Confronting Neopaganism in the Culture and the Church
Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Far West Region
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I. Introduction: Revolutionary Times

We are living in a most disorienting time, especially since someone said that orientation is knowing where the East is! When I came to the States in 1964, the threat from the East was not spiritual but material—atheistic Marxism and a fear of the disappearance of religion altogether, predicted by Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud. The 1960s Death of God theology seemed to represent in North America the final triumph of secular humanism. In 1967, the sociologist Peter Berger did note the “overall decline in the plausibility of Christianity,” but what few saw, including Berger, was also the demise of secular humanism. In 2008, in an article entitled “Secularization Falsified,” Berger had changed his mind. Religion had not been declining. On the contrary, in much of the world there has been a veritable explosion of religious faith.

What had created this unexpected situation? Philosopher David Harvey believes he knows: "The moral crisis of our time is a crisis of Enlightenment thought." And the "assumptions of secular humanism" have been undermined by Postmodernism. “The irony is delicious,” says theologian Don Carson. “The modernity which has arrogantly insisted that human reason is the final arbiter of truth has spawned a stepchild that has arisen to slay it.” An informed observer called this postmodern critique “a rage against humanism and the Enlightenment legacy.”

Postmodernism had brought an end to secularism in the oddest of ways. The French thinker, Lydia Jaeger, notes that “L’irrationalisme postmoderne est, en fait, l’ultramodernité: la modernité poussée jusqu’à ses conséquences logiques extrêmes.” For her, the ultimate contribution of autonomous reason (postmodernism) is the lucid observation that reason has no reasonable, objective grounds on which to stand. Such deconstruction raises a serious question: where does Postmodernism lead our culture? The answer I propose represents the body of this paper. Many now believe that grounds for existence can only be found in the irrational, in the age-old metanarrative of pantheistic Oneism.

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2 See chapters 3-6 of James Herrick’s The Making of The New Spirituality: The Eclipse of The Western Religious Tradition (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) for a full-scale account of the effects of rationalism on Christianity from the Enlightenment to the Modern period.
4 Ibid., 171.
6 David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 41.
[I am proposing to use two relatively neutral, descriptive terms, Oneism and Two-ism, in order to avoid applying a narrow theological system that only a few of us could affirm. These terms seek to express the only two bedrock options found in Romans 1:25: either the worship and service of creation understood as closed, homogeneous system, or the worship and service by creation of the transcendent ontologically other Creator].

Perhaps, we should have seen this spiritual tsunami coming. Instead, we treated the New Age as the latest, more or less harmless religious sect, which would go the way of the hoola hoop. We failed to hear the vast implications of Lennon's Imagine and Dylan's The Times They Are A'Changin. In fact, the "Yellow Submarine" was taking us to another "planet," the zodiacal Age of Aquarius.

These changin' times have, in one generation, radically transformed how popular culture thinks about sexuality, the family, gender roles, marriage, abortion, pornography, American history, the dating of history, the names of national holidays, the use of the Constitution, free speech, globalism, education, environmentalism, psychology and religious unity. A Roman Catholic theologian, Richard Grigg, in his book When God Becomes Goddess: The Transformation of American Religion, (1995), reassures us that religion in America will not disappear but is in the "process of transformation." "...[S]ignificant elements of traditional religious belief and practice are passing away, but a new kind of religiosity is poised to take its place." Since, of course, there are only two kinds of "religiosity," this "new kind" would be Oneism.

This "new religiosity" maintains the fiction of progress, but as C. S. Lewis remarked: "Pantheism is congenial to our minds not because it is the final stage in a slow process of enlightenment [as it often claims], but because it is almost as old as we are." In its present iteration, this ancient ideology denigrates theism as out-of-date, dysfunctional, and blame-worthy, and triumphantly declares itself to be our future. The Jungian mystic and counselor to Hillary Clinton in the White House, Jean Huston, has provocatively declared: "Other times in history thought they were it. They were wrong. Now is it." Joseph Campbell before his death in 1987 was asked: "Do you still believe that we are at this moment participating in one of the greatest leaps of the human spirit?" He answered: "The greatest ever." How did we get to this moment of Oneist triumph?

II. Ideological Revolution

The coherent ancient ideology of Oneism comes in a number of interlaced forms that together constitute a formidable construction of a "new" seductive worldview for our contemporary culture.

A. The Hinduization of the West

In the Sixties, spiritual globalism took a leap forward as Eastern Oneism continued its invasion of Western culture. Though Vivekananda had already made the trip West in 1893, and many had followed him, the Sixties saw a whole series of Indian gurus make their mark on the

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12 Richard Grigg, 22.
14 "Jean Houston: Thinking Allowed," Television Series and DVD Collection.
student generation. The "Fab Four" met the Maharishi, and popular culture was introduced to the "wisdom of the East." In August 2009, Newsweek announced that "We are all Hindus Now," meaning that the Western soul has been profoundly and definitively altered—a change that spiritual observer, Philip Goldberg, in his book American Veda\(^{16}\) compares to the Great Awakenings of the 18th century.

