,” O’Connor preferred to use the term “progressive diminishment” for this process, as she saw it as part of learning all possible information about a situation, including how to best deal with or how to eventually accept what cannot be changed. Watkins, 21.
³³⁷ Flannery O’Connor, Everything that Rises Must Converge (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux. 1965), published posthumously. This is a collection of nine short stories with an introduction by O’Connor’s longtime friend Robert Fitzgerald. Patricia Dineen Maida, in her essay “Convergence in Flannery O’Connor’s Everything that Rises Must Converge” states that “In a commentary on The Phenomenon of Man Miss O’Connor tells why the work is meaningful to her . . . ‘It is a search for human significance in the evolutionary process. Because Teilhard is both a man of science and a believer, the scientist and theologian will require considerable time to sift and evaluate his thought, but the poet, whose sight is essentially prophetic, will at once recognize in Teilhard a kindred intelligence. His is a scientific expression of what the poet attempts to do: penetrate matter until spirit is revealed. Teilhard’s vision sweeps forward without detaching itself at any point from the earth.’” (Maida, Studies in Short Fiction, VII no. 4(Fall 1970), 552 found in Watkins, 25). See also note 87 in this chapter for the derivation of this title.
For O’Connor the focus on diminishment points us toward the limitations of life. Our existence is about progress, growth, spiritual and intellectual development. Teilhard, however, also reminds us that this process includes physical limitations, disabilities, aging and disease, all of which he would term “diminishments.” Even these, however, depending upon how we struggle with and view physical decline, when linked with the Passion of Jesus can lead to progress and evolution for humanity. It is interesting that O’Connor, suffering terribly from an incurable disease recognized this as crucial to understanding Teilhard’s work; as we shall see, numerous others will overlook or refuse to understand that this underlies his ever present optimism.

As an example, her *Everything that Rises Must Converge* introduces readers to a variety of characters who suffer from one physical or psychological malady or another. These physically imperfect, eccentric characters have idiosyncrasies which differentiate them from the surrounding society, and expose them to pain and discomfort. O’Connor’s emphasis spotlights their responses to this pain and its possible positive implications for humanity as a whole.

Additionally, like so many others, O’Connor admires Teilhard for the fact that he had elucidated that it is not possible to escape matter, and yet matter and spirit are intrinsically intertwined. She saw that in motivating and encouraging humanity forward in development it is necessary to deal with the concrete and the material world, while recognizing how essential and intrinsic the spiritual is. As she wrote: “As a novelist, the major part of my task is to make everything, even an ultimate concern, as solid, as
concrete, as specific as possible. The novelist begins his work where human knowledge begins—with the senses; he works through the limitations of matter.”

O’Connor also recognized, through Teilhard’s influence, that the forces of upwardly rising energy move to a convergence together that culminate in a community of knowledge and love. Diminishments of all kinds represent the opportunity for humans to transform the usual dichotomy of body/soul, matter/spirit into a unitive whole, a whole that allows the participant to “cleave to God hidden beneath the inward and outward forces which animate our being and sustain it.” This was the same movement which at least some analysts believe she sought in her own final years of writing.

Chapter Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, by the beginning of the mid-1960s escalating acceptance and even wild enthusiasm for Teilhard’s work existed in the United States. An increasing number of scholars and authors were not only expounding upon his work, but acknowledging his influence in their own writing; additionally, the desire to better understand and to engage in discussion about his thematic points is spurring growing numbers of conferences, classes and study groups.

By late 1964 blatant opposition to Teilhard’s premises had decreased greatly. This decline in hostility was in part due to the realization that Teilhard’s thought was in increasing favor at the Vatican and at the Council. Fundamental paradigm shifts were occurring not only within the Catholic Church, but in society as a whole. In addition, the JFK presidential years and the Civil Rights movement placed earlier social, political and

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339 Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, 52.
religious motifs under pressure. As this era of transformation in American society gained momentum, so too did public interest in Teilhard.

Several propositions were suggested in this chapter as to why Teilhard’s thought was received in this manner during these years. Primary among these was the ongoing appreciation in the United States for his stance toward the material world, the secular, and daily life. For Teilhard, rather than viewing these as inconsequential, they are instead essential within his evolutionary framework. In addition, Teilhard’s positive stance toward progress, particularly scientific progress, was crucial for his popularity in this time period. In Teilhard’s thought no disjunction exists between science and religious faith; they are instead flip sides of the same coin. For Americans who have traditionally held a deep trust in human endeavor and the value of scientific progress, Teilhard was the man of the hour.

In regards to the Church itself, this optimistic hope in progress and change intersected quite favorably with the Americanist stance long a part of the American Catholic culture. Even if Teilhard never used the term “Americanism” in his own writing, his evolutionary understanding of change, an implicit tenet of the Americanist tendency, certainly encouraged others to interpret his thought in this way. Additionally, as the next chapter will show, the Second Vatican Council would foster an unprecedented understanding of the role of historical consciousness within the Church and the world. Teilhard’s worldview lent itself easily not only to an appreciation of these concepts, but as a schema by which they might be applied elsewhere.

This chapter also noted that several commentators and authors from this time period began to see the possible implications of Teilhard’s emphasis on “convergence”
and unity in terms of real-life possibilities. The question arises as to how his thought and methodology might be applied to sociology, psychology, political science. Conferences and articles explored this theme. Beyond this, a few writers note their fascination with Teilhard’s synthetic, Christocentric mysticism and its possibilities for the future of religion and the spiritual life. Additionally, the primary themes of Teilhard’s thought are creeping out into the wider, non-Catholic, population, as exemplified by his influence upon the sample of poets and literary works given here.

As the years continue and the demands for a reform of society and Church become yet more pronounced within the United States and around the world, these Teilhardian themes will continue to develop. The next chapter will explore the particular influence of Teilhard upon the documents and trajectory of the Second Vatican Council, as well as upon a new awareness, in theological circles, on the secular. Additionally, the reasons behind the continuing, overwhelmingly positive reception of Teilhard in a time of deep, rapid social and political change will be examined.
CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT DURING THE YEARS OF HOPE: 1965-1967

For at least a few historians the escalating trends of hope and progress that dominated the early 1960s were tempered during the middle years of that decade by radical theology, countercultural movements, a search for new life styles, serious dissatisfactions with traditional religious expressions, and widespread questioning of long-accepted views on the church, the university, the state, and societal expectations. These public, societal developments definitively put the 1960s into sharp contrast with the previous postwar period.341

This chapter and the next will explore these themes and their relationship to Teilhard’s reception during the years 1965-1967. Teilhard, with his vision of man as the pinnacle of evolution and his vision of organic global unity, truly exploded onto the scene during these years. It seemed that a new volume or periodical article concerning some aspect of his thought was published every week. Henri de Lubac’s commentaries on Teilhard’s other works became available in the United States during this time period, and these also increased interest in his thought. In general, this was an iconoclastic age, and a particular generation (or perhaps several generations) was transfixed by the possibilities

inherent in the Civil Rights Act, in new forms of interpersonal relationships and sexual mores, in the spiritual effects of psychedelic drugs, in a theology and a church opening to the world. The counterculture was rising, and the counterculture adored Teilhard.

The focus of this chapter is first the potential impact of Teilhard’s thought upon the Second Vatican Council. A perusal of the Teilhardian concepts found in the documents of Vatican II will additionally provide a framework by which to look at the social and political history of this time period and hence further an understanding of the positive reception of Teilhard in the United States during these years.

This continued to be a time of intense optimism for many, but contemporaneously the reality of the difficulty of change and the often violent backlash of both those determined to hold onto more traditional patterns of society and those seeking change more quickly began to cause fissures in the confidence of the nation as a whole. The ongoing utopian hopes of some, and the militant conservatism of others, will increasingly create “an atmosphere of intense expectation alternating with despair which gave this decade a truly unique flavor.”

Still, the change in acceptance of Teilhard spurred in large part by Vatican II and those seeking reform in Church and society extended to the eventual successful formation of the long awaited American Teilhard Association, whose birth is also detailed in these pages.

**Teilhard’s Influence on Vatican II**

The Second Vatican Council called between two thousand and twenty-five hundred bishops, more than 150 superiors of religious orders, and thousands of observers,

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auditors, sisters, laymen and laywomen to four sessions at St. Peter's Basilica between 1962 and 1965. From these gatherings came sixteen documents in total.  

The most immediate result of Vatican II as seen by the laity was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. It presented an agenda for change that in 1965 was already dramatically altering the way Catholics in the United States worshipped. Just as important, however, was the new perception of the church set from the first moments of the opening message given by Pope John XXIII, and reinforced by the Council’s efforts.  

Gradually over the following decades the centuries-old understanding of a juridical, institutional Church would be modified by a new model of servant Church, located in the scriptural paradigm of the People of God. The ecumenical efforts of the council advocated work toward unity; religious freedom was another key, controversial issue.

The debate over the continuity of the Council with what had gone before, particularly in light of the *resourcement* and *nouvelle théologie* of many theologians of the mid-twentieth century has at times been intense. In an article in *America* magazine in 2005, John O’Malley noted three “trends” in considering Vatican II: the council as an aberration, the council as continuous with what occurred before, the Council as discontinuity. In O’Malley’s opinion nothing frightening exists in any discontinuity.

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343 Pope John XXIII died of cancer on June 3, 1963. He was succeeded by Pope Paul VI (1963-78), who advocated that the church (and therefore the council) focus both inwardly and outwardly. The Council closed on December 8, 1965.

344 The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963. The primary aim of this first document of the Second Vatican Council was to achieve greater lay participation in the liturgy of the Catholic Church.


that may have occurred, for “even the most radical discontinuities in history take place within a stronger current of continuity.” Change, as part of the human condition is necessary to life, and so cannot be “un-Catholic.” O’Malley claims that: “Change, moreover, does not necessarily entail loss of identity. In fact it is sometimes necessary to assure identity, especially of a living organism.”

Some would claim that it was Teilhard, one of those scholars writing in the early-to mid-twentieth century, who made this kind of evolutionary and progressive worldview unavoidable for those of intelligence within the Catholic Church. The previous chapter in this work gave indicators that showed the implied condemnation of the monitum of 1962 was already being overlooked a year later; to consider that Teilhardian thought might therefore strongly influence and even be integral to the documents of the Council does not seem inconceivable. Teilhard’s evolutionary consciousness and unifying, optimistic worldview are qualities that several commentators on the Council in particular point to in regards to his possible impact. Especially it is Gaudium et spes, the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” where they agree Teilhardian notes are visible.

Teilhard’s contribution to the Council primarily appeared to occur through the efforts of his own great friend and supporter Father Henri de Lubac, already introduced in

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347 John O’Malley, “The Style of Vatican II,” America 188 (February 24, 2003):6. Note that one could consider these comments themselves as quite Teilhardian in nature!
349 Even none other than Pope Paul VI himself expressed interest and support during this time period. On February 24, 1966, in a speech to employers and workers of an important pharmacy company, Paul VI praised the basic theories of Teilhard concerning the evolution of the universe and pointed towards them as a model for science compatible with faith. Even though the Pope included some qualifications in his praise, it seems a strong endorsement of Teilhard’s theses. Pope Paul VI, Speech to Employers and Workers of a Pharmacy Company, February 24, 1966, in Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, Poliglotta Vaticana, 1966, 992-993. Retrieved from http://www.traditioninaction.org/ProgressivistDoc/A_035_Paul6Teilhard.htm
this work. This chapter, therefore, first discusses de Lubac’s interventions on behalf of Teilhard’s thought both before and during the Council, and then considers the reaction of several other theologians as to the possible influence of Teilhard on the council documents.

De Lubac was appointed by John XXIII as consultant to the Preparatory Theological Commission, and was later named as peritus to the Council itself. In the years surrounding Vatican II de Lubac intervened on Teilhard’s behalf numerous times, providing both written and verbal explications of his works at various gatherings. De Lubac later agreed, with some reservations, that Teilhard’s impact amounted to “a certain influence, at least indirect and diffuse, on some orientations of the Council.” In particular, Gaudium et spes expressed “precisely what Pere Teilhard sought to do.” In a later article written in 1968, de Lubac extensively examined issues concerning the “goodness of the world,” the separation between the natural and supernatural, and the Christian vocation in the world, quoting Teilhard several times in his explanation of how the Christian anthropology of Gaudium et spes evolved. Already at this time, only a few years after the closing of the Council, however, de Lubac was expressing his concerns that the Christological heart of Gaudium et spes was being subsumed within a secularism concerned solely with the urgent problems of the world and with human progress.350

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350 Henri de Lubac, Athéisme et sense de l’homme: une double requête de “Gaudium et spes,” (Paris, 1968), 130. This article was translated by D.C. Schindler as “The Total Meaning of God and the World” in Communio 35 (Winter, 2008):613–41. According to Dr. Mathias Trennert-Helwig, Teilhard’s thought had a “polarizing effect” right up to the Council’s last debates. For those Council fathers who did not know his writings or only knew them superficially, he was, as Cardinal Döpfner commented on September, 22, 1965, the symbol for a “superficial,” “triumphant” or “poetical optimism” that dangerously played down the reality of sin. Archabbot Benedikt Reetz and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre offered similar views. [See “Teilhard de Chardin and Vatican II – and the Monitum,” British Teilhard Association Newsletter, 23 (February, 2007)]. In regards to de Lubac’s interventions with this population, on September 11, 1965, shortly before the opening of the final session of the Second Vatican Council and a consideration of the final draft of Gaudium et spes, Father de Lubac presented a report titled “Tradition and Innovation in the
Theologians Robert Speaight, Leo Donovan, Bishop Otto Spülbeck, Sigurd Martin Daecke, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and John Haught are among those who concur, if only in passing, that this Teilhardian influence exists. Speaight’s biography of Teilhard mentions in the Forward that “Nothing that Teilhard said in public or in private … was left unsaid at the Second Vatican Council. Much that he had clamored for was implied or incorporated in its decrees.”

According to Leo Donovan, “Protestant and Catholic alike have commented on [Teilhard’s] influence at the Council.” Donovan argues that although Teilhard’s name was never explicitly mentioned in the conciliar documents or the official proceedings, it was well known how Gaudium et spes was shaped by theologians from the University of Louvain, as well as the French bishops and periti who were especially familiar with

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351 Robert Speaight, The Life of Teilhard de Chardin (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), 14. Speaight also notes here that when Teilhard wrote of revelation in a letter to Père Auguste Valensin on October 20, 1919 “it is not limited to the composition of a text, but it envelops that text and lives in it to the extent that the Church very slowly understands it,” he was stating what is now accepted as a theological commonplace.
Teilhard’s work. However, Donovan also notes that if a Teilhardian influence is to be claimed, it is a diffuse one dealing more with orientations than with specific teachings. A Teilhardian “school,” he notes, does not seem to exist.

Spülbeck, of Meissen, noted four occasions when Teilhard’s name was specifically mentioned in the council hall during the discussion of the *Pastoral Constitution*. It was his own view “that Teilhard’s optimism in judging the world process, his effort on behalf of developing all concealed possibilities, his ‘Yes’ to the entire creation in all its stages of evolution, his struggle for a unified and inclusive conception and view of the world in which every spiritual endeavor of mankind would be integrated, all this accompanied the writing of the text from the very beginning.”

Spülbeck thought that chapter three of the *Constitution* “Man’s Activity throughout the World,” has perhaps the most clearly defined Teilhardian characteristics. He also saw articles thirteen and fourteen, on original sin and the role of the body as attempting to balance Teilhardian optimism in regards to the problem of evil.

Daecke, a German Lutheran theologian, on the other hand believes that Teilhard’s themes are found in the *Pastoral Constitution* only in those areas on the threshold of theology, such as in anthropological and sociological issues. In the theology about God, Christ, the Church and God’s relationship to the world, he finds Teilhardian thought

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352 Donovan, 494. For another opinion on how this occurred, one might want to review http://www.sspxasia.com/Documents/SiSiNoNo/1994_April/They_Think_Theyve_Won_PartV.htm by the Pius X Society.


completely absent. Daecke laments that “Where Catholic interpreters must falsify Teilhard’s thought in order to be able to affirm it at these central theological passages, there is no trace left in the Constitution of an influence of Teilhard’s thinking.” In particular, Teilhard’s distinctive cosmic Christology was bracketed off from any significant influence upon the Council; what was left was a whitewashed version of his vision. This opinion obviously is quite different from Spülbeck’s; in Daecke’s view the change in attitude toward Teilhardian themes resulted from “oversimplifying interpretations,” the reason behind which permitted Teilhard to be considered orthodox and useful for the purposes of the Council.

Much later Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote similarly in speaking of Teilhard’s influence upon the documents of Vatican II and the optimistic stance toward the world found in these. He believed that Teilhard encouraged an understanding of evolution “as a type of technical and scientific development in which Matter and Spirit, the individual and the society constitute a global ensemble, a divine world. The conciliar Constitution on the Church and the Modern World [Gaudium et spes] followed the same train of thinking.”

Another who later agreed with this was John Haught, formerly of Woodstock Theological Center. Haught notes that Gaudium et spes is revolutionary in particular

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355 Donovan, 495. For Daecke’s own interpretation see his Teilhard de Chardin und die evangelische: Theologie Die Weltlichkeit Gottes und die Weltlichkeit der Welt (Göttingen, 1967).
357 John F. Haught “More Being: The Emergence of Teilhard de Chardin,” Commonweal (June 5, 2009): 17-9. 17. Haught is presently a Professor Emeritus at Georgetown University, and was formerly a senior fellow in science and religion at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown. He has written extensively on Teilhard. His most recent books are God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens and Christianity and Science. This article is included as a chapter in the book Reclaiming
for two statements: “The human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. In consequence there has arisen a new series of problems . . . calling for efforts of analysis and synthesis.” Also, “A hope related to the end of time does not diminish the importance of intervening duties but rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives.” Haught contends that it is almost impossible to read these words and not recognize Teilhardian thought in them, particularly that about the necessity of building the earth. He comments that when we recognize that the universe is still a work in progress, true Christian hope orients our life and efforts toward participation in that ongoing work of creation; it is then we also realize with Teilhard that “our hope for final fulfillment is not a reason for passivity here and now.”

Finally, not long after the council ended, Cyril Vollert wrote extensively on how Teilhard’s influence is directly evident in the conciliar documents. His thought is used here as a means by which to give a far more specific schema for considering what influence Teilhard may have exerted upon the Council.

Vollert’s essay, “Teilhard in the Light of Vatican II,” was published in 1968 in the United States in an edited volume of works on Teilhard. Vollert has no reservations in arguing that Teilhard’s influence was immense and significant. Several of the speakers, he states, including the future Paul VI, referred to Teilhard during the last three sessions

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359 Ibid, no. 21, 219.

360 Haught, 18.
of the Council. However, along with others already mentioned he contends that although Teilhard’s influence was tremendous, to claim that the Council deliberately or systematically incorporated any of his theses into the constitutions would be “an exaggeration.” Still one could argue, as does Vollert, that Teilhard’s spirit and fingerprints are all over the debates and documents of the Council, and these therefore speak of the role he played and the “influence he exercised” on Christians during these decades.

To render this point, Vollert compares phrases from the Council’s teachings with corresponding themes from Teilhard’s own work in five different areas: building the earth, the unification of mankind, the ecumenical spirit, faith and science, and new theological investigations. A brief synopsis of Vollert’s argument follows here, in hopes of also establishing that already so early in the 1960s Teilhard’s influence on the ecclesial hierarchy was quite substantial — in the United States as well as globally. Additionally these themes will prove useful later in this chapter in considering the influence of Teilhard upon the general US population of the time, and as a way to consider his reception in light of social events.

In the section “Building the Earth,” Vollert first points to the statements in *Gaudium et spes* mentioned above: “Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of its history.” Then later, “The human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one.” The reference to dynamic, evolutionary

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361 Cyril Vollert, “Teilhard in the Light of Vatican II,” *Dimensions of the Future*, Marvin Kessler, S.J. and Bernard Brown, S.J. ed. (Corpus Books: Washington and Cleveland, 1968), 147. Vollert includes a quote from Paul VI: “Teilhard is an indispensable man for our times: his expression of the faith is necessary for us.” Hereafter this article is referenced as “Teilhard in the Light.”

362 Vollert, “Teilhard in the Light,” 147.

363 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, no. 4.

364 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, no. 5, 203.
forces was recognized immediately by those reading about the Council as revealing the influence of Teilhard. 365 This constitution encourages Christians to respond to the spirit of the Gospel by performing their earthly duties conscientiously. 366 Additionally, although the sacred and the profane must not be confused, they are not to be separated, as the sacred is “the deepest dimension of the profane, and every human task has a sacred aspect.” 367 Every one of our actions can serve to build up Christ’s body. All work “takes on the form and greatness of a sacred duty.” 368

Concerning the unification of mankind, Vollert’s second category in his essay, he writes that the documents of Vatican II emphasize the reasons that unity among humankind is important for the Church. 369 All those who perform their work in a way benefitting society are correct in thinking “that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator’s work . . . and contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan.” 367 This becomes even clearer “if we consider how the world is becoming unified,” and how all have the responsibility to build a better world together.

365 Vollert, “Teilhard in the Light,” 149.
366 “The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God.” Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 43, 243. Also, “When, by the work of his hands or with the aid of technology, man develops the earth . . . he carries out the design of God.” Ibid., No. 57, 262. Vollert also directs the reader’s attention to Teilhard’s Divine Milieu, which explicitly argues that the new, evolving world “must be built by man himself. Man must guide the direction of history; he must make a map for the future (151).
369 Also, consider “The conditions of this age lend special urgency to the Church’s task of bringing all men to full union with Christ.” Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 1, 15. The thought behind these quotes could only serve as further encouragement for those Christian devotees of Teilhard who saw the work for Civil Rights and/or various anti-war efforts as divinely inspired.
370 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 34, 232.
This is a witness to the birth of a new humanism.\textsuperscript{371} The increasing sense of solidarity among all people is a sign of our times, Vollert argues.\textsuperscript{372}

The evolutionary vision of Teilhard de Chardin is obviously not static; the cosmos is a cosmogenesis which necessarily includes humanity in anthropogenesis. As a result, humanity is beginning to act in a more unified fashion. The prejudices of old have to be transcended, for “the age of nations is past.”\textsuperscript{373} Human unity consists of the achievement of oneness with Christ, but without the loss of one’s own personality.\textsuperscript{374}

Vollert recognizes that the goal of the unification of humankind as broached by Vatican II both requires and fosters the ecumenical spirit, another great theme of the Council, and one also encouraged by Teilhard. That spirit is dependent upon an appreciation of the dignity of the human person, which “has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man.”\textsuperscript{375} As with unification, successful progress of the ecumenical movement requires dedicated action on the part of all Christians.\textsuperscript{376}

\textsuperscript{371} Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 55, 260-61.
\textsuperscript{372} Vollert also suggests that the document Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity reinforces this sense, as for example in the statement: “It is a function of the lay apostolate to promote this awareness zealously and to transform it into a sincere and genuine sense of brotherhood.” no. 10, 501.
\textsuperscript{373} Teilhard de Chardin, Building the Earth, no. 60. The entire quote “The Age of Nations is past. It remains for us now, if we do not wish to perish, to set aside the ancient prejudices and build the earth” appears above the stairs leading down to the auditorium at the Bunn Intercultural Center (completed and dedicated in 1982) at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
\textsuperscript{374} Teilhard de Chardin, Hymn of the Universe (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 89. The kind of unified socialization which Teilhard sought was personalist; perfection of self occurs through reciprocal love. It is with and through this love that humanity will achieve a state of “ultra-humanity,” that is, of social unification. From Teilhard, The Future of Man, 275f. Consider also that whereas in the past anthropogenesis took place “naturally” without much involvement on humanity’s part, now that we better understand what is occurring we realize the choices of our free will can guide the future of evolution. The most important event of that future is the movement up toward Someone, the mystical Christ. Ibid., 279.
\textsuperscript{375} Declaration on Religious Freedom, no. 1, 675.
\textsuperscript{376} Consider: “Concern for restoring Christian unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the potential of each . . . and it leads toward that full and perfect unity which God lovingly desires,” Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 23, 222. Vollert adds that this action includes the explanation of Catholic belief in forms and with terminology that all can better appreciate, including the “separated brethren.” Vollert also notes that a portrait of the ideal
As with the age of nations, Teilhard thinks that eventually humankind will leave the ages of religions and enter the age of religion; without any doubt the ecumenical movement points in this direction. Of all the world religions, it is Christianity which is best suited to anthropogenesis. Evolution will follow along the lines of Christianity therefore, and other world religions will converge on this axis.\(^{377}\)

In regards to the intersection of faith and Teilhard’s evolutionary theories, *Gaudium et spes* stressed that science and faith (the next grouping in Vollert’s essay) are not in opposition.\(^{378}\) The Church wanted all branches of knowledge to be studied in a spirit of freedom since in scientific research “faith and reason give harmonious witness to the unity of all truth.”\(^{379}\)

Vollert points out that Teilhard’s theories offered aspects that even nonbelievers, such as Julian Huxley, could accept: “It seems to me that the bond Teilhard established between evolutionary biology and Christian theology is his single most important contribution to modern thought . . . It traces the road for an eventual reconciliation between science and the faith.”\(^{380}\) Still, Vollert makes an extremely important point in

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missionary for this work is found in *Ad Gentes*, a portrait that strikingly reminds one of Teilhard himself: “He must be ready to take initiatives . . . persevering in difficulties, patient and strong of heart in bearing with solitude, fatigue and fruitless labor . . . he needs a noble spirit for adapting himself to strange customs . . . he needs an empathetic mind and a responsive heart for cooperating with his brethren and with all who dedicate themselves to a common task.” *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*, no. 25, 615.


\(^{378}\) See, for example, “If methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith. For earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God.” *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, no. 36, 234.

\(^{379}\) Declaration on Christian Education, no. 10, 648.

\(^{380}\) Julian Huxley, “Message,” *Europe* 43 (1965): 12f. See also Huxley’s Introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man* which is much along the same line. Huxley also argues that the most essential feature of Teilhard’s work is “that of having built the bridge between science and religion.” Of course, Huxley comments,
noting that for Teilhard it is the Christian vision alone which gives meaning to that matter and to evolution. He saw no reason to refute the arguments of the materialists; he was instead satisfied to show that evolution was far better explained within the perspective of the faith. After all, when science is “probed deeply, it reveals the hidden countenance of God who is Love.”\footnote{381}

Finally, Vollert considers the goal of aggiornamento as espoused by the Second Vatican Council. Theological updating, he comments, requires “new investigation” into the faith through “use of the tools of the present moment.”\footnote{382} Still, the centrality of Christ must continually be stressed, for Christ is “the key, the focal point, and the goal of all human history.”\footnote{383} Christ “is drawing all men to himself.”\footnote{384} Teilhard was a reformer, who worked for a rejuvenation of Christianity, “not by structural alteration but by assimilation of new elements.”\footnote{385} His primary focus, as has been noted before in this work, is that he wished to show that only Christ is the apogee of evolution, toward which all is converging. In a point that perhaps many today, as well as the social activists and others working for “human progress” during the 1960s might argue, Teilhard numerous

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\footnote{381}{Vollert, \textit{Teilhard in the Light}, 162. See also Paul Chauchard, \textit{Telhard de Chardin: Un modèle et un guide pour notre temps} (Paris: Éditions du Levain, 1963), 11f for a similar argument.}
\footnote{382}{Vollert, \textit{Teilhard in the Light}, 163.}
\footnote{383}{As \textit{Gaudium et Spes} notes: “Recent studies and findings of science, history and philosophy raise new questions which influence life and demand new theological investigations.” \textit{Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World}, no. 62, 268.}
\footnote{384}{\textit{Ibid.}, no. 10, 208.}
\footnote{385}{\textit{Dogmatic Constitution on the Church}, no. 48, 79.}
\end{footnotes}
times claimed that it is Christ who “reveals himself as the form of faith most suitable to modern needs, a religion for progress . . . the very religion of evolution.”

A Reflection on US Historical Events 1965 through 1967

The pertinent historical events to be discussed in this chapter are three: the movement for racial equality, the escalation of the Vietnam War and resulting anti-war movement, and the rise of the counterculture. The Sixties were a time of hope, despite ongoing divisiveness, excess and incivility. Activists both within and outside the Catholic Church had confidence in the resilience of the national fabric, and felt free to test the limits of the nation. Their trust in the ultimate good sense of the American people gave them faith that conservatives did not seem to share. Additionally, their belief in possibility and progress strongly paralleled a primary theme in Teilhard’s thought, as well as in the documents of Vatican II. An examination of these events will give a further understanding of why, as transformation in American society gained momentum, so too did public interest in Teilhard continue to increase. An aspect of this interest to consider, however, is whether societal belief that human progress in solving the social problems of the world included a mistakenly shifted understanding of Teilhard’s focus as well as the basis of his optimistic hope.

Civil Rights

Without a doubt the civil rights movement and the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were of tremendous importance during these and subsequent years. Mark Silk situates his book Spiritual Politics on the premise that civil rights was often a religious

affair. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. himself noted that “if today’s church does not
recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the
loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the
twentieth century.” Indeed, the March on Selma of 1965 brought to the forefront a
new wave of quite visible nonviolent troops, many of them clerical activists. On January
2\textsuperscript{nd} of that year King told a rally in Selma that a new voter registration drive would be
launched from there. Two weeks later the United States sued the state of Alabama for
making voter registration too difficult for its citizens.

As the registration drive got under way in February, thousands of blacks were
arrested as they demonstrated against the registration requirements. On February 10,
1965, state officials attacked black protesters in Selma with nightsticks and cattle prods;
another confrontation in early March involved the use of tear gas and clubs.

The March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama on March 21\textsuperscript{st} of 1965 involved
twenty-five thousand protesters from across the nation. Three who were involved died as
a result of these protests. Still, unlike the Mississippi Summer just a year earlier, suspects
in the civil rights murders were at least brought to trial. The Voting Rights Act of 1965
was passed on August 6\textsuperscript{th} as a direct response to Selma and further racial violence. At
long last segregation and discrimination appeared to be dying; progress in the Civil
Rights front was happening.

The Civil Rights movement introduced nonviolent resistance to the nation and
emphasized the importance of community. What became clear was the necessity of
building and holding together a community of activists if any hope of success was to be

\footnote{Mark Silk, \textit{Spiritual Politics: Religion and America since WWII} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 3.}
had concerning the progress of humanity.\textsuperscript{389} The movement speaks to several of the Teilhardian themes elucidated by Vollert, particularly building the earth and the unification of peoples. In addition, the ecumenical spirit of the Civil Rights movement fit nicely with that espoused by the Second Vatican Council. As has already been discussed, Teilhard very much discerned that it was the work of the people to create progress in the world, which would include a deep appreciation of the dignity of every person, and the unity of all the races. Ahlstrom comments that “New cosmic signs \textit{were} being read in the 1960s. The decade \textit{did} experience a fundamental shift in American moral and religious attitudes. It is no accident that phrases such as ‘post-Puritan, post-Protestant, post-Christian, postmodern and even post-historical were commonly used to describe the American scene.’\textsuperscript{390} Presuppositions held for centuries were widely questioned; the nation was evolving. From Teilhard’s viewpoint, “To cooperate in total cosmic evolution is the only deliberate act that can adequately express our devotion to an evolutive and universal Christ.”\textsuperscript{391} The United States may have been evolving; the question however, was toward what was it they were evolving?

This question was on the minds of many when the violence of Selma escalated into the Watts riots in Los Angeles not even six months later. From August 11-16\textsuperscript{th}, 1964, primarily black Americans rioted in the streets; eventually thirty-four people died, over one thousand were injured, and four thousand were arrested. Riots spread across the nation until in 1967 they took place in Detroit, Michigan where 7,000 National

\textsuperscript{391} Teilhard, \textit{Science and Christ}, 68.
Guardsmen were called into protect the city. Riots also erupted in Rochester, New York, the Spanish Harlem section of New York City, and Birmingham, Alabama. The result was widespread confusion and discouragement.

Teilhard had written however, that a generalized desire for progress and unity, for movement toward convergence is not in itself sufficient. Instead, what is needed is to develop a relationship with others in terms of Christ, Christ loved not just for himself, but as the heart of the universe. This center of the universe, this Omega Point, for Teilhard, not only gives meaning to each person, but through loving Christ we also love those with whom we live and strive. In working to build the earth and to progress, man then sees “that he can love by his activity, in other words he can be directly united to the divine center and to others by his every action, no matter what form it might take.” 392 Without that center, convergence and love cannot survive. One might wonder how many of those reading Teilhard while striving at the time for racial equality or in antiwar protests understood this about his thought. In any case, these riots basically brought an end to the Civil Rights movement. The unity that had existed around the issue deteriorated in the midst of the violence, and was never recovered. At least in part though, the cessation of activism in this area occurred because energies aroused by civil rights were shifting instead toward the Vietnam War situation.

The Vietnam War and Anti-War Protests

The demographic developments during these years that created almost simultaneously both an urban crisis and a racial crisis are critical to the decade that became the Sixties. What is also significant is that the public’s former confidence in and allegiance to the American system was undermined by the transition of governmental

392 Teilhard, Science and Christ, 170ff.
concern from peace and reconstruction during the previous decade to the pursuance of the war in Vietnam. What could have been a gradual transition became sudden and traumatic. In 1962, President Kennedy sent American “military advisors” to Vietnam to help train the South Vietnamese army, but quickly concluded that the Diem regime was unsalvageable. As a result the following year the United States backed a coup that overthrew that regime and installed a new leader. Unfortunately the new US-backed leaders proved just as corrupt and ineffective.

Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, pledged to honor Kennedy’s commitments but hoped to keep US involvement in Vietnam to a minimum. After North Vietnamese forces allegedly attacked US Navy ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964 however, Johnson was given carte blanche in the form of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and began to gradually send US troops to Vietnam.

Within a week of Martin Luther King Jr.’s initial protests in Selma, Alabama, and only a month after President Johnson’s “Great Society” State of the Union speech in January, 1965, the war in Vietnam suddenly escalated with the regular bombing and strafing of North Vietnam by the United States—operation “Rolling Thunder.” At the end of March a car bomb exploding in front of the US Embassy in Saigon killed twenty-two people and injured another 183. The following day the United States ordered the first combat troops to Vietnam. The conflict escalated. By the end of 1966, Johnson’s “Americanization” of the war led to a presence of nearly 400,000 US troops in Vietnam.

American involvement began optimistically enough, with the belief that it would be quick and minimal. As the United States became increasingly mired in Vietnam

393 Ahlstrom, 2.
however, it pursued a strategy of attrition, attempting to bury the Vietnamese Communist forces under an avalanche of casualties. However, the Viet Cong’s guerrilla tactics frustrated and demoralized US troops, while its widely-dispersed, largely rural presence left American bomber planes with few targets. The United States therefore relied upon the use of unconventional weapons such as napalm and the herbicide defoliant Agent Orange. Still, little headway toward ending the war occurred.

In 1968, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong launched a massive campaign called the Tet Offensive, attacking several dozen US targets and the major cities in South Vietnam at one time. Although the United States pushed back the offensive and won a tactical victory, American media coverage characterized the conflict as a defeat, and US public support for the war plummeted. Morale among US troops also hit an all-time low.

What were the results of the escalation of the war in Vietnam? Historian Sydney Ahlstrom believes that it prevented a concentrated assault on the nation’s social justice problems of poverty and urban dislocation, as well as showing the “terrible inequities in military conscription.” 394 The optimism spawned during the Kennedy years was dampened by the escalation, and hardened the beliefs of many that military considerations were determining American priorities. As a result, this activated the student dissent movement, and led to a major loss of confidence in American institutions. The entire American system came under suspicion.

The antiwar movement within the United States consisted of student protesters, countercultural hippies, and those from middle-class suburbs, labor unions, and government institutions. The movement gained national prominence in 1965, peaked in 176

394 Ahlstrom, 13. This topic will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 of this work.
1968, and remained powerful throughout the duration of the conflict. As it encompassed political, racial, and cultural spheres, the antiwar movement exposed a deep schism within 1960s American society.

In the late 1950s a New York socialist, Michael Harrington, revived the League for Industrial Democracy as a forum for laborers, African-Americans, and intellectuals. Within the year the organization was taken over by the student radicals Al Haber and Tom Hayden of the University of Michigan, and reformed as the SDS—Students for a Democratic Society. In June 1962, fifty-nine SDS members met with Harrington at Port Huron, Michigan, in a conference sponsored by the United Auto Workers. From this meeting materialized the manifesto of the group that came to be called the New Left, the Port Huron Statement. Written by Hayden, the document expressed disenchantment with the then current military-industrial-academic establishment. The students bemoaned the ambiguity of life in Cold War America and prejudice against African-Americans as examples of the failure of modern American ideologies, and also called for a reconsideration of academic compliance. In regards to the latter, many claimed a widespread conspiracy existed, the purpose of which was to maintain a sense of apathy among American youth.

For the first several years of its existence, SDS focused solely on national concerns. The students actively supported Lyndon Johnson in his 1964 campaign against Barry Goldwater. Following Johnson's victory, they concurred with the social programs of the Great Society. Not yet an antiwar organization, SDS actively participated in the

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396 Barringer. Tom Hayden grew up Catholic in an Irish family in Royal Oak, MI, as did Mario Savio in a Sicilian-Catholic neighborhood in New York City. Savio initially intended to become a priest.
Civil Rights struggle and later proved an important link between the two primary causes of the decade.

Another bridge between the Civil Rights and antiwar crusades was the Free Speech Movement (FSM) at the University of California at Berkeley. Students who had participated in Mississippi's "Freedom Summer" began the organization in December 1964. Very quickly after several skirmishes with University President Clark Kerr, the FSM and its dynamic leader Mario Savio publicized the close ties between academic and military establishments. By the beginning of 1965, the foundation of the antiwar movement was already coalescing on campuses and lacked only a significant catalyst to bring wider public acceptance.

Early in February, 1965, when the US began bombing North Vietnam, that catalyst appeared. The pace of the protest immediately increased; in both February and March, SDS organized marches on the Oakland Army Terminal, the departure point for many troops heading to Southeast Asia. On March 24th, faculty members at the University of Michigan promoted a series of "teach-ins," on the model of successful Civil Rights seminars. These sought to educate the student population about the moral and political implications of US involvement. The teach-in format spread to campuses around the country and brought faculty members into active antiwar participation. In March, SDS extended the scale of dissent to a national level, calling for a march on Washington to protest the bombing, one that would mirror civil rights protests. On the 17th of April 1965, between 15,000 and 25,000 people gathered at the Capital. The turnout shocked not only the organizers, but the media and subsequently the nation as a whole.397

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397 The SDS movement gained new allies over the next two years. "Vietnam Day," a conference held at Berkeley in October 1965, drew unexpected thousands to debate the moral basis of the war. In the spring of
A significant development between 1965 and 1968 was the emergence of Civil Rights leaders as active proponents of peace in Vietnam. In a January 1967 article which appeared in the *Chicago Defender*, Martin Luther King, Jr. first expressed support for the antiwar movement due to moral grounds.\(^{398}\) He expanded his views in April of that year at the Riverside Church in New York by asserting that the war was draining much-needed resources from domestic programs.\(^{399}\) King's statements rallied African-American activists to the antiwar cause and established a new dimension to the moral objections of the movement. By this time the entire nation was aware that the administration's foreign policies were being widely questioned.

