

# M. Scott Peck: Community and the Cosmic Christ

By Warren B. Smith

**Note:** The following article about authors M. Scott Peck and Matthew Fox was first written in 1995 to provide an example of how the New Age movement was entering the church. Under the guise of “Christian” authorship, heretical New Age teachings were attempting to supplant biblical doctrine with a New Age/New Worldview. My article focused on Peck and Fox’s promotion of the panentheistic New Age teaching of “oneness”—that we are all “one” because God is “in” everyone and everything. Both men pointed to Catholic Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin—known as the Father of the New Age Movement—as their mystical mentor. All three men heralded the coming of a universal New Age Cosmic Christ.

What I didn’t know in 1995 was that a *then* obscure Methodist minister by the name of Leonard Sweet had already written a 1991 book entitled, *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*. In his book, Sweet aligned himself with the Cosmic Christ (p. 124) and described Peck and Fox as two of his “personal role models” and “heroes” (p. viii). He also went so far as to heretically hail the mystical Catholic New Age Chardin as “Twentieth-century Christianity’s major voice” (p. 106). Because Leonard Sweet himself is regarded as a major voice in the evangelical church today—speaking at worldwide Christian conferences and to the leaders of major denominations regularly—it is imperative to understand what this man *really* believes and not just what he *conveniently* says when challenged about his beliefs.

I have updated my 1995 article with some minor revisions to demonstrate the influence Peck, Fox, and Chardin have had on popular church figures like Leonard Sweet.

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*...the number of people entering the mystical stage of development and transcending ordinary culture seems to have increased a thousandfold in the course of a mere generation or two...one wonders if the explosion in their numbers might represent a giant leap forward in the evolution of the human race, a leap toward not only mystical but global consciousness and world community....*

*Perhaps the greatest prophet of this leap was Teilhard de Chardin.1*

*—M. Scott Peck, The Different Drum*

## The Great Heretical Idea

Just about everyone agrees that the world is in a state of crisis. With all the wars, floods, famines, earthquakes, plagues, environmental disasters, and violence there has come an accompanying sense of futility and despair. Life seems to be moving along at an exponential

speed. At this time in history when people seem to have so little control over so many of the major variables in their lives, they wonder if anything can be done to turn things around. They are asking “what can we do individually, in our communities, as a nation, as a planet to meet these very real problems? How can we save ourselves from the impending disaster?”

Marilyn Ferguson, the author of the New Age classic *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, writes:

*Usually at the point of crisis, someone has a great heretical idea. A powerful new insight explains the apparent contradictions. It introduces a new principle...a new perspective.*

She goes on to say:

*A new paradigm involves a principle that was present all along but unknown to us. It includes the old as a partial truth, one aspect of How Things Work, while allowing for things to work in other ways as well.*

Two paragraphs later she states:

*Given the superior power and scope of the new idea, we might expect it to prevail rather quickly, but that almost never happens. The problem is that you can't embrace the new paradigm unless you let go of the old.<sup>2</sup>*

She later adds:

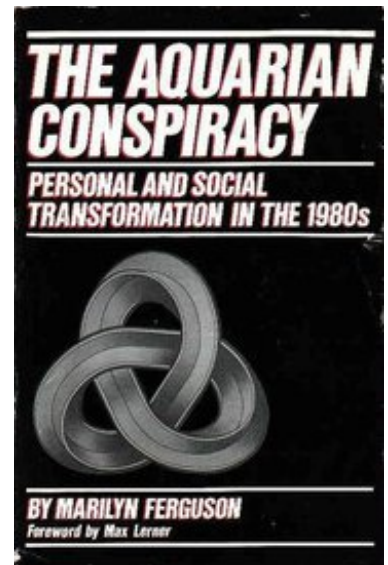
*If these discoveries of transformation are to become our common heritage for the first time in history, they must be widely communicated. They must become our new consensus, what 'everybody knows'.<sup>3</sup>*

In the thirty or so years since the publication of Ferguson's book, the New Age has made unprecedented headway into our culture. New Age thought has been “widely communicated” through the media, just as Ferguson suggested. And it is fast becoming our “new consensus, what everybody knows.” Ferguson's “prophetic” book has been, in many ways, a blueprint for everything that has transpired since the release of her book in 1980. Thanks to the media, Ferguson's New Age “Aquarian Conspiracy” has become an “open secret” and the New Age is now mainstream. But how did the New Age make such rapid inroads into our culture?

Over the course of the last century, esoteric New Age teachings were quietly and gradually introduced behind the scenes by a very purposeful spirit world (1 Timothy 4:1). The channeled teachings of Alice Bailey, and the mystical Catholic doctrine of Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, have been reintroduced to this present generation by New Age leaders like David Spangler, Robert Muller, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Matthew Fox, and Jack Canfield.

Many of today's popular spiritual catch phrases like "New Age," "inclusivity," "transformation," "quantum leap," "unity-in-diversity," and even "tolerance" can be traced back to Bailey and Chardin.

