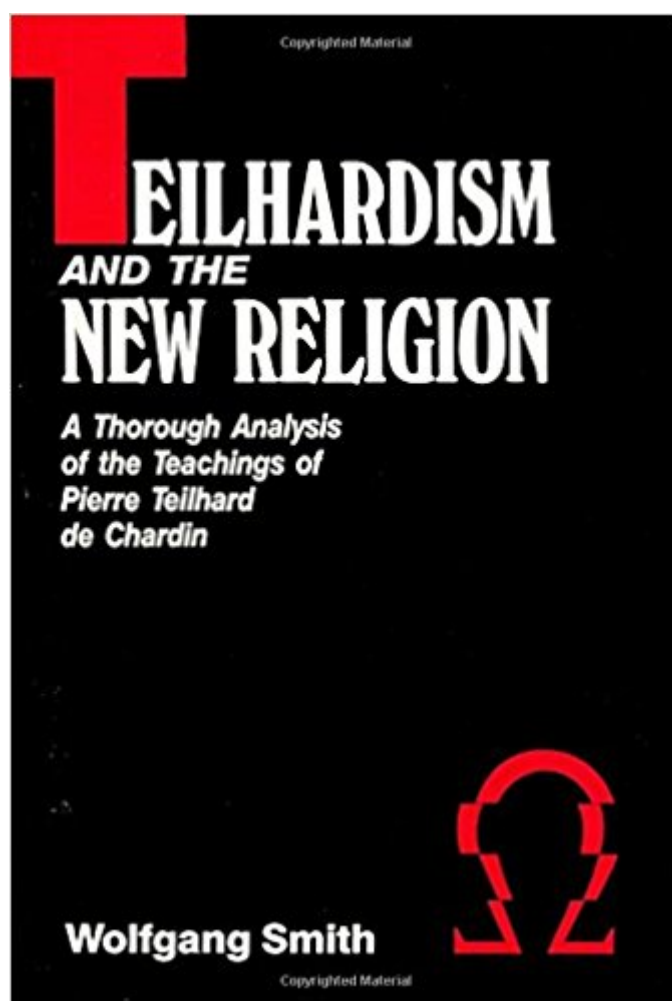


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Teilhardism And The New Religion: A Thorough Analysis Of The Teachings Of Pierre Teilhard De Chardin



Synopsis

Teilhardian ideas are at the root of the "new religion" laying waste the Catholic Church today. This brilliant scientist, mathematician and philosopher shows Teilhard's theory of the physical and spiritual evolution of all things (including God) to be scientifically fraudulent and philosophically impossible. Also explodes the theory of biological evolution. Absolutely refutes the notion that Catholic teaching should evolve in order to keep up with science. A brilliant work! 272 pgs, PB

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Customer Reviews

Wolfgang Smith has produced here a detailed technical discussion of the teachings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.. Dr Smith has advanced degrees in physics and mathematics and speaks clearly and knowledgeably about recent developments in many branches of science. He is also a scholar in traditional philosophy, especially metaphysics, and the meaning of biblical scriptures. It is from this background that he critiques Teilhard's teachings in detail, quoting them extensively as he presents his views. While Smith accepts, microevolution, evolution within a species, he rejects speciation that is the development of a new species from earlier types,. citing a lack of hard evidence, and numerous unanswered questions. This presentation focuses on details, many of which may be known only to specialists in the field. .

Wolfgang Smith has held faculty positions at M.I.T. and UCLA, and served as Professor of Mathematics at Oregon State University for many years. He wrote in the Preface to this 1988 book,

"the present work is intended, not just as a critique of a particular thinker, but primarily as a contemporary exposition of perennial truth. It... seeks to promote a deeper understanding of orthodox Christian doctrine. The problematic of the Teilhardian system serves mainly as a point of departure..."Here are some additional quotations from the book:"(Teilhard's) less-than-orthodox theological opinions, however, especially with reference to Original Sin, led to the termination of this employment and his de facto exile to China." (Pg. xi)"Evolution, according to Teilhard de Chardin, is a directed process: it proceeds from the material to the spiritual. The basic idea is simple: 'All that exists is matter becoming spirit.' But how? That is the question. How do material particles give birth to life, consciousness and intelligence?" (Pg. 42)"And there is another point to be made. Souls do not (nay, cannot) evolve; they are created. They come into existence, not by a slow and groping process, but instantly, all at once, in the indivisible moment in which God created the cosmos and its 'times.'" (Pg. 47)"It is literally true that Teilhard has deified evolution... (he) was presumably the first to be totally possessed by the concept, the first to be fully intoxicated, as it were, with the new wine." (Pg. 219)