As the antiwar movement's ideals spread beyond college campuses, doubts about the escalation of the war also began to appear within the Johnson administration itself. As early as the summer of 1965, Undersecretary of State George Ball counseled President Johnson against further military involvement in Vietnam. In 1967 Johnson fired Defense Secretary McNamara after the secretary expressed concern about the moral justifications

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\(^{398}\) Barringer at [www.english.illinois.edu/maps/vietnam/antiwar.html](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/vietnam/antiwar.html)

\(^{399}\) Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence.” This was a speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1967 at a meeting of Clergy and Laity Concerned at Riverside Church in New York City. Included in the speech are these words: “Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. … And we must rejoice... for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us.” Additionally he asserted that “The promises of the great society have been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam, making the poor, white and Negro, bear the heaviest burden both at the front and at home.” He also expressed concern over the placement of African-American troops in Vietnam and their higher casualty rates in relation to the total population. About a week later he addressed a major anti-war rally in New York City. Retrieved from [http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/058.html](http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/058.html) on July 17, 2013.
for war. Many more in government offices simply believed that the cost of winning was too high. However, widespread opposition within the government did not appear until 1968 during the presidential campaigns. That year Johnson faced strong challenges from peace candidates Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy, and George McGovern, all Democrats, as well as his eventual successor, Richard M. Nixon. By March 31st, after learning that his closest advisors now opposed the war, he withdrew from the presidential race.

As was expressed in the Introduction to this work, World War I was a point of conversion for Teilhard, and in many ways the catalyst for his later writing and further mystical experiences. Although Teilhard saw war as evil, it was still also an opportunity to build the earth, to promote convergence of humanity toward Omega, and to unite in a common cause. The Civil Rights Movement, the anti-war protests, the groups of student activists, even Johnson’s War on Poverty not mentioned in this work, were all potential opportunities for Teilhard’s form of evolutionary progress to occur. This is not to imply that all those who thoroughly perused his *The Phenomenon* understood Teilhard’s perspective as to how this progress was to happen, for the work and his categories were easily re-interpreted as the reader wished. As has already been expressed by some, it was perhaps the easily transportable quality of his basic ideas, particularly when divorced from his Christological center, which permitted them both to percolate into an increasingly pluralistic American society and to be transformed as the carrier desired. It is just this phenomenon with which de Lubac, Francoeur, and Barbour took issue.

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400 McNamara’s appreciation for Teilhard’s work has already been mentioned; in Chapter 6 his concerns over the Vietnam War will be discussed again.
The Rise of the Counterculture

Both the civil rights and the anti-war protest movements contributed to the growth of the counterculture; however, it was also a phenomenon that simultaneously developed and existed on its own. The segment of the counterculture most associated with a rejection of mainstream values was that of the “hippies,” a movement springing from the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco. The hippies were theoretically nonmilitant, espousing peace and love as alternatives to violence and racism, embracing long-held taboos as a way to revisualize and reform established society. They defied racism by adopting the idea of a general unifying brotherhood that drew all peoples into their fold. Through the philosophy and lifestyle of the hippie culture, the personal became political.

Those who could not travel to San Francisco had the music of their generation as an inspiration. Haugen and Box for example, consider the Beatles as the beginning of the counterculture in the United States. Some see the Beatles as redefining the sense of love for a generation, although some music critics would contend that their work had more to do with establishing identity and a general sense of spiritual well-being. It had, however, a strongly existential quality. The love about which they (and similar bands) sang “brought to the world a higher sense of harmony and goodwill, a sense of brotherhood and communal feeling not unlike the ethos advocated by the integrationist faction of the civil rights movement,” and similar to the ethos many found in Teilhard’s thought.

402 *Uncivil Wars*, 146.
403 *Uncivil Wars*, 146.
Anyone could aspire to hippie ideals with nothing more than a change in ethical or aesthetic views; so through advances in media millions of young whites could dabble in the music, dress, and philosophy of the counterculture without giving up the comforts of mainstream life. Once this option spread to the affluent and mainstream, it could not be ignored and was instead marketed. Scholar Mark Hamilton commented that at this point “hippieness had finally been subsumed by mainstream pop culture, but the essential message was not entirely lost in the process.”

Ongoing questions over the war in Vietnam, the paradox of the loss of civil rights for some in a democracy, and the notion that perhaps pleasure might exist outside of economic well-being, helped to liberalize mainstream American culture. Certainly the organized protest movements were more influential in pointing out and confronting injustice, but hippies were important in the overall cultural shift. As Barry Miles writes: “It was only by stepping outside society that people were able to look at it objectively— to see what was wrong with it, to see how they’d like to change it.”

The *International Times*, a periodical founded in the fall of 1966 for and by the London counterculture defined “hippiedom” as an inner-directed movement, so that those involved share a common viewpoint, one that could not be suppressed by force. They

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404 *Uncivil Wars*, 16.


406 *International Times* was launched on 14 October 1966 at The Roundhouse in London at a gig featuring Pink Floyd. The event promised a “Pop/Op/Costume/Masque/Fantasy-Loon/Blowout/Drag Ball” and featured progressive rock bands, steel bands, strips, trips, happenings, and movies. The launch was described as ”one of the two most revolutionary events in the history of English alternative music and thinking.” The *IT* event was important because it marked “the first recognition of a rapidly spreading socio-cultural revolution that had its parallel in the States” as explained by Daevid Allen of the band Soft Machine. From April 1967, and for some while later, the police raided the offices of *International Times* to try, it was alleged, to force the paper out of business. A benefit event labeled *The 14 Hour Technicolor Dream* took place at Alexandra Palace on 29 April 1967. Bands included Pink Floyd, Soft Machine, The Move, and Sam Gopal Dream. Also Hugh McLeod enumerates the themes of “hippiedom” as: 1) the use of drugs; 2) an advocacy of free love and rejection of the nuclear family; and 3) a rejection of the traditional work ethic; so that many perceived hippies as “parasites” upon the larger society. McLeod, 125.
believed that the individual should be free from any hindrance of external law so long as their actions did not impinge on another. This was not a movement of protest but of celebration, futuristic in nature, interested in having a good time or “pleasure now.” The new movement was essentially optimistic, with a “happy view of man and his potential, based mainly on his creativity… the new approach is to make changes wherever you are, right in front of your nose. The weapons are love and creativity.”\textsuperscript{407}

The counter-culturalists saw Christianity and the churches as far too dogmatic, interested primarily in laying down too many moral rules. At the same time, a strictly secular wisdom was criticized as also too dogmatic, reflecting a narrow conception of life and the universe.\textsuperscript{408} The ‘hippies’ were ready to accept the supernatural even as they rejected Christian ethics. McLeod considered them within a tradition that went back to the latter half of the nineteenth century, members of that middle way between orthodox religion and orthodox science, desiring a way of life that was spiritual without being exclusive, one that took “experience” seriously, and also considered phenomena that the mainstream rejected as a matter of course, including mystical experience.

As Timothy Leary wrote in the 1980s, “Everything we did in the 1960s was designed to fission, to weaken faith in and conformity to the 1950s social order. Our precise surgical target was the Judeo-Christian power monolith, which has imposed a guilty, inhibited, grim, anti-body, anti-life repression on Western civilization. Our assignment was to topple this prudish, judgmental civilization. And it worked!”\textsuperscript{409}

\textsuperscript{407} McLeod, 129.
\textsuperscript{408} McLeod, 132.
\textsuperscript{409} Paul Harvey and Philip Goff, \textit{The Columbia Documentary History of Religion in America since 1945} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 94-95. Timothy Leary, PhD., (1920-1976) was an American psychologist, writer, and an early advocate of LSD experimentation. Leary taught psychology at Harvard and by 1960, interested in their possible medicinal use in psychiatry, was doing experiments with LSD and other hallucinogens, first on prison inmates and then on himself and his friends. LSD was not
From about 1965 onward a variety of esoteric religious ideas began to reach a much wider audience, flowing especially from the San Francisco countercultural area. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow saw a strong correlation between the counterculture involvement and a rejection of Christianity. As is noted with Dr. Leary, the movement included the non-religious and “mystics” interested in knowledge of and belief in astrology, extra-sensory perception, and Native American religions. Consistent with their overall stress on the experiential and on individual freedom the counterculture, in terms of spirituality, emphasized the need for personal exploration, highlighting the subjective, emotional, and the intuition rather than rational argument.

The mystical, ecumenical qualities of Teilhard’s thought would on the surface appear to be quite appealing to those in the counterculture. For those seeking union not only with each other, but with the cosmos and the spiritual in general, someone who wrote of his own mystical experiences was quite alluring. Teilhard’s conception of what was later known as “deep time” would have also found favor with those seeking something beyond a dogmatic view of history and culture. In addition, of course, those who advocated love for all would have been quick to embrace one who spoke of love as the ultimate force of life. For Teilhard, however, as stated above, this “love” was first illegal at the time. In 1960, Allen Ginsberg, supervised by Leary, ingested psilocybin mushrooms, (under the influence of the drug he phoned Jack Kerouac, identifying himself as God to the telephone operator), and began to spread the word about the new powerful psychedelic drugs. When Harvard dismissed him in 1963, Leary set up the Castalia Institute in Millbrook, New York to continue his studies. His approach to taking LSD was that of "set and setting," a practice of taking the drug in a controlled environment, as a safeguard against bad trips. He coined the phrase "Turn On, Tune In, and Drop Out," and formed the "League of Spiritual Discovery," an LSD advocacy group. Another of his phrases appropriate to the era was “think for yourself and question authority.” He also wrote and spoke frequently about transhumanist concepts involving space migration, intelligence increase and the extension of life. In the mid 1960s, he began attending numerous musical events and public forums that promoted the use of LSD. Leary spent a number of years in 29 different prisons worldwide for various charges related to drug possession. In the early 1970s then-President Richard Nixon called Leary “the most dangerous man in America.” From “Timothy Leary, Pied Piper of Psychedelic 60s, dies at 75,” The New York Times (June 1, 1996) Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/1022.html on September 5, 2013. McLeod, 134.
found in a love of Christ. Repeatedly he notes that “it is impossible to love Christ without loving others…it is impossible to love others without moving nearer to Christ.”

It would seem, then, that to reject Christ along with Christianity was to reject that which would bring about exactly what at least seemed to be most desired by the counterculture – a community of love. And especially for the mystics in their midst, Teilhard notes that rather than individual spiritual ecstasy, “the only subject ultimately capable of mystical transfiguration is the whole group of mankind forming a single body and a single soul in charity” through Christ.

**The Formation of the American Teilhard Association**

It was in this turbulent atmosphere and intense interest in Teilhard’s thought in both Church and world that an official United States Teilhard association finally came into being. As has already been detailed in prior chapters, repeated attempts at the same thing earlier in the 1960s had not succeeded. However, as an indication of the increasing influence of at least some portion of Teilhard’s thought on the general American population, the American Teilhard Association was officially launched on February 24, 1965. Twenty people met for this purpose in New York under the initial leadership of Robert Francoeur, Pierre Dansereau, and John Walsh. They had finally been authorized by the French Teilhard Association to form a counterpart in the United States.

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411 Teilhard, *Divine Milieu*, 125.
412 Teilhard, *Divine Milieu*, 126.
413 ATA Brochure, Barbour Collection Box #2, Woodstock Library archives, Georgetown University. Also, Winifred McCulloch, *A Short History of the American Teilhard Association* (Chambersburg, PA: American Teilhard Association for the Future of Man, 1979). At this time Father Francoeur was beginning his work in experimental embryology in the Biology Department at Fairleigh Dickinson University, where he was to be for the next 40 years. Pierre Dansereau is known today as one of the “Fathers of ecology,” and was a Quebeçois who studied in Geneva, then worked first in Montreal and at the University of Michigan before moving to New York City. He ended his career as the Director of the Research Centre for Sciences and the Environment at the Université du Québec à Montréal.
The ATA, as it became known, was incorporated as a non-profit with tax-exempt status in April, 1967.

The front page of the first membership brochure for the ATA remarks that “Throughout the modern world the writings of the French Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin are inspiring hope and a sense of direction, zest for life and love of the world. Many thoughtful readers find that he speaks to the deepest problems of our troubled time.” Additionally included are comments that typify the decade:

As the process of creative union continues, aided by sophisticated modern communications, human persons will be united in a timeless and richly diversified universal community. The force that propels us from below that works in us and through us, that draws us up from above, is known and named. It is love. Thus, Teilhard challenges us to do our utmost to increase consciousness, union, love.

The purpose and plans of the ATA are enumerated as: 1) to extend knowledge and understanding of the thought of Teilhard; 2) to encourage critical study of his work and to further develop lines of thought indicated by this work; 3) to provide a focus for the integration of developments in science, sociology, religion, and philosophy; 4) To organize meetings of those interested in such studies; and 5) To promote fellowship and cooperation among those interested in the life, work, and thought of Teilhard.

As a means of accomplishing these aims, the Association planned to maintain a Teilhard Center which would include a reference and lending library, as well as space for meetings and seminars. Additionally, they were organizing an advisory board, membership association and newsletter for the purpose of exchanging information. This

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414 The address given on the first membership brochure for the ATA was 157 East 72nd Street, New York, New York. This location was a room in a former Anglican theological library, the Library of St. Bede’s, which had been founded and administered for over thirty years by a group of women from the Episcopal Church. It was also about three blocks away from the neighborhood in which Teilhard had spent his last several years, and the apartment in which he died.
board would also sponsor lectures and conferences on the thought of Teilhard and related issues. Finally, they wished to encourage research and interdisciplinary projects.

On the final fold of the ATA brochure is the comment:

Among the seminal thinkers of our century Pierre Teilhard de Chardin holds a pre-eminent place. He is one of the few scholars to make a creative contribution both to science and to theology. His distinction was to combine precise, analytic observation with a brand new synthetic vision and deep-rooted faith at a time when these three elements of human endeavor were divided and opposed to one another.

Rejected at first by positivistic science as well as by traditional theology, Teilhard nevertheless pioneered and summed up the dynamic and integrative approach of modern thought in theology, history and the natural and social sciences. Despite the scope of his thought, however, Teilhard did not aim to construct a closed or finished system. Rather, he sought to open the way through research and dialogue to an ever-growing knowledge of man, society and the world as parts of one organically related and developing universe whose fundamental characteristic is not atomic matter but mind, and whose supreme product, looking towards the future, is the full flowering of spirit. It is this search, initiated by Teilhard, that the ATA hopes to continue.

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415 Initial membership costs were regular membership $10, student $3, sponsoring, $100. This included a subscription to the biannual *Teilhard Review* and to the newsletter. The initial Board of Directors with their association positions and credentials (included here to indicate the already interdisciplinary nature of those interested) were Pierre Dansereau, President (Cranbrooke Institute — Department of Ecology, NY Botanical Garden, and Professor of Botany, Columbia, Fordham, and NYU); Michael H. Murray — Vice President (Episcopal minister and Communications Officer, Joint Urban Program, The Episcopal Church); Beatrice Bruteau — Vice President (Executive Secretary, The Foundation for Integrative Education- first convener of the 1964 Teilhard Conference at Fordham); Minna Cassard — Secretary Treasurer (lay Episcopal member); Ewert Cousins (Professor of Theology, Fordham); Theodosius Dobzhansky (Professor of Genetics, Rockefeller University); Henry Elkin (Psychotherapist and Jungian Analyst, New School for Social Research); Bob Francoeur (Assistant Professor of Biology, Fairleigh Dickinson University); Louis Marks (Chair of Biology, St. Joseph’s College, Philadelphia and then Fordham); Alexander Wolsky (Chair of Natural Sciences, Marymount College, Tarrytown, NY). The Advisory board included: George Barbour (Chair of Geology, University of Cincinnati), Sister Margaret Mary Bach (Chair of Philosophy, Marymount), Thomas Berry (Associate Professor, Asian Religions, Fordham), Donald J. Bloom (Founder of the Phenomenon of Man (POM) Project, Canoga Park, CA), J. Donceel, S.J. (Professor of Philosophy, Fordham), Loren Eiseley (Professor of Anthropology, University of PA), W.H. Kenney, S.J. (Professor of Philosophy, Bellarmine School of Theology, Ill), Hallam Movius (Professor of Anthropology, Harvard), Mildred Mann (Leader, Society of Pragmatic Mysticism, NY), Jean Houston (Director, Foundation for Mind Research, NY), J.V. Langmead Casserley (Theologian, Seabury-Western Seminary, Evanston, IL).
Finally, three years after interested parties initially gathered, the first annual general meeting took place in April of 1968. Within a year membership in the ATA stood at eleven hundred seventeen, and subscriptions to the *Teilhard Review* climbed to one hundred thirty-five nonmembers.

The reader should note, however, that once again, although “love” is mentioned in numerous places on this initial brochure, any mention of the Christological focus of Teilhard’s own love and thought is neglected. Rather than a personal Omega, the final point of humanity’s effort and love is an amorphous “full flowering of spirit.”

**Chapter Conclusion**

In light of the cumulative impact of the Second Vatican Council, and the Civil Rights, anti-war and countercultural movements, it seems Sydney Ahlstrom was correct in writing that “the full significance of these several compound events will not be knowable until the end of time, but it was perfectly clear to any reasonably conscious American historian that the postwar revival had completely frittered out, that the nation was moving rapidly towards a *crise de la conscience* of unprecedented depth.” It is appropriate here to remark that Teilhard commented more than once that phenomena, whether natural or chronological, can only be explained from a “God’s-eye” or highly bird’s-eye view. As is noted in his *Pantheisme et Christianisme*: “not a thing in our changing world is really understandable except in so far as it has reached its terminus.”

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416 The meeting took place on Saturday, April 27, 1968, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. First on the agenda were instructions given to attendees to pronounce the name as “Tay-yahr.” In response to the question as to why his surname was this was the explanation that Teilhard’s grandfather—Pierre Cirice Teilhard—married in 1841 into the de Chardin family, whose name was then appended onto his own, a custom not uncommon in Europe. As to the membership itself, the New York reading room had eighty-six visitors that first year, with numerous ongoing study groups. The first editions of the Teilhard Review went to three hundred printings.

417 Ahlstrom, 2.

Even today historians debate the interaction of these movements in the “perfect storm” that was the 1960s.

One must ask again, then, in the midst of that storm of the mid-sixties, why was Teilhard so readily embraced? In large part it was perhaps, as he wrote in *Hymn of the Universe*, that he was one “whom the Lord had drawn to follow the road of fire,” whose calling led him away from the road of abandonment of the life of matter into the world of people, action and the “stuff” of the universe. These years in the decade were certainly about people, action, and the stuff of life. They were also replete with passion, and Teilhard was undoubtedly a man of passion who became a model for many others.

The passion that drove Teilhard led him not only in the fire of love for and union with God, but towards union with a world of people of all types, participating in many different activities. One of those activities, which so greatly shaped his vision and thought, was World War I. In a new way he realized that at that time the matter of the earth was indeed charged with life and with spirit. As a result, the passion that so permeated his life was intensified, and the love he felt for the world, the need he felt to choose life, only grew stronger. He became more convinced that each of us is bound together by all our being —materially, organically, psychically, and mentally —with all around us. We are, like all other beings, cosmic by nature. All humanity together is in the process of forming that new entity, the cosmic Omega, which is far more than merely a collection of individuals, but the very Body of Christ. For Teilhard, perceiving this as happening at the war front was very much a redeeming and hopeful quality of the war.

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He wrote that “I brought back from it 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.”

In the United States those who were fighting the war on racial inequality and what they perceived as the curtailing in any way of personal freedom rejoiced in the sense of community and future hope fostered by this battle. Additionally, in Teilhard’s essay “Cosmic Life,” a motto written on the first sheet of the essay and later crossed out read “To those who feel; To those who will understand me,” an existential expression that thousands of people struggling for their voice in the mid-1960s might well have appropriated as their own salutatory plea.

As for those in the counterculture who aspired to peace, love, and personal freedom, Teilhard’s words that: “at the rate the consciousness and the ambitions of the world are increasing, it will explode unless it learns to love. The future of the thinking earth is organically bound up with the turning of the forces of hate into forces of charity,” were truths they were delighted to discover and attempt to put into action.

Those involved in the aforementioned movements, therefore, could be excused for thinking that Teilhard’s thought paralleled their own efforts quite nicely. What many appeared to overlook though in their appropriation of his work was the thoroughly integrated mystical Christian vision that required him to also write with sincerity: “To live the cosmic life is to live dominated by the consciousness that one is an atom in the

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421 Teilhard, The Making of a Mind, 125.
422 One might recall the lyrics of the Beatles opening track on the album Abbey Road, “Come Together,” released in October, 1969.
423 From the first essay in French found in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Érits du temps de la guerre (Paris: Grasset, 1965) in King, 55 and n. 49.
424 Ibid., 138.
body of the mystical and cosmic Christ. The man who so lives dismisses as irrelevant the host of preoccupations that absorb the interest of other men; his life is projected further, and his heart more widely receptive. For Teilhard, the promised unity and ongoing hope existed only within the context of, and a life lived in adoration of Christ. By no means did all those who appropriated his work understand it was this Christocentric focus that fueled the faith, hope, perseverance, and love that were keystones of his life and his thought.

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CHAPTER V


This chapter, like the last, attempts to delineate the increasing influence of Teilhard in the United States during the mid-1960s. As we have seen, the escalating trends of the time such as civil rights, radical theology, and various countercultural movements fed the increased interest in his work, and yet were in turn influenced by it. Teilhard’s thought truly exploded onto the scene during these years, as the escalating numbers of publications verify.

This chapter explores the themes of hope, optimism, and progress inherent to this time period and their relationship to Teilhard’s reception as expressed in conferences, journal articles, and books. The hope and excitement generated by the Civil Rights movement, the changes mandated by Vatican II, and the various student movements led to intense expectation. Even the radical theology and “Death of God” movement optimistically presumed that dispensing with moribund images of the sacred, the church, and religion would permit the evolution of something positive and improved.

In particular, the emphasis in the United States in the early- to mid-1960s was on hope for humanity and new possibilities for human progress. Harvey Cox’s The Secular City was indicative of the national mood during this time, as Cox articulated what so many were expressing in other forms, “Man, seen as the steersman of the cosmos, is the only starting point we have for a viable doctrine of God.”

This thought strongly

parallels Teilhard’s own conviction that humanity is the apex of God’s creation. The line between the secular and the sacred, the natural and the supernatural became thinner still during this time period, at least in the minds of a few, and Teilhard was in the midst of that adjustment.

As the previous chapter showed, these may have been years of hope, but the aftershocks of the race riots, and the escalation of the Vietnam War also constrained that hope. One of the questions that must be answered in the remaining chapters in regards to Teilhard’s writing is how hope in evolutionary progress might be sustained when all seems to have been lost, or at least quite stymied. This work has argued that for Teilhard, the promised unity of all humanity and ongoing hope despite suffering existed only within the context of, and a life lived with a Christocentric focus. As has already been shown, by no means did all those who utilized Teilhard’s thought in the years already examined either appreciate or understand the centrality of that focus in his own life or writings, and so were too eager to label him as scientific humanist, mystic, or poet.

The chapter begins by examining numerous publications out of the school of “radical theology,” including Harvey Cox’s *Secular City,* to determine their intersections with Teilhard’s writings. It then looks at a selection of the conferences on Teilhard’s work that took place during this time period, as well as publications from both the public and academic press concerning Teilhard and his work to determine how his thought was received, and the focus of those who wrote on him.

**Teilhard, the “Death of God,” and the Secular City**

Perhaps the most widely publicized aspect of this decade’s religious history, beyond the Second Vatican Council, were other efforts to meet the needs of the world’s
new age. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s earlier demand for a “secular interpretation” of scripture was answered by some with the emergence of radical theology, which entailed, like Teilhard’s writing, yet another major reappraisal of the basic Judaeo-Christian doctrinal consensus.

Radical theology was explored in Harvey Cox’ 1965 *The Secular City*, in H. Richard Niebuhr’s essay *Radical Monotheism* from 1960, and in Gabriel Vahanian’s *The Death of God: The Culture of our Post-Christian Era*” in 1961. Numerous theologians and scholars noted the correspondences between some aspects of radical theology and Teilhard’s work, and for that reason alone it would be worthwhile to explore those parallels. Considering also however, as several of the documents of Vatican II elucidate, the Council focused on the world, the role of the laity in the world, and the secular, this was a topic very much in the forefront of the minds of many. It was a theological topic that “grew legs” so to speak, giving momentum and agency to the ongoing efforts of those actively involved in the various social and racial justice movements of the time. Even if they had not read, or even heard of either Teilhard’s thought or “the death of god” movement, they lived it at this time. Hence, radical theology is a necessary topic for discussion in this work. Note too, that the Human Energetics Research Institute, the first official Teilhard-inspired organization formed at Fordham and discussed in Chapter Three sponsored one more conference following their

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successful seminars of the summer of 1964. In 1966, the Institute explored the similarities between Harvey Cox’s newly published book, *The Secular City*, and Teilhard’s thought.

Cox, of Harvard Divinity School, developed in a particular trajectory the contemporary thesis that the church is primarily a people of faith and action, rather than simply an institution. An ordained Baptist minister he argued that "God is just as present in the secular as the religious realms of life." With this so, the church should therefore be found in the forefront of change in society, discovering and celebrating the new ways religion was finding expression in the world, rather than hiding from the world.

Cox was specifically attempting to move beyond existentialism and “demythologization” to reprogram theology for what he saw as a new era in the history of humanity: the age of urban secularization. For the practical “technopolitan” dweller, “life is a set of problems, not an unfathomable mystery.” This particular population is too busy dealing with the realities of this life to have much concern for the next. The world, in other words, has been "defatalized," and life is now the task and responsibility of mankind alone. According to Cox, rather than deploring this trend, the church should welcome and assist it by supporting rapid social change.

Harvey Gallagher Cox, Jr. was born May 19, 1929 in Malvern, Pennsylvania, and served as Hollis Research Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School until his retirement in October 2009. Cox's research and teaching focus was on theological developments in world Christianity, including liberation theology and the role of Christianity in Latin America. His B.A. was in history from the University of Pennsylvania, his B.D. from Yale Divinity School in 1955, and his Ph.D. in history and philosophy of religion from Harvard in 1963. Cox was ordained an American Baptist Minister in 1957, taught at Andover Newton Theological School, and moved to Harvard Divinity in 1965. *The Secular City* could definitely be classified as a “run-away bestseller,” as it sold over a million copies.


Regrettably, Cox reiterated the definition of Dutch theologian C. V. van Peursen: “[Secularization is] the deliverance of man, first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language. It is the loosening of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed worldviews, the breaking
For Cox, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the perfect presidential type for this time period, as he was “the first really urban President,” one whose style was urban, cool, detached, yet mobile and appreciative. Kennedy was of “the world.” Cox chose the then newly martyred Kennedy as the model of his newly identified pragmatic, secular mind, for John F. Kennedy had assertively attacked old questions of civil rights, poverty, and crime with an innovative spirit, inspiring the younger generation to fresh ways of thinking. Additionally, Kennedy was an ideal example of the secular man who compartmentalizes his life in order to survive at work, at play and at home. Cox contends that the anonymity of city living helps preserve the privacy essential to human life; urban man “wants to maintain a clear distinction between private and public.”

Cox’s book gave John F. Kennedy the “secular canonization” liberal Catholics wanted; in turn, his paperback was a standard part of the teaching equipment of Catholic theologians. Carrying the theology of *The Secular City* one step further, “God is Dead” of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols. It represents the ‘defatalisation of history,’ the discovery by man that he has been left with the world on his hands, that he can no longer blame fortune or furies for what he does with it. Secularization occurs when man turns his attention away from worlds beyond and towards this time.” *Secular City*, 1-2. Also, Michael Novak’s article in *First Things* on March 5, 2007 states that: *The Secular City* caused such a sensation that by 1966 both *Christianity and Crisis* and *Commonweal* had published symposia on the book, in each of which Cox replied to his critics. These symposia plus a set of the outstanding critical reviews that had already appeared, and a set of essays newly commissioned for the occasion, appeared in the volume, *The Secular City Debate*, edited by Daniel Callahan (New York: McMillan, 1967). To this volume, too, Cox added "a vigorous rejoinder." In addition, Cox issued a new and revised edition of *The Secular City* in 1966, "to correct some of the more egregious overstatements, tone down an occasional vivid passage, and respond at points to helpful criticisms the book has elicited.

Gary Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion*, (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 89. Wills commented later on that: “Many felt on November 22, 1963 that God or fate or history had taken ‘the very best’ away.” Although the public and the government of the United States tried to solve that problem, they could not, and little solace, simply sadness was subsequently found. In the mid-1960s one might consider that “God’s death had been the death of mystery . . . but Kennedy’s death signaled the rebirth of mystery—the mystery of evil” (95-96). If the years of the Kennedy administration were years of great hope and the beginning of the Americanist appeal of Teilhard’s thought, the death of the Kennedys spoke to another aspect of Teilhard’s thought, one that was more difficult for most Americans to understand, much less to find of comfort.

*Secular City*, 40.
proponents cheered the news of God’s death.\textsuperscript{433} God \textit{had} to be dead if in “the marketplace,” John F. Kennedy left religion behind, sealed up privately. If the world was truly to be secular, “God must die to it, and release his claim on it.”\textsuperscript{434}

Therefore, God had to die, Cox concludes, to give us “Technopolis,” so that we might become the pragmatic men necessary to the age.\textsuperscript{435} Cox though, also outlines in his

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\item[\scriptsize 433] The “death-of-God” movement meant different things to different theologians, as Cox himself admitted (Harvey Cox, “Afterword,” \textit{The Secular City Debate}, 195-97). Yet, the movement hardly began with Cox, and is instead a widely quoted statement by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, which first appeared in \textit{The Gay Science} (German: \textit{Die fröhliche Wissenschaft}) in 1882. It is also found in Nietzsche's work \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra} (German: \textit{Also sprach Zarathustra} 1883-1885), which is most responsible for popularizing the phrase. The idea is stated in "The Madman" from \textit{The Gay Science} as follows: “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives.” By the early 1960s, however, the movement was garnering a great deal of contention, and numerous books were published around the subject. In 1961, Gabriel Vahanian argued in his book \textit{The Death of God} published in 1961 that modern secular culture had lost all sense of the sacred, lacking any sacramental meaning, and had no sense of teleology. He concluded that for contemporary society a transformed post-Christian and post-modern culture was required to resurrect God. Therefore, according to the norms of then contemporary modern thought, God \textit{was} dead. Another significant contribution to the “death of God” movement is found in \textit{Honest to God}, a book written by the Anglican Bishop John A.T. Robinson, which criticized traditional Christian theology, and aroused a storm of controversy on its publication. The dominant theory of \textit{Honest to God} is the idea that having rejected the idea of “God up there”, modern secular man also needs to recognize that the idea of “God out there” is also an outdated simplification of the nature of divinity. Rather, Christians should recognize in the existentialist theology of Paul Tillich that God is “the ground of our being.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s notion of religion-less Christianity is also a major theme in this book, as it is in Cox’s own later volume. Robinson claims that secular man requires a secular theology. That is, that God's continuing revelation to humanity is one brought about in culture at large, not merely within the confines of "religion" or "church." It is thus not a surprise that the cover of the April 8, 1966 edition of \textit{Time} magazine asked the question: “Is God Dead?” The accompanying article addressed the growing atheism in America of the time. Cox’s \textit{Secular City} therefore falls at least somewhat into this same theological discussion. Where, these authors are asking, is God to be found in a culture that is rapidly secularizing and re-examining the concepts of nature and grace? For some, Cox contended, the “death of God” meant the disappearance of the abstract divinity on which rested “our classical metaphysical systems.” For others this concept referred to the disappearance of the numerous culturally acceptable ways that the numinous of our ancestors was apprehended. As he notes, religious experience is shaped by cultural patterns, and when these change, so too do the means by which we discern and approach the holy. Hence, he writes, “the experience of the ‘death of God’ correlates with a rapid dissolution of traditional cultural patterns and is a frequent characteristic of societies in abrupt transition.”
\item[\scriptsize 434] Wills, 91.
\item[\scriptsize 435] Ibid., 92. The world is where one works, and religion therefore must also go into the secular, where the “action is.” It is perhaps necessary, he suggests, that the church may have to declare a moratorium on talk about "God" until there comes a better way of expressing the real meaning of this now almost incomprehensible concept. Wills notes that the death of God resembled Marshall McLuhan’s “death of print” and his concept of “Rejoicing in the non-word!” McLuhan (a convert to Catholicism) argues that print had to die to give us TV. McLuhan was another who took inspiration from the thought of Teilhard. In a 1952 review of McLuhan’s \textit{The Mechanical Bride} (London: Routledge, 1967) Father Walter Ong, who
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book the linkage of secularization with religion since even before the time of Christ and discusses how religion, particularly Christianity, has encouraged a secular response to change throughout the ages. A few have especially plumbed these ideas, he concludes, including Teilhard. Teilhard, one might argue, merged the religious with the secular even more so than Cox, who calls him one of the most important teachers of the future because of his emphasis on “man as ‘that point where the cosmos begins to think and to steer itself.’”  

In The Secular City Debate Cox refers to Teilhard as a “pariah” whose efforts to transcend metaphysical dualism with a secular theology, or more than that a Christian cosmology, are poetic and only accidentally scientific. This is a cosmology, Cox notes, that is “the first in some time to truly engage the imagination of modern man.”

What Cox discerns as key to humanity’s being is the future, and the understanding of man as a “creature who can hope.” Hope is essential to Teilhard’s discussion of transcendence. For Teilhard that hope is at least in part discovered in humanity’s growing capacity to apply science in the shaping of that future; the future then becomes not just that for which humankind is responsible, but that for which we now know we are responsible.

In an article in Continuum in 1965 on this very topic, Charles Thompkins notes that some are claiming Teilhard’s thought is already a passing fad, supplanted not just by the “Death of God,” but by Bonhoeffer’s emphasis upon secularization. Thompkins

happened to have studied under McLuhan, drew connections between McLuhan’s theories and Teilhard’s “noosphere.”

436 Wills, 98.

437 Cox, Secular City Debate, 197.

438 Cox, Secular City Debate, 198.

439 Donald Gray, “The Phenomenon of Teilhard,” Theological Studies 36 no.1 (March 1975): 19-51. Gray suggests that Teilhard’s work represents an attempt on hope’s part to achieve understanding of the sweep of cosmic evolution and of man’s place in it. “Teilhard hopes in order to understand.” Gray, therefore, writing several years after the last period covered in this work, places a great deal of emphasis on Teilhard’s Christology as his source of hope.
argues that for the most part, Teilhard’s and Bonhoeffer’s thought are identical. He gladly sees these as spelling an end to what some called “Christian culture,” as well as “wholesale condemnations of the secular world.” The realization has dawned that secularity is instead where personhood is found. “We are less distressed by a church of the diaspora because we see the destruction of Christendom and of the myth of Christian Culture, as a sign that Christianity is growing in self-awareness; it is becoming more Christian.”440

What radical theology attempted to do, therefore, was to update Christian language to make it more meaningful to a modern, scientific age. These authors wished to create what might be termed a “religionless Christianity,” for “Christianity had been separated off into a compartment labeled ‘religion,’ which had little relationship with the rest of life, and might offer means of escape from the tragic or mundane.”441

In regards to these topics Donald Gray later reaffirmed in an article in Theological Studies that Teilhard’s spirituality is decidedly secular in that it is directed to finding God in and through the “evolving world” and in “building the earth.” No dichotomizing tendency between sacred and secular exists for Teilhard. The future of the world is humanity’s responsibility; left solely to scientific evolution, the world would devolve into chaos and multiplicity from what order and unity presently exists.442

440 Charles Thompkins, “Fads upon fads,” Continuum 3 no. 3 (Autumn, 1965), 396-98.  
441 McLeod, 85.  
In terms of Teilhard’s hope, Gray believes it becomes for him a way of seeing. Teilhard, Gray argues, is writing against 1) those who have no hope whatsoever, the pessimists of contemporary society; 2) those Christians whose hope is too individualistic and focused overly much on the eschaton, and who therefore have no hope for the successful building of the earth; and 3) those humanists who do hope, but whose hope does not go far enough, and hence does not break through the barriers of death and suffering. Gray contends that for Teilhard neither Christianity nor humanism as they now stand is sufficiently optimistic; instead those whose stance is that of the absolutely optimistic draw their sustenance from a hope that embraces all of cosmic evolution, matter and spirit, nature and grace, through the power of the Paschal Mystery and especially the Resurrection of Christ. This is an explanation that those who later shunned Teilhard for too facile an optimism would have done well to make note of at the time.

**Conferences and Symposia**

The fact that the decidedly non-Catholic “Death of God” theologians would include an analysis of Teilhard’s work alongside Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s shows that for those outside the Catholic Church, as well as those staunchly within it, Teilhard’s thoughts were proving increasingly fascinating during these years. This argument can also be illustrated by what was becoming an increasingly common occurrence, namely special courses, conferences and “Teilhard Days” for both college students and the general public. To demonstrate this point, what follows is a summary of a few symposia from areas located apart from the previous Teilhard strongholds in the northeastern United States; those referenced here occurred in non-Catholic institutions in Chicago and
Pennsylvania, in the stronghold of the counterculture in southern California, and in the midst of middle-class, Midwest America.

The earliest of these was an ecumenical lecture series by Georges Crespy at the University of Chicago titled “Evolution and Its Problems.” This was one of, if not the first large conference concerning Teilhard giving in the Midwest, and outside Catholic walls. These talks were attended by over five hundred people—Roman Catholics and Protestants both, and were to be televised weekly by the Church Federation of Greater Chicago as “The Future of Man — a Discussion of Teilhard de Chardin.”

Additionally, February 10th was designated “Teilhard Day” at the University. An all-day conference on Teilhard’s thought and writings took place, and over one hundred philosophers, theologians and doctoral candidates attended. Most certainly that such a well-attended, wide ranging event with internationally-known Teilhard experts would occur, much less be sponsored by an ecumenical religious organization, implies a great deal not only about the interest in, but also the respect accorded the subject matter.

Yet another example of ecumenical interest can be found in the “Teilhard de Chardin Seminar,” which took place at Friend’s Central School in Overbrook, Pennsylvania. About 130 teachers from high schools and higher education attended, in

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443 Dave Meade, “Evolution: A Scientific New Gospel,” Chicago Daily News (1/9/65): 19. Dave Meade was the Religion Writer for the Daily News. Georges Crespy, a Swiss-born minister of the Reformed Church of France, was a Professor of Philosophical Theology at the University of Montpellier. Crespy’s thought is significant as he was one of the leading Protestant interpreters of Teilhard, particularly in Europe. He presented eight lectures on Teilhard between January 6th and February 24th, 1965 at the University of Chicago. The titles for these were: “Teilhard’s Concerns and Questions;” “The ‘Christology’ of Teilhard;” “The Question of Evil in Teilhard’s Thought;” “History and Eschatology in the Mind of Teilhard;” and “Theology after Teilhard.” Crespy had already written La Pensée Théologique de Teilhard de Chardin (1961), and later in 1965 would author De la Science à la Théologie: Essai sur Teilhard de Chardin, later translated into English as From Science to Theology: An Essay on Teilhard de Chardin (Abingdon Press, 1968). See in Chapter 7 a discussion of this book.

