Re-Enchanting the Earth

Why AI Needs Religion

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Introduction

The United Nations recently issued a troubling report on biodiversity; it indicated that the loss of species is happening "tens to hundreds of times" as fast as the average rate over the past 10 million years, and thereby is posing a dire threat to ecosystems all over the world.[1] With the indelible toxic human footprint on the earth's natural resources, we are truly living in the Anthropocene. According to many environmental scientists we are nearing a crisis.[2] *Crisis* is defined as "a rapidly deteriorating situation that, if left unattended, will lead to disastrous results." Yet even as we take note of these impending disasters, we are neither changing our lifestyles nor slowing down our rate of production.

In fact, we have been on the brink of disaster for over fifty years. In her 1962 book *Silent Spring* Rachel Carson first alerted the world to the toxicity of pesticides, thereby, in effect, launching the environmental movement. Nevertheless, the rate of global warming, species extinction, ocean pollution, and water contamination continues unabated. The roots of this breakdown can be traced to a complex of factors including industrialization, technology, consumerism, capitalism, radical individualism, and religious otherworldliness. We cannot claim to be ignorant of these dangers. Even as the impending crisis worsens, we have more information about these changes than ever before, all

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[1] United Nations, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), "Nature's Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species' Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'" (May 6, 2019).

[2] See, e.g., Jonathan L. Bamber et al., "Ice Sheet Contributions to Future Sea Level Rise from Structured Expert Judgment," *PNAS* (May 20, 2019).

delivered quickly and efficiently to our computer devices. Something is amiss.

What does the environmental problem have to do with artificial intelligence (AI)? Is ecology distinctly different from technology, competing for human attention? Have we artificially separated intelligence from nature? These questions are at the heart of this book, but they cannot be addressed by ecology or technology alone. As Lynn White noted in 1967, the underlying problem is essentially religious.[3] To appreciate the reasons that ecology and technology share a root in religion requires that we explore the question of intelligence in nature as well as the evolution of intelligent nature in relation to God. Rather than considering ecology and technology as separate but related disciplines, I focus specifically on the rise of AI in the context of evolution and draw out the ecological implications of AI as the principal factor of evolution in the twenty-first century.

It is not a trivial matter that AI emerged in the midst of a violent century of war. In a 1950 paper British mathematician and cryptanalyst Alan Turing, who played a key role in cracking the German Enigma code, sought to explore whether or not a machine could reason like a human. He was interested in knowing if a machine could "think" objectively, that is, without bias. The term *artificial intelligence* was coined by John McCarthy in 1955 in his proposal for a 1956 conference on artificial intelligence held at Dartmouth College. McCarthy's term evoked ways to explore how a machine could be capable of abstract thought, problem solving, and self-improvement. "He believed that every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can in principle be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it."[4] While McCarthy focused on machine learning, other scientists were exploring how information is generated and shared, such as complex dynamical systems and cybernetic systems, principles undergirding AI yet also found in nature. Such

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[3] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (March 10, 1967): 1203–7.

[4] Martin Childs, "John McCarthy: Computer Scientist Known as the Father of AI," *Independent* (UK), November 1, 2011.

findings lead me to suggest there is an implicit "intelligence" in nature, raising the question whether or not the adjective *artificial* is helpful to describe machine intelligence. Is artificial intelligence fake intelligence, like a plastic rose compared to a real rose? Or does artificial intelligence simulate biological intelligence and hence extend biological intelligence in a new medium? Some models of quantum physics suggest that intelligence is inherent to nature and that there is nothing fake about intelligence or nature.[5]

Twentieth-century science unveiled a biological holism by which nature dynamically recreates, transcends, and evolves to more complex forms of life. On that basis we can say that the root principles of AI are actually found in nature. But the word *nature* is a fast-and-loose term. We use it so often we do not realize that the term is a smokescreen for the complex interplay of physical, biological, and chemical life. The word *nature* can mean the capacity to become something—a quark, a cell, a bird, or a complex human—which means that nature has the capacity for multivalent forms; it is infinitely malleable and hence "plastic." Despite the penchant to reduce biological nature to verifiable mechanisms, biology can never quite cope with the fact that *nature* is an umbrella term for vital informational flow that often eludes causal mechanisms.

