

**POST MODERN REFLECTIONS**  
a review and critique  
of  
*Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*

By:  
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**“Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, *that’s* the great puzzle!” And she began thinking over all the children she knew that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have been changed for any of them.**

**POST MODERN REFLECTIONS**  
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***Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic***<sup>1</sup>

**THIS WRITER'S PREFACE**

It is shocking to me that this information is now ten years old. Where have I been? Like Seminary Dean/Annual Conference lecturer/multiple book writer Dr. Leonard Sweet, this reviewer is digging in unfamiliar territory and discovered the postmodern cavern. As a serious subject the postmodern era is unexplored territory, except by postmodern spirit guides. While it is unfamiliar to most people, the effects and influence of these deep caverns affects us all; there is a wind blowing through them bringing a refreshing--yet disturbing--new spirit for our time.

*Quantum Spirituality* was written for such a purpose as this. Sweet wished to explore the landscape revealed to those with new eyes who see the frontiers of a new emerging paradigm called the Postmodern Universe.

Reaching back to the beginnings of postmodern science, Dr. Sweet takes the four principles of quantum mechanics—Einstein's four-dimensional universe---and replicates these dynamics through the lens of spirituality. Sweet is seeking a unified theory to embrace both science and spirituality without reducing either one. To do this, Sweet seeks a new language to describe our new spiritual reality.

Quoting Stephen Hawking (*A Brief History of Time*), Sweet records, “. . . Hawking believes that without that missing mathematical formula of a Theory of Everything, the 'design' of the universe cannot be said to be 'divine.'" (p. 11.) It is the purpose of this book to define and empower God's BIG TOE (Theory of Everything). In fulfilling this purpose, Sweet uses the Bible's "smallest encapsulation of What It All Means: John 1:14 (p. 11). Sweet associates THE WORD (*Logos* as Divine Energy — *metanonia* or conversion), BECAME FLESH (*Pathos* as matter --- *koinonia* or Christian community), AND DWELT AMONG US (*Ethos* as space or environment --- *diakonia* or mission); AND WE BEHELD HIS [God's] GLORY (*Theos* as space/time --- *brasilia* or universe). **Logos, Pathos, Ethos and Theos — this is God's Big TOE**, and forms the arch of *Quantum Spirituality*.

We do live in a new paradigm. The author understands this new time as the positive experience of the old decaying while the new is revealed. Quoting Nobel winner Ilya Prigogine's "laws of dissipative structures,"

These laws of biological and social transformation say basically that things have to fall apart in disequilibrium, instability, and turbulence before they can come together to take systems down new paths of development. Claiming this culture for God requires the irreversible exchange of energy between the gospel and the postmodern world. To bring Christ in communication with the world means proclaiming an old-fashioned gospel in new-fangled ways. It is this "irreversible exchange of energy between the gospel and the postmodern world" that Dr. Sweet claims for God and the gospel.

The following is my own treatment of Sweet's material, representing my own intuited analysis. This brief is written to consolidate my own thinking about the postmodern universe. To

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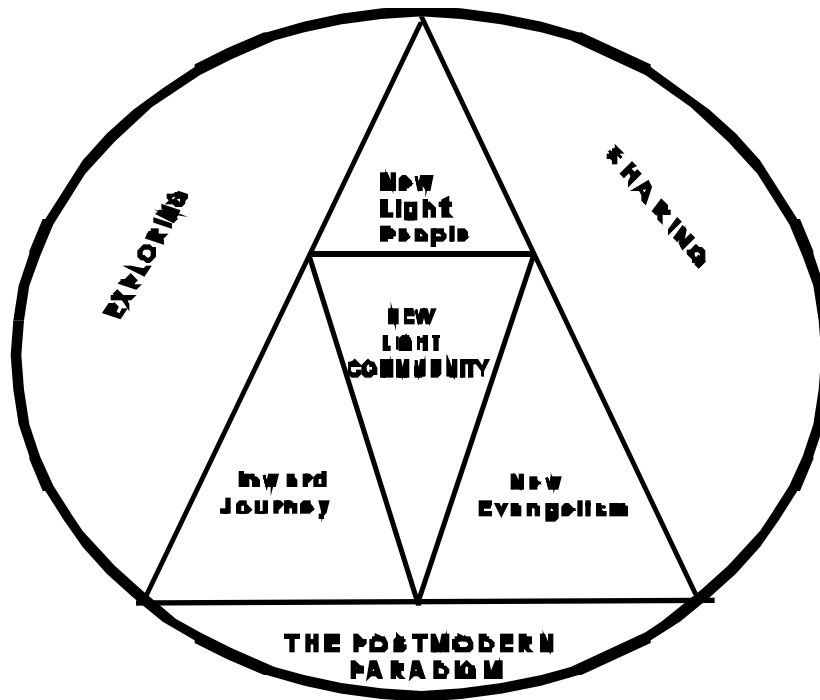
<sup>1</sup>Sweet, Leonard I. *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic* Dayton: Whaleprints 1991.

those who read it, this is shared with you in the hope it excites you to explore the postmodern universe as a *divine exchange*.

If it was my privilege to write Sweet's book, the working title would be **The New Light Community: The power and the passion to live in harmony with the universe**. From this perspective two major themes emerge: **New Light Theory and Practice**, and **Exploring and Sharing the Inward Journey**. From these two themes emerge three arenas: "***The New Light People***," "***The Inward Journey***," and "***The New Evangelism***."

