

Unity and Progressive Revelation: Comparing Bahá'í Principles with the Basic Concepts of Teilhard de Chardin

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A. Introduction

In the year 1949, less than a decade before the death of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and before the posthumous publication of his books, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith,¹ wrote these words:

The world has — at least the thinking world — caught up by now with all the great and universal principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh over 70 years ago, and so of course it does not sound “new” to them. But we know that

the deeper teachings, the capacity of His projected World Order to re-create society, are new and dynamic. It is these we must learn to present intelligently and enticingly.²

What is the meaning of this statement of the Guardian, claiming that the thinking world has caught up with the Bahá'í principles during the last 70 years? What are the dynamics of this process and what can we expect to find, when scrutinizing the “thinking world” after the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh? Today the Bahá'í Faith has a history of over a century and there

are many indications that the principles of the Bahá’í Revelation have influenced this world, even beyond the influence of the Bahá’í community as such.

The catching up of the “thinking world” with the Bahá’í Principles, as pointed out by Shoghi Effendi, will be the point of comparison of this paper, which attempts to “correlate with the Bahá’í teachings” the corresponding concepts of Teilhard de Chardin, whose books created a sensation in European intellectual circles when they were first published. This correlation will allow a comparison of the Faith with the “progressive movements of today” and promote the study of the “Bahá’í teachings more deeply.”³

Why, we may ask, is this paper introducing Teilhard de Chardin as a representative of the “thinking world” into this comparison, why is Teilhard introduced into this dialogue between the Bahá’í Faith and the progressive movements of today? Norman L. Geisler in his foreword to David H. Lane’s *The Phenomenon of Teilhard: Prophet for a New Age*,⁴ has said the following:

New Age writer of the popular Aquarian Conspiracy Marilyn Ferguson observed that many of the leading lights of the New Age movement claim Teilhard as one of the most influential persons in their lives. Other influences acknowledged include C. G. Jung, Aldous Huxley, Swami Muktananda, Thomas Merton, Werner Erhard, and Maharishi Yogi. Indeed, of the 185 New Age leaders surveyed, Teilhard was the most frequently mentioned of any

person who had most influenced their thinking. If this is the case, then if we are to understand the New Age movement properly it behooves us to take a careful and critical look at Teilhard de Chardin.

David H. Lane further claims that “today, within the Roman Catholic Church in most parts of Europe and America, Teilhardism is the dominant trend. Teilhard is referred to with adulation by many of the ‘progressive’ within the church.”⁵

Wolfgang Smith in his book *Teilhardism and the New Religion* remarks:

Christianity (as personified, firstly, by major contingents of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, and secondly, by a number of Protestant and inter-denominational institutions, such as the World Council of Churches) has begun to turn in the direction mapped out by Teilhard de Chardin.⁶

It has to be noted that these books claim to prove that Teilhardism is untrue and contrary to the Christian message. However, they present the system of Teilhard quite well, and critique it from a conservative, traditional and often fundamentalist Christian point of view, which cumulates in the statement of Rama Coomaraswamy: “The Truth, being timeless and immutable, is clearly immune from such ‘forces of change.’”⁷ This understanding of the truth would equally conflict with Shoghi Effendi’s understanding, when he says for example:

The fundamental principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh⁸ . . . is that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process, that all the great religions of the world are divine in origin, that their basic principles are in complete harmony.⁹

New Age writers and readers, progressive Catholics and Protestants alike, are all looking for new forms of religion, they are looking for something new in the meaning and understanding of today's world. They are the people described by Karen Armstrong in the last sentence of her book about the *History of God*:¹⁰

Human beings cannot endure emptiness and desolation; they will fill the vacuum by creating a new focus of meaning. The idols of fundamentalism are not good substitutes for God; if we are to create a vibrant new faith for the twenty-first century, we should, perhaps, ponder the history of God for some lessons and warnings.

Can man create a new faith? Try as they might, they will end up with something like the New Age faith, or, even worse, with the faith of ideologies that have characterized the last century¹¹ and brought destruction, death and misery to the whole world.¹² This paper is written to investigate a new faith, i.e. the Bahá'í Faith, and the comparison with Teilhard is not intended to be a proof of the truth of this Faith, but could hopefully provide a bridge from modern and post modern thinking to this Faith.

As will be shown below, it is significant that Teilhard de Chardin's ideas have been misunderstood in a similar way than the principles of the Bahá'í Faith. Such misunderstood ideas, among others, are the globalization of this world and world unity, the relativity of truth and the progressiveness of Revelation, the concept of unity in diversity and the harmony between science and religion, between reason and theology.

Teilhard attempted to "integrate pure scientific research with a religious vocation" and tried "to reconstruct science from the perspective of faith."¹³ His books were perceived by the Vatican as a threat to the integrity of the Faith. While "a small number of world-class scientists have taken his ideas seriously . . . the majority of scientists have reacted as defensively as the Vatican theologians."¹⁴ As can be seen, Teilhard was critically evaluated and equally rejected by both sides, by traditional Christian theologians and by traditional scientists.

In what way can the developments in the "thinking world" be seen as caused by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh or as caused by other social dynamics? This is a question for which there is no simple answer, it depends on the worldview of the observer. Even the scientific methodology cannot answer these questions, because history, unlike the natural sciences, does not allow experiments, to prove a causal connection. We can show antecedents and consequences, but the connection between them is, by definition, beyond scientific proof. Therefore, any understanding presented is always

speculative, based on historical facts. The proof of a speculation is in its predictive value, or in its historical results, which again are based more on the way the investigator looks at his data than on any scientific proof.

For example, as a scientific hypothesis we could ask the question: is the Marxist theory of the development of society true or false? Before the breakdown of Marxism as a viable social philosophy, this question would have been answered differently, depending on the worldview of the observer. Today, there is no question that the system did not work in the long run, and even former Marxists will have to admit that. Nevertheless, the failure of that system can again be attributed to different causes, maybe it was not implemented properly, maybe the respective societies were not ready, or maybe the system is just plain wrong and cannot work. All historical analyses are bound by similar limits.

When asking about the influence of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, it is again in the eyes of the beholder, what we see. Sometimes, it appears that a historical finding can shed a closer light on this problem. As will be shown in this paper, when a scientist-philosopher, Teilhard, who has no knowledge of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, comes to conclusions surprisingly similar with this Revelation, one could assume that there is something happening beyond natural and scientifically provable causes. Nevertheless, it could be stated as well, that both these elements are caused by a natural and not religious source, and consequently the outcome

appears similar. And there is no doubt that this will be stated by historians who have the methodological assumption that all effects are due to natural causes.¹⁵ That means if you definitely exclude anything else but natural causes, you will not see anything else. In addition, how do we define here natural versus spiritual or religious, or supernatural causes? These three terms are commonly used interchangeably, but they have different meanings according to the respective theological or philosophical system in which they are used.

In this context Teilhard stated: “However, it is just at this point, in fact, that we meet an initial split in the thinking mass of mankind.” And further:

Beneath an infinite number of secondary differentiation, caused by the diversity of social interests, of scientific investigation or religious faith, there are basically two types of minds, and only two: those who do not go beyond (and see no need to go beyond) perception of the multiple – however interlinked in itself the multiple may appear to be – and those for whom perception of this same multiple is necessarily completed in some unity. There are only, in fact, pluralists and monists: those who do not see, and those who do.¹⁶

The investigation presented in this paper is clearly based on what Teilhard calls monistic understanding or, as we would prefer to say, universalistic understanding or integral vision,¹⁷ on seeing the whole and not only parts, on seeing the unity of the world and not only the plu-

rality of events; and in this point again, Bahá'í thinking¹⁸ and the thinking of Teilhard are akin. This correspondence is one of the findings of this paper, described further below. Consequently, when in this paper the unity principle is the basis of understanding and its method, this cannot be proven to pluralistic thinkers, but neither can they prove this way of monistic thinking wrong, except when they unscientifically take their pluralistic and materialist assumptions as scientific truth, beyond proof. By definition, there is no scientific process that can prove either side as true or false.

Teilhard de Chardin was chosen for this investigation as representing the progressive movements of today. Though written in the first half of the last century, Teilhard's works have a rather significant following today. It has been shown that he is the most quoted author in the writings of the "New Age" literature and does seem to attract many seeking souls of today.¹⁹ In addition there is a rather significant influence of his thinking in today's discussion of religion and of the future of the world, which makes him an author whose importance might be rising, rather than diminishing. There are a number of books available about him and his books are available in new editions.

The following chapters will describe the method of investigation used in this paper, will compare the Bahá'í principles with basic concepts of Teilhard's writing, and will explain how they differ and why and how they function in the given context in a corresponding fashion.

B. Unity Method of Investigation

A word here about the method of this investigation. William S. Hatcher writes;

In particular, the refusal of many practicing scientists to give serious attention to fundamental philosophical and metaphysical questions has undoubtedly retarded development of science itself as well as creating an intellectual milieu in which immoral and anti-social uses of science and technology are more easily accepted both by the public and by the intellectuals.²⁰

The fundamental philosophical questions as expressed by Teilhard are the way of looking at this world, from a monistic or universal and spiritual point of view or from a pluralistic and materialistic point. These different points of view obviously influence the methodology of any investigation, which will result in different findings of the inquiry.

The correspondence between the Teilhardian and the Bahá'í thinking will determine the method of this investigation, because any method has to be appropriately adjusted to the topic of the investigation. Following the above mentioned characteristic of a monistic or universalistic point of view, this investigation will keep the unity of the investigated topic in focus and in this process this approach will be verified and demonstrated. This circular way of thinking, i.e. to prove a method while applying it, and then again concluding back from the result of the investigation

to the justification of the method, which had made the findings possible, seems to be required whenever the investigation surpasses a simple counting and describing of elements and their material causation.