Many of the architects of modern spirituality, such as Aldous Huxley, Joseph Campbell, and Huston Smith, were converts of Vedanta. Campbell and Smith were introduced to the culture thanks to the Bill Moyers PBS video series. Campbell, mentor of George Lucas and inspiration of the Star Wars movie series, had an enduring friendship with the guru Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Hinduism became the overarching theme of Campbell’s work. Huston Smith was an MK (missionary kid) in China who converted to Buddhism and became a leading authority in the history of religions. No one can underestimate the influence in the West of the Dalai Lama, from the same Eastern spiritual tradition. It is doubtless true to say that the key New Age leaders and their present disciples all claim some form of Vedantic enlightenment.

Hindu terms have entered Western consciousness. Everyday conversation includes words like karma, mantra, mandala, yoga (practiced by 18 million Americans), and avatar (Hindu term meaning incarnation). James Cameron in his film Avatar invites viewers to give up the biblical worldview in favor of Oneness. Mindfulness is now proposed as a valid Psychological method by recognized experts in the field of psychology as a way of reducing stress. Elizabeth Gilbert, Eat, Pray, Love, convinces many, including Julia Roberts, who played the lead in the movie version of the book, and became a Hindu, that you can eat great food, have all the sex you want, as long as you master Indian meditation and reject the God of Theism.\(^{17}\) The secular Jew and Hindu convert, Goldberg, notes that the Roman Catholic mystics, Bede Griffith, Wayne Teasdale, Thomas Merton and Thomas Keating were all deeply influenced by Eastern religion, and that Centering Prayer is "the highest level of Indian spirituality."\(^{18}\) Interestingly, their major influence has been seen in Christianity since the Sixties when Vatican II officially recognized the mysticism of pagan religions as a valid form of spirituality for Christians.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{18}\) Goldberg, 312.

\(^{19}\) Nostre Autate, vol 1, par. 2 (1965) "In Hinduism men explore the divine mystery and express it both in the limitless riches of myth and the accurately defined insights of philosophy...Buddhism proposes a way of life by which man can, with confidence and trust, attain a perfect state of liberation and reach supreme illumination either through their own efforts or by the aid of divine help. The Roman Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions." (see Vatican.va). See also Gaudium et Spes, vol 1, sec 2 and 3, pp.904-5 (Dec 1965)--recognizes "a divine element in all human beings...offers to cooperate unreservedly with all mankind in fostering a sense of brotherhood [for human destiny]." See Thomas Merton, Conjectures of A Guilty By-stander (Random House, 1966), 155, who believes "we should fall down and worship each other." Student of Merton, William Shannon, Seeds of Peace (Crossroad Pub Co, 1996), 180, claims that in mysticism a person "discovers that his own mystery and the mystery of God merge into one reality which is the only reality." Contemporary Emergent evangelical, Tony Jones, in his book, Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry (Zondervan, 2003), 16, proposes all the techniques found in these Catholic mystics.
**B. The Return of Gnosticism**

If you can speak of the Easternization of the West, you can also speak of the Gnosticization of the West.²⁰ The discovery in 1945 of the Nag Hammadi Library gave scholarship its first direct knowledge of ancient Gnosticism. The Gnostic documents became popularly known because of their translation in 1977 and, more recently, because of their use by Dan Brown in his mega best seller *The Da Vinci Code*.

James Robinson, like Hans Jonas, who saw Gnosticism as an ancient form of existentialism,²¹ presented these newly found texts as an attractive, timeless “answer to the human dilemma.”²² Robinson declared that the Gnostic library had much in common with three movements.

1. Gnostic texts have “much in common with primitive Christianity.” This affirmation has given life to the *New “Progressive” Christianity*, which argues that the Gnostic gospels prove that original Christianity was interfaith, a notion most Americans find acceptable.

2. Gnostic texts have “much in common with eastern religions and with holy men of all times.” This affirmation fits well with the Easternization of the West.

3. Gnostic texts have “…much in common with…the counter-culture movements coming from the 1960’s.”²³

Gnosticism became a cultural phenomenon through the influence of C. G. Jung, who was deeply influenced by it. Jungian psychology has introduced a form of Gnosticism into the Western psyche via the notion of the all-powerful subconscious.²⁴ Joseph Campbell said of Jung: his works “have inspired…an astonishing number of the leading scholars of our time.”²⁵ James Herrick see the importance of Jung "less for his psychoanalytical theories than for a “closely related set of religious ideas, some of which are at the center of the New Religious synthesis, like Gnostic and occult ideas about the divinity of the individual, spiritual gnosis, and paranormal reality."²⁶ Someone has called Jung the psychologist of the 21st century.²⁷ One writer on Jung says without overstatement that Carl Jung is the Father of Neo-Gnosticism and the New Age Movement.²⁸ A contemporary philosopher, Richard Wolin, Distinguished Professor at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, believes that “…since the 1970s Jung’s

