Introduction to Integral Spirituality

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Let me say it is an honor and a pleasure to be here with all of you tonite. I'm sorry I can't be there myself, but a few temporary health glitches have me slowed up. But this doesn't diminish my enthusiasm for this entire summit—it's wonderful.

There are two broad areas I've been asked to address tonite: first, spirituality in general and some of the truly amazing, even stunning breakthroughs that have recently been made in its regard; and then second, how this overall topic fits with recent updates in evolutionary theory, such as those presented by Dr. David Sloan, who is gracing this summit with his presence.

So let's get started. Broadly speaking, there are two fundamental types of spiritual or religious engagements widely present in the world today (and for the moment, I'm using "spiritual" and "religious" as generally synonymous—we'll separate them in a minute). The first type of spirituality is a kind of narrative—often mythic in nature—that purports to explain the origin and meaning of the world, usually at the hand of some Creator, God, or Goddess figure. On an individual level, its purpose is usually to provide some sort of meaning, value, or purpose in life; and on a collective level, its purpose is generally to provide social and cultural cohesion. Usually part of this narrative is a notion of salvation or redemption, the idea that humanity is caught in some sort of original sin or primary misdoing or fundamental ignorance, and has to confess, repent, awaken, enlighten, or reorder its life toward a love and service of this groundless Ground and its Righteous Order, and—sometime—through the vehicle of this God's one and only

primary prophet, or messenger, or even Son—who is usually the founder of this particular school of religion.

The effect of this narrative spirituality is to make this life—the life right now, here on Earth—essentially a testing ground, a trial. The here and now is not the real reality—it's just a thin test run to see if you can follow all the God-given rules, laws, and commandments. You are primarily to put off any real satisfaction for now—postpone all of that—and then get your real reward—and real life—in the world to come. If you follow all the commandments, obey all the God-given rules and covenants, if you live a basically sin-free life, then upon death you are transported to Heaven for all eternity (or at the least, a series of blissful reincarnations). This is your reward for the God-fearing, God-following life that you lived here on Earth. In the monotheistic versions, you will live in this Heaven forever—literally forever and forever. There's generally no coming back, there's no doing it over again, there's not another life on Earth or anywhere else—just everlasting, unending, ceaseless beatitude in endless radiance.

This version of religion or spirituality is a type of belief system—a series of beliefs, often, as I said, of a mythic-literal character (where "mythic-literal" means, for example, Moses really did part the Red Sea, Lao Tzu really was 900 years old when he was born, Lot's wife really was turned into a sac of salt, and so on; these are mythic beliefs where magic elements are often thrown in—water turned into wine, raising the dead, walking on water, flying through the air, walking through walls, and so on—and here we're not talking about real paranormal events or siddhi, which are rare but for which there is substantial evidence that some do indeed exist—we're talking rather about what most would see as childish magical wish fulfillment). Belief in magic and mythic

elements are often part of the attraction of this type of religion; and—without being judgmental about this, just stating the evidence—many people who are attracted to these magic-mythic belief systems are themselves at the earlier, more childish, magic and mythic stages of human growth and development themselves (as several studies have indicated).

But the whole point of this type of religion is that it is actually a type of a multiple intelligence that all humans have, called *spiritual intelligence*. What recent research has shown is that humans indeed have upwards of a dozen multiple intelligences—not just cognitive intelligence, long thought the one and only major intelligence humans possessed (and measured by the all-important IQ test)—but also emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, aesthetic intelligence, and, yes, spiritual intelligence. Further research has tended to bear out the fact that as different as these multiple intelligences are—and, by the way, they are also often referred to as *lines of development*—but as different as these multiple lines all are, all of them nonetheless grow and develop through the same major, basic, *levels of development*. So different lines, same levels. This overall process of development is referred to as *Growing Up*, because it follows the basic levels of development as they move from infantile to childish to adolescent to early adult to late adult to elderhood stages of growth.

The specific stages or levels of Growing Up have been given many different names—remember, these developmental levels cover all the different developmental lines, and therefore the number of different names that can be used is quite large.

I'll be using a number of different names for these levels of Growing Up, and I'll start with a variation on them given by the pioneering developmentalist Jean Gebser—but please remember, this is just one version of possible names for these major levels (including the levels of spiritual intelligence). So don't get caught up in them if you're not fond of them, we'll see there are many others. But this particular version of the basic levels of development or Growing Up (which apply to all of the various multiple lines) is: the archaic level of a line, the magic level of a line, the mythic-literal level, the rational level, the pluralistic, the integral, and the super-integral. Each of those names mean pretty much just what they sound like (although we will be giving some specific examples as we go along).

Now to jump to one important conclusion very quickly (and then we'll explain it): but the problem with the magic and mythic-literal levels of spiritual intelligence is that—as you can see in the list I just gave—those are some of the very lowest levels of spiritual intelligence available. And yet they are by far the most common worldwide. And <u>that's</u> a problem.

As you can imagine, this discovery of the existence of spiritual intelligence as one of the multiple lines or intelligences that humans have is a major breakthrough—and has enormous implications for religion and spirituality altogether. Now, there are numerous schools of developmental psychology, most of them focusing on a particular intelligence or line, or group of them (so Kohlberg focused on moral intelligence, Piaget on cognitive intelligence, Graves on values intelligence, and so on). But what's so interesting is that virtually all of the developmental schools, no matter how much they differ on details and specifics, virtually all of them give essentially these same basic 6-to-8 or so major levels

of development. Again, different lines, same basic levels. In a book I did called *Integral Psychology*, there are charts of over 100 different developmental systems, and what is so striking about those charts is that you can see, in the vast majority of them, something similar to these same 6-to-8 major levels continually showing up; some models give a few more levels, some a few less, but essentially these same 6-to-8 stand out time and time again. The many different multiple intelligences or developmental lines—and the essentially similar developmental levels they all grow and evolve through—are some of the very most fundamental components of the human psyche.