444 Additional papers presented included George Barbour’s “In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin,” and Ernan McMullin, Professor of Philosophy at Notre Dame speaking on “Teilhard’s Philosophical Affirmations,” among others.
order to learn about and better understand Teilhard’s thought and what it meant for their own scholarly discipline. The day concluded with a panel discussion on the impact of Teilhard’s thought by Haverford professors from biology, philosophy and religion.445

A third conference on Teilhard at a non-Catholic school was that held at Claremont Men’s College in December, 1966. The question of Teilhard’s popularity was broached by the main presenter, a Benedictine scholar. His conclusion was that Teilhard appeals especially to contemporary youth because of “a great intellectual curiosity, a very genuine creativity, a deep sense of and love for matter, a thorough understanding of man’s development, a fresh enthusiasm in research, an unshakable optimism in man’s goodness, a limitless confidence in the co-existence of spirit and matter, faith and reason to the point of some ‘mystical fusion,’ which was of great interest to many at the moment, particularly in the local area.” 446

Of local significance was another, much anticipated lecture on Teilhard which was to take place at Mount St. Mary’s of the West for the Athenaeum of Ohio in February, 1966. Due to unprecedented interest, the Teilhard lecture was moved to Wilson Auditorium at the University of Cincinnati. The presenter, the Dominican scholar Michael Stock, began his talk by discussing some of the controversy concerning Teilhard,

445 The teaching day took place November 12, 1965. The keynote speaker was Henry Van Dusen, former president of Union Theological. Georges Barbour once again also spoke about his friendship with Teilhard. Barbour Collection, Box 2, Woodstock Library, Georgetown University.
446 “Thoughts on Teilhard,” Claretmon Collegian 2 (November 30, 1966). Although at a private, non-Catholic college, the keynote speaker for the conference was the Benedictine Eleutherius Wilnance. In preparation for the presentation and resultant discussions an issue of the Claretmon Collegian was dedicated to the topic of Teilhard’s work in late November. Father Wilnance was giving an overview of “Chardin’s” life in order to acquaint the students with a powerful mind who might be able to shine a new light on everyday life within the context of faith. The presenter noted that while Teilhard follows the Greek scientific methodology of rationality, logic and accuracy, he also belongs to the mystical tradition emphasizing union with the absolute.
in particular whether his thought would endure and whether he was either a “new Thomas Aquinas” or alternatively a heretic. 447

Why, Stock asked, the interest in Teilhard in America? His response was that Teilhard’s vision is very modern, and so it naturally appeals to the modern mind. Beyond that, Stock believes this interest exists because it is based on a scientific theme and it confirms the strong present-day trend toward communal action. Additionally, it is optimistic in an age of increasing anxiety and it encompasses a spirituality that while very Catholic emphasizes “the sacredness of the world and the need for commitment.” 448 Still, however attractive Teilhard’s ideas might be, and however much they may stimulate new thought, Stock believes the essential vision is not likely to endure. 449

Another public presentation on Teilhard in Cincinnati took place at Xavier University in February, 1967 at the annual “Thomasfest” of the Philosophy Department. 450 Like that at the University of Cincinnati, this talk was also exceedingly well attended. Apparently not just students and faculty, but the public wanted to understand what the implications of Teilhard’s work were for their own lives; this was

447 “Teilhard de Chardin,” The Record (2/1966): 1, 5-6. The Record is the newspaper of Mt. St. Mary’s of the West at Norwood. This was one in the Leblond Lecture Series in Science, Philosophy and Religion, and this lecture took place on January 14th, 1966. Michael Stock was the then Dominican President of St. Stephen’s College in Dover, Massachusetts.

448 Ibid. 5. According to Stock, because science is respectable and successful, any vision which can claim a scientific basis is more easily accepted. Also, in Teilhard’s vision “it is inevitable that men will pool their resources and move into closer and closer cooperation on a planetary level.” Eventually language, customs, racial and creedal barriers will dissolve, and problems will be solved based on fraternal love and mutual respect—a theme most convivial to the hopes of the activists of the 1960s.

449 What Teilhard has done is to see and create a vision “at the level of phenomenon.” Teilhard “was an artist,” Stock argued. “The theologians and philosophers and scientists are engineers. They cannot accept the artist’s picture for their purposes; they have to check the terrain by their own methods.” Ibid., 6.

450 From a flyer found in the George Barbour collection, Box 2, Woodstock Theological Library, Georgetown University. Father Raymond J. Nogar, O.P. of Aquinas Institute and Father W. Henry Kenney of Xavier presented on “Teilhard de Chardin: Pro and Con.” Without a doubt the interest in and around Cincinnati was due to the Barbours’ influence.
particularly true for Catholics in light of the aggiornamento of the Second Vatican Council.

What this array of symposia shows us is on the ongoing distribution of Teilhard’s ideas into the general population of the United States. His thought was now no longer contained solely within the intellectual settings of New York and environs; instead, it had transcended academic and Catholic settings and had become almost distilled, one might say, into the very air breathed throughout the country during these years. The word “distilled” is used here purposely; the question remains as to how his thought was truly understood and utilized by those who read or heard it. Did they actually grasp the incarnational, personal and very Catholic spirituality that was its heart? A look at a representation of publications from these years may assist in answering this question and further understanding Teilhard’s reception during this time.

**Publications by and about Teilhard**

Not only symposia, but the numbers of published manuscripts and journal articles concerning Teilhard continued to swell during these years. As can be noted below, the numbers of books alone increased from 50 in 1961 to 399 in 1967, and the majority of these publications occurred in the United States.
Table 3. Numbers of Teilhard Related Manuscripts from 1960-1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication Year</th>
<th>Number of Publications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: This is from the annual bibliography of publications from the Society of Jesus, in this case with reference to Teilhard De Chardin. This table, a subset of Table 1 from Chapter 1, lists the numbers of publications worldwide with reference to Teilhard de Chardin. These statistics do not include editions or translations of Teilhard’s own writings, nor articles in periodicals. As Chapter 7 in this work will show, 1967-1968 are the peaks years for publications concerning Teilhard, after which the numbers drop precipitously.

Obviously the constraints of this project make it impossible to converse about even fifty of the books published in the United States during this time period. Instead, a significant few of these publications, in addition to periodical articles that are representative of several categories of interest, have been selected for further discussion.

The publications of this time in the main fall into four broad groupings which will be used for the purposes of this dissertation: 1. A general introduction to Teilhard, particularly for those who are encountering him for the first time, or for those already familiar with his work, additional help in understanding his thought; 2. Commentaries that attempt to analyze how Teilhard should be read, or why his popularity is so widespread; 3. A consideration of Teilhard’s innate optimistic hope and his response to suffering; and 4. Publications of a more theological nature that consider Teilhard’s doctrinal points and Christology, particularly in light of Vatican II. The following table highlights the primary points of the works included:
Table 4. Specific Publications in the US Concerning Teilhard Between the Years 1965-1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thesis of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mortier</td>
<td><em>Album</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Pictorial biography of Teilhard’s life by his literary executrix with excerpts of his writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McElwain</td>
<td><em>Introduction to Teilhard</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>An attempt to make Teilhard’s work accessible to everyone through the use of graphics and selected quotations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaight</td>
<td><em>The Life of Teilhard de Chardin</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>An apologetic biography attempting to justify Teilhard’s thought and work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Lubac</td>
<td><em>Teilhard: The Man and his Meaning</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Explains Teilhard’s “life-long vision” through two studies—one on his spiritual development and another on his apologetics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group 2. How should Teilhard be read, and why is he received as he is?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thesis of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campion</td>
<td><em>America</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Speculation on why certain groups in the US view Teilhard positively. These include young Catholic intellectuals, scientists, statesmen, religious thinkers, and the educated laity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooney</td>
<td><em>Saturday Review</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>The importance of the inclusion of evolution in Christianity; Teilhard’s varying reception due to paradoxes in Teilhard himself, primarily his synthesis of science and faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobzhansky</td>
<td><em>Zygon</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>One must look at the entire synthetic quality of Teilhard’s work; he uses mystical, poetic imagery as scientists sometimes do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collignon</td>
<td><em>The Christian Century</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Is a Teilhard cult beginning? He is neither a scientist nor theologian, but is espousing a particular way of Christian life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulmin</td>
<td><em>Commentary</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Teilhard’s thought is actually natural theology, and a fad. He was a scientific humanist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group 3. Teilhard, Suffering and Hope**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thesis of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>PRJ</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Where does suffering and evil fit in a life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of optimism such as Teilhard’s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teilhard</td>
<td><em>Making of a Mind</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>The impact of war on Teilhard, his spiritual counsel during that time with a focus on the source of his ongoing hope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chauchard</td>
<td><em>Teilhard de Chardin on Love and Suffering</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>The importance of Teilhard’s synthetic vision to understand the role of suffering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbour</td>
<td><em>The Christian Century</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The crucial quality of hope; Teilhard the synthetic humanist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group 4. Teilhard’s Theology and Christology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murray</td>
<td><em>The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>The application of Teilhard’s thought to traditional Christian doctrines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooney</td>
<td><em>Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Teilhard’s Christic vision as a revival of Pauline Christology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bravo</td>
<td><em>Christ in the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Teilhard’s incarnational Christology as focused on Christ at work in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltazar</td>
<td><em>Teilhard and the Supernatural</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Teilhard’s work as process theology bridging the natural/supernatural divide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group 1: Who is Teilhard de Chardin?**

As Teilhard’s popularity spread across the United States and into increasingly diverse populations, the need remained for additional introductions to Teilhard’s life and thought. The following publications, all books, assisted in fulfilling this need both for those encountering Teilhard for the first time, as well as the well-read who desired yet more information. They are presented here in order of increasing sophistication.

First, a pictorial life of Teilhard de Chardin was probably inevitable; *Album*, edited by his literary executrix Madame Jeanne Mortier, certainly fulfilled this requirement. Two hundred and twenty pages of black-and-white photographs cover every
phase of Teilhard’s life, from his childhood to his death. In addition to the photographs are brief texts taken from Teilhard's writings and letters. The book ends with a chronology of his life, as well as a bibliography of publications to date. Altogether the Album is more a coffee-table type of book—but the fact of its publication in the United States shows the high level of interest in Teilhard’s life that existed at this time.  

In contrast, a small book by Hugh McElwain, O.S.M. *Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin* by Argus Communications was published with the express purpose of making Teilhard accessible to the masses, and in particular to those who were not university-trained in either the sciences or theology. The book begins with a preface that stresses Teilhard’s search for meaning in the universe, and then relates this to one’s own existential quest and the need to “grasp the reality of change,” to see change “as virtually the only constant” in our lives.

The vocabulary and writing level of the book is quite obviously lower than that of, for example, either Mooney’s or Balthazar’s efforts discussed later in this chapter, but perhaps what really sets it apart are the multicolored graphical images of Teilhardian

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453 McElwain, 3. The introduction to this book notes that the work will concentrate on three areas: 1. Teilhard the man; 2. A basic orientation to Teilhardian thought; and 3. Broad implications of an evolving world for theology.
quotes scattered throughout, e.g. “Love is the only strength which makes things one without destroying them,” paired with a photo of a tree. “Nothing is profane for those who know how to see,” with a black and white image of river gravel. However, no citations are given for these quotes.

In an era when change— it seemed most suddenly—was a driving factor of life in the United States, McElwain’s emphasis on Teilhard’s acceptance and anticipation of the same must have been reassuring. The addition of “sound bite” quotes as further assurance could only have been of assistance.

A more traditional, but still accessible biography is found in Robert Speaight’s *The Life of Teilhard de Chardin*. Speaight begins with the comment that any new book about Teilhard requires an explanation or an excuse as so many already exist. What Speaight desires most, however, is to write from his own personal relationship with Teilhard, and his recognition that Teilhard’s appeal “is a dramatic vindication of his own claim to speak to, and for, the men and women of his own time.” He also notes that if Teilhard as mystical “seer” is suspect to the scientist, this is true almost as much to the theologian. Critics of Teilhard from both sides have thus impugned his personal integrity, and as this distresses Speaight, he hopes to correct it.

Additionally, he notes that if Teilhard has been the object of suspicion and scorn by his opponents, “he has also suffered from his more uncritical advocates. A bold

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454 Robert Speaight, *The Life of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967). Speaight’s work also contains a glossary of terminology, as well as an extensive bibliography and index of names and topics. When asked in January, 1963 to write a biography, the English translation of Claude Cuénot’s book was not in the works and the 1965 flood of books by and about Teilhard was “only a modest stream.” That said, this present book includes much yet unpublished material. In addition, Speaight comments, Teilhard’s true nature is still hidden: “Between the smoke raised by his critics and the smoke raised by his thurifers his true stature tends to be obscured.” That point was sufficient, Speaight believed, for a “less ambitious” and perhaps more accessible biography than Cuénot’s. Speaight, 11. Claude Cuénot, *Teilhard de Chardin: A Biographical Study*, Vincent Columore trans., René Hague, ed. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1965).
exponent of the Gospel has been treated as if he were the Gospel himself. This is the last thing he would have wanted!” Speaight acknowledges that many more books will most likely yet be written on the application of Teilhard’s theories; this book, however, deals with Teilhard “in his habit as lived,” in his dual vocation of priest-theologian and scientist. He counts Teilhard as a “passionate apologist,” out to persuade others of Christ’s ongoing involvement in the world.

In Speaight’s opinion the great sadness in Teilhard’s life was a result of the prohibition to address the larger public; this was then coupled with the heroic humility with which he bowed to this refusal. This humility was not easily achieved, just as his optimism was not a facile cheerfulness. Although his outward serenity and humility may have belied it, to continue to hope was at times a hard won struggle. The struggle was eased, however, by his “robust optimism,” which he regarded as “the secret of all activity and all success,” and which was, most importantly as Speaight sees, rooted in his dynamic faith and Christocentric vision.

Finally, the last book to be considered in this category is de Lubac’s Teilhard: The Man and his Meaning. The frontispiece to the Mentor-Omega edition notes that as the number of Teilhard’s readers has grown, and his work brings hope to humanity, elements of his work still remain unclear for many. Once again in this book de Lubac attempts to eliminate the obscurity and show how Teilhard’s deep originality is steeped in traditional wisdom.

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455 Speaight, 12. Speaight considers Teilhard as both cause célèbre and casus belli.
456 “What you cannot deny is the fact that Teilhard has brought many people to a belief in Christ who would otherwise have had no belief in him at all.” Speaight, 13.
457 Speaight, 13. See also Teilhard’s letter to Pierre Lamare, 29 March, 1932.
458 Henri de Lubac, Teilhard: The Man and his Meaning (New York: New American Library, 1967), 38-44. De Lubac also argues here that Teilhard at least in part adopted this Christology from his early Jesuit training. For example, Père Yves de la Briere, who taught Teilhard theology at Ores Place, Hastings, gave
Additionally, in the preface de Lubac notes that his book tries to explicate Teilhard’s “life-long vision,” as Teilhard first described in a twenty-five page essay initially entitled *Forma Christi*. As de Lubac’s view is that Teilhard's approach is more existential than most assume, and is situated in a personal witness to his mystical faith in the cosmic Christ, he hopes that in writing about this vision which nourished Teilhard, he will also explains its strength and its attraction for many of Teilhard’s readers.\(^{459}\) The book concludes with an assertion that although Teilhard would admit his faith was obscured by the shadows of not knowing, this is the same as for all other Christians; however, in de Lubac’s opinion these shadows didn’t affect Teilhard’s belief, as he always had hope in God.

In conclusion, the five biographical books presented here, therefore, vary from the “sound bite” variety through another of de Lubac’s carefully constructed apologetic works. They represent the diversity of the population that was finding Teilhard’s thought of vast interest during these years. Additionally, several of them do indeed at least appear to recognize as crucial the Christological underpinnings of Teilhard’s theories and life.

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\(^{459}\) The book is divided into two “studies.” the first explores Teilhard’s spiritual development, looking at his thoughts on a personal God, the cosmic Christ, the meaning of death, and the role of the Ignatian tradition in his work. The second is Teilhard’s “Defense of Christianity,” and beyond exploring Teilhard’s apologetics and methodology, also discusses his use of revelation and the impact of Rome on his work. The final chapter “Other Interpretations” refutes those critics who attempted to place Teilhard outside orthodox Christianity, through the rebuttal of such arguments by not only himself, but also Père Roger Leys, S.J. and Pastor Georges Crespy. These critics would include Ernest Kahane and Philippe de la Trinité mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. De Lubac also carefully considers *Comment je Crois* (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Comment je Crois*, [Paris:Seuil,1969]). These essays, which set forth Teilhard's vision of the Christian mystery and the evolving cosmos, include the famous one on Original Sin which was the cause of his banishment to China.
Group 2: How should Teilhard be read, and why is he received as he is?

In contrast to these books, the next five publications considered in this chapter are all journal articles and are primarily concerned with the question of why Teilhard’s reception is what it is at this time. All of these authors pursue an answer to this question by analyzing, as we already saw in Chapters 2 and 3, how one might classify, and therefore interpret Teilhard’s work. These particular articles, therefore, are included here as their responses provide us with more information as to what scholars of the time believed was the impetus behind his popularity.

In the first article, published early in 1965 in *America*, Donald Campion finds opposition to Teilhard slight, despite the *monitum*, and primarily generated by ultraconservative mouthpieces.\(^{460}\) He also suggests that the oppositional rhetoric has attracted people to Teilhard. He affirms that “Today, we witness a world-wide phenomenon: an interest in Teilhard that mounts with the years and reveals itself in new and often unexpected quarters. Teilhardism in the United States is a fact established beyond question.”\(^{461}\)

Campion discerns five distinct groups in 1965 to whom Teilhard appeals:

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\(^{460}\) Donald R. Campion, S.J. "The Phenomenon of Teilhard," *America* 112 no. 15 (April 10, 1965): 480-481. Just six weeks after this article was published Father Campion (1921–1988) a sociologist by education and training left *America* to become the director of one of the first Jesuit social action projects in New York. Father Campion had reported on the second and third sessions of Vatican II for the magazine. By the mid-1970s he was back at *America* as editor-in-chief.

\(^{461}\) Campion takes as an example that the French Ambassador to the United States was at Teilhard’s Requiem Mass in 1955. Surely this points to the respect with which the man and his work were already held. Additionally, according to Campion sales of the American editions of his books certainly show this. The paperback edition of *The Phenomenon* had passed the 95,000 mark already by 1961, with over 37,000 copies of the *Divine Milieu* by the same point. Similarly, both *Letters from a Traveler* and *Future of Man* have sold incredibly well. *Hymn of the Universe* went on sale this month, as did the English translation of Claude Cuénot’s biography of Teilhard.
1. First, young Catholic intellectuals are drawn to his work, as for them, Teilhard “offers a serious intellectual alternative to the secular ideologies, world view, or personal philosophies otherwise available.”

2. Secondly, Teilhard appeals to men of science, who admire his gifts as a field paleontologist or researcher, and as one who attempts to breach the religion—science divide.

3. Third, he has already influenced the writing of statesmen and international affairs people. Consider, Campion writes, Louis Halle’s essay in New Republic, which states that one can best grasp the major political currents of the day, particularly those regarding European unity, by first perusing The Phenomenon. Another who could be included here is Robert S. McNamara, appointed as Defense Secretary by John F. Kennedy, who as already noted is also an avid reader of Teilhard.

4. Teilhard is also of major interest to religious thinkers, Catholics as well as Protestants, as can be illustrated by the dozens of books, and hundreds of scholarly articles, published annually.

5. Thomas Corbishley noted in The Wiseman Review of England that it is “the educated layman who has found in these writings inspiration and hope,” perhaps even more so than formal theologians, as the unity of, and the convergence of the sacred and the secular allows God’s presence to penetrate all aspects of life. Particularly now, post-

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462 Consider, Campion suggests, the then recent choice of Omega as the name for the new Catholic student center at New York University’s Washington Square campus.
464 Both Teilhard and Pope John XXIII, Campion believes, had a “bold simplicity of spirit grounded on an unshakeable sense of Church.” It was this perhaps, he argues, that enabled them both to understand “the meaning of contemporary convergence as a God-given sign of the times.” The author contends, however, that without a doubt opposition to both exists. Consider the activist group “Catholics for Better Libraries” on the west coast, who are attempting to purge their libraries of works by people such as Karl Rahner and Teilhard. Campion, 480.
Vatican II, Campion finds this group is seeking to understand how to better live this on a daily basis. Catherine Aller and Flannery O’Connor, both mentioned in Chapter Three, come to mind as examples here.

Members of all these interested groups have been introduced in previous chapters, and more will yet follow. Although the scientific community will continue to be part of the mix, it is now especially the newly visible and vocal young who are the focus of many of those writing about Teilhard during these years.

Additionally, as we have already seen, many of the “religious thinkers” who advocated for Teilhard tried almost desperately to explain his method of synthesis to those others who were determined to classify it. One of these advocates, the Jesuit Christopher Mooney, wrote an article concerning this for the *Saturday Review*, this one in early 1966. As the next several examples in this chapter will show, the debate as to where Teilhard’s work should fit was obviously not yet resolved. Mooney’s “A Fresh Look at Man” noted that although Teilhard had little use for scholasticism and did not use scholastic language, he has been called by no less than the modern scholastic Joseph Pieper “one of the boldest and most spiritual of the theological thinkers of our time.”

The paradoxes surrounding the reception of Teilhard, Mooney argues, derive from paradoxes in the man himself, and their acceptance by the reader depends “in large measure on the extent to which a given individual shares Teilhard’s own intellectual and spiritual experience.”

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465 Campion, 480.
466 Christopher Mooney, “A Fresh Look at Man,” *Saturday Review* (February 26, 1966): 21-25. Christopher F. Mooney, S.J. (1925–1993) was at the end of his life a professor of religious studies at Fairfield University in Connecticut, and winner of two national Catholic book awards, including "Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ" which won the National Catholic Book Award in 1966. Father Mooney was, like Teilhard, very interested in the intersection of God and the secular, such as in the interaction of religion and science or law.
Teilhard’s search for unity, he writes, is from beginning to end the expression of a personal spiritual experience; a quest that concerns the desire to find some meaning and outcome for human life, and the corresponding conviction that Jesus Christ is the only true foundation for all universal life. Finally, Mooney suggests that if Teilhard has a special mission in the Church, it is perhaps a removal of the belief that no compatibility whatsoever can be found between modern scientific thinking and traditional Church teaching. Only the Christian faith “can grasp the full meaning of the obscure human searching present in every scientific achievement.”

Another article concerning Teilhard’s synthetic ability was also one of the first in the new interdisciplinary journal *Zygon*. It was authored by Theodosius Dobzhansky, an early founder of the American Teilhard Association, and a nationally recognized scientist. Dobzhansky believed that Teilhard was very much a humanist, and therefore the ideal scientist for his age. He was a scientist who spoke often about the ineffable, which required the use of poetic imagery. Too often, however, his poetic imagery was mistaken for scientific discourse. What is most interesting and significant about Teilhard's thinking, according to Dobzhansky as for Mooney, is the synthesis which he was able to achieve.

Dobzhansky sees Teilhard’s vision as that of both scientist and religious mystic, a mystic not only familiar with evolutionary doctrine but one to whom this is of paramount importance.

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467 Mooney, 22. Mooney repeatedly asserts that if one believes Teilhard’s analysis of man as phenomenon is all he is about, one is wrong. Instead, Teilhard the Jesuit priest had to rethink evolution within the context of Christianity. Evolution itself was a theological issue of immense importance, especially as it concerned the relationship of the cosmos to Christ. This relationship was actually the focus of Teilhard’s attention, in Mooney’s opinion. Mooney is one of the “religious thinkers” who appears to have consistently understood the importance of Teilhard’s Christology.

468 Theodosius Dobzhansky, “An essay on religion, death, and evolutionary adaptation,” *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 1 no. 4 (1966). Dobzhansky has been introduced elsewhere, *Zygon* will be discussed in the next chapter.
importance. Evolution incorporates for Teilhard that which in his vision is the source and the endpoint of all life – Jesus the Christ. 469

What is perhaps most noteworthy about this particular article is the fact that it is in itself an example of the synthetic methodology of Teilhard; it is written by a scientist who speaks of the value of poetry and mysticism for elucidating a vision, within a journal conceived to bridge the synapse between religion and the sciences. Most importantly, it is written by an eminent scientist who grasps the foundational qualities of Teilhard’s Christology for understanding his vision.

Perhaps Mooney and Dobzhansky were writing in reaction to Joseph Collignon, who just a few months earlier had asked in The Christian Century “is there room in the church for Teilhard?” Collignon’s response: perhaps someday there may be, but as of right now, this was not likely. 470

In contrast to several writers who had suggested that Teilhard is a second Thomas Aquinas, Collignon asserted that nothing could be further from the truth. In his view Teilhard’s vision is not another theology, but an entirely new look at Christian living. It is new, though, only in the sense that it provides a trajectory coherent to modern times

469 “I think that the proponents and the opponents are equally in error because they mistake a part for the whole. The greatest interest of Teilhard's work is that it represents a synthesis of science, metaphysics, and theology; this synthesis is stated, as such a synthesis can only be stated, in a language of poetic inspiration.” Ibid., 329.

470 Joseph Collignon, “The Phenomenon of Teilhard: In Man’s past this priest-paleontologist found truths which show a direction for man’s future.” Christian Century 82 (November, 1965): 426-28. Joseph Collignon, Ph.D. was a Professor of English, primarily in California. Collignon does concede that “both the man and his books have caused intense concern among Christians both in and outside the Catholic church.” Collignon had written a previous article on Teilhard “The Christian’s Dilemma,” for Saturday Review (June 27, 1964): 14-16, in which he asks which direction for the future contemporary Christians will choose: that of Dostoevsky, B.F. Skinner, or Teilhard.
from the model that is Christ. In contrast to Aquinas, his vision solves no theological point; it only points to a direction, “a goal in the Omega point.”

Collignon also notes his fear that in time those intoxicated with Teilhard’s thought will border on cultism. He claims the trajectory among the young is in that direction already, and that some aspects of Teilhard’s life in fact encourage this. Better then to be sure, he argues, that reliable discussions concerning his thought occur now, especially with young people.

One who would agree with this statement was Stephen Toulmin, who wrote the last article here which is concerned with analyzing Teilhard’s work in this way. Toulmin argued that what Teilhard was proposing was simply another and not even very sophisticated version of natural theology. He writes: “Teilhard’s *Phenomenon* is one further attempt in a long series to re-establish a place for natural theology within the new, evolutionary view of nature.”

Toulmin contends that Teilhard’s concept of humanity as “the cosmic standard-bearer,” alone fulfilling the purpose of evolution, is less about

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471 Collignon, 428. He claims that unlike Aquinas, in Teilhard’s work there is only the existential process, the ascent toward spirit.

472 Collignon, 426. Collignon points to the following as potential reasons for Teilhardian “cultism”: Teilhard’s “total unconcern for death; his trip to Rome to offer the ideas of a life-time’s search, the agony of the denial; the aura of the mystic about him, culminating in the fulfillment of his wish to die on Easter Sunday.” Despite his concern, Collignon comments that it is difficult to discover anything controversial about Teilhard or his writings. His life as a scientist, Christian, and Jesuit were exemplary. His overwhelming love for God, which reflects in his love for the world in the evolution of man, “is manifested on every page of *The Divine Milieu.*” Still, the *monitum* should have been expected. Questions exist still as to whether a Catholic can reconcile his beliefs with the “scientific mysticism” of *The Phenomenon.* In Collignon’s mind the question remains, “do Teilhard’s works constitute a denial of the existing dogma in the Church?”

473 Stephen Toulmin, “On Teilhard de Chardin,” *Commentary* 39 (March, 1965): 50-55. In particular, Toulmin notes that Teilhard’s ideas on evolution are not Darwinian, but hark back to an older continental tradition, which leads from Lamarck back to the early idealist philosophers, especially to Herder. For these authors, ‘evolution’ is always the name “of a cosmic process with a unique, recognizable direction and providential overtones.” The teleological theories of Teilhard in *The Phenomenon of Man* are, therefore, not scientific theories, but the “current exposition” of the tradition of “natural theology” (54).

474 Toulmin (1922 –2009) was a British philosopher, author and educator. He studied at Cambridge, where he met Ludwig Wittgenstein, by whom he was greatly influenced. Toulmin dedicated his works to the analysis of moral reasoning.
science than it is simple human pride. It is primarily the young, he believes, acting out of the naïve pride of youth, who have been captured by Teilhard’s thoughts.

As was Collignon, Toulmin also is concerned that since Teilhard’s ideas will “survive as something more than a fad,” it is necessary to discern how his work is to be read and judged. He argues that in the two subjects on which Teilhard is most dependent, Catholic theology and evolutionary biology, Teilhard’s standing was only that of “an enthusiastic amateur.”

Therefore, caution must be taken in espousing his theories, for how are these not just Scientific Humanism? Is this the synthesis, he laments, toward which contemporary Christianity is moving?

It is interesting that the preceding two scholars note the interest of young people in Teilhard’s thought, as well as concern over how they are interpreting his thought. That at least these two, in addition to Campion, found it necessary to remark upon this, should be a sign to us that his popularity was high among the youth, perhaps especially the counterculture, and that these concerns about his reception were at least somewhat present in the larger population.

**Group 3: Teilhard, Hope and Suffering**

The next category of four publications to be considered in this chapter address the issue of what for some seemed to be Teilhard’s naïve optimism and neglect of evil and suffering. As was touched upon both in Chapter 4 and earlier in this same chapter, this issue is in many ways of paramount importance when examining the reception of Teilhard in the United States during these years.

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475 Toulmin, 50. Despite the charm and sincerity of Teilhard’s personality and writing, Toulmin finds “something reckless about Teilhard’s theology.”
First, a special issue of *PRJ* in 1967 addressed “Optimism or Pessimism in our Brave New World—Teilhardian Perspectives.” A note from the editor Máire Compe commented that: “When accused of naivety and a facile optimism Teilhard would counter that ‘the depth of the abysses between the peaks are obvious enough not to need stressing.’” What, the contributors ask, about nuclear war, though? Or, the use of science and technology? The Brave New World? Granted is that many who do not share Teilhard’s religious convictions “share his optimism, the hunger for more-being (as opposed to well-being) and recognize the vital force which is asserting itself ever more strongly in our world.” This particular issue did not deny that suffering is a necessary part of the spiritual life for everyone, but argues that it is love that gives meaning to the anguish of humanity. In a phrase well-suited to the mid-1960s, the article ends with the claim from Teilhard that the darkness of the shadows of suffering will disappear “for those who in an ideal or a cause discover the secret of collaboration and identification with the universe in formation.”

A book published on very similar subjects and with comparable conclusions was a Paulist Press translation from the French of Paul Chauchard’s *Teilhard de Chardin on Love and Suffering.* Chauchard begins his small book with the argument against the

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476 “Optimism or Pessimism in our Brave New World—Teilhardian Perspectives,” Máire Compe, ed. *PRJ* 2 (1967). Seven contributors were included in this special issue.

477 The reference here is to *Brave New World,* a novel written in 1931 by Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) and published in 1932. Set in London of 2540 (632 A.F. in the book), the novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology and sleep-learning that combine to change society. The future society is an embodiment of the ideals that form the basis of futurology. Huxley followed up this book with a reassessment in an essay, *Brave New World Revisited* (1958) and with his final work, a novel titled *Island* (1962). In 1999, the Modern Library ranked *Brave New World* fifth on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. Huxley was an English writer and one of the most well-known members of the Huxley family. Huxley spent a great deal of his life in the US, living in Los Angeles from about 1937 until his death. His brother, Julian, an evolutionary biologist, wrote the Forword for the first English edition of Teilhard’s *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959).

then recent work of Roger Garaudy and Ernest Kahane, who assert that to understand the world scientifically all that is necessary is a historical analysis of nature like that of Teilhard’s which proves the uselessness of God. ⁴⁷⁹ No, Chauchard emphatically asserts, this is not what Teilhard says; in fact this could almost in no way more misunderstand Teilhard’s meaning.

Instead, he counters: “What is essential is not the historical analysis of nature. It is rather that such analysis, sometimes claimed as atheistic, necessarily leads the reason not to agnosticism or vague religious sentiments . . . but straight to a mystic encounter with Jesus Christ, the god of love.” ⁴⁸⁰ Teilhard is neither a scientist who is a believer, nor a priest who does scientific research, but a whole man, one who had a deep relationship with God. It is this relationship, Chauchard asserts, that sustained him throughout a life often full of suffering. In the evolutionary Christian sense, however, Teilhard realized that our suffering was minimal in contrast to Christ’s. Chauchard writes that: “His work was precisely that of reinserting Christianity in the world . . . with an ‘optimism’ convinced that nothing else could turn the world aside from self-destruction. Humanity is as much in danger from the opium of a disincarnate religion, which could not be that of Christ, as from the new opium of a science which denies the spirit its full dimensions.” Instead, Chauchard contends like Mooney and Barbour elsewhere in this chapter, that Teilhard knows how to belong to both worlds of science and religion. These worlds think that, because they speak different languages and are ignorant of each other, they are

⁴⁷⁹ Ernest Kahane was a biochemist, born in Romania although naturalized citizen in France. He was president of the Union of Rationalists in Paris for many years while he was a Professor at Montpellier. He cowrote with Garuady—who knew Teilhard from his Paris days in the early 1920s—the book “Teilhard de Chardin” about this same time. This was published by Kossuth Könyvkiadó in 1967. ⁴⁸⁰ Chauchard, 9.
Although this synthetic ability of Teilhard’s, like his scientific yet incarnational worldview, confounded, and continues to confound many, it was obviously immensely enticing to the population of the time, and certainly remains so today in the United States.

The third article that examines Teilhard’s optimism is also significant as it was written by another scientist, George Barbour’s son, Ian. In late 1967 Ian Barbour penned an article called “The Significance of Teilhard” for The Christian Century that also considered, among other topics, this issue of hope and pessimism in Teilhard’s work. Although he, like many others, found it difficult to classify Teilhard, he believed that much of Teilhard’s appeal in “a day of widespread anxiety and despair lies in his message of hope, a hope seemingly derived by projecting into the future the long ascent of the past.”

Although Teilhard’s writings can be read in a variety of ways—and this is indeed one reason for their widespread popularity—as science, poetry, natural theology, process philosophy and Christian spirituality, Barbour suggests that what is most original and important in Teilhard is his “exploration of the nature of man and the meaning of

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481 Chauchard, 10.
482 Ian Barbour, “The Significance of Teilhard” The Christian Century (8/30/67): 1098-1101, at 1099. Dr. Ian Barbour was born in Beijing, China in 1923 while his father George was a member of the geologic expedition to which Teilhard was also attached. Appropriately, Barbour is presently an American scholar on the relationship between science and religion. According to the Public Broadcasting Service, his mid-1960s Issues in Science and Religion “has been credited with literally creating the contemporary field of science and religion” (from the PBS Online NewsHour, May 28, 1999). As well as a PhD in physics, he earned a B.Div. in 1956 from Yale University’s Divinity School. Barbour taught for many years at Carleton College with appointments as professor of religion and as Winifred and Atherton Bean Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology and Society. He has been a professor emeritus there since 1986. Barbour gave the Gifford lectures from 1989-1991. These lectures led to the book Religion in an Age of Science. He was then awarded the Templeton Prize in 1999 (nominated by John Cobb) for Progress in Religion in recognition of his efforts to create a dialogue between the worlds of science and religion. Although Barbour can’t accept The Phenomenon as “straight science,” neither can he dismiss it simply as “mere poetry.” He compares Teilhard’s metaphysics to those of the philosopher Whitehead, both with their reliance upon Henry Bergson. Both men, he notes, “stress the continuity of evolutionary history and of the levels of life today.”
creation, redemption and eschatology in an evolving world.” Barbour emphasizes again that it is Teilhard’s stress upon the hopeful possibilities of the direction of the evolving universe that will continue to draw people to his work.

Even in war Teilhard saw hopeful possibilities. Indeed, “of the outside events in Teilhard’s life the war was probably the most decisive of all. It had a profound effect on his whole being,” writes Marguerite Teillard-Chambon in her introduction to the remaining book considered in this section, *The Making of a Mind. Letters from a Soldier-Priest (1914-1919)*. This work of Teilhard’s consists of a series of letters sent by Teilhard to his friend and cousin Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon, who was a school teacher in Paris during World War I. In this collection are included Teilhard’s “most extraordinary observations on suffering and death,” as well as those “on prayer, on detachment and Christian hope and above all on the need to rethink the Christian message in terms of modern man's outlook on the world.”

Additionally, within the letters one finds Teilhard's touching spiritual counsel to Marguerite. This counsel to Marguerite and many others is, perhaps, along with the overall sense of trust in God and optimism for the future, even in a time of war, what has made this book and Teilhard himself so popular. That optimism though, as this book

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483 Barbour, 1101. Additionally, Barbour believes that Teilhard’s refusal to abandon the quest for synthesis, even if it is only partly successful, and his refusal to assign ideas to watertight compartments, is a criticism and contrast to the contemporary world’s settling for a plurality of “totally unrelated languages . . . Teilhard’s conviction of the coherence of truth and the unity of the universe can inspire our hope of compassing even so modest a goal as honest dialogue between the disciplines.


486 What follows is a portion of one of the most popular of those letters to Marguerite, which has itself been often copied and published elsewhere: “Above all, trust in the slow work of God . . . Your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on as though you could do today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstance acting on your own good will) will make you tomorrow. Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming in you will be. Give our Lord the benefit of
shows, and indeed as all these works attempt to elucidate, is not simply the outlook of a happy disposition, but a difficult victory of faith in the Paschal Mystery, despite it all. The letters included in this book explicate how that victory was achieved; as Christopher Mooney wrote in one review of the book, because of this perhaps they are the best of all introductions to “the many-chambered edifice of Teilhard's thought, as well as the complex spiritual experience that was its source.”

Teilhard’s optimism then, was not one rooted solely in the belief that humanitarian activism in the world, even communal activism was sufficient. Teilhard’s “optimism” was instead a hopeful understanding that all of humanity, all the matter of the world, all the effort expended on a daily basis, and all our own suffering is redeemed through the power of the Paschal Mystery and especially the Resurrection of Christ. With this in mind we have no reason, therefore, not to hope.

**Group 4: Teilhard’s Theology and Christology**

The last five publications discussed in this chapter, all books, are concerned with the theology and particularly the Christological thought of Teilhard. They are all scholarly works, intended for a theologically knowledgeable audience. As Campion suggested earlier in this chapter, Teilhard continued to draw the intense interest of the Catholic intellectual.

The first, Michael H. Murray’s *The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin: An Introduction*, attempts to relate Teilhard to traditional Christian doctrines such as revelation, Incarnation, and evil. In addition it also presents Teilhard’s response to secularism, and discusses Teilhard’s methodology, including the “conjunction of science believing that God's hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.” 57ff.

and mysticism,” as well as his attempts to fuse the natural, the supernatural, and God with the everyday. 488

The next two books heavily concentrate specifically on Teilhard’s Christology. They are included here as a reaffirmation of the recognition, contrary to some detractors, of Teilhard’s orthodoxy, as well as the centrality of his Christocentrism. His vision of Christ might have been one often overlooked in the Western Church, but as these scholars comment, it is most certainly Pauline and New Testament in nature.

The first is *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* by Christopher Mooney, S.J. 489 Mooney, introduced previously in this work, had already explored Teilhard’s Christology in at least two articles prior to the publication of this book, and so this text is both a summary and a further exploration of his salient points.

Although he claims he is not ‘captured’ by Teilhard's jargon, Mooney gives careful explanations of what the neologisms mean so that Teilhard's own texts can be approached more intelligently; he also attempts to systematize Teilhard's thought in a straight-forward manner. He emphasizes that for Teilhard there are two sources of knowledge, the evidence of the world to be understood scientifically, and the content of

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488 Michael H. Murray, *The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin: An Introduction* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1966). The book is dedicated to Murray’s wife, as well as Father Robert T. Francoeur. It appears to be a published dissertation, but this could not be definitively discovered. The opening quotation is from William Blake’s *Jerusalem*, which speaks of the vision of “Past, Present and Future existing all at once,” and the need to see the Divine in the “Minute Particulars” of the everyday. The introduction provides a short biography of Teilhard, stressing the political, religious and social context of France in the late 19th century as the foundation for Teilhard’s later thought. The book also includes a Catholic theological response to the “Death of God” theologians.

revelation; revelation confirms the scientific hypothesis. The Omega Point, which Mooney asserts is for the most part a Pauline depiction of Christ, is the teleology of Teilhard’s evolution. For Teilhard and Mooney, the Mystical Body of Christ must be interpreted in a worldly, even physical sense. He is a growing force in the world, leading all to union in his own body; the body of Christ is the world evolving to the point of unity where God will be all in all.

