

Understanding Public Administration In The Light Of Human Evolution

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Review Article

Received date: 26/06/2020;

Accepted date: 05/07/2020;

Published date: 29/07/2020

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Keywords: *public, administration, human,
and evolution*

Abstract:

Man asks many questions necessary to understand himself. Christianity teaches that God created man out of his image and likeness and therefore man cannot evolve. The answers to the questions were obtained through paraphrase, exposition and textual analysis of the work of Teilhard de Chardin and the Church's teaching on human evolution. In the *Humani Genesis* (1950), which serves as the official pronouncement of the Catholic Church left the discussion open as far as the body is concerned, but made the implicit reservation that the soul may not be included in the evolutionary talk. Teilhard de Chardin begins his discussion on the origin of the cosmos by stating that it (the cosmos) started from the gaseous elements in space. From the elements the living matter formed. However, he also admits that the past is uncertain as to the real beginning of man. Teilhard observes that evolution is focusing now on the nervous system, which rises and concentrates on the development of the brain. He observes that it grows in quality and size. The ultimate saturation point, the uttermost point of the evolutionary process, the Omega, will be Christ.

Rationale of the Study

Maybe some of us are surprised that during the 1960s the word “evolution” was hardly mentioned. It has been the object of scientific studies the origin of the world and man. We wonder whether the universe is governed by chance, blind fate, anonymous necessity, or by a transcendental intelligent wisdom call “God”? The current preoccupation among many is Teilhard’s fundamental thoughts that show harmony between the evolutionary theory and the teaching of the Church.

Theoretical Background

Chris Aulich & Roger Wettenhall, (2019) doubts whether or not the evolution of the rising public enterprise is a natural one along the development path or one which has been shaped by a radical reformation of the dominant national political ideology. Corazon J. Logarta places man as the leading evolutionary offshoot that carries on the unfinished march of evolution as he gradually but continuously discloses his personality, and as he irreversibly seeks the fullness of his being as a person, in the union with the Omega.¹

Ralph Linton in his study inquires into the possibility of evolution and how it was being achieved. However, in his findings, he concludes that it was doubtful whether any major advances in human evolution could be achieved. Furthermore he states that selection alone could produce only a more perfect example of existing genetic possibilities but it could not generate new and advanced type.²

In *The Emergence of Man* the article “The First Men” debunks the claim that man who was believed to be merely an offshoot of the apes. This claim was rejected by the public. This article claims that no one has found any fossils proving a link between the apes and man. Consequently, most people doubted the primate origin of man because there was no convincing evidence to support Charles Darwin.³

On another plain Marie Daniello Vandebogaert presents that life in order to exist and to develop needs more than God’s initial creative act. God’s Providence and continued creative act are necessary conditions in evolution.⁴

Pacifico E. Pantas reacts on Bruno De Solages’ article affirming Julian Huxley’s statement “evolution is no longer a theory, but a fact.” Solages says that evolution is created and guided by God.⁵

Alfred North Whitehead also makes a study on human nature. According to him, in dealing with the class between permanent elements of human nature is to map human history and to disengage ourselves from our immediate absorption in the present conflicts. When we do this, according to him, we immediately discover two great facts. First, there has always been a

¹Corazon J. Logarta, “The Primacy of Person in Teilhardian Thought” Master’s Thesis. Cebu City: University of San Carlos, 1973, p. 54.

²Ralph Linton, ed., *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950, p. 27.

³Editors of Time-Life Books, “The First Men,” *The Emergence of Man*. Nederland: Time-Life International, 1973, p. 33.

⁴Marie Daniello Vandebogaert, “A Study of Casual System in the Basic Writings of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Aquinas” Master’s Thesis. Cebu City: University of San Carlos, 1966, p. 79.

⁵Bruno De Solages, “Christianity and Evolution,” *Philippine Free Press* 60 (9 December, 1967):64.

conflict between religion and science; second, religion and science have always been in a state of continual development.⁶

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to understand the concept of the Church regarding human evolution. This study would help to understand the basic teaching of the Church regarding the origin of man as speculated by Teilhard de Chardin. The concern of this research is the resolution of the following major questions:

1. What is the position of the Catholic Church after the Vatican II regarding the doctrine of human evolution?
2. What is Teilhard de Chardin's philosophy of human evolution as found in the *Phenomenon of Man*?
3. What are the areas in which the Church and Teilhard de Chardin agree or disagree on human evolution?

