

# Higher, Wider, Deeper “An Evolving ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’” guided by Ken Wilber’s Integral Map

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## Personal Journey

From my father I learned a love of climbing mountains. It is a joyous experience to make your way to the top of a peak and to see the view expanding as higher altitudes are reached.

An associated enjoyment was studying maps to get a perspective on the landscape to be explored, analysing contour lines, comparing possible routes to be taken and looking for landmarks to assist in finding the way. This ensured that there was a sense of being part of a larger whole, even while exploring one part of the topography.

## Maps for the Journey

In reviewing my own life journey, I am aware of how much benefit I find in having good ‘maps’ as a guide. I have found it helpful in my studies and my work to use conceptual ‘maps’ to make sense of the vast range of ideas and insights available, and to organise my own thinking on a topic.

One such map that has been particularly helpful has been the AQAL or Integral Model developed by American philosopher, Ken Wilber. For this presentation, I am describing Wilber as a “Cartographer of Consciousness,” rather like the mapmakers who took the charts of the early voyagers and linked their partial analyses into a larger picture. The component parts had an important contribution to make, and the larger map showed how the parts fitted together.

## Some Personal Context

To appreciate why Wilber’s work has been so attractive to me personally when others find his writings difficult to accept or to get excited about, it may be helpful to provide more personal details to set the context.

As I look back over my life, I can trace a process of development that has enabled me to stand comfortably within the context of progressive religion or progressive Christianity. From early experiences with evangelical (but not fundamentalist) Methodism, I developed an activist view of Christianity linked to beliefs about a loving God and a commitment to community service. This culminated in an experience of calling to ministry at the age of 20, and that sense of call has continued throughout my life, with its key metaphor of the “ministry of reconciliation” (II Corinthians 5:19).

At that time, I was working as a Primary School Teacher and studying Physical Education, and both of those experiences have also continued to influence my sense of personal identity, including my love of teaching and interest in the integration of body, mind and spirit to achieve wholeness/ holiness.

My theological education at King’s College and the University of Queensland provided an introduction to modern perspectives on biblical and theological studies, with Ian Grimmett having recently returned from studying with Paul Tillich at Union Theological Seminary in New York. This was a liberating process for me, although at the time the College was regarded by some in the Church as a place that destroyed the faith of students that had offered for ministry.

Looking back, I can see at work there the tensions between pre-modern and modern developmental levels. While I became active in the Student Christian Movement, serving for two years as President on the UQ campus, and revelling in

the open discussions we enjoyed, others found refuge in the faith certainties of the Evangelical Union.

For some, SCM provided the freedom to move beyond their previous experience of Christianity but at that time progressive versions of Christianity weren’t so available for them to move into. Like many others, they turned their back on their faith, rather than transcending their previous beliefs and incorporating them into a more comprehensive perspective.

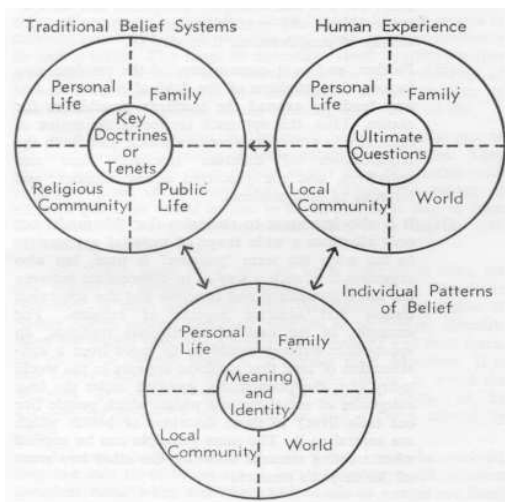
Being actively involved in creative aspects of ministry and years of ongoing study, I had the opportunity to build on previous beliefs and to be open to new understandings. Of particular importance were four years at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Union Theological Seminary in New York, where my doctoral studies were in Curriculum Theory and the interface between religion and education. In that context, I became aware of the challenging yet liberating perspectives of postmodernism, through texts such as *The Social Construction of Reality* by Berger and Luckmann.

Following that rich experience, I had the opportunity to apply these insights as Leader of a Religious Education Curriculum Project for the Queensland Department of Education, from 1975 to 1985. As the four of team members were highly qualified, it was natural that we would struggle to gain a perspective on religious education with a view to developing “curriculum materials that could be used by all denominations” as well as providing in-service programs for clergy and laypersons from those denominations.

## Religious Education Curriculum Project “Map”

A major achievement of that group was to develop a model that has continuing relevance of dealing with religious beliefs and traditions in educational settings.

To integrate our various understandings, we created a three-circle model, (the RECP Model) to cover **Human Experience, Traditional Belief Systems** and **Individual Patterns of Belief**. Each circle was then divided into an **outer section** to refer to *observable phenomena* and *life contexts* in which they might be found, and an **inner core** that related to *beliefs, questions, attitudes and values* associated with the external experiences and actions.



Mavor, et al, *Religious Education: Its Nature and Aims*, 1977

Rather than providing specific curriculum content for religious education, the model provided a basis for selecting content and for planning lessons. These were designed to encourage students to reflect on their own **patterns of belief** and to enrich these by giving recognition to the many **experiences** that lead human beings to raise **ultimate questions** about the nature and purpose of life; to respond with **beliefs** that seek to provide answers to those questions; and to codify those beliefs into **doctrines and religious practices**.

This approach left it to the denominations to decide whether to focus on their particular beliefs and practices or to make available to the students a wider range of understandings.

My interest in Ken Wilber's writings over the past 20 years has been in the recognition that he has provided a more comprehensive map within which the earlier model can be placed.



Ken Wilber & Ian Mavor, 2007

### Ken Wilber – Cartographer of Consciousness

From his first book on *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (1977), through to his current writings, Wilber has charted the relationships between Eastern and Western ideas and practices, and between the insights of the scientific and the spiritual traditions. He has a passionate commitment to an integral perspective as a way of overcoming the divisions that afflict the academic sphere and the wider community.

In developing this research, he is the most widely translated academic writer in America, with all his books still in print and 25 books translated into some 30 foreign languages. As the first philosopher-psychologist to have his Collected Works published while still alive, he is an internationally acknowledged leader and the pre-eminent scholar of the Integral stage of human development, which continues to gather momentum around the world.

Wilber is a prolific writer and his ideas cover such a wide range that each re-reading of any book seems to offer another flood of insights. For twenty years I have been reading his books with great interest. These have included *Up from Eden* (1981), *No Boundary* (1979, 2001), *Eye to Eye* (1990), *Grace and Grit* (1991), *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* (1995), *A Brief History of Everything* (1996), *The Eye of the Spirit* (1997), *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* (1998), *One Taste* (1999), *Integral Psychology* (2000), *A Theory of Everything* (2000), *Boomeritis* (2002), *Integral Spirituality* (2006), *The Integral Vision* (2007) and *Integral Life Practice* (2008).

Wilber describes his integral approach as being “All Quadrant/All Level” (AQAL), which over recent years has expanded to include: all **quadrants**, all **levels** (of development), all **lines** (of development), all **states** (of consciousness) and all **types** (as in typologies). He is the founder of Integral Institute, Inc., the co-founder of Integral Life, Inc., and the Senior Fellow of Integral Life Spiritual Center. These websites

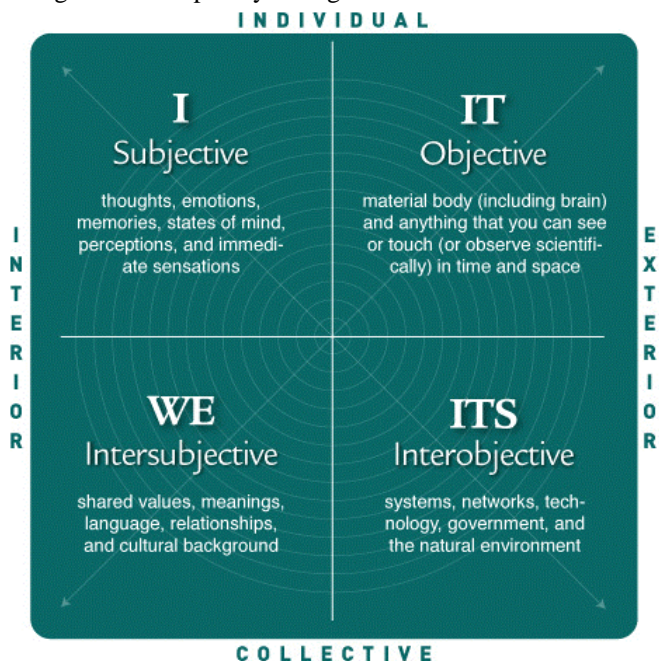
provide a wealth of information, including drafts of further documents that Wilber is developing: [www.kenwilber.com](http://www.kenwilber.com), [www.wilber.shambhala.com](http://www.wilber.shambhala.com), [www.integralinstitute.org](http://www.integralinstitute.org), [www.integralspiritualcenter.com](http://www.integralspiritualcenter.com).

Just as Wilber has generously put many of his writings onto the Internet in draft form, extensive use is made of Wilber's writings in this presentation, without attempting to provide detailed references for them all. The latter three of the books listed above have been the major sources of these notes.

### An All Quadrant Approach

In his writings since publication of *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* in 1995, Wilber has been developing the AQAL model that summarises diverse perceptions of reality and understandings of the nature of knowledge. He speaks of his approach as ‘integral’ in that it draws together, in a ‘both-and’ way, approaches to knowledge, research and action that are often regarded as opposites. He also emphasises, however, that the model is a “map” and not the “territory”.

