

What Is Evolutionary Christianity?



At three “Imagine Canadian Memorial” retreats, the congregation entered into discernment about our core purpose. As well, members contributed their dreams for our community by responding to a questionnaire. The results of this conversation were carefully documented, circulated via email, and placed on our website. Finally, we engaged in an every-member visitation in order to share the resulting dreams with the congregation and ask for commitment.

We developed a new Purpose, Values, and Vision statement:

We are called by God to be an open-hearted, open-minded community of faith, teaching and practicing evolutionary Christianity.

We often refer to the practice of evolutionary Christianity as *evolutionary Christian mysticism*. This paper is an introduction to what this term means. I will define what we mean by each of these words (*evolutionary, Christian, and mysticism*), starting with *evolutionary*.

Evolutionary

We are imagining evolution as a divine strategy for birthing and growing a world. This means that “God” (Heart and Mind of all that is) acts in and through the evolutionary process in a non-interfering, yet persuasive, way. Science has confirmed that the universe is evolving. Ever since Darwin discovered natural selection in 1859—one of the primary mechanisms of evolution—every field of science now recognizes that the fundamental nature of reality is evolutionary.¹ Science is concerned with the physical nature of reality but not with making meaning of the facts. The scientific method is one way of knowing the world. But there are other ways. Theology is another way of interpreting those facts.

Unlike some scientists, who interpret evolution as nothing more than the meaningless and random collision of atoms which, given enough time, will accidentally come to life and consciousness, we believe that evolution displays purpose and direction. The universe moves in a biased direction toward increased wholeness (unity), orderliness (which includes random activity), creativity, and consciousness. We believe that these are fundamental principles of reality that reflect Heart and Mind at all levels of our world. This impulse to evolve is part of the fundamental nature of Reality. In humans, this impulse gained the capacity for conscious awareness. We are that part of the universe able to consciously evolve. All of this is an expression of the impen-

1 Alfred Russell Wallace discovered natural selection at the same time as Charles Darwin did.

eternal, ineffable, yet always present Mystery we call “God.” Catholic priest and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin summed up the centrality of the evolutionary process:

“Is evolution a theory, a system or a hypothesis? It is much more: it is a general condition to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow and which they must satisfy henceforward if they are to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow.”

—*Phenomenon of Man*

God doesn't engineer or control the evolutionary process. Rather, God “makes” a world that can make itself. Biologist Charles Birch affirms that evolution proceeds through the interplay between purpose and chance. By “chance” he means that there is no preordained blueprint or future that God has already planned, and we're just waiting for it to arrive. There is an element of randomness and chaos, at all levels and scales of creation, that enables the emergence of actual novelty. The presence of chance (or contingency) is a precondition for what in the human realm we call freedom. Without chance everything would be predetermined. Purpose is suggested by the “laws” of nature. There is predictability and order in the universe, which science can measure. Patterns emerge from the apparent chaos of life. This dance between purpose and chance underlies the creative advance of the universe.

God does not interfere in this world-making. Theologian John Haught encourages us to think of evolution as a drama. A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In the middle, all kinds of accidents, including tragedy, keep the narrative interesting and somewhat unpredictable. Some scientists think that, because the world isn't perfectly engineered and because it has design flaws, this rules out God as designer. Actually, we agree. Ironically, fundamentalist Christians have this in common with atheistic scientists: they make their case for God by claiming that God is the Great Designer. They get very nervous about evolutionary imperfections (like the human appendix). Similarly, the presence of evil and suffering are rationalized by the claim that God's ways are not our ways, and everything that happens is the direct result of God's will. Try telling that to a mother of a young daughter who has died from cancer.

But God doesn't control outcomes. A world that was perfectly engineered would be a very boring world. Perfection is static. There's nowhere to go because it's already perfect. But an imperfect, evolving world is an adventure—just like a good story. We think that a better way to think about God is as a storyteller, and the world is a dramatic unfolding. Accidents, dead ends, and all manner of surprise drive the drama. We stay involved precisely because we don't know how it ends.