Importance of the Study

For almost a decade many have sensed the danger that the thought of Teilhard de Chardin might remain the private possession of scholars who could find in Teilhard de Chardin both enlightenment and inspiration.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The researcher does not claim to having brought to a full measure of completion, nor is the researcher deluded into thinking that it will settle henceforth all the disagreements and agreements between science and religion.

METHODOLOGY

This study gives a paraphrase, exposition and textual analysis of the work of Teilhard de Chardin and the Church teaching particularly towards the better understanding of the theory of human evolution. This research will also accommodate the areas of agreement and disagreement between Teilhard de Chardin and the Church on human evolution.

History of the Theory of Human Evolution

Charles Darwin was responsible for coining the word "evolution" which has changed the whole direction of scientific and philosophical thought. The theory of evolution posits that there is a concentration on origins, development, and the directions of nature. Evolutionists believe

⁶Mortimer J. Adler. ed., "Philosophy and Religion" Great Books of the Western World 55. New York: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1994:220.

that all living organisms develop into higher and advance specie. At first, Darwin was very cautious in including human species in his evolutionary view. But evidences were just too convincing for him to exclude man as his research progressed. The physiological similarity of man with the immediate lower vertebrates, compelled him to include the human species in the general evolutionary sweep.⁷

There was a strong and bitter opposition from the Christian Churches. They thought that evolution was an attack on them. There was also the fear of reducing man to the merely material and thereby displacing God in the universe. They thought that man's spirituality and immortality would be endangered and God would no longer be the Lord of Creation.

Muckermann, a theologian, affirms that the theory of evolution brings horror to Catholics. According to him, the admission to evolutionary principle is equal to a denial of God's existence, and the ape was man's progenitor.⁸

Early Catholicism and Second Vatican Council

There are scholars who made a closer study on what the author of Genesis meant. This misunderstanding flows from an excessive concern for the literal meaning of the words. According to Eugene Maly, when God produced certain creatures in six successive days of the week, this was often understood in a strictly literal sense, thus eliminating the possibility of evolution. But the truth that the author is telling is that God is ultimately responsible for everything that exists; the six-day workweek is simply a convenient framework familiar to his readers for making the truth clear to his readers.⁹

One reason the books of Teilhard de Chardin were banned, was because the Church did not want to initially agree with the theory of human evolution since it was still fresh and even the average evolutionists contradicted each other. The Church is open to the opposition of the theory of evolution so that their conclusion will not be invalidated.

Anthropogenesis

Teilhard de Chardin does not pioneer the theory of the origin of the universe; his theory was only an elaboration of the early evolutionists. He begins his discussion on the origin of the cosmos by stating that it (the cosmos) started from the gaseous elements in space. From the elements the living matter formed. He narrates that thousands of millions years ago, there was an accident where a fragment of matter, composed of stable atoms, was detached from the surface of the sun and without breaking the bonds attaching to each other, it received radiation. This fragment began to condense and to roll itself up; it took shape, and finally the planet was born.¹⁰ Some scientists believe that life can come into being only when certain elements—carbon, hydrogen,

⁷ Notes on the lecture of Fr. Leonardo Estioko, SVD, Ph.D. on Teilhard de Chardin.

⁸ H. Muckermann, *Attitude of Catholics Towards Darwinism and Evolution* (London: B. Herder Book, 1906), p. 5-6.

⁹Eugene Maly, "Purpose of the Bible" *Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version* (Philippines: Philippine Bible Society, 1978), p. x.

¹⁰ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 67.

oxygen, nitrogen, and phosphorus—are abundant.¹¹ Teilhard is not only a philosopher but also a real scientist who knew the laws of nature as well as the energies present in the body of every organism. Like the ancient philosophers who posit the stuff of all things, Teilhard suggests that the universe is composed of fleeting ‘vortices.’¹²

In the beginning of Teilhard de Chardin’s discussion on evolution was the nature of the element. First, he proves that the molecules of carbon compounds with their thousands of atoms symmetrically grouped; next is the cell which contains thousands of molecules linked in a complicated system, then the metozoa in which the cell is no more than an almost infinitesimal element, and later the manifold attempts made by the metazoa to enter into symbiosis and raise themselves to a higher biological condition. From there, Teilhard moves higher into evolutionary explanation of the origin of mankind by elaborating the role of carbon compounds as the starting point of the discussion on the origin of life on earth. Beginning with carbon compounds, to the atoms, to the cell, to the molecules, to the metozoa and then the formation of tissue are the stages to prove that life begins from the element, which is distinctly life-less. From this point Teilhard moves evermore upward in his discussion on the stages of life by attesting that the bottom of this stages of life is the bacteria and the lower fungi. He adds that one stage higher comes the colony of attached cells, as with the higher vegetable forms. Higher still is the metazoan cell of cells, in which by a critical transformation is established over the organized group of living particles. And still further on, comes *society*--that mysterious association of free metazoans. The society that Teilhard refers here is not only exclusive in the lower stages of life, but it also includes the society of human being that is formed by aggregation, sharing of goods and mutual protection. Thus, Teilhard posits that all living creatures start from bacteria ‘a mutation from zero to everything.’ Even human being is not exempt to this generalization.