The following are two art-forms to present a big picture of my review of Sweet's book. Such art-forms are not a modern (or linear) understanding. Rather, the art-forms are explorations of the postmodern paradigm appreciated as a wholistic picture. (*Note: a cursory review of Sweet's book reveals this process in abundance!*)

### AN ART-FORM SUMMARY



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<p><b>THE NEW LIGHT COMMUNITY:</b>  The power and passion to live in harmony with the universe  John 1: 14</p>		
<p><b>II. Exploring and sharing the Inward Journey</b></p> <p><b>I. New Light Theory and Practice</b></p>		
<p><b>B. Exploring the Inward Journey</b></p>	<p><b>A. The New Light People</b></p>	<p><b>C. Sharing the New Evangelism</b></p>
<p>1. <b>Logos:</b> the Inward Journey</p> <p>2. <b>Theos:</b> Thresholds of the Universe</p>	<p><b>Logos:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The New Synthesis</li> <li>2. New Light Credo</li> <li>3. Dynamics of the New Light People</li> </ol> <p><b>Pathos:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Living as the New Light Community</li> <li>2. The Tasks of New Lights</li> <li>3. The Work of New Lights</li> <li>4. The New Light Mission</li> </ol>	<p>1. <b>Geomantic:</b> Evangelism: the new Ethos</p> <p>2. <b>Ethos:</b> Protocols of the New Evangelism</p>
<p><b>The perils and promise of the postmodern world</b></p>		

On a recent trip to southeastern Kentucky to a work camp experience at the Red Bird Mission, our crew of 23 stopped in Corydon, Indiana to walk through the Squire Boon Caverns. Our young tour guide explained the in's and out's of walking through the cave. During this introduction, she alerted us to the unusual creatures inhabiting the cave: small bats, albino crawfish, and tiny red lizards. This was followed by the usual caveat of all splunking trips, "Watch your step!"

You are invited to go with me as your Spirit Guide into the wonderous Postmodern Caverns. Watch for the many unusual creatures along the walk. As you go you are warned to watch your step; the "trip" can result in a leap of faith.

Journey well, my friend.

## I. NEW LIGHT THEORY AND PRACTICE LOGOS

### A. The New Light People

The New Lights are prominently featured in Sweet's book. Old Light people are those living unaware of the postmodern shift. My definition of the New Lights are The Awakened Ones. John Wesley came to the conclusion that the human situation is that we are born spiritually blind. However, the human predicament is that we are unable to awaken ourselves. The mission of the Awakened Ones is to awaken those remaining spiritually asleep.

#### I. The New Synthesis

The question is, "Are you living in a new world?" There is a consensus that today's Christian church is not seriously living in today's world. Today's church is disconnected from today's *weltanschauung*, or the experience and interpretation of today's world. To its error, the Christian church fails to take science seriously. Consequently, the church left it to science to take faith seriously. The purpose of the Christian faith is to bring the meaning of Christ to every culture without becoming a cultural faith. As Sweet puts it,

The gospel has been inculturated into the thousands of indigenous cultures around the world . . . The body of Christ must be in conversation with the body of knowledge of every day." (1, 2.)

However, the Old Lights are uncomfortable with science. The evidence of which is that most pastors do not have science education. Many, if not most, are like me. History and Philosophy was more interesting than failing at algebra. Thankfully, today's science is a hybrid science, a science mixed with theology. Where the old science drew lines, quantum science opens doors.

The New Synthesis is that postmodern scientists are open to a fresh synthesis that Sweet characterizes as New Lights. Those living as New Lights use a multi-dimensional language that includes cosmic holism and a new empathetic ethics founded on bio-regionalism. Bio-regionalism "is based on the principle that the only way to save the whole is to save its parts . . . because every part . . . participates in the cosmic "holomovement." (9, *David Bohm quote.*)

The result is a new awakening that uses the language of a prism with four spiritual filters: *Logos*, *Pathos*, *Ethos* and *Theos*. These mysterious Greek theological terms are explained as we explore our postmodern cavern.

#### 2. The New Light Credo

Those awakened to the postmodern world discover the language of science/art is helpful to provide the words to describe the views found in this scientific/spiritual universe. What the Old Lights experience as darkness, the New Lights are given new eyes to see some astounding realities: quantum spirituality is lived out in an everywhere center and nowhere circumference (28); the postmodern world is not a bipolar either/or, but a double helix culture of both-ands and coinciding opposites; process-oriented thinking (29); things falling apart in order to come together new (30); orthodoxy becomes paradoxy. The latter is familiar to Christians: strength in weakness (2 Cor. 12: 9), living through dying (John 12: 24), seeing by gazing at the unseen (2 Cor. 4: 18).

It is this new ability to see the sense of Jesus' teaching that appeals to me. It is a holistic approach born of the following characteristics: a wide-angled awareness (48), a burning/all consuming interest (48), no personal pride but a reflected glory in Christ (48), energy for endurance (48), a lightness of heart with laughter (49), and a brightness of mind to add invigorating and agitating grace (49).

The New Light credo provides an experience of life as a masterpiece. This experience is characterized as an internal/eternal beauty shining forth from the following dynamics: *epiphonic effects* providing sudden all-knowing insights (50); *communities of people working and playing together* like family gatherings and town festivals (50); *traditional forms that become expressive of the present yet keep a relationship to the past* such as the “saintly instrumentalities as John Wesley’s pen. . . . Francis Asbury’s horse . . . Mother Teresa’s knees . . . Martin Luther King’s voice (50); *not tidy* (51); *ministering to the whole person* (50). The postmodern masterpiece is no longer “cool.” Rather, it is attached, participatory and thermionic — able to convert heat into electricity (52.) New Lights are masters of metaphors (53).

### **3. The Dynamics of the New Light People**

What are the metaphysics of the New Light people? Sweet compares the old metaphysics that separated the Mind and the Body to the new metaphysics featuring a mind/body that makes something out of nothing. British astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington described this epiphany in which the Mind and the Body are identical, not because the mind is the body in disguise, but because the body is the mind in disguise. Matter is the energy of the Spirit (59). The old physics described matter. Quantum physics describes matter as a field of energy in motion. Fluidity is relative to the relationship of the parts of matter.

New Light people experience metanoia or conversion. In my way of speaking, conversion is the sudden awaking to the darkness. This process is likened to being born in the darkness of the cave and never become aware of the darkness. Then, through some miracle, a bright flash of a strobe light provides momentary illumination. Now, the darkness has meaning. The epiphany of illumination sends us on a life-long search to make more meaningful the darkness in which we live.

