

# Integral Christian

INTEGRAL CHRISTIAN

INTEGRAL CHRISTIANITY

ESSENTIAL  
CHRISTIANITY

A 2ND TIER  
CHRISTIANITY

## A 2nd Tier Christianity

### Contributions from Every Stage

Having considered how Christians evolve through the 1st tier stages, and what it might mean to be transformed in the image of Christ at each of these stages, we arrive now at 2nd tier. What might a 2nd tier Christianity look like?

Each 1st tier stage of development contributes something to our evolutionary development. At 2nd tier we have the ability to activate healthy 1st tier resources in a deliberate way when they are needed, without being controlled by any of them. This means that each 1st tier stage can bring valuable resources to the table to incorporate into a 2nd tier Christianity. Here are some of the possibilities:

#### From the Magenta, Magic Stage:

- A sense of community, family, and belonging.
- A sense of the sacredness of the natural world as an expression of the Divine.
- Seasonal and nature community celebrations.
- Sacred spaces for contemplation.
- Shared rituals understood as a symbolic expression of deeper truths.

#### From the Red, Power Gods Stage:

- Individual empowerment and authenticity. The freedom, strength, and courage to speak our own truth.
- The courage to face and overcome obstacles and fears.
- Openness to new spiritual adventures.
- Being willing to explore new spiritual territory and understanding, even if it means leaving or remaking the tradition we grew up in.

#### From the Amber, Mythic Stage:

- A strong moral grounding for our lives. In today's modern world most adults are at least at orange (or green or even teal) in the cognitive line of development, but some may still be at red in the moral line. In this respect, the amber moral aspects of Christianity can serve an important function in the lives of its individual members and in the larger society. Amber Christianity can help people take an important first step toward self-transcendence, which is to submit one's individual, egoic self and one's life to something greater than the individual self. This submission is often prompted and/or accompanied by subtle state experiences of God in 2nd person, which is a valuable first step in our evolution on the horizontal scale of the [Wilber Combs Lattice](#).
- The desire and commitment to become a better person, and the experience of

"dying" to our old self and being "born again" many times, into increasingly higher states of consciousness and stages of development, until we are ultimately "born again" as our True Self.

- A commitment to principles of honesty and integrity, and the discipline and responsibility to keep our commitments. (The integrity and discipline developed in Amber can help us handle Orange's greater behavioral freedom in mature and responsible ways.)
- Openness to new sources of truth and wisdom.
- The creation of new sacred texts, born of today's spiritual understanding and experiences.
- Dedication to a cause greater than ourselves, and the willingness to make conscious sacrifices for it.
- A sense of meaning and purpose in life.
- Finding joy in service to others.
- Amber Spiritual Experiences:

At the amber stage of development many Christians have experiences of God's Spirit, love, and forgiveness. We feel the affects of Christ's atonement in our lives. We accept Christ's teachings and begin the process of being born again, as a new creature in Christ. And this makes us better people.

Sometimes in the move from amber to orange, these experiences are dismissed. At orange, we may reinterpret them as mere "emotional" experiences, and conclude that a temporary emotional experience is not a good compass for discerning ultimate truth. At green, we may consider these "emotional" experiences to be culturally learned responses.

But at 2nd tier, and in the context of the integral model, these foundational amber experiences can be reclaimed, and re-interpreted through the integral lens.

For example: If the four quadrants, and the "I, we, and it" perspectives inherent in the quadrants are inherent aspects of reality on the manifest or relative side of the street, and if the Witness or I Amness or Christ Consciousness is the inherent nature of reality on the unmanifest or Absolute side of the street, then human experiences of God or Spirit in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person are experiences of actual realities.

If this is the case, then our amber experiences of God, and of Christ's atonement, may be authentic experiences of spiritual realities. The experiences may be real, even if the amber interpretation of those experiences turn out not to hold up over time.

For example, many Christians have the experience of feeling God's love and forgiveness when they repent of their sins and seek forgiveness. The experience is real. But the transcendent reality behind that experience may not be a bearded, white-haired God (who cannot tolerate any unclean thing in his presence) forgiving us, because Jesus suffered in our place and thus satisfied this God's demand for justice. Rather, the transcendent reality behind this experience of love and acceptance may be an encounter with the 2nd person aspect of God or Spirit, out of which everything in existence arises, including each one of us and our many sins. This is an experience common to all of the world's spiritual traditions, though it may be interpreted differently in each tradition.