This approach appears to be necessary and uniquely justified whenever the meaning and higher level of understanding, in other words the spiritual, is focused upon. We have to keep in mind that basic assumptions of any investigation are never proven, they are applied and prove or disprove themselves during the process of application.

In other words, the method of investigation is not determined by detecting causes and effects in a materialistic and physical sense, but by finding the meaning of the elements or parts in the respective whole. For example the tax on tea was not the cause of the American Revolution in the same sense that the legal rule of taxation is the cause of government money or as a virus is the cause of an illness — and even there are several other causes involved, because not everyone exposed gets every illness. The tax on tea was only one elements or historical fact, which in the understanding of the colonials became meaningful and an element in the forthcoming revolution. The tea leaves in the Boston harbor did not cause anything, except maybe stomach problems for the fish population. But the meaning of the act of protest in the whole self awareness of the colonists was creat-

ing a new meaning and only in this sense a “cause” for rebellion and war.²¹

This investigation will, in a modest way, follow the method which can be called “ganzheitlich,” or “integral,” i.e. based on the “wholeness” of being. It proceeds in three steps, indicated by the level of inquiry as presented in the following scheme:²²

Level of Inquiry	Description of Inquiry	Example
Level I Text	Key texts form Bahá’í and Teilhard; Issues of translation, terminology	Attraction - Love; Unity-Wholeness; Reason - Spirit
Level II Context in Parts	Relationship compared in systems on the level of elements, parts, plurality	Unity in gender, religion, and peoples of the earth
Level III Context in Wholeness / Unity	Relationship of the Parts and the Whole (Teil und Ganzes), Holon Teilhard: Unification and evolution; Bahá’í: Unity and progressive revelation; The world as a Whole	Vienna school of thought: Spann, Gabriel (Solov’ev), Wucherer-Huldenfeld; ²³ The “Integral Whole” and in USA more recently Ken Wilber’s “Integral Vision” ²⁴

If the wholeness, the Unity of being, is the guiding principle of the investigation then these three steps are consistent with such an investigation and can be applied in any inquiry comparing such systems to each other.

Comparison of Bahá'í Principles with Teilhard's basic concepts

In the following comparison only short passages from the Bahá'í and Teilhardian texts will be quoted and a referral to the Appendix will indicate the context and the quote of these sections. The number of comparison and the letter of the text will indicate the context and the source of the quote. (For example 1a indicates the appendix 1 and the text under a.) In the spirit of independent investigation, which is a Bahá'í principle as well, the interested reader is invited to read the texts independently from the interpretation of this writer and come to her own conclusions. A comparison of the reader's own conclusion with the findings of this article could be a most valuable improvement on this paper.

It has to be considered that the writings being compared were not only originally presented in different languages, but also in different theological, philosophical, and metaphysical systems of understanding. While both texts are here quoted in their English translation, the theological, philosophical, and metaphysical context requires a consideration of norms of translation as well, which is attempted in this paper and needs further study.²⁵

It should be noted that the selection of texts is certainly not comprehensive and exhaustive, it is intended to give credence to the interpretations presented in this paper and to stimulate further readings.

Comparison 1 (cf. texts in Appendix 1)

Bahá'í: Unity in diversity

Teilhard: Unity and multiplicity,
the one and the many

On the issue of philosophical translation, we have to note that the term "diversity" or its French equivalent is not a term used by Teilhard. Teilhard usually talks about unity and wholeness and multiplicity, or plurality and complexity. The Bahá'í Writings present the future development of the world as unity in diversity (1a,b,c).²⁶ Teilhard is interested in the physical and spiritual relationships of unity and diversity and how they relate to each other (1f,g).²⁷

Consequently, in the chosen excerpts the corresponding term for diversity is plurality, multiplicity, and even fragmentation (1e). Complexity is also used as a central description of the fact that unity and diversity (or complexity) increase together, not in opposition to each other. So we can state that an increase in complexity and multiplicity will demand a higher level of unity. The Bahá'í "watchword" of "unity in diversity" (1c) does not analyze the relationship of these two concepts but uses them together, indicating, in a similar way, that they are complementary and not contradictory concepts, in the same way as Teilhard understood the concept of unity and plurality or multiplicity.

Teilhard sees the world as a world in evolution and therefore explains that the one and the multiple are not opposed to each other; actually he states that the one is born from the multiple and the unity is

woven from the plurality in a synthesis (1i). Teilhard presents the discourse of the complementary relationship between the one and the many, between the whole and its parts and between the unity and diversity. This philosophical topic of the whole (“das Ganze”) and its parts was further developed by Leo Gabriel and by Wucherer-Huldenfeld²⁸ in the concept of the integral whole.

A more recent development of the concept of the integral whole is presented by Ken Wilber, who uses the concept of Holon to indicate that each whole is actually composed of many parts, as well as being itself a part in a greater whole. This holistic process is described as a fundamental principle of all reality, from subatomic particles, to atoms, to molecules, to cells, to organisms, and humans, continuing into the awareness of humans, forming different levels of holons even there. So what is a part on one level of being is a whole on a lower level, and constitutes with other parts a whole on the next higher level.²⁹ Consequently, Wilber concludes “Reality as a whole is not composed of things or processes, but of holons. Composed, that is, of wholes that are simultaneously parts of other wholes, with no upward or downward limit.”³⁰ While more explicit, Wilber follows in that matter Teilhard and Koestler.³¹

Summarizing the new literature about this issue it can be stated that unity and multiplicity are concepts that are used not only in the relationship between the whole and the parts, but also in the relationship between the parts related to each other (1g). We can speak of an increasing-

ly higher level of unity, Teilhard begins with the atom or subatomic particle and develops this throughout the universe. The increasing unity and increasing complexity of the elements or parts indicates the increasing level of these elements in the whole of the cosmos, which he describes as cosmogenesis, indicating that this relationship is on the basis of the evolution of the world. Studying the phenomenon of man, Teilhard sees in human development the apex of this evolution and anticipates an even higher level of unity in the future evolution of the world, for which he coins the word “anthropogenesis” (1g).

The Bahá’í concept of unity in diversity is a basic idea that includes the development of the whole world community and it is aptly described by Shoghi Effendi as a unity that does not suppress the elements by which it is constituted, such as ethnicity, climate, language, and traditions, which all constitute this unity (1c). Before this, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá anticipated the Bahá’í community to “offer to the entire world a vibrant model of unity in diversity” (1b). Bahá’u’lláh laid the groundwork for this development, when He called humankind to purge the vision of men and to perceive this “unity in diversity, of variation and oneness, of limitation and detachment” stating that this will “wing our flight unto the highest and innermost sanctuary of the inner meaning of the Word of God,” thus connecting the vision of this new unity of the world with His Revelations (1a).

It needs to be noted that the term “unity” is not a univocal concept. This

becomes immediately clear when it is applied to different levels of existence. First of all, when we speak of the unity, or oneness of God, we only mean that there is only one God, and as much as this term is used in the Bahá'í writings, Bahá'u'lláh has the following to say about it:

*And if I attempt to describe Thee by glorifying the oneness of Thy Being, I soon realize that such a conception is but a notion, which mine own fancy has woven and that Thou hast ever been immeasurably exalted above the vain imaginations, which the hearts of men have devised.*³²

Bahá'u'lláh stresses the unity of all the Manifestations, but this does not imply a sameness of the human aspect or station of the Manifestation. This is clearly expressed in the Bible, where Christ indicates that John the Baptist is the return of Elias, even though no human identity is assumed and the Baptist could justifiably deny such identity.³³ In the same sense every Manifestation is the return of all the prior Manifestations, a unity in the Divine Station or Spirit, yet all different in Their historical and human shape.

When we speak of the unity of mankind, we talk about something different again, we talk about a unity that is based on a plurality, and we talk about a unity in diversity. The unity of an organism, such as a human being, needs to be applied in an analogous manner, but is different from the unity of humanity.

Teilhard, in his book *The Phenomenon*

of Man, has developed a vision of the whole world not only in evolution but also in unification, in wholeness, which he calls unimpeachable and describes as a “system by its plurality, a totum by its unity, a quantum by its energy; all three within a boundless contour” (1e). At this point the ontological placement of Teilhardian thinking needs to be noted. Wucherer-Huldenfeld has not only clarified the ontological roots in the Scholastic tradition of Teilhard's thinking but has additionally explained that this thinking is based on the unity of matter and spirit, of unity and diversity, and in this understanding it is especially important to note that these concepts describe the reality of the cosmos in which these seemingly contradictory concepts are not opposed to each other, but dependent on each other. Therefore, Teilhard frequently remarks that unification does at the same time differentiate the parts, so the parts and the whole are in an integral relationship, where the increase of unity requires an increase of diversity.³⁴

In concluding, it can be stated that the Teilhardian concept of the whole and its parts is not only congruent with the Bahá'í watchword of unity in diversity, but can provide an understanding of this watchword in modern thinking. A solid understanding of the Teilhardian concept of unification is not only comparable with the Bahá'í thinking about wholeness and unity, it adds understanding and conceptual assistance to the Bahá'í teachings and allows the Bahá'í scholar to grasp the Bahá'í concept of unity in diversity

“more deeply.”³⁵

Comparison 2 (cf. texts in Appendix 2)

Bahá’í: Independent Investigation

Teilhard: Our age an age of science

Again we have to consider that the concepts used by Teilhard are not directly translatable into Bahá’í concepts. The Bahá’í Writings are theological and revelatory texts. Teilhard, who was no stranger to theology and revelation, clearly states that his investigation of man and of the universe is not based on theology – he describes it as purely and simply a scientific treatise (2e). When he concludes that truth is nothing other than the total coherence of the universe, he makes, in his understanding, a scientific statement (2e). The same is true when Teilhard declares that the truth of the human being is the truth of the universe (2f). Teilhard even acknowledges that this understanding of truth is a new thing, is something enormous and something the universe has given birth to in our times of scientific research (2g).

