

## **Universe Christology: A Transplanetary Theory**

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Religion is usually the last of the cultural disciplines to change its frames of reference following the discovery of new knowledge. Although Western Civilization has entered the space age in its scientific astronomical orientation, most Christians are pre-Copernican in their spiritual cosmology. When they think of God and the spiritual world, unconsciously, they assume heaven is up, and hell is down, even though intellectually, they realize this makes no sense in our modern astronomical cosmology. Consequently, they continue to live with a Ptolemaic Christology.

This simplistic cosmological view is further augmented by pre-scientific concepts of eschatology. In spite of substantial evidence that we live in an evolutionary universe, where gradual evolution is the key to all growth and development, most Christians assume that after death, we are somehow instantly changed from material beings into a spiritual existence.

Among all of the areas of theology, eschatology, and the construction of a universe spiritual cosmology is the least developed. Various writers have speculated about the need for a universe to be a parallel between material and spiritual reality; the principle of parsimony suggests that we start with the known physical universe, and extrapolate into the unknown. The new astronomy, therefore, is the conceptual foundation we must use for constructing a spiritual cosmology which is relevant to contemporary frames of reference.

Astronomers like Charlier, tell us we live in a hierarchical universe composed of galaxies and supergalaxies. The curved nature of space suggests that we live in a limited universe, but it is of such gigantic size, that distances are measured in billions of light years. The universe is in evolutionary process with nebulae creating new suns and systems, and old suns are dying out. The astronomical cosmos is now expanding, but billions of years ago it was contracting; suggesting expanding-contrasting cycles.

The universe is held together by gravitational forces which make in and out references more meaningful than the up and down relationships of the old Ptolemaic three story universe. In all probability, there are millions of inhabited planets in various stages of evolutionary development.

With these facts and probabilities of our material astronomical cosmology in mind, let us project a spiritual cosmology which is harmonious with such a universe. First of all, our deity concepts used to be expanded to account for the amazing complexities of our well-nigh limitless universe. In addition to the traditional Paradise Trinity, there must be Deity Absolutes which are the source of all of the potentials of the infinite past, present, and future of the universe. This aspect of deity, to use a Whiteheadian term, we might refer to as the Primordial manifestation of God.

From distant galaxies to the most minute particles of energy-matter, we observe a creative process at work in the evolving time-space universe. Jung, Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead, and others, have called attention to this evolving aspect of God. Borrowing again from Process Theology, we might label this the Consequent or Process manifestation of God.

Viewing the countless galaxies with their probable myriads of inhabited planets, we must assume there are countless deity personalities of infinite variety and nature, ministering to this universe of universes. This function of deity we might call the Distributive manifestation of God. In addition to enlarging our deity concepts, any realistic theistic meta-physical picture must have a setting in a spiritual cosmology with is at least, as extensive as our vast astronomical universe. In such a cosmology, it would be reasonable to assume that the residence of the Trinity and other aspects of Primordial Deity is located at the center of the universe of universes. This, traditionally, has been known as Paradise.

Paralleling the galaxies and supergalaxies of the material universe, it would seem reasonable to project spiritual geographic creations corresponding to these material galaxies and supergalaxies, which we will refer to as local universes and superuniverses. Each local universe and superuniverse would have a contingent of Distributive Deity personalities responsible for ministering to all of the planets and personalities in this section of the universe of universes. The Universal Father delegates everything possible to the control and care of these Distributive Deity personalities.

The third basic assumption in projecting a relevant spiritual cosmology in the universe of universes, is that the key modus operandi in the spiritual universe is evolution. All of the events and personalities of this spiritual cosmology are shaped and conditioned by the evolving dynamics of evolutionary growth. In the present universe age, Process Deity is playing a major role in the galaxies and universes of time and space.

Intelligent beings of mortal status originate on the inhabited planets as the culminating development of the animal kingdom. The minds of these material mortals are enlightened by a spiritual ministry which includes aspects of Primordial, Process, and Distributive Deity activities. Through this leading of the spirit ministry, and the mortal truth, beauty, goodness value perception capacity, man makes decisions and identifications with spirit reality. These decisions evolve a quasi-spiritual soul which has survival potential, after the physical body-brain mechanism deteriorates and dies.

Postmortal experience with a new quasi-spiritual body-mind continues in the spiritual universe, virtually where evolutionary experience ended on the material world. Gradually, through rigorous growth experiences, these advancing personalities become more and more spiritual until they achieve true spirit status. Spiritual evolutionary education and growth continues as the individual progresses from universe to universe, inward in the spiritual cosmos, until these pilgrims achieve Paradise, and are taken into the embrace of the Universal Father. This ends the finite phase of experience, and opens new levels of reality for the opportunity of education and service, which continues into the infinite and eternal future.

With these initial assumptions rooted in our contemporary knowledge of universe cosmology and associated scientific phenomenal insights, we shall now attempt to project a universe Christology harmonious with these observations.

Each material-spiritual local universe is assigned a contingent of Distributive Deity personalities by the Universal Father. The hand of these Distributive Deity personalities in our local universe is a Divine Son whom Christians know as Christ. In each local universe, this Son of God is known as "the only begotten Son" because, for all practical purposes, he is God to all in his local universe - "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)

At each local universe site the Universal Father delegates responsibility to the Local Universe Son for all that takes place in his universe - "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matt. 28:8) The first task of the Local Universe Son and his associates is to set in motion the creative nebular forces which produce the local systems with their suns and planets, as visualized by the prologue of the Gospel of John. In this capacity, we would refer to the Local Universe Son as the Creator Son.

As planetary evolution progresses, eventually, beings with wisdom and worship potential appear on the scene. The Local Universe Son and his Distributive Deity associates provide various forms of spirit ministry to these intelligent beings, as their civilization and culture evolves. At some point in the cultural-religious development of each planet, which might be called "The fullness of time," the Local Universe Son decides that the planet is ready for a bestowal mission. Whereupon, he, or one of his Distributive Deity associates, incarnate in the likeness of the mortals of the realm.

The Bestowal Son brings a more complete knowledge of the Universal Father, and reveals the "Christ" as the way, by which, all in the local universe proceed to the Father - "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) The Local Universe Son serving in this capacity, we might refer to as the Savior or Mediator Son. There is, no doubt, some "Omega Point" of development

for each planet, which would be recognized by the Local Universe Son. At this time, he would return to the planet as the Sovereign of the Local Universe to inaugurate a new era of mission and service for the planet.

Once a universe Christology is established on a planet, there is a general recognition that the various religions of the planet all have authentic spiritual insights, and that each religion can learn from the others. Mortals on such worlds begin to understand that it makes little difference where we begin our spiritual education in the universe. Following physical death, all mortals who have evolved souls of survival value are resurrected, with a new type of body and mind, and continue their education and growth in the local universe, toward spiritual perfection, under the guidance and loving ministry of our Local Universe Head, the Savior, and the Sovereign Christ of all.

Eventually, we graduate from the experiential schools of the local universe, and with the blessings of Christ, begin our more advanced spiritual training, as we proceed inward in the universe of universes. When our long, long evolutionary universe training and growth culminates in reaching Paradise, and we are embraced by the Universal Father as his faith sons and daughters who have risen from animal origins to divine status, no doubt our real spiritual universe ministry will begin.

The foregoing Universe Christology is sketched in broad, impressionistic strokes. It is presented in the hope of stimulating creative theological thinking relative to a spiritual cosmology, which is harmonious with our contemporary knowledge of universe cosmology. Anyone interested in a more detailed consideration of religion from a universe point of view, will find *The Urantia Book*, available elsewhere on this website, to be a highly rewarding resource book.