What is perhaps the apogee of explanations of Teilhard’s Christology, however, was also the first published offering in English to explore what Teilhard’s thought might mean for the Church of Latin America. Francisco Bravo’s Christ in the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin, is as Ivan Illich comments in the Preface, “a prime opportunity for English readers to become aware of the unsuspected importance this author has assumed in a world which is conscious of its growth yet often called ‘underdeveloped.’”

In this particular study Bravo outlines and analyzes Teilhard’s interaction of Pauline doctrine and Darwinian evolution, God and the world. These two converge in Christ, and Bravo presents them as two articles of a single creed, for he argues that no longer can we dichotomize matter versus spirit or science versus faith. Instead, he contends that it is now imperative, in a time just past Vatican II, to acknowledge the

490 Mooney, Mystery of Christ, 18.
491 Francisco Bravo, Christ in the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), vi. The overleaf reports that Francisco Bravo, with a doctorate in Theology from the University of Salamanca has been associated with the Center of Intercultural Formation at Cuernavaca, Mexico, working in pastoral renewal in Panama and Mexico. He lectures regularly on Teilhard. This particular study not only adds a new dimension to the Teilhardian corpus, it exemplifies the interest in Teilhard throughout the New World.
492 Bravo, viii.
personal presence of Christ in the world as a stimulus for pastoral and communal
renewal.\footnote{Bravo comments in his introduction that it is with apprehension that he takes up the task of interpreting Teilhard, as so much has already been written so well about his work. He perceives his role is to point out the possibilities of the Teilhardian vision of Christology, a field which has been “practically stationary” since the Council of Chalcedon. (xv).}

In fact, the next book to be discussed here, Robert Faricy, S.J.’s \textit{Theology of the Christian in the World}, considers just this. The Preface to the book states that “the purpose of the work is to present on a central theme in Teilhard’s writings: “the relation between human endeavor and Christian revelation.”\footnote{Robert L. Faricy, S.J. \textit{Teilhard de Chardin’s Theology of the Christian in the World} (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967). The book opens with a dedication to Jeanne Mortier, “who has done so much for the Church in making known the ideas of Father Teilhard de Chardin.”} Like Teilhard, Faricy is interested in exploring a theology of human effort in the context of an evolving world directed toward its salvation. Faricy notes that this theme is scattered throughout Teilhard’s works; probably the closest complete statement is found in \textit{The Divine Milieu}, which rather than being theological is more “a spiritual essay,” without the necessary theological underpinnings.\footnote{Faricy, viii.} So, the book is an articulate presentation of the point that Teilhard has revived Christian endeavor in a way that has not been paralleled in recent times.

Similarly to Teilhard’s \textit{The Divine Milieu}, however, Faricy begins his effort with a discussion of the difficulties contemporary people find in possessing both “faith in the world” as well as “faith in God.” Or, how does one live both a secular and a spiritual life simultaneously? This certainly was a question that proponents of the Secular City were attempting to answer, as well as many of those newly involved in social justice movements and in implementing the Vatican II documents. These difficulties are discussed in Faricy’s book within the context of Teilhard’s vision of evolution and
teleology, the meaningfulness of the universe and Christ-Omega, and the Eucharist. In particular, Faricy unites a theology of human effort and activity with the Eucharistic offering, including that found in Teilhard’s *The Mass on the World.*

The question of the relation between nature and grace addressed in both Murray’s and Bravo’s books also appears in the last one discussed in this chapter. Eulalio R. Baltazar explores what he considers “the crucial problem” in *Teilhard and the Supernatural,* for he regards the efforts of scholars such as de Lubac, Claude Tresmontant, and Christopher Mooney as incomplete in this area. This work is included in this study not only due to the fact that it addresses one of the primary theological concerns regarding Teilhard’s writing, namely how he handles the separation between the natural and supernatural, but also because of the connections of the author to the University of Dayton.

Baltazar identifies quite precisely, at least in his own mind, the problem between traditional Christians and Teilhardian Christians: If evolution is a natural process which tends towards Christ, then it would seem that this natural process is able to attain Christ-Omega as supernatural by its own natural powers. However, this view would appear to be in opposition to the irrevocable teaching of the Church that the supernatural is not attainable by humanity’s natural powers or by the natural evolutionary process.

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497 Eulalio Balthazar, *Teilhard and the Supernatural* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966). Balthazar was one of four professors cited and later cleared in the “incident” at the University of Dayton as described in Mary J. Brown, “An ‘Inevitable’ Campus Controversy: The ‘Heresy Affair’ at the University of Dayton, 1960 – 1967,” *American Catholic Studies: Journal of the American Catholic Historical Society* 113 (Spring-Summer 2002): 79-95. Dr. Balthazar, a member of the University Department of Philosophy since 1962, was later awarded the Alumni Award in 1967, because he “is a man who has helped to create an exciting revitalization of philosophic discussion on our campus and in the world.” In part the recognition was given for Balthazar’s work on a philosophy of process, and this particular book, “widely hailed as a significant contribution.” Marlene Condron, *Dayton Daily News,* 8 March, 1967.
Therefore, Christ cannot be the teleological fruit of the evolutionary process. Balthazar examines this integral question regarding Teilhardian thought, and subsequently finds the scholastic formulation unsatisfactory.\footnote{498 The pertinent quote is “The scholastic formulation is unable to explain how the supernatural is the highest perfection of man, for it cannot show that it is at the very core and center of his being, constitutive of his nature, and the goal towards which his nature is intrinsically ordained. It is unable to resolve the tension in the modern Christian whose new awareness is that time is redemptive, creative, positive, for this formulation tells him that value is in the extra-temporal, transphenomenal, metaphysical, metaempirical. And finally, it is unable to meet the needs of naturalism and secularism, because it is unable to present the truths about the supernatural in a meaningful and significant way, or in a way that is harmonious with the other truths of Christian faith.” Balthazar, 71.}

In response, Baltazar reconstructs Christian theology strictly within the orientation and world view of process philosophy; in so doing he utilizes an operational definition of process, and converts the dynamism of being from act and potency to the dynamism of love. He is, one might succinctly say, strongly critical of the Aristotelian-Thomistic context of the then prevalent Catholic theology. What is most significant about this work of Baltazar’s is that it is one of the first to label Teilhard’s thought as “process theology,” a label which has tended to haunt it ever since.\footnote{499 Process theology or process thought is a school of thought influenced by the metaphysical process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), later developed more fully by Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000). Most would agree that Teilhard’s “process theology” is similar to but unrelated to the work of Whitehead. For both Whitehead and Hartshorne, an essential attribute of God is to be fully involved in and affected by temporal processes. This is a concept in conflict with traditional theological thought which holds God to be eternal, immutable, and impassible. The term “process theology” may at times be used to refer to all forms of theology that emphasizes occurrence or becoming over against substance. Additionally, most process theologians would reject a metaphysics that privileges “being” over “becoming,” particularly those of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, or later Scholastic theologians. Also check out Eulalio Baltazar, \textit{God within Process} (New York: Newman Press, 1970); Ian Barbour, “Teilhard’s Process Metaphysics.” \textit{Journal of Religion} 49 (1969): 136-59 which is also in \textit{Process Theology: Basic Writings}, Ewert H. Cousins, ed. (New York: Newman Press, 1971), 323-50; Norbert O. Schedler, ed., \textit{Philosophy of Religion: Contemporary Perspectives} (New York: Macmillan Publishing,1973), 440-60.}

\textbf{Chapter Conclusion}

These last two chapters have attempted to explicate the increasing influence of Teilhard in the United States during the mid-1960s. Trends such as civil rights, radical theology, countercultural movements, and new life styles and religious expressions
helped grow increased interest in his work. At the same time these developments were all influenced by it. Teilhard’s name was everywhere. As this chapter has further illustrated, articles, books and other media regarding Teilhard were published constantly during these years.

This chapter explored the themes of hope and progress inherent to this time period and their relationship to Teilhard’s reception as expressed in journal articles, conferences and written publications. It also examined the parallels between Teilhard’s writings and the radical secular theology of Harvey Cox and the “Death of God” theologians, which in the years immediately around the Second Vatican Council once again received great interest. The conclusion, at least on the part of a few, was that Teilhard was one whose thought definitely resonated with these ideas, for he merged the religious with the secular even more so than Harvey Cox. Teilhard, they concluded, was decidedly secular as his incarnational spirituality was so concerned with finding God in and through the “evolving world” and in “building the earth.”

In addition to the numerous publications that introduced Teilhard to an ever expanding audience, authors commenting on Teilhard’s work during these years reaffirmed the ongoing difficulties many have in classifying or understanding his work, stressing instead the need to remember the synthetic, organic quality of his thought. Several of the articles and books discussed in this chapter affirmed that although Teilhard’s writings were optimistic, his hope was predicated by his relationship with and understanding of the Cosmic Christ at work in the world, and maintained by both his Christology and his tremendous faith in the Paschal Mystery of Christ.
Another large number of publications directly examined that Christology, and the intensely Christocentric nature of his thought; this was explicated both as a means by which to stress his orthodoxy, and to establish it as Teilhard’s foundational spirituality.

Finally, we must remember that we have not yet come to the end of the Sixties, and the optimism of this time will not last. In the difficult years yet to come in the United States the accusations that Teilhard was merely a facile optimist who neglected to account for the inevitability of human failing will increase. In regards to Teilhard in America, one primary question remains to be answered in the chapters yet to follow. That question asks how it was that just when it was so very much needed, so many of those he inspired failed to catch the importance of his cosmic Christology?
In his *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, Robert Ellwood contends that 1968-1970 were bitter years in the United States, as the hoped for social and cultural changes did not occur easily, if at all. Instead, society found itself further polarized by war, assassinations, riots, and overall violence. The counterculture, founded on the budding optimism of the mid-1960s, lost its sheen. Mid-1960s theology had expressed the increasing interest in the secular prevalent throughout the country, as well as in the documents of Vatican II. The waning years of the decade, however, articulated the concerns of some that an ongoing cheerful secularism rooted in the Incarnation and God’s immanence was improbable. These were years in which there simply was less to be jovial about. Society turned against both secularism and institutional churches. None of it was working anymore. Young people, especially, rejected the secularized mainstream churches.

Concomitantly for many these were the years in which doubt about the optimistic Teilhardian worldview took hold; the movement toward progress and unity which Teilhard saw as inevitable instead appeared increasingly elusive. For some populations

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his writing simply became a source of support for personal beliefs. For those numerous factions who attempted to appropriate Teilhard’s thought for their own purposes during this decade, whether as justification for their actions, or to force their agenda, his work was suddenly found wanting and his influence waned.

All too often, however, those inspired by his teaching caught the flavor and not the true substance of his conviction in the future. Rather than the patient, persevering faith rooted in a deep relationship with Christ which Teilhard himself exemplified, what dominated was an expectation of progress centered primarily on the efforts of humanity itself. This was progress certain to be waylaid, if not destroyed, by the political and cultural upheavals taking place. For Teilhard’s brand of evolutionary progress to actually occur willingness for a personal as well as societal Christ-focused transformation was critical. As Teilhard wrote in *The Divine Milieu*, “the supernatural awaits and sustains the progress of our nature. But it must not be forgotten that it purifies . . . in the end only in an apparent annihilation.” For the Christian, hope and progress are found in the willingness to die and change; many of those who advocated change during this era were apparently still in need of this message.502

These tumultuous remaining years of the decade thus resurrected long debated questions concerning the effectiveness of human engagement with the world. How does one distinguish between justified optimism and Christian hope? What is the role of science and rationalism in contemporary life? Of what does “progress” truly consist? Is human unity actually possible? Where lies the distinguishing line, if any, between the sacred and the secular?

502 Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 76. This quote precedes Teilhard’s section on “The Mystery of the Cross.”
These questions and more will be explored in this chapter and the next within the context of the reception of Teilhard during the years 1968-1970. In order to discover answers this chapter first presents a summary of the pertinent historical, political, and cultural situation in the United States during these years, as well as a view of the situation within the Catholic, mainline Protestant and alternative “churches.” Following this, the chapter will discuss the happenings of the American Teilhard Association and its success or not in promulgating Teilhard’s spirit.

Politics and Culture

The murders of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy that occurred in 1968 rather effectively killed the budding promise of reconciliation and hope longed for not only by young activists, but for many across the generations.\textsuperscript{503} By early 1968 the Vietnam War and particularly the aftereffects of the “Tet” offensive would also destroy President Johnson and his administration. The voices of protest would however, become even louder and yet more violent over the next few years.\textsuperscript{504}

By 1969, especially, the great affluence boom seemed to be over. Inflation as a result of the war rose and the stock market sagged. Also, corporate dominance increased, with a shift toward increasing demands for efficient, impersonal operations. Already the movement toward a global, rather than local, economy was making itself felt. In response, conservatives began to dominate in the White House and state legislatures.

The cultural and religious movements detailed in these chapters transformed American politics and society. What was previously considered simply a social or

\textsuperscript{503} Mark Hamilton Lytle, \textit{America’s Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon} (New York, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2006), 256.
\textsuperscript{504} Lytle, 269.
cultural norm, such as racial or gender discrimination, became part of the public debate. At the same time, groups never previously considered oppressed—for example, the economically disadvantaged and ethnic Americans—also adopted specific identities and value politics. The inevitable disagreements that resulted over the goals and strategies of these groups, as the moderate ideas of the founding members faced the conservative, liberal, or radical suggestions of later additions, further accelerated the fragmentation of the times. After 1968 politics was an area for division, not consensus.  

Yet, in early 1968 everything still seemed possible—whether new ways of living, distinctive world views, or nonviolent confrontation. As author Hugh McLeod later commented: “Every tradition had been thrown in the melting pot. A new age was dawning.” The times were exhilarating, liberating, and replete with transcendental experiences, and “the feeling of being part of a great movement also fed the belief that real and fundamental change was possible—even inevitable.” Many active in the movements of the age believed an apocalyptic battle between good and evil was happening before their very eyes.

The remainder of this section of the chapter will concern the playing out of that “battle” through the lens of several events and their results: The assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the Vietnam War, and the radicalization of the youth culture. It will end with a look at the overall US culture at the end of the 1960s.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

For those who viewed the world in an apocalyptic fashion the last few years of Martin Luther King’s life certainly served as a great example. By 1968, despite Sargent

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505 Lytle, 271.
507 McLeod, 143.
Shriver’s best efforts, the Johnson War on Poverty appeared to be a failure, neglected in favor of military expenditures for the Vietnam War. Beginning in late summer, 1967, the Poor People’s Campaign, as envisioned by King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, hoped to raise nonviolence to a new level in order to pressure Congress into passing an Economic Bill of Rights for the impoverished of the United States. In particular organizers sought to address poverty in income and housing by dramatizing the needs and uniting all races through the common hardship of economic struggle. The battle for economic justice, therefore, would also challenge the Vietnam War. At the preliminary planning conference King suggested a shift from “reform” to “revolution” and stated: “We have moved from the era of civil rights to an era of human rights.”

The Poor People’s Campaign was intended as the initiatory incident in the second phase of the civil rights movement. King proclaimed “We believe the highest patriotism demands the ending of the war and the opening of a bloodless war to final victory over both racism and poverty.”

The March, 1968 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders study led by Illinois governor Otto Kerner was highly praised but deemed controversial for blaming recent violence on white racism and calling for “massive” governmental programs to allay black discontent. The Study, which reached the second position on the New


510 O’Neill, 180. This study was also known as the “Kerner Commission Study.” The final publication showed that the perceptions of whites and blacks regarding the state of the nation was widely diverging. Increasing numbers of whites felt that a great deal of money had been spent and much energy involved in attempting to allay not only the War on Poverty but racial tension, to no avail. Racial tensions and violence continued to increase. For their part, young African Americans perceived far less change. Jim Crow laws may no longer have been in use, but they could not afford the restaurants which were now open to them,
York Times bestseller list, also accused the news media of exaggerating the violence and underreporting on the poverty of America’s inner cities. It noted that: “A new mood has sprung up among Negroes, particularly among the young, in which self-esteem and enhanced racial pride are replacing apathy and submission to ‘the system’”511

The commission called for drastic increases in federal spending, while recognizing that such an action was in direct competition with the cost of the expanding Vietnam War. New York City Mayor John Lindsay was noted along with Robert Kennedy as “complaining that the cost of the war was keeping the country from its social responsibilities.”512 President Johnson buried the commission’s study after calling it a “good report by good men of good will,” adding that “they always print that we don’t do enough. They don’t print what we do.”513

A month later King was assassinated. By chance he happened to be in Memphis, Tennessee. The AFL-CIO was supporting the strike by the Memphis sanitation workers which had already continued at that time for over a month. Rather spontaneously, King came back to the city to bolster flagging spirits. In his speech of April 3rd at the Masonic Temple he called for unity, economic action, boycotts, and nonviolent protests.514

On April 4th he spent the day at the Lorraine Motel working with local leaders on plans for the Poor People’s march to take place in Washington later that month. King and housing and education options had not much improved. James Reston concluded that “The main crisis is not in Vietnam itself, or in the cities, but in the feeling that the political system for dealing with these things has broken down.” Quoted in Theodore White, The Making of the President, 1968 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969), 109.

512 Kurlansky, 97.
513 O’Neill, 180.
514 At the end of the speech Martin Luther King discussed the possibility of an untimely death: “It really doesn’t matter with me now. Because I’ve been to the mountain top. I don’t mind [if I die]… I just want to do God’s will… . . . I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land.” Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 3, 1968). "I’ve Been to the Mountaintop" From http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm, retrieved April 3, 2013.
was shot to death by a sniper on the balcony of that hotel with one rifle round, and was declared dead just an hour later at St. Joseph's hospital. 515

President Johnson went on TV to call for public order: “I ask every American citizen to reject the blind violence that has struck down Dr. King, who lived by nonviolence.” 516 Yet the president’s attempt had little effect as the Vietnam War had already undermined Johnson’s authority as a foe of violence. Robert Kennedy, hearing of the murder just before he was to give a speech in Indianapolis, delivered a powerful extemporaneous eulogy in which he pleaded with the audience "to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world." 517

Many considered the later Poor People’s Campaign led by Martin Luther King’s successor, the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, a flop. It appeared that nonviolence was now in retreat. 518 It seemed that the supposedly longed for Teilhardian convergence of

515 After an international man-hunt an escaped convict, James Earl Ray was arrested on June 27 in London, England, and convicted of the murder. Ray at first declared himself innocent, at his trial pleaded guilty, and after sentencing changed his mind yet again. Many people, Martin Luther King, Sr. included, considered him part of a larger conspiracy. Ray died in prison in 1998.
517 Robert F Kennedy “Remarks on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr,” April 4, 1968. From http://rapgenius.com/Robert-f-kennedy-remarks-on-the-assassination-of-martin-luther-king-jr-lyrics#note-1420015 Retrieved on April 4, 2013. Sunday, April 7, 1968 was designated as a day of mourning. At the end of his life King’s popularity had declined, which was perhaps especially demonstrated by the failure of the open-housing campaign in Chicago in 1967. Black militants were calling him “de Lawd” and mocking his traditional speaking style. The hawks who had formerly supported him and nonviolence at home but not abroad turned against him when he began attacking the war in Indochina. Still, at his assassination, rioting erupted in Chicago and Washington, DC. In the end forty-six persons were dead, all but five of whom were black. One hundred cities suffered arson and looting. Over twenty thousand federal troops and thirty-four thousand state guardsmen were called out in civil emergency. The white backlash against what many saw as the results of the racial justice campaign, even in the north, ultimately reduced the effectiveness of civil rights. O’Neill, 181.
518 Certainly the “Resurrection City” in the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool area at the end of April, 1968 received little media coverage. In many ways the Campaign exemplified the worsening of race relations throughout 1968. However, some 50,000 still participated in the reenactment of the March on Washington on June 19, 1968. Most then went home— those who stayed were jailed for refusing to evacuate. As was mentioned in Chapter Four, the armed services also reflected the degeneration of race relations. Only 12% of Vietnam forces were black, but 20% of the fighting forces and 25% of elite combat units were African
humanity would require far more patience and time than expected just a few years earlier. The question remained, however, as to whether the nonviolent civil rights campaign of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., based upon a deeply held humanist reading of the Christian gospel stressing unity and equality parallel to Teilhard’s own, would survive this time of great struggle.

**Robert F. Kennedy**

The assassination of Robert F Kennedy just two months after MLK’s reemphasized the shift in the social, cultural, and political wind of the 1960s, as well as in the reception of Teilhard. Along with his older brother John, Dr. King, and Sargent Shriver, Robert Kennedy exemplified the movement toward racial and economic justice. With the violent death of Bobby Kennedy not only did the age of Camelot come to an end, but in a sense so too did the age of Teilhard, who at one time was deemed the “theologian” to Camelot.519

Much of the support for this and many of the other initiatives that occurred during President Kennedy’s term in office from 1960 to 1963 actually was the result of the American. Multiple incidents of racial harassment and violence occurred at bases in Vietnam and the US. Still, at the end of the 1960s African Americans were better off on numerous scales. In 1960 non-whites earned 52% as much as whites, in 1968 that had increased to 63%. In 1960 39% of nonwhites had completed high school, in 1968 the percentage was 58%. Nonwhites employed in “craftsmen and foremen” jobs rose 57% during the decade, but the number of these jobs rose only 12%. The percentage of African Americans satisfied with their workplace rose from 54 to 76%. Yet 12% of the population still lived below the poverty line, as opposed to 22% in 1960. Whites who murdered blacks were starting to be convicted, even in the South. Additionally, when ordered to desegregate, most Southern schools complied. Statistics are from O’Neill, 193.

519 Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 117. Sargent Shriver found Teilhard’s thought so amenable to Kennedy “Camelot” politics that Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense, put Teilhard’s name on a list of most valued authors for the administration. Wills, 98. In recognition of the ready reception of Teilhard’s thought by the Kennedy administration Wills also notes later in his book that “This strange priest in the French army [Teilhard] was preparing the rationale for a weird American optimism, voiced . . . a decade after Teilhard’s own death. He became the posthumous theologian to Camelot.” Wills, 117.
determination of his Attorney General and younger brother, Bobby Kennedy. It was the Tet Offensive in February, 1968 that convinced Robert Kennedy he had to run for President. Then President Johnson’s unexpected “declaration of noncandidacy” in late March shook the entire nation and cleared the way for his campaign.

As Senator and then again as a party presidential candidate, Kennedy spoke forcefully in favor of the "disaffected," the impoverished, and "the excluded," thereby aligning himself with leaders of the civil rights struggle and social justice campaigners. His goal was to lead the Democratic Party to more aggressively eliminate perceived discrimination on all levels, thus seeking the further unity of all American peoples. His was indeed a very Teilhardian platform. During that aforementioned rhetorical speech at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana on April 4, 1968 following Martin Luther King’s assassination, Kennedy questioned the student body as to what kind of life America wished for herself; whether privileged Americans had earned the great luxury they enjoyed and whether such Americans had an obligation to those, in US society and across the world, who had little by comparison. In a statement that recalled Teilhard’s convergence toward the Body of Christ, Kennedy asked when we will realize that we are “one world,” and have responsibility for that world, and so violence has no place within it? He demanded that each American take responsibility for the current disorder, and

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520 Among these were the desegregation of schools and colleges, discussion with the leaders of the civil rights movement, and the creation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Asked in an interview in May 1962: "What do you see as the big problem ahead for you, is it Crime or Internal Security?" Robert Kennedy replied, "Civil Rights." From an interview conducted by Bob Spivack with then Attorney General Robert Kennedy, May 12, 1962 as quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy and His Times (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 313. Bobby Kennedy delayed entering the Presidential race in the summer of 1967 for fear of splitting the Democratic Party around the incumbent president; that delay ultimately damaged his reputation and his candidacy.

521 O’Neill, 356.

rather than react with more violence to the news of Dr. King’s death, to react instead with love.\textsuperscript{523}

Kennedy insisted on a platform of racial and economic justice, non-aggression in foreign policy, decentralization of power, and social improvement. Robert Kennedy’s campaign for the presidency included a continuation not only of his brother’s programs, but an extension of those. A crucial element to his campaign was engagement with the young, whom he saw as being the future of a reinvigorated American society. He was willing to challenge the young people who supported the war while benefiting from draft deferments, for instance. Many of Kennedy's policies did not sit well with the business world, as they were opposed to the tax increases necessary to fund social programs. He aroused rabid animosity in some quarters, with J. Edgar Hoover's Deputy Clyde Tolson reported as saying, "I hope that someone shoots and kills the son of a bitch."\textsuperscript{524}

On June 4, 1968, the night of the California Primary, Kennedy addressed a large crowd of supporters at the Ambassador Hotel in San Francisco. Around midnight he left the stage. While taking a shortcut through the hotel kitchen, Kennedy was shot by Sirhan

at promoting peace and unity, and one very Teilhardian in nature, was the Peace Corps, founded by John F. Kennedy in 1961, and headed by his brother-in-law Robert Sargent Shriver, "Sarge," from the beginning. Another sign of Teilhard’s influence upon the Kennedys was that in the very early years of the Peace Corps, book lockers were provided to all volunteers. These were to be left behind in the locations where volunteers were situated. Word was that Sarge himself, along with his wife Eunice Kennedy Shriver was behind the book lockers. In addition to reference books in the areas in which the volunteers were working, classics and paperbacks were provided. Also always included was spiritual reading, including books by Teilhard de Chardin. From John Coyne, “The Famous Peace Corps Book Locker, Part I,” May 13, 2009 at http://peacecorpsworldwide.org/babbles/2009/05/13/the-fabulous-peace-corps-book-locker-part-i/. Retrieved December 7, 2013.

\textsuperscript{523} Eugene McCarthy, Senator from Minnesota, had already entered the race as the anti-war candidate. His supporters angrily denounced Kennedy as an opportunist, and the anti-war movement was split between McCarthy and Kennedy. When Johnson dropped out of the Presidential race, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, long a champion of labor unions and civil rights, entered the race with the support of the party "establishment," including most members of Congress, mayors, governors, and labor unions. He entered the race too late to enter any primaries, but had the support of the departing president and many Democratic insiders. Robert Kennedy, like his brother before him, planned to win the nomination through popular support in the primaries.

\textsuperscript{524} Clyde Tolson, quoted in Thurston Clarke, "The Last Good Campaign," \textit{Vanity Fair} 574 (June, 2008), 173.
Sirhan, a twenty-four year old Jordanian living in Los Angeles. The motive for the shooting was apparently anger at several pro-Israeli speeches Kennedy had made during the campaign. The forty-two year old Kennedy died in the early morning of June the sixth.

What followed was the by now traditional post-assassination events. An official jet was sent to fly Kennedy’s body to New York City; President Johnson and others came to the funeral Mass which was celebrated by Cardinal Cushing, as was done for President Kennedy.\(^{525}\) Cynicism, though, was the order of the day, particularly as Bobby Kennedy was liked, in the center and on the left, even by those who did not care for his politics. Numerous commentators reflected upon “what it was like to have this greatest of all modern electoral dramas end so tragically.” And “The people who lined the tracks . . . mourned not just the man but what in that moment he symbolized . . . eyes thought to be drained of tears wept again.”\(^{526}\) A comment Edward Kennedy made during the eulogy he gave for his brother very much personified not only Bobby Kennedy, but the Camelot years in general: “As he said many times, to those he touched and who sought to touch him: ‘Some men see things as they are, and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not.’”\(^{527}\) Additionally, several commented that Robert Kennedy’s greatest asset was his capacity for growth, for “he was always in the process of becoming.”\(^{528}\) Both of these statements are quite Teilhardian in nature. With Robert Kennedy’s death yet

\(^{525}\) Leonard Berstein conducted the Mass, Edward Kennedy read the eulogy, and Andy Williams sang. A train later took Kennedy’s body down Penn Central’s main line to Arlington Cemetery near Washington DC. Huge crowds gathered along the way, so that it took eight-hours to make the 226 mile trip. About one thousand people were aboard the train—including friends, relatives, and reporters—most despairing and drinking.\(^{526}\) O’Neill, 372.

\(^{527}\) The quote is a paraphrase of a line spoken by the devil (The Serpent) to Eve in George Bernard Shaw’s Back to Methuselah, written during the years 1918-1920.

\(^{528}\) O’Neill, 374.
another “Teilhardian” man of unity, progress and hope in the future had been destroyed by those who were unable to understand the teleology of his work. “Why?” asked those who mourned yet again. For those who turned to Teilhard, the answer given was that in the end, the question of why evil happens must be transmuted into some very different questions. It is no longer important to know why something happened, but to ask, now that it has, how we plan to respond.529

Vietnam

The latter years of the 1960s saw an important shift in the perception of the Cold War consensus played by the United States in patrolling the remainder of the world. Since World War II the US had made security agreements with forty-two countries in NATO and SEATO. Thirty-eight countries benefited from US military advisory teams, and major US bases were found in twenty. This role was seen as even grander in the summer of 1967 when President Johnson claimed that America “had a whole world to guard.”530 Yet Congress was increasingly reluctant to do just this; the unspoken question was that if American military muscle could not stop the current war, how would they ever avoid future ones? Anti-interventionist, increasingly isolationist sentiments abounded.531 Rather than convergence, it appeared that the United States at least was intent upon increasing separation.

529 Teilhard, Divine Milieu, 83-6.
530 President Lyndon B. Johnson as quoted in O’Neill, 345.
531 O’Neill, 345. In May of 1967 the US Congress rejected a new weapons system for the first time in a decade. The Senate Armed Services Committee remarked that by making US intervention easier, it would certainly make it more likely. The following month congressional representatives met with US military officials to discourage American intervention in the Middle East crisis. Similarly, in July, 1967 Congress criticized the administration for sending transport planes to the Congo, and in August the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with conservative support, began hearings on the general subject of American commitments abroad.
By 1967 US casualties in Vietnam had already reached the 100,000 mark. Most likely it will never be known how many hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese—troops or civilians—were killed. The country was bombed more heavily than either Germany or Japan in World War II; ground operations were equally destructive. Journalist Jonathan Schell of *New Yorker Magazine* wrote in his book *The Village of Ben Suc* that “we are destroying, seemingly by inadvertence, the very country we are supposedly protecting.”

The “Vietnam Summer,” which took place during the summer of 1967, mobilized some twenty thousand young people to ring doorbells and “teach out” their neighbors regarding the issues surrounding the Vietnam War. The hope of the leaders was to especially encourage involvement in peace efforts on the part of middle-class America. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. also agreed to participate. The effort was notable, for it exemplified the progressively real authority and agency flowing from the young. As we have seen already, the young, especially educated young people, were one of the primary groups interested in Teilhard’s writing.

The Vietnam Summer effort was also a crucial turning point for the “New Left.” Many of those who would label themselves this way increasingly disdained this type of

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532 Jonathon Schell, *The Village of Ben Suc* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1967). In O’Neill, 333. Schell found the level of self-delusion regarding this fact staggeringly high in both military leaders and the US Senate. As an example, in sectors assigned to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) few villages were destroyed, but in US controlled areas some 90% were, indiscriminately so. “If a village was evacuated its inhabitants were called Viet Cong supporters. When sent to a camp they became refugees. The dead were always confirmed Viet Cong.” Quoted in O’Neill, 335. The ARVN, sometimes referred to as the South Vietnamese Army (SVA), was the Ground Forces branch of the Republic of Vietnam’s Military Forces, the official military of the Republic of South Vietnam which existed from 1955 until the fall of Saigon in 1975. It is estimated to have suffered 1,394,000 casualties (killed and wounded) during the Vietnam War. When a South Vietnam village was destroyed for harboring communists it was said to be its own fault. Rarely, however, did the villagers have a choice in the matter of whether village inhabitants, or outsiders, would support the opposing government. Similarly, the United States could not guarantee security for the villagers against Communist reprisals; they were still to blame if the Army had to kill them. In Schell’s experience Congress was unaware of, or did not wish to be aware of this reality.
promotional, nonviolent activity, and instead preferred radicalization. They considered anything else to accomplish little.

Similarly, their reaction to the October, 1967 March on the Pentagon which culminated the Vietnam Summer was less than enthusiastic. Almost 100,000 people gathered to protest the American war effort in Vietnam. More than half of these then marched to the Pentagon to ask for an end to the conflict. The protest was the most dramatic sign of declining support for the administration’s policies. The New Left radicals, however, did not think it went far enough. The event also deepened the fissures between politically active hawks and doves.

Then on January 30, 1968, the Vietnamese New Year or “Tet,” pro-North Vietnamese Viet Cong troops assailed thirty-six provincial capitals and five major cities. For the first time the US public saw the war in action in almost “real-time” television coverage, along with images of US soldiers panicked, dead, or dying. It was a media success for the Viet Cong, as the United States military was at a loss in understanding suicide warfare. President Johnson himself was astonished.

By 1968 television coverage reached more than eleven million American homes and the government was no longer able to control all public images of this conflict. As Walter Cronkite noted in February, “the grim pictures unfolding in the last week cannot fail to leave the impression that the agony of Vietnam is acute and that the detached

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533 Polls taken during the preceding summer had shown that for the first time American support for the war had dropped below 50 percent. The Johnson administration responded with a vigorous propaganda campaign to restore public confidence in the war effort. Johnson even called General William Westmoreland, commander of the US forces in Vietnam, back to address both Congress and the American public.

534 Kurlansky, 50. An illiterate farmer, Nguyen Van San, led fifteen men in attacking the US Embassy in a suicide mission on the Vietnamese New Year when it was least expected, and thereafter symbolized what became known as the “Tet Offensive.”

analyses of Secretary of State Dan Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara could be incomplete.536 This very public view of the hostilities encouraged yet more intense anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. On February 8th Robert Kennedy gave a speech stating the war was unwinnable. Between February 11th and 15th students from Harvard, Radcliffe, and Boston University held a four-day hunger strike protest. Five hundred law professors nationwide signed a petition urging the legal profession to actively oppose Johnson’s war policy.537

Slowly, those in Congress who had previously been hawks recommended that the US abandon hope for a military victory, deescalate the war, and try for negotiation. That particular shift, in addition to the advice given by new Secretary of Defense Clifford, forced President Johnson to realize the war could not be won at a reasonable cost.538

536 Kurlansky, 52. Walter Cronkite insisted on traveling to Vietnam to report on the war from a first person perspective. His *Report from Vietnam by Walter Cronkite* aired February 27, 1968. Perhaps the most important statement from the report was: “To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, though unsatisfactory, conclusion . . . It is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could.” Johnson reacted to Cronkite’s testimony as if he had a problem for the first time. “If I’ve lost Cronkite, I’ve lost Middle America,” was one quoted response; another was “If I’ve lost Cronkite, I’ve lost the war.” Cronkite’s *Report* was a watershed mark in the reporting of opinion by news commentators. Additionally, within two days afterwards Secretary of the Defense, Robert McNamara, resigned from his position and instead became President of the World Bank, a post he held until 1981. See also his autobiography *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, with Brian VanDeMark, (New York: TimesBooks, 1995) in which he notes that although well before leaving the Pentagon he realized that the war was futile, he did not share that insight with the public until late in life. In 1995 at the age of 79, he took a stand against his own conduct of the war, confessing that it was “wrong, terribly wrong.” Quoted in Kurlansky, 61. As another example of influence of Teilhard upon the Kennedys, McNamara was recruited as Secretary of Defense for John F. Kennedy by Sargent Shriver. Although he initially had his doubts about McNamara, then newly hired Chair of Ford Motor, when Shriver heard that McNamara was reading Teilhard’s *The Phenomenon*, he exclaimed: “How many other automobile executives or cabinet members read Teilhard de Chardin?” McNamara had the job. From Stossel, *Sarge*, 183. See also Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Kennedys: An American Drama, Volume 1*, (New York: Summit, 1984), 466.

537 The only response from the administration to these actions was that the Selective Service raised the number of young men called in the draft from forty thousand to forty-eight thousand, and also abolished the student deferment for graduate students. The seven weeks ending February 18th broke the previous record for weekly casualties, with 543 Americans killed in battle.

538 Secretary of Defense Clifford told Johnson to 1. Not send more troops; 2. Vietnamize the war; 3. Call for a limited bombing halt. Clifford had been chosen because he was a hawk, and not one to be nervous
administration could not win in Viet Nam because it was politically impossible to send the
million more troops victory would require; nor could the United States just withdraw
as this would require confessing errors that had already cost hundreds of thousands of
lives. The only remaining alternative appeared to be eternal combat. Some would claim
the Johnson administration ended in defeat—defeat in Vietnam, defeat in the war on
poverty, defeat at the polls. His decision not to submit his name as a presidential
candidate was in part a result of that sense of defeat.\footnote{O’Neill, 352.}

In a similar way the great test of Richard Nixon’s presidency was the war. The
largest achievement in 1969 was that some troops did leave. The fighting scaled down
and casualties declined. But any hope for a quick end soon withered. “Vietnamization”
going on, which meant a beefing up the ARVN so it could do most of fighting,
accompanied by the slow withdrawal of American infantry. This withdrawal was
imperceptible at first, as there were still over 400,000 troops in Vietnam at the end of
1969. Still, the war now was less expensive in terms of both lives and dollars. The
change in the draft sharply reduced middle-class anxiety, so that opposition to the war
continued, but it now lacked focus. In October, 1969 however, MOBE’s call for a
Vietnam Moratorium was answered by millions.\footnote{MOBE is the acronym for the National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam.} In November of that year, 300,000
people gathered for a “March Against Death,” the largest demonstration ever to take
place in Washington, DC. Unfortunately the March had little effect on the

about the direction the military endeavors were taking; given the actual facts he did not retain that stance
for long. Winning the war would mean drafting another 200,000 troops and calling up an additional one-
quarter million reservists to support them. Johnson’s announcement in late March, 1968, and call for a
partial bombing halt in North Vietnam was a result of his work.\footnote{Johnson’s announcement in late March, 1968, and call for a partial bombing halt in North Vietnam was a result of his work.}
administration; Vice-President Agnew denounced the anti-war protestors as “effete snobs,” “supercilious sophisticates,” and worse.⁵⁴¹

Although Teilhard himself found some deeper meaning in war as he considered it one of the primary forces by which to bring people together, the American public of 1968 obviously found it difficult to reconcile that belief with what was occurring in Vietnam. Instead the war was proving to be quite divisive, particularly among the young who were in line for the draft. The difference, perhaps was that for Teilhard times of war as much as periods of peace were opportunities for growth and progress; in working together in battling towards peace, he believed convergence toward Christ was occurring. Still, Teilhard realized that peace would only happen when “men share a common understanding, at least as a first approximation, on what we should expect and hope for from the world's future.” ⁵⁴² It did not appear, at this point in the late 1960s, that such a common understanding yet existed.

The Youth Culture

As was discussed in Chapter Four of this work, the “hippies” of the 1960s “counter-culture” were attempting to build alternative life styles to the corporate, suburban world of their parents. Against “hostile competitive, capitalistic values of

⁵⁴¹ See, for example, “New Political Labels Confuse,” The Kittanning Simpson Leader Times (March 2, 1970). Retrieved from http://newspaperarchive.com/kittanning-simpson-leader-times/1970-03-02/page-4 on October 4, 2013. This is the newspaper of Kittanning, PA. It appeared that the more Agnew abused blacks, intellectuals, and the young the more popular he became. Similarly, rather than dissuading the administration from continuing bloodshed in Vietnam, although ground troops were withdrawn, by March, 1970 130,000 tons of bombs a month were being dropped.