New Age books like *A Course in Miracles* have persuaded countless numbers of people, including myself, years ago, that Jesus was speaking anew to our generation. Many of us were convinced we were *finally* learning what the Bible's teachings *really* meant. We believed there was a "new story" that was the *real* story, and we were ready to spread the word. By the early 1980s a powerful core group of New Age believers was in place. We would be there to support and encourage the populace at large as they were gradually introduced to New Age teachings. And there was no doubt about it. Ferguson's book, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, had sounded the charge. There was a "new" spirit in the land.



By the mid-1980s most bookstore sections labeled "occult" were changed to "New Age." And these "New Age" books were also starting to surface in the religion, psychology, health, self-help, and even science sections of these same bookstores. In 1987 Shirley MacLaine's best-selling book, *Out on a Limb*, was made into a prime-time TV movie that was watched by millions. The New Age was officially out of the closet. Spiritual esotericism was making its move into mainstream society.

The popularization of the New Age gospel greatly accelerated in the nineties and into the new millennium when high profile people like Oprah Winfrey started openly declaring their New Age beliefs. Oprah's enthusiastic endorsement of New Age authors like Marianne Williamson (*A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principals of A Course in Miracles*) helped to make their New Age books instant bestsellers. Thanks to talk shows like *Oprah* and *Larry King Live*, New Age teachings such as *A Course in Miracles*, Betty Eadie's *Embraced by the Light*, Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations with God* books, and Eckhart Tolle's *A New Earth* were being talked about everywhere. Suddenly, the New Age was part of our popular culture. Psychic hotlines sponsored programs like *The Today Show*, while books by psychics and topics like communication with the dead were being featured on *Larry King Live* and endorsed by New Age proponents like Dr. Mehmet Oz. Flip the channel and there is bestselling author Deepak Chopra, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's former personal physician, telling a talk show host that his god is a woman.<sup>4</sup> Flip another channel and there is Oprah telling her worldwide audience that Jesus is "New Age."<sup>5</sup>

Yet even with the avalanche of New Age teachings streaming into our culture, many Christians—and particularly most Christian leaders—continue to minimize the influence of the New Age. They have been deceived into believing that the New Age is just a lot of unrelated hype about crystals and horoscopes and UFOs. They have missed the fact that "another Jesus" and "another gospel" are being "reinvented" right in front of their eyes (2 Corinthians 11:4). They don't seem to realize that countless numbers of people have already put their faith in that counterfeit Christ and "another gospel." Thanks to the media, the "great heretical idea" described by Marilyn Ferguson is fast becoming our "new consensus, what everybody knows."

But as we look at the present day popularity of New Age teachings, it is easy to forget the late

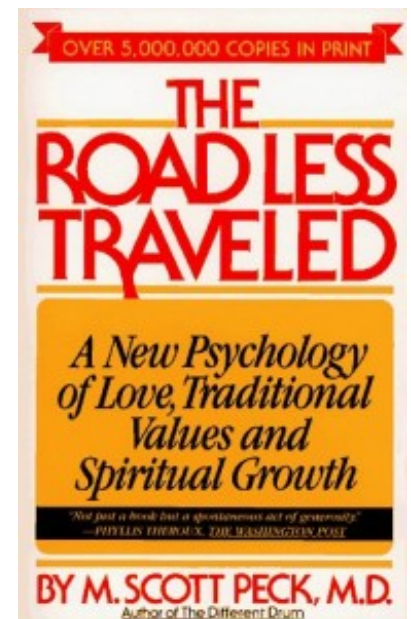
M. Scott Peck—the man who helped open the floodgates to so much of what we are witnessing today in the world and in the church. Peck, one of the first authors to present New Age ideas to the general populace, ironically called his “broad way” teachings *The Road Less Traveled*. On the back cover of Peck’s fourth book, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, *Aquarian Conspiracy* author Marilyn Ferguson wrote:

Scott Peck has done it again. *The Different Drum* could mobilize groups the way *The Road Less Traveled* inspired individuals.

Ferguson’s endorsement of his writings seems to underline the importance of his role as an Aquarian point man. However, because Peck described himself as a Christian, one would not readily associate him with the Aquarian Conspiracy or the New Age Movement. Publicly, he seemed to distance himself from the term New Age. But this brilliantly anecdotal, often insightful man with a professorial manner, has definitely played a major role in the New Age arena. But hiding behind Peck’s often charming, psycho-spiritual intellectualism, was the shadowy presence of the “Cosmic Christ.”

Peck’s landmark bestseller, *The Road Less Traveled*, helped to spark a spiritual revolution that is still going on today. His book inspired untold numbers of people to begin seeking spiritual solutions for their personal problems. His writings over the last several decades have also caused many Christians to reexamine their faith in light of his teachings. His books have been particularly popular with the Emerging church. There is no question that his writings and his endorsements of others have had a profound impact on the spiritual marketplace.