So if we return to the first type of spiritual engagement—the narrative belief-system—what we find is that this type of religion relies primarily on spiritual intelligence in the path of Growing Up—but, and here's the rub that we just pointed out—the most common of these religions are not at a particularly high level in that line. Spiritual intelligence is defined as how we think about, picture, view, or conceive ultimate reality—scholars like Paul Tillich and James Fowler call it how we view and relate to {quote} "our ultimate concern." (Now we will soon contrast this type of religion—a belief-system in Growing Up in the spiritual line of intelligence—with the second major type of spirituality—not that of *Growing Up*, but that of *Waking Up.* This involves, not spiritual intelligence, but direct spiritual experience; and it results not in life everlasting in some Heavenly hereafter or reincarnated heavens, but in a direct Enlightenment or Awakening or Metamorphosis in this here and now. Although they are often found together and intertwined, these clearly are two profoundly different types and practices of spirituality—spiritual Growing Up and spiritual Waking Up—and this, as we'll see, leads to a large number of very important conclusions.)

So to return to spiritual intelligence and spiritual Growing Up through the major 6–to-8 levels of development, this does mean that the narrative versions of virtually any or all major religions do not have to stop at the magic or mythic stage. In other words, as we just pointed out, in the spiritual intelligence line—which, like all lines, goes from archaic to magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral to super-integral (so there is an archaic approach to ultimate reality, a magic approach to ultimate reality, a mythic approach to ultimate reality, a rational approach to ultimate reality, a pluralistic approach, and so on)—but many, even most, of today's major religions are stuck at the magic and mythic levels of their own spiritual intelligence. It's a pure case of arrested development.

Now that's an important realization. But just as important is that they don't have to be. There are, in fact, several higher levels of spiritual intelligence available to them—and there are indeed individuals in every major religion that are at these higher levels. And, in fact, there have been empirical studies—including ones like the extremely significant studies of stages of Christian belief by James Fowler—clearly showing that there are individuals who can be found at every level of spiritual intelligence. In other words, even though most of the dogmatic and fundamentalist forms of Christianity, for example, have major components at the magic and mythic stages, there are individuals—who profess a strong belief in Christianity—who are themselves not only at the magic and mythic stages in their spiritual intelligence, but also there are those at the rational, pluralistic, integral, and super-integral stages. Other studies show unmistakably similar conclusions for religions including Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism, among others. In other words, even though the accepted dogmas of many of these spiritual systems are officially at a magic/mythic stage, many individuals continue their spiritual growth into

the higher stages of spiritual intelligence—moving on from mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral. (And we're not yet discussing the role and importance of that other spiritual engagement called Waking Up.) The point is that versions ALREADY exist of all of those higher stages of spiritual intelligence in religions, now, today, although this is rarely realized (simply because developmental levels themselves are rarely acknowledged and understood)—and so these enormously important notions are being almost totally ignored, and with often truly unfortunate results.

The evidence for these developmental levels is substantial. For example, these major levels in the cognitive and moral lines have been tested in over 40 different cultures worldwide—including Amazonian rain forest tribes, Australian aborigines, Mexican workers, and individuals in India. No major exceptions have been found.

Now most people, certainly in the West, think of religion as being this narrative belief-structure type of religion—this *Growing Up in spiritual intelligence* (whether they use those actual words or not)—and further, they see it almost entirely in *only its magic and mythic levels or stages*, because that is where orthodox religion in many cases has remained for the longest stretch of its history.

So I'll use Christianity as an example of these stages (again, there are published examples of these same basic stages in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and so on. And as a reminder, we are looking at the stages of Growing Up as they manifest in the spiritual line or spiritual intelligence, expressed in Christianity, and these levels are the same as expressed in all lines: archaic, magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, integral, and so on). Its lowest stage or level, beyond archaic (which few adults possess), is magic Christianity. Magic is the belief that your individual self can magically alter reality just

by thinking about it or performing magic rituals. The self and environment are not yet clearly differentiated at this early stage, so an image of an object and the real object itself are often fused and confused—so to manipulate the image is to manipulate the object, too. Voodoo is a classic magic religion: make a doll representing a real person, stick a pin in the doll, and the real person is magically hurt. Or in other cases, do a Rain Dance, and nature is magically forced to rain. In Christianity, magic beliefs show up in things like walking on water, raising the dead, converting water to wine, curing illnesses, and so on. Again, we're not talking about actual paranormal events or siddhi, which are rare but real in some cases; we're talking about the early, magic stage of developmental Growing Up, also called narcissistic word magic, and it occurs because the symbol representing a thing, and the thing itself, have not yet been fully differentiated, and therefore to manipulate the symbol is to manipulate the real thing—no distinction is made. Modern-day versions of this level of Growing Up in Christianity include sects such as the snake charmers, who believe that if you handle poisonous snakes, and your faith is pure, the snake magically won't bite you. By the way, the leader of one of the largest of these sects just died—from a rattlesnake bite.

The next higher developmental stage, Mythic Christianity, is the stage or level that James Fowler specifically calls "mythic-literal," because that's exactly what it does—it believes all of the myths in the Bible are literally and historically true, and are the absolute and unerring word of God. So Jesus really was born of a biological virgin, Elijah really did go straight to heaven in his chariot will still alive, the earth really was created in 6 days, Lazarus really was raised from the dead, and so on. To doubt any of this is a serious sin and can land you squarely in hell.

At this mythic level of development, a positive occurrence is that one's identity expands from egocentric to ethnocentric. Egocentric—which is present at the previous archaic and magic levels—means an identity that is self-centered, and is concerned just with oneself. One's identity is simply with one's own organism, and one cares only for that. So egocentric likes magic because magic can, well, magically protect or extend the self. But egocentric cannot see the world through another person's point of view, or walk a mile in another's shoes—it cannot, as developmentalists put it—"take the role of other." The egocentric child will hide its head under a pillow, and think that because it can't see anybody, nobody can see it, either. The world itself is treated as merely an extension of the self (hence "egocentric" or "selfish" or "narcissistic").