⁵⁴² Teilhard, Letters from a Traveller, 278. He also wrote while on the Front in WWI: “Let them understand that . . . which was disclosed to them in the shell-holes and barbed wire, will never completely withdraw from the pacified world. There it will always remain alive, more difficult to detect though it may be. And that man will be able to recognize it, and once more unite himself to it, who devotes himself to the tasks of everyday existence . . . with the consciousness of forwarding, in God and for God, the great task of creating . . . a Mankind that is born . . . in hours of crisis but can reach its fulfillment only in peace.” Teilhard, “Nostalgia for the Front,” The Heart of Matter, 178-9.
bourgeois America they posed their own faith in nonviolence, love, and community.543 The “counter-culture” began when the ideological struggle between the young and elders was named the “generation gap.” For the first time in American history social conflict was understood to be a function of age. Still, not all the young were rebellious—most were not, and many older people joined the rebellion so that as many over 30 as not yet 30 were part of it.

“Hippiness” was often an individualistic journey; one did not “drop out,” or “have to” take drugs, to somehow “qualify” as a hippie. Being part of the counterculture was the result of a frame of mind, like being part of the Movement (the protest element of the counterculture).544 As author Terry Anderson argued: “The hippie movement is not a beard, it is not a weird, colorful costume, and it is not marijuana. The hippie movement is a philosophy, a way of life, and a hippie is one who believes in this.”

The counterculture was earnest in its pursuit for a new way of being from maybe 1965 to early 1967. One might remember Mario Savio, leader of the Berkely Free Speech Movement, who made the connection between civil rights and the student movement in a famous speech in December, 1964 at Sproul Hall at Berkeley.545

By late 1967 the names of those such as Savio, student and antiwar arrests, and headlines pertaining to the counterculture were legend to incoming university students. Unfortunately, what was most embraced by those same later students was the noise and hedonism; what was forgotten was the grace and civility that drove the originators.

543 O’Neill, 251.
545 “There’s a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part, you can’t even tacitly take part, and you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop.” Mario Savio quoted in Kurlansky, 92-93.
Consider, as an example of this, the time Mario Savio removed his shoes before climbing onto a police car.\textsuperscript{546}

So hippiedom was consequently negatively affected by the influx of teenyboppers and runaways, attracted by media coverage, who some believe spoiled New York’s East Village and San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district for serious cultural radicals.\textsuperscript{547} Although many of those who participated most likely read his work, the 1967 “Summer of Love” had little to do with Teilhard’s concept of Omega-love. It certainly attracted thousands of young people to these two counterculture hubs, where rock bands, communities, “tribes,” and “families” thrived for a while. But these “immigrants” also brought in their wake psychotics, drug peddlers and criminals; rapes, muggings and assaults became commonplace.\textsuperscript{548}

Ultra-radicalism from the counterculture was more than just a calculated response. Keniston wrote in \textit{Young Radicals} that “the issue of violence is to this generation what the issue of sex was to the Victorian world.” The youth of the 1960s were obsessed by violence; the massacres of World War II haunted them, and the prospect of nuclear war shadowed their youth. Resisting violence became central to life. They made great efforts, for example through training in nonviolent confrontation, “to overcome in themselves any vestige of sadism, cruelty, domination, or power-seeking in human relationships.” Hence, the Summer of Love, sit-ins, and teach-ins. However, these tactics aroused violence in others which in turn increased their own intrinsic rage.

\textsuperscript{546} W.J. Rorabaugh, \textit{Berkeley at War}, (New York City: Oxford University Press, 1990), 19. Savio removed his shoes so as not to scratch the car.
\textsuperscript{547} O’Neill, 251.
\textsuperscript{548} Soon, this became the first community in the world to revolve entirely around the buying and use of drugs, which were important as means to truth and as advancers of the pleasure principle. Simultaneously, violence greatly increased.
and hostility. When the slaughter grew in Vietnam they began to think of American
violence as so potent that only counterviolence would end it. As Kenniston
commented: “For all his efforts to control violence, cataclysm and sadism, the young
radical continually runs the danger of identifying himself with what he seeks to control,
and through a militant struggle against violence, creating more violence than he
overcomes.” It appeared that rather than working in harmony with others toward the
evolution of the world, the radicals of the New Left were determined to force an
evolutionary path of their own choosing. Unfortunately, they did not truly perceive, as
did Teilhard that “driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world seek each other
so that the world may come into being. Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in
such a way as to complete and fulfill them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what
is deepest in themselves.” For Teilhard and those who understood his vision, the unity
the counterculture supposedly craved was not only necessary, but was also possible only
through participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, and hence also inherently
involved suffering. Their true task, our true task, is simply to learn to see and work
within this.

Still, patience with Dr. King’s path of nonviolence, and the associated “sit-ins”
and “teach outs” was growing thin among not only the youth, but the more radical Black
Panthers and the like. The stage was set for a show-down among all these groups at
the 1968 Democratic Convention.

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549 O’Neill, 340.
551 Teilhard, The Phenomenon, 264 ff.
552 As with Teilhard’s thought, the foundations of Martin Luther King’s concept of non-violence was at
least in large part based upon the Christian New Testament, particularly the Beatitudes of Matthew 5.
Abbie Hoffman and his friends had formed the Yippies, the Youth International Party. They called themselves “revolutionary artists. Our concept of revolution is that it’s fun.”\textsuperscript{553} The Yippies decided to stage a “Festival of Life” in Chicago to counterbalance the Democratic convention which they considered a festival of death. The National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE) also planned to demonstrate. The joint Yippie-MOBE plan was heavily publicized in the underground press. All of this was designed—at least by some—to offend Chicago’s provincial sensibilities and create the best possible confrontation. The thought of Yippies in his city goaded Chicago Mayor Richard Daley to rage. Presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy, running on the anti-war platform and hence well aware of at least some of the intent of the counterculture, encouraged people to stay home.\textsuperscript{554} Only about twenty-five hundred Yippies came, but that was enough to cause the subsequent havoc.\textsuperscript{555}

Mayor Daley meant to smash the protestors to bits. Consequently the protestors were gassed, beaten, and maced. Police sergeants lost control of the police forces, who beat reporters, bystanders, and Yippies alike.\textsuperscript{556} The effect on the nation was ghastly.


\textsuperscript{554} Desire for an anti-war candidate led to Eugene McCarthy entering the race. He said that if no one else would, he would, because “there comes a time when an honorable man simply has to raise the flag.” Quoted in O’Neill, 361.

\textsuperscript{555} On August 26, 1968 Chicago Mayor Richard Daley opened the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. While the convention moved haltingly toward nominating Hubert Humphrey for president, the city's police attempted to enforce an 11 o'clock curfew. On that Monday night demonstrations were widespread, but generally peaceful. The next two days, however, brought increasing tension and violence to the situation.

\textsuperscript{556} Fury and prejudice were definitely two reasons for the resulting violence; however, numerous authors note in addition that a peculiar psychology was seeping into police work, as it acquired the military’s enthusiasm for sweeping destruction and intelligence work, and saw not artists and mourning youth, but riot and rebellion. On Wednesday evening August 28, 1968, Chicago police took action against crowds of demonstrators without provocation. The police beat some marchers unconscious and sent at least 100 to emergency rooms while arresting hundreds of others. Mayor Daley tried the next day at a press conference to explain the police action. He famously declared: "The policeman isn't there to create disorder, the policeman is there to preserve disorder." O’Neill, 175.
Although Hubert Humphrey was nominated, the Democratic Party lay in shambles.\textsuperscript{557}

The whole country had seen the violence in Chicago, some of which occurred in the convention hall itself.

\textbf{American Culture at Large 1968-1970}

The Democrats lost the 1968 election not just because of the riot in Chicago. These years also saw the start of what became known as the “silent majority” who desired to see hippies, and their like, beaten up. Law and order could hardly be too viciously applied to suit people who were demoralized by years of war, protest, and youthful contempt for middleclass life.\textsuperscript{558} For example, the more the calls for repression came from society, the better off Richard Nixon was. Some would argue that despite his campaign slogan, “Come together,” Nixon, in his calls for law and order, accelerated the fragmentation of American society.\textsuperscript{559} Fragmentation, not unity. Is it any wonder that vision of a united and unifying world seemed increasingly remote?

More campus outrages occurred in 1969 than in 1968, but the temper of public life seemed to ease a bit. As historian William O’Neill wrote: “People can bear to address profound —therefore stormy and divisive—issues for only so long. When that time is up, regardless of what has been accomplished or not, private matters reassert their authority.”\textsuperscript{560}

\textsuperscript{557} Vice President Hubert Humphrey considered Shriver his first choice for running mate in the 1968 presidential contest, but the selection was effectively vetoed by the Kennedy family, according to Humphrey aides quoted in Scott Stossel, \textit{Sarge}, 515 -19. Humphrey chose Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine instead. Retrieved from \url{http://www.theatlantic.com/past/issues/2004/05/stossel.htm} on November 12, 2013). During the 1972 US Presidential election, Shriver was George McGovern’s running mate as the Democratic Party’s nominee for US Vice President, replacing Thomas Eagleton who had resigned from the ticket. In contrast to his in-laws, Shriver’s Catholicism appeared to be of the form of a deep discipleship.

\textsuperscript{558} O’Neill, 387.

\textsuperscript{559} O’Neill, 338.

\textsuperscript{560} O’Neill, 396.
The closing of the 1960s saw the physical condition of Americans improving. Real income went up, especially among blacks, as did educational levels. The work force shifted toward skilled or white collar occupations. As a result, not surprisingly, poverty declined. Black progress, though, was often accomplished by forceful tactics that offended whites. Many blacks felt cheated by the supposed wars on poverty, as their own lives did not reflect much growth.

Additionally, university populations grew as access to further education increased, but at the same time students began treating what had been a privilege as a curse. University administrations were often damned as racists and authoritarians. The more people of color they recruited, the more discriminatory they were accused of being. White radicals claimed universities were imperialistic knowledge factories, while older adults turned against university administrators on account of their failure to control their students.

On top of all that, pollution was growing, and the environment was deteriorating. For the first time on a large scale, ecological preservation became a concern. John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, argued quite vocally that nonmaterial values should have equal standing with economic ones. O’Neill notes that: “The abundance which had for so long been the American dream, now threatened the very hopes it was supposed to realize.” The situation was more ironic than many people could handle. Despite ongoing vociferous “discussion,” the first Earth Day took place April 22, 1970, under the championship of Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, who saw the day as an opportunity to promote teach-ins concerning the dangers of pollution. Even these

561 Lytle, 325.
562 O’Neill, 422.
attempts to preserve the earth were divisive, as some in mainstream America saw the call to work together to do so as yet another slogan by the spoiled counterculture. Conversely, young radicals believed that the argument for cooperation with “the man” in this effort was an argument “for the further consolidation of power and profit in the hands of those responsible for the present dilemma.”

Again, the unity that had seemed such a sure thing in 1963 was not coalescing. Convergence appeared to be dead, and the question was “Why?” What went wrong? Surely those who had given their lives to the work of social progress could expect to see movement in a positive direction by now? Teilhard, however, would counter that “What paralyzes life is lack of faith and lack of audacity. The difficulty lies not in solving problems but expressing them.” From an evolutionary standpoint the roadblocks were temporary; what was perhaps needed was simply ongoing faith and perseverance.

**Religious Issues**

Divisive or not, and even if few in number the hippies had a great effect on middle-class society, especially the youth. For one, hippies made religion socially acceptable. Interest in the supernatural was contagious; many of the communes in the late 1960s were actually religious fellowships practicing a contemporary monasticism. Not coincidentally, courses in religion in higher education multiplied. For example, at Smith, the number offered grew from 692 in 1954 to nearly 1400 in 1969 although the student population remained constant. In general, traditional religion was the point of departure

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563 Lytle, 331. The nascent environmental movement will be one direction in which Teilhard’s work will be utilized in future decades by Thomas Berry and others.
565 Consider, for example, the “Cathedral of the Spirit” in western Massachusetts, where a 19-year-old mystic helped the commune members prepare for the Second Coming and a time when all men would be brothers. The “monastery” had strict rules against drinking, drugs, and “sex without love.” The commune was essentially contemplative. O’Neill, 254.
rather than the final place for answers. Oriental theologies grew more attractive, as did mysticism of any ilk. Colleges were overwhelmingly asked for subjects like Zen, sorcery and witchcraft.566

All of this points to the anti-positivist, anti-rational, anti-science stance of many students. Science was now discredited as an agent of the military-industrial complex, and with failing to make life more attractive. Additionally, the “establishment” was rational! This emotionally-laden “fact” appeared to support the central truth of many religions that “man is more than a creature who reasons.”567 During these years the interest in mysticism of any type was intense; rather than science and reason, young people especially sought union with the good, the beautiful, and the forces of nature. As Roszak notes in his The Making of a Counter Culture, young people wanted their life to exhibit “the beauty of the fully illuminated personality.”568 For many then, Teilhard’s mystical qualities were very much a drawing point. The question will remain, however, just how his work is interpreted by those who, unlike Teilhard, chose to reject the Catholic and mainline Protestant churches in favor of the experimental.

This portion of the chapter will investigate how and why religion changed as it did in America in the years between 1968 and 1970. Changes in the Catholic Church will be examined first, then alternatives to organized religion—mysticism, magic, rebels, and dropouts will be explored. Finally, we will return to the radical theology of the mid-1960s and the “God is Dead” movement as explored in the previous chapter, to discern

566 O’Neill, 255.
567 Consider instead this statement from Teilhard: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.” Paraphrased from Teilhard, The Divine Milieu, 20-25.
why a “Theology of Hope” was the next logical step and how this intersected with Teilhard’s Christian hope.

Catholic Views

Prior to the mid-1960s Catholics in the United States in general were loyal and patriotic to a fault, equally devoted to both Washington and Rome. Since they perceived the Church and politics as existing on different planes, they found no contradictions in serving both. Additionally, anti-Catholicism was finally declining due to the positive influence of Pope John XXIII and John F. Kennedy. Both men demonstrated that it was possible to “both be free and Catholic.” During this decade it was politicians like the Kennedys, Eugene McCarthy, and a host of nuns and clergymen, who dispelled the fears of the remaining population that the growth of Catholicism threatened American liberty.569

Changes in the institutional structure of the Roman Catholic Church resulting from Vatican II also attracted favorable attention. In 1966 the NCCB was created, as was the USCC, both intended to better respond to the needs of the people within the Church.570 Additionally, special interest groups, such as the National Black Sisters’ Conference (1968) among many, began to be formed. The emphasis was on democratic procedures, even within the Church.571

570 Patrick Carey, Catholics in America: A History (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2008), 117. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) was an exclusively episcopal organization focusing on internal ecclesiastical issues, whereas the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) was an episcopal organization collaborating with lay Catholics and priests to address social & political issues of national and international concern.
571 As an example, the following organizations were formed in the indicated years: National Federation of Priests’ Councils (1968); National Black Sisters’ Conference (1968); National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus (1968); Priests Associated for Religious, Educational and Social Rights (Padres) (1969); Leadership Conference of Women Religious (1971); Las Hermanas (1971). Additionally, in 1969 the US Catholic Bishops promulgated “The Resolution on Due Process” to protect “human rights and freedoms.
Despite these developments, by 1966 Catholics were drifting away from their Church. A sign of this was that Church attendance statistics for 1967 show a dramatic downward turn. Additionally, statistics from that time show a mass exit from the priesthood, and a fall in clerical recruitment.\textsuperscript{572}

Catholic historical theologian Patrick Carey identifies four issues that appeared to be especially divisive in the United States Catholic Church at the time: 1. The nature and proper exercise of ecclesiastical authority; 2. Sexual morality and abortion; 3. The definition and implementation of social justice; and 4. The role of religion in politics. These four points are considered in more detail below; however what must be clarified is that although the conflict over issues was usual, what was new was the widespread, public, and substantive character of the conflict.\textsuperscript{573} Suddenly, everyone and everything was open to questioning and criticism. The conflicts in the Church were, of course, reflective of the general cultural revolution occurring in the larger American society. It was no longer presumed that tradition would necessarily prevail. The post-conciliar

\begin{itemize}
\item Attendance at Mass was down from 71% in 1963 to 52% in 1971; participation in sacramental confessions down from 38% in 1963 to 17% in 1971. Although the Catholic population (primarily due to immigration and an increased birth rates) increased by 17% between 1965 and 1988, the number of priests declined by 8%. This drop was due primarily to the 10,000 who left the priesthood and an 85% drop in the number of seminarians. The numbers of women religious dropped 40% between 1965 and 1988. As addressed by David Rice in \textit{Shattered Vows: Exodus from the Priesthood} (London: Fleming Revell Company, 1992), the decline in recruitment was primarily due to social and educational changes that provided alternative opportunities. In an age of “freedom,” young men and women chaffed at being forced into a particular rigid mold. Accordingly, the role of celibacy began to be regarded with suspicion, rather than as a witness of faith. Other factors contributing to the loss of clergy included loneliness, resentment toward authority, and the failure of the church to speak out on social issues.
\item Carey, 122. This was new particularly for those whose experience of Catholicism was confined to late 1940s and 1950s.
\end{itemize}
battle was instead over defining what was and what was not continuous and changeable in that Catholic tradition.\footnote{574}

In regards to Carey’s first point above, despite the proliferation of new organizations and councils, it appeared that the consensus of the Second Vatican Council was more anticipated than real. As a result, in the United States the authority of the papacy and the Vatican bureaucracy was especially under attack. Statements on sexual ethics, jurisdictional debates between American theologians and the Vatican over the teaching authority of national Episcopal conferences, and the disciplining of some bishops created tensions and distancing between America and Rome. Pope Pius VI had already warned against excessive enthusiasm for change; later he and his successor, Pope John Paul II would proclaim their supremacy in stronger terms. John XXIII had opened a door later Pontiffs found hard to close, for freedom of conscience was proving irrepressible. As historian O’Neill wrote, “Change generated an appetite for more change.”\footnote{575}

Much of the weakening of hierarchical authority occurred in regards to significant areas of Catholic moral life.\footnote{576} This took place simultaneously with the growing social mobility of the American Catholic people. Catholics were increasingly identified with the American middle class, achieving higher educational levels and greater prosperity, and moving into the professional and business classes of society.

As has already been discussed numerous times, a revolution was taking place in society over moral and lifestyle issues, including those of artificial contraception, premarital sex, abortion, and homosexuality. All of these were generally more accepted

\footnote{574} Carey, 123.\footnote{575} O’Neill, 308.\footnote{576} Carey, 119.
in the church pews and in society; opinion polls of the time showed a growing divergence between official church teaching and the beliefs of ordinary Catholics. In particular became a cause célèbre. The 1968 encyclical reaffirmed the ban of the Catholic Church on artificial contraception, and in so doing became a standard bearer for the postconciliar Church. Although Pius VI intended to suppress the movement among Catholics for repeal of this ban, along the way he coincidentally further undermined papal authority. The document provoked public opposition among theologians as well as a growing number of American Catholics. Unfortunately the timing was terrible; the document was promulgated when Americans had a high expectation that the Church would change the teaching on this issue. As a result, for the first time in American Catholic history, widespread public resistance occurred to an official church teaching. This was fueled by the prevailing cultural antiestablishmentarianism, the expectation of change created by the Second Vatican Council, and a new notion of ecclesiastical authority.

This last statement was also true in regards to the implementation of social justice policies. The democratic surge within the Church and the societal interest in racial justice and the war on poverty encouraged American bishops, the USCC, and Catholic

\[577\] Carey, 131.
\[578\] O’Neill, 309.
\[579\] John XXIII had created a papal commission on birth control in 1962 to reexamine the teaching; Paul VI had broadened its membership during Vatican II. The final encyclical, however, favored the minority who suggested retaining opposition to artificial contraception. In 1964 a sixty-member commission of laymen and married couples was appointed by John XXIII to study this issue, and in June of 1966 this commission advised that decisions regarding birth control should be left to married couples themselves. Sixteen prelates also endorsed this decision. A twenty-man commission of conservatives finally agreed with Pope Paul VI’s teaching, but by then earlier recommendations had been made public. In October, 1967 the Third World Congress for the Lay Apostolate recommended eliminating the ban on contraception. All this guaranteed that Humanae Vitae would be disregarded in practice and challenged in principle. Nearly 800 theologians in US signed a statement against the encyclical. Loyal prelates counterattacked to no avail. Already in the late 1960s over 70% of American Catholics approved the use of contraceptives within marriage. Carey, 132.
theologians to become major advocates for social justice and civil rights. The documents *The Challenge of Peace* from 1983 as well as *Economic Justice for All* published in 1986 both address “postconciliar concerns to demonstrate the interrelated practical, political and social implications of Christian life.” They present and represent the ideals to which the church aspired after Vatican II, very Teilhardian ideals indeed.

Additionally, the Catholic peace movement took a dramatic turn to radical protests against the Vietnam War in the late 1960s to early 1970s. From 1963 to 1972 the so-called Catholic Left, a group of more than two hundred Catholics, led high-profile, media-event protests against the war. The Catholic Left felt no compulsion to demonstrate its Americanism or loyalty. The morality of conscience and higher law they followed was not self-critical or drawn from the Catholic natural law tradition so much as it was a morality of prophetic witness. The reaction to their actions from American Catholics ranged from outright disdain to conditional support.

Just as the Black Power movements challenged Martin Luther King’s leadership in the black community, so too did the institutional Catholic Church experience a shift in

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580 Carey, 124.
581 As an example of how important social justice issues became to the Church starting in the late 1960s, of the 188 official public statements, resolutions and pastoral letters of the American hierarchy between 1966 and 1988 some 52% were concerned with issues of national/international social justice. Only twelve discussed sexual morality and abortion. The remainder focused on internal ecclesiastical issues such as ecumenism, celibacy, Mary, charismatic renewal, and Catholic schools. Carey, 124.
582 These protest groups were the Baltimore Four, Catonsville nine, Chicago fifteen, Minnesota eight, New York eight, and a host of other groups of local priests, women religious and laity. They burned draft cards in defiance of federal legislation, poured blood on draft records, raided corporate headquarters, and destroyed federal documents, all to demonstrate the violence of the war. A few individuals—the Jesuit Daniel Berrigan, his brother the Josephite Philip Berrigan, Michael Cullen and James Forest became national heroes. The 1968 Catonsville Trial against nine Catholic protesters who burned draft files became an international media event and a rallying point for the antiwar movement. The trial later became the subject of a book, a play, and a television documentary movie. Daniel Berrigan refused to turn himself in after the trial, instead becoming a fugitive who was not captured by the FBI until 1970. Carey, 125.
583 Carey, 125. Cardinal Spellman deplored these demonstrations, and eventually exiled Daniel Berrigan. By 1971 69% of American Catholics (by then over 50% were opposed to the war) believed Catholics who raided draft boards were not living their faith.
its approach to racial justice. Leadership in this regard gradually passed to the black clergy and laity. On April 18, 1968 just two weeks after the assassination of King, more than fifty of the then 150 black US Catholic priests met in Detroit to prepare “A Statement of the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus.” The statement was a stinging criticism of existing racism in the Church.\textsuperscript{584} Without a doubt the Church Teilhard loved, the Church he believed would lead the world’s people toward Omega was in upheaval. No wonder the people of that Church began to find it difficult to believe convergence toward Omega would happen through that means.

**Mystics and Alternative Religions**

From the mid-1960s forward a variety of esoteric and unique religious ideas began to reach a much wider audience in the United States. Especially in the San Francisco Bay area, one of the homes of “hippiedom,” a flowering of new forms of “spirituality” bloomed.\textsuperscript{585} In his *Experimentation in American Religion* sociologist Robert Wuthnow found a strong correlation between countercultural involvement and a rejection of Christianity.\textsuperscript{586}

These new forms of spirituality included all forms of mysticism, astrology, extrasensory perception (ESP), Native American and tribal religions.\textsuperscript{587} Readings from the eastern mystics were used by all faiths. Those who participated in these alternative spiritualities would constitute yet another group drawn to Teilhard’s writing, particularly

\begin{footnotes}
\item[584] Carey, 128. The formation of the National Black Catholic Clergy Conference (NBCCC) in 1968 attempted to create solidarity among black clergy. The NCCB also created within the USCC a National Office for black Catholics.
\item[585] See, for example, *Religious Crisis*, 134-145. At the time, the term “spirituality” was preferred by those who associated religion with an over-rigid body of dogmas and moral rules.
\item[587] *Religious Crisis*, 134.
\end{footnotes}
because of his mystical tendencies; in another fifteen years their practices would be labeled “New Age,” and some would place Teilhard in their midst.\textsuperscript{588}

Yet, even though church attendance declined from the high levels of the 1950’s, this does not necessarily imply a corollary decrease in religious enthusiasm. It simply indicates that in the late Sixties “faith” was instead expressed by not going to church.\textsuperscript{589}

Especially for young radicals, or “wanna-be radicals,” experiential religious practice and alternative churches were the preferred mode. It is no surprise then that the peace demonstrations in 1969 were full of religious symbolism. By these years many students regarded the war as a symbol of the absolute corruption of American society, and consequently regarded their own involvement in anti-war protests as a moral and religious obligation.\textsuperscript{590}

Sometimes alternative churches were known as “Submarine” churches; their symbol was a yellow submarine with a cross, a peace symbol, and the word “ecumenical” in Greek. The symbol of the yellow submarine came from the Beatles “Yellow Submarine.\textsuperscript{591} In the Beatles’ movie people of all types lived in the submarine loving each other “in a groovy way,” love which gave them strength “to do battle with the Blue Meanies.” The movie also showed “that a Church has to have flexibility and maneuverability.” Submarine churches were indeed one way the counterculture found God, did service, and loved one another.\textsuperscript{592}

\textsuperscript{588} See, for example, David Lane, \textit{The Phenomenon of Teilhard} (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996).
\textsuperscript{589} O’Neill, 257.
\textsuperscript{590} Religious Crisis, 144.
\textsuperscript{591} The Beatles, “Yellow Submarine,” 1966. \textit{Yellow Submarine} was the tenth studio album by the Beatles in the United Kingdom. It was issued first as the soundtrack to the film \textit{Yellow Submarine}. “Yellow Submarine” the track was simultaneously issued in 1966 as a single and on the album Revolver.
Some of the most important student leaders were strongly influenced by Christianity or Judaism, and Christian student organizations played a major role. The “Jesus movement” was an umbrella term for a variety of Evangelical Protestant groups based in California from about 1967 on. It presented a theologically conservative gospel message in the language of the counter-culture outside of conventional Christianity.

By the late 1960s innumerable “alternative” possibilities were also offered by mystics of all kinds. The growing interest in ecology was related to a revival of paganism, especially Wicca. Feminism, and mysticism merged in the worship of the Goddess. Alternative therapies became mainstream; yoga was now understood as a form of spirituality as well as physical fitness. The nomenclature of the “seeker”—one searching for their spiritual path, and a characteristic figure of “baby boom” generation—was born. Rather than the previous emphasis on orthodoxy and orthopraxy, the emphasis now was on the right and duty of all to follow their own “path.” The need for personal exploration was consistent with the societal stress on individual freedom. This highly

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593 For example, in Boston over one hundred thousand gathered before a gigantic cross on the Common, and lit candles were placed on the steps of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York. Sometimes a shofar was blown. In the eyes of religious leaders what was most important was that underground youth could relate to Jesus who also was a rebel, and who was also rejected by the citizens of the day. This is perhaps also one of the reasons for the acceptance of Teilhard among this group. He too was perceived as a rebel and an outcast. Religious Crisis, 146.

594 Religious Crisis, 244.

subjective spirituality highlighted experience rather than doctrine, feeling and intuition rather than rational argument.

It is difficult to exaggerate the extent of the radical defeat or conservative resurgence in the world that was being created in the late 1960s. Christian radicalism suffered many casualties. Many left their churches, and those organizations most sympathetic to these events were severely disrupted, as disillusioned members dropped out of organized activity of any kind because of despair or exhaustion. Interest in Teilhard’s thought waned as a result of that same disillusionment. It would appear that the mysticism that grounded him and strengthened his perseverance and fortitude did not do the same for them. What might be the difference? Teilhard did write that "It would be nursing a great illusion if the man of our times were to think...he had no further need of religion...in reality, for those who can see, the great conflict from which we will have escaped will only consolidate in the world the necessity of faith." 596 Most likely many of the Sixties radicals and flower children would argue that it was indeed an interest in seeing as Teilhard did that drove them. At the same time, however, Teilhard’s sight was focused on Christ. Everything in his life, including his mystical experiences and his scientific work, both pointed toward and was derived from seeing the diaphany of Christ in the world. This, they did not appear to understand, or had no desire to.

But Christian radicalism also left continuing legacies. Radical ideas now had an established place within the church, even if they were often contested. Social justice issues such as racism, Third World poverty and health concerns, ecology, and peace were now part of established church agendas. An enduring understanding of the interrelatedness of the human family, and hope for ongoing unification, that strong

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596 Teilhard, Building the Earth, 58-9.
Teilhardian concept, had taken root and would not so easily be quashed. These are among the many trajectories in Teilhard’s thought that will in the immediate future be the subject of conferences, workshops, and the work of individuals, like Robert Mueller of the United Nations, which will ensure they are not forgotten.

**The Death of God and the Theology of Hope**

In the late 1960s science and rationalism were losing ground; a concurrent decline was noted in the number of college science majors.\(^{597}\) An exchange of interest in science for that of magic occurred; this could be considered yet another sign of a fascination with the everyday work of the divine immanence. In the minds of a good part of America, Christianity and science had been able to cohabitate as each had its own, separate sphere; the visible, physical universe was the place of science, the invisible of religion and the divine. Teilhard and the young of 1968 rejected this division, however. Under the influence of Teilhard and the counterculture many came to see the physical and spiritual universes as co-existential; actually only one reality existed, and that is where the divine dwelt.\(^{598}\)

In Chapter Five of this dissertation “Death of God” theology was discussed. According to the theologians involved, the “death of God” was necessary for God’s passage from Transcendence to Immanence. God’s death was necessary to lead to a new humanity, a new world, a new life, and freedom. God became the evolving God, and eventually the God of process theology.

Many saw this idea of the death of God as related to the work of Teilhard, for both theologies were focused upon the Incarnation as the key event in history. For

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\(^{597}\) O’Neill, 313.

\(^{598}\) O’Neill, 313.
Teilhard, at the moment of the Incarnation, God immersed himself in creation, unifying it, taking direct control as it were, until, “having gathered everything together and transformed everything he will close in upon himself and his conquests there rejoining, in a final gesture, the divine focus he has never left.” At that point then “God shall be all in all.”

All this meant that God really is not dead, simply that the traditional view of God has died. One might remark instead that God is “absent,” or the ability to experience God is dead, or the word “God” is dead, obviating a continued search for his identity and nature. In summary, as Bonhoeffer wrote, man ought to act as if God were dead, while believing he is not. So, human beings had become fully responsible for their own condition and must set about repairing it, particularly through modern social justice issues. Death of God theology was well received by both Protestant and Catholic activists who pushed back against obsolete and confining conditions in their churches. Rather than experiencing God’s death as devastation, the proponents of this theology were instead overall an optimistic group.

However, by May of 1969 Time Magazine was announcing the probable death of the “God is dead” theology. This was not because of hostile publicity over the death of

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599 Teilhard, Phenomenon, 149.
600 “When Christ has assimilated all things unto himself, then he will himself also be subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” (St Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:18.) This would appear to be Teilhard’s favorite scripture passage, as it is found repeatedly in his writings. See, for example, Let Me Explain, 94; The Heart of Matter, 104; Hymn of the Universe, 94; The Human Phenomenon, 149; Letters from a Traveler, 302; Human Energy, 69, and Christianity and Evolution, 75.
601 “Is ‘God is Dead’ dead?” Time (May 2, 1969): 46. The article begins “Whatever became of the death of God? Three years ago it was the most fiercely debated issue in American theology (consider the cover of Time on April 8, 1966). Scholarly journals were thick with discussions of it. No sermon topic was more popular; pulpits rang with denunciations.” However, the article goes on to argue that it now appears that indeed the “God is Dead” movement is indeed dead. It was a shock, and it cleared away some of the simple-minded misconceptions of what it means to say “God is dead,” but American theology has moved on, and is ready for more creative thought. Death-of-God Theologian Gabriel Vahanian, mentioned already in this dissertation, contends that those who still want to believe, those who wait for God, need not be
God, but because a cheerful secularism rooted in the Incarnation and God’s immanence seemed both untimely and unlikely. There simply was less to be jovial about. Society turned against secularism and against institutional churches. None of it was working. As has been seen, young people especially were rejecting the secularized mainstream churches which they found irrelevant for the age. They were going their own theological ways.

One of the responses to the time was the “Theology of Hope,” proposed particularly by German theologian Jürgen Moltmann; this did not say that God Is, rather that He is Not Yet. God awaits man in the future. Hope was pointed away from the present and toward the future. Continuities between the Theology of Hope and Teilhard’s thought will be considered in the next section in this chapter. Indeed, in many ways this emphasis on the future, especially hope for the future, was consistent with revolutionary aspirations, where successful revolution was seen as the coming of God. This new theological emphasis however did not have the effect of “God is Dead.” It was, to be blunt, ignored by most. Radical Catholics were especially still moving in a secular direction. Young people were still forming religious communes.

Moreover, disillusioned. "The more a society becomes technological, the more it worries about spiritual questions," he explains. "After the death of God, man will be no less religious than before." German Protestant Theologian Jürgen Moltmann agrees wholeheartedly. "God is dead' is written on one side of the stone," Moltmann declares. "But when you turn it over, it reads 'everything is religion.'" Indeed, by December 26, 1969, seven months later, the lead article in Time was “The New Ministry: Bringing God back to Life.”

Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1993) published as Theologie der Hoffnung in 1965. Moltmann is a German Reformed theologian who is presently Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen. This was his first book. It was written in 1965 during the period of West German Reconstruction. In this and subsequent, similar works, Moltmann attempts to articulate Christian hope as a challenge to both the desperation and the official optimism of a Reconstruction that sought only to return to the glory days of the past, rather than live in the hope of a completely new future that comes from God, who lives not so much above us but in front of us, drawing us into God's own future for the world. Although his primary influences were Hegel and Bloch, his “God in front of us,” sounds tremendously like Teilhard’s “Prime Mover ahead.” (See The Phenomenon, 271; also Science and Christ, 179.) Both are quite eschatological in nature. Some would also argue that both are panentheists.
Yet in the minds of at least some Americans, religious life was more fertile and
diverse by the end of the Sixties than since the end of the 19th century.\textsuperscript{604} Sunday
morning congregations may not have appeared that way, but compared to the 1950s when
religious life consisted solely in church-going it certainly was. The religious revival in
the traditional churches of the previous decade may have declined, but “religion” itself
did not. As the established churches became more secular, unchurched youths grew more
spiritual. Mainstream churches may have been undermined by romantic, rigid, or utopian
tendencies, but the example of the late Sixties shows that “even in a technetronic age,
perhaps especially then, men still have need of God, and that if the established churches
cannot provide for it others will.”\textsuperscript{605} To continue to expect the future to look the same as
it did thirty years in the past was to ignore the reality of the continuing evolution of all
facets of life. Humanity, that spiritual creature, was moving in a spiritual direction, even
if that direction was not yet clearly defined. We were not, perhaps, on the teleological
track that Teilhard envisioned, but movement was definitely occurring.

**The American Teilhard Association**

In the midst of the turmoil that was the American society of the time, the
American Teilhard Association, the organization created to spread Teilhard’s thought in
the United States (hereafter known as the ATA), began with a great initial burst of
energy. The first few years of 1967-1968, which coincided with the peak numbers of
books published about Teilhard, was a phase of great growth. Ultimately, though, the
story of this organization mirrors the declension narrative that is Teilhard’s reception

\textsuperscript{604} As an example see “The New Ministry: Bringing God back to Life,” *Time* (December 26, 1969): 48-57.
\textsuperscript{605} O’Neill, 317.
during this decade. This particular section in this chapter considers the work of the ATA during these years.

Almost immediately upon the establishment, in late 1967, of the American branch of the “Friends of Teilhard” plans began for various publications, conferences and lectures. The hope of its founders was to operate on two levels—the academic and the popular. It was anticipated that the association would be useful in encouraging communication among scholars and students on topics relevant to Teilhardian studies. Another goal was to respond to the questions and demands of the public regarding “a wider understanding of the complex and subtle, and often confusing body of Teilhard’s thought among those outside the academic community.”

December, 1967 also brought the first of the lectures sponsored by the new association. Scholars presented at the universities of Fairleigh Dickinson, Fordham, Rockefeller, and Seton Hall, as well as at Marymount-Manhattan College. These were very well attended.

But, the Association organizers realized they needed to attract more members. As a result, Harper & Row, the official publishers at this time of the Teilhard manuscripts in the US, agreed to have postcards about the ATA purposes and benefits of membership inserted in all the American Teilhard books published, beginning with the 1969 publication of *Science and Christ*.

The official ATA Secretary launched a *Newsletter* in March, 1968 which was published three times a year for five consecutive years. Here was where those interested in Teilhard in America discovered information about the people and events dealing with

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his thought, as well as book reviews concerning anything Teilhardian published in the United States (and abroad).

The March, 1968 newsletter advertised the fall conference of the organization to be held at Seabury-Western Seminary titled *Teilhard de Chardin: The Future of Man.* It also encouraged members and others to attend the lecture program of five different talks yet to be held that academic year at Seton Hall and Fairleigh Dickinson Universities in the New York City area. Finally, it made known that a new audiovisual program was available on the thought of Teilhard, as based on *The Phenomenon of Man,* with text by Robert Francoeur, and illustrated with over two hundred colored slides created by the physicists and graphic artists involved in the POM project of Canoga Park, California.

The first Annual meeting of the American Teilhard Association took place in April, 1968 at the Harvard Club and was both a luncheon and a business meeting. The Reverend Michael Murray gave the address “Teilhard and the Nature of the Soul,” which he had already delivered at the Vezelay Conference in France the previous year. Sixty people attended this first meeting, including Dr. George and Mrs. Barbour from

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607 “American Teilhard Association Newsletter,” 3/68. The newsletter noted that at that time the ATA had 215 volumes in its library, and had hired a part-time librarian who was creating a basic Teilhard bibliography. Additionally, the primary focus of this issue was the five-day conference to be held September 9 – 13, 1968 at Seabury Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. The theme of the conference was “Building the Earth, Hope for the Future,” and the subject was “Teilhard de Chardin and the Future of Mankind.” Invited speakers included the Rev. J.V. Langmead Casserlay of Seabury Western, Robert Francoeur of Fairleigh Dickinson, Lynd Godson, Robert Wilshire from General Theological Seminary in New York, and Robert Speaight a biographer and novelist of England. The conference was sponsored jointly by the ATA, Center for Christian Ministry at Christ Church, Winnetka, ILL, and SW Theological Seminary in Evanston. Several of the papers from this conference were published in the book *Teilhard de Chardin: Re-mythologization* (Chicago:Argus Communications, 1970), with an introduction by Thomas Oman Edmunds, of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary.

608 The AV program was seventy-five minutes long, and was followed by a taped question and discussion period. The primary topics covered include: the process of cosmic evolution; the role of each particle and each human in this universal drama; the essential unity of science and religion; man’s responsibility for shaping the future; the Omega Point. The POM Project is discussed further in Chapter Seven of this work.
Cincinnati. They brought with them the Malvina Hoffman bronze bust of Teilhard which now sits in the Woodstock Library at Georgetown University.

In September of 1968 the ATA, jointly with The Center for Christian Ministry, Christ Church, of Winnetka, Illinois and the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary of Evanston, Illinois sponsored a five-day ecumenical conference for both the clergy and lay people titled *Teilhard de Chardin and the Future of Man*.609

The main speaker at the Second Annual meeting held at Essex House, New York, six months later in April, 1969 was George Maloney, S.J. on the topic “The Cosmic Christ from St. Paul to Teilhard.”610 Although Teilhard may have originated the term “Cosmic Christ,” Maloney wished to vindicate Teilhard by showing that the view of Christ he expressed was substantially that of St. John and St. Paul, who understood Christ as immersed in and continually revitalizing the created, material world. However, Maloney also desired to show the relevance and value of the "cosmic Christ" for modern society.