But sadly, much of what Peck introduced in his books was unscriptural. His often astute observations on human nature, gleaned from his many years as a practicing psychiatrist, were unfortunately tainted by his mystical world-view. Steeped in the teachings of Carl Jung and Catholic Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin, Peck’s spiritual observations were always screened through his mystical bias. Identifying with the Christ of the mystical New Age rather than the biblical Christ, Peck was clearly an ally to those presenting “the new story” and “the new spirituality.” Marilyn Ferguson, in her endorsement of Peck, saw him as a leader in the Aquarian effort to change the hearts and minds of the world. Author Jeremy Rifkin echoed Ferguson’s sentiments in his book *Declaration of a Heretic*. He recommended Peck’s book as one of those that deal with “the development of a new spirituality that is compatible (congenial) with the new consciousness, the new science and the new ecological understanding.”<sup>6</sup>



## Peck’s “Christian” Conversion

Oprah Winfrey, in a December 8, 1993 interview with Peck, introduced him to her 20 million viewers by saying:

| *Few writers have touched more lives than Dr. Peck, and few messages have empowered more people.*

She then went on to tell her huge audience that over the last decade *The Road Less Traveled* had been sold to an unprecedented four and a half million readers—a record she said some have compared to the Bible. She also described how *The New York Times* had recently celebrated the book's 500th week on its bestsellers list—A *Guinness Book of World Records* record for book sales. Oprah then said, "I wanted to talk to Dr. Peck today to meet the person, the mind behind such a powerful and influential book...who can write a book that can stay on the bestseller list for ten straight years...in his work, he shares lessons of truth and love and values that have enriched my life, and, I know, millions of other people."

But thirteen years after his "conversion" to Christianity one would never know from watching *Oprah* that day that Peck was a professing Christian. Given abundant opportunities during the interview to discuss what was meaningful to him, Peck never mentioned his Christian faith. Remembering Peck's admission in a more recent book, that he was *not* a Christian when he wrote *The Road Less Traveled*,<sup>7</sup> I was surprised when he told Oprah that he had been "divinely led" to write *The Road Less Traveled*.

He said that one autumn evening he heard something say, "write me—discipline, love, grace—write me." He described how his initial skepticism about the leading soon gave way to genuine enthusiasm, and he started writing the book. He described his "enthusiasm" as coming, in part, from "God within." He went on to say that he couldn't have written the book "without God's help."

Knowing that Peck wrote *The Road Less Traveled* as a non-Christian, I was amazed that on *Oprah* he was still affirming his belief that God had directed him to write the book. Although his "non-Christian" book was filled with false teachings, Peck as a "Christian" had, to my knowledge, never publicly recanted any of his unbiblical doctrines. In fact, five years into his "Christian" faith Peck gave his "wholehearted blessing" to a study guide entitled *Exploring the Road Less Traveled*. In his forward to the guide Peck was still describing *The Road Less Traveled* as "a gift to me and through me to all my fellow pilgrims."<sup>8</sup>

And what were some of the teachings in *The Road Less Traveled* that Peck presented to his readers? In a section of the book entitled "The Evolution of Consciousness," Peck described God as being

| *...intimately associated with us—so intimately that He is part of us.*

He said:

| *If you want to know the closest place to look for grace, it is within yourself.  
If you desire wisdom greater than your own, you can find it inside you.*

He then added:

*To put it plainly, our unconscious is God. God within us. We were part of God all the time.<sup>9</sup>*

He elaborated on this idea of evolutionary consciousness by stating:

*In my vision the collective unconscious is God.*

A bit later he wrote:

*Since the unconscious is God all along, we may further define the goal of spiritual growth to be the attainment of godhood by the conscious self. It is for the individual to become totally, wholly God....We are born that we might become, as a conscious individual, a new life form of God.<sup>10</sup>*

Peck summarized his unbiblical views by saying:

*...God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself). We are growing toward godhood. God is the goal of evolution. It is God who is the source of the evolutionary force and God who is the destination.<sup>11</sup>*

The Bible is clear when it tells us that we are not in any way a part of God. Our consciousness is not God. We are not evolving into God, and we are not to attempt to become God. We are His creation and we are distinct from Him. Scripture warns of those who become vain and do not glorify God as God, but try to change the glory of the “uncorruptible God” into an image of “corruptible man.” In equating man and God they “changed the truth of God into a lie.” The Scriptures describe those who distort the Scriptures as those who while “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” (Romans 1:22-25)

Some of Peck’s comments on grace in *The Road Less Traveled* were also unscriptural. In his section entitled “The Welcoming of Grace” he writes:

*If we can make ourselves into totally disciplined, wholly loving individuals, then, even though we may be ignorant of theology and give no thought to God, we will have prepared ourselves well for the coming of grace. Conversely, the study of theology is a relatively poor method of preparation and, by itself, completely useless.<sup>12</sup>*