Of course, this is more Salmon than it is Sweet. This is a foundation prism of Salmon’s *Transparent Theology*. The darkness does not go away. It becomes transformed, yet remains darkness, because the darkness is eternal and is the home of the Meaning Giver Christians name as God. Other religions provide other names and other insights into this darkness. What it means to be human is to live in the darkness transformed.

This little profundity is what Sweet means by *Logos*.

Using John Wesley’s life as a case study, Sweet follows Wesley’s conversion experience from doubt to faith as a state of excitation,

. . . .a set of metanoia-inducing, space-pervading fields—a consuming-fire transformation of consciousness that reorients one’s ambition, motives, presumptions, and energies (69).

This is a Deep Flow Experience (70 - 74). It is The Mysticism of Flash Lights and Flood Lights (74 - 76). It is Primal Screams and Passions (77 - 80). It is Energy Fire that is like the traditional putting on the Mind of Christ—God is the source of the energy, and a Spirituality of Enjoyment (80 - 87). It is The Lost Chord of Modernist Piety (87 - 90). It is Moving Inward to Reach Upward, The Rapture of the Deep, and When Depth Becomes Hologram (90 - 96.)

## **PATHOS:**

### **1. Living as the New Light Community**

Sweet claims that all of us are open to anyone who can frame a clear picture of the postmodern experience. Those who are awake to our new reality see themselves as individuals

who are part of a larger community of individuals. Sweet summarizes the postmodern experience as the society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The word “postmodern,”

. . . acknowledges that we are living indeed in a transitional period still in rebellion against canonical modernism. It refuses the premature naming of this period of history in anything but “post” terms—postsecular, postcritical, postcivilization, post-enlightenment, post-Constantinian, post-Darwinian, postbureaucratic, postliberal, postmodern (28).

## 2. The Tasks of New Lights

Sweet claims that the modern age did not yield much that was meaning giving. In reality, the search for meaning ended in a multiplicity of meaningful statements that are paradoxical. During the mid-20th century, the rise of psychology and psychiatry gave Christian study and theologians a new lexicon. We all became *little psychiatrists* believing the language would assist us in the task of becoming Luther's *little christ*s. Instead, many pastors opted to become family counselors and school chaplains.

### C **Take seriously the “crisscross of paradoxes”**

The key to living in the New Light is to appreciate the “crisscross of paradoxes (32).” In a manner of speaking, the task of the New Lights is to live in the oxymorons. Such as:

--Live in the *Global Village*? The more we get together, the further apart we feel. Today, there is the need for a “touch me” congregation;

--The *Clean Scene*? The world's hygiene and health standards help people live longer, yet more elderly commit suicide. Today, there is a need for a global health care plan and meaningful intergenerational engagement;

--*Certainty-based culture*? The more the attempt is to quantify and measure, the more ignorant we become about reality. Today, there is a need to relax and chill out;

--*More love making*. The more love making, the less love is made. The more *plugged in* the more *tuned out* we become. Today, there is a need for honest touching where time is taken to seriously tune-in to others;

--*Miracle drugs*? Doctors became the new modern priests, and we became “clients.” Today, there is the need for less toxicity in human relationships of all kinds;

--*Labor saving devices*? The more technology we have to save time, the less time we have. Today, we need more pluralism and less uniformity;

--*Information explosion*? Homogenized culture under the McDonald arches, the “Coca-Cola-zation” of the planet, and the depletion of complexity is leading us to extinction. Today, there is the need for living *sacral* and not just *secular*;

--*Enlightened society*? The modernization of the education industry led to specialization and professionalization. As the world turns people burn for a world where the big picture is meaning-full. Today, the need is for Platonic coat hooks on which people can hang what they learn. This is a re-centering of big ideas making sense of the little pieces;

--*Wealth systems*? We live in the wealthiest country in the history of humankind. Yet death from starvation is rampant in this country and around the world. Today, the need is to close the gap between producer and consumer. The result is a world of wealthy relationships and not just wealth.

Dr. Sweet stated all of the above in the negative without any suggestions for what is needed today. This presentation is my summation of what is written on pages 32 through 35 using suggestions of my own creation.

### C **Christians are “in-connection” with all creation.**

Continuing on in a more positive vane, Sweet turns his attention to *Building the Church Community “in-connection,” and “in-formation” with all creation*. From a biblical point of view,

humans are not at the apex of creation. Above us are angels. Humans are at the mid-point. Sweet observes that the world of nature has an identity and purpose all its own. "But we constitute together a cosmic body of Christ (124).

C **Christians are "in-formation" with all creation.**

From an ecological view of the church, the earth is not separate from us, but we exist in a symbiotic relationship; if one suffers, all of us suffer together. Literally, to say "This is my body" is to take seriously our universal relationship to all that exists. Sweet notes that "Quantum spirituality bonds us to all creation as well as to other members of the human family (125). One of the tasks of New Lights is to see God in the very substance of creation. In this way, Christians are "in-formation" with the earth.

To be "in-connection" and "in-formation" means to be bonded to all. To be "in-formation" and "in-connection" means to live for the sake of our common human identity. To be "in-connection" and "in-formation" means to represent a *Christ consciousness* on behalf of nature and humanity. To be "in-formation" and "in-connection" means to in synch with our memories and our ancestors. (123 - 130.) In this way, New Lights cast wide spiritual nets. Sweet continues by observing Christians are "in-connection" and "in-formation" with other religions (130 - 132), and with technology (132 - 134).

The creation of meaning fields is to take our creation seriously, along with our life story and our moral vision. As the modern era passes away and the postmodern era replaces it, our story moves from the *old mill stream*, and moves into the *desert*.

The energy organized into matter that we name "church" must add to its salvationist, "*Logos Christology* tradition the life-giving "Spirit Christology" tradition of the wilderness sojourns . . . give up its "liberationist outlook" in favor of an "exilic ecclesiology . . ." (103).