The AQAL model transcends the conflicts between different systems of thought by acknowledging the mapping of reality that has been the dominant paradigm of **modernism**; and the hermeneutic task of becoming critically aware of the role of the ‘map-makers,’ as emphasised in the **postmodern** agenda. In his semi-humorous style, he notes that no one is clever enough to be completely wrong..



AQAL recognises that while ‘surfaces can be seen, depth must be interpreted.’ His analysis identifies four quadrants, each of which has a particular insight to offer. These are the **external** and **internal** perspectives on knowledge; and the **individual** and the **communal** dimensions.

Wilber has identified significant ways in which the failure to take adequate account of both the **internal** and **external** perspectives has had unhelpful consequences for the development of human knowledge. Examples of the tensions he explores include those between religion and science, between liberals and conservatives, and between the pre-modern, modern and postmodern perspectives.

### The Left and Right Quadrants

The **Left Hand Quadrants** refer to **internal** dimensions of what is being studied: thoughts, feelings, cultural meanings

and worldviews. Others know the “I” and “We” dimensions through dialogue, interaction and reporting on the experience.

In the **Left Hand Quadrants**, what is being studied does not have simple location, e.g. while a brain may be analysed and dissected, study of a mind, consciousness or a worldview requires interaction. In that case, the accuracy of information depends on the truthfulness/ self-knowledge of the subject and the ability of the observer to achieve understanding and insight into the intersubjective meaning of a community. In this, the point of view of the **interpreter** is significant.

The **Right Hand Quadrants** refer to **external** aspects of experience as an objective observer might describe them, and the accuracy of observations is checked by comparison with the results of other observers or researchers.

This process is non-interactive, with each behaviour being observed and each object of study, living or non-living, individual or collective, being treated as an “It” (or “Its”), and as having specific location, e.g. in neural patterns of a brain or in social systems of a community.

In simple terms, he points out that most languages have terms equivalent to the pronouns “I”, “We”, “It” and “Its,” which can be used to identify these four perspectives. Together they provide the four quadrants:

- a. The **Upper Right** (UR) studies the individual person or thing from an external perspective, i.e. as an “**It**”
- b. The **Upper Left** (UL) studies the internal perspective of the person or thing (as far as that can be accessed), i.e. as an individual or “**I**”
- c. The **Lower Left** (LL) studies the internal perspective of a group or community of people or things, i.e. as “**We**”
- d. The **Lower Right** (LR) studies groups of persons or things from an external perspective, i.e. as communal “**Its**”

Since being introduced to Wilber by another explorer in matters of faith, Rev. Dr Robert Fulcher, I have had several roles that challenged me to apply his integral perspectives. These included being Principal Education Officer (Health and Personal Development) in Education Queensland, Executive Director of Lifeline Gold Coast and now Executive Director Hopewell Hospice Services and Paradise Kids, Gold Coast.

The four-quadrant model has provided a valuable approach for identifying factors to be considered when seeking holistic perspectives on topics such as suicide prevention, health and illness, palliative care, death and dying, homelessness, and grief and bereavement. A comprehensive analysis of each involves data relating to both individuals and communities, as well as data drawn from internal and external perspectives.

### The Quadrants and Healthcare

One example is approaches to healthcare, in which I have a personal involvement and which is an ongoing matter of debate in society generally. The World Health Organisation has a broad definition of “health,” i.e. “Health is not only the absence of infirmity and disease but also a state of physical, mental and social well-being.” The actual implementation of healthcare, however, could benefit from an AQAL analysis.

Orthodox or conventional medicine is a classic **Upper-Right** quadrant approach. It deals almost entirely with the **physical organism** using physical interventions: physical surgery, drugs, medication and behavioural modification. It believes essentially in the **physical causes** of physical illness, and therefore prescribes only physical interventions.

But the integral model claims that every physical event (**UR**) has at least four dimensions (the quadrants), and thus even

physical illness must be looked at from **all four quadrants**. While important, the Upper-Right is not the whole story.

Recent interest in alternative care, including such disciplines as psychoneuroimmunology, has made it clear that the person’s **interior states** (their emotions, psychological attitude, imagery and intentions) play a crucial role in both cause and cure of even physical illness. In other words, the **Upper-Left** quadrant is an ingredient in comprehensive medical care.

But individual consciousness does not exist in a vacuum; it is embedded in **shared cultural values**, beliefs and world-views. How a culture (**Lower Left**) views a particular illness - with care and compassion or derision and scorn - can have a profound impact on how an individual copes with that illness (**Upper Left**), which can affect the course of the physical illness itself (**Upper Right**). In fact, many illnesses cannot be defined without reference to a shared cultural background.

The **Lower-Left** quadrant includes all of the enormous number of **intersubjective factors** that are crucial in any human interaction - it includes the shared communication between doctor and patient; the attitudes of family and friends and how they are conveyed to the patient; the cultural acceptance (or derogation) of the particular illness (e.g. mental illnesses, AIDS - whether treated as a health problem or a moral problem) and the values of the culture that the illness itself threatens. All of those factors are to some degree causative in any physical illness and cure.

Of course, in practice, this quadrant needs to be limited to those factors that can be effectively engaged - perhaps doctor and patient communication skills, family and friends support groups, and a general understanding of cultural judgments and their effects on illness. Some of the more relevant factors from the **Lower-Left** quadrant are thus absolutely crucial in any comprehensive medical care.

The **Lower-Right** quadrant concerns all those **material, economic and social factors** that are almost never counted as part of the disease entity, but in fact - like every other quadrant - are causative in both disease and cure. A social system that cannot deliver food will kill you (as famine-racked countries demonstrate). But even in developed countries, if you have a lethal but treatable disease and your **insurance plan** is the only source of funding you have, and your plan does not cover your disease, then you will die. The cause of your death: poverty. We usually don’t think like this, because we say, ‘The virus killed him.’ The virus is part of the cause; the other three quadrants are as much a cause.

In the real world, where **every entity has all four quadrants**, a virus in the **UR** quadrant might be the focal issue, but without a social system (**LR**) that can deliver treatment, you will die. That is not a separate issue, as all holons have four quadrants. The **Lower-Right** quadrant includes factors such as economics, insurance, social delivery systems, and even things as simple as how a hospital room is physically laid out (does it allow ease of movement, access to visitors, etc.) - not to mention items like environmental toxins.

An effective and **comprehensive medical plan would be all-quadrant**, not to mention all-level (the idea is simply that each quadrant or dimension - I, we and it - has physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels or waves - and a truly integral treatment would take all of these realities into account). Not only is this type of integral treatment more effective, it is for that reason more cost-efficient.

Another example of the interplay of these perspectives can be seen in the impact of the work of **Elisabeth Kübler-Ross**.

Through her research, she challenged the narrow objectivity (UR) of her medical colleagues and helped change community attitudes (LL) about death and dying. She did this by taking time to ask dying people about their experience (UL) and regarding those experiences as data to be taken into account, along with objective tests, in making treatment decisions. In the process, she also helped change community perspectives about the dying process, as well as systems of health care (LR), such as funding for research and treatment, and encouraging development of hospices in the USA.



Figure 12. Four Quadrants of Integral Medicine.

## Developmental Levels

To continue the metaphor of mountain climbing, as one goes higher and gains altitude, it is possible to have a wider view and a broader understanding of the terrain. Incorporated in the AQAL model are developmental concepts that identify a capacity for growth and evolution in each quadrant.

The biological functioning of each individual, as well as the development of brain functioning from childhood to adulthood, is set in a long-term evolutionary context (UR).

Within the life span, there are identifiable stages of individual development and changes in social-emotional-cognitive functioning (UL), including development of self-awareness.

In any society, there is an evolution of cultural perspectives (LL) as these interact with developments in the other quadrants, e.g. the changes in gender identity and relationships (LL) linked to changes in socio-economic structures in industrialised societies (LR).

There is an evolution of social systems (LR) including changes in means of production, forms of government, medical services, the economy, access to hygiene and nutrition, and the interplay of global and local factors.

In Wilber's terms, each level of development can 'transcend and include' what went before. That is, each wave goes beyond (or transcends) its predecessor, and yet it includes it in its own makeup. He uses the term "altitude" to refer to these levels and a colour code from the spectrum of the rainbow.

For example, a cell transcends but includes molecules, which transcend but include atoms. To say that a molecule goes beyond an atom is not to say that molecules hate atoms, but they embrace them in their own makeup; they include them, they don't marginalise them. Just so, each wave of existence is a fundamental ingredient of all subsequent waves, and thus each is to be cherished and embraced.

Moreover, each wave can itself be activated or reactivated as life circumstances warrant. In emergency situations, we can activate power drives; in response to chaos, we might need to activate a sense of order; in looking for a new job, we might

need achievement drives; in marriage and with friends, close personal bonding. All of these levels have something important to contribute.

