

A Postmodern Cosmotheology

Cosmology is a branch of astronomy concerned with the study of the nature of the universe as a whole entity. The word cosmology is derived from the Greek *kosmos*, meaning harmony or order. Cosmologists are interested in the formation, evolution, and future of the universe and its constituents. Cosmology deals with the ways in which humans locate themselves in relation to the cosmos, seen as the totality of everything. The scope of religious cosmology is more inclusive than a strictly scientific cosmology (physical cosmology) in that religious cosmology is not limited to empirical observation, testing of hypotheses, and proposals of theories.

Today we are living in a “golden age” of cosmology and cosmological physics, given advances in astrophysics, particle physics, string theory, and the enhancement of the various means and methods of conducting research into the macro- and micro realms of the universe. Currently, there is a strong and growing interest in the intersection of theology and cosmology. Cosmology, astronomy, and theology have figured centrally in the discourse about the cosmos since antiquity. The advances in cosmological physics, combined with the pioneering work of Nikola Tesla, Buckminster Fuller, Nassim Haramein, Teilhard de Chardin, and Thomas Berry call for the construction of a new theological model of cosmology. As per the pioneering work of those mentioned within these pages, past and present, the ingredients are in place and ready to assemble.

Each religion has its own particular sources of authority— texts, canons of scripture, revelations, sages, prophets, enlightened ones, chains of tradition, and so on. And each reveals, transmits, and certifies its privileged knowledge of the cosmic order. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism all concur that there is an order to existence—a reality and set of life circumstances and conditions that humans did not make, and in principle cannot change. Human beings did not produce themselves, nor did they create light and darkness, time and space, or day and night. Humans did not vote these conditions, laws, and principles into being, and they cannot vote them out of existence. Rather, the cosmos establishes the givens of existence and constitutes the prerequisites of human experience. Specific religions may have respect for other religions and their claims, but they generally do not view their particular cosmology as being identical to other religions, or that necessarily lead to or are compatible with them. Rather, a particular religion tends to assume that only by adhering to its distinctive teachings can humans either repair the breach with the cosmic order, or prevent one from happening. Because the cosmologies of the various religions have no agreed upon common ground as humans concoct them, they are not interchangeable. Nonetheless, the evidence points to a singularity that is common to them all—an electric envelope of ambient light/love out of which all of existence, experience, and knowledge flows and returns. And this reality exists irrespective of the names that different cultures, religions, and science may ascribe to that envelope. Known by a multitude of names, Christ, Yahweh, Allah, the unified field, the singularity etc., it is the same universally. Like the sea, everywhere it is wet, and its taste is salty. Stories connect the past and present to the future, honoring and respecting our ancestors and us. All stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. All beginnings lead purposefully toward futures that draw the past and

present toward them like invisible electromagnets, just beyond the visible horizon. The future already exists and is pulling individual and collective history toward it in a grand orchestration of meaning and purpose. But it is visualized only by those who refuse to entrench in a static view of things. As primary tools of learning and teaching, our repositories of mythology, lore, and legend contain perennial truths that bring order to a confusing world. Embracing a paradigm of the unified field that has evolution as its dynamic allows a perspective of the world that is moving toward a future different than the past and present, yet builds on them both.

“The future belongs to a different kind of person with a different kind of mind: artists, inventors, storytellers—creative and holistic ‘right brain’ thinkers” (Daniel Pink, author).