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²³ Ibid., 1.
²⁶ Herrick, 191.
²⁸ Ed Hird, Past National Chairman of Anglican Renewal Ministries of Canada (March 18, 1998) in an e-mail.
influence on spiritual currents of the New Age movement has been enormous. It may only be a slight exaggeration to say scratch a witch and underneath you will find a Jungian.” 29

The modern expert on Gnosticism, Kurt Rudolf, rightly sees that Gnosticism is not spiritual dualism but “dualism on a monistic background.”30 That is, while espousing a radical dualism between the flesh and the spirit, it affirms the primordial unity of all immateriality and expresses a yearning for the restoration of that essential non-material unity. Gnostics, like modern day Eastern spiritualists, long for the ultimate experience of "non-dual" reality and dismiss theists as dualists. Help comes to the postmodern deconstructed world not through reason but through unreason. 186. Jung: “the distinguishing mark of the Christian epoch, and its highest achievement, has become the congenital vice of our age: the supremacy of the word…necessary at a certain [phase of man’s development, it has a perilous shadow side.”31 "The missing center of the mandala of the global community is [mystical] consciousness of the Self in the process of individuation,”32 that is, joining the opposites in a non-dual synthesis. Humans are connected by a vast psychic force, the collective unconscious.

Jung calls Christian orthodoxy "systematic blindness" in insisting that God is outside of man, unaware of "this inner deity revealing itself from the depths of the soul."33 But who is this divinity? In his The Seven Sermons to the Dead, Jung following the ancient Gnostic myth, elevates Abraxas, half man, half beast, as a God higher than both the Christian God and Devil, that combines all opposites into one Being, including Christ and Satan, God's "light and dark sons," and the male-female androgyne. 34 Jung’s Depth Psychology seeks to be the world’s final, unitary religion.35 Little wonder Jung’s recent biographer, Richard Noll sees Jung as the new Julian the Apostle, who, in the 4th century, turned the empire back to paganism. Says Noll, the only difference is that "Jung has succeeded where Julian failed."36

C. Pagan Mythology

All these movements are deeply related. The Jungian channeler, Jean Houston, mentioned above, believes our present society is in a state both of "breakdown and breakthrough…what I call a whole system transition, …requir[ing] a new alignment that only myth can bring [emphasis mine].”37 Houston follows the example of the Jungian, Joseph Campbell, and his message concerning The Power of Myth. The myth Houston proposes for the reconstruction of our world is the ancient Egyptian myth of Isis, the goddess of the underworld.38 A reviewer states: "Jean

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32 Kelly, Individuation, 185.
34 John P. Dourley, The Illness That We Are, 63 and 99.
35 For Jung, the archetypes point to “the sphere of the unus mundus, “the ultimate ground of the universe” (Collected Works, 11:295).
38 See above note.
Houston's work sparkles like a jewel whose inner fire is capable of drawing the participant out of the temporal world into the eternal realm of myth and archetype, the abode of the soul." Again, the answer is *mythos* not *logos*. As well as working both with the Clintons and President and Mrs. Carter, Jean Houston has been an advisor to UNICEF and, since 2003, she has worked with the United Nations Development Program, training leaders in developing countries throughout the world in the "new field of social artistry," actually helping young leaders to access their indigenous pagan myths.

### D. Perennialism

The unveiling of Gnosticism, of Indian Vedanta and of many forms of ancient Nature mythology in contemporary culture evidences the surfacing of a long-existing esoteric, occult spirituality known among the *cognoscenti* as "the Perennial Philosophy." Peter Occhiogrosso, author of *The Joy of Sects*, a 600-page encyclopedia of world religions, argues that a deep level of agreement exists between the many religions, though their proponents may not see it or speak of it. He likens this Perennial Philosophy to an underground well that feeds each religious stream. Joseph Campbell combines Jungian archetypes and mystical spirituality in his *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* to express the complimentary notion that all human civilizations have the same *monomyth* (with only minor differences in details). Integral thinker Dr. Roger Walsh's work, *Essential Spirituality: the Seven Central Practices*, *(John Wiley & Sons, 2000)* identifies what the world's wisdom traditions have in common, and in his *The World of Shamanism: New Views of an Ancient Tradition* *(Llewellyn Press, 2007)*, he believes shamanism to be the world's most enduring healing and religious tradition.

The Gnostic Bishop Stephan Hoeller, of the Ecclesia Gnostica of Los Angeles, agrees. The Perennial Philosophy is but another term for Gnosticism, whether ancient or modern. Ken Wilber, whom we will discuss below, calls his own system a variant of the Perennial Philosophy, as do a highly significant group of spiritual leaders, from Helena Blavatsky, Aldous Huxley, Carl Jung, and Huston Smith. Smith, hailed as the greatest living philosopher of world religion, calls himself a Perennialist with a capital P. All have rejected secular humanism. All identify with this ancient pagan tradition and promote it as the hope of the future. One notable perennialist today is Prince Charles, Patron of the *Temenos Academy*, which is dedicated to the central ideas of the Perennial Philosophy. Charles declares: "Only this great Tradition, in its sacralization of Nature, will solve the environmental crisis of the twenty-first century."