The text from Bahá’u’lláh states the same facts in theological language; “Looking and pondering” at the “world” will make the world “unveil” itself before “thine eyes” and will “reveal what God has inscribed in it.” It will give you “clear explanations” and make you “independent” from other opinions (cf. 2a). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in interpreting Bahá’u’lláh’s words adds the social benefit of this approach, stating “once every soul inquireth into truth, society will be freed from darkness of continually repeating the past” (2b). The independent investiga-

tion of reality (or truth, as stated in other passages) is one of the Bahá’í principles stated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (2c). Teilhard has understood this unity of the truth and the need, or as he would claim, the modern obsession with investigating it. In another statement, Teilhard directly called this attitude of science and this need to understand the truth of this world the new “religion of evolution” and an experience of conversion that encompasses all thinking people today.³⁶

The understanding of reality, the looking and pondering at the world, reveals to humankind the truth, which God has inscribed into the world. God has given man the ability to investigate this truth. Teilhard seems to be a witness to this ability and he found the vestiges of the truth of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh in investigating this world, commensurate to his capacity. This development could be demonstrated in many other philosophers and scientists, Teilhard (2g) seems only to be an outstanding example of this recognition of the truth from scientifically studying this world today. It is important that only in a view that looks at the whole, looks at the universe as a “Ganzheit,” an integral whole, this vision will emerge, reinforcing the Bahá’í understanding of the unity of the world.

In his writings about unification and the whole and its part, Teilhard has presented his worldview under the concept of evolution or progress. This new understanding of history has to be investigated in the next section in order to understand the congruence of these two approaches better. The human reason, or ability to

understand the world as a whole, is seen here as a special ability that is the basis of scientific progress. The relationship between reason and reality, the ability of humankind to understand the world and the relations of its parts to each other and to the whole, is the aspect considered by Teilhard in his writings.

How science as a human capacity relates to the object of scientific study is a question of fundamental importance. Ashbrook and Albright in their book *The Humanizing Brain, Where Religion and Neuroscience Meet*,³⁷ express similar thoughts when they say:

In understanding the brain, we seekers may come to understand how we become the human beings that we are — our genetic inheritance, our cultural variations, and our divine destiny.³⁸

They further claim in the same venue: “God is the ‘self evident’ and ‘dynamic source’ of all reality as experienced and expressed by human beings.” They discuss the attempted creation of God in the human image by the thinkers of Enlightenment, from Newton, Feuerbach, Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche and conclude:

Today, postmodern perspectives remind us of the constraint of context, the pluralisms of perspectives, and the constructions of the mind. Even though, all theories of projection must account for that screen upon which the projection is directed. Meaning embraces meaning making as well as meaning discovery!³⁹

In conclusion it can be recognized that the Bahá’í principle of “independent investigation of the truth” is not only a personal challenge to all people of today, it is also a mandate towards the scientific enterprise of the future. It is not only the individual person who is obligated to investigate the truth; it is also, in Teilhard’s words, an obligation towards the “patient, prosaic, but cumulative work of scientists of all kind” (2h). Teilhard even states that “the universe, in its totality and unity, inexorably forces itself on our attention.” And he describes this situation “to be a burden to us, to fascinate us, to exalt us” (2h).

Bahá’u’lláh has stated of His revelation: “The universe is pregnant with these manifold bounties, awaiting the hour when the effects of its unseen gifts will be made manifest in this world.”⁴⁰ Believing in this statement, should we not recognize the birth of this new understanding? Should we not perceive the offering of the manifold bounties of the Manifestation of God in the progress of science and investigation? It appears to me that Teilhard has aptly gleaned the fascination as well as the burden and obligation of this nascent worldview; we all, individually and cumulatively, in our personal lives and in our scientific enterprises are compelled to seek, in acceptance of the principle of the independent investigation of truth.

Comparison 3 (cf. texts in Appendix 3)

Bahá’í: Progressive Revelation,
Harmony of Science, Religion

Teilhard: “God of Evolution,” “Christ
the Evolver,” “Cosmic Christ”

In this comparison we again encounter the need to use the concept of translation norms and we will see how initial distinction of the process will result in the unity of the findings. The Bahá’í Writings, as quoted, talk about progressive revelation, while Teilhard speaks about evolution and the development of the cosmos, from the atom to the human, as a scientific concept. Additionally, he himself integrates or synthesizes this evolution of the cosmos with the physical concept of the point Omega and the theological concept of the Eternal or Cosmic Christ (3h). The translation in this case will be to extrapolate the biblical, mostly Pauline concept of the Cosmic Christ into the Bahá’í concept of Manifestation. Later on, we will exemplify this translation in the Return of Christ from a Bahá’í and Teilhardian perspective as well. Here it has to be explained why world evolution is comparable with progressive Revelation.

While Teilhard envisions the Eternal Christ as the cause and motor of the progress of the world to the point Omega and calls him the Christ of Evolution, he is painfully aware that a new perception and understanding of the Christian message is required to be effective in this context of our time. So he states:

The fact is that Christianity has already been in existence for two thousand years, and the time has come (as it does for every other physical reality) when it needs to be rejuvenated by an injection of new elements.

(cf. Appendix 6e,f, quoted from 6g)

These needed new elements are expressed in the new understanding of the Christian message in the light of evolution, which is at the core of Teilhard’s worldview.

The Bahá’í concept of progressive revelation has to be seen in a twofold manner. From the perspective of the world the revelation is aptly described as progressive; from the perspective of the Unity of the Divine Manifestations it is better described as successive, because there is no progressive difference from one Manifestation to the next, except in the form the Manifestations reveal Themselves to humankind. Any progress from one Revelation to the next is, therefore, a function of the recipients of the Revelation, on which the appearance of the Revelation depends, in order to be understood. Consequently, the progressiveness of the successive Revelations is totally dependent on the progress of humanity, which is the addressee of every new Revelation.

Bahá’u’lláh, therefore, uses these terms interchangeably in the original language. The distinction occurs in the English translation by Shoghi Effendi,⁴¹ according to the context, as in the following passage:

*Contemplate with thine inward eye
the chain of successive Revelations
that hath linked the Manifestation
of Adam with that of the Báb. I
testify before God that each one of
these Manifestations hath been
sent down through the operation
of the Divine Will and Purpose,
that each hath been the bearer of a*

specific Message, that each hath been entrusted with a divinely-revealed Book and been commissioned to unravel the mysteries of a mighty Tablet. The measure of the Revelation with which every one of them hath been identified had been definitely foreordained. This, verily, is a token of Our favor unto them, if ye be of those that comprehend this truth. . . . And when this process of progressive Revelation culminated in the stage at which His peerless, His most sacred, and exalted Countenance was to be unveiled to men's eyes, He chose to hide His own Self behind a thousand veils, lest profane and mortal eyes discover His glory.⁴² [emphases added]

Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that the progress of the world is a “principle and ordinance of God” (3a). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His interpreter in the Bahá’í Faith, further develops this thought. Vividly He describes the divine institution of religion as a dynamic, evolutionary concept and includes into this evolution of the “divine reality” all the human achievements of this “century of life and renewal” in “science, art, industry, and inventions” (3b). This compares directly with the statement of Teilhard that the universe has been appreciated “as an organic whole, advancing towards an every higher degree of freedom and personality” (3f). Teilhard concludes correctly, without being able to appreciate the prophetic character of his enunciation, that humanity needs and wants this new form of religion (3f and 3g). He explored

the evolution of the cosmos from a scientific point of view in his book *The Phenomenon of Man* and then, in a theological reflection, he placed the universal and cosmic Christ (using Pauline formulations) at the same point Omega, which he had scientifically anticipated (3h).

This seems to be a mysterious coincidence, or an indication that the Bahá’í Revelation is influencing the development of human thought. Teilhard, coming from the scientific perspective, ends up with the same conclusions, which before him were clearly expressed in the Bahá’í writings, originating from the Revelation of the Prophet of God. A more evident, astounding, and unanticipated result of these two lines of investigation can hardly be found.

There is commonality in the approach of those two lines of thinking; they both start with the unity and wholeness of the world of man and of the cosmos. While Teilhard expresses himself in a scientific manner, his basic understanding of the meaning of the world is religious, is formulated in the tradition of the Catholic Church following the Gospel of Christ. We can consequently compare the materialistic and reductionistic philosophical background of modern science on the one hand, with the fundamentalist, literal, and legalistic tradition of Christianity, as expressed in protestant denominations and in the Catholic Church, on the other. It might well be that historically these two traditions were not developed independently from each other, but rather demonstrate that the religious misconstruction of reality

has resulted in an opposing development of science, which inadvertently has not solved the problem, but participated in the same problem as its point of departure.

So we could suspect that the materialistic orientation of modern science was developed in opposition to a similar, mainly legalistic, and repressive understanding of Christianity, but has not shed the common misunderstanding of reality. The spiritual sins of the fathers were crippling the scientific attempts of the children. It could be speculated that the rapid increase in scientific progress and findings in the last century might indicate that these problems are being solved and we could further suspect and venture the thought that this has something to do with the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, since that progress of science was predicted by Him.