The word "ecclesiology" literally means those who are "called out" of the world, called "**out**" that they might better go "**in**" it. (104). Sweet makes much of current demographic studies showing trends of people moving to, and vacationing in, the desert southwest in order to find what Mary Austin called "deep breaths, deep sleep, and the communion of the stars."

C **The building of New Light Community is the central task for New Lights.**

Those who are awakened continue to remain awakened because of their community. A personal encounter with God flickers and dies "without communal fanning (105). This sense of community is based on the "wholeness principle." "Strictly speaking," Sweet observes, "there is no separate identify call *self* (111). Sweet continues: *Community* is a word that needs an adjective. The adjective is made all the more imperative by the lack of a Protestant theology of community." Going on, "New Lights must be very precise in their definition of "community." Not just any community will do. The Holy Spirit builds a particular kind of community with a particular kind of spirit." (111.)

Here we are speaking of **Pathos**, or the enfleshment of the Christ dynamic. The body of those called out to live on behalf of a world that is unwilling, or not ready, to live as a sacrificial spirit. This ecclesia lives this way until the day when the world is awakened (converted) to the reality of our spiritual cave.

The principles of New Light Communities are to:

--*Deepen and harmonize the parts with the whole*, and not just sacrifice the parts for the whole (116 - 117);

--To practice the maxim "*Community without individuality becomes oppressive. Individuality without community becomes anarchic.*" (118.)

--To give attention to *inner communal information* that is both "the process and the transformation of information; biological in principle **and** a theological concept (121).

--To *give shape and form to the energy matter known as Jesus Christ*. In this way, New Light leaders are *in-formational connectors* helping the body of Christ to become an in-formed church, and in-formational community." (121).

A major New Light undertaking is the designing of newstream communities that can be "in-connection" and "in-formation" with the spirit of Christ. Christ will be embodied for the postmodern church in information . . . with: (1) other Christians, (2) all creation, (3) one's ancestors and ancestral memories, (4) other faiths, (5) technology." (123 - 134.)

### C ***New ecclesial forms are necessary in order to make a difference.***

For this purpose, it is important to remember that no forms are permanent. The paradox of nature is that when organisms settle for bland permanence rather than asserting change, the structure, forms and values of the organism will destabilize themselves! Bureaucratic monopolies--like denominations--no longer work. However, hierarchy is still necessary.

Ecclesial structures can be "in-connection" **through the use of rituals**. As Sweet explains, "Scholars of ritual experience are uniform in their judgment that ritual traditions provide openings, holes, spaces into which the new can emerge and even amend the old." (138.)

With some irony, Sweet suggests the secret to success in New Light Communities is more concern about the church's roles than its rolls. Growth mania kills postmodern community. "The church is not a delivery system, rather it is an accumulator of human capital." (139.) To this end, New Light Communities,

--are more **organic than organization**;

--focus on decentralizing that places a "premium on movement models of leadership over establishment or managerial models." (136.)

--have a **vision and practice consensus** (137).

### 3. **The work of the New Leader**

The work of the New Leader is to push old thoughts in new ways. Sweet summarizes this point in writing that with our multi-dimensional nature of the universe it is necessary to develop inwardly and outwardly at the same time (249).

New Light leaders are the new Muses of history. At the time of our enlightenment--or conversion--the New Light Leader is lifted into a new consciousness, leaving behind a "linear metaphor of directionality," and assuming the helical historical model enabling a return to Eden; this experience appears to be the divine intention! (250.) This leadership is accepting of the insights of modernity which were necessary to lead us into the "current stage of thinking of nature as a organism of an implicate order." In the postmodern cave, the Muses' "Arrow of Time" is both reversible and irreversible, and entropy has positive and negative powers (251).

The one place Sweet turns petulant is in speaking that the work of the New Leader may be NEW, but it is not NOVEL. He concludes his section on "the Third Testament," (page 259) with the statement that he supports the belief of a ". . .divine inbreaking into the historical moment through which Alpha beginnings and Omega endings converge. The Third Testament is everything new about the old, old story."

This fundamental is supported in his own words,

New Light leaders will want to examine from a safe distance Bushnell's attack on a closed canon as "a naked and violent assumption, supported by no word of scripture, and justified by no inference from the complete organization of the gospel." The trilemma of a theology of revelation, a psychology of inspiration, and a sociology of knowledge may be the metaphysical equivalent of computing

*pi* (the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter) to billions of digits on the world's largest and fastest computer . . . I am not ready to bid farewell, as some earth-centered theologians seem to be, to the traditionalist symbols and old formulations of the Christian tradition. God has not continued giving tablets of stone from every mountaintop because God has given us something better--the living cornerstone of Jesus Christ, on which every generation can build its dwelling place. (258.)

#### **4. The New Light Mission.**

***The mission of New Light leadership is to be "Seminary Apostles."*** Sweet observes how Jesus may be the same yesterday, today, and forever, but this does not mean Jesus does the same thing over and over. Comparing the physical body with our physiology reveals that 98% of our atoms are replaced annually. In the theological sense, the Body of Christ is forever changing. "Energy matter is dispersed through space-time in ways we have yet to comprehend (255)."

***The mission of New Light leadership is to continue the work of Scripture.*** This is done through "seminary" or the propagation of the faith. Like Paul, we are to sow the seeds. Quoting Thoreau, Sweet likens seminarians as men and women who have "the seed of life in them." (256.)

## **II. EXPLORING AND SHARING THE INWARD JOURNEY**

In my treatment of Leonard Sweet's material, the second major theme is the exploration and the sharing of the inward journey. Those privileged to be awakened to the spiritual cave in which they live are required to become Spirit Guides. It may be that in the sharing they remain awakened.

Previously, Dr. Sweet noted the inward journey was made in order to help us reach upward. This reaching upward is a transcendent understanding Sweet describes as "*THEOS: The Sea of Time.*" His illustration is that of strolling on the smooth boardwalk until we fall off of the beaten path. He writes of this experience as "where the concrete ends."