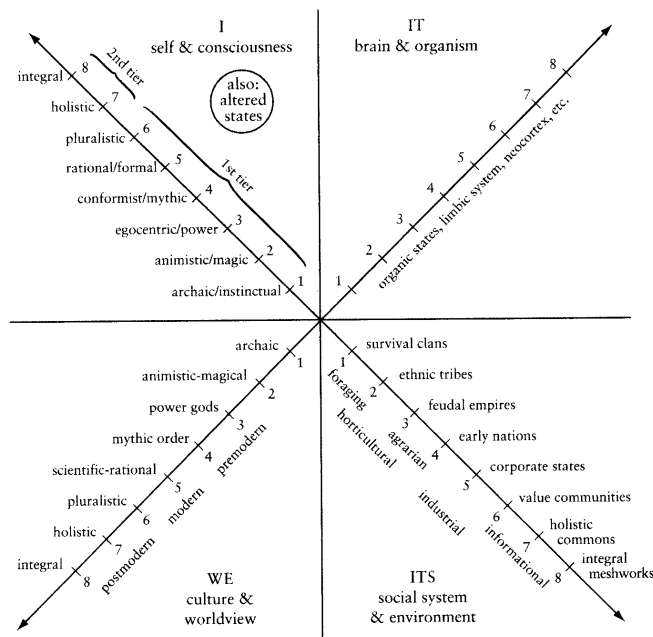


Figure 5. Quadrants Focused on Humans.

The problem is that some levels of development, while necessary, tend to act as if they are the right way to be, and to react against the other levels. **Each tends to think that its worldview is the correct or best perspective.** As people move from egocentric, to ethnocentric to world-centric, however, they become more able to appreciate the value of a range of beliefs and worldviews.

Wilber acknowledges that some forms of postmodernism have an ideological resistance to the concept of developmental stages, although their very resistance is an example of a stage of development. A higher-level consciousness, being fully aware of the interior stages of development - even if it cannot articulate them in a technical fashion - steps back and grasps the big picture, and thus appreciates the necessary role that all of the various levels play. This involves moving from relativism to holism or from **pluralism to integralism**.

## Integral Perspectives

One of the main conclusions of an all-level, all-quadrant approach is that each level of consciousness and wave of existence is, in its healthy form, an absolutely necessary and desirable element of the overall spectrum of consciousness. The **health of the entire spiral** is the prime directive, not preferential treatment for any one level.

A **developmental approach** accepts that there are many different values and worldviews, some more complex than others; that many of the problems at one stage of development can only be defused by evolving to a higher level; and that only by recognising and facilitating this evolution can social justice finally be served. As each level has "healthy" and "unhealthy" versions, the health of the entire spiral, and particularly earlier waves, is the major ethical demand.

Moreover, by seeing that every individual has all of these levels potentially available, the lines of social tension are redrawn: not based on skin colour, economic class or political clout, but on the **type of worldview** and breadth of outlook from which a person, clan, tribe, business, government, educational system or nation is operating.

Nonetheless, the **advantage of higher-level vision-logic awareness** is that it more creatively helps with solutions to pressing problems, and those able to grasp the big picture can help suggest more cogent solutions.

#### Range of Awareness

- egocentric – ‘me’
- ethnocentric – ‘us’ - family, group, tribe, nation
- worldcentric – ‘all of us’ – all humans without exception
- theocentric – ‘all of everything’

#### Cognitive Levels

- preconventional
- conventional
- postconventional
- post-postconventional

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### Quadrants/ Levels and Religion

In the **Lower Left** Quadrant, the sequence within a culture from pre-modern (mythic belief) to modern (rational, scientific belief) to postmodern (pluralistic/relativistic belief) has been influential in approaches and debates within religion throughout the past century.

At each of these stages, people tend to regard their point of view as correct and use it as a basis for criticising the views of others. For example, mythic believers tend to absolutise their path to ‘salvation’ and defend literal interpretations of the myths as being the essence of religion. In contrast, scientific rationalists want to debunk the myths and tend to equate religion with myths and so reject both. Postmodernists, however, want to relativise all truths as ‘interpretations,’ including religious beliefs and the conclusions of science.

Some, however, achieve a level of consciousness where they are able to acknowledge a sequence of growth and development in people’s lives and to affirm the importance of each stage as part of an expanding spiral. Pre-modern, modern and postmodern perspectives can then co-exist and each can affirm the others. Each stage can be seen as building on what came before it and as a base to prepare for the “climb” to the next stage, without idealising any one level.

The key factor in this model of development is the process of differentiation, transcendence and inclusion that takes place when a particular view of the world is outgrown and used as a basis for a more inclusive point of view. This is seen, for example when development takes place from egocentric to family-centric, to tribe-centric, to ethnocentric, to nation-centric, to world-centric, to cosmos-centric.

The question “Who is my neighbour?” put to Jesus to embarrass him, could be given different answers from each of these levels, depending on how widely the circle of inclusion is drawn. His response with the story of the Good Samaritan continues to serve as a challenge to ethnocentric outlooks.

Wilber encourages a healthy integral practice at each stage of development, and promotes a movement towards higher levels of consciousness. Such practices can be incorporated into everyday life (including activities such as meditation, exercise, devotions, intellectual and emotional growth, community service, social action and care for the earth.)

We need progressive religion to be available for those seeking a belief system that is more mystical than mythic, and gatherings such as the Common Dreams Conference serve a vital service for those that have moved through the developmental process to this level. It must be remembered, however, that research suggests that 75% of the world’s popula-

tion still has a pre-modern, mythic mindset, and that they are not helped by attempts to deconstruct their beliefs.

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### Altitudes and Colours of Development

As well as referring to “altitude” for the wider sense of perspective and inclusiveness at higher levels, Wilber uses colours as short-hand for each level based on the spectrum of a rainbow, i.e. red, amber, orange, green, teal, turquoise.

At the **magic (red)** level, religious practices may be regarded as influencing the gods or God to win a reward or to avoid punishment. Offering the first-fruits of the harvest could be regarded as ensuring a good season of food production.

In the *Book of Job*, not only is Job a “good man, careful not to do anything evil” but also he was faithful in religious observance. Like wealthy parents in all ages, he worried about his children’s partying behaviour. “The morning after each feast, Job would get up early and offer sacrifices for each of his children in order to purify them. He always did this because he thought that one of them might have sinned by insulting God unintentionally.” Job 1: 5.

While most commentators focus on the problem of undeserved suffering that the story illustrates, an additional spiritual pain arose from the failure of his sacrifices to protect him or his children. In this sense, the resolution of the story comes when Job moves beyond ritual to experience a personal epiphany of direct encounter with God.

A similar crisis of faith can occur for people with magical thinking when praying for the healing of themselves or a loved one doesn’t reverse the progression of their cancer. This is reflected in comments such as, “I used to believe in God but not after he let my mother die the way she did.”

While those at the magic level tend to focus on the holiness of God, who is all-powerful and does as he pleases, the **mythic (amber)** level introduces a concept of transcendent law that even God obeys. Here the righteousness of God comes into play and the codes of law are to be obeyed. Sacrifice takes place to make restitution for breaking the law or to emphasise the importance of observing the law. It is believed that even God is constrained and cannot offer forgiveness without some form of sacrificial substitute.

This is illustrated in the understanding of the death of Jesus as a Substitutionary Sacrifice to make up for the sinfulness of the world. In this view, as an expression of love for humanity, God provides the perfect substitute in the form of Jesus. While that is just one of several attempts to understand the meaning of the death of Jesus, it is held strongly among Christians that identify themselves as “evangelical.”

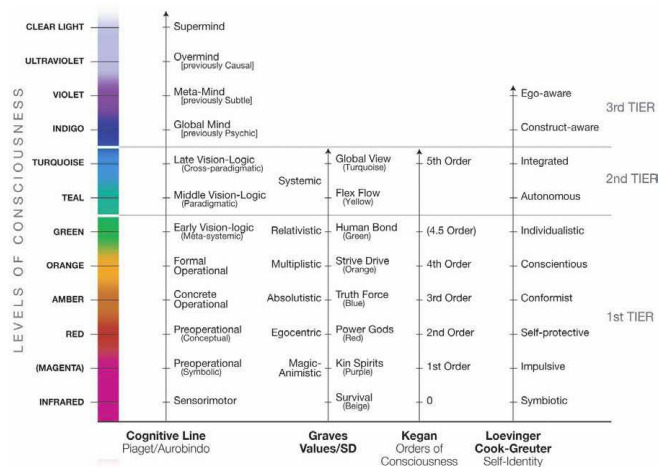
At the **rational, ‘modern’ (orange)** level it becomes problematical to regard God as demanding to be appeased through a sacrifice. The focus is on individual achievement and the willingness to make sacrifices of a practical kind to achieve worthwhile goals. Jesus is regarded as a good man willing to suffer for his ideals and an example for others to follow.

At the **pluralist, ‘postmodern’ (green)** level, the focus is on community, with an emphasis on multi-racial, multi-faith, multi-cultural forms of inclusiveness. This can lead to an interest in diverse forms of religious expression, including rituals that are interpreted symbolically, e.g. fasting during Lent or Ramadan might be regarded as promoting spiritual growth, rather than fasting to win favour with God.

At this level, the sacrifice of Jesus is seen more as a result of his political activism and an example of what happens to

people that challenge (in the language of postmodernism) the hegemonic domination powers in society.

At the **integral**, post-postmodern level (**teal**), it is recognised that previous levels have a contribution to make, and the aim is to transcend and include. One can consciously move between the levels, making ethical choices about appropriate action, rather than acting in unaware obedience to tradition.



Some Major Developmental Lines.

### The Pre/Post or Pre/Trans Fallacy

An additional important insight offered by Wilber is in identifying the confusion between magic and mythic beliefs that are pre-rational, and mystical insights that are post- or trans-rational, as both levels are non-rational.

In terms of Piaget’s stages, this lack of discrimination confuses pre- conventional and post-conventional stages because both are non-conventional. Similarly pre-egoic stages can be confused with trans-egoic because both are non-egoic.

The fallacy was illustrated by a recent article in which a minister defended traditional beliefs about the resurrection of Jesus. The writer accused religious progressives of taking the faith “back into a Pre-Christ form of primeval ‘spirituality’ ... the most regressive form of ancient paganism...”

