

Ursula King

“Evolutionary Spirituality and the Power of Love”

Episode 35 of The Advent of Evolutionary Christianity

EvolutionaryChristianity.com



Ursula King is an internationally renowned scholar on spirituality, interfaith dialogue, women and religion, and evolutionary mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. She is professor emerita of religious studies at the University of Bristol. Her books include *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* and *Religion and Gender*.

HIGHLIGHTS

For Ursula King, “**evolution**” is not just one aspect of her Christian faith; it is central. The grand story of a 13.7-billion-year-old cosmos pervades her sense of the sacred and the possibilities she envisions for humanity and for religions. She **interprets the evolutionary journey** in a way that celebrates the roles played by both diversifying and unifying processes toward the **emergence of greater complexity**, “**interiority**,” and **self-reflexivity**. Within the human realm, she points to “**the power of love**” as the unifying force that enables ever-greater levels of **human cooperation**. Strong in its **interfaith and planetary focus**, this interview portrays the **evolution of consciousness** more as a species-wide emergent than as an individual human quest. The opportunity for science to enhance our **reverence for nature** and guide the development of a viable **environmental ethic** are also key.

This is **the premier interview for sampling the profound influence of two of the leading lights** in promoting a deeply meaningful embrace of the full sweep of evolution and its implications for religion in general and Christianity in particular. These two major influences are **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin** (1881–1955) and **Thomas Berry** (1914–2009). Note: Three additional interviews present Teilhard’s ideas, but in less detail (John Haught, Ilia Delio, and Diarmuid O’Murchu.) The dialogue with Gail Worcelo also explores the ideas and influence of Thomas Berry in great depth.

SUGGESTED AUDIENCES

Any group eager to sample some of the most important ideas of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry will want to experience this interview. Christian terminology and doctrines are

sparse, as the epic of evolution is explored primarily for its capacities to transform all faiths and all of humanity. Even though some of the concepts are scholarly, the excitement and celebration of a hopeful view of humanity's future imbues this episode with an energy and accessibility that makes it engaging for all. Highly recommended for women's study groups, as well.

BLOG COMMENTS

Jerald Robertson says:

Wow! Ursula King is brilliant, such a range of understanding. This one I will be replaying a few times.

Cindy says:

Thank you, Ursula, for leading us into some deeper truths. Wisdom is surely speaking through your insights. God bless you and all those who have helped to form you into the person that you are today!

KEYWORD TOPICS

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, world religions, suffragette movement, modern feminism, feminist theology, the power of love, evolutionary spirituality, epic of evolution, compassion, empathy, the trajectory of evolution, "stream of becoming", evolution of life, "interiority", complexity, self-reflexivity, consciousness (transformation of), Thomas Berry, unity/diversity (not polar opposites), dualism, harmony in diversity, diversity (as vital for further evolution), emergence, integration, "response-ability" (supercedes "responsibility"), human solidarity, *Earth Rise* (photo), planetary perspective, evolutionary role of religion, science and religion (integration of), "engineers of the spirit", spiritual evolution, conscious evolution, life flourishing, the Great Work, Internet, noosphere, biosphere, evolutionary task, education of children (importance of), spiritual literacy, practical side of spirituality, evolution of groups, spiritual-but-not-religious, spirituality (critique of world-rejecting forms of), spiritualities for life, wonder and awe of science (as a form of spirituality), Richard Dawkins, "right relationship to reality", science as "the yoga of the West", "Fourfold Wisdoms" (classical religions/philosophies, indigenous wisdom, wisdom of women, wisdom of science), revelation (modern sources of), nonviolence (as connected to the rise of women), reverence for nature, Ursula Goodenough, "the sacred depths of nature", "covenant with mystery", Cosmic Christ, "apostles of love", spiritual fire, power of love, Pitirim Sorokin, mental health problems, violence and war, Earth community, pneumatophores ("carriers of spirit"), expanded sense of self (as encouraging right action), zest for life, spirit of life

BIOGRAPHY

Ursula King is professor emerita of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Bristol, where she held the Chair of Theology and Religious Studies from 1989-2002, after teaching for many years at the University of Leeds, in London, and in India. She was Visiting Professor in Feminist Theology at the University of Oslo (1998-2001), and in 1999 she held the Brueggeman Chair in Interreligious Studies at Xavier University, Cincinnati. In the fall of 2005 she was the distinguished Bingham Professor of Humanities at the University of Louisville, KY. She is currently Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Bristol; Professorial Research Associate in the Department of the Study of Religions, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; and a Vice President of the World Congress of Faiths.