In fact, this is a story that we ourselves are involved in shaping (not unlike participatory dramas at fringe festivals, when the audience is invited co-create the play as it devel-

ops). But the evolutionary story is sustained by the promise of an ending that makes it all coherent and satisfying. Theologian and novelist Fred Buechner wrote about the dramatic nature of the gospel as comedy, tragedy, and fairy tale.²

The thematic threads I've already mentioned—a tendency toward wholeness, creativity, orderliness, and consciousness—provide the fairy-tale dimension of the cosmic narrative. These give the narrative both coherence and hope. The promise of a meaningful ending is embedded throughout the narrative, in our deepest experiences of love and justice. We will see that the theme of God's promise is central to scripture. In the meantime, nobody knows (including God) how the story ends. But the promise of God is that, even with all of its imperfection, suffering, and tragedy, the story will be meaningful, fulfilling, and ultimately a story of Love's progress. (Of course, life is more than suffering and tragedy. It's also beautiful, ecstatic, and awe-inspiring.)

Christian

To call this “Christian” is to use the scriptural narrative, the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and the letters of Paul as an interpretive lens on the meaning of evolution. In this section, we will have a brief overview of how each of these lends itself to an evolutionary interpretation. We will see that, although Jesus, Paul, and the biblical writers could not have known about evolution as it is understood today,

2 Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Comedy, Tragedy, and Fairy Tale* (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1977).

it is possible to discern within these ancient writings an intuition that everything is in a process of change, that this change moves in a biased trajectory, and that God is both within this process and out in front, as the alluring Presence of Love.

We can embrace the scientific discovery of evolution, without accepting the materialistic assumption of some its modernist interpreters. This embrace of science also allows us to interpret our tradition, our doctrine, and our scripture through the lens of evolutionary science. But we can also allow faith to suggest deeper meanings for evolution than science allows. Both science and theology hold interpretive keys that may potentially unlock deeper meanings within these two different ways of knowing reality.

The “Old” Testament and Evolution

The Jewish Scriptures (the “Old” Testament) would have profoundly influenced Jesus’ understanding of God’s will for his life. The core narratives that tell the story of God’s relationship with the Jewish people over time are unique among the scriptures of the world’s religions in their implicit affirmation that history is going somewhere. Unlike the sacred myths of tribal and agricultural societies, which were shaped by the annual cycle of the seasons, Hebrew theology was shaped more by the image of a journey. The Jews were convinced that God was accompanying them through history, alluring them with a promise of a more abundant life. God was going ahead of them, leading them into a promised

future and meeting them in the present with intuitions and glimpses of this promise. History was not something to be escaped to but rather to be inhabited more deeply in accordance with God's will and purpose. In doing so, the people of God participated in the realization of the divine promise.

Once one assumes the reality of an evolutionary impulse, the irrepressible forward momentum of the biblical narrative becomes unmistakable. In the Genesis creation myth, the first couple is cast out of the state of perfection in the Garden of Eden. In this paradise there is nowhere to go; after all, it's perfect. But when they are cast out, they enter history, the realm in which to be is to become. Abraham and Sarah are called by God to leave home for an adventure in and toward the promise of God. The Hebrew people are led out of slavery, God going before them in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night so that they may realize the promise of freedom. The entire story of the patriarchs from Isaac through to Joseph is a drama that is animated by the pull of a divine Promise. Jacob wrestles with God and receives a new name, "Israel"—one who has striven with God and prevailed. Moses is called by God to liberate the Hebrew people. This calling causes him to grow beyond his comfort zone, a common theme in the New Testament. Prophets are called to confront kings and queens. Jonah is required to go against his every instinct to the Ninevites with an offer of divine mercy. Throughout the narrative, God is calling God's people to be more, to risk more, and to take their next, best step in and toward the divine promise—often in the

midst of great resistance. We can see at work here a power that provokes an urgent, evolutionary impulse to transcend present circumstances by being apprehended by an as-yet-unrealized future.

God is not only within the historical impulse to evolve but also in the pull of the future. Catholic theologian John Haught imagines God as The Future.³ God is the realm of infinite possibilities, needing us to make those possibilities real, that is, to actualize possibilities. Faith, as Paul Tillich offered, is being apprehended by the future, that realm of as-yet-unrealized possibility and yet which comes to meet us in the experience of hope and promise. Living with hope causes us to be actors in co-creating the future that we've glimpsed as God's will. In traditional theology, God rules from *up above*. In evolutionary theology, God leads from *up ahead*, leading us forward, animated by a promise that needs us in order to be realized. Living in faith and hope means becoming agents of conscious evolution, as co-creators of a divine promise.