This confusion can be found among those who reject all religious belief and spirituality - even at a trans-rational, high mystical level - as childish regression, as Freud tended to do.

Alternatively, some idealise all spiritual traditions, and regard pre-rational childish images and myths as equal to highly developed spiritual insights, which Jung tended to do. The spirituality of children is precious but is mostly magical/mythical, and not equal to the insights of the mystics.

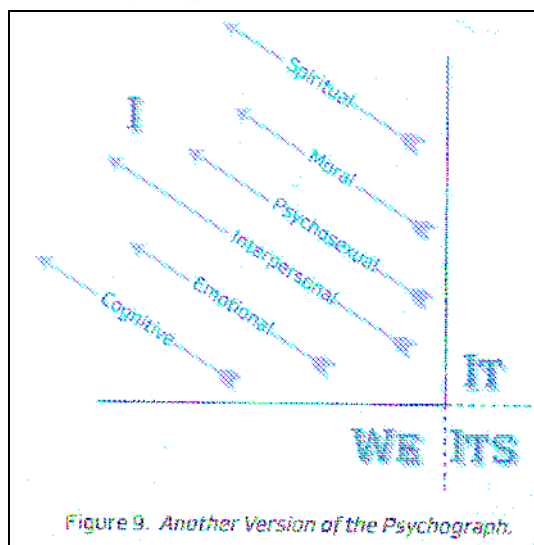
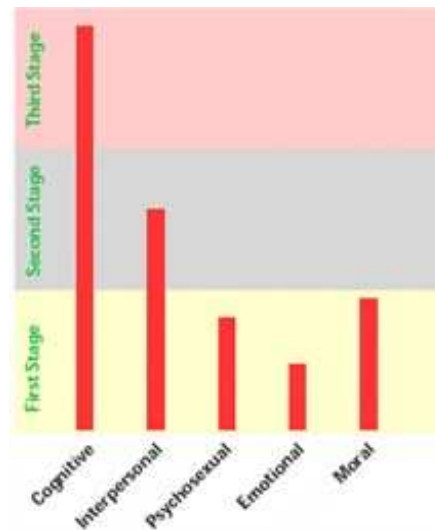
### Lines of Development

People have many varied abilities, sometimes referred to as multiple intelligences, and these develop at different rates. For any one person, a developmental psychograph can be created to trace these lines and their level of development.

In *Integral Psychology*, Wilber identified over 100 developmental models that have been proposed and researched, and showed parallels between them.

A major problem in the spiritual traditions has been when a leader is well developed spiritually but is not well developed morally or emotionally, resulting in abusive relationships.

### Examples of the Psychograph



Each of these developmental lines has distinctive “ultimate” questions that can be researched, as follows:

TABLE 2.1  
DEVELOPMENTAL LINES, LIFE’S QUESTIONS,  
AND RESEARCHERS

Line	Life’s Question	Typical Researcher
Cognitive	<i>What am I aware of?</i>	Piaget, Kegan
Self	<i>Who am I?</i>	Loevinger
Values	<i>What is significant to me?</i>	Graves, Spiral Dynamics
Moral	<i>What should I do?</i>	Kohlberg
Interpersonal	<i>How should we interact?</i>	Selman, Perry
Spiritual	<i>What is of ultimate concern?</i>	Fowler
Needs	<i>What do I need?</i>	Maslow
Kinesthetic	<i>How should I physically do this?</i>	Gardner
Emotional	<i>How do I feel about this?</i>	Goleman
Aesthetic	<i>What is attractive to me?</i>	Housen

The following Table illustrates some of the models of development and illustrates Wilber’s use of rainbow colours to depict “altitudes” in the development of consciousness.

### Integral Spirituality

When using the term “religion,” the RECP Team identified ways in which the term is used to develop a model that covered a range of uses. The term “spirituality” also has numerous meanings, resulting in confusion when attempting to define “progressive religion” and “progressive spirituality.”

In his analysis, Wilber has identified a range of ways in which the term “spirituality” is used. It can be something occurring in the highest levels or stages of any developmental line, it can be a separate line or it can refer to various altered states of consciousness.

In addition, many people equate “spiritual” with some type of quality, such as love, kindness, or wisdom. Those qualities, however, also show development, and it is only at their higher levels that they are regarded as “spiritual.”

A major concern that Wilber addresses in *Integral Spirituality* is the challenge from postmodernism summarised as the “myth of the given.” This refers to the intersubjective nature of human knowledge and the role of language and culture in any attempt to use metaphysics to describe “reality.”

By definition, an integral spirituality would leave nothing essential out. It would be a spirituality that in principle could be recognized and practiced by believers in all the world’s religions without abandoning their own essentials. A person could be attuned to an “integral spirituality” as a practicing Christian, Buddhist, New-Age advocate or Neopagan.

This would be something added to one’s religion, not subtracted from it. The only thing it would subtract is the belief that one’s own path is the only true path to salvation.

While there are major differences between the spiritual traditions, there are significant similarities. Most agree that:

1. Spirit, by whatever name exists, and it is good, true, beautiful and loving.
2. Spirit, although existing “out there,” is also found “in here,” or revealed within to the open heart and mind.
3. Most don’t realise this Spirit within because they are living in separation, sin or duality, i.e. they are living in an illusory, fallen or fragmented state.
4. There is a way out of the separated state (of illusion, separation, sin or disharmony), a path to liberation.
5. By following this path to its conclusion, the result is an awakening, a rebirth, salvation or enlightenment, a direct experience of union with Spirit both within and without (and neither), a supreme liberation.
6. This supreme liberation marks the dissolution or transcendence of illusion, sin and/or suffering, and manifests in care and courage, service, social action, mercy and compassion on behalf of the whole sentient Kosmos.

If there are these general spiritual patterns in the Kosmos, at least wherever human beings appear, ... the theological details can be argued but the simple existence of those broader currents profoundly changes the nature of the conversation.

## **The Conveyor Belt – Going Higher, Wider, Deeper**

*Integral Spirituality*, 2006, Chapter 9

Recognition of the developmental perspective can be helpful in understanding why it is sometimes difficult to have open dialogue about matters of religious belief and biblical interpretation. This is not helped by the tendency to absolutise particular levels of understanding to the exclusion of others.

The developmental understanding also raises the issue of what might be done to encourage and support the processes of development. This concern to promote growth and development applies in all four quadrants internal and external, individual and collective.

In regard to spirituality, Wilber regards the religious traditions as having both the resources and the responsibility to encourage development. He challenges the religious traditions to provide a ‘conveyor belt’ to assist development

through all the levels – premodern, modern, postmodern and beyond. This is in contrast to their tendency to emphasise mythic, pre-modern worldviews, even when some 25% of the population are at the modern level or beyond.

It is with this latter group that the “progressives” are seeking to communicate. At the same time, he challenges the tendency of some progressives to denigrate, deconstruct or demythologise their earlier stages, which can make progress more difficult for those still moving through those stages.

In particular, it is often the case that once a person has grown through particular stages they want to show up the problems inherent in their previous viewpoints, forgetting that those very understandings provided an important stage in their own development and may still be providing a way up for others.

Everybody is born at square one. There will always be people at each level, and that is fine. An enlightened society would always make room for that by recognizing that **stages in development** are also **stations in life** that deserve respect.

But the earlier stations - archaic to magic to mythic - involve stages that, nonetheless, humanity’s leading edge passed through in its infancy, childhood and adolescence.

But because religion serves as the repository of the myths created during those times, religion alone is the institution in today’s world that gives legitimacy to those earlier stages and stations for men and women. Religion alone gives legitimacy to the myths. And religion alone owns that 70% of the world’s population at those stages.

But precisely because of its ownership of the pre-rational heritage of humanity (and the pre-rational corpus of the great myths), religion alone can help its followers move from the pre-rational, mythic-membership, ethnocentric, absolutistic version of its message to the rational-perspectival, worldcentric, postconventional versions of its own message. This jump from ethnocentric amber to worldcentric orange is the great leap that religions alone can help humanity make.

The great religions alone can thus be the conveyor belt that gives legitimacy (in both the sociological and religious sense) to the orange (and higher) versions of their essential story and their essential spirituality. This is a difficult jump, as terrorists and college students praying in secret attest.

The main source of this difficulty is the confusion caused by equating religion with its pre-modern, mythic forms. Both secular humanists and religious advocates have confused the mythic **level** of the spiritual line with the entire spiritual **line**, freezing spiritual intelligence at that childhood stage.

Small wonder that every militant (“terrorist”) said exactly the same thing: the modern (orange) world makes no room for my (mythic, amber) religious beliefs, and therefore I will blow up the modern world in the name of my God.

This will not stop until the particular religion itself makes room in its own catechism for the orange, worldcentric, modern interpretations of its religious message, and sanctions those interpretations (e.g. Vatican II).

Numerous brilliant religious and spiritual writers are now emphasising the orange worldcentric interpretations of, say, Christianity. There is also a swelling tide of green/ postmodern interpretations of Christianity. But helping individual practitioners to negotiate the amber-to-orange horizon is of primary urgency for all religions.

This difficulty can be analysed using quadrants:

The **UL** involves a psychological movement from ethnocentric beliefs to worldcentric beliefs. While this is a difficult

transformation, from a role-based identity to a person-based identity, it allows a postconventional, worldcentric moral stance and not just an ethnocentric, us-versus-them mentality.

