earth. It is hard to imagine that the totality of Christian culture, as we have known it to date, is based on a grand delusion.

The facts of the resurrection story are relatively unimportant. Even if some researcher of impeccable quality could prove that he or she had discovered the actual earthly remains of Jesus (thus negating the *fact* of resurrection), it would not undermine Christian faith in any serious way. What happens in the experience of the resurrection is that the close followers of Jesus begin to rediscover their Savior's presence with them, and they experience this presence with an intensity and reassurance that transcends the quality of his earthly/human presence among them. To make sense of this new experience, the frightened and excited disciples start telling a story: "It was as if...." The story helps to contain the vision, the dream, the myth. The mystery is made tangible and its challenge accessible. And the story spreads like wildfire, all the time gathering coherence and clarity. But the more the storytellers focus on the *meaning* of the story, the more the story loses its essential meaning. In time, logic threatens the myth, and historical fact distracts from the challenge of the mystery.

What is most gripping in the resurrection myth is its power to transform. At a personal level, it depicts the frayed, bruised, humiliated Jesus exonerated in his essential, human dignity. At a structural, systemic level, it signifies that the political, cultural forces of injustice and oppression do not win out in the end. And at the global (wholistic) level, it projects a world of unrealized possibilities, opening up into an eternal future. Resurrection elevates human yearning into infinite proportions and invites us to understand creation (the entire cosmos) as endowed with an eternal destiny. The myth of resurrection opens up global horizons for person and universe alike.

The great Eastern religions speak of reincarnation rather than resurrection. The Eastern spiritual vision comprises a cycle of eternal birth and rebirth. The underlying myth is not fundamentally different from that of Christian resurrection. The cultural expression is different, but not the fundamental mystery which the human heart seeks to comprehend. Whether we embrace resurrection (in the Christian sense) or reincarnation (in the Eastern sense), the important thing is that we do *not* dogmatize either. Once a myth becomes a dogma, it loses much of its capacity to inspire and to enlighten. If the dogma prevails it will eventually become an idolatrous ideology in which truth and meaning become largely, if not totally, subverted. At the end of the day, both resurrection and reincarnation are *human* namings, attempts to make human and earthly sense out of divine,

eternal realities. A humble acknowledgment of this fact provides a far stronger guarantee of truth and doctrinal integrity than the many religious dogmas that have surfaced over the centuries.

The Universal Will to Life

Contemporary science has its own version of resurrection and reincarnation, known as "autopoiesis" (see Jantsch, 1980, especially 10ff., 90ff., 187–91). The concept was introduced by the Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana in the early 1970s. Autopoiesis refers to the ability of living systems to renew themselves continuously and to regulate this process in such a way that the integrity of their structure is maintained and continuously enhanced.

Already in 1926, the South African statesman Jan Smuts was exploring the wholistic nature of evolution. It took a good fifty years for mainstream science to acknowledge his contribution; it will take at least another twenty before these creative insights are integrated in a coherent way. Meanwhile an all embracing concept such as autopoiesis projects the scientific pursuit toward new horizons whereby it becomes a key concept in one of the most promising and provocative interdisciplinary explorations of all time.

Autopoiesis incorporates a range of ideas which taken together gives the quantum vision substance and conviction:

a. It considers everything to be a living system. Dead, inert matter is a perception of the mechanistic worldview of classical science. From a quantum (wholistic) viewpoint, a stone is a crystallization (compaction) of energy, not a lifeless object. The universe itself is not a machine-like entity, but an organism endowed with a highly developed, self-organizing life system, outlined in the Gaia hypothesis (Lovelock, 1979, 1988). Living systems are essentially dynamic (as distinct from static). They grow, change, and adapt. They possess a will-to-live, an amazing and intriguing capacity to regenerate, usually through the cycle of birth-death-rebirth.

b. It holds that every living system has an inherent capacity for self-organization. Contrary to the long-established second law of thermodynamics, which postulates the gradual decline and ultimate extinction of all life forms, scientists are now beginning to acknowledge the capacity for self-regeneration as a more fundamental aspect of nature. In 1947, Conrad Waddington introduced the notion of the "epigenetic process," the selective and synchronized use of structurally coded genetic information (as in DNA and RNA) by

the processes of life in interdependence with their relations to the environment. In the 1970s, Ilya Prigogine (1980, 1984), with his collaborators in Brussels and in Austin, Texas, introduced the notion of "autocatalysis": order through (chaotic) fluctuation, the inherent tendency of living systems to move beyond equilibrium, through instability, to adopt a totally new, life-enhancing structure. And at a cosmic level, Swimme and Berry (1992) postulate a similar self-regeneration process, which they call the "cosmogenetic principle," according to which the evolution of the universe is characterized by *differentiation, autopoiesis,* and *communion,* throughout time and space and at every level of reality.