Professor King has published and broadcast widely, especially on women and spirituality, gender issues in world religions, and the French thinker Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Among her publications are *Teilhard de Chardin and Eastern Religions: Spirituality and Mysticism in an Evolutionary World* (2011), *The Search for Spirituality: Our global search for a spiritual life* (2008; 2009, German translation 2010), *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages* (2001 & 2004), the edited volumes *Gender, Religion, and Diversity* (2004 & 2005), *Religion and Gender* (1995), *Spirituality and Society in the New Millennium* (2001), and *Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age* (1998). She gave the 1996 Bampton Lectures at the University of Oxford ("Christ in All Things. Exploring Spirituality with Teilhard de Chardin," 1997) and wrote the biography, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* (1996) Her current research is concerned with contemporary spirituality, comparative gender perspectives in different world religions, and women in interfaith dialogue. She has been awarded honorary doctorates from Edinburgh University (1996), Oslo University (2000) and the University of Dayton, Ohio (2003).

Ursula King's cv: <http://www.catherineofsiena.net/about/king.asp>

SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEO

10-minute video, "The Spirituality of Marriage"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBCLv9pK_d8

SUPPLEMENTARY WEBPAGE

Listener comments to this audio can be found (and more can be added) at the following url:

<http://evolutionarychristianity.com/blog/general/ursula-king-evolutionary-spirituality-and-the-power-of-love/>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. **Evolution as the foundation for spirituality.** For Ursula King, “evolution” is not just one aspect of her Christian faith; it is central. The grand story of a 13.7-billion-year-old cosmos pervades her sense of the sacred and the possibilities she envisions for humanity and for religions. She explains,

We see ourselves and understand ourselves very, very differently if we get away from our individualistic kind of centering on ourselves and see how **we are part of this immense ‘stream of becoming’**—of this whole grand story of the evolution of life. The question is how has this evolution of life gained in **interiority**, gained in **complexity**, gained in **self-reflexivity**? And at what important junction are we now—today, this century, the next century—in the history of the evolution of life?

What responsibility do we have for evolving further our consciousness, our action together with others, and our power to learn in a different way to connect with people and all that is living?

Question 1A: *Where are you on the spectrum of an evolutionary worldview? Do you merely accept that humanity was preceded by billions of years of increasing complexity in the universe — or do you delight in that understanding? Do you merely accept that humanity is one expression of the vast diversity of life through time — or do you value the deep sense of connection with nature that such a view can provide? Are you attracted to the word “evolve” mostly because it suggests a positive and essential mandate for continually updating religions — or do you sense the impulse of evolution working within and through human institutions no less than within the entire living world?*

Question 1B: *To what extent has your exposure to this “Evolutionary Christianity” series affected what the word “evolution” means to you, and where you now reside on the spectrum of appreciation of an evolving cosmos and evolving humanity?*

2. **The legacy of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.** The spiritual significance of directionality in evolution, the notion of “interiority”, the zest for life, the evolutionary role of religion, and “the noosphere” are five concepts that Ursula King attributes to **Teilhard de Chardin** (who was born in 1881 and died in 1955).

Question 2: *Review (below) Ursula’s depiction of five ideas attributed to **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**. Choose one or more that resonate with you deeply or that confuse or disturb you in some way and discuss.*

- **Evolution is going somewhere.**

I’m very much influenced in my understanding here by **Teilhard's so-called Law of Complexity Consciousness**. The whole process of becoming, from the Big Bang onward, from the first moment, is a coming together of different elements that combine into something bigger than themselves. So there’s always this movement towards union or unification, which complexifies

matter, complexifies life. Through this complexification you have this concentration, so that something interior happens, as well as exterior and material.

- **Interiority.**

How do we account for **interiority**, for our inwardness, which is more than our flesh and bones, more than our sensitivity at the skin level and more deeply than our skin level? What is it that makes us think, that makes us conscious? And **can we develop a greater core consciousness**? Is there a greater concentration of, what some people might call, a psychic quality or a consciousness that moves toward a **super-consciousness**? In a way, we don't actually have the language to capture the complexity and the subtlety of these processes that we are part of and that are shaping us.