For those with a Christian-faith background, the leap comes in realizing that Jesus Christ can be my personal saviour but that others may find a different path to salvation - that the Holy Spirit speaks people in different ways, in different tongues, in different lands, but is fully present nonetheless.

Crucially, in the **LL**, the individual needs to feel that his or her religion supports a truly universal or catholic Jesus, and not merely an ethnocentric creed. In some cases, this is a hotly contested issue, for example, while the dominant mode of discourse of Vatican II allowed healthy orange (worldcentric) Christianity; the last two Popes, for all their embrace of mystical states, and all their outward shows of liberal piety, have toed the line on a dominant mode of discourse that is oppressive amber - an amber that tragically represses their own higher, emergent stages of spiritual intelligence.

How this will be institutionalised (in the **LR**) will help determine the behaviour (**UR**) that is allowed by a person of faith in the modern and postmodern world. What is particularly required is an institution that embodies the stations of life in its own concrete social (and cultural) system. Will there be a conveyor belt that individuals can safely ride from pre-rational to rational to trans-rational floors, or will religion remain merely the repository of humanity's childhood?

If religion chooses the latter, then other disciplines (law, medicine, science, education) will continue to move into the things that adults do, and religion will remain the things that children (and adult children) do - like blow up things.

But if religion lives up to its promise as being that endeavour in humanity that allows Spirit to speak through it, and Spirit is indeed evolving in its own manifestation, then religion becomes a **conveyor belt** for humanity, carrying it from the childhood productions of Spirit to the adolescent productions of Spirit to the adult productions of Spirit... and beyond that into the great tomorrow of Spirit's continuing display.

This, surely, is a great role for religion in the modern and postmodern world.

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### The Three Faces of God or Spirit

A valuable insight can be found in Wilber's analysis of the dominant pronouns operative in one's relationship with God, Spirit, the Divine, Higher Power or that which is of Ultimate Concern in one's life. This could include one or more of the following, self, family, tribe, nation, political system, religious tradition and the world.

The **1<sup>st</sup>-person** perspective, God as Self, emphasises the presence of God's spirit within, using spiritual practices and disciplines to nurture that presence. [**I-I**]

The **2<sup>nd</sup>-person** perspective, God as Holy Other, sees God as One to whom is offered allegiance and obedience. [**I-Thou**]

The **3<sup>rd</sup>-person** perspective, God as Everything, sees God in the world of nature and the processes of evolution, with which one seeks to come into harmony. [**I-It**]

Each of these perspectives tends to predominate in various forms of religious observance and in explanations given to interpret particular forms of religious activity. While all are possible, most people emphasise one or two of them at most. For Wilber, to bring about a complete spiritual awakening, a person must embrace all "three faces of God," rather than becoming lost in one of these "faces of God" at the expense

of the others. On the path of Integral Spirituality, all three faces of God come together to transform every aspect of life.

For instance, a powerful **1<sup>st</sup>-person** "enlightenment experience" may be perceived as revealing the divine nature of the Self. But without the humbling recognition of the **2<sup>nd</sup>-person** face of God - God as Other, those 1<sup>st</sup>-person spiritual experiences may make a person more egocentric - not less so. The distinction is illustrated by this **Sufi Teaching Story**:

*The Sufi saint al-Hallaj was crucified for daring to proclaim "I am God." One of the orthodox who participated in his death later had a dream in which he saw the great saint being ceremoniously welcomed into Heaven.*

*Confused by this, he asked God, "Oh Lord! Why was pharaoh condemned to flames for proclaiming 'I am God' and al-Hallaj is ushered into Heaven for speaking the same words?"*

*A divine voice answered, "When pharaoh spoke these words, he thought only of himself and had forgotten Me. But when al-Hallaj spoke these same words he had forgotten himself and thought only of Me.*

*Therefore, 'I am God' in pharaoh's mouth was a curse to him, but in al-Hallej's mouth this 'I am God' was due to my grace."*

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### Three Perspectives on Awe and Wonder

The same **1<sup>st</sup>-, 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-person perspectives** can be found in the experience of awe and wonder.

For some people, a sense of awe and wonder is found in the celebration of their own existence and of the amazing capacities to be found in each person, i.e. in the **1<sup>st</sup>-person** perspective. It is able to celebrate the wholeness of human nature, including the shadow aspects.

The **2<sup>nd</sup>-person** perspective finds awe and wonder in the gift of relationships, the gift of one another. This includes the love between parent and child and of one adult for another.

The **3<sup>rd</sup>-person** perspective finds awe and wonder in the natural world, from the smallest element of life on earth to the vastness of space.

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### Integral Spiritual Practices

While that which is Ultimate is beyond all perspectives, it can only be pointed to *via* perspectives. Each perspective offers something unique to our awareness and growth.

In **3<sup>rd</sup>-person contemplation**, you see *It*. You open your eyes, mind and senses to the ultimate mystery of existence, and thus notice details and distinctions...

In contemplation you become aware of the fullness of Spirit and the Kosmos in more of its rich and miraculous multidimensionality - gross, subtle and causal. Moved by this vision people often actively *serve* others and Spirit.

In **2<sup>nd</sup>-person prayer and communion**, you open into intimate contact with the ultimate mystery of existence, letting *It* become *Thou*. You metaphorically face God, your ultimate Beloved, and become knowable to (not hiding from) that ultimate consciousness. In the process your feeling heart and soul cannot remain untouched or immune. You allow yourself to receive grace or the blessings of the mystery of existence. You open, deepen and surrender.

In **1<sup>st</sup>-person meditation**, you come to know yourself to be the *I* of Spirit. You let go of all limited identifications with memories, thoughts, sensations and desires, and awaken consciously as the **I AM-ness** of the here and now.

*Meditation, whether Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist or Muslim, was invented as a way for the soul to venture in-*



ward, there ultimately to find a supreme identity with God-head. (Grace and Grit, 1991)

You awaken into and as the total present moment, as the Self, the non-separate identity of the mystery of existence, and beyond all conceptions, into the Suchness or the emptiness that is not separable from anything or anyone.

### Levels of Understanding

Many practices **combine** two or more of these perspectives. Historically, however, certain faces of Spirit have tended to be emphasized and excluded at each stage of development:

**Magic and Mythic Spirit** tends to exclude relating to Spirit in the 1<sup>st</sup>-person. God is transcendent, not immanent, and it's sinful to confuse fallen humanity with the divine. Instead, it emphasizes a **2<sup>nd</sup>-person** relationship (*I pray to you, O Lord*), but tends to relate to Spirit only as objectified mythic deity.

**Rational Spirit** tends to move away from the 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship to the mythic deity. (*I no longer believe in the old interventionist deity, so why pray or worry about my relationship to Spirit?*) Instead, it emphasizes **3<sup>rd</sup>-person** ways of relating to Spirit and Nature. (*Spirit is a transcendental force or law of existence. I can contemplate the universe through science to know Spirit better.*)

**Pluralistic Spirit** opens to discovering a **1<sup>st</sup>-person** relationship to Spirit (*I am waking up to see that I am not separate from Spirit!*) However, it vigorously rejects rational and mythic versions of divinity. (*Church religion is too dogmatic, and rational science is too reductionistic and limiting.*) It is often, however, willing to accept exotic 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-person forms of spirituality without rigorous discernment.

**Integral Spirit** enters deeply into **1<sup>st</sup>-person** awakening as Spirit (*I am Spirit*), deepens **3<sup>rd</sup>-person** contemplation and service of Spirit (*I see and serve Spirit as It*), and resurrects **2<sup>nd</sup>-person** communion with Spirit (*I turn to face and love and be loved by You, Spirit of all*).

### Putting It All Together

Since 3<sup>rd</sup>-person contemplation, 2<sup>nd</sup>-person communion (or prayer), and 1<sup>st</sup>-person meditation are all inherent dimensions of an Integral spiritual life; something important is missing if any of them are not included. We can do specific 1<sup>st</sup>-, 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-person practices, or we can exercise them all together in a single Integral meditation practice.

We are related to everything - including Spirit, the great Mystery, Suchness and the ever-present - through perspectives and perspectives through which we relate to Spirit are similar to the perspectives through which we relate to one another.

- We can contemplate, serve, think, know and talk about Spirit (*knowing It*) as nature and through study and philosophy in the **3<sup>rd</sup>-person**.
- We can relate (*being with Thou*) and listen to, pray to, receive or commune with Spirit in a **2<sup>nd</sup>-person** relationship.
- And we can meditate and awaken and feel and know ourselves and speak as Spirit (*awakening as the I of all*) in a **1<sup>st</sup>-person** apprehension of our source and substance.

### 1-Minute Module: The 3 Faces of Spirit,

*Integral Life Practice*, 2008

At any moment, you can experience Spirit as a **3<sup>rd</sup>-person It**, a **2<sup>nd</sup>-person Thou**, or a **1<sup>st</sup>-person I**. Repeat the following sentences quietly to yourself, letting each perspective arise gently and naturally.

- *I contemplate Spirit as all that is arising - the Great Perfection of this and every moment.*

- *I behold and commune with Spirit as the beloved infinite Thou, who bestows all blessings and complete forgiveness on me, and before whom I gladly offer utter gratitude and devotion.*
- *I rest in Spirit as my own Witness and primordial Self, the Big Mind that is one with all.*
- *In this ever-present, easy, and natural contemplation, communion and meditation, I go on about my day.*

If you wish, you can replace the word "Spirit" with any word of your choice that evokes an Ultimate Being. It could be *God, Jehovah, Allah, Christ, the Lord, or the One*.