The rejection of Teilhard’s thinking by both sides of this divide should not surprise us. As Teilhard says, “There are only, in fact, pluralists and monists: those who do not see, and those who do.”⁴³ We can further conclude from this finding that there will never be harmony between the reductionistic and materialistic understanding of science, as well as between the repressive and legalistic misunderstanding of the message of Christ as presented in traditional Christian theology on the one hand, and the Bahá’í Faith on the other. It is the concept of Unity that harmonizes religion and science; it is again the concept of the Whole, or the Unity of God’s Revelation in all religions, which will bring harmony and unity to the

different religions of the earth.

It is clear that Teilhard was keenly aware that the world is not static or without evolution, as appears to be the standard Christian doctrine (3e). When the history of the world is reduced to the salvation of individual souls, any evolution of the universe is of little or no importance. Teilhard came to the conclusion that human progress is of little importance to Christians within that worldview. Among others, that is the same difficulty Teilhard’s Christian critics express clearly today.⁴⁴ The fact that this understanding is particular to Western Christianity, and especially developed in the Protestant denominations, as well as in different form in the Catholic Church, will not further be pursued here.⁴⁵

In concluding, it can be stated that the Teilhardian approach originated in a scientific treatise and developed into the scientific understanding of the progressive nature of the cosmos, so that Teilhard finally could harmonize this idea with religion in the theological concept of the Cosmic Christ. This scientific process is a parallel to the kerygmatic (related to the proclamation of faith) thought in the Bahá’í way of thinking.

In the Bahá’í Writings the point of departure is the Will and Command of God, and this new recognition and manifestation of Divine Will in our time results in the same understanding of the progressive nature of reality, of spiritual reality and of human reality, or civic reality in the progress of sciences and arts. We now can say that both ways are legit-

imate, nevertheless, we will avow that the scientific progress is a consequence of the divine intervention in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. This conclusion is a result of the comprehension of the unity of the cosmos, of the wholeness of the world and, again, cannot be proven scientifically, as scientific discourse is not based on this or any other fundamentally metaphysical understanding of the world.

The choice is not a scientific one, the choice is a matter of the heart as Teilhard has indicated (3i) using the same concept of the heart as Bahá'u'lláh, who said in the Hidden Words:

O My Brother! Hearken to the delightsome words of My honeyed tongue, and quaff the stream of mystic holiness from My sugar-shedding lips. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart.⁴⁶

Comparison 4 (cf. texts in Appendix 4)

Bahá'í: Attraction and love as principle of Reality

Teilhard: Love and reason as principle of existence in "spirit-matter"

This comparison will be brief, basically comparing only two texts. For every reader who has patiently proceeded to this point, it has become apparent that the principle of Unity, of the Whole, is the idea that connects the thinking of Teilhard and his understanding of the

evolution of the world with the Bahá'í principle of Unity and Progress in God's creation. While this understanding is clearly biblical, as Teilhard would insist, the Bible in the Christian tradition is usually not interpreted in that way, because it originated in a world that could not fathom this idea, in a world two thousand years removed from our times. This explains the resistance of the conservative Catholic hierarchy and of fundamentalist Protestants to Teilhard.

Teilhard perceives the world in a unity and in progress, consequently he sees the world as unity and the spiritual and the physical or material are for him not two different entities. In fact, the insistence of Christianity on individual salvation from the evils of this fallen world and its eager effort to secure this salvation in the next world culminates in the crucial question: "Am I saved?" Inquiring whether the world is saved, if the world is going in the right direction, or if there is an evolution of the world at all, is not a question for the typical safety seeking Christian. But it is a question of the modern thinker Teilhard, who restlessly and passionately pursued this idea throughout his life.

He solved this question in a newly conceived idea of evolution, which is only partially and rather accidentally dependent on Darwin or his followers, but is a result of a clearly mystical and personal seeking human being who was thoroughly imbued in the Christian message and, at the same time, was deeply involved in scientific research. Therefore, Teilhard came to the conclusion of the unity

between spirit and matter in the famous statement of the “universal multiple”: *“Spirit which is born within, and as a function of matter”* (italics in the original, see 4b). This statement centers and summarizes many of Teilhard’s writings.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses the same thought in the quoted text (4a) and many more times in His other Writings. Separation brings “hurt and harm” and is actually the source of evil, while “union of created things yield most laudable results.” He further explains that this unification is a principle of the constitution of this world: “From the pairing of even the smallest particles in the world of being are the grace and bounty of God made manifest.” He adds a principle of importance in understanding how unity and plurality is connected positively and mutually in the world, when he continues: “the higher the degree, the more momentous the union” (4a).

When the pairing of even the smallest particles of the world are in principle the same as the union of the highest degree, i.e., the union between spirit and matter, the unity of the universe, the unity of all people of the world with each other and the union of their hearts, the union of humanity and God which we call religion, then the same is expressed in the Teilhardian principle that spirit and matter are not separated but a function of each other, that the spiritual world of the heart and soul and of God and the material world of physics and causality are not opposed, but are mutually interdependent. This is the nucleus of the attractiveness of the Teilhardian worldview to

modern thinkers of today. The same idea of the Whole and Unity of the world in progress could be the center of attraction of modern seekers to the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

Comparison 5 (cf. texts in Appendix 5)

Bahá’í: Service to an ever advancing civilization, work as worship

Teilhard: Service in a “religion of the Earth”

This comparison is even more important as it deals with a rather new element of religion expressed by the Bahá’í Faith, i.e. work as worship and the value of the improvement of civilization of humanity (5a,b,c,d). This element is crucial as well in understanding the development of the world during the last century and the future development of modern societies. Consequently, it was an important concern of Teilhard as well.

It should not be forgotten that Karl Marx had started his career by defining work as the most important factor for man. In order to become himself, man has to create himself through work and, consequently, religion is in the way of this process and has to be eliminated. Marx certainly was not the only one at that time who promoted these ideas, nevertheless, he was the most successful one, albeit posthumously. The young Marx in his philosophical period saw God as an “alien being” in opposition to the new man, the “socialist man,” “who is nothing but the creation of man by human labor,”⁴⁷ and concludes that atheism must be the negation of this idea of God. Men had developed religion and the idea of God as cre-

ator as an “opium of the people” to produce a false happiness, because he did not understand that man does create himself by human labor.⁴⁸ This understanding of religion is frequently expressed by Marx: “Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself.” In order to free man from all alienation, it is primarily postulated by Marx, that religion and the concept of God cannot be real, cannot exist, or at least will disappear rapidly, as soon as the new understanding of man is accepted.⁴⁹

The unexpected worldwide success of Marxism in the last century is certainly related to many issues, but the acceptance of work as an essential element of human beings was definitely not the least important fact. Teilhard, as well, speaks constantly about this issue and reminds the Christians that they are not participating in this modern “religion of the earth” as he calls it. A dedicated scientist, he was keenly aware that the present form of Christianity is not in touch with the modern world, so he expressed his need by saying “The God whom I seek must reveal himself to me as a savior of man’s work.” (5e) This situation of the world, dedicated to the earth in work and science, is for Teilhard the driving force to request a change of religion, to ask for a new religion and to express his unceasing demand, that Christianity must and could accept this need of the world of modern man. This desire cumulates in the statement that “Christ must be born again.” (6e)

Teilhard states that the “supreme value

of life consists in devoting oneself body and soul to universal progress” (5g) and that one can understand “worship” only in a devotion of “body and soul,” to “the creative act” and to the fulfillment of oneself in “hard work and intellectual exploration.” (5h) In a sense, Teilhard goes farther than Marx in elevating work as a central obligation for humanity and he certainly does not see it in opposition to religion, as a matter of fact, he builds his religion on this truth.

It is certainly remarkable in this context that Bahá’u’lláh, born of an aristocratic family in Persia, founded the Bahá’í Faith during the 19th Century, just at the same time as Karl Marx wrote his papers declaring that God had to be eliminated because of man being a product of his labor. And is it not even more of historical importance that Bahá’u’lláh placed work in the center of its principles, has equated work with worship of God, and has declared that humanity was created to promote civilization through work?

Another, not unrelated fact is the recognition that during the next half century, Teilhard in looking at the phenomenon of man noted the same need for a religion of the earth, a religion that does not turn people against the world in which they live, a religion that dedicates itself to progress and improvement of the world, a religion that does preserve the deepest claims of Christianity, but develops these claims into a powerful force in the modern world. Teilhard expected this change to come from the inner meaning of the biblical message, as

best expressed in the letters of Paul and as found in the gospels. And in the process of unification of all of the religions of the world, as prophesied in the Bahá’í Faith, this might yet have to happen, even though it is not really visible today.

In this context ‘Abdu’l-Bahá talks of a spiritual civilization and a material civilization, compares them to body and soul and states that one cannot live without the other. Again a concept of Unity of two elements, in the past seen as contradicting each other, now declared as being both necessary and mutually supporting each other (5c,d).

Comparison 6 (cf. texts in Appendix 6)

Bahá’í: Return of Christ in
Bahá’u’lláh

Teilhard: “Christ must be born again”

As student in the 1950s, when I first was exposed to the writings of Teilhard, his statements that Christ must be born again did not elicit any special attention from me, neither has it caused his critics to start an elaborate opposition, as they have against many of his other ideas. Teilhard’s ideas of change, of evolution, were critically perceived as being opposed to orthodoxy, as were his positions on original sin and the evolution of man. I understood these statements probably exactly as Teilhard meant them. Progressive Christians, Catholic or Protestants, all knew that some change, some development is going to happen, that will make their religion more meaningful in the light of the achievements and horrors of modern times.