But as growth moves from magic to mythic, and one's self-boundary grows and expands, likewise one's identity expands from the self to a group or groups—it expands from egocentric to ethnocentric, from "me" to "us." Ethnocentric believes in the superiority or primacy of one's own group—one's race, color, sex, religious creed—believes in a "chosen people." And it has a very strong "us versus them" attitude—the "us" that has the one true God and is going to be saved for all eternity, versus the "them" who are infidels, unbelievers, nonbelievers, who believe in the wrong God or the wrong form of spirituality. This level of religion is very fundamentalistic. And the main job of the ethnocentric fundamentalist believer is *jihad*—"jihad" specifically is Islam for "holy war," but every true believer, every ethnocentric religionist, believes in jihad of one form or another—ranging from mild to extremist—that is, ranging from the more tepid forms of preaching or ministering or trying to convert infidels and unbelievers, to a middle range of coercing a forced belief through one means or the other, to a truly violent,

extremist end of torture and actual killing, murder, and warfare, eliminating unbelievers if you can't convert them. But the whole point of jihad is to convince, convert, coerce, or kill the unbelieving other. And for an extremist, it's not a sin to kill an unbeliever, because they have no souls (killing unbelievers actually looks very good on one's religious CV, with many extra rewards given in heaven for these good acts).

The Crusades were a good example of two ethnocentric, mythic-literal belief-systems engaged in all-out holy war with each other. And virtually all of today's terrorists' acts are committed by ethnocentric, fundamentalist, mythic true believers aggressively set against an other, a "Them," who are unbelievers—and this terrorist activity affects any individual in virtually every major religion (if they are at this level of development in their spiritual intelligence), whether this is Southern Baptists blowing up abortion clinics in the South, or ISIS murdering their countrymen, or Hindus attacking border Pakistanis, or Buddhists putting poison sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system, or the horrid acts committed by Irish Catholics and Protestants, or al Qaeda downing the Twin Towers, or the Sunnis and the Shi'ites in various proxy wars in the Middle East, or Hamass and Hezbollah, and on and on and on. All of these are acts perpetrated by mythic ethnocentric true believers who imagine that they have the one and only true God in existence, and all other people are to be converted, coerced, burned or beheaded. And, you will have noted, all of this is actually done in name of their one and only true God. Historically, this has been the single greatest cause of human suffering, torture, homicide, and warfare. And some 60-70% of the world's population is still at this mythic ethnocentric (or lower) level of development and growing up. It's quite disturbing,

actually—and made all the worse because developmental levels are not widely understood.

As we move to the next major level—one of its names is "rational," but don't let that term throw you. It doesn't mean dry, abstract, logico-mathematical (there's actually a separate multiple intelligence called "logico-mathematical"); here "rationality" or "reason" simply means the capacity to take a greater degree of perspectives, to see things from a larger view. Egocentric can see a 1st-person perspective (that is, self-only); ethnocentric expands its perspectives to a 2nd-person perspective—as we saw, it can take the role of other, it can see things through another's eyes, it can walk a mile in somebody else's shoes. But this also means that this capacity is limited to just one's own ethnic group (one's race, one's nationality, one's religion, and so on). But the next-higher level, the level of rationality or reason, can take a 3rd-person perspective—it can imagine the perspective of all humanity or a universal humanity—and so it strives to treat all people fairly, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed—and "regardless of creed" means "regardless of religion." Historically, this level arose on a large scale with the Western Enlightenment, which believed in {quote} "the universal rights of man" (and soon woman)—in other words, not just the rights of Catholics or Jews or Protestants or Muslims or Hindus, but all humans (a move from ethnocentric "us" to worldcentric "all of us"). So this wasn't an ethnocentric view—this was called a *worldcentric* view, for ALL human beings were deserving of the same basic rights—not just the saved or the privileged, but all humans—worldcentric, not ethnocentric. This was a staggeringly monumental transformation.

Now the rational worldcentric level of Growing Up, because it could take a 3rd-person, objective, universal perspective, was also the home of the burgeoning modern sciences—which depended upon this type of objective, 3rd-person, rational, universal stance—and so onto the scene exploded, starting around 1600 CE, modern physics, modern chemistry, modern biology, modern geology, and so on—the Industrial Revolution (for good and ill) was on us all, and the world would never be the same.

For similar reasons, with the emergence of worldcentric reason, monarchy began to give way to representative democracy. And slavery—which had been present in the human situation from day one (even foragers had slavery; and most major religions condoned it, since they all arose in pre-worldcentric times)—but, for the first time in all of history, slavery was now completely made illegal. During a roughly one-hundred year period (around1780 to 1880), slavery was legally outlawed in every single worldcentric, rational-industrial society on the face of the planet—again, the first time in history that had ever happened. The fact that most religions supported slavery shows that most of them were indeed originally coming from, or were stuck in, the ethnocentric stage, which finds slavery completely acceptable, and, in fact, the natural state of affairs.

Western Religion, at the time of the Western Enlightenment, largely remained at the mythic-literal level of Growing Up in spiritual intelligence; but there was no inherent reason for it to do so. And, in fact, many of the pioneering scientists themselves adopted a rational form of Christianity, such as Deism. Many theologians find Deism a little bit thin on the spiritual intelligence side, but the point is that it was a predominantly rational-level Christianity, showing that such is most definitely possible. More sophisticated versions of rational-level Christianity today include things like the Jesus

Seminars, a group of highly respected theologians who are attempting to decide which portions of the Bible are literally and historically true, and which are just mythic or symbolic in character. Or writers like Bishop Shelby Spong, who specifically rejects the mythic elements of the Bible and approaches Jesus as a profound wisdom teacher who still has much to teach the modern and postmodern world. (And there are the apocryphal tales of Thomas Jefferson sitting on the steps of the White House and, with a pair of scissors, aggressively cutting out all the "silly" mythic components of the New Testament, so that what he had left made sense to any rational person.)

But indeed, one of the most noticeable and significant characteristics of this rational Christianity, whenever it does manage to appear, is its *worldcentric* nature. This is incredibly important. When Vatican II admitted that, paraphrasing, "a comparable salvation to that offered by Christianity can be found in other religions," it took its first step from an ethnocentric privileged in-group (and chosen peoples) to a universal, truly catholic view. This had never happened before in its entire two-thousand-year history, and it is still a realization that is denied by every fundamentalist religion at this level. But it's obviously crucial that this type of developmental move (i.e., from ethnocentric to worldcentric) be made by every major religion if humanity is ever to find anything resembling world peace. As we noted, some 60-70% of the world's population is still ethnocentric (or lower), and the vast majority of those are held there by one religion or another that is still mythic-literal and ethnocentric, believing that it, and it alone, has the one true way.

So what we look for in any religion (besides its access to WAKING UP, which we'll get to in a moment), is whether it is at a rational-worldcentric or higher level of

Growing Up in the spiritual intelligence line. Less than that, and it will be involved, overtly or covertly, in some form of jihad—and it certainly will not be able to engage in any form of genuine interspirituality.

