

this is exegetically satisfying or not remains an open question for the reader to work out. Towards the end of the chapter, Marion raises, in particular through several verses in the Gospel of John, the notion of the Trinity, which he turns to next.

In chapter four, keeping with the phenomenological and theological concerns of the previous chapters, Marion explores various objections to the Trinity, notably those of Kant. He responds to these while defending the triune God through revelation and an appeal to several theologians, including Barth. The author moves from here to the essential issue of what he refers to as *the icon* as he discusses the configuration of God as Trinity, particularly in the formulation of Basil of Caesarea. Marion adds to this his delightful and profound view of the Holy Spirit, which unfolds in the closing pages of the chapter.

A short two pages, under the guise of conclusion, finishes the book. Marion suggests that aiming for a Conclusion is not very plausible. Neither philosophy nor theology, he argues, can offer closure on the issue of God. But where does that leave us? Marion has an intriguing reply, which sums up the notions of Givenness and Revelation.

This little book dealing with huge issues is a thick text and well worth reading. I highly recommend it.

Gregory J. Laughery

Christ in Evolution

Ilia Delio

Maryknoll, Orbis, 2014, (228 ss).

The Unbearable Wholeness of Being.

God, Evolution, and the Power of Love

Ilia Delio

Maryknoll, Orbis, 2015, (230 ss).

This is an innovative and enriching book. While not all will agree with Delio, *Christ in Evolution* offers a creative proposal of how to begin to integrate evolution and theology. How does evolution impact the theological enterprise? In other words, if evolution is true, which in her view is the case, how does this affect theology? According to Delio, Christianity can no longer ignore or set aside these types of questions. In fact, she argues, addressing them is central to an active and robust faith. Many aim to keep evolution and theology in separate compartments. No need for a dialogue between them. Such a ‘safeguard’ is often put in place to protect theology from any natural world challenges that might cause it to have to hit the ‘reset’ button. Delio, however, writing from a theistic and Christian perspective, removes these types of unhelpful barriers and embraces evolution *and* theology. Thus, she sets out in her book to explore something of what a ‘reset’ might look like. “Christ is the purpose of this universe and, as exemplar of creation, the model of what is intended for this universe, that is, union and transformation in God.” p. 8.

Delio is well aware of the heightening force of naturalism represented by Dawkins, Harris, and others. They hold that all can be explained naturalistically. She, by contrast, is careful to remain scientific, without being reductionistic. Her claim is that there’s much more than naturalism alone has to offer. Yet, it should not be

assumed that she thus presents the equally false alternative of some form of pietistic, escapist spirituality that has nothing to do with this world. Delio is uncomfortable with either of these directions and *Christ in Evolution* eloquently presents another option. Delio puts it this way: "God's Word is a dynamic Word intended to empower the fullness of life through the life of the Spirit. How to rekindle this power of life, to see Christ as the integrating center of our lives and of a universe moving forward into God, is the heart of this study." p. 14.

In chapter 1 Delio sketches out the significant rise of evolutionary science in order to provide the backdrop for where she believes we are today. She wagers that we are often caught up in ancient formulations of humanity and cosmology, which translates into an outdated Christology. Her concern is that Christians have too often ignored the evidences of new understandings of the natural world and that these insights, therefore, have not been appropriately applied to Christology. As a result, instead of a dynamic, living, and relevant Christology, Christ gets reduced to formulas, words, and doctrines.

Delio, in chapter 2, offers a brief overview of Christ via the Gospels, Paul's letters, the early church and the modern period. In doing so, she also interacts, in particular, with N. T. Wright, J. D. G. Dunn, and J. Moltmann. Following this, she proposes a Christology centered in the resurrection, since this relates Christ to the cosmos and thus teleology and eschatology. Her final sections touch on ancient and modern affirmations of a cosmic Christology, which paves the way for this to emerge more forcefully in the rest of the book. Delio believes we are in the midst of what she refers to as the "Chris-

tological shift" of our times. According to her, the cosmic nature of Christ now desperately needs to be (re)discovered.

The notion of the cosmic Christ, Delio suggests, had an impact on the primacy of Christ, notably in the Middle Ages. She turns, in Chapter 3, to investigate the incarnation during this period and invites the reader into the world of Alexander of Hale, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus. Incarnation is viewed as the *summit of creation and grounded in the Trinity*. Christ is not merely historical, but cosmic. From here, her chief focus in the rest of the chapter is on the work of Bonaventure who, she argues, has a mystical theology that is connected to relatedness, experience, and spirituality. This theology, in her opinion, is a key to unlocking the door to the cosmic Christ for our scientific times.

This leads Delio, in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 to explore four mystical guides that, she contends, reinforce a viable evolutionary and contemporary vision of the primacy of the cosmic Christ: 1) Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the Christic Universe. 2) Raimon Panikkar and the Unknown Christ. 3) Thomas Merton and 4) Bede Griffiths and the Transcultural Christ. These are fascinating chapters that highlight, among other things, theologies which can be pertinent in the context of evolution and that move towards the cosmic Christ. "The works of Teilhard, Panikkar, Merton, and Griffiths provide roadmaps to the mystery of Christ in an evolutionary universe and a humanity marked by a new level of consciousness." p. 123. All of the four writers call for a *complexified* view of Christology that is not merely about the past, but also more in line with our contemporary understandings of the world.