Today’s fragmented world has no overarching story that unites and instills hope or offers a glimpse of what the future holds. The postmodern age of religious, scientific, and cultural pluralism has mainly given rise to multiple, disconnected mini-narratives lacking a unified cosmology that holds them all together. Modernity past valued objective logical thinking, with an emphasis on absolute truth and a consensus on morality, ethics, and law. By contrast, postmodernity claims that all knowledge is relative, derived from a self that interprets reality according to its own subjective whimsy. Persons today are complacently content to live out of their own relative sense of truth without a shared big story, retreating into their small stories and private individualism. This leaves little room for a single, coherent, universal worldview that allows for the healthy integration of difference, diversity, and absolute truth. How can we find meaningful ways to retell the story of the Ambient One in the midst of a world and society filled with competing stories? First, the answer must begin with the natural world, as the divine communicates to us primarily through it, our first primer and bible. Not to experience the natural world as revealing perennial secrets is to miss the first principle in telling the new story. Second, in order to perceive the natural world as the transparency that it is, one must begin with the wonder and curiosity of a child, for children are naturally given to see things integrally, unencumbered by traditional educational methods. Third, a quest for the answer must also begin with the cardinal unifying premise that spirit and matter (spirit-matter) are paired in a seamless electro-magnetized synthesis, the ultimate substantial and evolving mystery whose final stage is resurrection, energy returning to the source from which it came.

In the pre-institutional, contemplative gospel tradition the name Christ was considered descriptive of the universal truth of matter and spirit working together as one, gratuitously inclusive of all, no exceptions. Implying a universality of the divine presence, Scripture records that Jesus, the Christ incarnated in human form, declared “I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd” (John 10:16, NLT). In creating a new story for the age, these unifying truths best serve as the primary and compelling message of all religion and all science. We live in a network of overlapping stories that constantly give rise to creatively new stories that lend fresh meaning, novel rhyme and vital connectivity to our existence. Only within a bigger field and wider frame will science, spirituality and education approach teaching the most comprehensive story of the

universe, and our human roles in it. The author proposes that the spiral motif and the energy that shapes it offers a revealing no-frills answer, one that has universal application and a sacred common denominator.

“It is all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned a new story” (Thomas Berry).

If the world no longer avails itself of medieval science, politics, medicine, and means of travel, it makes sense to update medieval systems of theology that shape outdated views of God and the biblical narrative. In the Western world, radical updates on the New Testament message seem to occur every five hundred years. Ironically, Luther’s bold reforms occurred about five hundred years ago in 1517, when his ninety-five theses ignited the Protestant Reformation. That reform was long overdue in addressing the abuses and inadequacies of the institutional church. Like other reformers, Luther was censured, condemned as a heretic, and suffered three excommunications—from his religious order, the emperor, and the papacy. Even so, the evolution of human consciousness dictates that today’s heresy will eventually become accepted, becoming tomorrow’s orthodoxy in need of revision and reformation. Those who pride themselves on their orthodoxy are often those who fear mental adventure, refusing to expand their worldview or think things anew. Yet, without adventure there can be no coming to truth. It has been demonstrated over again that institutional religion and outdated orthodoxy cannot be relied upon to lead the way toward an evolving understanding of the whole. By history, religious institutions are inclined to resist such movements, the very notion of evolution itself still considered anathema to many in those circles. While the time for a revised theology-cosmology is at hand, it will again fall to those in the sciences to take the lead in providing the energy, knowledge, imagination and direction for this novel integration. Optimally, religion, science, and education belong together as an equally yoked and reconciled triad. Unlike today, the medieval concept of university education had integral merit, knowing that the value of science can only be for the deepening of spirituality. Only the wise learn to think with the heart.

“Christ goes away when the mind attempts to behold this wisdom through intellectual eyes; since it is not the intellect that can go there, but the heart” (Bonaventure).

Historically rife with scandal and abuse of power, the western Church has lost its spiritual thread, out of touch with its cosmic essence and core for centuries. Orthodoxy may preserve tradition, but can also be a slave to habit. Domesticating the gospel message for its own tribal purposes, the institutional church does not really understand, much less foster, growth or change. Nor does it have a clear vision of the soul’s psycho-spiritual trajectory, or where history is heading. Its system of beliefs has supported a wide range of toxic consequences, from colonialism to environmental destruction, subordination of women to stigmatization of LGBT people, anti-Semitism to Islamophobia, and clergy abuses to white privilege. Further, such twisted belief systems have been used to justify religious violence seen in apartheid, genocide, slavery, the Crusades, and the burning of heretics and witches.

“Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made” (Immanuel Kant).

So-called Christian nations are often the most militaristic, dominative, greedy, and out of synch with the teacher they claim to follow. Their Savior is often kept on a pedestal, venerated as a caricature on a cross, a piece of jewelry, or a bumper-sticker slogan. Its clerics have traditionally suppressed the feminine, adhering to an exclusive patriarchal mindset that erodes its founder’s message, rendering it institutionally flat, lifeless, and in need of the kind of integral fix the prophet Joel dreamed would eventually burst forth in a future era heralding the onset of the messianic age.

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions” (Joel 2:28, NIV).

Theology is not an independent discipline. It is culturally conditioned, part of the close-knit fabric of any particular age—social, political, ideological, and scientific. The history of the idea of God in the Bible is also time-conditioned, an unfolding and progressive revelation of how Spirit manifests itself in history over deep time. The task of making its message contemporary, seeing what is essential and what is not, has been ongoing throughout. In its time, the message of Jesus was considered progressive, radical, even dangerous and subversive. His forerunner, John the Baptist, referred to him as a “winnowing fan” (Matt. 3:12), a harvesting tool used to separate chaff from wheat, the essentials from the nonessentials of his Judaic tradition. The postmodern era is a call for further winnowing, a contemporary nuancing and refinement in understanding perennial truths worldwide, aided by science. For science tells the other side of the gospel story, affirming the organic presence and evolutionary nature of God in creation. These essential updates do not replace, but affirm and complement the exclusive moral, doctrinal, and juridical aspects of the biblical revelation as conveyed by the church for millennia. The gospel treasures are much too multilayered and wide-ranging to remain the exclusive domain of theologians and clerics.

Truth presented to human consciousness goes through periods of unfoldment. Traditionally, truth goes into organization, and through organization becomes lost again. Periodic reform, updating, and a return to perennial principles are necessary in order to maintain viability.

Most animals shed their skin (or cuticle) in the course of their lifetime. This is how they renew themselves, casting off the dead outer layers, providing a future by growing a replacement underneath for the season that looms ahead, only to repeat the renewal process in cycles. Upon shedding its old skin, the snake remains a snake throughout but with a functionally new covering. Ideas, categories, and concepts are like snake skins to be sloughed off and removed, not once but many times. The swiftly moving age we live in requires, nay, demands that we do the same.

Religion is playing a waning role in developed lands. It has a credibility problem because of relevancy, abuses, and its role in supporting wars and oppressive political regimes. Millennials are leaving religion in droves. The number of Americans ages eighteen to twenty-nine who have no religious affiliation (the “Nones”) has nearly quadrupled in the last thirty years (Jana Riess, RNA graphic). Though spiritual hunger is at an all-time high, many people simply do not feel spiritually enriched or enlightened by attending traditional church services. Belief systems of all kinds are incompatible with each other on the surface. There is a need for objectively verifiable truths common to all, on which all can agree. A return to sacred geometry, in tandem with an understanding of the vibrational scaffolding of the universe, offer the kind of renewing integral transfusion that most sectarian religions do not.

“There is always room for a story that can transport people to another place” (J. K. Rowling).

If theology and cosmology are neither fixed or unrelated fields of study, it is time we find the God of science, or rather, the God *in* science who speaks to, attracts, and satisfies the informed person of today. It only remains for contemporary thinkers to unify what only appears as diverse fields, but in reality are united by a vital life force that whirls and swirls from a universal singularity.

Religious teachings and practices are the most effective when they connect the inner and outer worlds in a unified whole. That calls for theological education to be cosmo-theological (*cosmotheandric*) in scope, including Big Bang cosmology, quantum physics, consciousness studies, developmental psychology, systems biology, sacred geometry, and evolution, along with tradition and Scripture.

(In his book, “Ambient Christ,” the author proposes a timely integral model for that new cosmology, and a viable solution to the holy grail quest).