But grace, according to Scripture, comes in the person of the Holy Spirit when we recognize that we can never, through our own efforts, make ourselves into “totally disciplined, wholly

loving individuals.” True and complete grace comes when we confess to God that we are sinners, and that we recognize how far we fall short of His glory (Romans 3:23). We see that we are *separated* from Him by our sin and that it is only by the atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ, that we can be saved from our sins and receive eternal life (Romans 3:25, John 3:16). It is a gift of God. It has nothing to do with us. It has everything to do with Him (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Believing that the study of theology was a “relatively poor method of preparation”<sup>13</sup> for one’s receptivity to grace, Peck betrays his disbelief in the power and authority of God’s written word. He misses the heart of the Apostle Paul’s emphatic assertion that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). Because Peck was apparently unfamiliar with the Bible’s admonition to “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1) he was wide open to a deceptive spirit that said, “write me—discipline, love, grace—write me.” Because of his naiveté and lack of spiritual discernment, Peck fell prey to the deception of “another Jesus,” “another spirit,” and “another gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

It was in 1983, in his second book, *People of the Lie*, that M. Scott Peck announced that he had become a “Christian” and that Jesus was now his “Lord.” In his introduction to that book he wrote:

*I referred earlier to Jesus as my Lord. After many years of vague identification with Buddhist and Islamic mysticism, I ultimately made a firm Christian commitment—signified by my non-denominational baptism on the ninth of March 1980, at the age of forty-three—long after I had begun working on this book.<sup>14</sup>*

He went on to say that he made no apology for what he called his “Christian” bias. He said he had no desire to try to disguise his “Christian” outlook. He stated, “My commitment to Christianity is the most important thing in my life and is, I hope, pervasive and total.”

I remember reading *People of the Lie* when I was a fairly new Christian. While applauding Peck’s apparent commitment to Christ, I was nevertheless troubled by his definition of a “true Christian.” He said “a true Christian is anyone who is for Jesus a pleasant place of shelter.” His all-embracing definition included no statement of faith and, in his words, included “millions of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, atheists, and agnostics.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet I had remembered Peck was still new in his faith. Give him some time, I thought, and he’ll probably sort things out. But while I admired him for tackling the subject of evil, I remained concerned about some of the things he had said in his book. Largely drawing on his experiences with patients in his psychiatric practice, Peck was unwilling to let Scripture fill in what he didn’t understand. As a result he came up with some rather unorthodox ideas. For example, he described Satan as an impersonal “it” rather than a personal “he.” In the Bible Jesus *always* refers to the person of Satan as a male. In referring to Satan in John 8:44, He says, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him.”

Peck also believed that any truly loving person could assist in deliverance sessions with people who are demonically oppressed. He wrote:

*Were I to conduct an exorcism, I would not exclude from the team any mature Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jew, atheist, or agnostic who was a genuinely loving presence.*<sup>16</sup>

However, the Bible makes it clear that demonic spirits are subject *only* to the power and authority of Jesus Christ and that *only* His followers are given the power “to cast out devils” (Mark 3:14-15). Exorcism or deliverance has *nothing* to do with the amount of niceness and love projected by the people gathered. Peck’s further description of exorcism as “psychotherapy by massive assault”<sup>17</sup> is to completely miss the saving person of Jesus Christ and His victory on the cross over sin and death and evil (1 John 3:8).

Yet I wanted to reserve judgment on Peck and give him more time to come to terms with Scripture. The big questions that still remained for me were—did Peck *really* love the truth or was he just presenting his already preconceived mystical, New Age beliefs in Christian terms? Would he be able to clarify his faith according to Scripture or was he only going deeper and deeper into New Age deception? And, finally, was M. Scott Peck a genuinely confused disciple of the Lord, or was he just another worldly false prophet? I would have to wait and see.

## I Got My Answer

I received my answer several years later when Peck’s new book, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, arrived at our local bookstore. Greatly interested, I wondered where he was now in his faith. I picked up a copy and started reading. I wanted so much to see that he had grown as a Christian. I hoped that he had stopped referring to various parts of the Bible as “myth,” and had gotten clearer on the person of Jesus Christ. But my heart sank as I read the first two sentences of his introduction. He had written:

*In and through community lies the salvation of the world. Nothing is more important.*<sup>18</sup>

I was deeply disappointed by his words. Salvation does *not* come through community, it comes *only* through the person of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

I searched for some kind of clarification—that *true* community would only come through the lordship of the *real* Jesus Christ—but it wasn’t there. And as I read on, things only got worse. He wrote, “the human race today stands at the brink of self-annihilation.” He said:

*I’m scared for my own skin. I’m even more scared for the skin of my children. And I’m scared for your skins. I want to save my skin. I need you, and you me, for salvation. We must come into community with each other. We need each other.*<sup>19</sup>

Sadly, I knew that his plea for community would seem perfectly reasonable to someone



unfamiliar with the Bible. But what he was saying had nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ. For Peck, a professing Christian, to say that “In and through community lies the salvation of the world. Nothing is more important” was to completely miss our blood-bought relationship with the Lord. And in writing that we *must* come into community with each other, he left unsaid *what* that community must agree to in order to come together.