- **Zest for life.**

Teilhard said, in a talk in the 1950s given to an interfaith group which he belonged to, a private little group in Paris, he talked there about the taste, the love, the zest for life. He said that **the biggest danger today is to have the loss of the love of life**—to be, in other words, *bored*: to drop out, to say, “I don't care. What is there for me?” That is the greatest danger for the human community. If we don't want to act anymore, don't want to think anymore, don't want to love anymore, the world will stop; love will come to an end. But I think life is stronger than us. The Spirit of Life will well up in the most unexpected ways. I think there *is* this very strong need to seek the zest for life, particularly in **young people**, to give them the passion, the dedication, the commitment that really their life is worthwhile and **that they can contribute to life**. That's very, very important at the human level—and that's ultimately a spiritual task.

- **The evolutionary role of religion.**

Ursula King speaks about a concept that **Teilhard de Chardin** called “the evolutionary role of religion.” She says that the religions we have inherited, in their current forms, “can't give us all the answers for the present and the future.” She continues,

[We] need a much deeper kind of 'spiritual taking responsibility' for our own self-evolution, because **the further evolution is our task**. We are called to that, and that is an enormous task. We can only do it together, if we do it at all. So it's a question of bringing together, integrating—not in a minimalist sense—but to relate what we know of science and religion, and to bring together the two great streams of knowledge and experience in the history of humankind.

What can we do with [science and religion] to really develop further, to find the right ideas, the right actions? I love **Teilhard's** reflection on “where are the engineers?” There are thousands of engineers that look at our energy resources in a material sense, but where are the “**engineers of the spirit**”? Where are our spiritual energy resources that will feed and nurture the zest for life, the love of life, the acceptance and support of life, the trust in life?—and really bringing together all the necessary ingredients to ensure the flourishing of all people and the planet. That is such a huge, gigantic task, so we have to draw on all the resources we could possibly find.

- **Teilhard's “noosphere” and the value of the Internet.**

Teilhard didn't know about the **Internet; he would have loved it**. But he saw that out of the flowering of the biosphere (the biosphere that covers the entire planet) now comes the flowering of **consciousness**—and not in an abstract, cerebral way but the consciousness that animates the human mind, body, and heart. That is a layer that covers the entire globe. Every human being can

be part of this layer of acting, thinking, loving, connecting. **Teilhard** calls this the “emergence of the **noosphere**.”

3. **The legacy of Thomas Berry.** While Ursula King points to Teilhard de Chardin for ideas that have greatly influenced her, Michael Dowd singles out the legacy of Thomas Berry (who was himself inspired by the elder Teilhard de Chardin). While neither Ursula nor Michael ever met Teilhard (who died in 1955), **both were dear colleagues of Thomas Berry**. Michael considers Thomas to be a major mentor. Thomas Berry died in 2009 at the age of 94.

Question 3: Review (below) five ideas attributed to **Thomas Berry** that Michael Dowd and Ursula King find compelling. Choose one or more that resonate with you deeply or that confuse or disturb you in some way and discuss.

- **Our material oneness with the world.**

Michael says: **Thomas Berry** often pointed out that until we recognize our oneness—not just at the metaphysical or spiritual level but in terms of biological reality, that we actually share the same atoms and molecules and that everything is recycling, that there’s ultimately one water system on Planet Earth and it flows through, not just the oceans and rivers, but it flows through the bodies of every sentient creature—**until we recognize that physical oneness and a reality-based sense of interrelatedness we’re going to not adequately respond to the immensity of issues before us.**

- **The Great Work.**

Michael says: I think we need the media, we need the churches, we need the religious institutions, and we need the educational institutions. Like **Thomas Berry** said: we need to do the “Great Work” to have the transformation that is necessary in the human community to really guarantee or make possible a viable human and planetary future.

- **Science as “the yoga of the West.”**

Michael says: **Thomas Berry** speaks of science—modern science—as, “the yoga of the West.” I’ve always loved that phrase. Your statement, “the spirituality of life, the spirituality for life”: that resonates so deeply with me. I’ve come to see **evolutionary spirituality**—that is, I’ve now defined it for myself—as **growing in right relationship to reality** and supporting others in doing the same.