### The Wilber-Combs Lattice – States & Stages

*The Integral Vision*, 2007, from Chapter 5

Another significant distinction clarified by Wilber is the relationship between **states** [experiential] and **stages** [developmental]. This acknowledges that people will interpret any spiritual (meditative, altered) *state* of consciousness according to their *stage* of consciousness.

This means that in addition to the overall AQAL matrix, a person's *altitude* of development is a particularly important component of that overall interpretation.

Another map that charts this relationship has been called the **Wilber-Combs Lattice**, after its two founders. This uses a simple **7-level scheme of stages of consciousness** (archaic, magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, integral, super-integral) and **4 types of states of consciousness** (gross, subtle, causal, nondual). The result is 4 x 7 or 28 types of spiritual or religious experience, and evidence has been for every single one of them.

Any spiritual (meditative, altered) *state* of consciousness will be interpreted according to a person's *stage* of consciousness, i.e. their *altitude* of development.

For example, if they have a **peak experience** of seeing a cloud of radiant white luminosity, which at times appears to be a person or being of light, and then have a sense of merging into that light, feeling a sense of infinite love and unbounded bliss.

If this person is a Protestant, whose Lower-Left quadrant has predisposed their interpretations to see and clothe this experience in Christian terms. What will they see?

If at **red** altitude, they might see this as a magical Jesus who can walk on water, resurrect the dead, turn water into wine, multiply loaves and fishes, and so on.

At **amber**, they might see Jesus as the eternal lawgiver, the bringer of complete salvation if one believes the myths and dogmas and follows the codes, commandments and covenants given to the chosen people and found in the one and only true Book (the Bible).

At **orange**, this person might see Jesus as a universal humanist, yet also divine, teaching worldcentric love and morality, and bringing salvation not just in heaven but to some degree on this earth, in this life.

At **green**, they might see Jesus as one of many, equally valid spiritual teachers, and hence embracing Jesus might give them complete salvation, which is why they passionately do so, but other individuals and cultures might find other spiritual paths to be better for them, knowing that all genuine spiritual paths, if they go deep enough, can offer an equal salvation or liberation.

If this person is at **turquoise**, they might see Jesus as a manifestation of the same Christ-consciousness to which every-

body can have access, and thus Jesus is emblematic of a transformative consciousness that shows each person to be part of a vast system of dynamic, flowing and mutually interpenetrating processes that includes us all in its radiant sweep.

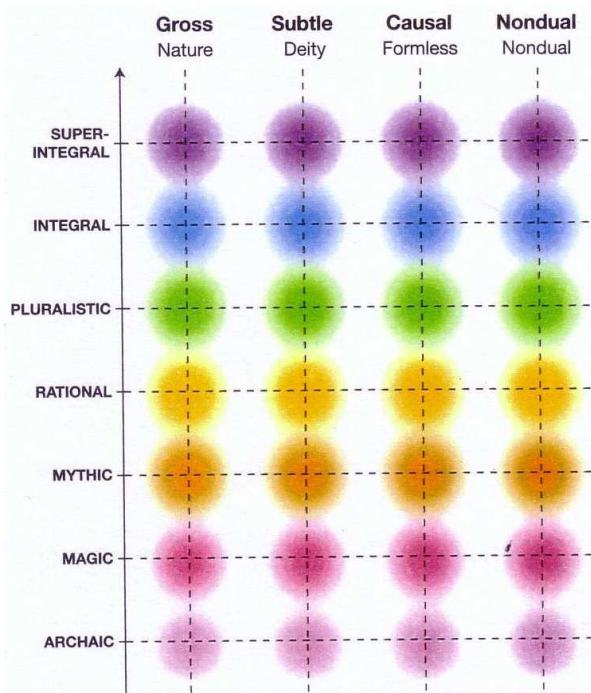


Figure 17. *The Wilber-Combs Lattice.*

At **violet** and **ultraviolet**, Christ-consciousness might be seen as emblematic of the transcendental, infinite, selfless Self, the divine consciousness that was in Jesus and is in us, a radically all-inclusive consciousness of Light, Love and Life that is resurrected from the stream of time upon the death of the loveless and self-contracting ego, revealing a destiny beyond death, beyond suffering, beyond space and time and tears and terror, and hence found to be right here, right now, in the timeless moment in which all reality comes to be.

In other words, the altered-state experience will be interpreted, in part, according to the stage that one is at. There is a magic Christ, a mythic Christ, a rational Christ, a pluralistic Christ, an integral and super-integral Christ, and so on.

This, of course, is true of any experience, but it becomes particularly important with spiritual and religious experiences. A person can be at a fairly low-level stage of development, such as red or amber, and yet have a fully authentic subtle- or causal-state experience. The born-again fundamentalist and evangelical is a very common example. This person *knows* that they have experienced Christ (or Allah or Mary or Brahman) personally, and nothing you can say will even begin to convince them otherwise.

And it's half true: they have had an authentic, vivid, real and immediate experience of a subtle-state reality. But they are interpreting that **state** through **stages** that are egocentric or ethnocentric: Jesus, and only Jesus, has the one true way.

Worse, their real or authentic state experience of love will actually *reinforce* their ethnocentrism. Only those who accept Jesus as their personal saviour can find salvation; everybody else is consigned to eternal damnation and hellfire by an all-loving and all-forgiving God.

Does that intense contradiction make any sense? Well, it does if you use the Wilber-Combs Lattice.

The existence of states of consciousness allows us to see why people can have experiences that are spiritual and authentic,

in some ways, even if they are at relatively low levels of development. This is also why they can be so commonplace.

While the percentage of the population at the highest (third-tier) levels of development in any of the lines appears to be less than 1%, those who report having had a spiritual or religious experience is well over 75%, according to many polls. Using AQAL, this otherwise conflicting data begins to make sense: 1% have had **higher-stage** spiritual experiences; 75% have had **altered-state** spiritual experiences.

Of course, the ideal situation for a person is to be at the higher stages of development as well as have a broad range of significant state experiences, such as meditative and contemplative states. As it is now, some spiritual practitioners focus only on meditative states, unaware or disdainful of developmental stages, which is unfortunate. Combining both is one of the main aims of an Integral Life Practice...

## Integral Post-Metaphysics

In *Integral Spirituality*, 2006, Wilber promotes the idea of an Integral Post-Metaphysics as a way forward for the spiritual traditions. The problem for the Great Wisdom Traditions is that, heavy with metaphysics, their incredibly important truths do not easily withstand the critiques of either modernity or postmodernity...

... For AQAL, every occasion has 4 quadrants, including a **Lower-Left** quadrant (intersubjective, cultural, contextual). Even transcendental knowledge is a 4-quadrant affair...

**modernity**, however, tended to focus on the **Right-Hand** quadrants of objective exterior evidence; while **postmodernity** focused on the **Lower-Left** quadrant of intersubjective truth and the social construction of reality.

The **premodern wisdom traditions**... were simply no match for the productions of modernity (e.g. modern science) and postmodernity (e.g. multiculturalism) in those domains. But there was one area that the Great Traditions still specialised in, an area forgotten, ignored or sometimes even suppressed by modernity and postmodernity. That is **the interior of the individual** – the **Upper-Left** quadrant with all its states and stages of consciousness, realisation and spiritual experiences.

But by situating the great wisdom traditions in an **integral framework** – which accepts the enduring truths of premodern, modern and postmodern realisations – their enduring insights can be salvaged to a remarkable degree.

... **Integral Methodological Pluralism** ... finds room for premodern truths, modern truths and postmodern truths, all in an integral framework not of conclusions but of perspectives and methodologies... The only thing it alters is their claim to absoluteness, and any scaffolding (and metaphysics) meant to justify that unjustifiable claim... it can reconstruct the important truths of the contemplative traditions but without the metaphysical systems that would not survive modernist and postmodernist critiques, elements it turns out they don't really need, anyway.

## The Quadrants and "Ultimate Reality"

The Quadrants come into play when theorists try to explain what they think is the "really real" makeup of the world and the nature of ultimate reality. Is matter the primary reality? Or are spirit and consciousness the primary ingredients? Or perhaps all of those "superstructures" of religion can be reduced to the "base" of economic realities? Or perhaps all knowledge is just a social construction?

If you think matter is the ultimate reality (i.e. the **Upper-Right** is the only real quadrant), then a spiritual experience or

belief will be nothing but an illusion. God is just an imaginary friend for grown-ups. All spiritual beliefs are “nothing but” physical fireworks in the material brain.

If you think spirit and consciousness (**Upper-Left**) are the ultimate realities, then you will believe just the opposite: the world of material form is the fallen realm of illusion. Those who believe in it are lost in ignorance, sin, maya, samsara.

If you think the systems view of reality (the **Lower-Right**) is the ultimate view, then religious and spiritual beliefs are nothing but manifest structure-functions determined by the “real” realities of social system, the techno-economic base, and interwoven webs of dynamic processes, all as 3<sup>rd</sup>-person “its” and nothing but 3<sup>rd</sup> person “its.”

If you think the **Lower-Left** is the only real quadrant, then all aspects of knowledge - including all of our ideas about systems themselves, not to mention God and Spirit - are nothing but social constructions. Not “I” nor “it” nor “its” are finally real, but rather the almighty “we” creates reality.

All these are forms of quadrant absolutism, whereas for **AQAL**, all of the quadrants are equi-primordial. None more real or primary than the others, they all tetra-arise and tetra-evolve together. Ultimate reality, if it is to be found anywhere, is found in their simultaneous arising and radiant display, mutually creating and mutually sustaining each other.



Figure 18. Quadrant Absolutism.