c. Living systems are rarely static, and if they are, they are likely to atrophy and die from stagnation. Living organisms do not thrive in a state of balanced equilibrium, but usually in a fluctuating restlessness often described as being "far from equilibrium." Living systems, therefore, are essentially *dissipative structures,* a concept introduced by Prigogine in the 1960s for which he won the Nobel prize in 1977.

These are structures with an innate capacity to dissipate anything that comes in to disturb the system. The term "dissipate" is somewhat unfortunate, because what really occurs is *integration* and not *dissipation.* The system is shaken up — usually by an outside influence; a chaotic dysfunctional phase may ensue. The urge toward self-organization or regeneration is invoked (at a subtle, subconscious level, which nobody really understands) and the system evolves into a new and more creative way of being. At the human level, we see this process happen in the case of recovery from illness, trauma, or addiction. We also recognize that recovery may never happen, and death may ensue. But in quantum terms, death is not a meaningless termination; it is a transformation into a more wholistic way of being.

d. Autopoiesis is essentially a learning process. According to Jantsch (1980, 8), evolution is open not only with respect to its products, but also with regard to the process within which it unfolds. Once the human body has developed an immunity to one or other illness, it retains that resource for a whole lifetime and uses it to recognize and ward off the intruding antigen. Proponents of the Gaia hypothesis claim that the same happens at the planetary and cosmic levels on a grand evolutionary scale. Chance and necessity are complementary principles (and not just a biological urge to survive) in what increasingly resembles a mystical, spiritual will-to-life.

e. In quantum terms, the autopoietic process makes the notion of

an alive universe (Gaia) a great deal more meaningful and attractive than the more mechanistic concept of an external agent (God or otherwise) empowering the unfolding process from without. This in itself is not, nor is it intended to be, an argument against an external agent. Rather it is an invitation to take the focus off the *without*, where so much energy and creativity is projected and dissipated, and refocus on the *within* (of all things) where such a reservoir of life and meaning awaits discovery. Once we begin to understand and internalize the sacredness of life from within — ourselves, our planet, and our universe — then the classical academic search for an external agent may become quite irrelevant. Once we genuinely make the connection, the deep realization of the interdependence of all things, we readily endorse the quantum conviction that the *within* and the *without* are, in fact, one and the same reality.

f. Finally, there are the quantum dimensions of autopoiesis itself, a tendency that knows no boundaries, no before or after, a will-to-life that stretches into infinity. The innate driving force of the autopoietic process is something that science, by itself, can never hope to comprehend fully, no more than theologians can ever fathom fully what we understand by resurrection or reincarnation. These concepts, at the different, but complementary, levels of science and theology, are attempts to contextualize within our daily, earthly lives, the pull (urge, desire) toward infinite horizons. St. Augustine seems to have had a profound insight into our infinite yearnings when he wrote: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

Whither Afterlife?

St. Augustine's cosmology had a simplicity to it that proved attractive over subsequent centuries. It was a dualistic view of *this* world and the *next* world. This domain of existence was considered transitory, fragmentary, illusory, sinful, a place of pilgrimage to be endured until, in death, we escaped to the real life beyond. The *next* world was deemed to be eternal, real, and complete in every sense. It, too, had its dualistic poles of heaven (absolute happiness) and hell, (eternal pain and suffering). In Catholic theology we added purgatory, as an interim "place" of purification in preparation for heaven.

In Augustine's worldview, heaven, hell, and purgatory were real physical places. Heaven was considered to be above the sky, hell beneath the earth, and purgatory in some unknown location. Although

we even begin, if we wish to set things right? What's the point in beginning if — as many think — it is already too late?

From a quantum perspective, the impact of impending global disaster needs to be treated with profound theological seriousness. Central to the Christian faith is the Calvary experience, which we tend to explain in terms of personal (or interpersonal) redemption and salvation. But the Calvary experience — and its equivalents in other religious systems — has a symbolic meaning of planetary and global proportion, a dimension largely ignored by orthodox religion and theology.