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39 See The Human Capacities Bookstore website.
42 See his personal website and a book he edited, *Paths Beyond Ego: The Transpersonal Vision* *(Tarcher, 1993)*, which is a collection of 50 of the best articles on transpersonal psychology and related topics such as consciousness, meditation, lucid dreaming, spiritual emergencies, and exceptional abilities, with contributors such as Huston Smith, Stan Grof, Ken Wilber, Jack Kornfield, and the Dalai Lama.
43 See his opening speech at the 2006 conference "Tradition in the Modern World," a conference convened by the "traditionalist journal," *Sacred Web*, of the Temenos Academy. He is the Patron of the Temenos Academy, *The Temenos Academy Review* is the journal of the Academy and is the successor to the journal *Temenos*, HRH The Prince of Wales wrote that the Academy and its review are "committed both to the perennial philosophy and to the notion that Man is, at root, a spiritual creature with spiritual and intellectual needs which have to be nourished if we are to fulfill our potential." See the site, *Life and Work of HRH Charles Windsor, The Prince of Wales.*
A decade ago the respected American historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, said: "There has been a culture war and the Left won it," but the war was also religious, and it has just begun.

III. The Revolution Is Just Beginning: What ever happened to the New Age?

I recently registered for an online forum, Beyond Awakening: The Future of Spiritual Practice. You could say Beyond New Age. Hailed as “the most important conversation for the planet today,” the program consists of interviews with many of the old lions of the New Age—Jean Houston, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Surya Das, Ram Das, and Michael Murphy, having their last shot, along with lion cubs like Ken Wilber. Within a few weeks this forum had enrolled 35,000 participants. They call themselves “Cultural Creatives,” “Progressives,” “Evolutionaries,” “Integral Spiritualists,” “Interspiritualists” or “Transtraditional Spiritualists.” They are organized in multiple national and international visionary groups that are responding to a world in crisis. (There are apparently 50 million Cultural Creatives in the USA and 90 million in the European Union). They claim that thirty-nine percent of the US population are SBNRs (spiritual but not religious), and half the boomer generation thinks all religions are the same. With such odds, these spiritual progressives plan to take over the US culture by AD 2020.

Into this triumphalist spirituality steps a new Vedantic Prophet, Ken Wilber, a Mahayana Buddhist from a Christian background, a proponent of “integral spirituality.” Wilber proposes a bold post-deconstruction metanarrative of a spiritual evolutionary synthesis, an all inclusive philosophy that weaves together science, morals, ethics, aesthetics, Eastern as well as Western philosophy, and the world’s great wisdom traditions. He concludes that all major worldviews are basically true and the universe is winding up not down. Only one modernist metanarrative survives—bio-spiritual evolution. In this system, every entity and concept or holon shares a dual nature: as a whole unto itself, and as a part of some other whole. His catch phrase is “transcend and include,” in an evolutionary movement through nine stages:

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<th>Phase</th>
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<td>Phase 9</td>
<td>Integral-Holonic</td>
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<td>Phase 8</td>
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<td>Phase 7</td>
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**Second Tier Consciousness**

| Phase 6 | The Sensitive Self (Green egalitarianism)       |
| Phase 5 | Scientific Achievement (Enlightenment Rationalism) |
| Phase 4 | Mythic Order (an All-powerful Other: Theism, Two-ism) |
| Phase 3 | Power Gods (Magical-mythical)                    |
| Phase 2 | Magical-Animistic                               |
| Phase 1 | Archaic-Instinctual                             |

**First-Tier Consciousness**

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44 See Gertrude Himmelfarb, One Nation, Two Cultures: A Moral Divide (Knopf, 1999), for an excellent documentation of this phenomenon.

45 Goldberg, American Veda, 344.


47 Wilber, A Theory, 40.

Wilber’s final phase is “Integral Spirituality,” what he calls “direct spiritual experience,” the non-dual joining of matter, consciousness, and spirit into an undifferentiated One—into deity, formless and non-dual deep spirituality—a perfect description of Oneism.

But Wilber’s ascending ladder has problems. First, all the systems he mentions exist simultaneously in history. So where is the “progression” except in his own religious value system? Second, eight of his nine steps are Oneist. The only Two-ist system (the Mythic Order, which is described as belief in an All-powerful Other) is dismissed as one more primitive religious stage of “developmental arrest” to “transcend and include.” This is intellectual subterfuge because you cannot transcend and include or synthesize Two-ism or theism into a Oneist system without dismissing its core affirmations. But the new hybrid of Eastern spirituality allied with Western social activism, has political goals that are staggering. “Sincere care” of the planet for the sake of human survival, and coded terms like compassion, justice and inclusiveness are part of a strategy to eliminate “the B team” that is now running the world.

The futurists speak of a “Journey toward Oneness,” carried along by “Global Spirit” (a modern form of animism). Nothing will stop them, they believe, from building a New Humanity, based on oneness, which will include the gender blur of the rising generation, which refuses to be confined to normal heterosexual distinctions.