Certainly in Genesis 11, those who came together in the land of Shinar believed they met with God’s favor as they built their tower toward heaven. But the Lord did not support *their* human ideas about spiritual community. His response was to dissolve their community and scatter them over the face of the earth. Scripture records that God is not pleased when man organizes spiritual community in His name but not according to His will. Genesis 11:5-7 records:

*“And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”*

So much for oneness and community and spirituality that is not in accordance to God’s expressed desire. The lesson of Babel was that we humans should not go building spiritual community without God’s explicit direction.

As I continued reading Peck’s introduction to *The Different Drum* I was startled again by what he wrote:

*It is not impractical to consider seriously changing the rules of the game when the game is clearly killing you.20*

Peck had a point if he was talking about the environment or some economic matter, but what if those rules are God’s rules? I immediately reflected on Jesus’ death and His unwillingness to compromise God’s rules to “save his own skin.”

Peck *had* to realize that changing the rules or going against God’s will was exactly what Jesus did not do—nor his disciples, either. They died living by God’s rules rather than trying to change those rules to “save their own skin.” Peck, in his unwillingness to follow Scripture, had *already* changed the rules. So it didn’t surprise me when Peck went on to say that the rule changing would also apply to the Christian Church. Speaking to the Church he wrote:

*Here again I will call for the rules to be changed...If humankind is to survive, the matter of changing the rules is not optional.21*

For the world to survive, Peck proposed that the nation-state system “must at least be rapidly

modified to the point where the nations of the world substantially relinquish their external sovereignty to a supranational government agency.”<sup>22</sup> Peck stated that “Demanding rules must both be learned and followed.”<sup>23</sup> Presenting himself as one to teach these rules he said, “the purpose of this book is to teach these rules and encourage you to follow them.” His ultimate objective was that the world would learn his “new” rules and follow them. Peck, without any pretension of modesty about his emerging role as world teacher, concluded his introduction by unequivocally stating, “For that is how the world will be saved.”<sup>24</sup>

What Peck was advocating had serious implications for Christians who dared to put *their* God before the god of community. In language reminiscent of New Age matriarch Alice Bailey, Peck emphatically stated that:

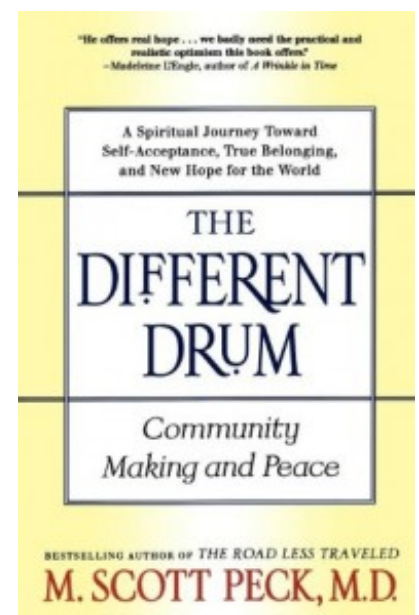
*Community is and must be inclusive.*

*The great enemy of community is exclusivity. Groups that exclude others because they are poor or doubters or divorced or sinners or of some different race or nationality are not communities; they are cliques—actually defensive bastions against community.*<sup>25</sup>

What Peck seemed to be saying was, that to survive in this perilous world we must be accommodating enough to form a world community in the interests of peace. However, Peck’s definition of Christian community gives us an idea of just how accommodating the Christians will have to be in the future. In his eyes, *everyone* is a potential member of a world “Christian” community, no matter what their expressed faith might be. He said, “any group of people (no matter what their religious persuasion or whether the word ‘Jesus’ is ever spoken) who are willing to practice the love, discipline, and sacrifice that are required for the spirit of community, that Jesus extolled and exemplified, will be gathered together in his name and he will be there.”<sup>26</sup> In *People of the Lie*, Peck was already on record saying that a true Christian is “anyone who is ‘for Jesus a pleasant place of shelter.’”<sup>27</sup> Pleasant atheists, by Peck’s definition, would be seen as “Christians” in his “Christian” community.

In his book *The Different Drum*, Peck seemed to really believe that it was his mission to bring community and peace to the world. As a founder of the “Foundation for Community Encouragement,” a non-profit organization for promoting community and world understanding, Peck had traveled extensively, sharing his ideas in speeches and workshops. But in his attempt to bring peace to the world, he seemed to have overlooked that Jesus’ mission was not to bring peace but truth. And if Peck had a higher regard for Scripture he would have known that Jesus warned his followers that His truth would not only *not* unify mankind but rather, would divide them. He knew that the world would not accept what He had to say. That is why He said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34).

Jesus said that our relationship to God is through Him and *not* through community. He said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:37) Can we not assume that also implied in



His statement is “he that loveth community more than me is not worthy of me?” The Lord made it clear that *true* community would not arise amidst “pleasantness” or through worldly compromise. It would be forged with the tears and tribulation of those who followed God’s will. (Matthew 7:21) They were the ones who *continued* in His word. They were His disciples indeed (John 8:31).