Liberal theologians of the nineteenth century tended to distinguish between the particular (historical) Jesus and the Christ of faith. In other words, the actual, historical person of Jesus preached and embodied a vision for a new world that had an immediate application to the people of his time (and to those who, subsequently, aligned themselves with Christianity). That same Jesus, besides his specific, personal identity, has a cosmic significance for all people and for the whole of creation. Christian theologians tend to argue that the Cosmic Christ makes no sense apart from the particular, historical Jesus. Without the concrete person, we cannot imagine nor create the universal ideal.

This is where quantum theology differs radically. It considers the Cosmic Christ, the God of universal life and love, whose revelation unfolds over fifteen billion years of (known) evolution, to be the originating mystery from which we devise all our divine personages and images. All the god-figures of the different religions, including Christianity, emanate from this cosmic originating source.

Consequently, all the events narrated in the Christian Gospels, particularly those that impact upon universal human and planetary yearnings — beginnings (e.g., the Infancy Narratives) and endings (e.g., Calvary, resurrection), miracles, parables — are particularizations of a more universal narrative of faith and meaning. They point to something greater than their immediate terms of reference. They offer a universal symbolic significance as well as having an immediate, practical application.

Our Calvary Moment

Taken in its universal sense, the Calvary experience is a symbolic encapsulation of the breakdown and disintegration which is endemic to evolutionary unfolding and a prerequisite for a new

evolutionary threshold from which higher forms of life emerge. In the great Eastern religions, this process is described as the cycle of birth-death-rebirth.

Our world today is in the throes of a Calvary disintegration. Death, destruction, and despair dominate our world scene. Exploitation, violence, and desecration are all around us. Our Western world has adopted a stance of outright denial: we don't want to know the real truth, and we'll do all in our power to subvert it by accommodating a range of addictive behaviors. Thus we trip headlong into chaos, destruction, and eventual annihilation.

It sounds too pessimistic to be taken seriously; so we resort to denial and rationalization. We choose to forget the thousands of species — animal, bird, and plant — that human interference has condemned to extinction. We fail to internalize the horror and disgust of tropical forests being eroded at the rate of one hundred hectares per week. We numb our intelligence to the realization that we have created enough bombs and nuclear arsenals to destroy the world, not once, but several times over. We are immersed in a cultural death-wish of the gravest proportion, one from which we can only hope to escape by some divine miracle.

From a quantum perspective, the miracle has already happened! The Christ-event, with its climax of death and resurrection, with a specific faith content for Christians, has a global symbolic significance of divine rescue. This can be understood as a once-and-for-all event (or experience) in the traditional Christian sense, or as an enduring quality of universal life, manifested in many spiritual trends and scientific discoveries of the recent past. The onus is not on some divine, external agent who can reverse, with sleight of hand, the cumulative destruction we humans have caused. The burden is ours to own and to bear. We are the stewards of creation and the time is at hand to render an account of our stewardship.

It is unlikely that we humans will survive the impending global crisis. Whether it be a nuclear holocaust (possible but unlikely), chronic oxygen-depletion due to pollution of air and water (quite possible), or mass extinctions due to global warming (likely), our species faces virtual extinction, possibly within the next *fifty* to *one hundred* years.

Rather than contemplate the enormity of the disaster, we continue to evoke human good will and some unexpected reprieve — from nature or from God. We need to recall that there have been, not one, but several mass extinctions in the history of our world, and climatic factors usually play a key role. We record destructive

impacts like the extinction of the dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous Era (some sixty-six million years ago), but we fail to appreciate the larger more wholistic, interpretation that this is one of nature's strange and ingenious ways of withholding her creative energy for a new outburst of evolutionary life (Swimme and Berry, 1992, 50–60, 94–95, 118ff. are profoundly informative on this topic). Species emerge and become extinct, land masses surface and become submerged, cultures unfold and decline again, but the evolutionary story of creation moves unceasingly on its infinite trajectory.

We are a dimension of the evolutionary story, *co-creators* but not *masters*. As highlighted so often in this book, our lives make no sense apart from the planet and cosmos we inhabit. We take meaning from the larger reality to which we desperately try to give meaning. In our battle with the so-called "alien forces" of nature, we have now reached a nadir point where we could destroy the whole enterprise, ourselves included (as in a nuclear holocaust). In this grim scenario, we need to remember that the real loser would be our own species. Temporarily, but not permanently, we would have destroyed the processes of nature. However, we would not have destroyed the will-to-life which rapidly would reinvoke its self-organizing, autopoietic potential and begin the co-creative process all over again.