An example of this virtually apocalyptic optimism is the Vision Project, an on-line site that gathers visionary statements from leading occultists, theosophists, Perennialists and interfaith globalists, such as Riane Eisler, radical feminist; Jean Houston, channeler; Barbara Marx Hubbard, director of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution; Ervin Laslo, author of Science and the Akashic Field: An Integral Theory of Everything; Michael Lerner, editor of the journal of progressive Jewish spirituality, Tikkun; Robert Mueller, Under-secretary General of the United Nations, New Ager and founder of the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica; David Stendl-Rast, syncretistic Benedictine monk; Sarah McKeechnie, president of Lucis Trust, founded by the occultic Alice Bailey; Dale McKeechnie, Vice-president of the Lucis Trust, USA, to name just a few here featured.

The apocalyptic vision of a this-worldly utopia is given powerful expression by the brilliant Oneist spiritual philosopher Richard Tarnas. Tarnas sees a rising “powerful crescendo” as many movements gather now on the intellectual stage as if for some kind of climatic synthesis [emphasis mine]. This synthesis will happen when “the human mind actively brings forth from within itself the full powers of a disciplined imagination and saturates its empirical observation with archetypal insight that the deeper reality of the world emerges.” Or, as Wilber says, Enlightenment Liberalism is now ready to embrace deep spirituality. The secularist logos is swallowed up/transcended and included, in mythos.

Mitchell Silver, who teaches philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, is a self-identified Jewish atheist who, with careful analysis, shows how this synthesis could occur. He examines the “new god” of contemporary Judaism as expressed in the progressive spiritual writings of Michael Lerner, Arthur Green, and Mordecai Kaplan, and shows that the secularists

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49 Tarnas, Passion, 411.
50 Ibid., 403.
51 Ibid., 434.
52 Wilber, A Theory of Everything, 80-82.
54 Michael Lerner, Jewish Renewal (NY: Putnam, 1994); Spirit Matters (Charlottesville, VA.: Hampton Roads, 2000); Arthur Green, Seek My Face: Speak My Name (London: Aronson Press, 1992); These Are the Words
and what he calls the new-god believers are “two groups of moderns who actually accept the same literal description of reality. They agree on what is known.” It is a question of "their different attitudes to the unknown... The new god believers have a taste for extreme emotions... the secularists have less of a thirst for heavenly joy.”

So the real difference between atheists and pantheists has to do only with emotions. The “new godders” believe that the essential work of religion is this-worldly and share with moderns the notion of ‘freedom’ that flows from the rejection of supernaturalism. Thus, both "new godders" and atheists can join in the common social vision of the shared notion of freedom in a this-worldly utopian tomorrow. He concludes:

…when the messiah arrives (or after the revolution), there will be those singing god’s praises and others whistling a secular song, and neither need be out of tune.

A form of this synthesis is already here. "Evolutionary Christianity" is producing the longed-for and much-prophesied synthesis, namely, the union of science and spirituality, of "transcendent" romanticism and rationalistic humanism. Evolutionary Christianity is a variant of Wilber's Theory of Everything, a worldview of Oneism that claims to explain everything through the notion of human evolution into a non-dual divine. Michael Dowd, the ex-Evangelical now evangelist for evolution states: Agreeing with Bishop's Spong's "post-theistic Christianity, Dowd declares "supernatural other-worldly religion will die out for a post-metaphysical natural religion.” Here "evolution" is not just a scientific theory of origins but also a theological hermeneutic.

In this movement are strange bedfellows, brought together in another on-line forum, called Evolutionary Christianity, which is one more example of Utopianism, what Thomas Molnar calls The Perennial Heresy. They include Evangelical theistic evolutionists, "progressive" Emergent Christian leaders, radical post-theistic Christian liberals, Christian non-dual mystics, pro-homosexual ministers, radical religious feminists, and recognized evolutionary scientists. Some are deeply influenced by Pierre Teillard de Chardin, and pagan "geologians” such as Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme. All their views are synthesized into a vision of spiritual/"Christian” evolution by pro-evolutionary Michael Dowd, who wrote Thank God for Evolution: How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our world. Dowd is an ex-Catholic, ex-Pentecostal, now married to a Unitarian Universalist, and a disciple of Thomas Berry.

Is evolution the answer? Will the world get better? Will the spiral always evolve upwards? These “Cultural Creatives” or "Evolutionaries" believe themselves called to create a pax planetarium, a global empire of utopian pretensions, where religious, political and human


55 Silver, Plausible God, 111.
56 Ibid., 119.
57 Ibid., 105.
59 See the Website, The Advent of Evolutionary Christianity.
conflicts will exist no more. Pollster Daniel Yankelovitch said in 1997 of this movement: "We are witnessing nothing less that the re-invention of spirituality."\(^{62}\) For some, this is obviously progress. Goldberg is doubtless right when he observes that the Vedantic worldview fits perfectly the present spirit of the contemporary America where non-sectarian autonomy and religious freedom dominate the spiritual quest.\(^{63}\) Goldberg believes that "This non-dual religion is likely to ascend because studies show that human beings move upward along a continuum of spiritual expansiveness."\(^{64}\) He adds, "...society will surely welcome a "non-dogmatic" spirituality, over against the "deadly forces of tribalism, ethnocentrism and fundamentalism, over against the outworn dogmas of the past, of people who believe "mine is the true religion."\(^{65}\) Such believers are on "the wrong side of history."\(^{66}\)