## Heralding the Cosmic Christ

In 1988, just two years after the release of Peck’s *The Different Drum*, a book entitled *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* surfaced in bookstores all across the country. Author Matthew Fox, a mystical New Age Catholic priest, was presenting an unbiblical, deeply ecumenical, New Age theology that in the name of Christ was anything *but* Christian. And on the back cover of *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* was a lead endorsement by M. Scott Peck. Peck wrote, “Fox’s most daring, pioneering work yet, stimulating us to the kind of resurrection of values and practice required for planetary salvation.” It was hard to believe, but the professorial Peck was now openly endorsing a “Cosmic” New Age Christ.

Fox, the former director of “The Institute in Culture and Creation-Centered Spirituality” at Catholic Holy Names College in Oakland, California, was eventually defrocked by the Catholic Church after years of controversy. Promoting New Age mysticism in Christ’s name, Fox had been given great latitude over the years by the Vatican. With much of the doctrinal damage to the Church already done, he was *finally* disciplined by Rome. Now an ordained Episcopalian priest, Fox is still, by his own description, a mystical Catholic. All it would take to put Matthew Fox on the front lines of a more contemporary and mystical “New Age” Catholic Church is a more liberal pope and a few encyclical orders.

In his “Creation-Centered Spirituality,” Fox emphasizes the creation, rather than the Creator. He believes the Creator is *in* all of creation. Reflecting the all-embracing philosophy of mystical Catholic priest Teilhard de Chardin, Fox credits Chardin as one of the “Key Spokespersons” for his Creation-Centered Spirituality.<sup>28</sup> It is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who was quoted at the beginning of Marilyn Ferguson’s book *The Aquarian Conspiracy* as saying, “This soul can only be a conspiracy of individuals.” And it is Teilhard de Chardin who was cited by Peck as being perhaps the “greatest prophet” of the evolutionary leap that was moving all mankind toward “global consciousness and world community.” And it is the Cosmic New Age Christ of Teilhard de Chardin that challenges the historic Christian faith today.

Chardin, an upstart priest like Fox, was seen as a rebel by the Catholic Church. His writings were never officially recognized by the church. Fox follows in the Chardin tradition. To his followers he resembles the heroic, renegade priests in New Age author, James Redfield’s *The Celestine Prophecy* who dared to confront “old age” Biblical theology with their emerging New Age insights. Fox’s New Age Christianity was described by the *New Age Journal* as a “uniquely California blend of Catholic mysticism, feminism, and environmentalism.”<sup>29</sup> Also in the Chardin tradition, original blessing was emphasized over original sin and Christ was seen as His creation.

Fox, who seemed to relish his role as a maverick “Christian,” hired Starhawk, a practicing witch, and Brian Swimme, a cosmic evolutionist, to help him teach Creation-Centered Spirituality at Holy Names College. Swimme, who co-wrote a book with Fox, entitled *MANIFESTO! For a Global Civilization*, was also among those who endorsed Fox’s *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. Swimme’s endorsement was just below that of M. Scott Peck. Swimme said Fox’s book was “the eighth wonder of the world...convincing proof that our

western religious tradition does indeed have the depth of imagination to reinvent its faith.”<sup>30</sup>

*The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, like *The Road Less Traveled*, takes a radical departure from biblical doctrine. Fox, in equating fundamentalist Christianity with “Christofascism,”<sup>31</sup> says that “we must let the old paradigm go” and commit ourselves to what he called “the theology of the Cosmic Christ.”<sup>32</sup> Underlining Teilhard de Chardin’s teachings on the mystical christification of the world, Fox says that:

*the coming together of the historical Jesus and the Cosmic Christ will make Christianity whole at last.*<sup>33</sup>

Peck, in endorsing Fox and his universal Cosmic Christ, affirmed that the term Christ is not specific to Jesus, but is referring to the “Christ” who is supposedly “in” everyone and everything.

Fox, in promoting the doctrine that we are all Christ, writes that “divinity is not outside us. We are in God and God in us...its technical name is *panentheism*, which means that ‘God is in all things and all things are in God.’”<sup>34</sup> Fox quotes Chardin as saying that Christ is “in the very heart of the tiniest atom.”<sup>35</sup> Citing Chardin’s innovative conceptualization of the term “Cosmic Christ,” Fox echoed Chardin’s complaint that he couldn’t find many people interested in his “Cosmic Christ.”<sup>36</sup> But that was in 1988. With Peck’s endorsement, and with the continued popularization of the New Age Christ in the media, Fox would not make that complaint today.