Within a short period of time, possibly within *one hundred* years (a mere millisecond on the evolutionary time scale), the cycle of life would recommence, regenerating human life, possibly within *one millennium*. What previously took billions of years would now happen in a few minutes of evolutionary time. And from the Calvary of Homo sapiens would emerge (in all probability) a new quality of human being, equipped emotionally, intellectually, psychically, and spiritually to become more attuned to the new evolutionary age. Not for the first time in the universe's story would death have given way to resurrection!

The quantum theologian needs to take extinction seriously. Without it the dance of life is fundamentally incomplete. The precise details are unimportant; scientific evidence, compulsively bent on controlling nature, is incapable of engaging with this dimension of our evolutionary story. Our patriarchal consciousness cannot confront the shadow, that dark pain and chaos that serves as a prerequisite for fresh possibilities. The insatiable desire to manipulate and control is the deadly addiction of our age, destined to reap havoc on planetary life. The crisis seems unavoidable; we may not be able to prevent it, but we can anticipate it, enter its painful and paradoxical life-giving energy, and in this way possibly survive it.

We cannot address the future in a serious or comprehensive way without embracing the dark and perilous threat that hangs over us as a human and planetary species. And in quantum terms, we are compelled to assert what seems initially to be an outrageous claim: a radically new future demands the destruction and death of the old reality. It is from the dying seeds that new life sprouts forth. Destruction becomes a precondition for reconstruction; disintegration undergirds reintegration; Calvary is a prerequisite for resurrection.

Quantum Yearnings: Within and Without

Our future, therefore, is about peril and promise, annihilation and fresh possibility. All fields of human learning offer dreams for a new future, and science has engendered some fascinating possibilities. These can be explored in terms of an *inward* and *outward* path, offering complementary rather than opposing strands of development. We have reviewed the imminent prospect of a universal Calvary, with the demise and likelihood of extinction for Homo sapiens. I suggest it will take nothing short of a universal resurrection if we humans are to retain some sense of sanity and hope in the future. Signs of this possible resurrection are already abundant for those who can see with the eyes of quantum vision.

In terms of the inward journey, scientific exploration has moved into the invisible realm of the subatomic world, a hybrid of intense and awesome activity which we can intuit in the heart long before we can, in any sense, apprehend with our human senses. We have shifted the quest for the origin of the universe from what happened in the first minute of time, to the first second, milli-second, and now we talk of the first billionth of a second, a concept which the human mind (at this stage of its evolution) cannot even remotely grasp. Biologically, we have probed the genetic code to a depth that is verging on mystery itself. The word "micro" is one of the most frequently used in modern technology.

Spiritually, the path of the inner journey is frequently traveled today. Religious adherents tend to judge prematurely and harshly the perceived secularism of our contemporary Western culture; this perception often betrays a myopic view that negates the spiritual search of our time in the nonreligious realm. As increasing numbers lose faith in the institutions of state and church alike, people often find themselves adrift in a spiritual wasteland. This is the mythic desert space, which, contrary to popular opinion, does not alien-

Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, and David Griffin. Central to process theology is the conviction that God is responsible for ordering the world, not through direct action, but by providing the various potentialities which the physical universe is then free to actualize. Thus, God becomes a participator in the creative process rather than an omnipotent creator and ruler from without. In the very *becoming* of the universe God also becomes. God's creativity is manifested or revealed primarily in the process of creation itself.

Process theologians offer us the model of a *dipolar* God. The two poles are described by Whitehead as *primordial* and *consequent,* the former relating to the abstract essence of God: free, complete, eternal, immutable, and unconscious; and the latter, referring to God's concrete actuality: determined, dependent, incomplete, vulnerable, and conscious. Both aspects are necessary to comprehend God's activity at any moment in time.

Jantzen (1984) adopts a somewhat similar approach in proposing that we consider the world to be God's body, wherein God risks the embodiment of divine creativity, eliciting a perception of the divine as visible and present to all creation in a palpable way. McFague (1987, 1993) develops this idea at great length, describing such embodiment as a type of sacramentality, celebrating simultaneously something of the world's vulnerability and precariousness but also its uniqueness, beauty, and prodigious creativity.