But just how "non-dogmatic" is this religious option? There is an iron fist in this velvet glove, a religious non-negotiable that must not be questioned. A secular observer chillingly calls this vision "world purificationism," driven by an unrelenting ideology.\(^{67}\) For over all of these variations of pagan spirituality that claim to be "non-dogmatic" and tolerant, be they Hinduism, Gnosticism, Mythology, Jungian Depth Psychology, the Perennial Philosophy, Interfaith, or the spiritual homosexual agenda, you must write the Hindu term Advaita, "not two." (Not Two-ism.) The synthesis will be "non-dual." Goldberg believes that Advaita or "non-dual...oneness, unity nonseparation" are "the generic term[s] increasingly used to describe spirituality"—meaning that God and the world are not two.\(^{68}\)

Their terms "All is One," and "Not Two" leave nothing to the imagination and sum up the nature of the battle we as Two-ists have on our hands, we who must affirm the very opposite: "All is Two," "Not-One." It is clear that true Oneist spirituality must eliminate the God of the Bible, as C. S. Lewis understood, having concluded that there are only two possible answers to the religious search: Hinduism or Christianity. For Lewis, these are the ultimate, contradictory expressions of religion, either Hinduistic monism (where paganism is "full-grown")\(^{69}\) or Christian theism.

In the midst of the Sixties cultural revolution, world historian, Arnold Toynbee said of modern times: "...[this] chapter [of history] which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race."\(^{70}\)

IV. The Oneist Revolution Goes to Church

Christians are often unaware of the Hindu elephant in the room. Indeed, some are baptizing Eastern Vedantic spirituality as thoroughly Christian, even as it eviscerates Western Christendom of its essential understanding of God. Modern Christians make the mistake of thinking that modern culture is, at worst, neutral and, at best, the work of the Spirit that will bring in the coming of the kingdom. The UK emergent leader, Kester Brewin believes we must

\(^{62}\) Cited in Goldberg, American Veda, 339.
\(^{63}\) Goldberg, American Veda, 340.
\(^{64}\) Goldberg, American Veda, 345.
\(^{65}\) Ibid.
\(^{66}\) Goldberg, American Veda, 340.
\(^{68}\) Goldberg, American Veda, 344.
\(^{70}\) Goldberg, 347.
admit “our dependence on the host culture” and open ourselves to and adapt to it and recognize its "essential goodness." But if you make contemporary culture the norm, you will end up in non-duality.

We expected such thinking from Liberals, who were once attached to rationalist non-supernatural forms of Christianity, but are now finding their spiritual home in the new or integral spirituality of neo-paganism. Now called “progressive” or “evolutionary” spirituality, the mystical, supra-rational state represents a desirable liberation from the mythological sky God of out-dated theism. The Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress, San Francisco Grace Cathedral’s Canon for Special Ministry [popularizing the labyrinth], tells her story of awakening from modernity to spiritual enlightenment in a similar vein: “We mistakenly thought that the intellect was the avenue to experiencing the Sacred, to nourishing the soul. We discounted the imagination and our other faculties of knowing mystery. Harvey Cox sees a promising future for "Christian" Gnosticism.

We expected it from esoteric "unity" spiritualists, claiming a form of Christianity, such as that expressed in a forth-coming book, Can Christians Be Saved? A Mystical Path to Oneness by Virginia T. Stephenson and Buck Rhodes. They suggest "a new reformation of Christianity, turning away from the dualism that creates separation to the principle of Oneness or non-dualism." According to the homosexual spiritualist, Toby Johnson, "The book presents a wonderful study of the meaning of Jesus' teachings interpreted through a Buddhist view of Hindu, Sumerian, New Age mythologies and through personal experience and dreamwork." The main tool the authors use for spiritual growth is "Deeksha" (also known as the Oneness Blessing)... which affects a neurobiological shift... that activates the kundalini, balances the chakras, to induce... higher states of consciousness, and ultimately... the state of Oneness itself.

The great irony is that evangelicals are also drinking at the source of pagan non-dual synthesis, proposing a new hybrid of non-dual mysticism and social action as the essence of Christianity in our postmodern world. Phyllis Tickle calls the general return of spirituality "the Great Emergence," a "new reformation" of solus spiritus. The Martin Luther of the “new reformation,” Brian McLaren, willingly contributed to the Vision Project, assembling the future visions of leading occultists, theosophists, perennialists and interfaith globalists, proposed as various elements of a "greater, emerging vision... keyed to synthesis." Indeed, when McLaren looks at the movement of modern culture and the process of history, he concludes, as far as I can

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71 Kester Brewin, Signs of Emergence: A Vision for Church that Is Organic/Networked/decentralized/bottom-up/Communal/Flexible/Always Evolving (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 53.
72 Brewin, Signs, 104.
73 Brewin, Signs, 128.
75 Harvey Cox, The Future of Faith (New York: Harpercollins, 2009),165. For Cox, the Gnostic texts show that a wide variety of different versions of Christianity, not just one, flourished in the early centuries, and they "offer an alternative spirituality that is attractive to many twenty-first century people."
78 Virginia's blog.
tell, with this same notion of synthesis in view: "the beautiful whole that is as big as the cosmos, and bigger still, in which every particle is known, named, and loved. Can we even say something absurd? Can we say that this beautiful whole is even bigger than God..."  