Often, with a rational-level religion, its previous mythic-literal dogmas are called into question and replaced with more reasonable but still deeply spiritual beliefs—as with the Jesus Seminars. Christ is no longer seen literally as the sole Son of God, but as a great World Teacher who had—and still has—a tremendous amount of wisdom much needed in today's world.

This level of rationality or reason was generally the world's leading edge of evolution for the next several hundred years, until around the 1960s and the emergence, in a significant number of people, of the next-higher level of Growing Up, called various terms such as the postmodern, pluralistic, relativistic, cultural creative, diversity, multicultural, participatory, and so on. The point is that where the rational or modern level could take a 3rd-person perspective, the pluralistic or postmodern level can take a 4th-person perspective, which simply means it can reflect on 3rd-person perspectives, including science, and reach conclusions from a higher level of generality. And one of the first conclusions that this level reached is that strictly universal truths—like those claimed by science—are too rigid or too excluding of other types of truth. Each culture has many of its own truths, and we have to be very careful about making judgments about just who has, and who doesn't have, the correct or superior view. In fact, for most versions of this postmodern pluralistic level, there is no such thing as "the" one correct view—rather, every view is relative or pluralistic, depending on a whole host of background factors and contexts, which means that each culture has its own various types

of truth, and what's true for one might not be true for another. Likewise, you have what's true for you, and I have what's true for me, and both of those can be right.

But we do have to be careful when approaching this level, because it tends to take its conclusions just a little too far. This has been pointed out now by many social critics, and the common conclusion is that postmodern pluralism itself commits acts that it says cannot or should not be done. For example, postmodernism claims that all knowledge—from science to poetry—is simply socially constructed and the result of interpretation, not any sort of universal validity. But postmodernism itself claims that that is true for all cultures, in all places, at all times. In other words, it claims that it is universally true that there are no universal truths. It claims that there is no such thing as a superior view, but it believes that its views are superior to all the alternatives. And that's not an interpretation, that's an unalloyed truth. It's right, everybody else is wrong. So we have to be careful about this self-contradiction in any postmodern view.

But aside from that performative contradiction, this pluralistic level did bring many of its own true if partial discoveries. Because it believed there were no universal values or truths, it was hyper-sensitive to imposing any system of values on anybody—and thus it paid extreme attention to any oppression or marginalization of any peoples, especially minorities of any type. In fact, beginning in the '60s, it was this level that particularly drove the profound civil rights movement; that was behind personal and professional feminism; that started the worldwide environmental movement; and that started driving for increased rights of minorities in the world's religions, including women and homosexuals. The importance of cultural context on all of our knowledge remains an enduring contribution of this level. And this is worth keeping in mind for

spirituality as well. As a quick example, note that Western mystical texts sometimes contain mention of luminous spheres-of-light beings, some of which possess things like 2 wings—in other words, angels. But nowhere in any of those religious writings can you find a mention of a being with 10,000 arms. Yet go to Tibet, a country permeated by Buddhist mysticism, and that image is everywhere—it's known as Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Clearly, culture has an impact on what is perceived to be spiritual and on how it appears. Now postmodernism would claim that such things happen because all knowledge is a relative, culturally-bound social construction, period. For Integral Metatheory, that's only part of the picture. These beings, when directly perceived in a meditative state, are representing a real reality—namely, the subtle realm—and as such, versions of these luminous archetypes appear in virtually all of the world's great Traditions. But how they actually appear, their surface structures—whether they have 2 wings or 10,000 arms—are molded by the 4 quadrants (or actually, the entire Kosmic address or overall AQAL address, for those of you familiar with Integral Metatheory). So the deep structures are genuinely real—they have a real, universal, ontological existence—but their surface features are relative and culturally molded (as well as molded by other contexts such as race, sex, linguistics, gender, creed, and so on—the entire AQAL Matrix). In this fashion, Integral Metatheory attempts to rescue both a genuine reality and a cultural construction, giving each its proper due. But this also anchors all of our spiritual realities and gives us reason to believe they are not merely symbolic or culturally made-up (although it might be of a lower level than we imagined—or that we like).

An example of a Christianity at this level—a postmodern pluralistic Christianity—can be found in any number of texts with names such as *A Postmodern Bible*. It is also found in, to give only one example, the influential writings of Marcus Borg. This scholar flat-out states that he doesn't believe in virtually any of the mythic elements in Christianity—he doesn't believe in the literal one and only Son, nor in the virgin birth, nor the literal resurrection, nor the *Genesis* account of creation, nor Noah's ark—and on and on. Moreover, he claims that not a single theologian he knows believes them, either. This will come as news to most Churches, but it simply points out how dramatically different interpretations of traditional material rest on the level of spiritual intelligence brought to the interpretation. Yet Borg—as well as Bishop Spong—claims that he still considers himself, in every important way, a fully subscribed Christian. And that's a key point that I would really like to stress—no matter where the founder of a spiritual movement was in his or her own development (in both Growing Up and Waking Up), subsequent individuals can be at a different level and still honestly and truly claim to be in the lineage tradition of the founder. You can be at any level of spiritual Growing Up in relation to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and so on, and still rightly claim to be a member of that religion. Lineages have a way of speaking to people, and if a lineage speaks to you, that's the only fundamental requirement (although its official version will likely have several specifics that you disagree with). I believe this is fine, particularly if the particular religion has instituted a conveyor belt of its own teachings.

Now, by CONVEYOR BELT I simply mean, since—as we've seen—there are already individuals at virtually every level of Growing Up in virtually every major

religion, then each religion ought to officially institute, as foundational, the version of its primary teachings as they appear and are interpreted at every major level of Growing Up there is—and that full spectrum of interpretations is what every religion should present as its official beliefs. We already saw, very briefly, what Christianity looks like to each of these major levels of development (magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, and so on). You can get very good, very detailed versions of each of these levels from actual empirical research such as James Fowler's. But the point is, each level of Growing Up has a very, very different view of its religion—and that religion needs desperately to take that into account with a Conveyor Belt of interpretations covering all of those levels.

