

Where Am I and Where Are We?

The Human Condition: Contemplation and Transformation
Thomas Keating

Christ, Evolution and All Creation
Javier Melloni

Incarnation
Hans Urs von Balthasar

Christ, Evolution and Religion
Denis Gleeson



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Just as God did with Adam and Eve, “At every moment of our lives, God is asking us, **“Where are you? Why are you hiding?”** P.7 “Metaphysics and the religions of the world have discovered that human beings are designed for unlimited happiness, the enjoyment of all truth and love without end. This spiritual hunger is part of our nature as beings with a spiritual dimension. Here we are, with an unbounded desire for happiness and not the slightest idea of where to look for it.” P.10 “The homemade self, or the false self as it is usually called, is programmed for human misery.” P.15

However, “The **false self** is deeply entrenched.” P.17. “..... Jesus said, ‘If your foot scandalizes you, cut it off.’ He..... was saying that if your emotional programs (*for security and survival; power and control; affection and esteem*) are so close to you that you love them as much as your own hand or foot or eye, get rid of them. They are programs for human misery that will never work. They will interfere with all your relationships - with God, people, the earth, and the cosmos.” P.18

“The contemplative journey, because it involves the purification of the unconscious, ... is an exercise of **letting go of the false self**, a humbling process, because it is the only self we know.” P.20 “We have to take the trail to truth; this is what the gospel asks.” P.24 “Spiritual awareness is designed by God to become our normal awareness. Unless our selfish programs for happiness have begun to be dismantled by a spiritual practice or discipline, we are not aware that events ...people...plans...memories are dominating our awareness..... ” P.31

(adapted from “The Human Condition: Contemplation and Transformation” by Thomas Keating, Paulist Press, New York, 1999)

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Christ, Evolution and All Creation

The truth that sets us free is knowing that we do not
 proceed from a whim
 coming out of nowhere,
 by chance or out of necessity
but from a source of unspeakable love,
 constant and unending,
 which Jesus experienced
as flowing from a depth which he called Abba.
Knowing that we come from such an Origin
opens us to trust and freedom ever-ready to begin.
...Because it reveals to us that existence is a pure gift
 given for the sake of giving
What prevents us from being free is the fear of losing ourselves
 clinging to everything without knowing it.
 ...If we find out that life is gift,
 we have nothing to lose,
 because we've never owned it
 We are only its steward.
 To live this way frees us
...awaiting to unfold in a multitude of situations
 and nuances:
In the complex entanglements with ourselves
 In our relationships of domination over
 or dependence on others,
 in the meaning we give to our beliefs
 and codes of behaviour
 that we have learned to restrain ourselves
 creating both personal and collective identities
 in which we remained constricted.
Frequently we remain caught up in all this instead of
 being the wings which gives us the impulse
 to rise called greater horizons.

Javier Melloni, *El Cristo Interior*,
(*God is Love: The Heart of all Creation* Guidebook p 84-85.)

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Incarnation

Christ has become... “sun of all the ages,” under whose beams the world’s harvest gradually ripens towards unity in God. This is the *mysterium magnum* of which Paul speaks. This is the great and hidden mystery. This is the blessed end, the goal, for whose sake everything was created. This was the divine purpose that lay before the beginning of all things... With this goal in mind, God called the natures of things into existence. This is the limit towards which providence and all the things it protects are moving, where creatures realise their re-entry into God..

This is the mystery spanning all the ages, revealing the supremely infinite and infinitely inconceivable plan of God, which exists in all its greatness before all the ages. ... For Christ’s sake, for the sake of the mystery of Christ, all the ages and all the beings they contain took their beginning and their end in Christ... Not redemption from sin, but the unification of the world in itself and with God is the ultimate motivating cause for the Incarnation and, as such, the first idea of the Creator, existing in advance of all creation.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*
The Universe According to Maximus The Confessor.
(*God is Love: The Heart of all Creation* Guidebook p 27.)

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Christ, Evolution and Religion

“ If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ”
(Mt. 16:24-25)

To lose one's life is to come to a point where we look to God for our identity rather than to the ego. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Our frenetic inner dialogue, and usually self-righteous commentary, slows to an insignificant background murmur. Our preoccupation with fears, dramas, ambitions and hurts begins to still. The false self is allowed to die and the true self rises within us offering an entirely new perspective on life, a perspective previously beyond our imagining. This process, which we invoke each time we do our Centering Prayer, is a sharing in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, that self-emptying that was the “core gesture” ⁽²⁰⁾ of his life. After Jesus calls us, as he did Lazarus, out of entombment, it is a removal of the bonds that bind us, until one day we are free and have become more the human being we were created to be. We are a new creation which Bourgeault describes as, “the integral wholeness of Love manifested in the particularity of a human heart.” ⁽²¹⁾

It is important to note that the manifestation of Love within humanity comes about not through a process of rejection but through a process of evolution. Our human condition, with the development of the ego and the false self system, is the very stuff of the evolutionary journey and of transformation.⁽²²⁾ It is, in a sense, primal matter, the chaos over which the creative Spirit broods.

The evolutionary template can be discerned from the beginning in the Old Testament. God calls Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not just to relationship but to intimacy. Their descendants, enslaved in Egypt are summoned out of bondage to journey to freedom. Shaped into nationhood in the wilderness, they travel to their new home, a land of milk and honey. Though repeatedly called to justice and compassion, they prove to be weak or incapable and Yahweh has to promise them new hearts so that they can truly become his people.

Today, Jesus calls us to relationship and to intimacy with the Father when he asks us to enter the inner room. Consenting to God's presence and action within us, we are summoned out of bondage to journey to freedom. Shaped by silence, we seek to embrace our own darkness and to come home to our true self. Incapable, of ourselves, of dealing with the wounds of the past or with the unconscious, God will eventually heal our hearts and transform us with Divine Love.

(extract, Gleeson, Denis, “Unbinding Christian Faith: Free to Be”

Cluain Mhuire Press, Dublin 2015, pp 161-163)

19. “Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening” by Cynthia Bourgeault. Cowley Publications 2004, cf p161.

20. Ibid cf p83.

21. Ibid cf p87.

22. Ibid 106.