The dipolar description, and its underlying sense of divine embodiment, is reminiscent of the Christian struggle to reconcile the divine and human aspects of Jesus. Our dualistic tendency is to oppose these two characteristics into conflicting positions which often become irreconcilable. The heart, mystery, and challenge of the Christian faith is that they are totally reconcilable, a conviction often articulated in mystical statements such as: "The glory of God is people fully alive" (St. Irenaeus) or, "God is what happens to people on the way to becoming human" (Gregory Baum).

Nonetheless, the concept of a dipolar God does disturb our desire for intellectual neatness and perceptual simplicity, but as Davies (1992, 183–84) remarks, this is an eminently appropriate model for our quantum age. In the domain of particle physics, we can no longer describe or perceive the electron as a simple object. It will manifest itself as a particle if we are observing its position and as a wavicle if we are observing its movement. At all times, it is a wave-particle duality, manifested only in one or other expression. Perhaps we have here a illustration of what *all* life is about, including God. We humans can grasp and comprehend only in a partial and fleeting way.

The "whole" is greater, more open-ended, and more creative than we can ever hope to observe or decipher. And it is precisely this greater whole that enlivens and energizes us toward a different and more creative future.

In this chapter, we have set out to achieve something verging on the impossible: to build a bridge between two possible futures for our planet and cosmos — *extinction* (at least of the human species) and *transformation* (by the co-creative forces of evolution itself). Paradoxically, with all the arguments in the melting pot, the challenge to perceive and understand our universe on the grand scale may yet prove to be the most rewarding pathway to the light of truth and to a real sense of hope for the future. At this juncture, there is increasing evidence to suggest that, for scientist and theologian alike, the breakthroughs of the future are more likely to be in the realms of global contemplation rather than in laboratory experimentation. In fact, the evidence is overwhelming, veering in the direction of that truth which asserts that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

What must be unmistakably clear at this juncture is that we humans have scarcely begun groping into the dark and mysterious power of universal life: that the arrogant intrusiveness with which we play God has made our very existence precarious and verging on meaninglessness; that we humans in the next few decades are in for a rude (and possibly highly destructive) awakening; that our only real hope for "salvation" and new life is to humbly acknowledge how little we are in it all, let go of our masculine will-to-power, and allow ourselves to become the co-creative beneficiaries of an evolutionary process that far outstretches anything we ever dreamed of. In that sublime and poignant moment of letting go, and letting "God," we'll rediscover who we really are.

The considerations of this chapter leave us with what may well be the most paradoxical of the twelve principles that underpin quantum theology: *Extinction and transformation, the evolutionary equivalents of Calvary and resurrection, are central coordinates of cosmic and planetary evolution. Their interplay at this historical moment — our "kairos" — provides the primary locus for the praxis of the quantum theologian.*

Chapter 15

No Greater Love . . .

The day will come when after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. Then for the second time in the history of the world, man[kind] will have discovered fire.

–Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

In a time such as ours when the intrinsic value of our world must be stressed, eros as the love of the valuable is a necessary aspect of both divine and human love.

–Sallie McFague

Human society, including its relationship to Planet Earth, will begin to transform only in relationship to the evolution of a new sexuality.

–Robert Lawlor

People first began to use fire about six hundred thousand years ago. For our ancient ancestors, it became one of the greatest stories ever told. Not only did it provide new ways of cooking food and warding off the harsh winds of wintertime, but it became a life force that animated and united. The hearth became a new focal point for camaraderie, bonding, communicating, celebrating, and "praying." Around the bonfire, our ancestors came to know something of the meaning inherent in all things. And for possibly the first time in their existence, they consciously acknowledged the power of love. The warmth of fire awoke the inner flame that draws hearts closer together and unites people in true mutuality.

Love is a central concept in all the great religions. But it always tends to be personalized, attributed to God(s) and people, but rarely to other species, and scarcely ever to the forces of universal life itself. Consequently, we have inherited in Christianity a focus on the inner

forces of love and the outer forces of cold and darkness, another classic dualism that subverts deeper meaning.

With the discovery of the quarks (from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s), we detect within nature itself tendencies toward mutuality. Because quarks are discernible only in relationships of diads or triads, we are confronted with what seems to be a fundamental truth about all life: connectedness and interrelatedness are interwoven throughout the entire fabric of creation. This imprint is not a cold inanimate force, but a vital, life-giving energy, perpetually destined toward co-creation. There are no limits to the energy of love which begets higher and more complex life forms, and in that very begetting we realize an essential benign quality with which all reality is endowed, in the face of which the "perpetuation of the species" and the "survival of the fittest" become motivating forces of secondary significance.