Delio goes on, in Chapter 7, to address this important configuration. She stresses the need for a *rebirth* of Christology along

the lines of the theologies of the four mystics. “There can be no *beyond Christ* because Christ alone is the fullness of what we hope for in God.” p. 135.

The focus on the four authors continues in Chapter 8, where Delio now underscores one of their common threads: we are to be, according to Teilhard’s words, *co-creators* in Christ. All these authors share the view that through human participation in Christ there comes about a manifestation of Christ in the world. Thus, Christ in evolution is connected in some sense to human evolution, but Christ is the cosmic Christ; the One who is already at the center of the universe. Christian love is to be at the core of this unfolding process that finds its fulfillment in God.

Human evolution, as Chapter 9 points out, is developing ultra-rapidly into a technological phenomenon. Artificial intelligence, robotics, and cyborgs, to mention a few, are having a profound influence in the present and it appears they will become even more prominent, for better or worse, in the future. The relationship between humans and technology is a massive question that Christians have to take seriously. In this new era, how are we to view “techno-sapiens” or the notion of the image of God? Delio addresses these and other issues in this final chapter.

What Christians will make of this book is an open question. My suggestion, as always, would be to read it critically. There are significant insights here, and we must be willing to consider new ways to formulate the biblical Christ and Christology in light of the growing evidence for evolution coming from the natural world informer.

The second book for review, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being. God, Evolution, and the Power of Love*, is equally challen-

ging and insightful as the previous. In this work, Delio moves even more deeply into the controversial issues of evolution and theology.

In the Introduction she states:

“Theologians continue to talk about God and explore theological questions as if evolution is irrelevant or marginal to our understanding of God. However, if evolution is the story of the cosmos, that is, the order of physical reality, then evolution is central to our understanding of God and God’s relationship to the world.” p. xix.

In Chapter 1 the author explores what, in her opinion, are the roots of resistance towards evolution. She argues a major shift took place, which the church opposed, in the Middle Ages when a heliocentric cosmos replaced a geocentric one. Two significant consequences of this new perspective, Delio contends, were that the God-world relationship was thrown into question and that humans were displaced from the center of the cosmos. Both these consequences were intolerable for Christians, who longed for the old geocentric view with its stability and order. This situation, says Delio, continued until Descartes and modernity. Descartes aimed to overcome some of the conclusions of modern science by re-centering humans and locating truth in human subjectivity. According to Delio, God, however, remained distant and disconnected. The rise of a mechanistic cosmos and deism shortly followed. Science was moving on and getting more precise, while religion, for the most part, harkened for the past of a geocentric cosmos with all its supposed benefits. Yet, Delio suggests that from then until now, God and the cosmos and God and humanity only grew further and further apart.

Chapter 2 delves into wholeness and

order in the cosmos and humanity. Parts and wholes fit together in the natural world, which serves as her basis for depicting wholeness in humanity “through the evolution of love and consciousness.” Included in this chapter are sections on Systems Biology and Nature as Symphony. There is, Delio wagers, a deep connection between wholeness, complexity, and consciousness, yet she confesses it goes far beyond her capacity to understand this fully.

The main theme of Chapter 3 is Teilhard’s new philosophy based on the energy of love. Instead of focusing on *being* (substance), his direction was an *ontology of love*. Teilhard called for a new understanding of reality that fit better with the impulse of evolution, and that would thus, in turn, provoke a new understanding of God.

The topic of new understandings of God is further explored in Chapter 4. Delio, at this stage, brings in Panikkar and Tillich in to complement Teilhard. Her aim is to discover new insights about God and the world in the context of evolution and these thinkers, she argues, further that purpose.

Chapters 5 and 6 explore more closely love and suffering and the sacred and the secular under the broader template of creation and incarnation.

The focus of Chapter 7 is the Christian life and love. Delio refers to this in Teilhard’s words as “Christogenesis.” This is understood as the birthing and emerging of Christ, who is both love and the cosmic Christ. “Christian life finds its meaning in Jesus as the Christ, and evolution imparts new meaning to the Christ, not only for Christians, but for all of cosmic life.” p. xxii.

In Chapter 8 Delio looks more closely at love, knowledge, and evolution. What

place do knowledge and thought have in evolution and what kind of connection between love and knowledge is necessary to move towards God and wholeness? Does the Catholic intellectual tradition have any viable role to play in responding to these types of questions?

Technology is advancing at a rapid pace. Delio, in Chapter 9, alerts readers to Transhumanism, the Noosphere, and Techno-sapiens. This is a fascinating, though brief look, at evolution and the impact of technology in the present and into the future. Christians, argues Delio, should be well informed about technology in order to know more about where we’re going and why.

Love is the central topic of Chapter 10, which is titled Contemplative Evolution. New ways of emerging consciousness translate into the embodiment of love. As Jesus gives a new commandment to love, to follow the cosmic Christ is to be committed to love God, self, other, and world.

In the Conclusion, Delio has a fine discussion of Life, Death, Love, Evolution, and God. She argues there are no totalities; no absolutes in these matters. The universe is an unfinished project moving toward *new creation*, and we’re not there yet.

This is a valuable book and well worth reading. No matter where you stand on religious traditions or how you perceive evolution, I believe you will find Delio’s work perceptive and challenging.

Gregory J. Laughery