This would immediately have several profound, indeed extraordinary, benefits. One, religion would become, in today's world, a pacer of actual transformation—a conveyor belt—that picked people up where they begin their lives—namely, at their own archaic and magic stages (emphasizing the superman and magic beliefs dominant at that stage—and still attractive to individuals who are specifically at that stage). Then, at the appropriate time (usually between ages 7 and 12), make available to them a mythic belief-system (which would help them shift from egocentric levels of development to ethnocentric levels, and move them away from "me only" concerns to "we" concerns; and whose beliefs shift from egocentric magic to group ethics and various commandments and laws). And then, as they begin to move away from those mythic-literal beliefs (usually starting in adolescence), offer them a rational spirituality (of the Jesus seminar variety, for example, or Bishop Spong; much of Buddhism is already at least at rational—although not all its followers are—since from the beginning it denied gods and goddesses and mythic Divine Creators, and spoke mostly in

straightforward reason terms—in addition, of course, to its profound teachings on Waking Up).

As the individual enters early adulthood and the pluralistic stage, make a postmodern pluralistic teaching available, with special emphasis on the multicultural importance of all the world's great traditions, the importance of non-marginalization and participatory attitudes, deconstructing hierarchies (which Jesus did with a fury—the meek shall be strong and inherit the earth, the outer-rejected shall be center, etc.). And likewise, introduce the yet next-higher level when it emerges—an extremely important level—called "integral"—that we'll talk about in just a moment.

The point here is that with such a conveyor belt in place, the major religions could help individuals reach out to higher and higher stages of development—and not keep them in arrested development at the magic or mythic. Many of the features of major religions remain at the mythic-literal stage, which has made "religion" in the modern and postmodern world synonymous with childish, regressive, anti-rational, anti-science, Santa-Claus-like myths—and has also made the fundamentalist, ethnocentric, mythic stage a major driving force of terrorist acts in every major religion around the world, driven by an "us versus them" mentality—we have the one True Way, and the rest of the world, especially the modern world, is totally without Spirit or any redeeming values at all, a Great Satan that deserves only destruction. That ethnocentric fundamentalism would no longer be the Final Word for that religion; rather, that religion would continue to open up into worldcentric versions of its teachings, which recognize the validity of many other religions as well. And when appropriate, if this individual continues to grow and evolve, the religious conveyor belt would be there to help them move into

postmodern pluralistic stages, integral stages, and higher (not to mention making Waking Up attractive).

So the first major result of the conveyor belt would be to make religion—not a case of arrested development at mythic-literal—but an overall transformation process helping each individual move to higher and higher stages and levels of their own Growing Up. Second, this would undercut terrorist acts that are based upon a specific, ethnocentric, fundamentalist level of interpretation of their religion, because the religion itself would point out the ongoing road of the unfolding of spiritual intelligence (and would point out the fact that this particular religion does not have the ONLY way, a falsehood that is today the main motivation of terrorism in general). Third, this would stop religion (particularly in its magic- and mythic-stage versions) from being essentially the laughingstock of the modern and postmodern world. The new atheists—Hitchins, Dawkins, Harris, Hawking—have had a field-day virulently attacking all religion, when all their arguments actually address is mythic fundamentalism—and, be it noted, most of their criticisms are true and correct when it comes to the unhealthy versions of those early levels and stages of religious engagement. But how hard is it to argue that Noah's ark didn't really contain one couple—male and female—of every species on earth?—did the ark really get all 180,000 insect species, billions of viruses (and male and female from each), and so on? It doesn't take a genius to see the holes in that and other myths. And the new atheists' arguments do not touch—do not even appear to be aware of—both the higher levels of spiritual Growing Up and the entire range of Waking Up—of these, we hear not a single word from these scientific materialists. This type of antagonistic attack between what amounts to postmodern levels of science versus premodern levels of

spiritual intelligence will continue as long as religion itself remains dogmatically at the premodern/mythic stage—cutting it off from reason, cutting it off from science, cutting it off from the modern and postmodern world altogether.

And finally, fourth, the conveyor belt, by making religion overall much more compatible with the modern and postmodern world, this would allow individuals to become both more aware of, and more willing to try, the Waking Up aspects of religion. Many people today are so put off by the mythic-literal aspects of many religions that they don't even think to try the Waking-Up aspects of religion. So they remain unexposed to what is the real heart of spirituality to begin with—namely, Waking Up, Enlightenment, Awakening, Satori, Metamorphosis, the Great Liberation. This is a major cultural catastrophe. The conveyor belt, by making the narrative form of spirituality more adequately full and complete, and thus more acceptable to conventional culture (by pointing out its higher, post-mythic, science-compatible levels), would make culture more open to the Waking-Up aspects of spirituality as well.

Thus, the conveyor belt would help with the two biggest problems of religion in the modern and postmodern world. The first problem is that most known forms of religion in the West today are versions of a mythic-literal stage of spiritual development, and at odds with all higher levels of development, making it a truly regressive and anti-growth element in today's world—and a laughingstock of all higher levels. And if the first major problem is an arrested development in the quite mediocre level of spiritual intelligence in Growing Up, the second major problem is the general and almost total lack of awareness of the Waking Up versions of spirituality, the true core of religion itself. So the conveyor belt would help with both of the two major problems of religion

in the West: the mediocre level of spiritual Growing Up, and the almost complete lack of spiritual Waking Up.

But before moving on to Waking Up, let's quickly finish with the Growing Up aspects. Because, as I've previously hinted, there is presently occurring a new development in the overall Growing Up process itself. We mentioned that the last major and culture-wide stage of development to occur in our history was the pluralistic postmodern, starting in the '60s; but we also hinted at yet another, even more evolved stage, usually called the integral. What is this integral stage of development, and why is it so different?

As developmental researchers continued their examination of various levels and stages of development, beginning just a few decades ago, they were perplexed by some new data that was so odd and so different from anything that they had ever seen, they assumed it was basically just some mistaken results. But the more they researched, the more the same odd data kept showing up. Finally, they were forced to admit that the data was real, and that it actually indicated, in fact, that a radically new and different level of development was beginning to emerge—and not just a new level, but an entirely different type of level.