Later that same year in November, 1969 a two-day conference on *Process Thought: From Cosmogenesis to Christogenesis* was held at Drew University Theological School in Madison, New Jersey with Pieter de Jong, Clarence Decker, Robert Francoeur, and Ewert Cousins. Teilhard was one of the primary foci of that

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609 This was held at Seabury-Western Seminary and was organized by Dr. J.V. Langmead Casserley, Professor of Theology. Dr. Casserley, Robert Francoeur, and Robert Speaight of England were speakers.

610 Maloney pointed out in his talk that this same vision of Christ was developed by the early fathers, particularly those of the east: Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Athanasius, among other. The title of George Maloney’s later book was *The Cosmic Christ: From Paul to Teilhard* (Baltimore: Sheed & Ward, 1968). A review of the book states: “From a theological point of view, the value of Teilhard de Chardin’s contribution to an understanding of the gospel …rests on the validity of his Christology. Maloney is trying to prove the orthodoxy of that Christology – he relates it to the New Testament (Paul and John) as well as the ante-Nicene and post-Nicene Greek Fathers. The reviewer finds that Teilhard’s thought, although absent from recent theology, is strikingly similar to that of the ancient Church, and contains elements – such as Christ the Omega— that had not been seen since the time of Maximus the Confessor.” Peter Fehlner, O.F.M. Conv., *Theological Studies* (March 1, 1969): 127-29.
particular conference. That month also saw the first of the evening series of discussions or seminars to be offered from that point forward at the ATA headquarters.\textsuperscript{611} Additionally, due to public demand the governing board approved, and several members created a set of “Teaching Outlines” for explaining Teilhard’s ideas to children, available for a minimal cost.

The 1970 ATA annual meeting had about 150 people attend to hear guest of honor Renee-Marie Parry, Honorary Secretary of the British Association speak on “Teilhard and the Contemporary World Scene,” and Dr. Theodosius Dobzhansky on “Evolution and Man’s Conception of Himself.” In September of that same year Donald Gray gave a seminar on \textit{The Phenomenon of Man}, and Larry Surget led a discussion on “Building Mankind,” and “Human Energy.” In Connecticut Professor Alfred Stiernotte conducted a workshop on “The Thought and Mysticism of Teilhard de Chardin,” an inquiry into process theology, Teilhard’s Christology, and the mysticism of process.

In late 1970 the distribution of members of the ATA showed numerous members in thirty-six states, and in five of the Canadian provinces. Additionally members were represented in Burundi, France, Italy, Mexico, Peru, and Yugoslavia. The ages of the members varied between 17 and 92 years old.\textsuperscript{612}

The 1971 Annual Meeting was held in New York at the St. Ignatius Loyola Community where Teilhard lived the last several years of his life. Jean Houston gave the address “More Being and Being More—Teilhard and the Future of Consciousness,” with

\textsuperscript{611} Some of these from the late Sixties included: “Exploring Teilhard,” “Applying Teilhard’s Insights to Contemporary Challenges,” and “Church, Eucharist, Grace, Sin in the Thought of Teilhard.”

\textsuperscript{612} \textit{ATA}, 26-7. Volumes 6-7 of the \textit{Oeuvres} published in Paris by the French Friends of Teilhard had not been made available in the US because by this time Harper & Row had allowed publication of the Teilhard works to lapse through declining sales. Then Harcourt Brace Jovanovich took over the publication rights of the remaining books. So \textit{Human Energy} and the \textit{Activation of Human Energy} appeared in February of 1971.
an evening discussion by Ewert Cousins, Robert Francoeur and Jean Houston on “the Transformation of Man: Towards the Year 2000.”

*Teihard de Chardin: in Quest of the Perfection of Man* was later described by Robert Francoeur as “the best conference I ever attended.” It was held in May, 1971 in San Francisco at the Palace of Fine Arts; the co-chairs were San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto and Seymour Farber, Dean of Continuing Education in Health Sciences, UCSF.

Mayor Alioto was impressed by the influence that Franciscan Father N. Max Wildiers, the Dutch Teilhardian scholar had already had on his son and other students at the University of San Francisco. Rather than “copping-out” of society as so many young

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613 Jean Houston, born 1937, is an American scholar, lecturer, author, and philosopher active in the “human potential movement.” She has a Ph.D. in Psychology from Union Graduate School, and a Ph.D. in religion from the Graduate Theological Foundation. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees, including the Millennium award in 2000 and the Spiritual Hero of the Year Award in 2011. She taught in philosophy, human development, psychology, education and religion at Columbia, Hunter College, Marymount, UC Santa Cruz, and the University of British Columbia. She has been an adviser to political leaders, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Group. As a teenager she lived in New York City where she first met and later struck up a friendship with “Mr. Tayer” (the long French name was “unpronounceable”) who she met in Central Park in 1951, and who lived across the street from her in the Saint Ignatius rectory. Teilhard had a tremendous influence upon her later leanings; as an example in 1965 she and her husband Dr. Robert Masters formed The Foundation for Mind Research. In one interview she recounted one of her conversations with Teilhard: “We need to have more specialists in spirit who will lead people into self-discovery,” he told me. ‘What do you mean, Mr. Tayer?’ He said—and this is exactly what he said; I was taking notes because I knew I was in the presence of greatness—‘We are being called into metamorphosis, into a far higher order, and yet we often act only from a tiny portion of ourselves. It is necessary that we increase that portion. But do not think for one minute, Jean, that we are alone in making that possible. We are part of a cosmic evolutionary movement that inspires us to unite with God. This is the lightning flash for all our potentialities. This is the great originating cause of all our shifts and changes. Without it there is nothing but struggle and decline.’” Quoted in *EnlightenNext Magazine* retrieved from http://magazine.enlightennext.org/2010/11/03/a-chance-encounter-with-pierre-teilhard-de-chardin-think-about-this/ on August 16, 2013. Her website today speaks of much the same concepts as Teilhard: “The times of great change and remarkable opportunity are upon us. To succeed we can no longer go it alone, but must partner with one another to share innovative and creative ways in which to rethink and restructure our individual existence within the context of our expanding global communities. To do this requires a heightened awareness, an awakened sense of purpose, and a dedicated commitment to actively seek out the possible.” Retrieved from www.jeanhouston.org on August 16, 2013. See also http://www.jeanhouston.com/blog/?p=42#more-42.

614 *ATA*, 28 -9. Alioto believed Father Wildiers inspired them much as Teilhard had inspired the worker priests and students of Paris earlier in the century.
people were doing at the time, Wildiers offered them Teilhard’s challenge to face their problems and “Build the Earth.”

The last American Teilhard Association event which this dissertation will discuss was the “Hope and the Future of Man” Conference held October 8-10, 1971. The theme is appropriate to a Teilhardian Conference for Teilhard had believed that hope was “the essential impetus without which nothing will be done” and also what was most important was the creation of the future. Another purpose of the conference was to address the intersection between Teilhard’s hope for the world and the aforementioned new Theology of Hope in light of what appeared to be the sometimes “overwhelming despair of the times.”

The editor of the conference proceedings, Ewert Cousins, notes in the Introduction that “Nuclear weapons and the ecological crisis raise the basic question: Does man have a future? What kind of hope can he have for the future?” He also comments on the new prominence of “the future” in theology. “Instead of being viewed as outside time, God is seen as intimately involved in the temporal process, and Christ is viewed as the energy source of evolution. Eschatology has been singled out as the distinctive element in the Christian vision, and hope the central Christian virtue.”

The conference was conceived as a convergence of numerous innovative thinkers who were having a far-reaching influence on contemporary theology. It centered around three important Hope Theologians from Germany: Joannes Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, and

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615 ATA, 29. The speakers at this conference were Father Wildiers, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Francoeur, Mooney, Bernard Towers, as well as Dr. L S B Leakey, and Connor Cruise O’Brien. The conference papers were published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press in 1973 as Teilhard de Chardin: In Quest of the Perfection of Man (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1973).

616 ATA, 29.


618 Cousins, Hope, vii. The conference proceedings contains the six public lectures along with seven responses, and concludes with an afterward by Daniel Day Williams. At this time Cousins was Associate Professor of Theology at Fordham, and President of the ATA. He was the editor of the anthology Process Theology.
Wolfhart Pannenburg. In addition to the Hope theologians, American scholars were invited who would speak not only on the eschatological approach, but also on Teilhardian studies and process theology. For the first time they met for a mutual exchange over their understanding of the future, as well as of humanity itself and the values that could energize the people of the world in building the future.

The conference consisted of six public lectures, in addition to private discussions between scholars which were to be open to students. Initial plans were to hold the public sessions in the Assembly Hall at Riverside Church which held four hundred; aware though of the potential large response to the Conference, another local church was approached which held seating for fifteen hundred. In the end well over twenty-five hundred attended. The conference was so well received that the New York Times had a feature story on it. In fact, it was so well attended that before his presentation began

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619 Philip Hefner of the Chicago Lutheran School of Theology had helped to arrange for their attendance, and expenses for the Germans were underwritten by their government. The conference was sponsored by the ATA, Cardinal Bea Institute of Woodstock, Union Theological Seminary, Trinity Institute, and Goethe House in NYC. American scholars participating included: representing the eschatological approach was Carl Braaten of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago; John Cobb of Claremont, Daniel Day Williams of Union Theological, and Lewis Ogden of The Divinity School at the University of Chicago all presented on Process Theology; and Donald Gray then of Manhattan College, Philip Hefner of The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Christopher Mooney, S.J. then President of Woodstock College, New York City, and Joseph Sittler of The Divinity School at the University of Chicago took a Teilhardian stance.

620 Cousins, Hope and the Future of Man, viii.

Johannes Metz asked: “Who are all those people? How is it possible to assemble so many people for a Conference on Theology? And at 9:30 in the morning?”

The conference itself began with a public session of three presentations on the meaning of the future from a Process, a Teilhard, and an Eschatological perspective. The process theologians argued, among other points, that no guarantee of progress exists in the short turn, but that the future will include a new kind of society beyond any collectivities of autonomous persons. At the close of his discussion on this topic the Teilhardian Philip Hefner concluded that “the activation of man’s energy is the crucial question of the future, because if that energy is not activated in the proper direction, we will be only moments away from the abyss.”

Theologian Carl Braaten then took the eschatological approach. His primary thesis was that the future comes to us through two symbolic forms of consciousness: the utopian and the eschatological. “The utopian future is projected as another time in history; the eschatological future deals with the final fulfillment and end of history.”

The eschatological provides hope as the future always offers the hope that the present can

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622 Metz, in *ATA*, 31. In addition, over four hundred attended a special session for students held at Union Seminary at which the conference speakers answered questions. In addition to the public sessions, three working sessions took place, two at Woodstock College and one at Union Seminary. The purpose of these was to discuss in great detail the issues emerging in the public lectures. Not only were the twelve conference speakers present at these, but also some twenty other invited specialists, including Charles Hartshorne, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Bernard Meland, and N.M. Wildiers. Schubert Ogden was the seminar leader for the first two sessions, and Daniel Day Williams for the third. Although most attendees were from the New York area, many traveled from across the United States and Canada.

623 John Cobb’s argument was that process theology holds a mediating position in the tension between present and future; process itself does not assure progress. Although God’s ongoing activity in the world provides for progress in addition to change, “there is no guarantee of progress in the short run, and in the long run it is inevitable that life on this planet will become extinct.” For Whitehead “the penultimate value and meaning of history become ultimate in God.” Cobb conjectured about a “post-personal future” in “which there would be a rich interpenetration of each into the other to the intensification and harmonization of the experiences of all.” This future will create “a new kind of community,” one beyond both collectivities and any form of voluntary associations comprised of autonomous persons. Process theology gives Cobb hope that humanity is able to discern its way through contemporary difficulties, but “it gives him no assurance that man will do so.” *ATA*, 31.

624 *ATA*, 31.

625 Ibid., 32.
be reversed. Additionally, it can initiate new trends in which the reversal of the present becomes a new starting point. Braaten concluded with the thought that: “Ultimately what we mean by the future is what we mean by God. For God is our Future, the fulfilling power of the future in all things.”

During the second evening, Moltmann of the University of Tübingen spoke on “Hope and the Biomedical Future of Man.” His primary thesis was that for the first time in the history of the world, “human life in fact has become a moral task” which calls for a reassessment of illness, aging, and dying. Since medicine and biomedical research creates hopes, but does not guarantee happiness, it is essential that it be guided by a humane ethics. Moltmann ended his lecture with the comments that today Hope Theology admittedly “sounds too good to be true. In light of contemporary history, things do not look too hopeful. The hopes of the early sixties have ‘gone with the wind’ and everywhere we hear words like ‘frustration’ and ‘betrayal.’” Yet, Dr. Moltmann concluded, that the more humanity gains power over nature the less survival alone can be the sum total of what life is about.

On the final evening Johannes Metz of the State University of Münster presented “The Future ex memoria Passionis” in which he contended the future of our technological civilization is a political and social issue. He proposed “the memory of suffering” as a means by which political and social action might occur. This thought was

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626 ATA, 32. The three German theologians responded to the presentation by the Americans, and then each evening one delivered a lecture, followed by responses from the Americans. On the first evening of the conference Pannenberg of University of Munich spoke on “Future and Unity,” exploring a diverse set of topics including the relation of God to the future, the interaction of the divine and the profane, the interaction of individual and society as well as religion and society, the probable significance of the resurrection, and “the meaning of the eschatological future as the future of God’s kingdom in his eternal life and power,” all through the lens of the thought of Teilhard and Whitehead. Donald Gray responded from a Teilhardian view, Williams from a Process viewpoint.

that the memory of crucifixion “prevents us from ever becoming reconciled” to the
realities of the everyday life of our societies. Memory should become “the ferment for
that new political life we are now seeking on behalf of our human future.”

At an executive meeting held after the conference, Ewert Cousins reported that
the conference evaluation showed it was positive for both the audience and the
participants. Most felt that “important communication had occurred” and that significant
exchanges of knowledge and information had happened for all those who participated.

In a reflection on the conference in the proceedings, Daniel Day Williams notes
that all the theologians involved “see the meaning of the Christian faith as
eschatologically determined. Life is understood through what we shall be.” The
Teilhardian perspective, he suggests, draws upon a general scientific understanding of the
world, interpreted in a cosmic development toward final unity. The Teilhardians seem to
put more emphasis upon the spiritual vision making it possible for people today “to live
religiously through participation in the slow, painful growth of humanity toward unity.”
He further notes that what he found most impressive in the Teilhard contingent was “their
continuing hopefulness about a significant ethical and religious life in the present age,
despite the suffering that occurs.”

Apparently, unlike many others at the time, this 
contingent understood and was comfortable with Teilhard’s understanding that suffering
points to a universe that is still unfinished, one that is emerging and becoming what God
means it to be; along the way to completion, therefore, suffering due to imperfection will

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628 ATA, 33.
629 Ibid.
630 Daniel Day Williams, “Hope and the Future of Man: A Reflection,” Hope and the Future of Man
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 142-43. At the time of the publication of this work Williams was
Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology at the Union Theological Seinary in NYC. He is the author of
The Spirit and the Forms of Love as well as God’s Grace and Man’s Hope.
necessarily occur. The attribute of perfection can only be applied to some future cosmic unity that is currently and constantly being called into being by God from the future up ahead.\(^{631}\) In the face of this becoming in God, then, hopefulness is quite justified.

This particular conference was to be the first stage in exploring the Teilhardian perspective set against the “Theology of Hope.”\(^{632}\) It is significant, both in terms of the reception of Teilhard in this time period, and the preceding paragraph concerning hope, that due to a lack of financial backers and a concomitant lack of interest, the follow-up second conference never materialized.

**Chapter Conclusion**

The years of 1968-1970 might be considered bitter years by some, as the hoped for social and cultural changes longed for earlier in the 1960s did not occur easily, if at all. Instead, rather than increasing unity, American society found itself further divided by the Vietnam war, the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy and others, race riots, war protests, student protests and escalating violence.

Those groups who had been attracted to Teilhard’s work for its emphasis upon the ongoing progress of humanity, a movement toward organic unity and a synthesis of the peoples of the world, were themselves splintered between those who lost faith in evolutionary possibilities and those who, much fewer in number, kept their trust in a God who inexorably was drawing the world forward.

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\(^{632}\) The second stage was to bring together the same group of theologians with future planners and thinkers in the fields of science, sociology, political science, and technology. For this second conference a budget of some twenty-five thousand dollars was projected. Even though it never occurred, as a result of the Theology of Hope conference by the end of 1971 the ATA boasted over five hundred members, the highest number ever in the history of the organization.
Even the American Teilhard Association, founded to disseminate Teilhard’s message of convergence and progress, could not withstand the disillusionment inherent in the early years of the 1970s. After years of initial failed attempts to organize in the face of disapproval from Rome, followed by a few heady years of growth following Vatican II, membership and financial resources diminished, and hoped-for conferences did not occur.

As the next chapter will further explore, it would indeed seem that a positive reception of Teilhard’s thought in the face of the collapse of promise appears predicated upon the ability of the reader to understand that the love about which Teilhard write; the foundation for his own hope in the face of suffering is overwhelmingly experiential and religious in nature. This love, optimistic hope, and loyalty to the Church rises out of his own experience of Christ, one that, although shaken at times by the experiences of his life, stayed true until the end. As Teilhard noted in 1951: “I can truly say—and this in virtue of the whole structure of my thought—that I now feel more indissolubly bound to … to the Christ of the Gospel than ever before in my life. Never has Christ seemed to me more real, more personal or more immense.”

This statement was made shortly after learning his request to publish *The Phenomenon of Man* had again been denied, his faculty position at L’Institute Catholique in Paris revoked, and he had been sent in virtual exile to end his days in New York City. The suffering was immense, yet for him, faith and the hope remained.

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633 Teilhard, Letter from Cape Town to Father General, Jean-Baptiste Janssens (12 October 1951).
CHAPTER VII


The previous chapter examined the cultural and social situation in the United States during the years of 1968–1971 in order to better determine the reception of Teilhard de Chardin; this chapter in turn looks at a couple dozen articles and books pertaining to Teilhard published between those same years. A simple perusal of any library catalog offers the knowledge that the contiguous years 1967-1968 were those during which the largest quantity of books concerning Teilhard and his thought were published. These books were written during the earlier years of hope; note that after 1968 the number of publications decreases significantly.

Table 5. Numbers of Teilhard Related Manuscripts from 1965-1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>399</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>202</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: This is from the annual bibliography of publications from the Society of Jesus, in this case with reference to Teilhard De Chardin. This table, a subset of Table 1 from Chapter 1, lists the numbers of publications worldwide with reference to Teilhard de Chardin. These statistics do not include editions or translations of Teilhard’s own writings, nor articles in periodicals.
As the last chapter explicited, the period between 1968-1970 was very difficult for the United States. For some, change did not occur rapidly enough, for others it was happening far too quickly. Radicals of all types, including the Catholic Left, became progressively more radical as the nonviolence movements moved slowly and produced few tangible results. At the same time the previously muted conservatives became more entrenched, growing in power and volume. The Vietnam War dragged on, racial violence continued, and conflicts on college campuses escalated. North American society was increasingly polarized by war, assassinations, riots, and overall violence. Unity may have been desired, but what appeared instead to be happening was disillusionment and despair.

The broad trends delineated by United States historian Sydney Ahlstrom concerning the late 1960s will be of use here. These are: 1) a growing attachment to naturalism or “secularism” that makes people suspicious of any supernatural doctrines, or in the opposite corner produces a fascination with the most radical brands of magic, superstition, or divine intervention; 2) an awareness of the vast contradictions in American life between profession and performance, the ideal and the actual; and 3) increasing concern about the capacity of political, social, educational, and religious institutions to correct these contradictions.⁶³⁴

In part as a result of these trends, for many these were the years in which doubt about the optimistic Teilhardian worldview could no longer be ignored. As we have already seen, he was accused of naïve optimism more than once. However, in the face of mounting naturalism it became increasingly difficult, despite ongoing fascination with

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mysticism, for many to understand the Christocentric incarnational vision that Teilhard espoused.

The divide between science and religion, particularly religion as practiced in the mainline churches, appeared wider than ever as this decade drew to a close. Similarly the gap between Teilhard’s brand of theology, which was such an influence upon many of the Vatican II documents, and that of neo-scholastics such as Maritain and those concerned about the implementation of the Council, was again rearing its head. This is reflected in the ongoing confusion and debate as to Teilhard’s methodology, as well as concerning both the theological and scientific validity of his arguments. The discussions over not only the classification of his work, but the value of it, particularly the spiritual value of it for contemporary society, continued to be quite heated at times.

For a few the source and value of his work were quite apparent. These scholars and authors asserted that what Teilhard was doing was a resourcement of the Pauline tradition associated with the Cosmic Christ, one updated by modern scientific knowledge concerning paleontology and evolution, and transmitted through a mystical lens in a manner that spoke to the needs of a young, contemporary, and secular world. Recall from the explanation given in the Introduction to this work that Teilhard’s Christology is supremely incarnational; as such, an inherent aspect of this is his emphasis upon the value of the secular, material world. Those who understood Teilhard’s Christocentric focus also appeared to realize that to expect to bypass the confusion and suffering encountered along the path to the new forms of life slowly evolving in US society was impossible, for these were obligatory, if difficult, aspects of a lived Paschal Mystery.
When this inherent component of a spiritual life was understood, whether in the case of either an individual person or a society, ambiguity, sorrow, even death could then be tolerated and employed as a springboard for new growth. Difficulty and paradox might be inevitable, yet they were not the final call.

However, all too few who wrote on Teilhard’s thought during these years appeared to have this Christological understanding. Instead, most were eager to continue to focus on the use of his theories for secular purposes, particularly the further study of scientific evolution, or the future of technology, on process theology, psychology, and sociology, or on a general global mysticism or humanism. In the end it appears that it was indeed these latter forms of exploration of Teilhard’s thought that predominated during these years and those that immediately followed. Indeed, as the conclusion to this work will show, for almost the entire decade of the 1970s, even as the numbers of publications produced concerning Teilhard’s work plummeted in volume the vast majority explored just these subject matters.

Although far from a comprehensive enumeration of all publications of the time, those presented in this chapter were chosen as they are representative of the others produced in five specific categories during these years. The first category is that of works that examine the Christological basis of Teilhard’s work as foundational for a full appreciation of Teilhard’s thought. Following these are treatises written by Teilhard and either translated or edited by Father Henri de Lubac.

The chapter then examines several articles from interdisciplinary journals that even as they stress Teilhard’s own synthetic nature, also attempt to classify his work.
These then lead into a reflection upon articles and books that examine Teilhard’s spirituality and its relevance to contemporary society and the Church. Finally, this chapter ends with an examination of several books that move even farther away from Teilhard’s Christology, considering his work instead from what might be considered a generic secular humanist or even materialist viewpoint.

Table 6. Publications Discussed Within this Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Book or Journal Title</th>
<th>Thesis points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Publications that explore Teilhard’s Christology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td><em>The Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin</em></td>
<td>How to live real presence in the secular city. The importance of Teilhard’s Christology for a valid understanding of his thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooney</td>
<td>Continuum</td>
<td>Teilhard’s Christocentric vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyson</td>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>The importance of Teilhard’s evolutionary thought for contemporary Christianity, particularly his theory of convergence toward the Cosmic Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cargas</td>
<td><em>The Continuous Flame</em></td>
<td>Teilhard as <em>resourcement</em> of Christian tradition, and the relationship of his thought to that of St. Paul, Dante, Bonhoeffer, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooney</td>
<td>America, book review of Christianity and Evolution</td>
<td>Teilhard’s thought concerning the relevance of Christianity in the 20th century, with focus upon his Christocentrism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Publications of Teilhard and Henri de Lubac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Lubac</td>
<td><em>The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin</em></td>
<td>Teilhard's Christian spirituality as one that engages the secular world; the value of Teilhard’s Christocentric cosmology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Lubac</td>
<td><em>The Eternal Feminine</em></td>
<td>A book in two parts: the first examines what Teilhard meant by “the feminine;” the second is the use of Teilhard’s thought to address current issues in the Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Publications in Interdisciplinary Journals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riggan</td>
<td>Zygon</td>
<td>A scientific review of Teilhard’s work. This article is important especially for his four points that explicate Teilhard’s significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbour</td>
<td>Soundings</td>
<td>Teilhard’s thought as a synthesis of mystical natural theology and process philosophy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Publications examining Teilhard’s spirituality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Francoeur</td>
<td>National Catholic Reporter, book review of Writings in Time of War</td>
<td>The relevance of Teilhard’s thought concerning the secular and the value of everyday life and work particularly for 1960s youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCarthy</td>
<td>Journal of Religion and Health</td>
<td>Teilhard’s Divine Milieu as a source to better understand the value of daily life and the suffering encountered therein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheets</td>
<td>Theological Studies</td>
<td>The application of Teilhard’s evolutionary worldview to the study of the development of doctrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>The One and the Many</td>
<td>The question of mystical creative union and differentiation as found in Teilhard’s thought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Publications for a secular audience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hefner</td>
<td>The Promise of Teilhard</td>
<td>Teilhard as Christian Humanist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>The Vision of Teilhard for VIPs</td>
<td>An explanation of Teilhard for those (primarily the young) who are cognizant of new technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POM</td>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>Explanation of Teilhard through drawings and diagrams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Publications Concerning Teilhard’s Christological Vision

In continuation of a theme prevalent during the years of 1965–1967 and discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the first publication considered here takes as its starting point the intersection of Teilhard’s thought, particularly his Christology, and the “secular city.” At least on the surface, Sister Maria Gratia Martin’s book would seem to speak to the situation of many Catholic religious of the time. She emphasizes that one of the

results of “God is Dead” theology and the new post-Vatican II laity is that the people of the Church want to cultivate and live the real presence of Christ in the secular city. However, this seems impossible “without the intense faith and an uncompromising sincerity that come from deep prayer and a certain conscious self-discipline.” In her mind the spirituality of Teilhard speaks to those in the secular city concerning these issues, as it flows from “his vision of Christ everywhere giving a face and a heart to the world.” His wisdom may well satisfy “the contemporary Christian’s deepest longings to find Christ where He is.”

In particular, examining a theme that will prove quite prevalent during this time period, the author contends that Teilhard’s spirituality as it is found in The Divine Milieu is a mysticism of co-creative union with the Trinity through the Eucharistic Christ. Sister Maria, then, grasps not only the urgent importance of Teilhard’s Christology for a true understanding of his work, but also the kenotic and mystical Eucharistic quality of that thought. She argues that the primary role of the Christian is to labor to further universal progress for the love of Christ, the Christ whose cosmic Body he is building up collaboratively with the Father and Holy Spirit. Additionally, through the acceptance of suffering we are purified by God within, making us a yet “more perfect instrument of cosmic unification.” Only a mystical awareness obtained through prayer of Christ’s universal presence, however, will allow unification of our personal world with that of all others. Teilhard’s very Christian spirituality or mysticism is basically the collaboration

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636 Martin, vii. Emphasis is the author’s.
637 Martin, viii. Emphasis is the author’s.
with the Trinity in the “progressive realization of Jesus’ priestly prayer that all may be one.”

Martin suggests that this is the tension as Teilhard sees it at the heart of the contemporary religious crisis. Beyond atheist–humanists, it is a tension found among Christians themselves, who often suffer from a “religious schizophrenia.” They struggle between their desire to love God above all else, the God of the Above that is, and their increasing attraction towards the “new type of God ahead,” present in the perfection of the world in man.

Martin notes that Vatican II recognized the value of this form of Christianity in the world, and calls on all Christians to realize they are to live their Christian vocation in this way. One is to live the Gospel in “the sort of mysticism that makes one seek passionately for God in the heart of every substance and every action.”

Although the publication date of this book preceded the events of 1968-1970, the reader of today must wonder if Martin was ever able to see these hopes playing out in the reality of the Church and society of the late 1960s. One might argue that of all the authors profiled in this chapter, in many ways she grasps and utilizes Teilhard’s Christology most fully. It does not appear, however, that those who grew impatient with the “co-laboring” required to maintain the nonviolence movements were interested in seeking passionately for God, or

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638 Martin, x. His “Christian” spirituality is highlighted in contrast to the Eastern spiritualities much in vogue at the time of publication. Martin also, like many of the other authors later discussed in this chapter, asks whether in the “God is dead” era humanity is outgrowing Christianity. As science advances toward a self-created “terrestrial ultra-humanity,” similar to that of Marxism, mankind feels that much more self-sufficient and autonomous. As a result, the need for the “old” Christian god of the “above,” associated with despising the world, disappears. The latter implies the type of religion reviled by the atheistic humanist who touts the “economic and social emancipation of man” while believing that religion thwarts liberation by “arousing hope for a deceptive future next life” which then diverts humankind from the construction of the earthly city. (46).

understood the suffering required to “build the earth” in the Teilhardian fashion she suggests is necessary.

Yet another publication that addressed the issues of the “Death of God” theologians is Christopher Mooney’s article “Teilhard on Man’s Search for God” in a 1968 issue of *Continuum*. The essay also explores the role of the secular for Teilhard, and like the previous work concurrently explicates a great deal about Teilhard’s own mystical, Christ-centered theology.640

Mooney notes that in general the consensus of Death of God theology is that contemporary culture is estranged from Christianity, and concomitantly, today Christianity is not possible without secularity. His thesis in this article is that Teilhard’s primary focus is just this; Teilhard strives to overcome the present cultural estrangement of Christianity, and the divide between humanity and God, as well as the divide between God and the world.641 As Mooney points out, the lifelong efforts of Teilhard and many others contributed to the creation of the recent *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, an indicator that the Second Vatican Council itself recognizes the necessity of addressing this concern with estrangement.

Surely no one was more conscious of these "happenings, needs, and desires" of our age than Teilhard, Mooney argues. Nor was anyone more anxious than he to find therein "authentic signs of God's presence and purpose," so that the unbeliever might see

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640 Christopher Mooney, S. J., “Teilhard on Man’s Search for God,” *Continuum* 5 no. 4 (Winter 1968):643-54. Hereafter referred to as Search. One might add also that this article offers further ammunition for Flower Children who are all about “LOVE” as well as an affirmation of the Beatle’s hit song “All you need is Love.”

641 Mooney, Search, 643.
how Christian faith "directs the mind to solutions which are fully human." In an effort to overcome this present day estrangement from God, Teilhard developed a theology as oriented toward the material and temporal as the eternal. Still, Mooney insists, one must realize that for Teilhard the problem of God was foremost a personal one; his personal, mystical, experience of the divine was what convinced him he might have a message for contemporary humankind. This message has two prongs: humanity’s need for an absolute and humanity’s need for Christ. The parallels to these two needs Teilhard had himself experienced in his own commitment to science and contemporary culture or to the material world.

Mooney includes an explanation of Teilhard’s Christology in this article as a means by which to encourage others to recognize that without this foundation, the remainder of Teilhard’s thought is almost inexplicable—as hopefully the ongoing public and academic debate over how to “classify” or make use of this thought indicates. Only when a religious conversion of sorts occurs so that the reflective reader realizes that the “love” about which Teilhard writes is a personal love drawing all of creation, all of humanity, all of matter in fact, teleologically toward the Omega Point, or the Cosmic Christ, does the remainder of his thought—evolutionary or spiritual—fall into place.

Mooney, and Sister Martin also we might argue, realized with Teilhard that unless our society accepts and experiences a personal God who loves us, as the historic incarnated Jesus who was willing to suffer and die for us, all the potential of individuals and the world at large become oriented toward violence and suppression rather than

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642 Search, 644.
toward love, growth, and unification. This statement alone would seem to explain a
great deal as to why Teilhard’s optimistic worldview, if not wholeheartedly rejected, was
at least quite misunderstood in the decade following these bitter years, by those who also
rejected or did not comprehend the Christocentric nature of Teilhard’s mystical thought.

Indeed, Mooney and Teilhard are also very aware that most modern Christians
had no interest either in building the earth or seeking out the personal God. What then
will happen to succeeding generations? "There is only one way for believers to bring God
to the men of our time," Teilhard insisted, "and that is to share their human ideal, and to
search at their side for the God whom we already possess but who is present among us
yet as if we did not recognize him." The “presence” of God of which he writes is best
manifested “in and through the events of man’s life” in the secular world, and in matter.
Only this kind of understanding of God can leap the chasm between the Christian faith
and contemporary culture. As Mooney notes: “His Christology was a further effort in
this same direction: faith in the Incarnation is precisely a recognition that God has
become so immanent in human life that the distinction between sacred and secular must
henceforth be considered more rational than real.”

For Mooney then, as for Teilhard, what is needed is not just some amorphous
“love,” but an effort to see God and to participate in God’s work of building the earth and

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643 Search, 649.
644 Teilhard, Note pour servir à Vevangelisation des temps nouveaux, 1919, in Ecrits du temps de la guerre,
367 quoted in Mooney, 354.
645 Mooney, 654. We can conclude that for Teilhard to be a Christian is simply to take part daily in God’s
plan, which is cosmological, secular and sacred, encompassing all which involves man’s work as well as
God’s. "And thus in the end," states Teilhard, "above the rediscovered greatness of man, above the newly
revealed greatness of humanity, not violating but preserving the integrity of science, the face of God
reappears in our modern world." Teilhard, La Place de l’homme dans l’univers, 1942, in La Vision du
passé, 324. (Eng. trans., 231) in Search, 654.
moving ahead the evolution of the world. The work taking place in the political and social worlds of the United States will have no long term effects if those involved do not recognize that the work is “God’s work,” and not their own. The face of God must be found in the secular, an orientation toward God must take place, and the divine love must be nurtured in the everyday lives of all people. This is how the unity and hope sought by civil rights and student and anti-war protestors will be found, but as this chapter has shown, will unfortunately for the most part not be.

Yet another treatise concerned with both Teilhard’s Christology and its application to the times of the 1960s was one by A.O. Dyson. Dyson also is convinced Teilhard has a schema that responds well to the angst of a generation sure Christianity is no longer relevant. In particular he counters James Mitchell, who Dyson notes has described Teilhard de Chardin as "a pseudo-religio-scientific fraud" and, in another place, as an "ecclesiastical witchdoctor." Mr. Mitchell asserted in his own article that “such unlikely fellow-travelers as Teilhard and Billy Graham,” whom Mitchell compares to "some old-style Music Hall hypnotist," are in vain attempting to keep Christianity alive for another generation. In this view Teilhard is seen as fraudulently patching together a Christianity which is a “dying mythology,” “no longer able to illuminate the human condition.”

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647 Dyson, 98. What in this is argument is legitimate? Dyson acknowledges the validity of Mitchell’s complaint that much contemporary theology ignores recent modern achievements concerning humanity and the world, and instead continues to sequester itself within the cloister of academia and church. However, Dyson also contends that Teilhard’s project has something hopeful to offer in regards to this complaint. If nothing else, one must concede the risk Teilhard takes in candidly facing his own “Kierkegaardian streak,”
Dyson suggests that Teilhard’s underlying primary task is to determine whether the known world of man, society, and the natural world is attuned by nature with the claims Christianity makes for it. Is there really any compatibility between Christianity’s assertion of Christ as the center and the goal of all things and the reality of the space-time continuum in which we live? That the compatibility could even be envisaged became a possibility for Teilhard only as he developed his evolutionary hypothesis. This enabled him to posit the theory of a converging evolution passing from multiplicity to a complex unity over an incredible period of deep time; this evolution sheds illumination not only on humanity’s past, but also on the present and future as we evolve toward, or are drawn toward Omega. It is Teilhard’s conclusion, and that of Dyson, that indeed coherence very much exists between the Christian faith and our lived understanding and observation of human life, society, and nature. This is, actually, the basis of Teilhard’s Christology.  

For Christians the cosmic Christ of their faith is the Christ who permits the universe to get on with being and becoming what is proper to it, a way in which the stuff of life—evil, suffering, chance, failure, new life—cannot be avoided, and is, in fact, the heart of what we call the Paschal Mystery. We recognize and affirm that Christ is involved at every level of our lives and history; indeed, he is essential to the whole cosmic order. For Teilhard, however, coherence between these principles of the

—and acknowledging that perhaps human reality really does speak only of meaninglessness and absurdity—an acknowledgement that society increasingly appears willing to make. To challenge this is a massive threat, and for this Dyson points to Teilhard’s genuine faith. The willingness of Teilhard to stand in personal continuity with the Christian tradition even as he also stands with open eyes before modern reality speaks to Dyson of Teilhard’s sincerity, and suggests the equal imperative to as willingly examine his proposals.

Dyson, 100.
Christian faith and cosmic natural history goes a step forward as it illuminates the present and guides the shape of the future.\(^{649}\)

To Dyson it seems that without Teilhard’s exploration and risk-taking in this area, Mitchell and others may indeed have good reason to ask whether Christianity is not dying. This is particularly true when one observes what was then currently occurring within the churches and the social activism inspired by Christian movements.\(^{650}\) For this reason, Dyson, in addition to Mooney and Martin, advocates that Teilhard’s task should be a matter of ongoing urgency, engaging “a whole new theological generation” that comprehends and practices his Christology.\(^{651}\) One might argue that it was indeed an unwillingness or inability to practice this form of Christology—whether for lack of interest, understanding, or desire—that not only caused many to permit the social movements of the earlier 1960s to be directed away from a Christian foundation toward violence and revolution, but also precluded their understanding that cycles of frustration and disappointment are inherent to the Christian life.

Now that this chapter has examined several publications that emphasize the importance of Teilhard’s Christocentric vision, both for an understanding of his thought and as a means by which to live it in 1960s society, this next section will consider a book that speaks of the sources of that Christology. Harry J. Cargas’ *The Continuous Flame: Teilhard in the Great Traditions* attempts to connect Teilhard with other great

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\(^{649}\) Dyson, 101.

\(^{650}\) When these types of ongoing open reflections upon the nature of humankind through the lens of contemporary knowledge, including scientific knowledge, are sacrificed, particularly to nothing more than what Dyson terms mind-numbing “repetition of New Testament language,” or the subjective “feelings which Jesus Christ provokes in us,” the temptation is to conclude that no grounds exist at all for Christian belief. If this sacrifice occurs, Dyson is certain that the Christian gospel will indeed be rendered incommunicable to this and future secular ages.

\(^{651}\) Dyson, 102.
visionaries, and, for purposes of this paper, specifically to establish links between Teilhard’s Christology and that of the Apostle Paul.652

According to Cargas, the editor of this collection, “what the essays in this book show, it is hoped, is that indeed Teilhard is an eclectic, but one of the most adventurous and exciting synthesizers in modern history.”653 Cargas argues that Teilhard’s work is a resourcement from varied parts of the Christian tradition. He also notes that Teilhard is actually in “a double Christian tradition,” one that both appreciates and utilizes the great religious and secular movements of the past, as well as one who advances that already established tradition further forward.

Cargas concedes that the late 1960s are a curious time when young people are scoffed at for losing touch with the past, as well as for their apparent lack of a sense of continuity; yet, they seem to love Teilhard. Teilhard, however, is “surely the most aware man as to where he has come from; this is how he knows where he, and we, are going.”654 Obviously, Cargas believes, we have much use for Teilhard today. With that in mind this little book attempts to show Teilhard in relation to many diverse writers and visionaries, not only St. Paul, but also Jung, Dante, Whitman, and Bonhoeffer. Cargas, therefore, in keeping with the ecumenical spirit of the age, situates Teilhard not only within the Catholic tradition, but beyond this within a broader Christian mysticism. Within the next decade of the publication of this volume he suggests scholars will be contextualizing him within a global mystical tradition.