## Zones

*Integral Spirituality*, 2006

In seeking a more comprehensive integration of the diverse fields of research that humans have developed, the four Quadrants have been further analysed into eight Zones, depending whether a 1<sup>st</sup> person or 3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective is being taken. The “I”, “It”, “We” and “Its” can be studied from an external perspective or an internal perspective, described by the Canadian developers of Integral Coaching as “**Looking At**” and “**Looking As.**”

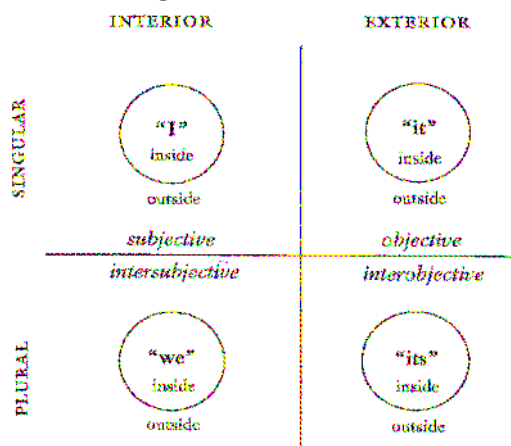
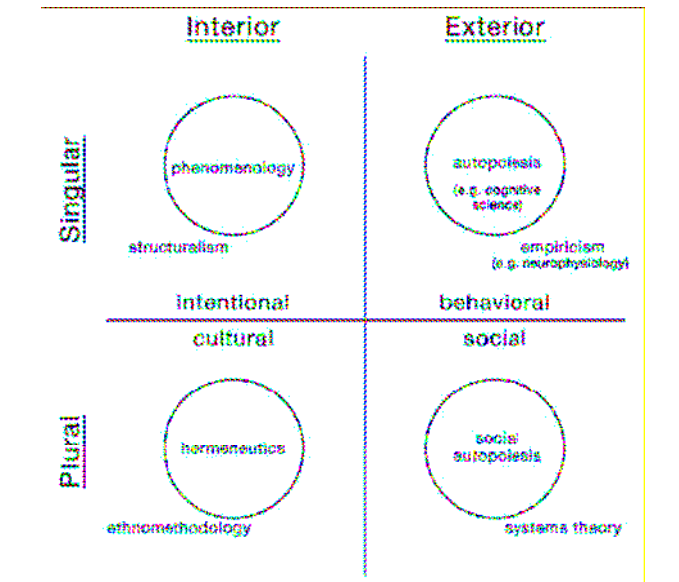


Figure 1.2. 8 Primordial Perspectives.

For example, in Zone 1, a person may use meditation to gain an inner personal awareness, while Zone 2 researchers might interview a range of people in an attempt to identify developmental stages that can be applied to such awareness. Both of these approaches are still in the Upper Left Quadrant.

The eight zones can be linked to distinctive disciplines of research, each of which emphasises a particular perspective.

While the distinctions are helpful in identifying discourses and methods of research, the Quadrants continue to provide a handy approach and are most relevant to this discussion.



## The Many Faces of Spirit

Rumi

*We began  
As a mineral. We emerged into plant life  
And into the animal state, and then into being human,  
And always we have forgotten  
our former states,  
Except in early spring  
when we slightly recall  
Being green again.  
That's how a young person turns  
toward a teacher.  
That's how a baby leans toward the breast,  
without knowing the secret of its desire,  
yet turning instinctively.  
Humankind is being led  
along an evolving course,  
Through this migration of intelligences,  
And though we seem to be sleeping,  
There is an inner wakefulness  
That directs the dream,  
And that will eventually startle us back  
to the truth of who we are.*

From *The Essential Rumi* by Coleman Barks

Using the AQAL matrix, we realize that “spirituality” can be used, and has been used, to refer to quadrants, levels/ stages, lines, states and types. When done without clarity, the result is much confusion and contradictory conclusions.

But using AQAL it starts to make sense, at least enough to climb out of the nightmare of fundamentalism (amber), the depressing emptiness of scientific modernity (orange) or the wasteland of whatever (green).

Moving in the direction of the supramental, transpersonal and super-conscious waves of evolution, Spirit itself seems to smile, announce its presence, and awaken to the umpteenth game of “hide and seek” with its own being and becoming.

There is a Spirit for every wave of awareness, since Spirit is that very Awareness appearing in the different levels of its own development, the same Awareness that slumbers in the mineral, stirs in the plant, moves in the animal, revives in the human, and returns to itself in the awakened sage. Most extraordinarily, we are all invited to become awakened sages.

### Is Spirit Real or Not?

In *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* (1998) Wilber analysed the nature of knowledge and the types of research appropriate for each sphere of knowledge. He also challenged the usual understanding of **paradigm** as simply referring to a particular point of view or interpretative framework.

Rather, he links paradigm to a methodology of research as well as the changes of interpretation made possible by that methodology. For example, the technology of the telescope was a major stimulus for the Copernican revolution and the use of scientific method was basic to the insights of Galileo.

Challenging modernist reductionism, he affirms the research methods of spiritual disciplines as valid sources of knowledge and insight. If we are going to decide the ultimate question of whether there is or is not a real Spirit, a real Godhead, a real Ground of All Being, it would certainly help if we checked with the answers given by those at the highest stages of development. Not that we have to believe everything they say, but simply check on whether they give some sort of consistent response here, and as you might expect, they do.

And it is as suggested, namely, the ultimate Ground of Being is not pictured in magic terms or mythic terms, nor is it seen as something outside of or merely transcendent to this world, but rather the Suchness or Thusness of this world, or even the Emptiness of all that is arising (with “Emptiness” meaning the unqualifiable openness or transparency of each moment).

Is there a proof for that God? Yes, absolutely, and here it is: develop to the ultraviolet waves of your own awareness and then look, taste, touch, feel, breathe, and tell us what you see.

But one thing is for sure: it is not a mythic God, it is not scientific materialism, it is not pluralism. All three of those have failed to give satisfactory answers to the riddle of existence, and that is exactly why. They were not yet whole enough to see the Big Picture of your own Being, your own Becoming, and your own Awakening.

### Redefining the Body Integrally

*Integral Life Practice*, 2008

... Gross, subtle and causal refer to the energies or bodies associated with the three main states of consciousness (waking, dreaming and deep sleep). Correlated with the spectrum of states of consciousness in the Upper-Left quadrant is a spectrum of bodies or energies in the Upper-Right quadrant.

Waking consciousness corresponds to the gross (or physical) body. Subtle or dream consciousness corresponds to a subtle body. And formless (or deep sleep) consciousness corresponds to a causal, or very subtle body, as the Tibetans call it. Each one of your states of consciousness has a bodily-energetic support.

Here are some examples of exercises you can do for each of your bodies:

#### Gross Body

Weightlifting, Running, Aerobics  
Sports (skiing, basketball, tennis, volleyball, soccer, etc.)  
Dance, Push-ups, squats...

#### Subtle Body

Yoga, T'ai chi, Qigong, Subtle Breath Practice,  
Visualisation, Lucid Dreaming

#### Causal Body

Witnessing Meditation, I AM Mantra Meditation  
Integral Inquiry, Big Mind, Centering Prayer  
The 3 Faces of Spirit

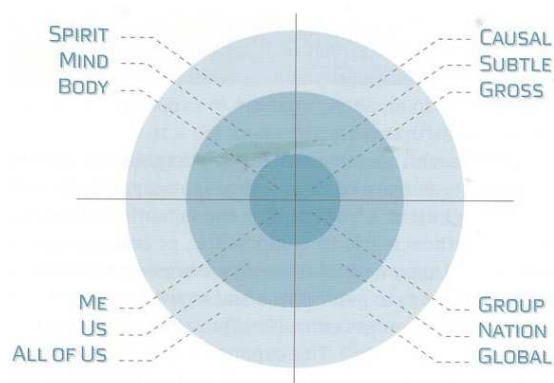


Figure 8. AQAL.

### Integral Life Practice

As part of the agenda of the Integral Institute based in Denver, Colorado, Wilber has been promoting the concept of an **Integral Life Practice**. This is akin to the emphasis of the religious and spiritual traditions of the need to have an ongoing practice to assist healthy growth towards wholeness (holiness) by promoting development through the stages of spiritual growth. This is summarised as cultivating body, mind and spirit to take self, culture and nature to increasingly higher, wider and deeper modes of being, which fits well with the topic: **Living the Progressive Religion Dream**.

The aim is to provide a model that can encompass a range of spiritual practices and disciplines, and that has a structure to ensure that the combination of activities is comprehensive. The practices suggested for the Core Modules promote care of Body, Mind, Spirit and Shadow. Other Auxiliary Modules relate to Ethics, Sex, Work, Emotions and Relationships.

This process is set out in detail in the book *Integral Life Practice*. It also provides creative techniques for applying some of the insights of *Integral Spirituality*. These include methods for growing through **Body**: movement and breathwork, **Mind**: the theoretical framework of an Integral spiritual approach, **Spirit**: the 1-2-3 of God and **Shadow**: the 3-2-1 shadow process.

#### Shadow Work

While one aspect of Wilber’s agenda is to affirm the contribution of the world’s wisdom traditions, he also challenges these traditions to take seriously the insights offered by modernism and postmodernism. For example, insights from modern psychology into the concept of the **shadow** have much to offer to these traditions – insights that meditation and other spiritual practices have not provided of themselves.

“Shadow” refers to those parts of the person that are repressed as a result of social pressures while growing up. As a result, part of the self is split off and projected onto others. It requires energy to keep the shadow parts out of awareness, and they often find immature and unhealthy expression.