The New Testament and Evolution

The New Testament is the story of Jesus' life contained in the gospel accounts, and the early church's interpretation of his life contained in Paul's letters. With Jesus of Nazareth as our primary exemplar, we look at his life as a template for where this divine impulse to evolve a world is headed. In this

3 Following theologians Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg

sense, we read back, from the story of his life, death, and resurrection, and from his teachings to the origins of the universe—the Big Bang—and imagine that his love and wisdom is a manifestation of the divine Mind and Heart out of whom a universe emerged, is sustained, and is evolving. He represents, in human form, the fulfillment of the promise of an evolving cosmos. For Christians, Jesus is a down payment on the future promise.

This is what it means to affirm that Jesus is “the Christ.” Christ is a title, not Jesus’ last name. It means *anointed*. Jesus was anointed, through his own conscious willingness, to be a radiant expression of the Heart and Mind of God. His love, compassion for the other (including the “enemy”), and commitment to establishing God’s realm (Kin(g)dom of God) on Earth is an expression of the purpose of this evolving universe that took 13.7 billion years to manifest. Jesus was completely transparent to the God whose presence can be felt as the urge within the evolutionary impulse, beckoning from the realm of future possibilities.

Jesus’ teaching picks up the theme of promise from the Old Testament. The metaphor that Jesus uses to express this promise is not the “promised land” but rather the Kin(g)dom of God. The Kin(g)dom of God is what our personal lives would look like if Love and not ego reigned; it is what our relationships would look like if loving kindness prevailed; it is what our collective life would look like socially, economically, and politically if God’s passion for justice and peace reigned in our systems; and finally, it is what our relationship

with Earth would look like if we grasped our essential interconnectedness with Earth. The Kingdom of God is always already present and yet also waiting to be realized—through our conscious cooperation with the divine impulse to evolve and our conscious consent to surrender to the call of God to go beyond our comfort zone and take responsibility for the realization of God’s preferred future, personally, relationally, and corporately.

Jesus teaches that the proper orientation of his followers is the future. “Anyone who puts [her] hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the Kingdom (realm) of God.” There is no excuse for delay, not even the moral and spiritual obligation to bury one’s own father (Matthew 8:22). This is surely hyperbole, a favorite rhetorical device of Jesus. Nevertheless, you can feel the sense of urgency to “press on” (Philippians 3:14), to render as relative all that would keep one from the absolute importance of the vocation of revealing and realizing the Kingdom of God. In the call of the disciples, this sense of urgency is captured, as one by one they leave everything to follow him. Today, this call may be interpreted as the evolutionary urgency to consciously evolve our species in the service of ensuring a future for generations of life on Earth.

Jesus began many of his teachings with the phrase, “You have heard it said...but I say unto you,” indicating that his was a new teaching. His intention was to break open his lineage to new depths and new interpretations. He taught that one cannot put new wine into old wineskins, because it will

burst the wineskins. A new container is required. We're not saying that Jesus intended to start a new religion. Rather, he wanted to help the tradition evolve, as many Jewish prophets had done before. To be Christian, then, is to take on this spirit that is continually breaking open—not replacing—and advancing tradition. By interpreting evolution from within the Christian tradition, and interpreting our tradition through the lens of evolution, we are being faithful to the spirit of Jesus. It is the very heart of our lineage to be watching for how Spirit is moving to evolve the tradition.

One of Jesus' favorite metaphors is the seed, and its mysterious potential to grow and bear fruit. A sower goes out to plant seed; a farmer plants seed in the ground and goes to bed. Before long, the farmer knows not how, the seed has mysteriously grown into a plant. Faith is compared to a mustard seed that increases in size, becomes a tree⁴ which provides shelter for the birds. I interpret his teaching to be drawing our attention to three interrelated dynamics: 1) the growth of a seed is a metaphor of God's grace at work in the universe; 2) we ourselves *are* divine seeds; the same natural grace that animates seeds is working within us to bear fruit; and 3) the very image of God is within us in potential form, just as an oak is within an acorn in potential form. Our spiritual journey involves consciously realizing that potential by allowing a natural grace, an evolutionary impulse, to animate our living. Jesus obviously had no knowledge of evolutionary theory, but from this side of Darwin's discovery

4 The biblical writer got this detail wrong. Mustard seeds don't grow into trees.

it is legitimate to interpret the metaphor of the seed from within an evolutionary paradigm. We are the seeds of a new creation, being “informed” by the push and pull of the divine to bear distinctive fruit.