- **The importance and limits of religions.**

Michael says: I want to go back to something that you shared before that I thought was very provocative, and it also reminded me again of something that **Thomas Berry** shared, which is the idea that our ethnic **diversities**, our religious diversities, our spiritual diversities can be an enormous resource for coming together—rather than tearing us apart. And I remember a quote from **Thomas Berry**, one of my favorite quotes, he said, “**Humanity will not come into a mutually enhancing relationship with the natural world on the resources of the existing religious traditions—and we can’t get there without them.**”

Ursula: That’s a very good contradictory statement. I would wholly and utterly agree. It expresses in a nutshell that **the religious traditions preserve something very, very precious that we cannot do without.** But at the same time, they’re encrusted in such superfluous customs, traditions, and backwaters that we must get rid of a great deal of all the frills and the extras. That

would be what **Teilhard de Chardin** used to call “**the fossilized part of religions.**” The religions as traditions are still stuck in the Neolithic—evolutionarily speaking.

• **The “Fourfold Wisdoms.”** Both Ursula King and Michael Dowd point to the importance of, what **Thomas Berry** identified as, “the Fourfold Wisdoms.”

Ursula says: In order to tackle and achieve the profound transformation that we need in our own attitudes and social organizations, we need to draw on the sources of wisdom that the human community has amidst itself. **These fourfold sources of wisdom, I think, Thomas Berry characterized very well.** The first source is the **Wisdom of the Indigenous People**, which is only becoming more recognized now. Similarly, the **Wisdom of Women:** the deep wisdom of life and experience of women throughout the ages and in the different traditions is something that is also becoming much more recognized and acknowledged now, and we can’t do without it. Then we have the much more widely, and usually exclusively acknowledged, **Wisdom of the Traditional Religious and Philosophical Traditions:** the great philosophical insights—whether from India or Africa or East Asia—from Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, so many different ones; then the classical philosophical traditions of the East and the West. We have all those wisdom traditions—and we have in addition the very new, the very recent **Wisdom of the Resources of our Scientific Knowledge and Insight:** the mind boggling discoveries the human community has made over the last 200, 300 years which really transform our own self-understanding and the understanding of the world around us. Now, much has gone wrong in this process, and we are suffering from many of these wrongdoings. We have to acknowledge that we have to mend our ways and change the human community to make a better world, where the planet and people can truly be flourishing and not destroy each other.

4. **Importance of mentors for developing one’s worldview.** This dialogue excels in presenting **the importance of intellectual mentors** — that is, those elders whose ideas and temperament seem to draw out one’s own growing wisdom of how things are and which things matter, thereby helping us establish or evolve a coherent worldview that can guide the way we see the world and the choices we make in life. In the case of **Teilhard de Chardin**, neither Ursula King nor Michael Dowd (who was born three years after Teilhard died) ever met the man. In the case of **Thomas Berry**, both King and Dowd knew him personally.

Question 4: *Do you feel that you **have discovered one or more writers or teachers** whose worldviews so resonate with your own deepest concerns and yearnings that you regard them as primary spiritual mentors? If so, identify one or more, and in a few sentences describe **why that mentor inspires you.** If you have not yet discovered such a mentor, what next steps might you take to increase your chances of finding one?*

5. **Harmony in diversity.** Ursula King and Michael Dowd dialogue about the value of diversity:

Ursula: Sometimes people use this very old expression, “unity in diversity.” I very much like the way Japanese speak—not about unity in diversity, but “**harmony in diversity.**” There is this

great diversity at every level—and diversity is part of the superabundance of life. **Diversity is an absolute necessity for something to emerge and come into being.** This diversity can be constructed as negative, as opposed to each other. Think of warring nations, a very concrete example, or the diversity of faith. But it can also be seen (and this is our way of appropriating it constructively) as resources that relate to each other and can enhance each other or can critically shift each other, and **can combine to produce something more developed: something that integrates the different elements, but at the same time produces something new that goes forward to a different level.** So I feel we as a human community—as a species—have to learn to deal with these differences among us and between us.

Michael: I couldn't agree more. In fact, I've been languaging myself that the big shift, for me at least, before I had an evolutionary understanding and afterwards, is that prior to thinking in evolutionary terms, how I related to differences was as a problem to be solved. With the sacred understanding of evolution **I now see our differences as at least a potential solution to our problems**—in the same way that the diversity of an ecosystem is essential.