Two years after Peck endorsed Fox’s “Cosmic Christ,” he proclaimed his further support for world government through his endorsement of a book entitled *Planethood* by Dr. Benjamin B. Ferencz and Ken Keyes, Jr. The two authors, a lawyer and a New Age leader, presented a plan for how the world could be saved by a reformed United Nations. By endorsing this book, Peck formally joined the ranks of those wanting the UN to take a leading role in establishing a New World Order. Also endorsing *Planethood* and writing the book’s introduction, was former Assistant-Secretary General of the UN, Robert Muller. A Teilhard de Chardin devotee and the author of *New Genesis: toward a Global Spirituality*, Muller was also a chief proponent of a new world religion that would be under the auspices of the United Nations. Alice Bailey’s dream of the UN as “a new church of God” was becoming more and more a real possibility.<sup>37</sup>

Peck, in reading *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, must have been pleased to see that Fox was also looking to the UN and to the year 2000 with high hopes. Fox’s epilogue in that book, entitled “Vatican III,” spelled out his dream:

*At the United Nations plans are underway for the great global happening of the year 2000. That happening is, in religious terms, the celebration of the Jubilee Year....The planet is alive with excitement...a global renaissance seems well underway.*<sup>38</sup>

Because of his obvious support of Fox, the Cosmic Christ, and the UN, Peck was probably aware of Fox’s earlier work, *MANIFESTO! For a Global Civilization*—a book he co-authored with Brian Swimme in 1982. Curiously, in 1991, the same year Fox, Peck, and Muller endorsed *Planethood*, Robert Muller wrote his own book on the coming New Age entitled *The*

*Birth of a Global Civilization*. Peck followed that in 1993 with his book, *A World Waiting to be Born*. But like the New Age leaders he endorsed, and those who endorsed him, Peck's faith was not grounded with faith in the Scriptures or in the Bible's Christ. Defying the literality of truth as proclaimed in the Bible, his faith was in community and the Cosmic Christ, and a New World Religion under the auspices of the United Nations.

Not surprisingly, Jeremiah's words were as applicable to Peck as they were when he pinpointed the false prophets of his day. He said, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely...and my people love to have it so." (Jeremiah 5:30-31) He warned that, "they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jeremiah 8:11) He said, "Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you...For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 29:8-9)

Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:15-16) He said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matthew 7:13) He made it clear, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

Ten years on the bestsellers list, a millionaire many times over, having appeared on *Oprah* and traveling around the country as one of America's foremost spiritual teachers, M. Scott Peck's popularity in the world was quite a contrast to the prophets of old, who were ridiculed and stoned and beaten and killed. In his unbiblical plea for consensus and compromise in the name of community and the "Cosmic Christ," M. Scott Peck made a mockery of the Christian faith he purported to be interpreting and teaching.

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Sidebar:

## MATTHEW FOX ON THE COSMIC CHRIST

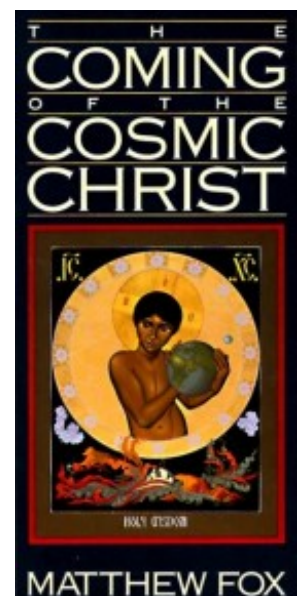
This book is about the sacred and our response to it: reverence. The sacred what? The sacred everything....The holy omnipresence of the Divine One in all things. The Western term for this image of God present in all things is "The Cosmic Christ." (p. 8)

I believe the issue today for the third millennium of Christianity—if the earth is to survive...is the quest for the Cosmic Christ. (p. 28)

...the theology of the Cosmic Christ—ignored for centuries—must be reconsidered seriously today. (p. 6)

Is it possible that our entire civilization is depressed because we lack the Cosmic Christ perspective? (p. 2)

The Cosmic Christ is the *divine* pattern that connects in the person of Jesus Christ (but by no means is limited to that person). (p. 135)



Divinity is found in all creatures. The divine name from Exodus 3:14, “I Am who I Am,” is appropriated by Jesus who shows us how to embrace our own divinity. The Cosmic Christ is the “I am” in every creature. (p. 154)

Divinity is not outside us. We are in God and God is in us. That is the unitive experience of the mystics East or West. It’s technical name is *panentheism*, which means that “God is in all things and all things are in God.” (p. 50)

We are called, like the Cosmic Christ, to radiate the divine presence to/with/from one another. (p. 137)

There is a real sense in which the Cosmic Christ is not born yet. Even in Jesus the Cosmic Christ has yet to come to full birth, for those who say they believe in Jesus have scarcely brought forth the Cosmic Christ at all on the mass scale that Mother Earth requires. (p. 136)

Indeed, the birthing of the Cosmic Christ is the purpose of the incarnation...Divinity wants to birth the Cosmic Christ in each and every individual. (p. 122)

The birthing of the Cosmic Christ is itself a cosmic act involving cosmic labor pains. (p. 138)

The Cosmic Christ educes power and responsibility from those who dare to allow the mystic to be born in and through them. (p. 138)