Biological life is anything but mechanistic. Nature is more flow than fixed. There is a dynamic impulse in nature choreographing the various structures through finely tuned regulatory steps and elaborate processes. Steve Talbott points out that structures, once formed, do not necessarily stay that way. This is now true on just about every level of biological life. How the smallest structures of a single cell, such as the nucleus, mitochondria, and golgi apparatus, can work together in a seamless rhythm baffles the search for mechanistic principles. Nature, as Talbott writes, is an "unbearable wholeness of beings."[6]

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[5] Chapter 1 herein explores the models of mind in relation to matter in detail.

[6] Steve Talbott, "The Unbearable Wholeness of Beings," *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology and Society* (2010).

The awareness of relational holism was part of the rebirth of science in the twentieth century. Quantum physics disclosed a relational holism through the discovery of wave-particle duality, and biological systems were found to work as complex dynamical wholes. Every single cell is more than the sum of its parts. Living systems are networks of information, interacting with other systems and giving rise to more complex systems. Every system is a super-system, so that systems exist within systems—an insight that led to the description of a *holon*, something that is simultaneously a whole and a part.[7]

Quantum physics in particular brought holism to new light by identifying the observer as part of the system, pointing to a fundamental role of consciousness in material reality. The significance of consciousness is still highly contested among scientists today because the nature of consciousness is still unknown. Does consciousness emerge from nonconscious matter? Is consciousness the fundamental layer of matter or the governor of matter? Since all physical events are descriptive events that depend on consciousness, there can be no clear answers to these questions. It is impossible to talk about the intrinsic properties of matter apart from consciousness.

One could describe evolution as the emergence of cosmic and biological holism that reaches a peak in the species *Homo sapien sapiens* (hereafter *Homo sapiens*.) The human species is an outflow of biological evolution and part of the overall community of life; hence, the human species is governed by the same principles of nature as the clam or the beaver. On one hand, the complex brain and physiological makeup of the human person recapitulates cosmic life. On the other hand, the development of cultures and societies complexifies holism on a higher level of consciousness. Technology is part of this complexification process.

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[7] For a discussion of holons, see Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2006), 94–102; idem,, *Fields of Compassion: How the New Cosmology Is Transforming Spiritual Life* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2010); and Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2000).

The term *techne* means the act of "bringing forth" what is potentially in nature, the capacity of nature to create structures and relationships toward wholeness, or as Aristotle noted, toward the flourishing of life. *Techne* is as much a verb as it is a noun; it is linked with *poiesis* or the art of making something out of existing materials. In this respect *techne,* which is the root of *technology,* is not artifactual or mere tool making, something inert and extrinsic to biological life; rather *techne* is biology's capacity for whole making.

Among early humans, knives, utensils, and hunting tools—all crafted from nature—became means of participating in flourishing life in the face of environmental pressures. Similarly, the birth of the tribe in early human development followed the communal pattern of nature. Decisions were made within communities in relation to the wider cosmos, and thus the natural world and the human world were sympathetic and symbiotic. As rationality and language began to emerge in complex ways, a new power entered into nature with a new consciousness of self-reflective life: the awareness of finitude. And with the complexification of consciousness that arose with increased brain size and function came a new level of self-reflection; death entered into human awareness, and with that came the rise of religion.

Religion emerged in evolution as part of cosmic holism. Religion is the response of collective consciousness and human action in the process of development. It is about ultimate concern, but even more, it is about cosmic tethering, or what Mircea Eliade called an "umbilical cord" to the whole.[8] The word *religion* has

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[8] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* trans. William R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1959), 37. Eliade writes: "Such a cosmic pillar can be only at the very center of the universe, for the whole of the habitable world extends around it. Here, then, we have a sequence of religious conceptions and cosmological images that are inseparably connected and form a system that may be called the 'system of the world' prevalent in traditional societies: a) a sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic religion to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld; c)

as its root the Latin *ligare,* from which the English word *liga-ment* is derived. Hence, religion refers to that which binds us or returns us *(re-ligare)* to ultimate wholeness, in which we find our ultimate concern and value. In this respect religion is not simply an adaptive mechanism for well-being;[9] rather, religion has a deeper function in cosmic life, a "tethering" function, without which no aspect of life can adequately survive, since the fullness of life depends on the whole.