Question 5: *Search through your memory and see if you can come up with an example when you actually experienced diversity shifting from something that caused problems to something that offered new heights of understanding, solutions, or creative endeavor. (If you can't think of a personal experience along those lines, then consider current events and whether "the problem" of diversity in some part of the world is now opening up fresh opportunities.)*

6. **"Spirituality" must include the material world.** Throughout this series, Michael Dowd has been attempting to **reorient our understanding of the word *spirituality*** so that it pertains to how we relate to *this* world, **not some otherworldly** time or space or entity. He tends to label this perspective, **"right relationship with reality."** Ursula King is very much in his camp on this issue, but she has a different way of describing it and its importance. She says,

People don't want to know about religions, but they are sometimes quite comfortable with *spirituality*, like in some of the new religious movements. Or, you have people who feel *spirituality* is something connected to aesthetics: to the arts, to painting, to music. But I feel that, really, whatever word we use, the word might not be the most satisfactory because it has been traditionally associated with the contrast to the body, and the contrast to the material, and the contrast to the economic. So that, **traditionally, spiritualities have been far too ascetic—far too world-rejecting, body-rejecting**—particularly when you've had male ascetic spirituality rejecting women and their bodies, and so on. . . . There is a great deal of 'bad baggage' that we have in the past there, and that is difficult. But nonetheless, I do feel that one might call *spirituality* something to do with our attitudes and relationships, not only to ourselves. **Very often it is only seen in terms of the individual and God—and that is too isolationist. It has to be related not only to the personal and the individual but also to the social, and I would say to the planetary, to the global.** It has to be related—and it *is* related—to all areas of life. This is why I like the expression—"spiritualities of life," "spiritualities *for* life."

Question 6: *Consider your own use of the term spirituality: **Do you tend to elevate the immaterial or otherworldly sense of it?** Or do you lean more toward this-world applications*

— what Ursula King would call “spiritualities for life” and Michael Dowd would call “right relationship with reality.” And does this interview, or any others in the series, encourage you to move or expand your understanding of spirituality more in the direction advocated by Ursula and Michael? Why or why not?

7. **Feminist insight and the search for nonviolence.** Although all the women in this series would surely agree that they have benefitted from the women’s movement, only a few speak directly on this development. **Ursula King**, and especially **Joan Chittister**, do make a point of mentioning the importance of this turn in recent history. And, of course, Ursula mentions that the **Wisdom of Women** is one of the “**Fourfold Wisdoms**” that **Thomas Berry** singled out as playing vital roles in the evolution of culture. Ursula also says,

The women’s movement, feminist insight: This I see also as a **sign of the spirit**, in the same way that you [Michael] see the development of science as a sign of the spirit. Our modern development, since the **abolition of slavery** in the 19th century, or the search for **pacifism** in the world, the search for **nonviolence**: all these are **extraordinary turnarounds in the human community** that bring a new consciousness into life where I really think the energy of the spirit is present and actively engaged. This is what we need to respond to; for me that’s very, very important.

Question 7: *In your society and culture today, do you generally regard the absence of mention of the women’s movement and feminism as a sign of their success (having gone “mainstream”) or as perhaps a symptom of regression? Explain.*

8. **Accessing spiritual/religious sensibilities in the known v. the unknown in science.**

Throughout this series, **Michael Dowd** has periodically expressed his zeal for science in how the new discoveries actually enhance his spirituality and his faith/trust. Dowd is thus an example of one who thrives on *the known*. **Ursula** also delights in the *known* made available by science, but she also finds spiritual sustenance in the *unknown*. She explains,

I love also, **Ursula Goodenough**'s expression, “**the sacred depths of nature**,” which is the title of one of her books where she speaks as a scientist, as an evolutionary biologist, about the “covenant with mystery.” She speaks about the “**covenant with mystery**” because, however much we are analyzing, dissecting, studying in the lab, or wherever, we are still **always coming up against a deeper mystery**. I know there are very, very ambitious American scientists who want to find the Unified Theory that explains everything. But I don’t think that’s possible, and some scientists also say this is not possible. Whereas some very arrogant scientists think they *can* do this. But I do really think that to look at nature in a **Teilhardian** sense, he speaks about nature as a “Divine Milieu.” Nature is animated, energized, brought to life through the presence of God. It’s the Divine, it’s the elements, for him; it’s the Christic elements even, **the Cosmic Christ**. Everything is related to the Divine. Everything can be a fusion-point with the Divine for the human experience—if we but develop our sensibility and if we prepare to be silent, to listen, to contemplate, to think about these matters. For that we need inner space, we need recollection, we need **an attitude of humility and reverence**.