The ecumenical council Vatican II soon

became the hope of many, and its pastoral constitution is based in its conception on Teilhardian ideas. The development since, especially under the present pope has directed the Catholic Church in a more retro and conservative position. However that may be, nobody expected Christ to be born again and everybody, including probably Teilhard, accepted this statement as a symbolic rather than historical event. Teilhard in his statement expresses the need for change, for the rebirth of Christianity, but Christ is seen as Redeemer who will combine heaven and earth but “will take his place supernaturally (as seen by our faith) at the actual focus-point upon which the rays of evolution naturally (as seen by our science) converge” (6f).

On the other hand, the idea that is clearly expressed by Bahá’u’lláh and in the Bahá’í Writings is that the return of Christ has happened, has happened in this world as a historical event, has happened the same way it happened before: a human being, a man, born from a woman, is filled with the spirit of God and proclaims to be the Messenger of God, just like Jesus proclaimed His special function in manifesting His heavenly Father (6b).

Christians by and large accept the future return of Christ as a symbolic event and hardly believe it could happen in their lifetime; Bahá’ís on the contrary accept some of the biblical statements as symbolic, like the return in the heavens and the public and visible judgment over good and bad, but accept other biblical statements, like the return as a thief in the night and the rebirth, in a more concrete

and historical fashion. So Shoghi Effendi formulates as the most important distinction between all previous religions, especially Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith, the fact that Bahá'ís believe that the return of Christ has happened in history, has happened on this earth and has happened in the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, as it has happened before.

In spite of this fact, and following the trend of thought of Teilhard as explained above, reading his numerous statements indicating the needed changes, the need for a new religion and, yes, the need for Christ to be born again, we must sense a strong desire, an obvious passion and a mystical experience that leads the Teilhardian thinking in the direction of the return of Christ. It appears as though Teilhard felt the truth but could not perceive it, because of this knowledge and preconceived understanding. This is, as we know, the position of many Christian seekers, who just cannot believe what the Bahá'í Faith teaches.

One could deplore this fact, and one could hope that it will change. In any case, for Teilhard we can only say that one can sense a providential meaning in the fact that Teilhard was never seriously or at all confronted with the message of the Bahá'í Faith; he certainly never mentioned it in all the books that I have read. Because of that fact and because he could not overlook the need of his times and the lack of the previous religions to provide for humanity, what it clearly seems to need, he was forced to do two things. He firstly described the need of modern man more substantially and more deeply

than anybody else, and secondly, he searched the religions of the world, not only Christianity, but also Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as the Chinese forms of devotion for an answer, which he could not find there. He further looked with open eyes into present day Christianity and found it lacking as well. As a devoted Christian, he did not give up his faith but deepened it and tried to find a solution in his faith for himself and for all other seeking souls of his time.

This made Teilhard a beacon towards a land he could not enter. Like a modern Moses, he stood on the mountain and looked into the Promised Land, without the possibility to go there. Teilhard has been called the prophet of the last century by followers of New Age spirituality. His statement that Christ must be born again certainly places him as close as possible into the new Jerusalem, announced by Bahá'u'lláh. Yet, he could not see Him who "verily, came down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time" (6b). Neither did Pius IX to whom these words were originally directed by Bahá'u'lláh. The Pope either did not understand the message or did not accept any of it. Teilhard was open and seeking and in his writings prepared the way to a better understanding of the Bahá'í message, to a better unification of all religious of the world, and to an open invitation to all seeking souls.

E. An Integral Vision

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in one of His prayers stated the following about the privilege and special status of humanity, especially in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the hidden truths that are embedded in the heart of hearts of all that is:

O God, O Thou Who hast cast Thy splendor over the luminous realities of men, shedding upon them the resplendent lights of knowledge and guidance, and hast chosen them out of all created things for this supernal grace, and hast caused them to encompass all things, to understand their inmost essence, and to disclose their mysteries, bringing them forth out of darkness into the visible world! “He verily showeth His special mercy to whomsoever He will.”

O Lord, help Thou Thy loved ones to acquire knowledge and the sciences and arts, and to unravel the secrets that are treasured up in the inmost reality of all created things. Make them to hear the hidden truths that are written and embedded in the heart of all that is. Make them to be ensigns of guidance amongst all creatures, and piercing rays of the mind shedding forth their light in this, the “first life.” Make them to be leaders unto Thee, guides unto Thy path, runners urging men on to Thy Kingdom.

Thou verily art the Powerful, the Protector, the Potent, the Defender, the Mighty, the Most Generous.⁵⁰

This paper was written with this impli-

cation and in following Shoghi Effendi’s encouragement, on whose behalf it was stated:

Study history, economics, sociology, etc., in order to be au courant with all the progressive movements and thoughts being put forth today, and so that they could correlate these to the Bahá’í teachings. What he wants the Bahá’ís to do is to study more, not to study less. The more general knowledge, scientific and otherwise, they possess, the better. Likewise he is constantly urging them to really study the Bahá’í teachings more deeply.⁵¹

It is hoped that this paper will have shown how close the progressive thinking of our days is to the Faith we profess, how deeply the Bahá’í principles have penetrated modern thought and how much they direct human civilization towards the goal of increasing humanness, in spite of the apparent breakdown of modern societies. Teilhard knew that Christ must be reborn, that a new religion must unfold and he described what he saw in his studies of the phenomenon of man. Not knowing about the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh he stretched the Christian message as far as possibly in the direction of the new worldview he had gained from science.

According to the Bahá’í principle of the unity of all religions of God, the only concept he could not understand was the issue of the return of Christ and the return of all Manifestations. One could employ the modern colloquialism that on this point he could not think “outside of the box” of Christian tradition but, by

giving Christ the epithet of “cosmic” and “universal,” he came as close as possible to the concept of Divine Manifestation, trying to fit Christian tradition into his new concept of the “God of evolution.”

As pointed out above, this process has not ended with the death of Teilhard and the publication of his work in 1955. Some of the New Age writers have tried to continue in Teilhard’s view, but have not been able to really comprehend the message of this writer, due to their lack of historical understanding. This was clearly pointed out by Ken Wilber,⁵² who himself continued and expanded the new view of Teilhard and others into a impressive opus, that has been translated into more than 20 languages and has found followers in different lands, especially in Japan and Germany.⁵³

Bahá’í theology is in its beginning stages and will develop together and in dialogue with today’s philosophy. It is this author’s conviction that in spite of Teilhard’s Catholic background and Wilber’s Buddhist influence, both authors, if understood in the Bahá’í context, will contribute to the development of a Bahá’í theology, thus promoting the Unity of all Religions of God as proclaimed in the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.

APPENDICES OF TEXTS

Appendix 1

Bahá’í: Unity in diversity

Teilhard: Unity and multiplicity, the one and the many

Bahá’í Writings ⁵⁴	Teilhard ⁵⁵
Bahá’u’lláh	
a) Please God, that we avoid the land of denial, and advance into the ocean of acceptance, so that we may perceive, with an eye purged from all conflicting elements, the worlds of unity and diversity, of variation and oneness, of limitation and detachment, and wing our flight unto the highest and innermost sanctuary of the inner meaning of the Word of God. <i>Kitáb-i-Íqán</i> , p. 160	d) On the other hand the more we split and pulverize matter artificially, the more insistently it proclaims its fundamental unity. <i>The Phenomenon of Man</i> , p. 41
Abdu’l-Bahá	
b) You should strive to create a Bahá’í community, which will offer to the entire world a vibrant model of unity in diversity. <i>The Call into Being</i> , p. 16	e) The cosmos in which man finds himself caught up constitutes, by reason of the unimpeachable wholeness of its whole, a system, a totum, a quantum; a system by its plurality, a totum by its unity, a quantum by its energy; all three within a boundless contour. <i>The Phenomenon of Man</i> , p. 43
Shoghi Effendi	
c) Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá’u’lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remodel its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men’s hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity such as Abdu’l-Bahá Himself has explained. . .	f) The distressing spectacle of the multiplicity of the world and of its present state of disorder, which in the end forces us into an impassioned faith in the possibility of reducing that fragmentation to unity — in that lies the source of various philosophical currents. <i>Towards the Future</i> , p. 40
	g) The One and the Many; whence comes the fragmentation? And how can there be a return to unity? The increasing clarity with which this problem is seen, and the gradual approach to its solution, are probably guide to the stages (some of which are still to come) of anthropogenesis. <i>Towards the Future</i> , p. 40
	i) And now, the world of man — bursting with a new exuberance of energies and desires — disappointed, and yet more than ready to accept a new form — feels all the pain and anxiety of the need for a spiritual orientation. <i>Towards the Future</i> , 41
	j) From the modern point of view, which is governed by the idea of evolution, the one is not merely opposed to the multiple as a total perfection opposed to the sum of imperfections: partially at least, it is born from that multiple. Its unity is, to some degree, woven from the plurality whose consummation and synthesis it ensures. <i>Towards the Future</i> , p. 5