Given nature's holism and the rise of religion as an evolution-ary dimension of the search for wholeness, I raise three main questions in this book: (1) Why did AI arise in the process of evolution? (2) What does AI do for us? (3) What do we want with AI, especially in light of the crisis of climate change? Some may wonder whether AI arose in the absence of religion or if AI is supplanting religion. My position is that AI shows the critical need to reconstruct religion for a world of evolution and com-plexity. The thesis of this book is that religion is the linchpin to the future of AI-mediated cosmic intelligent life and that an AI world, oriented by new religious sensibilities, can bring about an ecological re-enchantment of the earth.

Although I spell out this thesis in the chapters ahead, I here provide a brief explanation of my ideas. In speaking of "new religious sensibilities" I refer to the conviction that something about religion has broken down in contemporary culture and that something new is on the horizon. Lynn White claimed that religion, in particular Christianity, lies at the source of our ecological crisis. He based this argument on Christianity's ambivalence toward nature, its anthropocentric focus, and its otherworldliness.[10] I share his concerns, which I think Pope

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communication with heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images, all of which refer to the *axis mundi*: pillar, ladder, mountain, tree, vine, etc.; d) around this cosmic axis lies the world (=our world), hence the axis is located 'in the middle,' at the 'navel of the earth'; it is the Center of the World."

[9] See Stephen Asma, *Why We Need Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); E. O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowl-edge* (New York: Vintage, 1999).

[10] White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis."

Francis tried to address in his recent encyclical *Laudato Si'*. But the problem is compounded by ancient metaphysical principles, patriarchy, and biblical literalism, all of which appear insuperable in institutional religion. In response, I look to the novel insights of the Jesuit priest and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). Teilhard was a trained paleontologist whose area of expertise was the Eocene period of evolution, 56–34 million years ago. He was also a deeply committed Christian and a mystic.[11] He was bold, creative, and daring in his approach to evolution and the role of religion.[12] He did for religion, in a sense, what Steve Jobs did for the computer: harness it for a new world.

Teilhard anticipated a new level of collective mind, which he called the "noosphere," from the Greek *nous* (mind). Computer technology has initiated this next step of evolution, but according to Teilhard we must take hold of this new level of consciousness and evolve.[13] The noosphere is the natural culmination of biological evolution and not its termination. "Just as Earth once covered itself with a film of interdependent living organisms, which we call the biosphere, so humankind's combined achievements are forming a global network of networked mind, a new intersubjectivity."[14] The noosphere is a sphere of collective consciousness expressed in the way culture is organizing itself around social networks. The age of nations has passed, Teilhard

[11] See Kathleen Duffy, *Teilhard's Mysticism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014).

[12] James W. Skehan, SJ, "Exploring Teilhard's 'New Mysticism': Building the Cosmos," in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 21.

[13] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man,* trans. Norman Denny (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 204. "In the 1920s Teilhard coined the word *noosphere* in collaboration with his friend Edouard Le Roy. Derived from the Greek word *nous* or mind in the sense of integrating vision, the noosphere describes the layer of mind, thought and spirit within the layer of life covering the earth." Ursula King, "One Planet, One Spirit: Searching for an Ecologically Balanced Spirituality," in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet*, ed. Cecelia Deane-Drummond (London: Equinox, 2008), 82.

[14] Michael H. Murray, *The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Seabury Press, 1966), 20–21.

said, and unless we wish to perish, we must shake off our old prejudices and build the earth.

To build the earth is another way to talk about the flourishing of life. How do we move beyond our impasses toward a new intersubjectivity and planetized consciousness? Responses have come from two camps: *transhumanism* and *posthumanism.* Nick Bostrom, a forerunner of transhumanism, claims that human enhancement through AI is the way forward. In this sense AI builds on the Cartesian subject and the perfection of mind. Donna Haraway and Katherine Hayles, who represent critical feminist posthumanism, distance themselves from transhumanism precisely because the latter so closely weds itself to the ideals of modernity and Enlightenment humanism. While transhumanists and critical posthumanists both see that moving beyond the present through AI is a step toward flourishing life, their notions of flourishing life differ. For transhumanists, enhancement is the key to betterment; for critical posthumanists, transgressing boundaries toward complexified relationships is paramount. AI is not perfecting the mind but extending the body beyond narrow boundaries that limit or thwart personhood and community. Critical posthumanists claim we will never flourish if we don't first recognize that our relations with others are integral to who we are. Hence, they argue for a deep and abiding relationality that can extend in and through our electronic devices (Hayles) but must also extend into kinship with the nonhuman biological world (Haraway).