Power of Love or Love of Power?

At some moment in every human life, we each grasp something of love's own depth and beauty. Unfortunately, we are rarely sensitive enough to imbibe the experience for the future benefit of ourselves and others. Life forces us back to basics: the struggle to survive (for most in the Southern hemisphere) or the struggle to compete (for many in the West), or one or other of the destructive variants that lie in between. Our current travesty, as a human species, is that we have largely lost the capacity to love and to be lovely. We have succumbed to the crude and cruel functionalism of our mechanized culture. We are largely a people whose hearts are numb. We are children of an unloved and unlovable "God," which, in the West, we label "civilization."

In our civilized, mechanized culture, competition rather than cooperation is the dominant mode of action. From the internal bosom of the family to the geopolitical arena of nationalistic rivalry, there is an incessant drive of people seeking to outwit one another. Our culture is absorbed by a compulsive addiction where one has to be a winner or a loser. We are crazy for power, and to the same degree starved of love. And the more we seek to satisfy the power-drive, the more alienated we become in codependent systems that increasingly alienate us from other people, from nature, from the divine life force, and ultimately from our own selves.

In the power game, everything and everybody is an *object* to be

manipulated and controlled, not a subject to be connected with or related to. Western imperialism — politically, scientifically, and religiously — always seeks to undermine subjectivity. Although many religions acknowledge and advocate "a personal relationship with God," they distrust human feeling and emotion. Love for most of the religions is a rather cerebral concept, often disembodied from real people in a real world. "God" is the object to be worshiped and obeyed, as prescribed in religious dogma, law, and ritual, rather than a life force (personal or otherwise) whose very essence is invitation into relationship (hence the notion of God as Trinity, the Old Testament idea of Covenant, or the Christian conviction that love is the first and greatest commandment).

Love is the life energy that animates everything that exists. Physiologically and psychologically, we can explain the urge to love in terms of various biochemical processes, such as phenylethylamine (PEA) and Oxytocin. These, I suggest, are *manifestations* rather than *causes* of loving, altruistic behavior. The love-energy is too complex, amorphous, and profound to be embodied in any one set of scientific explanations. It is probably more accurate — as Teilhard de Chardin observed — to compare it to fire, with the paradoxical combination of warmth, tenderness, care, and closeness, on the one hand, and an enormous power for destructibility, on the other.

Love sets the world on fire through the intimacy of sex and the compassion of justice. Only in recent times are we rediscovering that sexuality is the creative core of spirituality and theology (Eisler, 1995; Evola, 1983; Keen, 1985; Lawlor, 1989; Singer, 1990; Mollenkott, 1992). In prepatriarchal times, especially in the culture of the great Ice Age, 40,000–10,000 B.C.E., sexual union was frequently used as a symbolic expression of the divine-human relationship. Hinduism retains many features of this ancient wholism, where the beauty and sacredness of the body (human and earthly) are concomitant with the elegance and ecstasy of the divine energy. In the passion of human loving, the passionate God manifests the divine eros — in stark contrast to the *detached* God of later theistic religion.

The Embodiment of Love

McFague (1987, 1993) offers a contemporary theology of love that incorporates many of these insights. She suggests we adopt new metaphors to explore the meaning of God in the context of the emerging wholism which characterizes our age. She proposes that we image the world as God's body (see also Fox, 1991, 61ff.). The being and action of God are not limited to God's embodiment in the visible creation. Rather God "gives birth" to the world (universe) through divine self-expression and in doing so shapes an embodiment and generates the presence of, and relation to, all other embodiments which constitute God's body. Consequently, we are invited to see our own bodies as a dimension of a larger earthly and cosmic body which itself is divinely endowed and cherished as God's special mode of embodiment.

The model suggests — quite unambiguously — that God loves bodies, that bodies are worth loving, sexually and otherwise, that passionate love as well as attention to the needs of bodily existence are a part of divine fulfillment. It is to say further that the basic necessities of bodily existence, such as adequate food and shelter, are central aspects of God's love for all bodily creatures, and therefore should be central concerns of us, God's co-creators.