### **B. Exploring the Inward Journey**

#### **1. LOGOS: The Inward Journey**

The theological premises in *Theos*, Sweet illustrates in postmodern terms as *space/time*; this is the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension of the quantum spirit; it is the fusion of outer and inner space: *kairotic time* as opposed to--or inclusive of--*chronos time*. This experience is movement becoming a spiral. Interestingly, Sweet speaks of "pulpit time" as *kairos time*.

##### **a. Thirst for the spiritual**

To spend one moment in God's presence is the best "turn on" imaginable. This is the way we get to the bottom of things while removing our name from the bottom. (95, 96.)

##### **b. Move Inward to Move Upward**

The move inward is to enable a transcendent understanding. In Sweet's terms, this is the way to get in touch with the reality of God's presence. On page 91 and 92, Sweet writes about consciousness raising attempted in the marketplace, and in the high touch industry.

##### **c. Metaphors for Enlightenment**

Writing about New Light believers who are enlightened, they are recognized by their passion, high energy, and filled with sensual experiences. Sweet notes the use in the Romantic period of both passion and music, and he calls for postmodern musicians to do the same. They

are possessed by a higher power, possessed by a Christ consciousness that is heartfelt knowledge of God's love and forgiveness; possessed by a "sober intoxication," even a "divine intoxication." (77, 78.)

"Quantum spirituality begins not in the heights, nor out in the breadths, but by going down to the innermost depths, where "deep calls to deep." (60)

From the beginning of philosophy in Greek thought, the soul was conceived as fire. Postmodernism's starting point is not with matter but with spirit, with energy, with fire and the unity of spirit and matter. The greatest contribution of quantum physics to postmodern spirituality is its reorienting us to the role of spirit; its bring together the "great opposites" energy and matter, mind and body; its bringing to an end the binary, adversarial reading of reality. (60.)

"Every instance of matter is the expression of a spiritual reality." (60.)

**d. Seeing double**

Using the scientific principle of physics, Sweet argues that deep matter of faith begins in what Albert Einstein called "the law of the equivalence of mass and energy."

This kind of depth comes from looking at two points at once: emotion and thought, intuition and reason, energy and matter, feminine and masculine, subject and object, community and individual, chance and necessity, mind and body. The modern era preferred looking at life with one eye closed. (60, 61.)

Between each major section, Sweet interjects a non-rational art-form. One of these he titles "Pigeonwalking." This poetic notation describes how a pigeon walks by bobbing along. The rational explanation is that the bird cannot focus very well, and the bobbing allows its brain to measure the environment. Dr. Sweet observes that the postmodern era needs this bobbing vision to see clearly our spiritual environment.

Indeed, energy without depth became the American formula for success.

Without reconnecting what should never have been disconnected, without putting an end to this sibling rivalry, faith cannot find its depth perception or "implicate order." Depth is the source and unity of both energy and matter. (61.)

**e. Spirit Shadows**

Every religion has a root metaphor. For Christians this metaphor is *Logos*. The many meanings of this Greek term is spelled out on page 62. In the Bible, there is little difference between thoughts and things. Consciousness is now a serious part of the study on the theories of matter. The human mind connects at some mysterious level apparently beyond consciousness. In this regard, metanoia--or conversion--means an "after thought," something of a divine thought; it is a transformed consciousness. In this spiritual connection, we experience spirit shadows. (62 - 65.)

**f. Deep Flow Experiences**

Psychologists speak of a holistic sensation in which people feel themselves at one with all things. Sometimes this happens in jogging and other extreme exercises. These are the deep flow experiences. The church identified these experiences as ritualized behavior in which doctrine "become drama and the word is made flesh." (71.) This is a theology characterized as:

C **Mystery**; a primal experience, the meaning of life. Sometimes this experience is trivialized into a school of the feel good. Mysticism is "metaphysics arrived at through mindbody experiences; . . .they begin in experience; it ends in theology." (74 - 77).

C **Passion and connectedness** are connected to the word zeal. The principle is Complimentarity where the observer influences the observed experiment. Sweet

believes it is this “observer-participancy” that constitutes the “basic building blocks of the Christian life.” This process is both physical and spiritual. (77 - 80.)

C **Raptures of the deep** is the “Fourth Drive” associated with self and survival, power and material, and sex. This is our drive or instinct--or thirst--for God. (93 - 95.)

**g. The source of our energy is Jesus Christ**

Putting on the mind of Christ creates in us a Christ-consciousness. In postmodern thinking this is a tuning of ourselves with the spiritual vibrations already present in the spiritual universe. When this takes place we experience John Wesley’s “warm heart” experience. (81.)

Sweet affirms that “Our bodies are nothing more than the human organization of energy-fire. On page 82, the author describes this reality with several principles of physics, in which the synergy of the divine-human exchange of energies “are rounded up and released in the universe.” (82.) “New Lights believe and confess that what electrifies and magnetizes us is the love and grace of God.” (83.)

One of the best ways of checking on our relationship to the source of spiritual energy is the experience of sheer joy. This is pointed out in the relationship of Jesus to the practice of austerity; Jesus loved to party! Sweet calls for the church to learn to dance.

“A Jesus-Christ faith challenges the lifestyle of both gluttonous pigs and abstemious prigs.” (84 - 87.)

**2. THEOS: Thresholds of the Universe**

The fundamental question raised is, “What takes your breath away?”

Sweet’s answer is these four thresholds:

--The *threshold of mystery* — mystery is identified as inexhaustable intelligibility, and is experienced as “being lost in wonder (229).

--The *threshold of the angelic* --- this is identified in John Wesley’s understanding as the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God (231).

--The *threshold of the psychic awareness* --- This is living in a twilight zone in which we distinguish between the authentic and the fraudulent spirituality. Sweet writes,

Only when the paranormal and spiritual combine in ways that foster ethical and philosophical development ‘of the highest order’ . . . will the differences be illuminated between “psychism and mysticism, information and insight, knowledge and wisdom, and self-development and service.” (232.)