Noogenesis is the formation of the Noosphere; also called the birth of thought, the crossing of the threshold of reflection. Teilhard de Chardin thought that the appearance of man was not much different from other species; it followed the complexification-consciousness law. On the physical level there is not much noticeable change; however, there is a considerable change in what Teilhard de Chardin called “psychic temperature” in Noogenesis. When the ceiling of physical mutation was reached, there followed a mutation on the psychic level. Hence, evolution crossed the threshold of reflection. The animal is endowed with sense knowledge, i.e., consciousness of things around it. In man, a step higher was taken, namely self-reflection or self-consciousness. Man began to include himself as the object of thought. Reflection, so to speak, overflowed from things around him to his own self. Man’s self-reflection became a specifically new envelope on the earth’s surface. Biosphere became Noosphere. Teilhard de Chardin further says that evolution is nothing but an “ascent towards consciousness.” Consciousness is the substance and heart of life in the evolutionary process.¹³

Complexity-Consciousness. Teilhard was amazed at the wonderful things created by men. The advent of technology, which made the life of man comfortable, might be the source of our awe at the achievements of man. The ability of the mind to comprehend the things around him becomes his instrument for further ascent of consciousness.¹⁴ Indeed, “there is no more amazing and

¹¹ Christopher K. Mathews, et al., *Biochemistry* 3rd ed., (Manila: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001), p. 7.

¹² Teilhard refers here to the catastrophic power like that of a rushing whirl. This is considered by Teilhard as the origin of the cosmos as its basic stuff of all things. For him this is the origin of the world and all things develop from this.

¹³ Notes on the lecture of Fr. Leonardo Estioko, SVD, Ph.D. on Teilhard de Chardin.

¹⁴ Tim Maudlin, “Computation and Consciousness,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 86 (August 1989):407.

puzzling fact than that of consciousness. As to the question of the origin of the consciousness, Teilhard advises us to take a look on the whole process of evolution particularly in the early ages because for him, every detail of the events that took place in man is part of the history of his consciousness.

Cerebralization. As an anthropologist, Teilhard studies the transition of the brain from the pre-historic up to modern time. He observes that it grows in quality and size. These changes manifest in the formation of the skeleton and skull. When Teilhard examines the skeletons and skull, he found out that the brain is already perfect, so perfect that there seems no measurable variation or increased perfection in the organic instrument of our thought. The intelligence accumulates collectively by means of education. Teilhard believes that one factor for the development of the size of the brain is through education and experiences in life.

Anthropogenesis

Anthropogenesis means the transformation of human being starting from the anthropoid apes up to the modern man. The study of man becomes a unique value to science. Teilhard maintains that science of man is the practical and theoretical science of hominization, which for him, means profound study of the past and of origin of man. Teilhard does not allow biological sciences alone as the sole source of information regarding human evolution. Richard Schacht adds that the explanation on the origin of man according to scientific findings is not sufficient or even to add what other human sciences have to say.¹⁵ Teilhard holds that only in man has the ability to become the knowing subject and at the same time an object of the study. Through introspection or reflection, man is able to go beyond the level of his animal nature.

Pre-Human. After the carbon compound formed into cell, it develops into single-celled organisms, and still continuously transforming until such time that a new organisms will be formed. The Bible ascribes that God created the sea creatures first, followed by the animals, and finally God made man, Teilhard also follows the same pattern; i.e., life begins in the sea. From the sea creatures which later become amphibians and reptiles, there shoot of the mammalian branch.

The Dawn of Man. The presence of primitive animals is surprising in modern time. Why did they still exist? Why did they not transform like other animals? These are the questions of some critics in both theistic and even in atheistic evolution. Teilhard mentions the function of the genes over the transmission or non-transmission of acquired characters. He states that through the genes, there are acquired characters which the new offspring inherited from their parents. However, he also noticed that there are characters of the new offspring that are not acquired from their parents. Because of this, he concludes that this is due to the transformation of the living organisms from one kind to another.