Beginning with the notion of the world as God's body, McFague suggests that we reimage the Trinity in terms of an embodiment that is characterized by love and nurturance. Instead of the traditional namings (metaphors) of Father, Son, and Spirit, she suggests Mother (parent), Lover, and Friend. The Mother-Creator image is offered as being more inclusive and wholistic than the patriarchal father metaphor, which has often been associated with subservience, royalty, power, and exclusion. God as Mother implies a cosmic generosity that gives life to all being with no thought of return and continues to *participate* in the unfolding dream of open possibility (hence the notion of the prodigious womb).

However, this is not a mother metaphor constructed on the traditional feminine stereotypes of softness, sentimentality, and pity. Instead, we are presented with a fiercely protective female, for whom passion and justice are paramount, a woman who rages with anger when her offspring (her very own body) are deprived of the basic essentials of love, care, and justice. Those who produce life have a stake in it and will judge, often with anger, what prevents its fulfillment.

In applying to Jesus the metaphor of *Lover,* McFague is touching base with one of the most profound and controversial movements of our time: the decadence of the *hero* and the upsurge of the *lover* as a dominant cultural metaphor (more on this topic in Keen, 1985). For McFague the love-energy of the lover is characterized particularly by *eros,* that quality of love that expresses personal affirmation of the worth and value of the beloved, the love that draws the beloved to

eventually surrender to the true love which alone is our life and salvation.

The other dimension of the table which may need an explanatory note for nonreligious readers is the root metaphor of "covenantal faithfulness," attributed to the befriending Spirit. "Covenant" is a Judaeo-Christian concept, denoting a love of God for the people that remains faithful forever, inviting a similar response from those to whom this covenantal love is offered. I'd like to draw attention to the global ambience of this love and fidelity, which is apparent in the diagram in the series of metaphors offered. *Organism* can be understood as being on its own, complete within itself. The metaphorical range then widens beyond the "individual" to *interpersonal relations,* and again is expanded to assume global dimensions in the *covenantal faithfulness.* What in mainstream religion can seem an exclusive and limiting category, becomes in the quantum vision a threshold for openness to new possibilities and expanded horizons.

Love knows neither barriers nor boundaries. Mystics and novelists, artists and comedians all have had a go at exploring its mysterious power. From the basic particles that hold matter together (the bosons), to the divine energies that sustain our meaningfulness, we encounter a life force that lures and attracts, that underpins the polarities of attraction and repulsion, on which all human relationships are based. Our search for meaning compels us to probe this mysterious force. Yet all our probing leaves us only partially satisfied, if indeed satisfied at all. Perhaps the great Eastern mystics are the ones with the ultimate wisdom, which claims that it is only in the silence of the mystery that we can see the light, and from the darkness of the shadow we begin to glimpse its infinite meaning.

Inspired by these reflections, the quantum theologian invokes what seems to be a very old, yet radically new principle: *Love is an interdependent life force, a spectrum of possibility, from its divine grandeur to its particularity in subatomic interaction. It is the origin and goal of our search for meaning.*

The Love That Liberates

For the quantum theologian, the real question seeking understanding is not about our love for God, but God's love for us. From the totality of otherness, from which we often feel distanced and alienated, comes our ultimate meaning. It's not our individuality that matters (less so our independence and autonomy), but our personhood, which is meaningless apart from the relationships that beget and sustain each one of us. Even the child born from a pregnancy caused by rape is the product of a relationship yearning for love, in this case, the deep pain of love, a love thwarted and distorted, often because of an intense deprivation of love. Our human longings, dreams, hopes, aspirations, are focused on love as a goal; our anger, hatred, fear, disillusionment are inverted desires for a love that has been refused, or that we were unable to receive. Whatever our conditions or circumstances, love is the focal energy that holds the key to meaning.

In the fragmented world of our time, we are deeply aware of the lack of love and the abundance of hatred that prevails. But hatred is not the opposite of love; *indifference* is, just as spiritual indifference rather than atheism is the enemy of authentic religion. In our indifference we abdicate our divine will-to-life; we opt to disengage from the dialogue of life. We become love-less, and in a sense hate-less; we lose heart and begin to atrophy. It is this lack of passion, often provoked by patriarchal institutions and values, that denudes us of our dignity, value, and worth as human beings and poses the greatest threat to the future of humanity and to the future of our planet. This apathy often assumes masked and distorted power in the compulsions and addictions which are so prevalent in modern society. Our abdication of personal power disempowers us (and others) to the point where we become engulfed by "powers" which alienate us from our true selves.