The legend of Jesus’ birth, although not historical, is yet another seed story. Mary is invited by an angel to receive and gestate the divine seed of the Holy Spirit. This can be interpreted as the early church’s way of undermining Empire’s claim that God privileges the rich and powerful. By imagining that Mary’s conception happens directly from God’s seed, another oppressive institution—patriarchy—is bypassed and undermined. Divine birth occurs outside the patriarchal “norm” of male privilege. In the words of Canadian singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn, “Mary has a child without the help of a man.” In this birth story a new order breaks in upon the existing deadly order. The world discovers “the future shining in a baby’s eye.”⁵ In these ways, the story of Jesus’ birth symbolizes divine intention for the evolution of our species. By inference, to follow Jesus means committing our lives to the evolution of our social, political, and economic systems.

5 Bruce Cockburn, “The Cry of a Tiny Babe,” *Nothing but a Burning Light* (Golden Mountain Music, 1991 1991).

Paul's Letters and Evolution

The other part of the writings that we call the New Testament is comprised of Paul's letters. Seven of these are authentically Pauline, and the others are either disputed or simply attributed to Paul by other writers, a common practice in the 1st century.⁶ Paul is the founder of the church, particularly the Gentile church. In the spirit of the Christ, Paul discerns that he is being called to open up grace and the church itself to Gentiles. This was very controversial and put Paul at odds with the church in Jerusalem, which regarded the church as a new expression of Judaism, all the attendant rituals and codes of that lineage intact. But Paul was convinced that the risen Jesus was telling him that the promise of God was being made available to non-Jews. This would entail letting go of ancient rituals, purity codes, initiation practices (circumcision), and Sabbath practices that defined Judaism. For Paul, being “free” in Christ implied letting go of an earlier iteration of faith and allowing it to evolve into what he called the “new creation” in Christ. Paul's very mission was evolutionary.

To repeat, I am not suggesting that either Paul or Jesus had an explicit understanding of evolution, but we now know that Reality is evolving, and therefore we would expect that our wisdom teachers would intuit that this evolutionary impulse was a feature of Reality. A favorite metaphor of Paul was the development from childish spirituality to adult

6 Galatians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians

spirituality. For Paul, the Law (and the customs, rituals, and practices of Greco-Roman religion) acted like babysitters for us until we attained spiritual maturity and were able to live by the Spirit naturally and organically.

Paul's understanding of the Law (Torah) evolved. He was so filled with the love of Christ that his actions organically reflected this love. He needed no external set of laws to control his behavior. He was set free (Galatians 5:1) for freedom. The love of the Christ lived within him, just as Jeremiah prophesied in the Old Testament that the law of God would be written upon our hearts, and no teachers would be required (Jeremiah 31:33). This was true to such an extent that he experienced Christ as the very core of his own identity: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). This sense of freedom from external authority being replaced by the love of Christ is what Paul wanted for every member of the church.

Paul himself underwent a metanoia—a turning around—from one who persecuted the early church to one who was its most effective proponent. After encountering Jesus in some kind of spiritual body after Jesus' crucifixion, Paul commits his life to building communities of Christ-followers among the Gentiles. He changed his name from Saul to Paul. As we've seen, his understanding of Jewish purity, initiation, and holiness codes also evolves. Circumcision was no longer required as a rite of initiation, and Gentiles would not be required to eat kosher food. This was a dramatic evolution.

For Paul, the death and resurrection of Jesus initiated

a new creation. The risen Jesus was the “first fruit” of this new creation, and everyone who had the faith *of* Christ was destined to become the new creation. Humanity itself was evolving, in Christ. A new expression of the human species, oriented from an interior dimension, filled with love, gentleness, kindness, humility, and all the fruits of the spirit, was emerging (Galatians 5:22–23). Paul exhorted us to the “let the same mind that was in Christ, be in us” (Philippians 2:5).

The section from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians that has been read countless times at weddings sounds explicitly evolutionary. We are meant to evolve from childhood to a mature, adult spirituality of love.

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:10–12).