Many Christians also have experiences of personal transformation that enable us to better live Christ's teachings, to become more Christlike in our

daily lives. Our hearts may be softened, so that we are more patient, and feel more love toward others. We may become less selfish and more giving. At amber, we may understand this transformational force to be God's Spirit helping us to better live the commandments. But the reality behind this experience may be what happens, in any tradition, when we surrender our individual desires and interests to a higher purpose or cause, and move up one or more stages on the vertical axis of the [Wilber Combs Lattice](#). We become what we surrender to. So when we surrender ourselves and our lives to Christ as we understand him, the result is that we become more Christlike.

In the integral model, experiences of God are a subtle state phenomenon. God is an aspect of our own transcendent nature that appears as other in gross and subtle state experiences. So the ideal of Christ that we surrender to at amber, and thus become more like, may be what our own deepest I Amness or Christ Consciousness looks like when it is projected outward, onto the historical person of the awakened Master, Jesus.

Thus a 2nd tier integral view can allow us to reclaim our deepest and most transformational experiences in amber Christianity, experiences that made us genuinely better people. At 2nd tier, we are able understand those experiences in a wider context, and build on them.

### **From the Orange: The Rational, Scientific Stage**

- A commitment to discovering spiritual truth through our own direct experiences.
- A willingness to put new ideas to the test, in order to discover new truths and new spiritual practices.
- The desire to be involved in bringing about progress, and creating new and innovative spiritual pathways and practices that are the most effective available at the present time.
- Openness to discussion and willingness to revise principles as new evidence comes to light.
- A belief in our ability to awaken spiritually, and acceptance of personal spiritual responsibility for oneself.
- A sense of personal empowerment, and the conviction that each one of us can have a positive impact in the world.
- A commitment to make life in the manifest world the best it can be for all people.

### **From the Green, Pluralistic Stage:**

- Openness to diversity, and the willingness to explore spiritual understandings and practices from other traditions, and to use them to enhance our own spiritual development and community.
- Openness to each person's individual ideas and spiritual experiences, and the understanding that all of our ideas and interpretations are partial.
- Tolerance for differences and alternative lifestyles and behaviors, so long as they do not harm others.
- A commitment to inclusion and equality on all fronts: gender, racial, socioeconomic, etc., and to the global well-being of all people.
- A commitment to the well-being of the natural environment and all sentient beings, and to live in harmony with Nature.
- A commitment to physical, emotional, and psychological balance and well-being.

- A commitment to peace, both within and in the world.
- An exploration of higher states of consciousness.

### From the Teal, Integral Stage:

To all of the above gifts, we can add the gifts that teal can contribute to a 2nd tier Christianity.

- An acceptance of all of the previous stages of Christianity – magic, mythic, rational, and pluralistic – without contending with any of them.
- A vision of how all of the previous versions of Christianity fit together in an evolutionary pattern, and a commitment to work for the healthy coexistence of all of these versions of Christianity.
- Offering pathways into 2nd tier for those who are ready, without seeing individuals at any of the previous stages as being "wrong."
- The ability to integrate conflicting truths, and to tolerate and even enjoy paradoxes and uncertainties.
- An understanding that different solutions work at different stages of development, and that what may be workable or useful at one stage of Christianity may not be useful at another stage.

### **Being Transformed in the Image of Christ**

Earlier we defined the heart of Christianity that runs through all of the stages of development as "being transformed in the image of Christ." At teal or 2nd tier this experience again takes on new meaning. At teal Jesus becomes an enlightened master who realized his own Christ nature, and being transformed in the image of Christ means making this same realization – realizing our own essential identity as Christ Consciousness, or I Am-ness, or the Witness.

[Click here](#) to hear Ken Wilber talking about different understandings of Jesus at different stages of development. To purchase the CD sets that are the source of the clips on this website (*Kosmic Consciousness* and *The One Two Three of God*) [click here](#).



To purchase the book this picture is from (*The Integral Vision*), [click here](#).

## Christian Mysticism

In the previous audio clip above, Ken said that there have been Christian mystics who have gone all the way up the spectrum into "Godhead." One of these was the German Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart. We can look at Meister Eckhart's teachings through the lens of the [states of consciousness](#) we learned about earlier. Eckhart's descriptions of his experiences of God and his own True Self seem to fall within the [causal or witnessing](#) state of consciousness.

### Experiences in the Causal State of Consciousness: Home of Formless Mysticism

- One's sense of self merges with the unmanifest source or ground of all of the lesser levels of consciousness – the Ground of All Being.

