

90 Development and Facets of Christianity's Many Paths — an Integral Perspective

Why I have this reference on my website

Note: For Hot Links go to:

Posting 90 on <https://www.garyvollbracht.com/general-support/quotes-from-other-sources/>

I was a student of Ken Wilber 20 years ago, and for several years hosted a discussion group of others interested in Wilber's Integral perspectives. After a few years I got away from Wilber's Integral philosophy as I committed myself to a path that became my spiritual home — more on that later.

In reading Connie Zweig's 2021 book *The Inner Work of Age – Shifting from Role to Soul*, I was reintroduced to her friend Ken Wilber's work and began listening to the Audible version of Wilber's 2017 800-page (30-hour!) work *The Religion of Tomorrow*. I resonate with what Wilber has to say after all his years as a pioneer of Integral philosophy, and to learn from his book that there are new resources out on *Integral Christianity*.

In pursuing Integral Christianity, I was drawn to the title of a book by Paul R. Smith, [Is Your God Big Enough? Close Enough? You Enough?: Jesus and the Three Faces of God](#) (©2017), especially the question "*Is Your God YOU Enough?*" Why? Because it speaks to where I am in my long spiritual journey — in what might be considered a *panentheistic framework*.

Smith follows an *Integral Christian path*, blending *Wilber's Integral perspectives* with his own Christian journey. Smith is a retired Baptist Minister, a Christian mystic, and co-founder of the *Integral Christian Network*. Smith also wrote an earlier work, [Integral Christianity: The Spirit's Call to Evolve](#) ©2012. In this earlier work I appreciate how systematically and clearly Smith approaches Integral Christianity. His work is commended by two other authors I follow — Richard Rohr and Cynthia Bourgeault.

I include the *topic of Integral Christianity* in my website's "Quotes from Other Sources" for several reasons. First, because I grew up in a strong Lutheran family, went to a Lutheran grade school, and, until age fifty, was very active in leadership and teaching in a conservative Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod). *I considered myself a Christian — though always a questioning and curious one, always the serious student and always pushing the edges of my Lutheran roots*. I am thankful for all that these first 50 years of life in the Lutheran Church gave me, especially deep roots in the Bible and other Christian writings, as well as a faithful group of Christian friends, family, and leaders.

In my mid 40s my curiosity and spiritual hunger started leading me away from the Lutheran Church, and for 15 years I “wandered in the desert,” searching for a spiritual home – until at age 58 I was led to (guided to) a little-known path called **Pathwork**.

During those fifteen years in the wilderness I was very active and focused on my spiritual search, however ***I wasn't sure if I could call myself a Christian any longer – AND that no longer mattered to me. I was a seeker of Truth, always open to Mystery – and Mystery*** seemed to be a more likely **Reality** than what I as a human could fathom.

For over 20 years now (I turn 80 this year -2022) I have immersed myself deeply in the Pathwork teachings. Why? ***Something in Pathwork resonates with, awakens, and inspires my soul!*** Pathwork has provided a broader, deeper, and more resonant base for my spiritual home – enabling me to ***build on and go beyond my earlier foundation of biblical Christianity*** that was so much a part of my first 50 years of life.

Pathwork did this broadening and deepening work by offering many other dimensions of both spirituality and psychology in general and Christianity in particular that resonate deeply with my soul. But during these years ***I would NOT have said, “Yes, I am a Christian.” “Being a Christian” was just no longer central to my self-identity.***

Tastes of another identity have been emerging over the past several years. In this identity I experience myself in the phrase that Jesus may have used once in a while when someone asked him who he was. In John's gospel Jesus is said to have said on one occasion (John 8:58), ***“Before Abraham was, I am.”*** And that ***“I am”*** seems to fit some of my experiences – ***I simply am.*** To say more would be to say less ([See Wilber on I AMness](#)).

Integral Christianity, in the framework I understand it from reading Wilber, gives me a way of expressing how ***Pathwork describes Jesus Christ and God, central figures*** throughout Pathwork's 258 lectures, which comprise around 2,500 pages of dense reading. [Pathwork Lecture 204-What is the Path gives one a feel for Pathwork as a toolkit for lifelong spiritual and psychological development in the Integral Christianity framework.](#)

So perhaps ***my reasons*** for including this reference to ***Integral Christianity*** on my website are these four: 1) My long and deep relationship with Christianity – being a “Christian,” 2) My lifelong search for a meaningful relationship with God and, if it is truthful, Jesus Christ, 3) How I experience Pathwork teachings, my foundational resource for the past twenty years, as perhaps a unique and extensive tool for both the psychological and spiritual development of my relationship with God, Christ, self, and others, and 4) Recognizing that ***Pathwork can perhaps be a tool for others pursuing Integral Christian development*** – supporting the themes of: ***Wake Up, Grow Up, Clean Up*** (*Pathwork's specialty*), and ***Show Up***,

I am also drawn to another resource for Integral Christianity: ***Roland Michael Stanich's*** new book, [Integral Christianity – The way of Embodied Love](#) ©2021. I find his nearly [2-hour interview](#) quite relevant to my journey.

In all of this I come to these current possibilities: ***Jesus Christ was NOT a Christian. Jesus Christ was/is Immanuel (Mt 1:23), that is, “God With Us.”*** And in this frame His ***Great Commission could perhaps be, “Go and do thou likewise – Wake Up, Grow Up, Clean Up, Show Up!” – or BE and “Show Up” as who we truly are – be “God with” everyone we encounter in the Grand Mystery of our “fully human/fully divine essence.”***

I experience Pathwork as a helpful tool for this commission.

I look forward to pursuing these and other recent sources emerging from the Integral Christianity community.

Notes:

1. ***Metaphysical Musings on Pathwork*** – including integration with Ian McGilchrist’s Right Brain/Left Brain from ***The Master and His Emissary***
2. Wilber speaks of ***involution*** and ***evolution***. I find it interesting that in ***Pathwork Lecture 20 God: The Creation*** (Given January 1, 1958) in related myths describing creation and coming of evil, the lecture speaks of ***evolution and devolution***. (¶23-24; pages 28-31) – in the same sense as Wilber’s evolution and involution.
3. Over 200 of the Pathwork Lectures are available in a ***Devotional Format*** that I find helpful for accessing and digesting this material at a heart level, and all 258 Lectures are available in ***Audio Format*** comprising about 200 hours of listening. (These two forms of the Pathwork Lectures are also ***available in complete sets via Dropbox***)
4. As related to stage development in Integral Christianity, ***Pathwork Lecture 105-Humanity’s Relationship to God in Various Stages of Development*** (Given June 8, 1962) is relevant. In this lecture ***prayer*** is described as experienced in each stage – very comparable to prayer in stages as described in Integral Christianity.
5. ***Pathwork Lecture 258: Personal Contact with Jesus Christ – Positive Aggression – The Real Meaning of Salvation***, the last lecture given (January 10, 1979) may represent a transition Lecture as I consider additional work with those involved in Integral Christianity – another possible “transcend and include” experience for me. I am exploring this with those in the ***Integral Christian Network-WeSpace***.
6. ***WeSpace Guidelines*** are comparable in intent to multi-day workshops and multi-year group transformation programs used in Pathwork.
7. Explore other background related to my journey in Pathwork on ***my website***.