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652 Harry Cargas, ed., The Continuous Flame: Teilhard in the Great Traditions (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Company, 1969). Contradictory publication dates are given. The dedication to this book is to “Jessie Teilhard Cargas: In Whom the Flame Continually Burns.”
653 Cargas, ix.
654 Cargas, x.
James Adams, OFSF, the author of “St. Paul and Teilhard de Chardin” which is included within this collection, contends that Paul and Teilhard have the same end objective in mind, namely to show how the material world proclaims God’s glory. As a result, matter itself is sanctified by its participation in this glorification, a process that continues to occur at this very moment. Concerning how this divinization pertains to the era of the late 1960s, the author notes that “all things,” including “tribulations or poverty or imprisonment” are a way to further spiritualize matter and consecrate the world through working together with God. This is why, Adams exhorts, Teilhard insists the duty of every Christian is to be a co-creator, for “true Christian asceticism inevitably flows from the requirement of creation to be essentially painful and mortifying,” as “the mystery of the cross is present, operating in all creation, in the whole of creation.”

The editor hopes therefore that the book portrays Teilhard for this generation and the next “not as a freak who happened at one moment in the twentieth century. He is both a culminating point and a commencing point from which we can branch out in the future with joy, love, and hope.” He aspires to the thought that those who find hope in Teilhard’s thought also anticipate that their efforts, even if apparently unsuccessful at that moment, are indeed “building the earth” and creating results. As Teilhard wrote in *The Divine Milieu* “Where are we to look for the source of rejuvenation . . . except from the perception of a more intimate connection between the victory of Christ and the outcome

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655 Additionally, as both Paul and Teilhard write, the Christian life may imply an acceptance of the human condition, but this does not happen in a passive fashion, as instead it looks forward to and works toward a goal. That goal is the union of all creatures in Christ. All sufferings are to be endured through the desire to see God glorified; both successes and failures become efficacious means by which Christians contribute to the “New Creation.” See, for example, Colossians 1:24 “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church.”

656 Cargas, xi.
of the work which our human effort here below is seeking to construct . . . the expectation of the kingdom cannot remain alive unless it is incarnate in our body today."  

The last work to be considered here that specifically addresses Teilhard’s Christology is another by Christopher Mooney published at the very end of the time period this dissertation discusses. A book review of Teilhard’s *Christianity and Evolution*, it argues that not only is this book quite Christological, it also includes an exploration of the topic that will prove paramount in Teilhardian circles in the decade to come—that of evolution.  

Mooney begins his review by suggesting that the significance of Teilhard lies in his willingness to continue to ask, throughout a forty-year period, unique questions of theologians. In his previous article already discussed in this chapter, Mooney pondered Teilhard’s relationship to the “Death of God” theologians; here Teilhard is by contrast questioning Roman Catholics, including perhaps, fellow Jesuits. As were the Death of God theologians, Teilhard was concerned about the irrelevance of much of 20th century theology to those questions that haunted much of contemporary society. So, his attempts to work out answers to nineteen of these questions from within a Roman Catholic worldview are found in the essays in this book.  

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659 For example, eight of these essays deal with original sin, as Teilhard was concerned with safeguarding the cosmic significance of Christ's work of redemption in the face of new theories of evolution and science. Christ's death and resurrection were for Teilhard the signs and guarantee of the ultimate goal of human life, yet the theology behind original sin with which he was familiar seemed to him to completely ignore the cosmic character of redemption.
Several of the essays are Christological in character, and within these Teilhard especially attempts to clarify his concept of Christogenesis. In particular, Mooney notes, the essays are significant as they portray Teilhard as scientist attempting to elucidate and work out religious conjectures. In an age of “Jesus freaks” and mystical experiences, Mooney ends again by stressing the existential, mystical quality of Teilhard’s “highly personal Christian spiritual experience.” Once again Mooney concludes by contending that Teilhard’s ultimate goal was to help theologians better “see” the contemporary situation. It therefore appears Mooney’s own purpose in writing this book review was to encourage Teilhard’s American fans to take seriously his Christocentric world view, and to understand how formational this is for his writings. His concern was that those fans recognize how critical it is that if one is to successfully make use of Teilhard’s thought, it must be understood in its synthetic entirety.

**Teilhard and Henri de Lubac**

We now move from discussion of publications of a specifically Christological nature to those produced by Teilhard himself, and notably those that involved Henri de Lubac, S.J. as editor or translator. During the time period from 1968 to 1971 the following manuscripts of Teilhard were published in the United States:

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660 This in turn requires him to consider Christian work in the world, the role of the Church, and his attempt to unite creation and salvation as similar aspects of the divine plan.
Table 7. Manuscripts by Teilhard Published in the US from 1968-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title:</th>
<th>Year of Publication:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Letters from Hastings, 1908-1912</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Writings in Time of War</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Science and Christ</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Human Energy</em></td>
<td>1969</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Activation of Energy</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Christianity and Evolution</em></td>
<td>1971</td>
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</tbody>
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If nothing else, the ongoing publication of various collections of Teilhard’s letters and other manuscripts speaks to the societal demand for yet more. At least up to a point, which appears to be in the early 1970s, all things Teilhardian continued to be a lucrative market for publishers.

Due to its special importance as an examination of Teilhard’s Christocentric “Dialectic of Spirit,” the last of these books was already briefly presented above in a book review by Christopher Mooney, and space does not permit a summary of each of the others.

However, regarding the publication of the first, *Letters from Hastings*, the February, 1969 issue of the quarterly *New Book Review* does suggest a possible oversaturation of the publication market.\(^{661}\) In this journal critic Michael McMahon gave his annual list of 1968’s “Ten Best” and “Ten Worst” books in religious publishing. Included in the ten-worst category, along with *Relax and Rejoice for the Hand on the Tiller is Firm* and *Religion: Out or Way Out?* is *Letters from Hastings*, a collection of early Teilhard de Chardin correspondence as edited by Henri de Lubac. Although the

\(^{661}\) Reference to this book review was found in “Integrity of the Week Award,” *Christian Century* 86 no. 14 (April 2, 1969): 437.
jacket blurb portrays the volume as “an important chapter in the history of [Teilhard’s] spiritual and intellectual development,” McMahon instead terms it “a particularly odious sort of exploitation.” He first rejoices that Teilhard did not live to see the publication of his private and sensitive early correspondence; he then concludes with a facetious forecast: “Coming next—The Teilhard Cookbook, Teilhard and Vietnam, and Teilhard: My Uncle.” Interestingly enough, Letters from Hastings is published by Herder and Herder as is New Book Review.

Several of Henri de Lubac’s manuscripts on Teilhard were discussed in previous chapters; he continued to write more books about his fellow Jesuit and friend Teilhard de Chardin between 1967 and 1971, at least in part at the urging of the Jesuit General. Those briefly discussed here because of their significance are The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin and The Eternal Feminine.662

Due to life circumstances, de Lubac likely had the most familiarity with Teilhard’s mind and history. He knew Teilhard through both letter and conversation. From the beginning of his efforts concerning Teilhard’s work his aim, like those of many of the scholars already discussed, was to show Teilhard’s writings are not as unorthodox as they sometimes seem. Against critics like some of those mentioned in this and previous chapters, de Lubac urges readers to remember that those who have no religious experiences to describe, no new “seeds of thought” to bring before the Church and public, know nothing, as he puts it, “of the difficulties, the hesitancies” that are part of the effort

to express one’s unique ideas or experiences in an adequate manner. In his own mind a significant gap exists between those who are teachers, and those who are attempting a lasting contribution to humankind.\textsuperscript{663}

In regards to \textit{The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin}, in conjunction with a theme that has occurred consistently through this and prior chapters, de Lubac promotes Teilhard's Christian spirituality as one that engages the secular world. As he notes, many, perhaps Protestants especially, are inclined to think of Roman Catholics in the United States as either overly dogmatic or overly private and moralistic, both attributes which tend to maintain a distance from the world. As presented by de Lubac however, Teilhard's incarnational spirituality actively engages Christians with their worldly ministry. Further, even the uniquely Roman Catholic elements of Teilhard's spiritual rhetoric are readily adaptable to any Christian lifestyle, and so de Lubac contends his is a spirituality well-suited to ecumenical efforts.

In a manner similar to those already cited in this chapter, de Lubac considers the greatest theological contribution of Teilhard's thought his focus on the cosmological reality of Christ. De Lubac argues that Teilhard’s focus on the cosmic Christ discussed in this book offers opportunities for an expansion of Christian thought in several directions. First, men and their religious activity can be understood as a part of the natural, material world, which is its “own thing,” not simply something conceived of by humankind. This notion of nature as constituting an important component of human life, rather than simply as being outside ourselves, will soon strongly influence the ecological movement. Second, technology and the technological sciences can be appreciated in their natural

\textsuperscript{663} De Lubac, \textit{The Religion of Teilhard,} 17.
place as something that is now an instrumental factor in evolution. They need not be a threat to humanity’s existence; instead, people are to master technology and put it to use.

Finally, Teilhard's emphasis on the cosmic Christ legitimizes the theme of God's majesty in nature, an essential theme of scripture and one that will again be especially vital to Christian environmentalists. Also it can again be given a central place in theology just as it has had in scripture, particularly Pauline scripture, as noted in the Cargas book above. 664

De Lubac points out the similarities between these components of Teilhard’s theological concerns, particularly those around the need to recapture and reexamine scriptural themes, and many raised by other nouvelle theologians in France prior to Vatican II. In this way he again situates Teilhard within the same conversations as others, including himself, who had an important influence upon the Council.

The Eternal Feminine consists of two parts: the first is a study by de Lubac of Teilhard’s 1918 essay, “The Eternal Feminine” and the second is titled “Teilhard and the Problems of Today.” In an age seemingly fascinated by the notion of “love,” in a time when feminist consciousness is just beginning to germinate, Teilhard and de Lubac present a work that offers a countercultural reading of both these concepts.

The first part of the book traces the development of the essay from its conception in Teilhard's mind to its birth in the written form now available to us in Teilhard’s

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664 And of course, the issues surrounding eschatology, particularly eschatological hope, can now be taken more seriously, as was discussed in previous chapters in regards to the ties between the Theology of Hope and Teilhard’s own work.
Writings in Time of War. Teilhard knew that his vow of chastity could never be for him a negation or rejection of life. De Lubac argues that he therefore presents the feminine, despite his struggles to define its role, as absolutely necessary for both personal and cosmic maturity. The “essential Feminine”—another name at least in de Lubac’s eyes for the principle of love—is “the unitary aspect of beings.” As Teilhard writes: “Driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come into being.” He even looks forward to a time when feminine love so transforms the earth through personalization that the present sexual triangular relationship of Man-Woman-Child will be sublimated by the relationship of Man-Woman-God. This is certainly a different vision of chastity, and love, from that celebrated by the counterculture and the Summer of Love, and one with which we must suppose young lovers of Teilhard of the time struggled mightily.

The second half of the book, first published in Paris in 1968 three years after the end of the Second Vatican Council, is titled “Teilhard and the Problems of Today.” It is, in the spirit of the social scientists who had already done the same, de Lubac’s own attempt to use Teilhard’s work to give guidance to a post-Vatican II world. In his first

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665 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Writings in Time of War (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). What becomes obvious is that Teilhard really was not clear as to where the “feminine” fit into his overarching system. From the first page, however, we see him struggling with a subject with which he was deeply interested: virginity. In April, 1916 a notation in his notebook remarks: “Virginity: an undoubted invasion of the cosmos by the Revealed.” A few days after, he made the decision to undertake this study “in honour of Our Lady.” (The Eternal Feminine, 9). He was trying to define the cosmic nature of virginity, which eventually he associates not only with the Blessed Virgin, but concurrently with purity, chastity, fruitfulness, love, and ultimately union.

666 De Lubac, Feminine, 86.


668 The second chapter of the book summarizes Teilhard’s “Poem of Love,” and discusses its sources and antecedents. As mentioned above, Teilhard sees the evolutionary process as bound up with the evolution of love, but it would be just as valid to view the essay as "A Poem of Matter." The similarities between Teilhard's poetic description of Matter and the entity he calls the Feminine are striking.
essay de Lubac suggests that Teilhard’s impact has been great because “readers have found in [him]… undeterred by disappointments, ‘stronger than every obstacle and counterargument’ … the same hope and the same eagerness to get to work” as Vatican II urges. It is as a result of Teilhard’s willingness to express these hopes and fears, the guidance he offers through them, that de Lubac believes he is so widely read. Still, he admits, Teilhard was at least a generation ahead of most people; he wonders therefore how he will be received in another two decades.

One might note in regards to these comments de Lubac’s own concern that as with the documents of Vatican II, Teilhard’s thought too was being interpreted along trajectories with which he would not agree. He argues in the second chapter of this section of the work that “small groups of impatient people are going too far…a number of extremists are trying to use the present transitional period to promote their own views rather than wholeheartedly adhere to what was written…enthusiasm is taking the form of an extremism.”

Finally, in the chapter “Jesus Christ,” de Lubac again emphasizes the inspiration Teilhard found in the writings of St. Paul and the resultant importance of Teilhard’s Christology at the heart of his thought. He notes Teilhard’s comment that “Without Jesus Christ, centre of consistence, I crumble away within—everything outside me

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670 De Lubac, Feminine, 145. In reading between the lines it is easy to get a sense of his anguish at the direction he sees many taking.
671 Ibid. The remaining chapters of this part of the book, titled "A Personal God," "Jesus Christ," "The Church of Christ," and "Tradition and Obedience,” explicate Teilhard’s popular thought in a fashion proposed to inform, Roman Catholics especially, as to what de Lubac considers a valid interpretation of the Vatican II changes.
crumbles away also.”

With equal force, de Lubac argues, Teilhard emphasized the necessity of the Gospel life for humanity’s progress, for “without faith, purity and charity, the three fundamental interior attitudes taught by Christ… neither could the divine milieu be constituted nor could the Kingdom of God flourish. Without them, the progress of earthly society could lead ultimately only to inhuman structures.”

Still, as de Lubac writes, for Teilhard—as it should be for every Christian—hope must not be abandoned. Even if an occasion exists for despair, pessimism is not the final word. It must be remembered that “times of crisis will always be… pre-eminently times for hope.” In this time during these last years of the Sixties there would seem to be no doubt that Teilhard would have suggested to those students and activists who were in despair that “The star for which the world is waiting, without yet being able to give it a name…is necessarily Christ Himself, in whom we hope… We must try everything for Christ, we must hope everything for Christ.”

Works in Interdisciplinary Journals

The next section of this chapter is a discussion of four articles on Teilhard published in journals specifically established in the 1960s to explore interdisciplinary topics, particularly those of the humanities and science. These articles all discuss the various ways in which scholars were “reading” or interpreting Teilhard during these years, and particularly whether it is possible to successfully “do” both science and

672 Teilhard, personal note at Tientsin, November 27, 1939 quoted in de Lubac, Feminine, 170.
673 Teilhard, Writings in Time of War, 92-4 quoted in de Lubac, Feminine, 175.
674 De Lubac, Feminine, 145.
675 Teilhard, Divine Milieu, 137.
theology as Teilhard has. If so, just what type of science and theology is he actually doing, and is it valid?

An examination of these articles is indeed important simply to reaffirm that as synthesizer of faith and science Teilhard’s work was notable, particular at this point in time. Beyond this, however, consider again Ahlstrom’s comments at the beginning of the chapter regarding this age of increasing secularism and suspicion about organized religion as well as the value of science. In light of that, these essays point to at least a few well-respected scientists or intellectuals willing to admit to the ongoing importance of both a life of faith and the necessity of concomitantly further developing scientific knowledge. Or, as Teilhard wrote “Humanity is no longer imaginable without science. But no more is science possible without some religion to animate it. Christianity is an exemplary form of the religion of science.”

Note, however, that it is only the last of these works that significantly references the importance of Christ for Teilhard, or the implications of his Christology.

The first of these essays is George Riggan’s “Testing the Teilhardian Foundations,” which examined at length the scientific basis of Teilhard’s claims, and which will also reaffirm several conclusions already obtained within previous chapters of this work. Riggan ultimately decides that Teilhard’s synthesis “is embarrassed”

677 George A. Riggan, “Testing the Teilhardian Foundations” Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science 3 no. 3 (September, 1968): 259-313. Riggan was at that time Riley Professor of Systematic Theology at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. This paper was prepared while he was a post-doctoral Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study for Theology and the Sciences at Meadville Theological School in Chicago during the academic year 1967-1968, and was first read at seminars there. Zygon was introduced in Chapter 5 of this work. The journal was started at Meadville Theological School of Lombard College in 1965 following any number of years of increasing collaboration at the school between theologians and scientists, and in particular as the result of a conference titled “A Reconsideration of the Relation of Theology to the
because he “deceives himself as to what constitutes scientific evidence.”

Although Riggan reassures the reader that the support of religious faith by scientific evidence is fine, in his view Teilhard pushes his definition of science past the limits.

In Riggan’s eyes, Teilhard insists upon an intimate relationship between Christian faith and science even as he appears to regard his own work as the initiating moment of a revolution in the natural sciences; he also rests his case upon his theory that evolution is primarily a spiritual process. Riggan’s response to this is “Whatever their status in Catholic dogma, extrapolations such as these have scientific standing only in science fiction.”

Still, Riggan agrees, the significance of Teilhard’s work can not be measured only by its scientific inadequacies. He elucidates four points regarding this which are of particular importance for this work, and which reaffirm conclusions made earlier concerning the reception of Teilhard during this decade. In the first place, Riggan writes, the Vatican ban against publication of Teilhard’s works most likely magnified their influence in Catholic circles both during his own lifetime, as he proceeded to circulate them privately despite the ban, and especially when published by Jeanne Mortier and others after his death. Secondly, his “proposal to translate the Gospel in evolutionary

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Sciences” that same year, which was in large part devoted to a trajectory of Teilhardian thought. The goals of Zygon state that “the contemporary sciences provide a rich lode of reliable knowledge about man’s nature, destiny, and cosmic setting. Theologies which take this knowledge seriously might vitalize their religions and find themselves moving toward greater consensus. The function of the Committee on Theology and the Sciences which directs this journal is to assess the religious relevance of this increasingly interlinked network (From “Theological Resources from the Sciences,” Zygon 1 no. 1 [Jan, 1965]: 11). In the same issue of Zygon is also compiled by Riggan on pages 314-22 “A Selected Bibliography of the Works of Teilhard de Chardin,” in which he includes in alphabetical order those articles of Teilhard’s from the years 1913 to 1955 that attempt some synthesis of the scientific and spiritual.

678 Riggan, 303.
679 Riggan, 303.
terms” hastened a discussion that assisted in preparing the way for the Second Vatican Council and the eventual movement of Catholic theology into the twentieth century.

Third, Riggan admits, Teilhard’s synthesis is not wholly without scientific merit. Indeed, beyond his poetry, mysticism, and neologisms, Riggan perceives that Teilhard remains a consistent evolutionist, always viewing man as a participant in the process and subject to its laws, including those of natural selection and mutation. He incorporates a necessary holistic, synthetic viewpoint into what could otherwise become a very narrow and deterministic science. In Riggan’s eyes, however, the most important significance of the Teilhardian synthesis is Teilhard’s efforts toward establishing the scientific foundations for a naturalistic theology based on a directional evolutionary trajectory.681

In conclusion, Riggan asks what the theological consequences might be of “retranslating Christian theism from a biblical into such a contemporary scientific world view.” The answer to him appears to be the role God already plays, redefined in terms of mutations and selection in both biological and cultural systems.682 Even so Riggan believes the sciences need to be part of that investigation if we do not wish to subject

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680 The harsh reviews it has received from some such as Medawar and Simpson are at least partially balanced in Riggan’s mind by the restrained approval of other outstanding scientists, among them Dobzhansky, Huxley, and Needham, who commonly stress that his work should be read as that of a poet and mystic, as well as a scientist. As the following article in this chapter will elucidate, we could also add Ian Barbour to this list. Dr. Joseph Needham was a British embryologist and a biochemist, a Fellow of both the Royal Society and the British Academy, who developed a vast interest in the Far East. In 1942 he traveled to China to aid in the reconstruction of that country’s reconstruction of academic science. While there, he met Teilhard. He later served as President of the British Teilhard Association, wrote several articles on Teilhard, and referred to his work in many of his own books.

681 Riggan, 305. Riggan believes Teilhard quite thoroughly compromises his repeatedly announced intention to remain within a scientific frame of reference. He subsequently then evades the very findings implicit in a satisfactory scientific approach to his proposals. Despite this (or perhaps because of it), Riggan finds the guidelines he suggests for a natural theology have great merit.

682 What this view of God might possibly mean for Christianity and ethical values must still be explored. This exploration by necessity must take place beyond the sciences, Riggan asserts.
ourselves to further technological and cultural abuses which might “hasten the extinction of all life upon the earth.” He finds then that the interest in Teilhard’s efforts is timely, imperative, and hopefully will continue far into the future.

Ian Barbour, son of George Barbour, good friend of Teilhard himself, was introduced in Chapter Four of this dissertation. At about the same time the previous essay was being published, he wrote an article, titled “Five Ways to Read Teilhard” for Soundings. Like several others in this chapter, this is an effort to explain, for those on both sides of the “divide” just what it was that Teilhard was attempting. Barbour was concerned that Teilhard’s work has “evoked an extraordinary diversity of appraisals” since The Phenomenon was first published in the United States in 1959. As did his father George, Ian Barbour felt that most of the controversy and contradictions could be “traced to the unexamined assumptions” of those reviewing Teilhard’s thought. These primarily dealt with the issue of what criteria should be used to evaluate his ideas; or considered in another fashion, on what basis and with what categories are his writings to be judged?

This particular article is included here in the hope that it will reaffirm how Teilhard’s work was classified during this decade. Barbour successively considers Teilhard’s work within the five categories of: 1) evolutionary science; 2) poetry and mystical theology; 3) natural theology; 4) Christian theology; and finally as 5) a process philosophy. Note that indeed these five categories are those by which Teilhard’s thought has been categorized to this point within this dissertation.

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683 Riggan, 306.
684 Ian G. Barbour, “Five Ways of Reading Teilhard,” Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal 51, No. 2 (Summer 1968):115-45. Hereafter “Five Ways.” Note that it is both appropriate and significant that an article on Teilhard should be published in “an interdisciplinary journal” attempting to bridge the divide between science and the humanities.
1). Considering Teilhard as evolutionary scientist, Barbour concedes that Teilhard's technical papers, some of which are collected in *The Appearance of Man*, are sound contributions to science.\(^{685}\) Still, Teilhard's strong concern for "the totality of the phenomenon of man" moves him far beyond the specialized sciences; he tries to reconcile quite diverse types of data within his "comprehensive framework."\(^{686}\)

Also problematic is Teilhard’s metaphorical use of scientific terms, such as his overuse of superlatives and neologisms. It is apparent his sources lay outside science, and as others cited within this dissertation have suggested, these should “have been more explicitly indicated.”\(^{687}\)

2) Teilhard as Poet and Mystic: Barbour admits that much of *The Phenomenon* is not strictly scientific by even the broadest definition, so some interpreters have gone to the opposite corner, considering it a poetic epic inspired by evolutionary science.\(^{688}\) *The Phenomenon* could then be read as a “kind of religious meditation on evolution.”

3) Teilhard as Natural Theologian: Barbour also suggests that *The Phenomenon of Man* can be read as a reformulated argument of Natural Theology in which the directionality of evolution is taken as evidence for the existence of God.\(^{689}\) Barbour points out that de Lubac, for example, in *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and his

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\(^{685}\) Barbour, “Five Ways,” 118. Barbour agrees that as might be expected by the “enthusiastic endorsement from many prominent biologists” his work has received, nothing that contradicts established scientific understanding can be found here.

\(^{686}\) Where however, Barbour asks, is the “absolute line” between fact and interpretation? One cannot deny however that “creative imagination” is necessary in the synthesis Teilhard was attempting.

\(^{687}\) Ibid., 121.

\(^{688}\) Barbour, Five Ways, 121.

\(^{689}\) Barbour, Five Ways, 124.
Meaning feels that it is unfair to criticize Teilhard for not stressing God’s transcendence or the scholastic separation of nature and grace as these would have not made sense in an “apologetic aimed at the agnostic and based only on what the latter could accept.” In particular his vision of hope is significant, especially in a day when “most authors instead write of despair, meaninglessness, and estrangement from nature.” In Teilhard lies a scientist who sees in the evolution of the world a reason for “faith in progress, cosmic optimism, and a sense of kinship with nature.”

4) Instead of reading The Phenomenon as a natural theology—an argument from nature to God—one could read it as Teilhard’s attempt to observe nature from a theological perspective. In this the religious ideas that are his main source lie outside science; the starting point would be the biblical revelation and the Christian heritage in which Teilhard's thought was profoundly molded.

On this reading, Teilhard's arguments concerning the teleology of history and personal nature of evolution come from his religious beliefs, and his optimism for the future is primarily an expression of Christian eschatological hope rather than any evolutionary inference. Through this lens Barbour argues that much of Teilhard's writing is easily considered as the articulation of traditional Christian doctrine within an evolutionary universe. The Phenomenon therefore contains variations on the doctrines of 

Henri de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and his Meaning (New York, 1965). The second half of the book (133ff.) defends Teilhard's essay, "Comment je crois," against its critics - largely on the grounds that it is a form of "natural theology." Note that although Barbour speaks of Teilhard’s eschatological hope in this section, no direct reference is made to his Christology.

Barbour, Five Ways, 125.

As we have already noted at numerous points, this is of course one of the primary motivators for his positive reception during this era, although many who point to this aspect of his thought do not connect it to his Christological faith.

Barbour, Five ways, 129.

Ibid.
creation, providence, and eschatology. His thought is implicitly incarnational and sacramental; divine involvement in the history of the world through the Christ-event shows the value God places on the world, and that Christians should likewise be involved in the world.

5) Finally, Barbour would argue that Teilhard is actually something of a process philosopher. Process categories play an important role in his theological writings in that he reinterprets the nature of man and the meaning of creation, redemption, and eschatology in an evolving universe.

In conclusion Barbour agrees that Teilhard’s *The Phenomenon* and most of his work is multi-faceted and not easily “pigeon-holed” into any particular discipline. Moreover, Teilhard barely acknowledges any specific methodology, and most of his key terms are ambiguous. For these reasons, Barbour notes, Teilhard’s thought is “peculiarly

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695 Additionally, Teilhard's "theology of nature" could also be understood as an expression of his theology of the secular, including his affirmation of the creative potentialities of the world and his rejection of the dualistic tendency to view matter as evil.

696 Barbour, 131. Here Barbour comes closest to acknowledging Teilhard’s Christocentric view, although he does not fully develop this. But, he also reiterates that if Teilhard is to be considered a Christian theologian, then of course this makes his work more vulnerable to theological criticism. As a result, Teilhard's defenders are left attempting to show that he is orthodox, or at least really not very unorthodox. Consider that although he stresses God's immanence, the allegation that he is a pantheist Barbour contends is surely unfair, since he repeatedly stresses God’s transcendence and the individuality of each person over against God. Critics operating out of the scholastic tradition must also recognize that for him there is no absolute dichotomy between "natural" and "supernatural" events. Barbour asserts that Teilhard's biblical assumptions cannot be denied, although he does not indicate what these are. However, his work is not just about the *resourcement* of a neglected historic tradition; once again Barbour does not name this tradition. Still he says, Teilhard’s indebtedness to both religious and scientific sources needs to be kept in tension, and the interaction between scientific and religious concepts acknowledged. Theology is not itself revealed, Barbour reminds the reader; it always involves an interpretation of the (usually) historical events in which God is understood to have acted. Teilhard then is definitely something more than a classical systematic Christian theologian. Barbour notes that Teilhard's appreciation of the value of secularity is similar to that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Harvey Cox, and other recent exponents of "worldly Christianity" as already noted in the previous chapter.

697 Barbour, 115. Barbour notes that Teilhard’s evolutionary outlook leads him to emphasize such genuinely biblical themes as continuing creation, the significance of time and history, an affirmation of “secular” life, the unity of man as a total being, the reality of a living God involved in the world, and the cosmic significance of Christ, all concepts with which process philosophy deals regularly.
vulnerable to one-sided interpretations by both critics and supporters. In any book—but especially in one that crosses lines between fields—the reader tends to see what he is looking for and to use what he finds for his own purposes." This is certainly occurring in this period with Teilhard’s publications.

Teilhard’s unity, Barbour reiterates, can be found at several levels; what is foundational however is his personal, passionate, existential mystical experience. Here is found the “intense conviction of cosmic unity and a powerful imaginative expression” of God’s presence which underlies the rest of the work. This experience, Barbour believes, is key to understanding that work, and can not be discounted. Note here that again in this series of articles, rather than an explicit acknowledgement of Teilhard’s Christ-centered worldview, we see a nod toward some ambiguous cosmic mysticism.

According to Barbour, therefore, a process metaphysics which combines the fourth and fifth of his own classifications, that of Christian theology and process philosophy, consistently runs through all of Teilhard’s works. He argues that Teilhard has given us a genuine synthesis of scientific and religious insights, rather than a natural theology derived from science alone or a Christian theology derived from revelation.

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698 Barbour, 137.
699 It is interesting that Barbour plays the mystic note as do several of these writers; in an age where mysticism has become much more “socially acceptable,” to mark Teilhard as one is to almost immediately draw the attention of the reading public to his work. Also, Barbour notes that many have contrasted Teilhard’s various works, considering the The Phenomenon an example of natural theology aimed at the "unbeliever," and The Divine Milieu as Christian spiritual theological work intended for the "believer." Although the differences exist, he argues, still he finds more unity among them than many acknowledge. He instead sees that this separation of audiences into “believers” and “unbelievers” is not simple as most people are a mix of faith and doubt, belief and its opposite. Then too, we know that Teilhard was also concerned with reconciling the scientific and the religious in his own life and thought. Teilhard and dualistic thought do not deal well together. 148.
700 Barbour, 138.
alone. Barbour’s conclusion is that: “In a day of increasing specialization and fragmentation, [Teilhard’s] concern for the totality of man and his vision of a unified world may themselves be his most enduring contribution.”

In 1968 Ian Barbour was also found on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, for which Ralph Wendell Berhoe was the editor. The December, 1968 issue of *Zygon* was completely dedicated to various interpretations of Teilhard and his work in light of both science and religion. The next two articles are both found in this issue. Additionally, Berhoe’s editorial concerning this issue observed that the journal’s purpose of integrating religious “notions of what is meaningful and sacred” about humanity’s identity with scientific notions about the world was not solely dependent upon Teilhard’s synthesis. However, an evaluation of Teilhard was certainly “both a useful guide and a caution.”

He continues on to note that one scientific criticism of Teilhard was that his "theology" was not really scientific enough to make it credible. In this particular issue, the included transcript of a symposium on "Do Life Processes Transcend Physics and Chemistry?" raised a reverse criticism of *Zygon's* purposes. Within the symposium it was suggested that science may be implicitly insufficient for handling theological questions.

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701 His evolutionary outlook leads him to emphasize such genuinely biblical themes as continuing creation, the significance of time and history, an affirmation of "secular" life, the unity of man in/as a total being, the reality of a living God involved in the world, and the cosmic significance of Christ, all concepts with which process philosophy deals regularly. Barbour believes Teilhard’s thought is both a challenge and a stimulus for scholars and thinkers in many disciplines, one he finds is being taken up already. Of course, as has already been discussed within this dissertation, this also means his work stands subject to criticism by the criteria of almost every discipline.

702 Barbour, 143.

This suggestion was raised not by theologians, but scientists. What Berhoe fears is that if physics is unable to explain chemistry, nor chemistry explain biology, then perhaps the distinctive barriers between disciplines are so high that what those on the board of the journal hope is without substance. In particular this implicates their belief that the sciences can be of possible assistance to even more distant disciplines—such as ethics or theology. If this is the case, then what does one do with someone like Teilhard? If nothing else, Berhoe concludes, the experience has taught the board members how difficult Teilhard’s efforts at integrating the two sciences in a similar fashion were, as well as why his work has received such criticism.

Another of the articles to be discussed from this issue of Zygon, and the last in this series, is Alfred Stiernotte’s “An Interpretation of Teilhard.” In this very thorough and lengthy article Stiernotte, a professor of philosophy, summarizes the more important works of Teilhard as well as some of the commentaries, admirers, and critics in recent French and English literature. Finally he examines scientific evaluations and criticisms. He too offers his own interpretation of the Teilhardian system in an attempt to explain the reasons it has appealed to so many of differing philosophical and religious orientations. In this essay we again see an acknowledgement of the incredible

704 Alfred Stiernotte, “An Interpretation of Teilhard: As Reflected in Recent Literature,” Zygon, 3 no. 4 (Dec, 1968): 377-425. Alfred P. Stiernotte was at that time professor of philosophy at Quinnipiac College. He begins his article by observing that Teilhard is enjoying a popularity seldom given a scientific scholar, particularly one who considers the implications of science as religion. (377).

705 He addresses basic studies, fundamental aspects, and controversial points, first from Roman Catholic sources but also from Protestant sources.

706 Stiernotte acknowledges that the friendship and admiration Teilhard found in the likes of Julian Huxley and Theodosius Dobzhansky pay tribute to his mind and dedication. Even Mircea Eliade noted his significance: “At least one hundred volumes and many thousands of articles have been published all over the world in less than ten years, discussing—in most cases sympathetically—Teilhard de Chardin’s ideas. If we take into consideration the fact that not even the most popular philosopher of this generation, J. P.
importance of a particular Christology for living Teilhard’s thought, as well as the
difficulties some had in accepting Teilhard’s vision of the evolutive, cosmic Christ.

In stressing Teilhard’s importance and influence, Stiernotte suggests that Teilhard
is difficult to understand for many because “one of the most significant academic
shortcomings of our time is the trained mind of the specialist who does indeed know his
own research but has not learned to leap over walls separating his from other specialties
with the same agility as did Teilhard.”

Stiernotte asserts in accord with Barbour’s interpretation above that Teilhard's system is not to be understood merely as a scientific, intellectual, or philosophical world view; he too emphasizes Teilhard’s mysticism, but implies it is a new type of mysticism, a mysticism of process rather than that of a static vision, one of a communion with the universe, including the inorganic, the organic, humanity, and Christ. Christ here is “nothing less than the pervasiveness of altruistic love in self-sacrifice as fully as it is possible to reveal love in a man of our species living

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Stiernotte, 380. One of those who Stiernotte writes admired Teilhard is Paul Tillich. Tillich wrote: “I happened to read Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's book, *The Phenomenon of Man*. It encouraged me greatly to 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 vision of the future, I am convinced by his description of the evolutionary processes in nature.” Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), III, 5. In fact, Stiernotte notes that the third volume of Tillich's *Systematic Theology* contains “thirty-five pages which are strictly in accord with the general evolutionary view of reality.” Stiernotte, 378. Additionally, Stiernotte comments that the number of societies dedicated to the study of Teilhard continues to increase, including among Marxist scholars such as Roger Garaudy. See, for example, *From Anathema to Dialogue* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), 48-54, for references to Teilhard.
under existential conditions but maintaining unbroken his sense of communion with God as love.”

What has been the response of the Catholic world to this cosmic understanding? On the part of great theologians and philosophers, specifically those such as Maritain and Gilson, polished Thomists both, Stiernotte finds the reaction has been one of both mild admiration and great puzzlement at Teilhard’s audacity of mingling the scientific, philosophical, and theological.

Stiernotte suggests that the summary of *The Phenomenon of Man* found in *Masterpieces of Catholic Literature* explicates Teilhard’s accomplishment well: “Perhaps the real "scandal" of Teilhard and *The Phenomenon of Man* lies in his attempt to achieve, in an evolutionary account, a solidly knit synthesis of the biological and spiritual worlds, two worlds which, despite the teachings of Christ, Paul, and many others in the Christian tradition, have continued to be regarded by Platonic-Cartesian dualism as isolated from each other.” Teilhard, Stiernotte concedes, is definitely not a dualist, and this in itself—for both academy and Church—is scandalous!

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708 Ibid., 388.
709 Stiernotte, 389. Stiernotte’s thought is that Maritain especially appears to favor a philosophy of being over that of the philosophy of becoming which is implicit in a process theology such as Teilhard’s. See for example James Collins, in “Maritain Asks Some Questions.” “As for Teilhard, he had a poetic intuition of the sacred worth of created nature. But the Teilhardians substitute evolutionary becoming for being and subordinate all metaphysical and religious questions to the panchristizing and pancosmicizing process.”
711 Frank M. Magill, ed., *Masterpieces of Catholic Literature* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 1017-21, quoted in Stiernotte, 391. In a similar fashion, Petro Bilaniuk of St. Michael’s in Toronto is quoted in this article as commenting that the opposition of many to Teilhard is a result of an underlying fear not to violate the divine transcendence by exaggerating the divine immanence in the world: “They think that by minimizing immanence they will preserve transcendence. However, is it not possible to say that immanence and transcendence complement each other on the part of the absolutely simple pure act of the subsisting existence itself, the ground of being, that is God?” Petro Bilaniuk, “The Christology of Teilhard de Chardin,” quoted in Robert J. O’Connell, S.J., ed., *Proceedings of the Teilhard Conference 1964* (New York: St. Michael’s College, 1965), 32.
Catholic opposition to Teilhard, according to Stiernotte, has primarily centered on the criticism of Philippe de la Trinité. The heart of his disagreement with Teilhard, ironically for this dissertation, lies in Teilhard’s cosmic Christology: “No, the Teilhardian cosmo-anthro-po-christogenesis does not develop Catholic dogma in a homogeneous and legitimate way. It perverts it, it warps it.” To such an accusation, de Lubac replies: "One thing at any rate is clear, that he [Philippe de la Trinité] denies to the glorified humanity of Christ the cosmic role which a number of commentators . . . saw, as did Teilhard, in St. Paul's statement: a role which some first-rate theologians of today still attribute to him.” As Stiernotte neatly concludes in this article, these arguments point out that an understanding of a cosmic Christology associated with divine immanence, as contrasted to a Christology of divine irruption associated with divine transcendence, seems to be the dividing line between those who favor Teilhard and those who do not.
Stiernotte suggests, as Teilhard had decades earlier, that they are perhaps not quite “ripe yet!”

In ending Stiernotte nods toward a book review by Peter C. Hodgson concerning Teilhard with which he agrees.\(^{715}\) The two concur that the thought of Teilhard is likely to grow in the next decade for the following reasons, none of which will be surprising to readers of this dissertation: (1) Recent developments in Catholic theology, including many of the documents of Vatican II, cannot be understood without reference to Teilhard; (2) The recognition by Protestants that eschatology, which is a leitmotif in influential present-day Protestant circles, is also at the center of Teilhard's hope-filled thought; (3) The contribution of Teilhard "to the encounter between theology and natural science, the possibilities of which have by no means been exhausted."\(^{716}\)

**Publications Concerning the Utilization of Teilhard’s Spirituality**

The next four publications discussed in this chapter consider from different perspectives what is of value for the spiritual growth of the ordinary person in what Teilhard has written, particularly in an age of upheaval. The first two again address the question of the value of the secular, particularly that of daily effort, as elucidated by Teilhard. The subsequent article by Sheets queries how Teilhard’s thought might contribute to understanding the evolutionary development of Roman Catholic doctrine in the era of Vatican II. Finally, Donald Gray considers the ancient question of mystical union from within the lens of Teilhard’s spirituality.

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\(^{716}\) Hodgson, 621 in Stiernotte, 405.
As explained in the Introduction to this dissertation the emphasis of Teilhard upon
the secular is a result of his incarnational worldview; the reader should note however, that
in making use of Teilhard’s thought in this direction these four scholars do not explicitly
acknowledge this underlying foundation in their articles.

The interest in Teilhard by at least some portion of the “whole new theological
generation” referenced above, particularly in regards to the value of the secular or work
in the world, is partially illuminated in Robert Francoeur’s book review of Teilhard’s
Writings in Time of War. As Francoeur writes: “The idealistic college grad of today
does not find much challenge in making a prettier ‘Princess’ telephone or a more
complex satellite.” So, despite better salaries and attractive working conditions, people
of a certain generation are “opting out” of the traditional work force. To counteract this,
Francoeur suggests that companies in the late 1960s were increasingly emphasizing the
global, one might even say “cosmic” nature, of the work in order to appeal to their higher
nature.