My work builds on the insights of posthumanism but widens this perspective through cosmic and relational holism, building on Teilhard's ideas for a new religion of the earth. If religion means connecting to ultimate wholeness, and AI is seeking to hyper-connect toward seamless unity, then religion is at the heart of AI. Teilhard saw computer technology as the next level of biological life in evolution because it is the next level of religious evolution. From cosmos to life and mind, religion is the energy of life's fulfillment because it focuses on ultimate meaning and concern. As Teilhard recognized, computer technology can extend the outreach of human activity, but it depends on a broader use

of human activity and how we control psychic, spiritual energy needs and powers.[15]

Religion grew up in what Karl Jaspers called the axial period, the age of the individual; now it is time to reconceive religion for a new axial period of consciousness, a second axial period brought about by AI technology and the electronically linked globe. Teilhard recognized the emergence of a new electronically mediated hyper-connected person. For this new interconnected person in an interconnected world he posited a new religion of the earth. Such a religion engages the plasticity of nature, the complexity of systems, the fragile boundaries of relationships, and the invaluable role of love in orienting human and biological life toward a future fullness of life. Here is a brief look at the chapters.

In Chapter 1 I examine the twentieth-century rediscovery of nature's holism with Einstein's theory of relativity, the rise of quantum physics, and the obscure role of consciousness in matter. I briefly explore panpsychism and dual-aspect monism as ways to conceive mind and matter, opting for the latter insofar as panpsychism does not adequately account for physical evolution. I introduce Teilhard de Chardin as someone familiar with the new physics and attentive to the integral relationship between mind and matter. Teilhard's notion of mind as the "inside" of matter and the openness of matter to higher levels of mind impelled him to suggest that religion is a dimension of evolution. His insights on religion and evolution are discussed within the context of relational holism, undergirding the directionality of human evolution.

In Chapter 2 the emergence of the human person and the rise of consciousness are placed within the framework of axial consciousness. The tribal, collective, and cosmic characteristics of pre-axial consciousness are mapped against the rise of axial consciousness marked by the individual and world religions. The concept of the axial age is controversial because, like the

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[15] Joseph A. Grau, *Morality and the Human Future in the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin: A Critical Study* (Lanham, MD: Associated University Press, 1976), 274.

pre-axial period, it is a long span of time and changes are not clearly defined. However, I use the axial period as a heuristic, a model of events that form a pattern over time. Leonard Swidler nicely summarizes the difference between the pre-axial and axial periods:

> In briefest fashion: "Pre-Axial" mentality focused mainly on *(a)* "*community*," *(b)* "*ritual*," and the *(c)* "*oneness*" of all reality. On the other hand, "Axial" mentality focused mainly on the individual *(x)* "*person*," internal *(y)* "*intention*," and a radical *(z) distinction* between this created world and the transcendent one.[16]

Chapter 3 focuses on axial consciousness more specifically in terms of religion and gender. The rise of the individual brought with it the rise of philosophy and attitudes toward nature. The philosopher Aristotle, in particular, was enormously influential in distinguishing the sexes, and his ideas filtered into Western Christianity and the rise of modern science. While scientific discoveries were not entirely Western in origin, the principles of the Judeo-Christian tradition including particularity, contingency and developmental time were significant for the emergence of modern science. David Noble's work on religion and technology was groundbreaking insofar as he identified the roots of technology in male Western monasticism, claiming that both religion and science sought to restore the fallen Adam to divine likeness; hence, the monk, the scientist, and the priest were on a higher level, close to God.[17] Women were largely excluded from religion and science due to the Aristotelian notion of incomplete intellects and heightened emotions.

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[16] Leonard Swidler, "The Meaning of Life in the Twenty-First Century," essay shared in private communication.

[17] David Noble, *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 17; see also idem, *A World without Women: The Christian Clerical Culture of Western Science* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

Religion and natural philosophy (science) maintained a fruitful relationship until the Late Middle Ages, when the Copernican system began to emerge. The Catholic Church rejected Galileo's heliocentric theory and his support of Copernican cosmology, thus distancing religion from the new insights of science. After the Galileo affair, modern science developed independent of church authority, while Christianity became inward looking, secured by a static cosmology and Greek metaphysical principles. This division of science and religion set the stage for the Cartesian subject and an abandoned earth in the twentieth century. The cry "God is dead" rang through the hallways of philosophy and a new mechanistic paradigm developed based on inert matter in motion and a detached thinking self.