Appendix 2

Bahá'í: Independent Investigation
 Teilhard: Our age an age of science

Bahá'í Writings	Teilhard
Bahá'u'lláh	
a) Look at the world and ponder a while upon it. It unveileth the book of its own self before thine eyes and revealeth that which the Pen of thy Lord, the Fashioner, the All-Informed, hath inscribed therein. It will acquaint thee with that which is within it and upon it and will give thee such clear explanations as to make thee independent of every eloquent expounder.	e) If this book (<i>The Phenomenon of Man</i>) is to be properly understood, it must be read not as a work on metaphysics, still less as a sort of theological essay, but purely and simply as a scientific treatise. The title itself indicates that. This book deals with man solely as a phenomenon; but it also deals with the whole phenomenon of man. <i>The Phenomenon of Man</i> , p. 13
<i>Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh</i> , pp. 141-142	
Abdu'l-Bahá	
b) The first [of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings] is the independent investigation of truth; for blind imitation of the past will stunt the mind. But once every soul inquireth into truth, society will be freed from the darkness of continually repeating the past.	f) Truth is nothing other than the total coherence of the universe in relation to each part of itself. Why suspect or underestimate this coherence because we ourselves are observers? The truth of human beings is the truth of the universe for human beings, that is, the truth, pure at simple.
<i>Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá</i> , 248	<i>Teilhard Lexicon</i> , p. 199
c) Among these teachings was the independent investigation of reality so that the world of humanity may be saved from the darkness of imitation and attain to the truth; may tear off and cast away this ragged and outgrown garment of a thousand years ago and may put on the robe woven in the utmost purity and holiness in the loom of reality. As reality is one and cannot admit of multiplicity, therefore different opinions must ultimately become fused into one.	g) We are given to boasting of our age being an age of science. And if we are thinking merely of the dawn compared to the darkness that went before, up to a point we are justified. Something enormous has been born in the universe with our discoveries and our methods of research. Something has been started which, I am convinced, will now never stop. Yet though we may exalt research and derive enormous benefit from it, with what pettiness of spirit, poverty of means and general haphazardness do we pursue truth in the world today!
<i>Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá</i> , 298	<i>The Phenomenon of Man</i> , p. 278
Shoghi Effendi	
d) The extent of their future undertakings in both continents; their contribution to the Global Crusade to be launched throughout the whole planet; their particular and, in many ways, unique, reinforcement of the work, connected with future Bahá'í research and scholarship, in view of the characteristic qualities of painstaking thoroughness, scientific exactitude and dispassionate criticism distinguishing the race to which they belong, — these are too vast and complex to be assessed at the present time.	h) Thus, from the patient, prosaic, but cumulative work of scientists of all types, there has spontaneously emerged the most impressive revelation of the Whole that could possibly be conceived. . . . Today the universe, in its totality and unity, forces itself inexorably on our attention. Whatever the avenue opened up by our thought or our activity, there it stands, whole and entire, to be burden to us, to fascinate us, or to exalt us.
<i>Light of Divine Guidance</i> , vol. 1, p. 185	<i>Christianity and Evolution</i> , p. 63

Appendix 3

Bahá’í: Progressive Revelation
 Teilhard: “Religion of Evolution,” “Cosmic Progress”

Bahá’í Writings	Teilhard
Bahá’u’lláh	
a) The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquility of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God. <i>Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh</i> , pp. 129-130	e) For such a Christian, accordingly, the universe has ceased to extend the primary of its organic unity over the whole field of interior experience: the operation of salvation, reduced to being no more than a matter of personal success, develops without any reference to cosmic evolution. Christianly gives the impression of not believing in human progress. <i>Christianity and Evolution</i> , p. 126
‘Abdu’l-Bahá	
b) Religion is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore, it must be living, vitalized, moving, and progressive. If it be without motion and non-progressive, it is without the divine life; it is dead. The divine institutes are continuously active and evolutionary; therefore, the revelation of them must be progressive and continuous. All things are subject to reformation. This is a century of life and renewal. Sciences and arts, industry and invention have been reformed. Law and ethics have been reconstituted, reorganized. The world of thought has been regenerated. Sciences of former ages and philosophies of the past are useless today. <i>Promulgation of Universal Peace</i> , p. 140	f) The universe, we may well believe, has now finally and permanently been appreciated by our generation as an organic whole, advancing towards an ever higher degree of freedom and personality. By that very fact, the only religion mankind wants and can henceforth acknowledge is one that is capable of justifying, assimilating and animating cosmic progress. <i>Christianity and Evolution</i> , p. 154
c) Among the bounties of God is revelation. Hence revelation is progressive and continuous. It never ceases. <i>Promulgation of Universal Peace</i> , p. 378	g) As a result, then, of life’s very recent passing through a new critical point in the course of its development, no older religious form or formulation can any longer (either factually or logically) satisfy to the full our need and capacity for worship . . . So true is this, that a ‘religion of the future’ (definable as a ‘religion of evolution’) cannot fail to appear before long; a new mysticism, <i>here and now</i> . <i>Christianity and Evolution</i> , p. 240
Shoghi Effendi	
d) The fundamental principle enunciated by Bahá’u’lláh . . . is that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process, that all the great religions of the world are divine in origin, that their basic principles are in complete harmony, that their aims and purposes are one and the same, that their teachings are but facets of one truth, that their functions are complementary, that they differ only in the nonessential aspects of their doctrines, and that their missions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society. . . . <i>Promised Day Is Come</i> , p. 1	h) Just suppose that we <i>identify</i> (at least in his ‘natural’ aspect) the cosmic Christ of faith with the Omega point of science; then everything in our outlook is clarified and broadened, and fall into harmony. . . . If we are to effect the synthesis between faith in God and faith in the world, for which our generation is waiting, there is nothing better we can do than dogmatically to bring out, in the person of Christ, the cosmic aspect and function which make him organically the prime mover and controller, the ‘soul’ of evolution. <i>Christianity and Evolution</i> , p. 180
	i) Only <i>purity of heart</i> (assisted or not by grace, as the case may be) and <i>not pure science</i> is capable, . . . of overcoming the essential indeterminacy of appearances and of unmistakably disclosing a creator behind the forces of nature – and the Divine underlying the abnormal. <i>Christianity and Evolution</i> , p. 30

Appendix 4

Bahá'í: Attraction and love as principle of Reality

Teilhard: Love and reason as principle of existence in “spirit-matter”

Bahá'í Writings	Teilhard
<p>'Abdu'l-Bahá</p> <p>a) From separation doth every kind of hurt and harm proceed, but the union of created things doth ever yield most laudable results. From the pairing of even the smallest particles in the world of being are the grace and bounty of God made manifest; and the higher the degree, the more momentous is the union.</p> <p><i>Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá</i>, p. 119</p>	<p>b) It (the spirit) in no way represents some entity, which is independent of matter or antagonistic to it, some force locked up in, or floating in, the physical world. By spirit I mean ‘the spirit of synthesis and sublimation’, in which is painfully concentrated, through endless attempts and setbacks, the potency of unity scattered throughout the universal multiple: <i>spirit which is born within, and as a function of matter</i>.</p> <p><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, pp. 107-108</p>

Appendix 5

Bahá'í: Service to an ever advancing civilization, work as worship

Teilhard: Service in a “religion of the Earth”

Bahá'í Writings	Teilhard
<p>Bahá'u'lláh</p> <p>a) All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.</p> <p><i>Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh</i>, 215</p> <p>b) It is enjoined upon every one of you to engage in some form of occupation, such as crafts, trades and the like. We have graciously exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship unto God, the True One. Ponder ye in your hearts the grace and the blessings of God and render thanks unto Him at eventide and at dawn. Waste not your time in idleness and sloth. Occupy yourselves with that which profiteth yourselves and others.</p> <p><i>Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh</i>, p. 26</p> <p>'Abdu'l-Bahá</p> <p>c) Bahá'u'lláh taught that hearts must receive the Bounty of the Holy Spirit, so that Spiritual civilization may be established. For material civilization is not adequate for the needs of mankind and cannot be the cause of its happiness. Material civilization is like the body and spiritual civilization is like the soul. Body without soul cannot live.</p> <p><i>Abdu'l-Bahá in London</i>, p. 30</p> <p>d) God gave this power to man that it might be used for the advancement of civilization, for the good of humanity, to increase love and concord and peace.</p> <p><i>Paris Talks</i>, p. 42</p>	<p>a) The God whom I seek must reveal himself to me as a savior of man's work.</p> <p><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, p. 123</p> <p>b) We are now finding that the concentration of scientific research, focused ahead on the extension of the ‘phenomenon of man’, is opening up an even more astonishing prospect in that direction: that of a progressive ‘humanization’ of mankind.</p> <p><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, p. 140</p> <p>c) In spite of many differences in detail, a rapidly increasing number of our contemporaries are henceforth agreed in recognizing that the supreme value of life consists in devoting oneself body and soul to universal progress – this progress being expressed in the tangible development of mankind.</p> <p><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, p. 123</p> <p>d) To worship was formerly to prefer God to things, relating them to him and sacrificing them for him. To worship is now becoming to devote oneself body and soul to the creative act, associating oneself with that act in order to fulfill the world by hard work and intellectual exploration.</p> <p><i>Christianity and Evolution</i></p>

Appendix 6

Bahá’í: Return of Christ in Bahá’u’lláh
 Teilhard: “Christ must be born again”