Mysticism

Many people associate mysticism with New Age, “woo-woo” spirituality. But the greatest scientist to have ever lived, Albert Einstein, said that the mystical emotion is the highest emotion available to us. The “mystical emotion” is grounded in an experience of unity: the awareness and experiential feeling that Reality is One, and we are expressions of that unity, manifesting in wondrous diversity. This mystical sensibility that there is only one, seamless reality and that we are an expression of that unity is grounded in solid science

and in the mystic sensibility of mystics of all religious traditions, including Judaism and Christianity.

Science is revealing a universe that supports this mystic intuition. Cosmology is the study of the large-scale structures of the universe. What cosmologists now know is that everything and everybody shares a common origin, the Big Bang. Galaxies, supernova, our solar system, Earth, and every plant, animal, or human that ever emerged came from this Great Radiance 13.7 billion years ago. We are literally made from the same stuff as everything else. All life forms share the same genetic material, amino acids, and building blocks. Our diversity arises from the fact that there are different arrangements of this material. The human being is a composite amalgam of 4.5 billion years of life on Earth and 13.7 billion years of cosmic evolution. The whole universe is literally gathered up in us. We are the presence of the universe, in human form, consciously evolving.

It's a bit of a cliché to say that we are the offspring of an exploding star, but it is scientifically accurate to make that claim. All the heavy elements necessary for the emergence of life on our planet came from exploding stars. It can be stated non-romantically that we are the reconfigured presence of the original Fireball in human form. It just took 13.7 billion years to get to us! Our unity is based in evidence: this is scientific mysticism, not romantic idealism. The 21st century is unique insofar as a growing number of people are awakening to the truth that we are the evolutionary process awakening to itself.

The universe explodes into being. Leave it alone, and after 13.7 billion years, it becomes aware of itself in and *as* you and me. This is a stunning moment, a realization of our “deep-time” identity. It is only in the last fifty years that we had access to this knowledge. This is a game-changer that none of the wisdom or religious traditions had known about. We are not separate, lonely individuals, desperate to connect in an isolating and uncaring universe. It’s not simply that we belong in the universe. (We do!) It’s that we *are* the universe, in human form, evolving. Our belonging is so radical, so deep, that there is no disconnection—anywhere! There is distinction and differentiation, sure. And yes, we may *feel* alienated. But if this is how we feel, then we have lost connection with Reality, with our deep, cosmic identity as the universe in human form. This unity is primal. It took an entire universe, and all this time, to arrive at you.

And what does the universe want to do? It wants to evolve through you, because this is just what the universe does. In us, the universe is able to consciously evolve. In evolutionary mysticism, we imagine that God/Spirit is within this impulse to evolve, and we are most truly ourselves when we are conscious of this impulse and have made a wholehearted intention to be That which wants to evolve through us. To be “in Christ,” then, is to awaken to this cosmic identity, this Big Self, and to *be* the new creation that needs you in order to emerge. The Christian mystic says “yes” to this unity with All That Is, and “yes” to this sacred impulse to be a vessel for the new thing God is doing through you and *as* you. When

we are living out of our deep, unitive, cosmic identity; we are alive, we realize our power, and we understand that that nobody else can bring forth the unique future that is ours to manifest.

It is critical to understand, in evolutionary Christian mysticism, that we are embodied and personalized expressions of this push and pull to evolve—and to do so, not merely for our own personal growth but in service of the evolution of the universe itself. To get this is to experience what futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard calls “vocational arousal.” Our lives are not our own, meaning they are not simply for the realization of our personal goals. Our lives are for the realization of the universe’s goal of evolving deeper expressions of what it means to be fully human and fully divine. We are the presence of the universe evolving in and toward a divine promise of greater freedom and fullness of life.

We are the interior dimension of the universe evolving. And this interior dimension is filled with “God”: the Mind (Conscious Intelligence) and Heart (Love) that is the ground of Being or the “divine milieu” from which a universe emerged and evolved 13.7 billion years ago and continues to emerge and evolve. The paradox is that we are That which we’ve been seeking our entire lives. What we mean is that we are embodied expressions of the Mystery of the Holy One and the Sacred Oneness of Reality. Through cultivating conscious awareness and loving kindness we come to realize that, far from being separate from the originating Heart and Mind, we are Its intimate expression.