--The *thresholds of miracles and prodigies* --- it is at this point that Sweet introduces us to his hermeneutic (study of meaning) on healing. Miracles are the indicative, they are the way life is in life’s fullness and wholeness. (241.) Sweet makes the assumption that the biblical understanding of miracle “must have been something quite different than breaking “nature’s laws.” (243.) Rather, a miracle “is the introduction . . . the seepage and interpenetration, of the patterns and processes, the mysterious and magic, of other worlds into this one (243). From this perspective, NATURAL HEALING is expressed in self-healing and medical healing. MIRACULOUS HEALING is an expression of faith and psychic healing. “A faith for the fourth dimension will witness to a God who always heals (243).”

C. **The New Evangelism**

**ETHOS:**

**1. Geomantic Evangelism: the new Ethos**

Sweet gives us this definition of *sacred geometry*. "I am calling a geomantic style of evangelization will ensure harmonious habitation patterns as the gospel interconnects and interacts with all life and land forms. The focus of this evangelism is on the people who need it the most. New Light evangelists find and embrace those in need (168).

The author identifies five spiritual laws of Systems Dynamics to summarize this new **Ethos**. The old ethic was based on *systematic theology* (a rational approach), while the new ethic is based on *systems theology* (a holistic approach) that seeks wisdom on how God works. (177.)

If the road to hell is paved with good intentions then New Light evangelists can apply five laws by jumping on the vehicle on the road to hell:

1<sup>st</sup> — *Take a chance on God*, take the risk! Discover security in insecurity, stability in instability, safety in danger, control in vulnerability, life in death, steadiness in speed. (177 - 180.)

Discovering these paradoxes is what I name as the Indicative--this is The Way Life Is (TWLI).

2<sup>nd</sup> --- *Love the past without living in it*. Discover that space-time process structure needs to be in vertical as well as horizontal relationships with its parts. That is, come to experience silence, peace of mind. "The New Light apologetic looks to the past to sanctify the present. (180 - 183).

This is what I identify as historicity; the more of the past you know, the more future you have.

3<sup>rd</sup> --- *Do what you do with passion!* Discover the order of disorder — from the standpoint of nature, the worst thing we can do is to slow down. This is a mother's advice: "Get up and get moving. Better to wear out your shoes than your sheets." (183 - 186.)

4<sup>th</sup> --- *Take time for "down time."* Discover solitude. Provide for vacation time and creative play as a method of renewal that precede new bursts of creativity.

In my view, this is taking care of yourself in order to care of others. (186 - 188.)

5<sup>th</sup> --- *Find and use the "free fuel."* Discover the free energy of faith in Jesus Christ. While pleasure and material wealth are sources of free fuel, these things lead to entropy and meaninglessness. (189 - 190.)

From my perspective in the postmodern cave, this is getting in touch with the indicative. "The Way Life Is" is that to which we are awakened. This free fuel is the energy source of reality that is already within us. An inexhaustible supply of spiritual energy already exists in our innards. The reason why it is inexhaustible is that the tank is eternal. This fuel gives us eternal combustion.

However, you get yourself pumped up when the free fuel of Jesus Christ leads you in singing and laughing while inviting to join us the lepers abandoned by the side of the road.

Who are the lepers and strangers with whom we identify? (190).

*Idealized Outsiders* — the rich, powerful, and those beyond the reach of our jealousy;

*Alienated Outsiders* --- marginal groups like minorities, handicapped, homosexuals;

*Intentional Outsiders* --- those who chose to stand apart, even to their destruction;

*Innocent Outsiders* --- the clowns who symbolize our twin desires to "stand out" and "blend in."

**2. The protocols of the New Evangelism: the six protocols (193 - 199.)**

1. Take seriously who we are and what we have to offer.
2. Remember to tell God's story, not our own story.
3. Be natural and express an inner excitement.
4. Offer God first. Evangelism is Grace not public relations.
5. The promise in the stranger is God's presence.
6. Less One-on-one, and more Two-by-two.

To these ends, practice hospitality by giving the invitation and asking for the RSVP. Don't scare the hell out of people, or sell yourself. Offer Christ and don't "muffle your drum." After the invitation, practice the initiation. Follow the invitation with *koinonia*, and connect liturgy and mission (common table, foot washing). (198 - 213.)

Geomantic evangelism is "recognizing Jesus when he comes to us, and to help others recognize Jesus when he comes to them . . . many times God, as at Emmaus, is revealed to us only **after** we have offered hospitality to the stranger." (213.)

**III. THE PERILS AND PROMISE OF THE POST-MODERN WORLD**

**A. The New Sensibility (Postface: 162 - 298)**

**1. Trust the fuzziness**

The first rule of thumb in the postmodern world is that the quantum mind cannot make sense of the old ways. "Many of the lessons my kindergarten teacher taught me are wrong for the postmodern era in which we are living (263)."

**2. Leave common sense at the door**

The second rule of thumb in the postmodern world is to honor your intuitions, which means to have a sense of the common.

**3. 10 protocols demonstrating the peril and the promise**

Sweet observes that these ten things spell "not the abandonment of *good sense* but the initiation of a more realistic, more postmodern sense of the common. Each of the following states something to be unlearned in the postmodern universe. Each item is followed by the particular "treasures" found in the postmodern application, as well as the "monsters" to be experienced in each as well.

*Protocol # 1 You can only do one thing at a time (268 - 271)*

*Protocol # 2 There is a right way and a wrong way to do everything (271 - 276)*

*Protocol # 3 You can do everything (276 - 278)*

*Protocol # 4 You can do everything you put your mind to (278 -280)*

*Protocol # 5 If at first you don't succeed, try, try again (281 - 282)*

*Protocol # 6 You can't be two places at once (283 - 284)*

*Protocol # 7 Learn to do it yourself (284 - 286)*

*Protocol # 8 There are simple, easy answer to every problem (286 - 290)*

*Protocol # 9 You don't know everything (290 -293)*

*Protocol # 10 The truth lies somewhere in the middle (293 - 295)*

**4. Drawing a sabbath breath (299 - 302)**

In Sweet's usual creative way of drawing unusual word pictures, he reminds us about the "Kiss of God," as the method of our spiritual creation. Sweet references the Hebrew (*ruach*) or the Greek (*pneuma*) as the "breath" or spiritual wind God uses to create Adam. This is the gift of life (298).