Christogenesis

What will humanity thousand or million years from now? Evolution will continue its super-complexification and super-humanization. Evolution will continue to break ceilings, and the last ceiling will be 'somebody.' The ultimate saturation point, the uttermost point of the evolutionary process, the Omega, will be Christ. Teilhard de Chardin states that the coming of

¹⁵ Richard Schacht, "Philosophical Anthropology: What, Why and How," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50 (Fall 1990):157.

Christ is conditioned by man's efforts to build the earth. From the beginning, Teilhard already recognizes the future of man which is to be like Christ. This is the end of all the process of transformation; that is, to be perfect like Christ.

Vision of Universal Fraternity. Teilhard's vision is to unite the people. Some of his critics negate his explanation of the origin of man or life in general; except his vision of universal fraternity. Teilhard believes that man's aggregation to form into a 'society', is also a product of chance. He adds that unity would only be accomplished if we love one another.

Future of the World

Teilhard predicts that there is a possibility that calamities might happen in our planet on times we never expect. He even predicts that a gigantic comet will crush us; or even tomorrow the earth might quake and collapse under our feet. However, Teilhard says that this is just a theory where we can have higher reasons for being sure that they will not happen.¹⁶

Future of Man

In our modern world, the progress of science and technology has inflated the ego of man. As a consequence, he has lost his perspective, his balance and sense of values.¹⁷ Man is in continuous progress whose future we never know. For Teilhard, the future is uncertain because of man's unpredicted behavior. However, this uncertainty can be properly guided if we know the past.

Christ, the Goal of Evolution. It has been the object of scientific studies the origin of the world and man. We wonder whether the universe is governed by chance, blind fate, anonymous necessity, or by a transcendental intelligent wisdom call "God"? Some say that the world arises from God and necessarily returns to Him—its origin and its end.¹⁸ Christ will be the grand finale, the Omega. Christ has all the time been the attracting force of evolution right from the beginning. Just as he was there in the beginning, so will he be there in the end. He is the launcher and receiver of evolution.

Conclusions

First, in the evolution of man there is a great deal of evidence showing that human beings evolved from the lower species. The Church recognized this theory, but she needs more theories to build a stronger foundation on her future claim. Man may come from lower specie; however, the Church holds that souls are immediately created by God. The Church left the discussion open as far as the body is concerned but made the implicit reservation that the soul may not be included in the evolutionary talk.

Second, is the agreement of the Church and Teilhard de Chardin regarding the development of man. Both of them realized that man progresses and develops. The development

¹⁶ Phenomenon of Man, p. 275.

¹⁷ Nimfa Montejo, "Christ and the Modern Man," *The Carolinian* 31 (December 1967-January 1968):4.

¹⁸ Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Minnesota: The Wanderer Press, 1994),

of science and technology is in accordance with the teachings of Christ which is to be the master of himself and of the world. Teilhard de Chardin's findings of the human development are not contradictory to the teaching of the Church. The life of man is following after Christ who is the final point of evolution. Christ is the alpha and the omega point of man. Evolution is guided and created by God. God planned the world to be what it is now at present. Christianity and evolution are true and that the teachings of the Scripture are supported by true facts of science. Evolution, for Teilhard, is to follow the life of Christ who is the beginning and the end of the evolutionary thrust. His theory is both scientific and Christian.

Third, is the agreement on the dignity of man. Man, according to Teilhard de Chardin and the Church is apart from other animals.

Fourth, is the agreement of Teilhard de Chardin and the Church on the place of man in the future. They agree that science, progress and the destiny of man are patterned after the life of Christ. The future of man is to be like Christ who is perfect. This can only be achieved if we love one another.

To sum up: the Church cannot immediately accept the theory of evolution. However, the Church needs more proofs so that their future conclusion will be reliable. Evolution just shows a strong possibility of the origin of man. Teilhard de Chardin's understanding of human evolution implies that there is no conflict between science and religion on the claim regarding the origin of man. Science tells scientific truth, while Church religious truth. Truth will not be contradictory.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

Public administration should be in accordance with the nature of human evolution. Policies implemented should be in accordance with the nature. The laws that are crafted must defy the natural tendency of mankind to behave like beasts.

A specific law passed to unify religion rather than dividing people because of individual beliefs. Public policies therefore are intended to curb the beastly desire of survival of the fittest.

Every constitution of the country must be in harmony towards unity. Like cells, organisms, they thrive because they unite; mankind should unite against threat to human existence.

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