When Jesus says, in John’s gospel, “Before Abraham was, I Am,” the author of John’s gospel is expressing a profound mystery: that Jesus is a manifestation of Great I Am-ness out of whom a universe emerged. He is the consciousness (Mind) and the love (Heart) of God in flesh and blood.

But unity with the divine is not limited to Jesus. On the shores of Narragansett, Rhode Island, I found myself in a state of reverie. The words on my lips were: “I am the Great I Am, noticing I Am.” The universe was awakening to itself in me, for four days, in order to help me realize my oneness with both the universe and the Mind and Heart from which the universe emerged. Through this tiny but radiant being, on a tiny but radiant planet, the universe became conscious of itself. This was an experience of sheer ecstasy, helping me to understand why Hindus affirm that the core nature of God is bliss.

Evolutionary Christian Mysticism affirms incarnation—the Mind and Heart of God becoming flesh—but not “the” incarnation. That is, this incarnational dynamic of the “Holy One, slowly growing a body”⁷ did not just happen once upon a time, 2,000 years ago in Palestine. Rather, it is the story of the evolution of matter from energy, life from matter, mind from life, and conscious awareness from mind. It is the story of the evolving universe, in its exterior (physical) and interior (consciousness) dimensions. We are incarnations of the divine, but so are bacteria, bats, butterflies and baboons—not to mention galaxies, supernovae, and granite. Earth is

7 Hafiz

indeed filled with God's glory (Isaiah 6:6). To awaken to incarnation is to discover the source of our deeply felt ecological imperative to repair Earth and to walk lightly upon Her. Earth truly is the body of God.⁸

Because we are embodied creatures, who experience suffering, death, and all manner of indignities during our lifespan, we have a tendency to forget our oneness with God and cosmos. Like the prodigal son, we wander away from home, confusing our cosmic inheritance—unity with All That Is—with money, or success, or status. We suffer the indignity of the prodigal species as the one creature among all who is imbued with conscious self-awareness but who uses this evolutionary treasure to pursue all that does not satisfy. We squander our inheritance, pursuing the desires of the small, personal self. When we've had enough, we "come to our senses," as did the prodigal son. We realize that our wandering off, our existential forgetfulness was necessary, preliminary, and preparatory to our waking up. We return home with our repentance speech all prepared. But the "father" is not interested in our speech. We've come home to the cosmos, home to the Heart of the Universe. We were lost, but now we're found. The father/mother, of course, is the Heart and Mind of the universe, from whom we can never actually be separated. But the illusion of separation dissolves. We are always already home. God throws Her arms around us and welcomes us as though we had never left (which we hadn't!).

8 See Bruce Sanguin, *Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos: An Ecological Christianity* (Woodlake Books, 2006).

The evolution of religion is the story of the sky-god falling from the sky and into our own hearts. For millennia, the intuition of a Deeper Mystery, of Absolute Power, Love, Wisdom, and Creativity, was necessarily projected “out there” beyond the skies. Over the course of our evolution as a species, this power, love, creativity, and wisdom has been reclaimed by the part of creation that is human. These are divine qualities and characteristics that abide within each of us, but it has taken 200,000 years of evolution for us to realize; that is, to make them real within ourselves through conscious awareness. Given that we are evolutionary creatures, the capacity for love, wisdom, creativity, and the wise use of our power is still in the process of being realized.

We are committed to raising up a community of evolutionary mystics who realize their unity with Spirit, Cosmos, and Earth, and seek to live their lives in accordance with this consciousness. We are doing this from within the Christian tradition but realize that, in the spirit of Jesus and the church’s founder, Paul, we are breaking open the tradition. The universe is evolutionary in nature. Spirit gives birth to a universe, and the divine Heart and Mind begins the slow and patient journey of non-coercively realizing a cosmos that is self-aware, that is in the process of manifesting this originating milieu of Love, Intelligence, and Creativity. We are That divine process, embodied in human form, evolving. It is an exciting and challenging time to be alive on Earth. There is a divine and cosmic urgency that each of us awaken to the impulse to evolve and assume responsibility for re-

vealing and realizing that realm that Jesus called the Kin(g)dom of God.

This is evolutionary Christian mysticism: persons on the path of Christ, consciously evolving in community, one with the evolving cosmos, and one with the divine Heart and Mind, in loving service to our one Earth community.