Who would have thought that forms of Evangelicalism would contribute to the Hinduization and paganization of Christianity? Interestingly, Rob Bell, who, along with McLaren, enthusiastically endorses Ken Wilber, says: "We're rediscovering Christianity as an Eastern religion, as a way of life." The church, listening to the culture, is aping the new Oneist hybrid of spirituality and activism, but with little sense of a Gospel-driven love of sinners or the personal piety and holy living essential to the Creator/creature distinction. She is imbibing a hybrid, neo-pagan eschatology of synthesis—a union of the inner and the outer, a radical joining of the opposites. Such an approach is increasingly influenced by the teaching of Roman Catholic "non-dual" mystics, so that Franciscan priest, Richard Rohr teaches evangelical pastors Third Eye, non-dual thinking and spirituality in one of our significant evangelical seminaries. Rohr teaches that “The incarnation actually happened 13.7 billion years ago with a moment that we now call “The Big Bang.” That is when God actually decided to materialize and to self expose...as the cosmic Christ." This eliminates both the Creator/creature distinction, and the uniqueness of the historic incarnation, and makes us, as the old New Agers used to say, "little christs," the ultimate implication of "non-duality." For Rohr, the world is the body of God.

In the light of this, I cannot help but think of the prediction Alice Bailey, leader of the occultic Theosophical Society made in the Forties of the last century, that "...[thanks to the] the efforts of the U.N...a new church of God, gathered out of all the religions and spiritual groups, will unitedly bring to an end the great heresy of separation," clearly to realize the great Oneist lie of Advaita.

V. The Christian Response

A. Make Clear the Issues of Cosmology

Christian theologians, in this time of great confusion, must define the timeless struggle in order to establish essential theological clarity. The ultimate choice is not between the old and the new, the traditional and the progressive, the cool and the uncool, the modern and the postmodern, autonomous mysticism and autonomous rationalism—but between two irreconcilable, perennial definitions of reality. The conflict is between theism and monism, between God and the world, between Two-ism and Oneism, between Heterocosmology and Homocosmology, between ontological Duality and non-dual Advaita.

83 Course, SP761: Action and Contemplation (8 units), Fuller DMin program, 2010.
84 Richard Rohr, "Creation As The Body of God," The Huffington Post (March 4, 2011).
85 Richard Rohr, "Creation As The Body of God," The Huffington Post (March 4, 2011).
87 See my One or Two: Seeing a World of Difference (Main entry Editions, 2010), where these terms are explained.
We must follow the orthodox theologians of the past who, over against all attempts at “synthesis,” clearly saw the reality of theological “antithesis,” inherent in a fallen world. Abraham Kuyper, in the Stone Lectures of 1898, said, regarding the deep antithesis within human history: "Do not forget that the fundamental contrast has always been, is still, and always will be until the end: Christianity and Paganism, the idols or the living God." J Gresham Machen, stalwart defender of Christian orthodoxy, writing in the 1920s, identified the liberalism entering the mainline churches in his day as maintained the paganism in Christian dress, and adeptly put his finger on the essence of apostasy at a time when it was not so obvious.

The truth is that liberalism has lost sight of the very centre and core of the Christian teaching. …one attribute of God is absolutely fundamental in the Bible… in order to render intelligible all the rest. That attribute is the awful transcendence of God. It is true, indeed, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. But He is immanent in the world not because He is identified with the world, but because He is the free Creator and upholder of it. Between the creature and the Creator, a great gulf is fixed.

It is the apostle Paul who, under the inspiration of the Spirit, juxtaposed the only two possible religious approaches to life, thereby giving us the very touchstone for our apologetics and theology in a more and more neo-pagan world that progressively looks like his:

…they exchanged the truth about God for the lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:25)

B. Make Two-ism the Foundation of Evangelism

The study of the contemporary progress of Oneism is not merely an interesting description of the strange things pagans do and believe. It has become an absolute necessity for contemporary evangelism, which must now involve a sensitive deconstruction of non-dual Advaita cosmology, if the Gospel is to be heard and understood. Advaita Oneism denies the need, even possibility, of the Gospel's notion of reconciliation with the transcendent divine Other. Contemporary evangelism must therefore involve a clear presentation of biblical Twoism. This could hail a new day for God's Spirit to work in evangelistic outreach.

