

The New Science and the New Spirituality

Quantum Physics and the New Age/New Spirituality

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, **after the rudiments of the world**, and not after Christ. (Emphasis added, Colossians 2:8, KJV)

In explaining the universe's origin, the theory of evolution neither wants nor needs God. Assuming matter's temporality, evolution proposes that by chance something derived and organized itself from nothing; or assuming matter's eternity, the theory asserts that something evolved from something. So what matters is matter. Thus, the study of it—is it a wave or a particle?—becomes primary in explaining "the system" in which we live, where matter came from and why "It" continues.

By observing the interaction of particles and/or powers at the subatomic level, the science (Latin *scientia* for "knowing") of theoretical, particle or Quantum physics attempts to understand why "the system" keeps working. But in light of a possible obliteration of the universe (if gravity should suddenly give up), evolution-based physics offers no comfort to the human soul. Hearts cry out, "How can meaning be found in this immense and threatening universe which many scientists assume commenced and continues by chance?"

Esotericism, or the mysterious spirituality of secrets, proposes to salve the angst. By combining the mystical religion of the East with the science of the West, the New Age/New Spirituality imagines to bring meaning to disturbed human hearts. In American culture, this blending of science and spirituality has become popular and as such, can enamor Christian hearts "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." So believers need to understand how the spiritualization of science can "capture" their souls.

The Science

The Old Theory of Physics (a clock)

The world (Greek, *cosmos*) includes everything that exists, everything that's either "here" or "there," including human consciousness and experience of the universe. Like the word "cosmetic," *cosmos* refers to a universe perceived as orderly. Mathematician and physicist Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) observed that like a clock, natural laws governed the universe. Apples fall and dependably, the earth rotates. By viewing the greater parts of the whole, the old physics appeared to confirm that God (the Clockmaker) originally designed, constructed, and wound-up the cosmos (the clock), the perception Genesis' opening chapters agree with. This "ordered" view of the universe indicated time to be linear—it began and will end (i.e., entropy). But combined with evolutionary theory, Quantum or theoretical physics now threaten this orderly worldview. Does the universe function predictably? Well, it depends . . . Who, where, at what dimension, and how are they are observing the universe, or "It"?

The New Theory of Physics (a game)

Even though at the macro-level the universe seems to behave orderly, scientists now observe that matter/energy behaves chaotically the subatomic level. Stephen Hawking, the Cambridge University theoretical physicist regarded as the most brilliant since Einstein, explains that this discovery during the 1970s, forced physicists to turn their "search for an understanding of the universe from [the] theory of the extraordinarily vast to [the] theory of the extraordinarily tiny." [1] So Quantum physics was born; a science which attempts to observe, calculate and understand the unpredictable behavior of particles and energy at the minutest scale within the extant continuum of time, matter, space—and beyond. Of the revolutionary impact of this New Physics (which believes Energy is the essence of the universe) upon the Newtonian worldview, scientist-psychologist Arthur Koestler (1905-1983) stated: "The nineteenth-century clockwork model of the universe is in shambles and, since matter itself has been dematerialized, materialism can no longer claim to be a scientific philosophy." [2]

Though the old physical worldview remains a player in understanding the universe's working, it is no longer "the" player. As diagrams of atoms with neatly orbiting protons, neutrons, and electrons symbolized the old physics, the new physics explains itself in complex mathematical symbols, equations and formulas which portray the attempt of physicists to calculate and understand the interaction of matter/energy at the subatomic level. [3] Scientists believe these mathematical symbols are "the language of God."

Scientist-physicist-mathematicians hope that if they discover what controls the system's chaotic behavior they will have discovered the Grand Unified Theory as to why the universe holds together, or the "God particle." (Compare Hebrews 1:3.) This discovery, Hawking thinks, "would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God." [4] But while such science may fascinate the mind, it does not feed the soul; so to bring meaning to their souls, many people are seeking after spirituality beyond the continuum of time-matter-space. Man cannot live by math alone.

The Spirituality

In his bestselling book *The Language of God*, Francis Collins, an American physician-geneticist who led the Human Genome Project, testifies that while taking a course in "relativistic quantum mechanics" during his student days, his renowned physics professor intentionally left informational "gaps" in his lectures for the students to fill in. Collins testifies that the "experience" of filling in the blanks "left a profound impression on me, particularly because the ultimate outcome had such aesthetic appeal." [5] So to be meaningful, formulas need feeling. In linking "soul and universe," mathematics needs metaphysics (i.e., above the physical). [6] As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) stated, "The mathematician is only complete insofar as he feels within himself the beauty of the true." [7] So to introduce meaning to life, science needs a "relationship" with spirituality; proper observation of the phenomenal world needs to feel the "Beauty" of Plato's ideal world. Contemporary with the emergence of the quantum physical worldview during the late 1960s and 1970s, America underwent a profound cultural, spiritual and moral shift from Christian to New Age. Indicating the transformation, the Beatles introduced Eastern religion and philosophy to the West through their music. In what became known as "the hippie movement," eastern-mystical spirituality captivated the minds and hearts of "baby boomers." New Age spirituality possessed a natural attraction toward the evolutionary-scientific worldview for both assume the unity and eternity of the universe. Indicating this

magnetism, Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976), who collaborated with the Danish existential-physicist Niels Bohr (1885-1962), noted that after World War II, the scientific contribution coming from Japan was belief in "a certain relationship between philosophical ideas in the tradition of the Far East [mysticism] and the philosophical substance of quantum theory." [8]

Complementing evolution's theory that a self-originated universe remains self-sustaining, Eastern mysticism teaches that as the conscious part of the Energy system (i.e., the Force), the human mind can achieve psychological and/or spiritual union with the universe. Whether induced by practicing meditative spiritual disciplines, doing drugs, listening to certain types of music, dancing or sex, all of which were part of the pagan Woodstock Festival (August, 1969), humans can experience deification. In this consciousness shift, they can realize "oneness" with the cosmos in which they believe their intelligence will possess the power to control the present and create the future. (See Genesis 3:5.) Just as "quantum science" hopes one day to know God's Mind, so "quantum spirituality" seeks to experience God's Soul, the divine "presence" which permeates everything (i.e., pantheistic monism). But Paul recognized the danger of this way of reckoning reality.