This is followed by several paragraphs on “Sevening.” Again, this is a play on the *sabbath* concept with which we get a hold of the significance of our existence. Sweet concludes this section in the illustration of the Navajo Indian culture in which they use the community circle until “the circle becomes one breath. ((299 - 300.)

## **THIS WRITER’S POSTLUDE**

### **A. An Unscientific but intuitional critique**

Dr. Sweet provides us with an introduction to the postmodern age. As I noted at the beginning of the brief, it is shocking in 2001, to realize his thinking is now ten years old. This intrigues this writer to see where else postmodern Spirit Guides, like Sweet, are taking us now.

#### **1. Use of words and illustrations**

Dr. Sweet has many sweet ways of turning a phrase. I’m not certain if the turn of every phrase is a necessary ingredient for entering the postmodern world, or if it is Sweet’s method for getting us to think in new and different ways. I suspect the latter. For example:

[This book is] Designed to be read and appreciated on many levels, **Quantum Spirituality** is a hybrid work . . . it is written in a genre that is oddly mixed. Part intellectual curiosity, part synthetic bridging, part guided tour through a vast bibliography, part theological rumination, part “preaching it round,” it is fundamentally a roundabout apologetic exercise in standing inside history and “getting looped”---upping the ante of theology to enter wholesale worlds like that of the quantum, the realm most scientists believe to be the fundamental level of reality.” (3, 4.)

See what I mean? And speaking of the “vast bibliography,” there are 812 references in this book.

#### **2. An overwhelming use of illustrations**

It is this vast bibliography that is both a treasure and a monster, to use one of Sweet’s delicious metaphors of magical manifestations. For example. Writing a description for initiating one of our lost people into the postmodern community, Sweet leaves us wandering in the wilderness of his many illustrations:

The “Ritual of Friendship,” for example, is an odd grouping of words that ranks right up there with the oxymoron “Orthodox Christianity” and the tautology “Independent Baptist.” When friendship needs to be ritualistically dragged into existence, forced into bloom like marigolds in March, there is need for something deeper than “friendship.” Similarly, the introduction into modern liturgies of a segment called “Passing of the Peace” is the peace that passes my understanding. Either from the standpoint of those frozen in place trying to quick-thaw for two minutes of friendliness, or those whirling dervishes endangering anything or anyone in their path, the attitude is one of “Let’s get this over with so we can get about the real work of worship.” Or in the words of Andrew Sullivan speaking in **The New Republic**, the “sign of peace” is “the Vatican II equivalent of that poignant moment in “The price is Right” when you realize you’re the contestant: (Why is everybody

smiling at me?)” (211, 212). (Ed. note: *This paragraph was picked at random.*)

Is all this really necessary? Sometimes I thought I was reading a Jessie Jackson sermon. There are so many ironical metaphors, allusions, and alliterations as plays-on-words. If the above paragraph was unusual, it would not be so painful to read. However, the majority of the book's paragraphs require this deep ploughing. This is not a book for the commoner. Obviously, the book was written for those with a theological and intellectual background. Maybe this is its strength, but it can turn off the unmotivated reader of whatever capacity.

### **3. A weak and simplistic Christology**

#### **a. Jesus, the man**

Leonard Sweet's Christology is based on the Incarnation. On page 65 he writes, "The basic theological issues in the *Logos/Pathos* dimensions of faith are incarnational ones." *Quantum Spirituality* is focused on the revitalization of individual Christian as well as the Christian community; this he describes as New Light leadership and the New Light Community.

While the theological basis of this book may be incarnational, there is little evidence of Jesus' role. The faith claim is made that God did not send us a principle, nor a story, nor a dimension of love. Rather, the Kingdom of God is a person (Jesus Christ), and a community (the Christbody community). (81.)

Sweet asks the question, "How does someone say "Jesus" in the postmodern world (65). The answer seems shallow.

First, the author tells us that Jesus is the one on whom we come to give our entire dependence. Sweet writes, "Jesus called 'faith' the 'flow experience' of turning toward him in complete dependence, the metanoia of our fused, unseparated self: body and mind, action and intention." (72.) But who is this Jesus to whom we give such allegiance?

Second, the author tells us that Jesus is the one who parties rather than fasts; he does not renounce the world, but is a joyful experience (85). Also, in a play on the words of the hymn "What a friend we have in Jesus," he paraphrases it as "What a friend Jesus has in us." (302). The unanswered question is why? Why would we be friends with Jesus?

Unfortunately, this sums up what the author records about the human life and work of Jesus, the man.

It seems to me that Incarnational theology makes much of the life, ministry, and message of Jesus. In this book, there is little to be learned about any of these topics. Also, Incarnational theology usually points to the events surrounding the birth and death of Jesus.

The question for an incarnational approach is the one Jesus asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" This topic is the topic Sweet needs to illumine in postmodern language and metaphors.

#### **b. The Christ**

Is it Sweet's evangelical background on which he basis such claims as, "I am not ready to bid farewell, as some earth-centered theologians seem to be, to the traditionalist symbols and old formulations of the Christian tradition (258)? Yet Sweet testified to the necessity "To bring Christ in communication with the world means proclaiming an old-fashioned gospel in new-fangled ways." Sweet gives us new metaphors for viewing the postmodern world. I wonder why he defends "old formulations" of the Christian tradition?

##### *1. Dump "transcendence" and use "transparency"*

The need to defend "old formulations" gets Sweet caught up in old Greek formulations of transcendency: God is up there, out there, or in there. In one section, he makes the argument

that we go inward in order to go upward (249). This is unfortunate language for postmodern ears. This is true, particularly when one is using postmodern physics as the language to carry spiritual metaphors.

For me, I do not find meaning for my life “out there.” Meaning already exists within me, down deep in the cathedral of my soul. It radiates through me at all times. This is why the language of “transparency” is postmodern language.