C. Make Two-ism the Touchstone for Twenty-first Century Christian Orthodoxy

In the light of the vast confusion sown in the Church by forms of progressive thinking, the One-ist/Two-ist analysis has become a necessary component for the construction of a comparative antithetical hermeneutical system by which the truth can be clearly articulated and defended as over against “the Lie” (Romans 1:25). Such a paradigm serves as a regulative

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88 In recent times, Carl F.H. Henry, in his *Twilight of a Great Civilization: The Drift Toward Neo-Paganism*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1988), p. 15, used the term “paganism” as the implication of our turning away from biblical truth. “Our generation is lost to the truth of God, to the reality of divine revelation, to the content of God’s will, to the power of His redemption, and to the authority of His Word. For this loss it is paying dearly in a swift relapse to paganism.”


90 He used the synonym "naturalism."


92 My translation.
principle of theology, soteriology, of spirituality, of Christian experience, of ethics and of sexuality. Pagan Oneism, in spite of itself, establishes a boundary for biblical Two-istic truth, helping us to see in every area, the limits beyond which any given belief system ceases to be biblical and becomes error. This simple test allows for a deepened and clearer understanding of the nature of truth by seeing it over-against its very opposite.

These parameters serve for a whole series of debated contemporary issues:

- A doctrine of the transcendence and alterity/otherness of God which is the very heart of the Gospel of divine condescension;
- God-honoring and scripture-honoring spiritual disciplines that preserve the Creator/creature personal distinction;
- Corporate worship that witnesses to both the immanence of God through His Spirit and also to His ontological transcendence;
- Our views of gender roles in the Church, seen less in terms of issues of power but more as an expression of essential cosmological distinctions;
- Our understanding and defense of marriage as the union of difference for common projects of responsibility for the next generation, reflecting our deep calling of union with Christ the Other, our transcendental Creator and incarnate Redeemer;
- Our courageous clear discourse regarding the nature of homosexuality which pro-homosexualists call "the sacrament of monism," but which we must engage not moralistically but cosmologically as the tip of the spear of a coming Oneist civilization;
- Our understanding of creation care as meaningful Adamic service of God's handiwork, not inspired by the hermeneutic of mystical non-duality, but maintaining the distinction between us human beings and the rest of creation and between us created human beings and the Creator.

VI. Conclusion

We live in a neo-Babylonian, post-Constantine, once-Christian culture, now dominated by an Eastern spirituality of man-worshiping non-dual mysticism. This context has massive implications for our culture and for our Church. But the Bible has a word for us. It is not a word of flight but of engagement.

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters…; multiply there…seek the welfare of the city…pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. Jeremiah 29: 4-7

The welfare of the city involves art, music, science and commerce, as well as solid marriages and strong families, which show a clear and attractive statement of the beauty of Two-ism. But our attempts to revive/maintain the once-Two-ist structures of our culture (as we should, in valid cultural, social and political action) will not stop the revolution. We must also

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93 June Singer, *Androgyny: Towards a New Theory of Sexuality* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1977), 20, 22. Here Singer states: “[t]he archetype of androgyny appears in us as an innate sense of...and witness to...the primordial comic unity, that is, it is the sacrament of monism, functioning to erase distinction...[this was] nearly totally expunged from the Judeo-Christian tradition...and a patriarchal God-image.”
speak truth "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:14-16) in a hostile situation. Such speech will be costly. If God is willing to grant us a Christian spiritual awakening, it will come in part by making Two-ism known in word and deed, not moralistically but authentically and cosmologically. We must lay before the world the implications of the crucial choice before which all human beings stand—a choice that will determine their eternal destiny.

As theologians and teachers of the Church and of its rising generations, we need to ask ourselves if the majority of contemporary Christians is in any way prepared mentally, theologically and spiritually for the rude battles ahead—for the kind of suffering the New Testament believers encountered in the ancient pagan Oneist empire that our world is beginning to resemble.

In spite of its fabled cruelty, the first century Romans proudly believed that their pax romana was a gift to humanity. Those who ungratefully refused to confess Caesar as Lord and Benefactor were regarded as social subversive ingrates, indeed “haters of humanity,” to quote the Roman historian, Tacitus (AD 56–117). Writing in the New York Times of his day, this ancient Stoic intellectual concluded that denying the “goodness” of this carefully constructed Oneist society was tantamount to downright anti-social “hate speech.” Does this sound familiar?

Hopefully, without sensationalism, I have tried to describe, as I see it, how Oneist spirituality is growing in power around us, and to suggest how we must courageously and respectfully speak and live out the Gospel truth of Two-ism, whatever it costs, if future generations of Christians—our children and grandchildren—are to keep the faith and change the world through their Gospel witness.

The situation can discourage us. The onus of responsibility we feel can discourage us, but as Two-ists, discouragement cannot be the final word. We must look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, Who, at the End of Daze, when the seductive Oneist non-dual Lie of Advaita is finally exposed, will be Two-istically confessed by all as LORD, for the glory of God, transcendent Creator and condescending, loving Redeemer. And we look to the encouragement of Scripture, Jeremiah 32:36, taking the promise of old Israel as finally also true for the New:

"Now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence': Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them...I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

Just as we must love God with all our heart and soul in faithfulness to His truth, know that He loves His people throughout history with all His heart and soul.