Bahá’í Writings	Teilhard
Bahá’u’lláh <p>a) Wherefore, should one of these Manifestations of Holiness proclaim saying: “I am the return of all the Prophets,” He verily speaketh the truth. In like manner, in every subsequent Revelation, the return of the former Revelation is a fact, the truth of which is firmly established. Inasmuch as the return of the Prophets of God, as attested by verses and traditions, hath been conclusively demonstrated, the return of their chosen ones also is therefore definitely proven. This return is too manifest in itself to require any evidence or proof.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Kitáb-i-Íqán</i>, p. 154</p> <p>b) O POPE! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained . . . He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof. On His right hand flow the living waters of grace, and on His left the choice Wine of justice, whilst before Him march the angels of Paradise, bearing the banners of His signs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh</i>, p. 83</p>	<p>e) After what will soon be two thousand years, Christ must be born again, he must be reincarnated in a world that has become too different from that in which he lived. Christ cannot reappear tangibly among us; but he can reveal to our minds a new and triumphant aspect of his former countenance. I believe that the Messiah whom we await, whom we all without any doubt await, is the universal Christ, the Christ of evolution.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, p. 95</p> <p>f) The great event with which our day is pregnant, and whose birth we must assist, may well be, surely, that these two spiritual currents may feed, swell, and fertilize one another, and so by synthesis, make Christianity break through into a new sphere: the very sphere in which the Redeemer, combining in himself the energies of both heaven and earth, will take his place supernaturally (as seen by our faith) at the actual focus-point upon which the rays of evolution naturally (as seen by our science) converge.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, p. 148</p> <p>g) The fact is that Christianity has already in existence for two thousand years, and the time has come (as it does for every other physical reality) when it needs to be rejuvenated by an injection of new elements.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Christianity and Evolution</i>, p. 147</p>
Shoghi Effendi <p>c) You should point out to the believers that, by belonging to other organized religious bodies, we are not acting openly because we firmly believe Christ has come again – so how can we belong to a church, which does not accept Bahá’u’lláh and His message as the fulfillment of Jesus’ message and the reappearance of Jesus Himself?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Light of Divine Guidance</i> vol. 1, p. 107</p> <p>d) The churches are waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ; we believe He has come again in the Glory of the Father.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Light of Divine Guidance</i> vol. 1, p. 123</p>	

Notes

1. For readers who are not familiar with the Bahá'í Faith a very brief introduction will be added here. The Bahá'í Faith understands itself as being the most recent revelation of the One Religion of God, that was presented to the world in many different steps by the founders of all previous religions, such as Krishna, Buddha, Moses, Christ, Mohammad, and in our age the Báb (1819-1850) and Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1893). Bahá'u'lláh was born a nobleman in Persia, today Iran. The Báb, a forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, was executed through a firing squad 6 years after His announcement of the new revelation in 1844. Bahá'u'lláh was a prisoner for 40 years, first of the Shah of Persia in Teheran and then exiled to Baghdad, from there exiled to Constantinople to Adrianople and finally confined in the prison city of Akka. On His death He transferred the leadership of His Cause to His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá who guided the faith and visited many European countries and the USA in 1912. In His testament He transferred the Guardianship of the faith to Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957), His Grandson, who at that time was a student in Oxford England. Under his Guardianship the Bahá'í Faith grew to a world religion, today the fastest growing of all world religions. Counting approximately 6 million members, the Faith today is spread out over the whole world, second only to Christianity.
2. *Importance of Deepening*, p. 152.
3. "Shoghi Effendi has for years urged the Bahá'ís (who asked his advice, and in general also) to study history, economics, sociology, etc., in order to be au courant with all the progressive movements and thoughts being put forth today, and so that they could correlate these to the Bahá'í teachings. What he wants the Bahá'ís to do is to study more, not to study less. The more general knowledge, scientific and otherwise, they possess, the better. Likewise he is constantly urging them to really study the Bahá'í teachings more deeply. One might liken Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them." Excerpt from a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 19 April 1947, *The Importance of Deepening*, pages 228-229.
4. Quoted from the foreword by Norman L. Geisler, in David H. Lane, *The Phenomenon of Teilhard, Prophet for a New Age* (Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia, 1996).
5. Ibid. page 81.
6. Wolfgang Smith, *Teilhardism and the New Religion, a Thorough Analysis of the Teaching of Pierre Teilhard of Chardin* (Tan Books and Publishers Inc., Rockford, Illinois, 1988).
7. Quoted from David H. Lane, ibid., page 89. The full quote states:
Rama Coomaraswamy (*The Destruction of the Christian Tradition*, 129-130) is quite correct when he states: These concepts of 'progress' and 'evolution' are the most pernicious pseudodogmas and pseudomyths that the world has ever produced. This is not to state that they do not exist, but their existence is partial and of quite limited applicability, and never without their antithesis in degradation and degeneration. The Truth, being timeless and immutable, is clearly immune from such 'forces of change.'
8. Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1893) is believed by Bahá'ís to be a Divine Manifestation (like the other Prophets of the world religions) and the founder Prophet and of the Bahá'í Faith. See endnote 1.
9. Shoghi Effendi (1896-1957), the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, in *The Promised Day Is Come*, p. 1. Compare in this context the paper from Moojan Momen "Relativism: a Basis for Bahá'í Metaphysics" in *Studies in Honor of the Late Husayn M. Balyuzi: Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions*. Vol. 5, ed. Moojan Momen (Los Angeles; Kalimat Press, 1988).

10. Karen Armstrong, *A History of God, The 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1994).
11. The proposition that “man makes religion, religion does not make man,” was anticipated by Feuerbach and then popularized by Karl Marx in, “Towards a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” in *Karl Marx selected writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford University Press, 1977), page 63. In this sense, it could be stated that the New Age might attempt, in a post modern attitude, to solve the problem of atheistic Marxism and Armstrong’s statement seems to be based on a similar way of thinking, as if religion was a creation of man.
12. Stephane Courtois et al. in: *The Black Book of Communism, Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1999):

These are the “cold” statistics of the victims of communism as described in this book page 4:

U.S.S.R:	20 million deaths
China	65 million deaths
Vietnam	1 million deaths
North Korea	2 million deaths
Cambodia	2 million deaths
Eastern Europe	1 million deaths
Latin America	150,000 deaths
Africa	1.7 million deaths
Afghanistan	1.5 million deaths

13. Charles S. Henderson in Chapter 5 of his book *Towards a Science charged with Faith* (John Knox Press, 1986), revised and expanded under *God and Science*, p. 1.
14. Ibid. p. 1.
15. This was concisely expressed by Moojan Momen in “Bahá’í Scholarship – Definitions and Perspectives,” published in the *Bahá’í Studies Review*, vol. 3.2 (1993) when he described the “scientific” or “academic” methodology: “The methodology of the academic study of the Bahá’í Faith is that everything is explicable from the outside, that any text or episode in Bahá’í history is explicable from the exter-

nal circumstances. Everything has an explanation in terms of psychology, sociology, economics or whatever.” And later: “On the other hand, the academic study of the Bahá’í Faith is based on a methodology that is basically irreligious, in the sense that it is methodology which assumes that God does not intervene in the world.

16. Teilhard, “How I believe,” page 101 in *Christianity and Evolution* (Harcourt Brace & Company: San Diego, 1969).
17. This was presented in a consequent continuation of Teilhardian thinking, and based on the tenets of perennial philosophy (Plato, Plotinus), and of developmental psychology, as well as the transpersonal psychology by Ken Wilber, see *A Theory of Everything, An integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality* (Shambhala: Boston, 2001), especially Chapter 3, page 33 *passim* and throughout his other works.
18. In *Dialog and Universalism*, Polish Academy of Science, 11-12/1996, Published monthly by “Centre of Universalism” (Warsaw University: Poland, 1996), several authors from three different continents present contribution to the topic “The Bahá’í Faith, Universalism in Practice,” Guest Editor: Jan T. Jasion. The different aspects of Universalism and the Bahá’í Faith are described especially by Udo Schaefer, “Bahá’u’lláh’s Unity Paradigm” (p. 23), and Jan T. Jasion: “The Universalism of the Bahá’í as reflected in the writings of Shoghi Effendi” (p. 105) and Phyllis Sternberg Parrakis, Bahá’í Universalism: “Uniting Religious Belief and Social Ideology,” (p. 17).
19. David H. Lane and Wolfgang Smith, *ibid.*, see endnotes 6 and 8.
20. *Dialog and Universalism*, *ibid.* p. 14.
21. This methodological distinction between cause in the physical sciences and meaning in social science was clearly developed by Othmar Span in this *Gesellschaftslehre* (Sociology) (Verlagsbuchhandlung Quelle

- & Meyer, Leipzig, 1923), who based his science on the philosophical theory of Wholeness (*Ganzheit*) and developed a system and methodology appropriate to this worldview, following the “*philosophia perennis*” of Aristotle, Avicenna, Aquinas and the romantic German philosophy. It is not surprising that one of the few American studies on Othmar Spann totally missed this point and only looked at the political errors and mistakes Spann made. In the abstract to his dissertation John J. Haag (*Othmar Spann and the Politics of “Totality,” Corporatism in Theory and Practice* (Dissertation, Rice University, Houston Texas, 1969), clearly reveals his materialistic prejudice when he defines philosophy as “verbiage” stating: “stripped of its Romanticist and metaphysical verbiage, Spann’s social and political theory revealed itself to be little more than an elitist variant of Pan-German nationalism.” This one-sided misunderstanding of Haag is already expressed in the Title of his dissertation where he talks about the Politics of “Totality,” a word Spann did not use in his philosophical “verbiage,” even though “Total” and “Totalität” were key word in Nazi propaganda. Obviously, Spann misjudge the growing National Movement in Austria and Germany, but he certainly was in good company in this misunderstanding, when considering that the Cardinal of Vienna, Innitzer, tried a similar rapprochement with Hitler with devastating consequences, i.e. a storm of Nazi youth at his Residence and the murder of a priest, who could not hide himself, like the Cardinal.
22. Othmar Spann has described these three methodological steps as the method of his *Gesellschaftslehre* (ibid. page 531), of any historical or sociological investigation: 1. Recognizing the whole of the area of investigation, 2. Recognizing how the members or parts relate to each other and 3. Recognizing how the individual parts have to be understood in their respective whole. In the process used in this paper

these three levels have been reversed to provide a systematic method of comparison.