Question 8: *What comes up for you as you reflect on Ursula King’s words? And do you generally find your source of inspiration (and of ‘spiritual’ or ‘peak’ feelings) to emanate more from the **known** of science or more from the as-yet **unknown** (e.g., the “deeper mystery”)?*

9. **Interfaith understanding for inspiration.** Interfaith dialogue garners a lot of support and interest, especially among the theologically liberal and theologically open, where religious tolerance is greatly valued. Here, Ursula King advocates for interfaith understanding for a different reason:

You can't just have a religion of your own, in your own personal kind of little chapel, if you like.

Religion requires the religious efforts of the whole of the human community, which we can see today in a much more global and historic sense. This is why I am very passionate about the study of the history of religions and to see what humanity collectively has experienced—what the greatest seers and saints and '**apostles of love**,' as they're sometimes called, have seen, have communicated, and have lived. I mean, there is a Book of Life there that can give us **the greatest sources of energy and strength**. And in that sense, I think, both the sources of science and the sources of religion complement each other in terms of spiritual resources for animating the lives of humanity.

Question 9: *Is interfaith dialogue important to you? Have you personally engaged in such? And what is your response to the reasons Ursula King gives for her enthusiasm about interfaith communication and learning?*

10. **The power of love, the centrality of love.** The title of this episode is “Evolutionary Spirituality and the Power of Love.” Ursula King briefly mentions the power of love at the beginning of the dialogue. She says, “The most central element for me is **the transformation of the human species through the power of love**.” She quotes Teilhard briefly on this theme. The exact quote from Teilhard is “Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, **for a second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire**.” She returns to this theme at the end of the interview, saying,

Love is really, absolutely central—certainly at the human level, in terms of bringing together, connecting, helping each other, and nurturing each other. It is **an energy resource that really can make everything different, and change it, and create new circles of community in the human species**, which has existed in small measures, in small groups, for a long, long time—but which we need now to expand to the whole globe.

I think this is what **Teilhard de Chardin** also speaks about. How extraordinarily parallel to Teilhard's thought: the same thoughts were developed by the Russian-American sociologist, **Pitirim Sorokin**, who was the founding father of sociology at Harvard University. He wrote about the ways and power of love in the extraordinary sense, where **he calls upon the human community to study the sources and energies and ways of love to transform the human community, to bring about help to all the problems we have**, in terms of whether they are mental health problems or

problems of self-understanding or problems of violence and war. It is in that sense that I like Teilhard de Chardin's quotation, "**Love is the free and imaginative outpouring of the Spirit over all unexplored paths.**" We have to explore new paths, we have to embrace and we have to invent them, we have to create them in order to forge our way forward into a more global, more balanced, more ecologically sane human and Earth community.

Question 10: *What is your response to Ursula King's portrayal of "the power of love" for transforming humanity and solving our collective problems?*

11. "**Pneumatophores**" as a new metaphor. The test of the power of a new metaphor, especially a new form of visual imagery, is whether it helps a concept lodge in one's memory.

Question 10A: *How well did Ursula King's use of the metaphor pneumatophore work for you? Without looking back at the transcript, do you recall what the original, **biological** use of the term refers to? And do you recall how Ursula proposes using it in a **spiritual** sense?*

Question 10B: *Were there **any particular metaphors and imagery** in this dialogue that especially worked for you? If not, what about this series as a whole? Are there any new metaphors or imagery that really call to you, and that you would like to keep fresh in your mind? If so, identify one and provide a sense of why it is powerful for you.*

12. **Why an expanded sense of self encourages right relationship to reality.** Michael Dowd puts a lot of passion into his concluding remark. He says,

I'm trying to ignite people's passion for life, their love for life, their love for integrity, for **living in right relationship to reality**, and to recognize that **it's not about responsibility** in terms of "Oh, we must save the planet, we must work for a better world." It's just that when you realize who you really are and that you're the product of 14 billion years of unfolding grace and creativity—and that **your sense of self doesn't stop with your skin**, and that the Earth is your larger body, that the Universe is your larger body—then you are about the work of helping to ensure a healthy future for all of us, *not* from the place of responsibility, but **from a place of love**, from a place of **passionate desire to make a difference in a positive way**. And it comes out of pure joy.

Question 12: *In what ways do you share Michael Dowd's perspective? If not, can you understand why he feels so passionate about the importance of expanding one's sense of self? Does his passion in this regard overwhelm you with its intensity, or does it urge you forward — perhaps toward **nurturing your own reappraisal of who you really are** in space, in time, and the role you may play in the continuing journey of humanity and life? Say more.*