Wolfgang Smith is a conservative Catholic writer with Traditionalist leanings, i.e. Traditionalist as in Guñon, Coomaraswamy and Schuon. His project is to refurbish Catholic teachings with insights gleaned from the Traditionalist or perennialist school. In this book, Smith takes on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a dissident Catholic who attempted to create a grand synthesis between Christianity and Darwinian evolution. The result was a kind of optimistic, socialistic pantheism in which Darwinian evolution was combined with teleology and the idea that God is "The Omega Point" of cosmic development. Smith considers Teilhard's ideas to be heretical, and even implies that they might be Satanic. His book is a detailed criticism of Teilhard from a conservative Catholic and Traditionalist perspective. It's a heavy read, but could perhaps interest advanced students of theology. Since Smith rejects Darwinian evolution in favour of a kind of "old earth creationism", he naturally collides with Teilhard already on this, very fundamental, point. To Smith, the world as we know it is fallen from a higher metaphysical plane. Strictly speaking, there is therefore no evolution and definitely no "progress". Smith regards Teilhard as a panpsychist, and criticizes him from a dualist standpoint. He also attacks the notion that God somehow needed to create the universe, or that humans can affect God. Often, the author regards Teilhard as nebulous and illogical. If the so-called Omega Point is God or Christ, how can God or Christ exist from the beginning, as well? Smith also regards Teilhard as a crypto-socialist who favoured a strong, universal state. I'm not a Traditionalist, and I consider Wolfgang Smith's entire perspective to be frankly reactionary. The writer vehemently rejects

feminism, gay liberation and egalitarianism, instead extolling the virtues of traditional social hierarchies. At least by implication, he opposes modern technology, as well. I think his real problem with Teilhard is precisely the modernist, progressivist political perspective of the maverick Jesuit father. By contrast, the Traditionalist cosmos is hierarchic, stable and static. Translated to political terms, this means Throne-and-Altar conservatism, with any change (read: reform or revolution) seen as a degeneration. Teilhard's teleological, optimistic evolutionism implies the exact opposite - small wonder Smith dislikes him. In a concluding chapter based on Eric Voegelin (whose works I unfortunately haven't read) and the idea of the "immanentization of the eschaton", the author argues that the progressive movements of modernity are really forms of Gnosticism, a Gnosticism turned 180 degrees from a vertical rejection of the material world in favour of "Heaven" to a horizontal rejection of the present material world in favour of a future millenarian Utopia (often conceived in scientific-technological terms). While the idea sounds somewhat far-fetched, I agree that there is *some* truth in it. Hegel's scheme of a unconscious world soul coming to know itself in a history created by itself, does sound like a temporalized, immanentized form of Gnosticism (or perhaps Hermetism). Marx, of course, based his curious teleological materialism on Hegel. Interestingly, Smith also rejects millenarianism, despite its clear Biblical antecedents. Ironically, a strict follower of Biblical millennialism might argue that *Smith* is the Gnostic, since he rejects a millennium on Earth ushered in by Jesus in favour of a nebulous salvation in the purely spiritual realm of Traditionalism. "Teilhardism and the New Religion" is, as already indicated, a heavy read - unless you spend most of your spare time actually studying heavy metaphysical treatises, or even the works of Teilhard de Chardin (with warts, neologisms and all). However, it deserves a high grade on its own turf, so to speak. Therefore I give it four stars. But yes, in the event of a revolution, I'm afraid I would have to extradite Smith to Bhutan or some other micro-state where the ancien régime still survives...

This book is a definitive monograph on Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit paleontologist who invented a Catholic understanding of theistic evolution. This book, published by TAN, is pretty ugly. The thoughts of Teilhard also make me ill. It is interesting how Smith traces Teilhard from his "scientific" pronouncements on Christ as the "noosphere," up through Teilhard's endorsement of totalitarianism, and his revelation (like Carl Jung) that he is the beneficiary of very dubious private revelation. I find Teilhard's thought so ugly and disturbed that the book was not pleasant reading for me - unlike Wolfgang's other books. Because the TAN book is so ugly, it is hard for me to decide whether I would recommend this copy or *Theistic Evolution: The Teilhardian Heresy*, the updated

version. This book has the benefit of calling out Teilhard as a Gnostic heretic near the end. But it is more deferential to the scientific consensus than Smith's later edition. The first chapter in this is worse. The last chapter is better. Wolfgang Smith goes a little too mystical in his fifth book, Christian Gnosis (see my review there). This edition is not hampered by that handicap. However, because of the ugliness of the TAN edition and the beauty of the Angelico Press edition, I would recommend reading the Angelico Press edition after Cosmos and Transcendance. It is hard enough to get through the disturbed thoughts of Teilhard, even mitigated by Wolfgang's erudite style, without having to pick up an ugly book.

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