The Scriptures

Paul warned the Colossians against trying to synchronize elements and spirituality because of the danger of their faith being taken captive "after *the rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ." (Emphasis added, Colossians 2:8.) In the New Testament, the meaning of "rudiments" (Greek, *stoicheia*) includes both the "physical particles" constituting the cosmos and the "spiritual powers" inhabiting it. (Compare 2 Peter 3:10 and Galatians 4:3.) The pagan worldview integrated matter and spirits, which the ancients believed comprised the universe. "Heavenly bodies" notes one authority, "were also regarded as personal beings and given divine honors." [9] Thus the ancients venerated the "divinized elements," [10] a holistic worldview taught by Greek Hermetic philosophy. Hermeticism views that "everything in the cosmos is internally related, bound up with everything else," or that "even though the cosmos may be hierarchically arranged, there are forces that cut across and unify at all levels, that "Divine powers understood variously as 'energy' or 'light' . . . pervade the whole." [11] Like a hermetically sealed envelop, the universe's existence is viewed to be airtight—no interference from anything or anyone outside the system. The maxim expressing this cosmic-Hermetic-holism is, "As above, so below." This pithy saying became "the central tenet of Western occultism." [12] While it excludes the existence of a personal God, the occult worldview, like New Age spirituality, includes the reality of paranormal forces or spirits. (See 1 John 4:1-6.) Among others, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and Matthew Fox (1940-) advocated a Hermetic, mystic and pantheistic "creation spirituality" which their Roman Catholic Church declared heretical. Approvingly, Fox quoted de Chardin as follows: "Christ, through his Incarnation, is internal to the world . . . rooted in the world, even in the very heart of the tiniest atom." [13] Fox himself stated: "The Cosmic Christ is the "I am" in every creature. . . . each atom, each galaxy, each tree, bird, fish, dog, flower, star, rock, and human." [14] Making analogy to the Roman Catholic Eucharist (e.g., "This is my body"), de Chardin thought of the universe as the ultimate Host (beyond the communion wafer) ever penetrated and vivified by Christ's Incarnation. According to creation spirituality, Christ is the pantheistic presence throughout "the whole of nature." [15] But Jesus contradicted Hermetic oneness theory (i.e., monism). Contradicting this holistic worldview, Jesus told one religious audience, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I

am not of this world" (Emphasis added, John 8:23, NASB). Jesus said that two realities not one, comprise what "is"—first the holy God and Heaven, and then the universe. He claimed He originated from a reality separate from theirs. So any spirituality that attempts to merge the two realities, something some contemporary evangelicals are flirting with, contradicts Jesus.

Conclusion

Any attempt to merge science with "oneness" spirituality destroys the biblical worldview. If all is one, then God is no longer outside (i.e., holy), but inside "the system"—part of "It." As the immanent one, he, she, or it evolves and mutates too (i.e., process theology). (Compare Malachi 3:6.) Further, because they say God is wholly immanent in the universe, He is no longer sovereign (i.e., open theism). Because God did not create the universe, He no longer controls it. Amazingly, the New Spirituality suggests that if humans attain unto their higher consciousness, they with God can continue to co-create and co-control the universe. Further, Christ's incarnation becomes unexceptional. To them, He is not the only begotten Son of God. (See John 1:14.) Jesus is viewed as an "ascended (not descended) master" who, in his higher consciousness, learned how to manipulate "the system" (i.e., perform miracles), something we can do if we experience a consciousness shift in which we learn we are a Christ too (i.e., human potential). As part of an evolving universe, morals change (i.e., moral relativism). Evil becomes undefined, and then alluding to John Lennon's song, we can "Imagine there's no heaven . . . no hell," that there is no separation! **[16]** This is but a snapshot of how adapting Christianity to the seductive combination of the New Science and New Age Spirituality affects the faith. So the question which confronts Christians is this, will our minds be seduced and captured by "the rudiments of the world"? Will we worship the cosmos, or the Creator, Jesus Christ?

Endnotes

- [1]** Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1996): 54.
- [2]** Arthur Koestler quoted by Dave Hunt, *A Cup of Trembling* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995): 373.
- [3]** See J. Trampeti and J. Wess, Editors, *Particle Physics in the New Millennium: Proceedings of the 8th Adriatic Meeting* (New York, NY: Springer). This book's three-hundred and fifty-five pages are filled with symbols and equations.
- [4]** Hawking, *Brief History of Time*: 210.
- [5]** Emphasis added, Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006): 61-62.
- [6]** Emphasis added, Edward Rothstein, *Emblems of Mind: The Inner Life of Music and Mathematics* (New York, NY: Avon Books, 1995): 30.
- [7]** Von Goethe quoted by Rothstein, *Emblems of Mind*: 135.
- [8]** Emphasis added, Werner Heisenberg quoted by Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, 4th Edition Updated (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1999): 18.
- [9]** William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1979): 769.
- [10]** Emphasis added, Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996): 189.

[11] Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001): 13.

[12] Ibid.

[13] de Chardin quoted by Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988): 129.

[14] Ibid: 154.

[15] Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, René Hague, Translator (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1971): 73-74.

[16] John Lennon, "Imagine" (<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnlennon/imagine.html>).