Practically every approach to the treatment of addictions invokes, in one form or another, the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). Central to this vision is an acknowledgment that we, individually, are no longer in control, and that we are not ultimately responsible for what we are or do. We learn, often slowly and painfully, to accept a "power" higher than ourselves, within whose love and energy we are not absorbed or consumed, but rediscover anew our true selves, as people born with the capacity to love and to be loved. It is in this rediscovery of love that we recapture something of our true nature. We come home to ourselves.

At this moment of homecoming, of reconnecting with the inner core of meaning, we don't become hermits cut off from the world, nor incestuous navel-gazers preoccupied with our own survival. No, it's precisely then, and only then, that we can embrace our world from that center of strength wherein we know we are loving and lovable. From that center point all things are possible. It is the greatest quantum leap we can ever hope to take.

Appendix One

Principles of Quantum Theology

Principle 1

Life is sustained by a creative energy, fundamentally benign in nature, with a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm, and pattern. Creation is sustained by a superhuman, pulsating restlessness, a type of resonance vibrating throughout time and eternity.

NEW ELEMENTS:

a. God and the divine are described as a creative energy, which is perceived to include, but also supersede, everything traditional theology attributes to God.

b. The divine energy is not stable or unchanging, but works through movement, rhythm, pattern, and restlessness — within the evolving nature of life itself.

c. The divine co-creativity operates within the evolutionary process rather than as an external agent based on a cause and effect relationship.

d. Notions such as "God" and "divinity" are used sparingly, because these are human constructs (descriptions) that may limit rather than enhance our understanding of life's ultimate source and meaning.

Principle 2

Wholeness, which is largely unmanifest and dynamic (not static), is the wellspring of all possibility. In seeking to understand life, we begin with the whole which is always greater than the sum of the parts; paradoxically, the whole is contained in each part, yet no whole is complete in itself.

NEW ELEMENTS:

a. No one source of knowledge, theological or otherwise, can provide a complete description of reality; the mystery of life is fundamentally open-ended.

b. Theology is about opening up new horizons of possibility and ultimate meaning, and not about consigning truth to specific dogmas, creeds, or religions.

c. Since the whole is understood to be contained in, but not by, each part, the dilemma of pantheism is resolved.

Principle 3

Evolution is underpinned by a deep unfolding structure, characterized by design and purpose, necessitating an unceasing interplay of order and disorder, randomness and creativity.

NEW ELEMENTS:

a. Evolution is considered to be the primary context of divine-human creativity in the world.

b. Life, in its basic meaning, is blessed and not flawed (as in the original sin approach).

c. In the divine-human unfolding, light and shadow always intermingle; quantum theology, while acknowledging the paradox of polarity, seeks to outgrow all dualisms, especially that of good vs. evil.

Principle 4

The expanding horizon of divine belonging is the context in which revelation takes place; all creatures are invited to respond, to engage in the co-creative task of being and becoming. All life forms have unique roles in this process, the primary focus of which is creation itself rather than formal religion.

NEW ELEMENTS:

a. The primary context of divine revelation is the unfolding process of creation and not formal religion. Each religion is a particular crystallization of divine revelation. No one religion, not even all the religions together, could contain or explain the fulness of revelation.

b. All life forms, and not just humans, have a co-creative role in the divine plan for the world and in the responses it elicits and evokes.

c. Revelation is ongoing; it cannot be subsumed in any religion, creed, or cultural system.

Principle 5

Because the capacity to relate is itself the primary divine energy impregnating creation, we humans need authentic ecclesial and sacramental experiences to explore and articulate our innate vocation to be people in relationship.

NEW ELEMENTS:

a. The doctrine of the Trinity is a human attempt to describe God's fundamental relational nature.

b. The divine interaction within creation is that of subject to subject rather than subject to object.

c. The innate human desire and capacity for relationships is the experience in which we connect most authentically with the divine ambience of our existence.

d. Church and sacraments are key moments for exploring and articulating our relatedness, as a divine invitation to life and meaning, and not organizations and rituals commanding legal observance.

Principle 6

Ultimate meaning is embedded in story, not in facts. All particular religious stories belong to a larger story, which includes but also transcends the specific religious traditions of any one historical or cultural epoch. All sacred texts are attempts at articulating ultimate truth and archetypal values, approximations that require fresh interpretation in each new cultural epoch.

NEW ELEMENTS:

a. Sacred story is our primary channel for accessing the divine source and ultimate meaning of life.