Chapter 4 highlights the emergence of AI in the midst of a historical crisis. By the early twentieth century the human person was like a cog in a machine; religion was authoritative, governed by rules, and mandated as God's infallible word, while technology showed its terrifying capacity to destroy lives on a mass scale. Alan Turing experimented with the computer not simply as a thinking machine but as an *unbiased* thinking machine. While his venture was novel and ingenious, Turing did what nature consistently does in the midst of crisis: finds new ways toward optimizing life. Turing's work, along with other key thinkers like John McCarthy and Claude Shannon, gave birth to computer technology during a period of human history when war and destruction were rampant. At the same time, the importance of complex dynamical systems began to replace Aristotelian causality. The science of dynamical systems gave rise to new insights on identity, permanence, resilience, and stability. The idea that most biological life works according to principles of dynamical systems led to the discovery of cybernetics and a new understanding of information through feedback systems; hence the science of cybernetics.

The cultural and philosophical movement of transhumanism seized upon computer technology and AI in the late twentieth century as a fulfillment of the Enlightenment project whereby we

humans could improve ourselves and transcend our biological limits. While aspects of transhumanism are alluring, the philosophical construct of human betterment belies the complexity of personhood and renders technology a new improved humanism, though still individual in its pursuit. I refer to some of the radical claims of transhumanism, such as brain downloading and disembodied mind, what I call shallow AI, and compare shallow AI to the form of deep AI ushered in by critical feminist posthumanism.

The advent of the posthuman in Chapter 5, which refers to a new type of human beyond the liberal subject, unfolds amid the gradual awakening of a new axial period of consciousness—what Ewert Cousins calls the "Second Axial Period."[18] This new axial consciousness is brought about by technology and mass communication and hence is the milieu for a new type of person emerging in evolution. Through the work of John Johnston and Katherine Hayles, I consider the emergent new person as a hybrid of biology and machine, what Johnston calls "machinic life" and Hayles illuminates as the posthuman.

Chapter 6 examines the new second axial person and posthuman life. The concept of the cyborg as symbol of posthuman second axial life is examined through the lens of social philosopher Donna Haraway and her masterful insights on hybrid creatures. Katherine Hayles brilliantly reconceives the posthuman not as the end of the human person but the end of a certain idea of the human that dominated modernity, the modern liberal subject. She speaks of a new electronically extended body, a human-electronic cyborg, as a new subjectivity of cybernetic information rather than an elimination of subjectivity or personhood. What Hayles and Haraway suggest is that the human species is a co-evolving partner in the cyborgizing techno relationship, which has enormous social and political implications. I discuss a new type of ontology emerging in a networked world, from the logic of binaries to the logic of complex relationships. The intermediate space

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[18] Ewert H. Cousins, *Christ of the Twenty-First Century* (Rockport, MA: Element Books, 1992), 4.

of shared information is the new co-creative space of becoming, a new ontology of the in-between that transcends categories of gender, race, and religion in favor of ongoing co-creative life.

The remapping of human relationships and culture by computer technology raises the question, toward what end? Where are we going in our technospheric life? Chapters 7 through 9 discuss the insights of Teilhard de Chardin. What is fascinating and relevant to this discussion is the way Teilhard saw the emergence of the electronic global mind as integral to the evolution of religion itself. That is, the evolution of life unifies and complexifies on the level of mind, and this complexification of mind undergirds Teilhard's new understanding of God in evolution. Teilhard's theogenesis (birthing of God) brings to the second axial period a radical and new understanding of religion in evolution that challenges established doctrines and beliefs. In doing so, he opens up a door for religion in an AI world that sees religion as the necessary dimension to electronically mediated hyper-connected life. He reconceives personhood within a new framework of hyper-personalization and hyper-socialization and speaks of the "ultrahuman" in a way that is consonant with the new posthuman milieu.