23. See below, note 26.
24. Ken Wilber has extended and continued in the Teilhardian tradition, including the Perennial Philosophy, the German Idealists and Process Philosophy of Whitehead. Ian Kluge, writing about Whitehead and Chardin, placed this development into the Bahá’í Theology and concludes: “we may conclude that by studying other process philosophies such as Whitehead’s and de Chardin’s, we will discover new ways to enrich our understanding of the Writings themselves. For Bahá’ís this is valuable as a deepening of their knowledge of their religious faith; for non-Bahá’ís, this is valuable as shedding new light on a relatively un-explored aspect of humanity’s intellectual history” (Ian Kluge, “Process Philosophy and the Bahá’í Writings: An Initial Exploration,” at www.geocities.com/iankluge/ian_kluge_witehead-dechardin.rtf 2003).
- Similar and more extended thoughts can be found in Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality, The Spirit of Evolution*, Shambalha, Boston London, 2000, see chapter 4 (“A View from Within,” pages 115-158) and chapter 9 (“The Way UP Is the Way Down,” pages 329-354). The Opus of Ken Wilber deserves further study, especially in its closeness to the philosophical understanding expressed in the Bahá’í Writings.
25. The translation norms as described by Gideon Toury, *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, (Jerusalem: Academic Press, 1980), are adapted from the paper by Diana Malouf, “The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh, Translation Norms Employed by Shoghi Effendi,” in *The Vision of Shoghi Effendi, Proceedings of the Association for Bahá’í Studies Ninth Annual Conference, November 1984, Ottawa Canada* (Ottawa: Association for Bahá’í Studies, 1993). Malouf indicates that Translation Studies are a relatively

new field (*ibid.* page 131), the translation from different thought system to another are even less studied. In this paper, the English translation of both the Bahá’í writings and the Teilhardian texts are assumed of having established sufficiently the norms of translation from the different languages, the task of applying the norms for translating of one system of thinking to another will be attempted in this paper, a study of these issues of epistemology as applied to the task of comparing modern thinkers with the Bahá’í writings is still outstanding.

26. The pages of the Appendix are indicated by the number and the corresponding text is indicated by the following letter, so that 1abc means referral to the texts a, b, c on the Appendix 1.
27. Othmar Spann, a contemporary of Teilhard, has a similar understanding of the whole and the parts, the one and the many. Compare this brief and formal definition of “Gesellschaft” (Othmar Spann, *Gesellschaftslehre (Sociology)*, 1923) Seite 509 (translated by this writer):

Expressed in a short phrase, the formal concept of Society can be defined according to the universalistic understanding as follows: Society is spiritual and acting Wholeness - a formula consisting of three characteristics: “Wholeness,” which is the most general form or essence of Society (this is in contrast to the individualistic understanding of Society); “spiritual” is a closer characterization of this wholeness; insofar as it is not the biological, not the living-substantial wholeness, which characterizes society (as it is biologically present in an organism) “acting” is the second attribute of the social Wholeness, on the one hand this expresses its purely serving nature, for example in the economy (economy is a mean towards goals); on the other hand, this attribute expresses the quality, the realization, and the unfoldment (self presentation) of the spiritual.” The German word “Ganzheit” is here translated as Wholeness, the temptation to translate it with the simpler concept of Totality (see John J. Haag, *ibid.*) must be resisted, as this word is equally available in

German (Totalität), but never used by Spann for obvious reasons. The rather awkward English translation of “Ganzheit” with Wholeness cannot be avoided, since only this concept conveys the idea of a whole, a healthy and integrated unity, which are all descriptions used for Ganzheit by Spann in his universalistic understanding of the whole and the parts.

28. The thoughts presented here are strongly influenced by Augustinus Karl Wucherer Huldenfeld, *Ursprüngliche Erfahrung und personales Sein: (Original Experience and personal existence)*, p. 434-445, who writes about the new history of the integral opposition, between the unity and multiplicity, which is expressed in the idea of the integral whole. Unity is based on Unification and Wucherer discusses the thoughts of Teilhard about multiplicity and unity, quoting Teilhard who stated that the human thinking has never stopped to deal with the question of unity and multiplicity, spirit and matter and Teilhard expresses his opinion that this problem is on the basis of all of physics, philosophy and religion. (pp. 406-420.) In another paper in *Zur Aktualität des integralen Denkens Leo Gabrieles (About the Actuality of the integral thinking of Leo Gabrie)* by Augustinus Karl Wucherer-Huldenfeld, (presented at the 100 year anniversary of the Birthday of Leo Gabrie, at the University at Vienna November 27, 2002), he describes that unity, which seems to contradict on a lower level with diversity and multiplicity, can be established on a higher level of being. Teilhard de Chardin, for example, mentions the law of entropy in the physical world, which is not valid on the biological level. In *The Phenomenon of Man* (Harper and Row, New York, 1975), page 66.
29. This concept is extensively explained in most of Wilber’s books; see for example *The Essential Ken Wilber, An Introductory Reader*, Shambhala, Boston and London, 1998, chapter “Holons and Hierarchy,” page 55 and “Reality Is Made

- of Holons," page 61.
30. Ibid. p. 61.
31. Ibid. p. 56. In the following parts of this paper the continuation of the Teilhardian concept of unity by Wilber will not be commented upon, except in the final summary of this paper.
32. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, LXXV, p. 123.
33. Mathew, 17:10-13:
- And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.*
34. Wucherer Huldenfeld, Ibid., page 406 passim about Teilhard: *Zur Ontologie der Vereinigung* (About the ontology of unification), where he not only explains Teilhard's scientific origin in the scholastic tradition of the Jesuit order, but also develops the Teilhardian thinking about unification into the idea of the integral whole, see note 30.
35. Shoghi Effendi, ibid., see endnote 3.
36. In spite of many differences in detail, a rapidly increasing number of our contemporaries are henceforth agreed in recognizing that the supreme value of life consist in devoting oneself body and soul to universal progress — this progress being expressed in the tangible developments of mankind. It is a very long time since the world has witnessed such an effect of 'conversion'. This, surely, can only mean that in forms that vary (communist or nationalist, scientific or political, individual or collective) we have without any doubt been watching for the last century the birth and establishment of a new faith; the religion of evolution.
- Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, ibid, page 123.
37. Ashbrook and Albright in their book *The Humanizing Brain, Where Religion and Neuroscience Meet* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1997).
38. Ibid. Introduction p. XXIX.
39. Ibid. Introduction p. XXXI.
40. Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 60
41. This writer expresses his thanks to Iraj Ayman, who made him aware of this translation issue.
42. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XXXI, pp. 74-75.
43. see endnote 16.
44. Among others, compare the books by Lane and Smith, see endnotes 6 and 8.
45. The Western theological theory of satisfaction, a rather legalistic concept promoted by Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) implying that God had to send His Son to earth in order to satisfy divine justice through His own Son's death in order to save humanity, is today rather generally accepted in Western Christianity, even though it was never defined as a dogma in the Catholic Church. See Karl Rahner, *Kleines Theologisches Wörterbuch (Brief Theological Lexicon)*, Herder Bücherei, Freiburg i. Br., Germany 1961 ("Satisfaktionstheorien"). A vivid description of this theory and its influence in Catholic Theology to this day is presented by James Carroll in *Toward a New Catholic Church, The Promise of Reform*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, 2002, Page 77 passim, contrasting Salvation with Revelation as the central message of the Bible.
46. Bahá'u'lláh: *Persian Hidden Words*, p. 33
47. Towards a Critique of Hegel's *philosophy of right*, 1843, quoted from Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 63.
48. Ibid. p. 95.
49. Under postulatory atheism, we understand a worldview, which postulates the non-existence of God from the assertion of man's dignity and freedom, based on

- his ability to change the world. See Augustinus Karl Wucherer-Huldenfel, 1994 “Marx und Freud: Zur Problematic der Struktur des Atheismus innerhalb ihrer Religionskritik” (Marx and Freud, Essay about the problematic of the structure of atheism in its critique of religion). Further, *passim* in his volume of selected studies I, 1994 and II, 1997 (Böhlau Verlag Wien, Köln, Weimar, 1997); this concept is expressed especially in the section about the “structure of the postulatory atheism,” pp. 447–450.
50. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Prayers*, p. 103.
51. See endnote 2.
52. Ken Wilber in: *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality, The Spirit of Evolution* (Shambhala, Boston & London, 2000), pp. 654-655, where he states that these writers overlook the dialectic of progress.
53. Ibid. pp. 115-119 where he describes the “View from Within” quoting Teilhard stating: “*Things have their within*. I am convinced that the two points of view require to be brought into union, and that they soon will unite in a kind of phenomenology or generalized physic in which the internal aspect of things, as well as the external aspect of the world will be taken into account. Otherwise, so it seems to me, it is impossible to cover the totality of the cosmic phenomenon by one coherent explanation.” Wilber has developed this within in his “All quadrant all level” theory that has *explicated this statement* of Teilhard into a full-fledged philosophy, or a “theory of everything” as one of his book titles claims. It is hoped that this new opus of Wilber will find its Bahá’í interpreter, as other modern philosopher have. Compare the paper of Ian Kluge dealing with Heidegger and existentialism, “The Call into Being: An Introduction to a Bahá’í Existentialism” (www.bahai-library.org/articles/existentialism.kluge.html).
54. In the Appendix all quotes from the Bahá’í writings are copied from: Bahá’í Library CD-ROM (Laguna Hills California: Digital Era Productions, 2001).
55. The following books of Teilhard are quoted in the Appendix by name and page: Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (Harper & Row, New York, 1975). *Christianity and Evolution* (Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, 1974). *Towards the Future* (Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, 1973) *The Teilhard Lexicon, Understanding the language, terminology and vision of the writings of Teilhard de Chardin* (Brighton: Sion Cowell, Sussex Academic Pres, 2001)