From Eckhart\*:

*"Being is God...God and being are the same. ...There is nothing prior to being...in being, mere being, lies all that is."*

- The experience of knowing yourself as the Silent Witness that is prior to any manifestation, and exists outside the stream of time. It was never born, will never die, and never enters the temporal stream. An utter release from the material world. Nirvana. The liberation and freedom of no longer being bound to or caught in the turmoil of any of the objects witnessed, including the egoic self.

From Eckhart:

*"As is written in the Book of Wisdom, 'Prior to*

*creatures, in the eternal now, I have played before the Father in an eternal stillness."*

*"...I am my own first cause, both of my eternal being and of my temporal being. To this end I was born, and by virtue of my birth being eternal, I shall never die. It is of the nature of this eternal birth that I have been eternally, that I am now, and shall be forever. What I am as a temporal creature is to die and come to nothingness, for it came with time and so with time will pass away. In my eternal birth, however, everything was begotten. I was my own first cause as well as the first cause of everything else."*

*"...all time is contained in the present Now-moment. ...It is the real Now-moment which...is eternity's day, on which the Father begets his only begotten Son and the soul is reborn in God. ...To talk about the world as being made by God tomorrow, yesterday, would be talking nonsense. God makes the world and all things in this present now. ...The soul who is in this present now, in her the Father bears his one-begotten Son, and in that same birth the soul is born back into God. It is one birth; as fast as she is reborn into God, the Father is begetting his only Son in her. ...God the Father and the Son have nothing to do with time."*

- All God-archetypes experienced in the subtle realm condense and dissolve into one final-God. In the very same step, one's own Self is here shown to be that final-God, and consciousness itself thus transforms upwards into a higher-order identity with that Divine Radiance. (For example, Christ's claim that "I and the Father are one.")
- The soul no longer contemplates Divinity, it become Divinity.

From Eckhart:

*"In this breakthrough I find that God and I are both the same. Then I am what I was. I neither wax nor wane, for I am the motionless cause that is moving in all things."*

*"The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me; my eye and God's eye are one eye, one vision, one knowing, one love."*

*"God must be very I, I very God, so consummately one that this he and this I are one "is." ...God's is-ness is my is-ness, and neither more nor less."*

*"What then shall I do? Thou shalt lose thy thy-ness and dissolve in his his-ness; thy thine shall be his mine, so utterly one mine that thou in him shall know eternalwise his is-ness, free from becoming; his nameless nothingness."*

*"In eternity, the Father begets the Son in his own likeness. ...Furthermore, I say that God has begotten him in my soul. ...The Father ceaselessly begets his Son and, what is more, he begets me, not only as his son, but as himself, and himself as myself, begetting me in his own nature, his own being. At that inmost source, I spring from the Holy Spirit and there is one life, one being, one action. All God's works are one and therefore he begets me as he does his*

*Son and without distinction."*

- Formless mysticism. Experiencing yourself as an opening, a clearing, an emptiness or vast spaciousness and freedom in which all objects (the material world, individual beings, thoughts, feelings, etc.) come and go.
- The experience of being pure Consciousness without an object – pure Emptiness. This does not involve any particular experience, but rather the transcendence of the experienter itself.

From Eckhart:

*"There is a heavenly door for the soul into the divine nature – where somethings are reduced to nothing."*

*"Kill thy activities and still thy faculties if thou wouldst realize this birth in thee."*

*"The soul must step beyond or jump past creatures if it is to know God. ...However small it may be, if anything adheres to the soul, you cannot see God."*

Notice how similar this sounds to what we learned about [Witnessing Awareness](#): that we awaken to our True Self as the Witness or I Amness when we cease identifying with any object – with any "thing" – as our self, and discover our True Self to be the Witness of all of things. In other words, when all of our self objects have been reduced to nothing, or no-thing, and instead of being any object or thing, we experience our "self" as the pure Awareness that sees all things.

In subtle state spiritual experiences, we experience our "self" as a soul. But to reach the causal state, we must dis-identify with even this subtle soul object. So Eckhart says, "If anything adheres to the soul, you cannot see God."

As Christians we are often uncomfortable with the notion that at the deepest level of our being, there is no individuality, but only the one Witnessing awareness that looks out through all eyes. We don't like the idea of any ultimate reality that would mean losing our individuality.

But what if this is exactly what Jesus was talking about when he said,

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." *Matthew 10:39.*

In other words...