Francoeur observes that a recent conversation with a friend along these lines
brought home to him the appeal of Teilhard for many. “The ‘Teilhardian fad’ has given
way to a more substantial interest simply because Teilhard has struck at the very heart of
the crisis of mankind today in a prophetic language that is understandable to today’s
youth—a youthful spirit, by the way, that has little to do with chronological age.” What
is the crisis? It can be elucidated in the question as to what, actually, is the purpose of

Teilhard de Chardin, National Catholic Reporter (1968): 11. No additional publication data is available.
life? And, do the efforts of daily work matter? Are they and the suffering of everyday, secular life actually worth something?

One can only hope that at least a few of these young people discovered in "The Divine Milieu" answers to these questions, and the realization along with Teilhard that "Creation is not finished. It continues still more magnificently...we serve to complete it, even by the humblest work of our hands. That is, ultimately, the meaning and value of our acts." 718

On a very different note is an article by Sister Viterbo McCarthy, C.S.J. which appeared in the "Journal of Religion and Science." 719 In many ways, although it was not the original intent, this article appears to attempt to address those issues raised by the young people mentioned in Francoeur’s book review above.

As had other social scientists, McCarthy was interested in exploring Teilhard’s work for wisdom appropriate to recent advances in the behavioral sciences. She comments that Teilhard’s synthetic perspective is especially congenial for psychology, a synthetic discipline itself, where the natural and biological sciences, social sciences, and humanities meet. 720 She believes that Teilhard’s thought is interesting for psychologists as it offers a deeper understanding of the contemporary religious dimension inherent in the daily life of lay people. An article highlighting this would seem to be especially appropriate during these post-Vatican II years, when a new emphasis on universal

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718 Teilhard, Divine Milieu, 62.
720 McCarthy, 142.
holiness had recently been introduced; in addition McCarthy comments that the quest for holiness is especially urgent during the current time of social upheaval.\textsuperscript{721}

In regards to the relational life, McCarthy comments that not only were deep friendships characteristic of and necessary to Teilhard’s life, so too was his understanding that love of others is essential even though it exposes us to hurt. Despite the probability of suffering, however, Teilhard repeatedly suggests that human love will evolve into yet nobler expressions on the cosmic dimension.\textsuperscript{722}

McCarthy observes that in Teilhard’s own life this “high degree of insight” was accomplished through “an extraordinary and unique integration of the data of science, philosophy and theology.” The result was the ever-deepening conviction that the best of everyday human effort and achievement would persist, as “a harmony, a particular expression of love, the enchanting complexity of a smile or a look . . . for the Incarnate God did not come to diminish the magnificent responsibility and splendid ambition that is ours of becoming our own self.”\textsuperscript{723} Note, however, that McCarthy did not attempt to explicate what this “unique integration” in Teilhard’s life might look like, nor explicitly mention the Christocentric nature of that integration. Nor does she acknowledge that Teilhard might suggest this was the means by which the Paschal Mystery was playing

\textsuperscript{721} What are Teilhard’s contributions to this conversation? The Jesuit psychologist W. W. Meissner wrote, almost in answer to Francoeur’s comments above, that “no one in contemporary thought has better grasped and expressed the realities of the Christian life in the world than Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.” In particular Meissner refers to Teilhard’s focus upon detachment from egoism, and subsequent attachment instead to all that is good, progressive, and unifying when accomplished through daily work, “provided a man gives himself to it faithfully and without a rebellion.” W.W. Meissner, S.J., \textit{Foundations for a Psychology of Grace} (Glen Rock, NJ.: Paulist Press, 1966), 5 and 222 in McCarthy, 142.

\textsuperscript{722} McCarthy comments here: “As these new forms of relationship evolve, they will demand enlarged hearts to match the evolving noosphere. Love will increasingly demand more of humanity. As the human personality grows, a synthesis of the masculine and feminine will also occur, and in each person this will occur in a unique fashion as their life progresses. However, eventually both components must be united in love, whether this is achieved in marriage, in friendship, or within the family itself.” McCarthy, 144.

\textsuperscript{723} Teilhard, \textit{The Divine Milieu}, 33 in McCarthy, 147.
itself out in the contemporary society of the moment. Still, McCarthy urges that surely reflection upon Teilhard’s wisdom can only continue to aid in “building the earth,” even in the midst of the challenging era which was then occurring. As the previous chapter suggested, however, those seriously willing to stop and consider the application of this wisdom to the “signs of the times,” and those who were able to comprehend the origin of Teilhard’s vision appeared to be all too few and far between.

A very different, very Catholic article was that which came from John Sheets of Marquette.\textsuperscript{724} It is included here primarily because of its uniqueness, both due to the author’s attempts to make use of Teilhard’s Christology in the fashion he does, and because that use is so appropriate for this particular era in light of Vatican II.

Sheets’ primary question is whether it is possible to provide an answer to the problem of development of dogma through the lens of Teilhard's evolutionary principles.\textsuperscript{725} Sheets would argue that the whole process of development can be explicated as an expansion of the power “to see.” Through the lens of Teilhard’s Christology constantly more opportunity exists to see revealed truth, where the “act of seeing and the truth which is seen unite and reinforce each other in constantly complexifying new synthesis.”\textsuperscript{726}

\textsuperscript{724} John Sheets, S.J., “Teilhard and Development of Dogma,” \textit{Theological Studies} 30 no. 3 (S 1969): 445-62. The substance of this article formed the contents of a paper delivered at a symposium on Teilhard held at Marquette University on the weekend of November 1, 1968.

\textsuperscript{725} Note that Teilhard himself never proffered any theory of development based on these principles. Sheets believes that we should be able, however, to validly apply them to Christianity, and in particular to the phenomenon which we call the development of dogma.

\textsuperscript{726} Sheets, 459. Another fundamental principle in Teilhard is the idea of seeing, and as has already been stated, he sums up the purpose of his work in terms of the meaning of seeing. For Sheets, so it goes with the Church, also. The Church is necessary, Sheets writes, for it is the Church which is to see where Christ leads, and to teach with a God-given authority what is to be believed. In the Church Teilhard sees the phylum which “incorporates the suranating principles of the risen Christ and transmits the life of Christ.
As has been shown, Teilhard was very concerned with the prevailing pessimism, despair, and aimlessness of the modern world. His goal was to give humanity a guarantee beyond final death; in his theory that “everything which rises must converge,” he found a corroboration of the gospel message of hope. But Christian hope for the Church must be primarily focused on the assurance of Christ to the Church that death will not prevail. In Teilhard’s case he emphasizes that promise is cosmic in nature for the “Church,” for it offers hope for the entire world, not simply a small portion of it. For this reason, Sheets contends, the Church and particularly its teaching role must be seen as part of the gift of Christ to all humankind; similarly, the Church itself must recognize its global and cosmic role and act upon this accordingly. These are principles which will not be foreign to those who closely read *Gaudium et Spes*. They are, one might argue, a corroboration of the statements of many, as discussed in Chapter Four, that Teilhard’s thought was quite influential in the writing of this document. At the time of this article, however, the Church found itself greatly struggling with the means by which to actualize this document, perhaps particularly in the United States where the still existing if struggling Americanist minority would likely take it along a particular trajectory.

The last publication concerning Teilhard’s spirituality to be discussed in this section is one that considered his concepts of mystical union. *The One and the Many* by Donald Gray purports to have its genesis in an original and unusual reading of Teilhard. 

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to the world” (462). The ultimate meaning of the Church is to see, to see with the same power that belonged to Christ, and to unfold Christ to the world; the Church therefore is “to transmit Christ both as Seer and as seen.” If it does not progress in its ability to see, acknowledging there is increasingly more to see, it will succumb to the law of entropy. The object of faith must be made more explicit and unfolded; this unfolding is that of a person, Christ, who suranimates the Church with and through his life. The unfolding of Christ correlates with a development of the power to see the mystery of Christ in a clearer fashion. Sheets, 455-57.
The author attempts to investigate systematically the whole question of unity, or creative union, that he would claim predominates in Teilhard’s thought and spirituality. As the concept of union is central to most mystical theologies, his reading is quite appropriate for and also reflects what was, as we have discussed, one of the primary spiritual concerns of the time.

By studying Teilhard's early writings from 1916 to 1927 or so, Gray draws into focus Teilhard's own attempt to work out the metaphysical understructure of his thought on this subject during these years, which Gray contends were crucial to his later work. In this, Gray claims that Teilhard's central concern is the problem of the one and the many.

This problem may be classical in nature, but by viewing it through the lens of evolution, Teilhard brings a fresh perspective. He sees evolution as a movement from the many to the one, through convergence by way of creative union, yet in such a way that through the energy of love inherent in that union, many become one without simultaneously losing their identity.

The process of convergent unification leads to the emergence of new possibilities; hence, through the gradual process of unification, the world is continually being created and recreated. In this emphasis upon creative unity as a solution to the classical problem of the one and the many, Gray argues that Teilhard finds a way of unifying science, philosophy, and religion, while also retaining the unique distinctiveness of each. Additionally, as those whose study includes the great mystics would argue, it is this that is at the heart of Teilhard’s mystical spirituality. As with the previous text, however, one must ask if Gray considered how this process was transpiring within United States
society during these years, particularly when it appeared that dispersion, rather than convergence, was the primary form of movement. Additionally, note that Gray’s argument, although it acknowledges Teilhard’s Trinitarianism, does not make much mention of his very personal Christocentric spirituality. Gray’s focus is far more upon a generic, cosmic mysticism.

**Publications of a Secular Nature**

The next three books, and the last discussed in this chapter, are each unique in their focus for this time period. The fact of their publication in itself perhaps shows both the desire of those who appreciated Teilhard to more widely share his thought, as well as his ongoing appeal for a diverse variety of people. Each attempts to place Teilhard within particular contexts for specific audiences, whether those are Christian Humanists, those comfortable with the new technologies of the era, or the educated, intellectual youth of the time. It would seem that these groups combined would constitute a very large percentage of those who are reading Teilhard’s works. With these as the intended audience, however, it is not surprising that none of these publications are in any manner concerned with Teilhard’s Christology or incarnational spirituality, nor so few of those who read Teilhard, particularly through these sorts of publications, recognized the importance of this Christocentrism for him.

First, the Lutheran theologian Philip Hefner offers his book *The Promise of Teilhard* specifically in hopes that it will shift the focus of many from Teilhard’s theology to his efforts as a “Christian Humanist.” As Martin Marty suggests in the

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Foreward, Hefner offers his distinctive focus by locating Teilhard “as the newest-fangled representative of an old-fashioned category, that of the Christian humanist.” Hefner believes that Christians must come to terms with scientific-humanism, and Christian theology must become comfortable with the “possibilities offered by evolutionary and developmental processes.”

This work then paints Teilhard not chiefly as a Christian “theologian,” but as one simply attempting to discern meaning in the age in which he lived and worked.

With this in mind then, Hefner’s book offers a portrait of Teilhard as first a human, one who was “fully man,” open to a wide range of experiences, and one whose work reflects that range of experiences. Additionally, Teilhard was able to unify those experiences into his personality and religious life: he was, as Hefner names it, “the antithesis of the compartmentalized man.”

This integration is why, however, the genre of his work, and consequently its significance, is so difficult to classify. Hefner’s argument is that someone who was less concerned with bringing to bear that integrity and the full ramification of his life experiences upon his theories, perhaps one more concerned with intellectual and ecclesial specialization, would be much easier to understand, classify, and critique. At the same

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728 Martin Marty quoted in Hefner, The Promise of Teilhard, 5.
729 Hefner explains that although Teilhard might be considered to “do” theology, and his first works tended to be critiqued by his compatriots who were overwhelmingly professional theologians, we cannot ignore the fact that immense numbers of people today outside the realm of professional theology appreciate and are attempting to live what he teaches. One could include here the audiences for many of the books discussed in this chapter.
730 Hefner, 16. By 2005, rather than humanism, Hefner was emphasizing instead the poetic Eucharistic image of Teilhard’s thought. As he then wrote, Teilhard’s evolution is all about Christ and the emergence of Christ in the universe; faith itself concerns a focus on unification with Christ. This implies grasping “every opportunity of growing greater and in accepting every summons to die.” In this, growth and death are mystically conjoined, they are then “our access to unification with Christ and God.” From “Teilhard de Chardin and His Relevance for Today,” Woodstock Report 82 (June 2005) retrieved from http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/publications/report/r-fea82a.htm.
time, however, this broad acceptance of so many facets of life enables his work to find a home in the lives of disparate groups of people—those in the academy, housewives, young Jesus freaks and hippies, politicians, Bell Telephone scientists, and Montesorri teachers—as the vast array of publications in these last two chapters show. As a result of this way of being and living he is a role model for the contemporary people of the present time.

Taking all this into consideration, Hefner contends that Teilhard is “best understood as a man who built a number of comprehensive theories for the purpose of clarifying the meaning of the contemporary history he was living through.” He was, in other words, “an interpreter of current events on a grand scale.”

The last two books discussed in this chapter are light-hearted and obviously aimed at a young, modern audience. Both present at least the basic rubrics, if not the underlying Christological themes of Teilhard’s thought as found in *The Phenomenon*. *Survival*, the first, is a most unusual book, one developed by the Phenomenon of Man project out of San Francisco and published as a spiral-bound paperback in 1970. The book is titled “Survival,” because as the authors state, the final segment of *The Phenomenon of Man* concerns the future of life, or “survival,” as Teilhard calls it.

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731 Hefner, 26.
732 Hefner, 28.
733 Phenomenon of Man Project (POM), *Survival: A Study Guide for Teilhard’s The Phenomenon* (The Project, 1970). The previous chapter mentioned a joint project of the ATA with the POM Project to develop a slide show that explained Teilhard’s thought. I was unable to determine whether this book is actually the published slide show, although it likely this is the case.
Paralleling *The Phenomenon* itself, the remainder of *Survival* is divided into four primary chapters of “PreLife,” “Life,” “Thought” and “Survival.” This part of the study guide “builds” toward and ends with the word “God-Omega!” An epilogue follows on the “Christian Phenomenon,” itself consisting of eighty-eight illustrated study points. Point number 27, for example, comments that “People often think they are honoring Christianity when they reduce it to a gentle humanitarianism,” only to be followed by “those who fail to see in Christianity the most cosmic of hopes completely fail to comprehend its ‘mysteries.’” The authors include a series of three explanations as to why Christianity is crucial, as well as an extended treatise on the value of Christian love, concluding with the note that “at the present moment Christianity is the only current of thought which is sufficiently audacious and sufficiently progressive to lay hold of the world… in an embrace where faith and hope reach their fulfillment in love.”

Despite this, an editorial comment at the end of this “Epilogue” points out that, although Teilhard was a devout Christian, he recognized the value of the other major world religions. “Hence,” the authors write, “it is perfectly proper for someone not in the Christian tradition to interpret Teilhard’s remarks on the relationship between the Omega Point and Christ in light of his own religious tradition,” a statement which certainly reflects the then strong emphasis upon ecumenical effort. The focus of the book, one

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734 It begins (with no preface or introduction) with an alphabetic glossary of Teilhardian terms which might be of use for the perusal of Teilhard’s work, and the chapters are themselves divided into a total of some 510 study points, each illustrated with an appropriate line drawing or diagram.

735 *Survival*, 137.

736 *Survival*, 137. The entire “Author’s Note” states: “Teilhard lived most of his life in close association with Buddhists, Mohammedans, Confucianists, and agnostics. While he was always a devout Christian, he still realized the truth that these various traditions contained. Hence, it is perfectly proper for someone not in the Christian tradition to interpret Teilhard’s remarks on the relationship between the Omega Point and Christ in terms of his own religious tradition. If Teilhard’s analysis of cosmic evolution remains
can therefore conclude, is neither the academic nor the devout Christian, nor one specifically interested in Teilhard’s Christology, but most likely the somewhat educated young person who wishes to understand, without too much effort, just what the fuss is concerning this man Teilhard. Although an entire chapter is included that explores the Christian basis of Teilhard’s theories, the book does so superficially and at a distance.

A more unique book and the last one discussed within this chapter is *The Vision of Teilhard Programmed for VIPs* by Thomas Alexander. The overleaf explains that this is “My thoughts about the thoughts of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin with the fixed idea to “program” them for V.I.P.’s and all others, who don’t have much time available to bother with things like these.” This explanation is signed by the author noted as “The Programmer.” Like the previous publication, this obviously is a book aimed at a particular portion of a most likely younger population, one aware of and comfortable with the new data processing technologies just becoming available within universities if not yet to the general public. It appears the author’s focus on Teilhard’s work is primarily through the lens of evolution and generic “feel good” spirituality, one meant to appeal specifically to this audience.

Alexander’s goal is to “program” Teilhard’s work for those who do not understand it. He wishes to present his “philosophy” in such a short and easy form that the ordinary human brain can understand it in a fairly short time . . . in “that amount of time which busy people are willing to spend reading on trains, at the seashore or between

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faithful to phenomena as they are in truth, then his synthesis should be open enough to incorporate and embrace truth wherever it may be found.”

other ‘important things.’ This is important to do, as Teilhard definitely has
“something to say, something for which most of us are searching, something to believe,
to ‘hang on to’ in this new, seemingly quite messy world of ours.”

Alexander calls Teilhard’s philosophy “The Beatification of Evolution,” one
which sanctifies everyday life, making it “not only logical but in a way beautiful and holy.” This, he argues, is exactly what the people of the time need and want. As is
hopeful already quite apparent, the tone and focus of the book is quite different from
any of those already discussed in this chapter. In addition to “programs” in Fortran
situated throughout, the author has included numerous drawings and diagrams to visually
explain Teilhard’s thought to a particular segment.

The book itself ends with the quote “So, my dear sick pessimists, you are wrong
once more. This phenomenon on planet Earth is going to make it. According to Pierre
Teilhard de Chardin all that one has to do is to be willing to take off the blindfold and
see.” Nowhere, however, does Alexander suggest that Teilhard’s seeing may consist
of anything of a Christian or even religious nature.

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738 Alexander, 15. The Introduction, which unquestionably sets the tone for what follows, begins with the
sentence: “It was a cold night in November of 1964, and I was out on a “first date” with a nice cute
blonde.” This prologue continues with Alexander’s story of how that evening he attempted to explain to the
blonde that his search for existential “TRUTH” had led him in various directions, yet none seemed to
suffice. After a time of listening to all this, eventually she asked if the author had ever read the works of
Teilhard, “for she thought he may have the answer to some of my questions.” Although he did not at the
time take her seriously, the next time he was browsing in a bookstore, he picked up a copy of The Future of
Man and ended up missing his train.

739 Alexander, 78.

740 As a further example of how removed this tome is from Teilhard’s Christological foundations,
Alexander ends his book with an epilogue of “My own short answers to 3 basic questions.” These include
an explanation of what “teilhardism” is, whether “Teilhardism” is a religious idea, and the next step for
readers who are now able to “see on a Universal level,” and who wish further ideas as to how to live a
mystical life in a secular world. So, is “Teilhardism” a religious idea? To this the author replies “This is a
question of language – terminology…When someone says “Christ,” “Buddha” or “The Scientific Evolution
of Man” these things mean different concepts to each individual.” Similarly, the inquiry of how to live a
Without a doubt this was a book written in a very particular time, for a very specific culture. That it WAS written and published however, exemplifies the fact that at least some portion of the population attempting to make sense of Teilhard’s thought was quite comfortable with that being stripped of any vestige of his Christology.

Chapter Conclusion

As has been detailed in the last two chapters, 1968-1971 were irretrievably difficult years for the United States. Some populations regretted the changes that had already occurred, others bitterly resented that the desired revolutions did not happen. Radicals of all types, including the Catholic Left, became progressively more radical as the nonviolence movements of Martin Luther King among others produced few tangible results; concurrently conservatives became more entrenched. The Vietnam War dragged on, racial violence continued, and conflicts on college campuses escalated. North American society was increasingly polarized by war, assassinations, riots and overall violence. Rather than evolving unity, the norm seemed to be disintegration.

For many these were the years in which doubt about the optimistic Teilhardian worldview could no longer be ignored. Teilhard himself was quite adamant in stating that one must choose either absolute optimism or absolute pessimism, as he saw no valid middle ground, for: “only, in support of hope, are there rational invitations to an act of faith.” As we have already seen, he was consequently accused of naïve optimism

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mystical life receives the response “All the rest has to do is to try to get motivated for life to a degree to avoid an obvious suicide.”

741 In regards to this statement, this work doesn’t even mention, for example, the Kent State shootings of unarmed students, only some of whom were protesting the Cambodian Campaign, by the Ohio National Guard on May 4, 1970.

742 Teilhard, Phenomenon, 233.
more than once. Later in his life he himself said that he limited himself to bringing out the positive and did not find it necessary to provide the negative, protesting in a typically intuitive fashion that “Surely [such things] were obvious enough. I have assumed that what I have omitted could nevertheless be seen.”

This chapter examined two dozen articles and books about Teilhard published during this time by various scholars, some of whom did understand this of Teilhard. These few knew that Teilhard’s hope was not predicated upon naïve optimism or the anticipated final results of scientific evolution and human progress, but rather on his relationship with a God who is Love, and his incarnational worldview. These scholars and authors asserted that what Teilhard was doing was a resourcement of the Pauline tradition associated with the Cosmic Christ, one updated by modern scientific knowledge concerning paleontology and evolution, and transmitted through a mystical lens in a manner that spoke to the needs of a young, contemporary, and secular world. Eschatology and evolution in this model was understood as Christocentric, oriented toward the Omega Point of love. Therefore, those who knew to see this, those who were in Teilhard’s own words “ripe,” could not help but have hope, even through the darkest days of the late 1960s. Those who grasped Teilhard’s Christocentric focus also appeared to realize that to expect to bypass the confusion and suffering encountered along the path to the new forms of life slowly evolving in US society was impossible, for these were obligatory if difficult aspects of a lived Paschal Mystery. When this inherent component of a spiritual life was understood, whether in the case of either an individual person or a society, ambiguity, sorrow, even death could then be tolerated and employed as a

springboard for new growth. Difficulty and paradox might be inevitable, yet they were not the final call.

Still, not too many seemed to comprehend this essential component of Teilhard’s thought. This truth is reflected in the ongoing confusion and debate concerning Teilhard’s methodology, as well as that concerning both the theological and scientific validity of his arguments. The arguments over not only the classification of his work, but also the value, particularly its spiritual value for contemporary society continued to be quite heated at times.

Those works presented in this chapter were chosen as they are representative of five specific categories of publications during these years. Those categories include those that examine the Christological basis of Teilhard’s work as foundational, as well as treatises written by Teilhard and either translated or edited by Father Henri de Lubac. Also, several articles from interdisciplinary journals that attempt to classify Teilhard’s work were examined, and several more which scrutinize his spirituality and its relevance to contemporary society and the Church. Finally, this chapter ends with an examination of several books that moved even farther away from Teilhard’s Christology, considering his work instead from what might be considered a generic humanist or even materialist viewpoint.

That these last publications exist is a commentary on the truth that all too few who wrote on Teilhard’s thought during these years had a Christological understanding. Instead, as shown in this chapter most were eager to continue to focus on a reductionist use of his theories for secular purposes, particularly the further study of scientific
evolution, or the future of technology; others made use of his thought for process
theology, psychology, and sociology or as a schema to investigate a general global
mysticism or humanism. In the end it appears that it was indeed these latter forms of
exploration of Teilhard’s thought that predominated during these years and those that
immediately followed. It was during 1967–1968, the “years of hope,” that the largest
number of publications concerning Teilhard appeared. After 1968 those numbers
decreased significantly, as did participation in the American Teilhard Association.\textsuperscript{744}
Indeed, as the conclusion to this work will show, for almost the next decade of the 1970s,
even as the numbers of publications produced concerning Teilhard’s work plummeted in
volume the vast majority explored just these subject matters.

\textsuperscript{744} See for example \textit{ATA}, 42: “It was agreed that the first wave of enthusiasm of the early 1960s had run its
course, but that Teilhard’s dynamic influence was still germinating within the minds of both religious and
non-religious persons and that it had a role to play not only in shaping the basis of individual beliefs but
also in the general intellectual and religious reappraisal of the total world view.”
CONCLUSION

This dissertation discussed how it was that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, visionary priest, paleontologist, and writer, significantly impacted the Catholicism of the United States between the years of 1959 and 1972. The focus has been on the US reception of Teilhard’s work during these years. This period, also the decade of the counterculture, the Second Vatican Council, and the dissolution of the immigrant subculture of the church in the United States, were the years in which the first American scholars responded to his theology and so set the foundation for later interpretations.

The primary argument of this work is that the manner in which this reception occurred, including the intensity of this phenomenon, happened as it did at this particular point in the history of both the United States and the Catholic Church because of the confluence of the then developing social and political milieu, the opening of the global Roman Catholic church to the world through Vatican II, and unique developments within United States Christian theology. Additionally as these social and historical events unfolded within US culture during these dozen years, the manner in which Teilhard was read as well as the aspects of his thought which were especially deemed of value changed.

At various times Teilhard’s work became a carrier for an almost Americanist emphasis upon progress, energy, and hope; at other times, his teleological understanding
of the value of suffering and exile moved to center stage. Teilhard wrote concerning humanity’s desire for the divine and strove to place that desire for unity within the context of both religion and science. In the end, it has been his attempt to bridge the divide between the secular and the sacred and to place this within his unique Christological vision, a vision that in itself positioned Paul’s cosmic Christ within the context of evolutionary theory, that remains of value today. It is this attempt which has had, and which continues to have, impact today upon US Catholic theology. In regard to the reception of Teilhard at the conclusion of the time period discussed within this work, an editorial in *America* in 1975 on the twentieth anniversary of Teilhard’s death noted:

> Teilhard dealt in millennia; two decades therefore seems a pitifully short time in which to judge the success of so sweeping a venture. Indeed, his falling stock in the popular marketplace of ideas over the past 10 years tells us as much about ourselves as about him. Our buoyant optimism ran aground in the sands of a war we could not win abroad and of a peace we could not keep at home. Military debacles, political assassinations, race riots, government scandals, double-digit inflation and unemployment—such have been the dolorous milestones on the journey we began so bravely with Teilhard 15 years ago. We can be excused for feeling that Point Omega looks much further away now than it did then. But a sustaining vision is still necessary.

Two years later Father Henri de Lubac wrote “a little book” on Teilhard in which his essential goal was to show the dissimilarity of what he calls a certain “Teilhardism” to Teilhard’s actual thought. Even many of the serious authors, de Lubac believed, did not seem to grasp Teilhard’s underlying synthetic Christocentric character. This foundational Christology he believed is the reason “Teilhard found scarcely any hearing anymore.”

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Instead, de Lubac argued, a “pan-critical, pulverizing mentality” reigned, “crushing” everything else potentially possible.\(^\text{747}\)

A while after this de Lubac also wrote that having published so many works on Teilhard explicating his work, not to mention his participation in conferences and dissertations directed on the same subject, he felt he had well contributed to the recognition that Teilhard was “a true religious and a faithful Catholic.” Perhaps as a result of this, however, de Lubac lamented, people have lost interest in Teilhard. He was no longer either “a scandal or one who could easily be derided for heretical notions.” Additionally, Teilhard’s characteristics and thought, de Lubac noted, are quite contrary to the “critical, analytical, pulverizing mentality,” the “anti-intellectualism,” and excessive individualism so rampant everywhere. His thought was at its heart absolutely counter to the “anti-establishmentarianism” prevalent from the late 1960s forward. Teilhard was, instead, “hyper-Catholic.” Very few, he believed, have perceived the historical importance of Teilhard’s effort to create a “spiritual interpretation of universal evolution that featured the ‘transcendence of man, the value of the personal being, freedom, openness to God, and most importantly, consummation in Christ.’”\(^\text{748}\)

Even from the very halls that twenty years earlier had lambasted him, came the glimmerings of understanding at the centennial of Teilhard’s birth. Consider this quote from the front-page article by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli in *l’Osservatore Romano*:

\(^{\text{747}}\) De Lubac notes that the quoted phrases are from von Balthasar, and it appears that both here refer to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School.

\(^{\text{748}}\) Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 110. De Lubac also notes that it was already at that time necessary, in order to truly understand Teilhard’s purpose, to historically contextualize the religious France of around 1900, and the “positivist, anti-religious mentality” which then dominated.
What our contemporaries will undoubtedly remember, beyond the difficulties of conception and deficiencies of expression in this audacious attempt to reach a synthesis, is the testimony of the coherent life of a man possessed by Christ in the depths of his soul. He was concerned with honoring both faith and reason, and anticipated the response to John Paul II's appeal: “Be not afraid, open, open wide to Christ the doors of the immense domains of culture, civilization, and progress.”

Numerous years later Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Austria wrote in 2007 that

“Hardly anyone else has tried to bring together the knowledge of Christ and the idea of evolution [as Teilhard] has done . . . the fascination which Teilhard exercised for an entire generation stemmed from his radical method of looking at science and Christian faith together.”

Finally, just within the last five years, Pope Benedict XVI noted in a homily that an understanding of the sacred teleology of secular matter as it participates in evolution toward the cosmic Christ could be at least in part attributed to Teilhard: “This is also the great vision of Teilhard de Chardin: in the end we shall achieve a true cosmic liturgy, where the cosmos becomes a living host.”

During the years discussed in this work, those who grasped Teilhard’s attempts through his integrated Christological vision, to bridge the gap between nature and grace and religion and science, as well as those who appreciated his embrace of the everyday

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749 This was written by Cardinal Casaroli at the request of Pope John Paul II on June 10, 1981. Retrieved from http://www.traditioninaction.org/ProgressivistDoc/A_120_RatzTeilhard.html on November 9, 2013.
750 The entire quote is: “Hardly anyone else has tried to bring together the knowledge of Christ and the idea of evolution as the scientist (paleontologist) and theologian Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. has done . . . . His fascinating vision . . . has represented a great hope, the hope that faith in Christ and a scientific approach to the world can be brought together . . . These brief references to Teilhard cannot do justice to his efforts. The fascination which Teilhard de Chardin exercised for an entire generation stemmed from his radical manner of looking at science and Christian faith together.” Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, Creation, Evolution, and a Rational Faith (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 141.
material world, were best able to carry his thought beyond the difficult days at the end of this time period. Although the number of publications concerning Teilhard may have decreased, his thought certainly did not simply and completely die.

Instead there would continue to be those who saw the possibilities of his work not only for the emerging laity of the Church living and struggling in the world, but also in those political organizations, such as the United Nations, that were attempting to achieve the unity of which Teilhard thought inevitable. If, at least temporarily, Teilhard’s spirituality was deemed inadequate, too optimistic, or too Christocentric for the general population, in other ways his influence lived on.

One area in which it survived, and a topic which is certainly worthy of further work, is the popular culture that, already starting in the late 1960s, developed around it. As was noted earlier, even then in the wide variety of topics and approaches found in Teilhard conferences, anthologies, and articles one notices the diverse application of his thought. It is therefore no surprise that those in the performing and visual arts saw possibilities as well. As Ewert Cousins remarked several years later: “The thought of Teilhard has become a major force in the intellectual world. It has attracted the attention of a wide spectrum of professional groups: scientists and theologians, psychiatrists and

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752 September 20-21, 1983 an international colloquium in honor of Teilhard was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York in conjunction with the opening of the 38th General Assembly. The findings were published in 1985 to celebrate forty years of the U.N. and the International Year of Peace as Leo Zonnevald, ed. Humanity’s Quest for Unity: A United Nations Teilhard Colloquium (The Hague: Marananda, 1985). During the first plenary session of this colloquium the first International Teilhard Award was presented to Robert Muller, who worked with the United Nations for over forty years and was secretary of the Economic and Social Council. His "Five Teilhardian Enlightenments" was a reflection on the United Nations within biological evolution, based upon his most basic conviction that life is divine. One of the enlightenments speaks of spirituality as "the ultimate key to our earthly fate in time and in space." Robert Muller, New Genesis (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 159-68. Muller was first exposed to Teilhard’s thought through Emmanuel de Breauvery, who worked for the Natural Resources Division of the U.N. and who lived with Teilhard in New York. Robert Muller, And Most of All They Taught Me Happiness (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 113-17.
Several examples of those who carried Teilhard’s evolutionary Christological thought into popular culture and the arts would include the composer Edmund Rubbra, the architect Paolo Soleri who was the creator of Arcosanti, and the sculptor Henry Setter who created the “Omega Point” sculpture at the University of Dayton.

Another direction in which Teilhard’s thought would be used beginning in the 1970s was in ecospirituality and the environmental movement. People like Thomas Berry employed Teilhard’s work to speak about the story of the universe and “deep ecology.” Berry would ultimately write the first of the American Teilhard

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754 Edmund Rubbra was an English composer whose work was extensively performed in the US. It is especially his “Hommage à Teilhard de Chardin,” *Eighth Symphony Opus 132*, written in the late 1960s and first performed in 1971 that is the focus here. The symphony very much reflects Rubbra’s Roman Catholicism, and is “in the deepest sense, a spiritual journey.” Rubbra noted that “It was not part of my intention, even if possible, to translate these [Teilhard’s] ideas into music, but they meet, I hope, in a like optimism.” Quoted in liner notes from Robert Saxton, *Rubbra: Symphony No. 5, Symphony No. 8, Ode to the Queen.* (A Chandos Recording, 1999). Paolo Soleri was an architect who was influenced by Teilhard in the development of his science of arcology, the fusion of architecture and ecology. His essay, "Myriad Specks/Teasing Grace," continues his reflections on urbanization in a Teilhardian spirit deprived of one ingredient of Teilhard’s foundation -- God: "My revisionism deals with a Teilhardian model that has been ‘robbed’ of God." Paolo Soleri, “Myriad Specks, Teasing Grace,” *The Spirit of the Earth: A Teilhard Centennial*, ed. Jerome Perlinski (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 132. He is especially known for Arcosanti, a planned community being built by students and volunteers in the Arizona desert some 70 miles from Phoenix. Even before beginning his sculpture, Setter had been greatly inspired for many years by the work of Teilhard. When in the late 1960s the directors of the Marianist University of Dayton began looking for a sculpture that would represent both its commitment to the future as a place of higher learning and its Catholic identity, they turned to the work of Teilhard and Setter. Father Henry Setter was himself a 1951 University of Dayton alumnus, had worked as novice master for the Marianists in the New York area, and was at that time completing a Master of Fine Arts degree through the University of Georgia. Setter was later laicized, married, and raised several stepchildren in Georgia. He continued to sculpt and teach, and created several other Teilhardian inspired works of art during his lifetime.

8 Thomas Berry, C.P. (November 9, 1914 – June 1, 2009) was a Passionist priest, cultural historian, and ecotheologian (although he preferred to call himself a cosmologist and geologian—or “Earth scholar”). Berry traveled extensively after World War II, and then taught the cultural history of India and China at various universities from 1956-1965. Later he was director of the graduate program in the History of Religions at Fordham University (1966–1979). He also founded and directed the Riverdale Center of Religious Research in Riverdale, NY (1970–1995). Berry was President of the ATA from 1975-1987. Among his publications were “Teilhard in the Ecological Age,” *Teilhard Studies #7* (American Teilhard
Association’s *Teilhard Studies* edited volumes in 1978 with his “New Story,” in addition to several others over the years. Berry’s story of evolution, however, is purposefully not as exclusively Christocentric as Teilhard’s, as Berry’s intent was to appeal not only to the Christian community but beyond.

As was mentioned above, Teilhard’s thought would also be appropriated by those in political circles. As one example, during the 1972 US Presidential election, Sargent Shriver was George McGovern’s running mate as the Democratic Party’s nominee for US Vice President, replacing Thomas Eagleton who had resigned from the ticket. In contrast to his in-laws, Shriver’s Catholicism appeared to be one of deep discipleship, and he treasured Teilhard’s thought until his death. In his first speech as candidate for vice-president in 1972, Sargent Shriver closed his remarks in the most memorable of ways,

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As one former employee wrote “During the Kennedy years and after, Shriver was hiring so many former nuns, priests and brothers that OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] might well have been the Office of Ecclesiastical Outcasts. Sarge’s Catholicism ranged from ordinary pieties—a rosary always in his pocket—to mindfulness of the church’s teachings on social justice and nonviolence.” From Colman McCarthy, Jan 19, 2011, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/18/AR2011011804789.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/18/AR2011011804789.html) Retrieved December 3, 2013. Michael Novak also wrote that Shriver always hired people to whom he could talk about Teilhard de Chardin, Dorothy Day, G.K. Chesterton, or the Worker Priests of France. He “loved the vein of Catholic thought that wanted to ‘reconstruct the social order,’ ” put the yeast of the gospel in the world.” Novak saw Shriver as a Catholic who thought of his faith “as a culture-changing force, a shaper of civilizations, an inspirer of great works, a builder of great institutions that bring help of all kinds to the needy in all dimensions of need,” and who took great joy in learning from others, like Teilhard, who thought the same way. Michael Novak “The Last Liberal” at AEI:American Enterprise Institute (5/24/2004) Retrieved from [http://www.aei.org/article/politics-and-public-opinion/elections/the-last-liberal/](http://www.aei.org/article/politics-and-public-opinion/elections/the-last-liberal/). This is a review of *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver.*
electrifying the reporters present, by quoting Teilhard: “Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness for God all the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”

Shriver continued to read and use Teilhard’s concepts, and to be involved in the leadership of global organizations throughout the remainder of his life.

As we have seen therefore, with the dawning of the 1970s some previously under the Teilhardian influence were undoubtedly shamed or dismayed by what they saw as the havoc of the last few years, particularly those who had not “caught” his particular brand of persevering faith. Still, Teilhard’s thought had already so become part of the foundation of modern Catholic religious thought and US culture as a whole that it could neither be ignored nor wholesale rejected without tumbling the entire edifice of American modernity. Instead it would go underground for much of this next decade. It would yet emerge at various times in the work of politicians, artists, writers, theologians and social theorists, too often unnamed, as if in fear that to claim a Teilhardian influence was to immediately elicit categorical rejection.

Resurrection of Teilhard’s thought, however, would occur repeatedly and cyclically during the next forty years up till today as those optimistic about the future of the world were willing to take it up and reconsider it. As Teilhard himself wrote during a very dark period when the Japanese occupied China in World War II:

> Everything strengthens my conviction that the future can be forced and led only by a group of men united by a common faith in the spiritual future of the earth. ‘Get behind me,’ I would make bold to say, ‘All Godless pessimists and all Christian pessimists. We must take up again, on a sounder scientific basis and as a more exact philosophical concept, the

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758 Teilhard, “The Evolution of Chastity,” Toward the Future, 86–7. This was written in Peking in 1934.
idea (or, if you prefer it, the 'myth') of progress. This is the essential setting in which I see the simultaneous rebirth of humanism and Christianity. 759

As this dissertation has shown, however, Teilhard’s optimism and belief in progress was not one rooted solely in the belief that humanitarian activism in the world, even communal activism was sufficient. Teilhard’s “optimism” was instead a hopeful understanding that despite the daily diminishments we suffer, all of humanity, all the matter of the world, all the effort expended on a daily basis, and all our own suffering is redeemed through the power of the Paschal Mystery and especially the Resurrection of Christ. This is why, above all else, we are to love Christ with all our strength, even as we love the stuff of everyday life, and the matter of the universe. 760

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759 Teilhard, Letters to a Traveler, 277. From Peking, January 12, 1941.
760 See especially Teilhard, 15 March, 1916, letter to Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon, “I want to love Christ with all my strength in the very act of loving the universe. Can this be absurdity, blasphemy?”
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