To understand what was so new about this stage, we need to look at what all the previous stages had in common. As it turns out, all of the previous stages do share a common trait: each stage (archaic, magic, mythic, rational, and pluralistic) believes that its truth and values, and its alone, are really real. All of the others are mistaken, infantile, goofy, or just plain wrong. Because they all share that belief, they are all called "1st tier." But this newly emerging stage—which was called "2nd tier"—believed that each of the

previous stages all were important; they were all significant and necessary stages in the overall human growth cycle. None of them could be left out, and none of them could be skipped. This made this new level an incredibly inclusive, holistic, all-embracing, comprehensive level—in fact, the very first of this type of truly all-inclusive level that had ever existed in our entire history. And that is what had so puzzled researchers when they first started seeing this level—nothing like this had ever appeared before. This 2nd tier was radically new. Because of its inclusive nature, it was given names like "integrated," "systemic," "comprehensive," "all-embracing," "integral." Clare Graves, a brilliant pioneering developmentalist, said that with this new level, "a cataclysm of depth of meaning is crossed—a monumental leap of meaning."

This revolutionary level of development drives individuals who are at this stage to be motivated, not by "deficiency drives," as are all 1st-tier stages, but rather by what Maslow called "abundance drives"—as if the person were overflowing with richness and resources, and simply wants to share them. But such individuals begin looking for all things integral. They want Integral business, Integral politics, Integral medicine, Integral law, Integral education, and—yes—Integral Spirituality. And by Integral Spirituality, they mean a spirituality that includes virtually every theory and practice that has to do with the transformation of their own consciousness, particularly if it helps put them in touch with the ultimate Divine—and not a mythic-literal fairy tale, but a psychotechnology of consciousness transformation. In other words, they are definitely interested in the paths of Waking Up.

And that brings us to the second major type of spirituality generally available in today's world—namely, a spirituality of Waking Up. This is not a series of belief

systems, mythic or otherwise, but rather, indeed, a psychotechnology of consciousness transformation—a series of actual practices leading from, at one end, the small, narrow, finite, skin-encapsulated ego, to, at the other, what is said to be a oneness with the Ground of All Being, what the Sufis called the "Supreme Identity," a union of the individual with this all-pervading infinite Ground—a state known variously as Enlightenment, Awakening, Metamorphosis, moksha, satori, emancipation, salvation, the Great Liberation.

I won't go into this overall path in detail, except to notice that this was the province of the world's great meditative or contemplative traditions, the paths of the Great Liberation, the paths of Waking Up. And just as there is a great deal of similarity, around the world, in the major stages of Growing Up, what research demonstrates is that there is a strong amount of general agreement as to the 4-to-5 major stages of Waking Up, such as Evelyn Underhill's stages that all Western mystics are said to go through, which she called gross purification, subtle illumination, infinite Abyss or dark night, and ultimate nondual unity consciousness (or what we called the Supreme Identity). Similar stages can be found in virtually all major Eastern traditions as well—from Mahamudra to Zen, Theravada to Anuttara Tantra, Kashmir Shaivism to Vedanta, as demonstrated by many researchers, such as Daniel P. Brown, Dustin DiPerna, and my own work, to name just a few.

Virtually all of the world's Great Traditions began with their founder (or founders) directly experiencing these stages to a profound Waking Up or direct unity consciousness of the individual with ultimate Spirit—the Supreme Identity. Many religions, especially in the West, however, began identifying more with a religion found

not in the path of Waking Up but in the path of Growing Up—with the real problem being that it was especially the lower or *magic and mythic stages* of Growing Up—frankly, the more childish stages of Growing Up—and these religions slowly gave up direct experiences in the path of Waking Up (although these remained more common in the Eastern traditions, such as Zen or Vedanta or Tibetan Buddhism).

So today, in the West, religion largely means mythic stories about a grey-haired gentleman sitting on a throne in the sky, which is why so many people now call themselves {quote} "spiritual but not religious" (25% of the American population now identifies with the phrase "I'm spiritual but not religious," and one poll showed a stunning 75% of millennials—age 18-25—identify with that phrase, which generally means they are looking, not for childish stages of spiritual Growing Up, but higher stages of direct, immediate, experiential Waking Up).

So what we want, in short, is to develop both to the highest stage of Growing Up in spiritual intelligence—namely, an integral stage—and the highest stage of Waking Up in spiritual experience—namely, nondual unity consciousness, by whatever name. But strange as it seems, no path of growth, East or West, has ever included both of these paths of development (both Growing Up and Waking Up). The Eastern or contemplative traditions in particular are rich in maps and models of Waking Up, and the various practices, steps, and stages useful for that realization. But there are no meditative systems anywhere in the world, East or West, that have anything like the 6-to-8 basic stages of Growing Up. You can fully achieve Waking Up while at almost any stage of Growing Up—which means you can be very ethnocentric and mythic-literal oriented, and

still pass through all the stages of Waking Up—you can even become a fully transmitted Zen master (and we have abundant evidence of this).

But likewise, virtually no modern Western developmental model of Growing Up includes anything like the stages on the path of Waking Up—so you don't find Enlightenment or Awakening or satori in any major Western system. This means that throughout our history, and around the world, humans have never been training themselves in a full degree of complete development—rather they have been training themselves in either Growing Up or Waking Up—that is, they have been training themselves to be partial, broken people. Only now, after having put both of these paths together—the path of Growing Up and the path of Waking Up—are approaches that include both starting to emerge. This is a revolutionary event in human history, and means that for the first time ever, humans can begin a full and complete path of development and evolution. This is revolutionary, unprecedented.

This really is a major turn in overall human evolution itself. To see why, we'll draw on a simple component of Integral Metatheory itself, namely, the "4 quadrants." I promise this will pay off.

The Integral Approach maintains that you can look at any phenomenon in existence from 4 different but equally real perspectives: the inside and the outside of the individual and the group (or the collective). Now we're almost done here, but to make the ending especially painful, I'm going to toss out a series of technical terms here. But seriously, you do NOT have to remember these, or even follow along with what I'm saying at this point. I promise I'll summarize in simple English when I'm done. But the point is that, particularly as people begin reaching the integral levels of development,

they start to want Big Pictures and fully holistic accounts of all parts of reality. So they want to know about all the levels of Growing Up, and they want to know about all the stages of Waking Up, and they want to know about all the 4 quadrants—because all of these items are parts of a more full account of the real world. And that's what integral folks really want.