Wilber notes that traditional religious practices such as meditation have tended to repress the ‘shadow’ aspects of human nature, with unhealthy consequences, whereas Integral Life Practice incorporates insights from modern psychology as well as more traditional activities.

Some of the great mystics of the world’s religious traditions have, however, affirmed the integration of all parts of human nature and of life’s experiences. This is well illustrated by the beautiful translation of Rumi’s poem *The Guest House*

### The Guest House, Rumi

*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they’re a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honourably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.*

From *The Essential Rumi*, by Coleman Barks

## The Integral Life Practice™ Matrix

CORE MODULES			
Body (Physical, Subtle, Causal)	Mind (Framework, View)	Spirit (Meditation, Prayer)	Shadow (Therapia)
Weightlifting (Physical)	Reading & Study	Zen	Gestalt Therapy
Aerobics (Physical)	Belief System	Centering Prayer	Cognitive Therapy
E.I.T. ★ (Physical, Subtle)	Integral (AQAL) Framework ★	Big Mind ★ Meditation	3-2-1 Process ★
Diet: Atkins, Ornish, the Zone (Physical)	Mental Training	Kabbalah	Dream-Work
ILP Diet (Physical) ★	Taking Multiple Perspectives	Compassionate Exchange ★	Interpersonal
Tai Chi Chuan (Subtle)	Any Worldview or Meaning System that Works for You	TM	Psychoanalysis
Qi Gong (Subtle)		Integral Inquiry ★	Art & Music Therapy
Yoga (Physical, Subtle)		Vipassana Meditation	
3-Body Workout (Physical, Subtle, Causal) ★		The 1-2-3 of Spirit ★	

AUXILIARY MODULES				
Ethics	Sex	Work	Emotions	Relationships
Codes of Conduct	Tantra	Right Livelihood	Transmuting Emotions ★	Integral Relationships ★
Professional Ethics	Integral Sexual Yoga ★	Professional Training	Emotional Intelligence Training	Integral Parenting ★
Social & Ecological Activism	Kama Sutra	Money Management	Bhakti Yoga (Devotional Practices)	Communication Skills
Self-Discipline	Kundalini Yoga	Work as a Mode of ILP ★	Emotional Mindfulness Practice	Couples Therapy
Integral Ethics ★	Sexual Transformative Practice	Karma Yoga	Tonglen (Compassionate Exchange Meditation)	Relational Spiritual Practice
Sportsmanship		Community Service & Volunteering	Creative Expression & Art	Right Association (Sangha)
Vows & Oaths		Work as Transformation		Conscious Marriage

It’s as simple as:

- Pick **one practice** from each of the **Four Core Modules**
- Add practices from the **Auxiliary Modules** as you wish
- Go!

(We particularly recommend the Gold Star Practices ★)

### The Integral Spiritual Center

Wilber has recently been involved in establishing an Integral Spiritual Centre, based in Denver Colorado. This has brought into conversation spiritual leaders from a range of traditions in accordance with these principles, which are similar to those of the Progressive Religion movement:

*The last hundred years has seen the explosion of a new spirituality, both Western and Eastern. This new spirituality has emerged from and is nourished and inspired by the classical religious systems of the great faiths. At the same time, for most practitioners in the “global spirituality movement,” there is a strong desire to seek the underlying shared truths of Spirit. There is a strong intuitive understanding that what unites us is far greater than what divides us.*

*Every great system of Spirit holds a powerful yet partial truth. No one system holds the entire truth by itself. Yet, paradoxically, authentic spiritual practice requires a commitment to a particular path of spirit.*

*The great systems of spirit which come to us from the pre-modern world remain central and important. Any world or integral spirituality must reverentially recognize and include much that exists in humankind’s evolutionary past.*

*The insights of modernity and postmodernity are valid and must be honoured and woven into the spiritual matrix. Truths of science, psychology, sociology, politics, history and many other fields are all expressions of the unfolding of the universe in higher orders of complexity and understanding, which in turn have given birth to democracy, human rights movements, the emergence of the feminine, global interconnectedness, etc.*

*The image of a symphony is one that resonates with many of the Fellows and Members of Integral Life Spiritual Center. Each instrument is honoured and must be mastered through intense commitment and practice. At the same time each instrument must listen with care and love to all the other instruments. It is from this very diversity, held in harmony and integrity that the sound of music emerges.*

As a member of a Barbershop Chorus, *The Blenders*, I enjoy this musical metaphor. In my roles as a Uniting Church minister and Executive Director of Hopewell Hospice and Paradise Kids, I find Wilber’s maps helpful in my own “Evolving Pilgrim’s Progress” and commend his insights to others committed to “Living the Progressive Religion Dream.”

## Books by Ken Wilber

1. *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (1977). An introduction to the full-spectrum model, the first to show, in a systematic way, how the great psychological systems of the West can be integrated with the great contemplative traditions of the East.
2. *No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth* (1979). A simple and popular guide to psychologies and therapies available from Western and Eastern sources.
3. *The Atman Project: A Transpersonal View of Human Development* (1980). The first psychological system to suggest a way of uniting Eastern and Western, conventional and contemplative, orthodox and mystical into a single framework.
4. *Up from Eden: A Transpersonal View of Human Evolution* (1981). From Joseph Campbell to Jean Gebser, Wilber outlines the human evolutionary journey - and "dialectic of process" - from primal past to integral future.
5. *The Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes: Exploring the Leading Edge of Science* (1982) Prominent scientists and thinkers on the dialogue between science and religion.
6. *Sociable God: Toward a New Understanding of Religion* (1983). Introducing a system of reliable methods to adjudicate the legitimacy and authenticity of a religious movement.
7. *Eye to Eye: The Quest for the New Paradigm* (1983). Examining three realms of knowledge: empirical of the senses, rational of the mind, and contemplative of spirit.
8. *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the World's Great Physicists* (1984). Non-technical excerpts from the work of great physicists, including Heisenberg, Schrodinger, Einstein, de Broglie, Jeans, Planck, Pauli and Eddington.
9. *Transformations of Consciousness: Conventional and Contemplative Perspectives on Development*, by Ken Wilber, Jack Engler and Daniel P. Brown (1986). Nine essays exploring the full-spectrum model of human growth and development, from prepersonal to personal to transpersonal.
10. *Spiritual Choices: The Problem of Recognizing Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation*, edited by Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker and Ken Wilber (1987). Psychologists and spiritual teachers contribute to a study of religious movements, aimed at answering the dilemma of how to distinguish spiritual tyranny from legitimate spiritual authority.
11. *Grace and Grit: Spirituality and Healing in the Life and Death of Treya Killam Wilber* (1991). The moving story of Ken's marriage to Treya and the five-year journey through her illness, treatment and eventual death from breast cancer.
12. *Sex Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (1995). The first volume of the Kosmos Trilogy that introduced the 4-quadrant model. This tour de force of scholarship and vision traces the course of evolution from matter to life to mind (and possible higher future levels), and describes patterns that evolution takes in all three domains.
13. *A Brief History of Everything* (1996). A short, highly readable version of *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, written in an accessible, conversational style, without all the technical arguments and endnotes; the place to begin if new to his work.
14. *The Eye of Spirit: An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad* (1997). Essays explore the Integral Approach to such fields as psychology, spirituality, anthropology, cultural studies, art and literary theory, ecology, feminism, and planetary transformation.
15. *The Marriage of Sense and Soul: Integrating Science and Religion* (1998). Surveying the world's great wisdom traditions and extracting features they share, Wilber offers compelling arguments that not only are these compatible with scientific truth, they also share a similar scientific method.
16. *The Essential Ken Wilber: An Introductory Reader* (1998). Passages from Wilber's most popular books, imparting the essence and flavour of his writings for those new to his work.
17. *One Taste: The Journals of Ken Wilber* (1999). A lively and entertaining glimpse into a year in the life of Ken Wilber.
18. *The Collected Works of Ken Wilber, vols. 1-8* (1999-2000). An ongoing series.
19. *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy* (2000). A landmark study introducing the first truly integral psychology, this model includes waves of development, streams of development, states of consciousness, and the self, and follows the course of each from subconscious to self-conscious to super-conscious.
20. *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality* (2001). A summary of the Integral Approach as a genuine "world philosophy," noteworthy because it includes many real-world applications in various fields. A popular choice for introductory reading.
21. *Boomeritis: A Novel That Will Set You Free* (2002). Brilliant scholarship and wicked parody to target one of the most stubborn obstacles to realizing the integral vision: a disease of pluralism plus narcissism that Wilber calls "boomeritis."
22. *The Simple Feeling of Being: Embracing Your True Nature* (2004). A collection of inspirational, mystical and instructional passages drawn from Wilber's publications, compiled and edited by some of his senior students.
23. *Integral Spirituality: A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World* (2006). A theory of spirituality that honours the truths of premodernity, modernity and postmodernity - including revolutions in science and culture - while incorporating insights of great religions. A revolutionary book, hailed by critics as fundamentally changing the nature and role of religion and spirituality.
24. *The Integral Vision: A Very Short introduction to the Revolutionary Integral Approach to Life, God, the Universe and Everything* (2007). An all-inclusive map that touches the most important factors from all the world's great traditions.
25. *Integral Life Practice: A 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Blueprint for Physical Health, Emotional Balance, Mental Clarity and Spiritual Awakening*, by Ken Wilber, Terry Patten, Adam Leonard and Marco Morelli (2008) A uniquely adaptive approach to awakened living. It's geared for the devout – and irreverent – people of any religion or no religion!