Teilhard's ideas on religion and evolution in terms of second axial religion,call attention to the fact that almost all discussion on religion and technology is based on first axial religion and thus is strained by narrowly defined theological concepts (narrow insofar as philosophical and metaphysical principles underlying these concepts are outdated). Teilhard focuses on the immersion of God in materiality and the rising up of the Cosmic Person, the Christ, in evolution through the energies of love. World religions, he suggested, can thwart technological evolution because they are acosmic and otherworldly. What is needed is a convergence of world religions, a letting go of doctrinal differences, and a working together for a new spirit of the earth. While his theology is distinctly Christian, it is not narrowly Christian; that is, he envisions the convergence of spiritual energies or interspirituality as part of cosmic formation. Teilhard's second axial religion is a religion for an electronic age where the hyper-connected, net-

worked person finds meaning in deep relationality, interthinking, interspirituality, co-evolving, and co-creating a new earth. His is not a new anthropocentrism but a new holism, that is, an earth religion that cannot be adequately engaged by first axial religion or the institution of religion. In light of Teilhard, I examine how the emerging posthuman is not postreligious but in search of a new religious depth that meets the needs of the hyper-connected, networked life and can shape posthuman life for the good of the planet.

Chapter 10 explores a new religious sensibility in a networked world by conceiving a new "church of the planet." Teilhard was convinced of a new role for religion in an electronic age. His ideas on planetary faith, mysticism, and technology, and the sacredness of everything, provide a new context to consider posthuman life in the twenty-first century. As Thomas Berry and others have pointed out, we need a new re-enchantment of the earth if we are to flourish in this new age.[19]

While there are a number of social critics who suggest that we need to unplug and slow down, I do not see technology as a problem. Technology is ambivalent in value; how we use technology depends on what we want with technology, what we are looking for. The way Gen Z uses social media to organize around social concerns leads me to suggest that technology is not detaching us from the earth or from one another but rather inviting us to reconceive our relationships on all levels of earth life. This urgent search for collective wholeness is deep within us, but the stagnation of religion has caused us to project our religious desires onto technology. We seek in technology what can no longer be found in institutional religion, that is, meaningful life together. We look for ultimate meaning, ultimate value, and ultimate connections that once belonged to the realm of religion and the practice of religion in community. However, the

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[19] See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (1988; repr., Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2015); Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and Andrew Angyal, *Thomas Berry: A Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

fundamental doctrines of institutional religion no longer satisfy the needs of the posthuman because the relational human has changed—has been rewired, so to speak—through a Lamarckian evolution in an electronic milieu. Teilhard identified this new stage of evolution in the early twentieth century and devoted his life to bringing religion and evolution together for a new spirit of the earth, a new religious vitalism.

We are living in the midst of a significant evolutionary epoch. The artificial separation between humans and cosmos brought about by the alienation of religion from modern science lies at the heart of our moral confusion. We are not sure where we are going and if we are going together. Teilhard felt that Christianity is not a new religion that surpasses other religions but a renewal of the personalizing process of evolution itself. Evolution is the rise of the Cosmic Person, one whole in formation, from multiplicity to unity, from many persons to transpersonalization.

Science, religion, and technology can work together for a new religious vision on a new level of consciousness, one that is worldly, planetary, and future oriented. The age of the individual is coming to an end and so too is the religious institution that met the religious needs of the individual in the past. A new religious configuration is on the rise and yet it is not clear what this new configuration will be or how it will address the needs of the posthuman, living in the dynamic flux of information and co-creative life. Teilhard suggested that the rising up of religion in this new age must flow out of the great wisdom traditions of the past but look toward a new religious consciousness before us.

Transhumanists envision in the future a seamless skin of electronic mind. So too Christianity anticipates a new cosmic "body" of interlocking hearts. In an age of information, can the mind genuflect before the power of the heart? This is the challenge before us: technology and religion must find each other for the good of the whole earth. To do this, institutional religion will have to let go of everything that prevents engagement in the dynamic flow of evolution, and technocrats must rethink their dystopic, disembodied ideals in view of whole-earth posthuman life. Otherwise our religious longing for salvation and immortal-

ity will continue to be sought in the anticipation of what technology can do for us, even though AI cannot fulfill the longings of the heart. Only an ultimate source of life, the One who draws us together beyond ourselves into a new wholeness, a new unity, can ultimately fulfill our deepest desires. "God is love," the disciple John writes (1 Jn 4:13). Love attends to that which is deep within us and draws us together into a new unity beyond our partial selves. Love causes us to see the world and all that is within it in a vibrant spirit, a deep-down freshness.

Can technology and religion work together to form a new religion of the earth? Can AI develop toward the deepening of love? These are ultimate questions. Otherwise, super-intelligent AI life may do no more than polarize and alienate us, while sea levels continue to rise and violent weather patterns destroy life and consume the poor. Only love and compassion can bring us to a new level of cosmic life. How to reclaim a new religious spirit of the earth in a technological age, a posthuman love, is our task and our future.