So, on the inside of the individual—or the individual looked at from a 1st-person, subjective, introspective view—we find their emotional, psychological, and spiritual experiences—their feelings, their ideas, their intuitions, their viewpoints and perspectives. So this quadrant includes all of the stages of Growing Up (archaic to magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral and super-integral). It includes all the stages of Waking Up (one version of which is gross to subtle to causal to witnessing to nondual unity consciousness). It includes shadow material (the psychodynamic unconscious). That's the individual looked at from within, subjectively. That same individual looked at from an outside, exterior, objective view shows us, not experiences and insights and feelings and awareness, but a triune brain, 2 lungs, 1 heart, neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin, a reptilian brain stem, a limbic system, a neocortex, and so on. And if you watch an individual from this quadrant, you can't see their interiors, you can only see their exterior behavior and actions. So those are the two individual quadrants—the individual looked at from within (or subjectively) and from without (or objectively).

Likewise, the two group or collective quadrants are the group looked at from within and the group looked at from without. From within, the group consists of shared values, a common history, shared linguistic systems, mutual understandings and meanings, common roles and rules, shared feelings, a sense of membership, and all the

things that hold a group together from within. That's from the inside; from the outside, we see instead all the objectively existing structures and institutions that hold it together from without—legal, economic, political, environmental and other surroundings, all systems of interaction that are webs of relational existence. The interior view is generally called "cultural," and this exterior view, "social."

So each individual has interior, behavioral, cultural, and social quadrants—and all 4 of those are arising together, interacting with each other, and evolving together. They are actually 4 different dimensions of the same occasion, which is why they are all so intimately interwoven. And this includes their evolution. Scientific materialism—which believes only in the exterior views of "it" and "its," and not the interior views of "I" and "we"—thinks that evolution occurs only in those exterior quadrants—with a chance mutation in the individual/exterior dimension giving an advantage in the fight for survival, and that mutation is selected for by the collective/exterior through natural selection—or the collective exterior environment selecting the individual organism. For the orthodox view, the interiors (of symbolic meaning and cultural factors) are not directly involved in evolution. It's simply exterior, material random chance and survival selection.

But that's an odd view, if you think about it. And David Sloan has certainly thought about it. And he points out that in addition to the orthodox forms, that mental symbolic forms and cultural forms are also inherently involved in evolution. In other words, evolution occurs in all 4 quadrants—which is exactly what Integral Metatheory maintains. Now I'm not claiming that Dr. Sloan agrees with all of the Integral view, only that there are definitely some unmistakable compatibilities, especially in the types of

phenomena that are passed forward in evolution. In other words, it's not just fitness in the Lower-Right quadrant, but fitness in all 4 quadrants that determines what is carried forward and what is rendered extinct.

I mean, think about it. From the Big Bang, where there was only something like quarks and strings, all the way to Shakespeare's poetry today—the whole move, according to the orthodox view, is nothing but a colossal accident coupled with a more successful way to get laid. But clearly, the very existence of so many of evolution's increasingly higher levels shows that the universe is not winding down, it's winding up. Randomness is exactly what the universe is overcoming—as Prigogine would put it, it is producing order out of chaos at every turn. And—this is the central point—this means in all 4 quadrants, not just in the exterior, objective quadrants. This all-pervading drive of self-organization can be called many things—Eros, or Spirit-in-action, "the love that moves the sun and other stars," or as Erich Jantsch put it, "Evolution is self-organization through self-transcendence."

More sophisticated evolutionists, such as David Wilson Sloan, have better ideas about the domains in which evolution is operating. Wilson, who is joining us at this conference, points out that there is first the standard requirements of neo-Darwinian evolution—a population of reproducing entities; a variation in phenotypic or deep structure architecture; a corresponding variation in fitness; and its heritability. But then he points out that those processes don't just apply to genetic evolution. They also apply to epigenetics, and to social evolution (by which he also means cultural evolution), and symbolic thought. In other words, all 4 quadrants. More important even than whether

evolution is primarily agentic or altruistic, in my opinion, is the fact that it is occurring in all 4 quadrants. This is a monumental shift, truly profound.

Now if I can focus on my version of the mechanism for this, it's an elaboration and expansion of Whitehead's view of ongoing experience, which he called "prehension" and I call "tetra-prehension," or a prehension simultaneously occurring in all 4 quadrants. "Prehension" is the term Whitehead used to mean the proto-awareness or proto-feeling that is present in all phenomena, all the way down to quarks and strings and atoms. It works like this. Each moment starts as a subject of experience, a drop of awareness, and as it comes to be, it is aware of, or prehends, the previous moment. The previous moment, which was itself a subject, is thus made an object of the newly arising subject. The new subject feels the previous moment, thus including or enfolding it in its own makeup; but then—according to Whitehead—it also adds its own bit of novelty or newness to the previous moment. This newness is a creative movement, is the movement of Eros, or whatever term one prefers. When the phenomenon is very simple—say, a proton or quark—the amount of newness is very small, and so it appears almost as if a type of strict determinism and causality is at work—and much of the physical realm appears this way. A good astronomer can tell you where Jupiter will be a thousand years from now, barring accidents. But a good biologist cannot tell you where a dog will be a minute from now—the dog, being more complex, and with more awareness, brings more newness, more novelty, to the moment, and thus its actions are very hard to predict.

So as a new subject comes to be, and prehends the previous subject as object, it then adds its own bit of newness or creativity, and this shows up in the degree of freedom that it has. So each moment "transcends and includes" its predecessor, if it is to be

passed on. The "include" part is the prehension of the past—which is where the present moment prehends the previous moment, and thus actually embraces it—which is how the past has an influence on the present—that's causality. But that influence is not a strict determinism, because the present also "transcends" the past, transcends its inheritance, transcends its causality to some degree by adding its own newness or novelty or creativity. According to Whitehead, the universe has 3 ultimates: the one, the many, and {quote} "the creative advance into novelty." As an ultimate! And that creative advance—that order out of chaos—which is an inherent aspect of existence itself, is crucial for evolution. The orthodox scientific view is that that "newness" comes from a chance random mutation in genetic material—it's nothing but an accident—and that the universe is otherwise winding down. But, as we've seen, the universe is actually winding up—and this inherent creative advance into novelty is why—it's built into the universe itself, it's not an accident slamming into it.