**"For whosoever will save his life [our life as an individual egoic self] shall lose it:** [when we die, this individual egoic self is gone, and if that is all we have know ourselves to be, then at bodily death we will have lost our "self"] **but whosoever will lose his life [those who lose their identity with the individual, egoic self] for my [Christ Consciousness] sake, the same shall save it** [they will awaken to the eternal life that they already are, as Christ Consciousness, which never dies]." *Luke 9:24.*

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from the [Integral Spiritual Center](#) of Father Thomas Keating talking about this scripture.

Perhaps this is also what Paul is referring to when he says:

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." *Galatians 2:20.*

We know that Paul cannot be speaking literally in this verse, because he was still alive



when he wrote it. He had not been literally crucified. But what if he is speaking of crucifixion symbolically, not literally? What if he is saying:

**"I have been crucified;** [I have died to my separate ego self-sense] **in Christ** [in the realization of Christ Consciousness] **and it is no longer I who live,** [I no longer experience myself as the individual "I" that I used to] **but Christ lives in me** [I now experience myself as a temporary vessel through which Christ Consciousness is manifest in the world]."

Let's return now to the words of Meister Eckhart:

*"Back in the Womb from which I came, I had no God and merely was, myself. I did not will or desire anything, for I was pure being, a knower of myself by divine truth. ...I existed untrammelled by God or anything else. But when I...received my created being then I had a God."*

Earlier we learned that "Gods" are a subtle state phenomenon, and that when all Gods collapse into one final God and the soul becomes Divinity, then we are in the causal formless emptiness that is prior even to God. So in the quote above Eckhart says, "Back in the Womb from which I came, I had no God and merely was, myself."

In this next quote, Eckhart seems to be making the distinction between the subtle realm of Gods and the causal emptiness that is before even God, when he differentiates between what he calls God and Godhead.

*"God and Godhead are as different as heaven is from earth...Everything in the Godhead is one, and of that there is nothing to be said. God works. The Godhead does no work, there is nothing to do; in it is no activity...God and Godhead are as different as active and inactive...When I go back into the ground, into the depths, into the well-spring of the Godhead, no one will ask me whence I came or whither I went...[this is] where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have not yet made their distinctions."*

Meister Eckhart also said that the only way we would understand what he was saying would be if we experienced it for ourselves:

*"If anyone does not understand this discourse, let him not worry about that, for if he does not find this truth in himself he cannot understand what I have said, for it is a discovered truth which comes immediately from the heart of God."*

This seems to be the same thing Paul says:

"...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. "...For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ." *1 Corinthians 2:14, 16*

This understanding of Christ, and of our own true nature at Christ Consciousness, is reflected in Gnostic Christian scriptures:

*"Jesus said: Whoever discovers the meaning of these words will not taste death." The Gospel of Thomas, V. 1.* In other words, if we discover our True Self, that True Self will never taste death, because it never enters the stream of time.

*"Jesus said: If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will kill you." The Gospel of Thomas, V. 70.* In other words, if we bring forth the Christ Consciousness that is within us, that will save us from death, because Christ Consciousness never dies. If we do not bring forth the Christ Consciousness that is within us, then what we know our "self" to be, the small egoic self, will die.



*"If you do not know yourselves, then you exist in poverty, and you are that poverty." [The Gospel of Thomas](#), V. 3.*

## The Value of Institutional Christianity

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from the [Integral Spiritual Center](#) of Father Thomas Keating and Brother David Steindl-Rast talking about the value of the institutional Church.

[Click here](#) to hear an audio clip from the [Integral Spiritual Center](#) of Father Thomas Keating and Brother David Steindl-Rast talking about spiritual leadership and the institutional Church.

One of the most important points made in this clip is that a religious tradition is fulfilled when its practitioners reach a level of spirit that is common to all of the world's great religious traditions (Self-Realization or at-one-ness with God). Can this level of development happen inside Christian denominations?

[Click here](#) for an summary of one version of Gnostic Christianity. For a full presentation of this version of Gnostic Christianity, see [Jesus and the Lost Goddess](#), by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy.

---

\* Meister Eckhart quotes are from:

*Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, trans. Raymond B. Blakney, New York: Harper and Row, 1941, ISBN 0-06-130008-X.

C. de B. Evans, *Meister Eckhart* by Franz Pfeiffer, 2 volumes, London: Watkins, 1924 and 1931.

---

[Click here](#) to return to the home page.



Domain Registration