Evolution: A New Understanding of Christian Doctrine

WASHINGTON, D.C.—According to moral theologian Jack Mahoney, evolution has provided a new understanding of reality—with revolutionary consequences for Christianity. His new book, *Christianity in Evolution*, is a bold and pioneering exploration of the revolutionary impact of evolution on traditional Christian beliefs. George V. Coyne, SJ, president of the Vatican Observatory Foundation, applauds the book as “a very important work in the challenges it places to the traditional interpretation of Church dogmas, especially those to do with original sin, the image of God, and God’s purpose in Creation and in the Incarnation. It provides a good historical review of various dogmas before reinterpreting each dogma in the light of scientific evolution. I do not know of any other work that does this so thoroughly.”

*Christianity in Evolution* explores how by using an evolutionary perspective, one should understand the incarnation as God entering the evolving human species to help it imitate the trinitarian altruism, in whose image humans were created, and to counter its tendency to self-absorption. Furthermore, Mahoney contends that Jesus did not “die for our sins” to satisfy God, as traditional Christian theology has held since the days of the apostle Paul. Rather, the life and death and altruism of Jesus represent evolutionary progress in ethical human behavior, a model for morality that is fully consistent with a scientific worldview.

Previously such doctrines as original sin, the fall, sacrifice, and atonement stemmed from viewing death as the penalty for sin. The death of Jesus on the cross is now seen as saving humanity, not from sin, but from individual extinction and meaninglessness. Death is now seen as a normal process that affects all living things, and the religious doctrines connected with explaining it in humans are no longer required or justified. In this insightful and controversial book, Mahoney reveals similar evolutionary implications for the Church, the Eucharist, priesthood, and moral behavior; and offers a truly revolutionary synthesis of science and religion.

Jack Mahoney is emeritus professor of moral and social theology in the University of London and a former principal of Heythrop College, University of London. He is the author of several books, including *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*.

PUBLICATION DATE: October 2011, 192 pages
ISBN 978-1-58901-769-6, paperback $26.95 / £18.75

CONTACT: Jacqueline Beilhart, Publicist, (202) 687-9298, jb594@georgetown.edu

# # #