Now, as a new subject comes into being, and transcends and includes the previous subject, making it object, that new subject has to match with existing realities in all 4 quadrants. Remember, the 4 quadrants are the actual realities that the new phenomenon is met with. So in the exterior/collective or social or environmental quadrant, the new subject has to survive—it has to fit in with its environment in a way that allows it to move forward. If it doesn't fit with its environment, then it will cease to exist. So there has to be some form of functional fit (and natural selection is simply one of those forms—so it's important). But the same thing is happening on the interior quadrants as well. As a new cultural phenomenon comes into being—a new intersubjectivity making the previous moment an interobjectivity—it, too, has to fit with its various surroundings,

has to fit its cultural surroundings. If it does so, it will survive. If it has exceptional new qualities that help its existence flourish, then that cultural phenomenon will become even more widespread. This is a selection process, just like natural selection in the exterior/collective; but this is a selection happening in the interior/collective, happening with cultural learning. And likewise with the interior of the individual, or what Sloan calls "symbolic meaning systems." If a mental phenomenon comes to be, and it smoothly fits with its interior surroundings, it will move forward; while also adding its own degree of novelty or creativity or newness. If this has qualities that allow it to not just exist but to flourish, then its influence in the mind will increase; if these are pallid, its influence will be minor. If it doesn't fit at all, it will be rendered extinct almost immediately.

But in all cases, a phenomena in any of the 4 quadrants must "transcend and include"—the new subject must include the previous subject by prehending it, by enfolding it, by feeling it and making it an object; but then it will also transcend the old subject by adding a degree of novelty, newness, or creativity—and this happens in all 4 quadrants. In this way, evolution (or Eros or Spirit-in-action) continues to build more and more order out of more chaos, and drives the universe from dust to Deity, or the awakening, in all 4 quadrants, to ever-more inclusive realities. The fact that this happens in all 4 quadrants means that it will also happen in the "I" dimension and in the "we" dimension—and development in the "I" dimension drives an individual's identity to ever-greater embrace—from an egocentric self-only "I" to a group-identity ethnocentric "us" to a worldcentric "all of us"; and in the cultural "we" dimension drives increasing unities of ethical awareness, goodness, morality, and altruism (from preconventional to conventional to postconventional to integral—or clan to tribe to empire to international

nation-state to global commons)—as well as movements like interspirituality. Interspirituality is not something that could have occurred one or two thousand years ago—the "we" dimension had not yet grown to global dimensions, and thus couldn't embrace all of the world's religions, the way awareness can do so today. This interspiritual or integral movement, as Sloan has pointed out, is fully compatible with a saner view of evolution.

This view of evolution also allows for evolution to occur, in my view, even if sexual reproduction is not present. After the Big Bang, for example, when there were only quarks and early atoms available, these phenomena had very little creativity, and thus as they inherited or were determined by their previous moments, they included them easily but only minisculely transcended them. The universe approached a nearly—but not really totally—deterministic mechanistic process. But over the millennia, as atoms continued moving forward and transcending and including, at some point the cumulative transcendence lead to atoms coming together to form molecules—a very significant creativity, a major transcendence, and a much higher unity. So molecules transcended and included atoms, which transcended and included quarks. Numerous millennia later, a group of very large molecules were hanging out together, and suddenly a higher form of self-organization—a cell wall—dropped around them, and a living cell emerged—a staggering leap of creativity, of self-organization or Eros-in-action. And that cell transcended and included the previous molecules, as it began its life of evolutionary unfolding to yet higher unities. Only considerably down the road did all of this evolutionary unfolding bring sex into the scene, and then "fitting with the previous 4 quadrants" meant that there was a struggle for biological survival, and so in some cases a

more standard Darwinian evolution began to operate, alongside with evolution still occurring in the other quadrants—including mental and cultural and spiritual. But even to this day, sexual reproduction is not necessary for evolution to occur. From Einstein to Hawking, brilliant mental phenomena are passed forward, flourishing in their symbolic and cultural environments, and thus this extraordinary "transcend and include" continues to bring creativity into the Kosmos, as higher and higher, more and more whole, more and more unified, more and more loving and moral and caring entities emerge and evolve in this universe.

Once a particular phenomenon emerges, it tends to remain in existence, precisely because it is also often carried forward as an ingredient in the next-higher phenomenon. Thus, organisms transcend and include cells, which transcend and include molecules, which transcend and include atoms, which transcend and include quarks. The same is true for the stages of consciousness in the process of Growing Up—archaic is transcended and included by magic, which is transcended and included by mythic, which is transcended and included by rational, and so on. Likewise with states. As Robert Kegan summarized human development: "I know of no better way to describe development than that the subject of one stage becomes the object of the subject of the next stage." In other words, the identical "transcend and include" or prehension we saw operating at the very earliest levels of evolution.

This extraordinary Kosmos is a creative fountain of ever-increasing wholeness. As we noted, Whitehead said that there are 3 ultimates—the one, the many, and "the creative advance into novelty." That creative advance—that Eros, that self-organization, that Spirit-in-action—is what has brought us to this Integral Age now starting to unfold

globally, and to the new movements of interspirituality, and to increasing capacity for altruism and love and care and concern. Every major study of love has shown that it expands and increases with every major level of development—from selfish me-only love, to small-group love, to large-group love, to love of all groups or love of all humanity, to love of all beings—in other words, evolution and love go hand-in-hand (an example of Spirit-in-action if ever there was one).

In Darwin's major book on the function of evolution in humans, *The Descent of Man*, the index has only 2 references to survival of the fittest; it has 92 references to moral sensitivity, and 95 references to love—and he felt these were actually the higher drives to selection in human evolution, not survival of the fittest. Or, the way Integral Metatheory would put, survival is indeed central to evolution, but survival is different in every quadrant. Love and moral sensitivity are survival processes in the collective interior—the more we love, the more we flourish; the more morally sensitive we are, the wider our own circle of identity, going from an isolated "me," to a group of humans—an "us"—to all humans, or "all of us," and from there to all sentient beings, and then the universe itself, en toto, a Supreme Identity with the Ground of All Being. This is where evolution is taking us, driven by that self-organizing unity, that Eros, that Spirit-in-action, "the love that moves the sun and other stars." Looking at that extraordinary, complex, beautiful, wondrous universe out there, how could we ever doubt it?

This is Ken Wilber; saying thank you all very much….