I’m still pondering why the author spends so little time defining his Christology. As noted above, the man Jesus gets short shrift. The same can be said about The Christ. The following is the clearest summation I can give of his Christology, and this comes from all over the book. Look for these four elements: 1) the philosophical underpinning, 2) some definitions of Christ, 3) the effect of Christ in our lives (or our lives in Christ), and 4) *the source of Free Fuel*.

### 2. *The philosophical underpinning*

On page 40 Sweet writes,

Indeed, at this very moment a New Light movement is already mediating a transitional map of the moral universe amidst immense social and scientific change. The result is less a theology than a story that synthesizes science and philosophy with deep religious perceptions and sensibilities.

On the same page, Sweet charges, “Too much of the church is seeking revitalization when it should be seeking Christ . . . Christ is the church’s only life. So far, so good. Then, he claims, “People are looking for someone, for anyone, to **frame** an orthodoxy on the other side of paradox.” I understand what it means to frame an orthodoxy. I think I might understand what an orthodoxy is on the other side of paradox as I support a postmodern “alterative future” *The question Sweet pecks at but never devours, is what is the Christ-significance for the postmodern world?*

How I yearn for Sweet to take Peter Berger’s definition of “true religion” and run wild with it. Here it is! True religion is “an experience in which metahuman reality is injected into human life.” (80.) Yes, here is a postmodern definition of incarnational reality. *Meta-human*, the big picture of authentic humanness, finds an example in the physical (human) life in Jesus.

Sweet clearly understands where he is going with this, because he uses the life of John Wesley as an example in the following pages. *Yet, he never defines it! Yes, he describes the effects of it. Why doesn’t he take the time to plumb the significance of it?*

Let me affirm that Sweet takes stabs in this direction. On page 95 the author interprets Psalm 84: 10 and notes, “Faith in Jesus Christ both increases one’s capacity for living and expands the volume of life one can inhale into one’s being.” This makes me want to say, “Yes! Now go on!”

### 3. *Some definitions of Christ*

--Christ is the model for the redescription of the world. Yes, and go on!

--The energy of divine love was assembled in matter in the human form of the *Logos-Christ* (65). Beautiful, and say more!

--The Energy-Fire flows from God (80). Oh, yes. And . . .

--The energy burns and shines for spirit love not for earthly love(84). Oh well . . .

### *The effect of Christ in our lives (or our lives in Christ)*

--At “Aldersgate” Wesley “put on the mind of Christ,” inhabited the Christ consciousness (81). Here is another tiny fuse that could light an immense explosion to be understood in postmodern terms. However, it is left as a dangling fuse. Instead, Sweet turns to a series of rather inane comments about the Christ experience. Such as:

--What’s good for the body is good for the spirit (87);

--Too much of the Church is seeking revitalization when it should be seeking Christ (40);

- The Kingdom principle — seek first God's kingdom through Christ (40);
- Less faith **in** Christ and more faith **of** Christ (55).

Sweet so often comes so close yet misses the mark because there is no persistent/consistent plunging below the surface of such statements as the following:

In Paul's hymn (Phil. 2: 6- 11) God so loved that there was the self-emptying of Christ--a love of loss and recover, of agony and ecstasy, or pain and healing, of giving and receiving. The story of the life of Jesus is the story of loving others as God loves. (40).

This is a beautiful insight, incarnational in understanding, and descriptive of the Christian's ministry in and through Christ. To be "self-emptying." Now, there is something to aspire to. Oh, I wish Sweet would say more.

5. *Free Fuel*

This novelty of this idea is symbolic of the many creative ideas flowing out a Sweet pen. Free Fuel is the energy source on which an organism depends. It is the energy to fill our tank and to be expended in humanness.

Not all Free Fuel is free. When humans seek physical satisfactions to feed spiritual needs the end result is meaninglessness. Pleasure, sought for its own purposes, results in disaster--pleasure cannot be sustained. Sweet explores this on page 190.

Authentic Free Fuel is found at the pump of Jesus Christ. When we fill up on Jesus Christ then,

"We will travel down the Jericho Road, far from thermodynamic equilibrium but singing and laughing, inviting to join us the lepers abandoned by the side of the road, and the stranger broken-down on the road's shoulders from bad, entropic fuel."

Unfortunately, these four points are widely scattered postmodern images to tease us about the purpose and function of Christology as the energy lighting and enlightening the postmodern cave in which society exists. Of 925 paragraphs in the book, seven are attributed to Jesus and twenty-four to Christ.

This count many not be entirely fair, because of the many, many illustrations. However, after a thorough reading, and deep reflective study, these thirty-one references fairly state the Christological presuppositions of the book.

To me, it is interesting to observe this weakness against the backdrop of the current (old?) modern church. All of the churches I have served, and the one I presently attend, as well as all of the churches with which I am acquainted, the central weakness in each is a shallow understanding of Christology. "Theo-ology" is clear; they understand the First person of the Trinity, but not "Christ-ology," the Second Person of the Trinity. Go figure.

**B. Personal recommendations**

My personal experience of Dr. Sweet's book is positive, in spite of the negative observations noted above in this postlude. The topic holds unusual interest for me as my motivation is to write my own theological observations as a postmodern Spirit Guide.

More importantly, parts of this book are recommended to the reading list for every church administrative board or council. Also, every church committee would be well served to read it too. *In particular, the Evangelism Committee, and those struggling to write a "vision statement," will find the following sections helpful.*

**C. References for EVANGELISM COMMITTEES**

Pages

**Read this paper**

Geomantic Evangelism	167 to 168
Ten Protocols	268 to 295
Five Spiritual Laws	176 to 190
The New Lepers	170 to 176

**D. References for the VISION STATEMENT STUDY**

**Read this paper**

The New Synthesis	1 to 13 (Preface)
The New Light Credo	46 to 55
The New Sensibility	265 to 266
Leave Common Sense	266 to 268
The New Lepers	170 to 176
Ten Protocols	268 to 295