Deep ecumenical possibilities emerge when we shift from the quest for the historical Jesus to the quest for the Cosmic Christ. This shift requires making mysticism central to our faith once again. What the human race needs today is *mystical solidarity*. (p. 232)

The promise of ecumenism, the coming together of religions, has been thwarted because world religions have not been relating at the level of mysticism. (p. 65)

This Cosmic Christ will lead the way to a...deep worship; deep ecumenism and interaction among all religions of the planet. (p. 8)

The point cannot be emphasized too much: We have never attempted a rapprochement between the Cosmic Christ in Christianity and the Cosmic Christ in the universe and the Cosmic Christ in other religions. Yet the Divine One is present in them all... (p. 229)

Deep ecumenism is the movement that will unleash the wisdom of *all* world religions—Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, Taoism and Shintoism, Christianity in all its forms, and native religions and goddess religions throughout the world. This unleashing of wisdom holds the last hope for the survival of the planet we call home. (p. 228)

Perhaps a new “ecumenical council” will be forthcoming in our lifetime. This one would be *deeply ecumenical* and would call forth the wisdom of *all* the world’s religions. Part of its work might be to declare an ancient but forgotten doctrine: the Cosmic Christ, the “pattern than connects” all the atoms and galaxies of the universe, a pattern of divine love and justice that all creatures and all humans bear within them. (p. 7)

The coming together of the historical Jesus and the Cosmic Christ will make Christianity whole

at last. (p. 7)

\*All quotes taken from *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* by Matthew Fox, Harper, New York, 1988.

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## Endnotes:

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3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. *The Tom Snyder Show*, CNBC, 8/25/94.
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6. Jeremy Rifkin, *Declaration of a Heretic*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1985 pp. 127-128.
7. M. Scott Peck, *Further Along the Road Less Traveled: The Unending Journey Toward Spiritual Growth*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993, p. 165.
8. Alice and Walden Howard, *Exploring the Road Less Traveled*, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 1993, p. 7.
9. M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 1978, p. 281.
10. Ibid, pp. 282-283.
11. Ibid., pp. 269-270.
12. Ibid., pp. 308.
13. Ibid.
14. M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie*, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 1983, p. 11.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 201.
17. Ibid., p. 188.
18. *The Different Drum*, p. 17.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 18.
21. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
22. Ibid., p. 272.
23. Ibid., p. 21.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 61.
26. Ibid., p. 75.
27. *People of the Lie*, p. 11.
28. Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*, Bear & Co., Sante Fe, 1983, p. 316.
29. *New Age Journal*, Mar/Apr, 1989.
30. Matthew Fox and Brian Swimme, *MANIFESTO! For a Global Civilization*, Bear & Co., Santa Fe, 1982.
31. Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Harper, San Francisco, 1988, p. 7.
32. Ibid., p. 6.
33. Ibid., p. 7.
34. Ibid., p. 50.
35. Ibid., p. 129.
36. Ibid., p. 77.

37. Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations*, Lucis Publishing Co., New York, 1949, p. 152.

38. Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, p. 246.

\*First published in the Volume 19:2-3, 1995 issue of the *SCP Journal*.

Also published in the November 1995 issue of *The Christian Conscience*.

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The Christ will bring together, not simply Christianity and Buddhism, but the concept of God transcendentâ€”outside of His creationâ€”and also the concept of God immanent in all creationâ€”in man and all creation.<sup>4</sup> (emphasis added). In Leonard Sweetâ€™s 1999 book *SoulTsunami*â€”with its front cover endorsement by Rick Warrenâ€”Sweet introduces this same New Age idea of God not only being transcendent but also immanent.Â  23. Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p. 154. 24. *Ibid.*, p. 137.Â  28. M. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1988), pp. 205-206. Kalamazoo Community Foundation. M. Scott Peck - American psychiatrist and best-selling author who wrote the book, *The Road Less Traveled*, published in 1978. *Love Happily Ever After Dating Advice Romantic Things Falling In Love Romantic Quotes Motivational Words Inspirational Quotes Falling In Love Quotes*. "Falling in love is not an extension of one's limits or boundaries, it is a partial and temporary collapse of them."Â  There can be no vulnerability without risk; there can be no community without vulnerability; there can be no peace, and - M. Scott Peck quotes at AZquotes.com. *Interesting Quotes My Philosophy Course In Miracles Inspirational Quotes Words Positive Affirmations Real Love What Is Love Image Quotes*. M. Scott Peck, M.D. Publications. Purchase M Scott Peck Books! *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978). Confronting and solving problems is a painful process, which most of us attempt to avoid.Â  In recent years, however, the advancements in life-prolonging technology have blurred the lines between what constitutes good medicine and the deeper ethical and spiritual issues involved in keeping a patient alive at all costs. Here Dr. Peck offers new definitions of euthanasia and rails against the inadequate treatment of physical pain, while offering sensible medical and spiritual perspectives on chronic and terminal emotional and physical pain and illness.