

#412– Meister Eckhart Mystic Warrior for Our Time with Matthew Fox

## David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Matthew Fox

(Transcribed from ShrinkRapRadio.com by Eric Hanley)

**Introduction:** My Guest today is the well-known theologian, Dr. Matthew Fox, the author of over thirty books, including *The Hidden Spirituality of Men*, *Christian Mystics*, and most recently, *Meister Eckhart Mystic Warrior for Our Time*. A preeminent scholar and popularizer of Western mysticism, he became an Episcopal priest after being expelled from the Catholic Church by Cardinal Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI. You can find out more about Matthew Fox by visiting our show notes for this episode on Shrinkrapradio.com. Now, here’s the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** Dr. Matthew Fox, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Matthew Fox:** Thank you David, very good to be with you.

**Dr. Dave:** Well I’m very pleased to have you on the show, I’ve heard your name over the years from graduate students who were drawn to your work but this is the first opportunity I’ve had a chance to dip into it. I believe I’ve heard your name in connection with something called Creation Spirituality. What can you tell us about that?

**Fox:** Well, Creation Spirituality is the alternative version of Christianity, it doesn’t begin with original sin but original blessing. Doesn’t begin with anthropocentrism but with the universe itself, it’s not anti-science, it’s very interested in what science has to teach us about not only human nature but about nature itself and the cosmos and the history of the cosmos. And it’s also feminist, its synergist in the wisdom of women, it really is the original tradition that historical Jesus was about because he comes from the wisdom tradition of Israel. The wisdom tradition of Israel is very cosmos-centered and nature-based, also feminine. So this is not the tradition that built empires in the name of Jesus, this is a justice tradition and of course, giving to these perils regarding ecology and global warming and the rest, obviously a rediscovery of the sacredness of creation seems to be very important in anyone’s world view and certainly in our religions.

**Dr. Dave:** Well that sounds like something I could feel comfortable getting on board with, is the term one of your own creation?

**Fox:** Actually I got it from my mentor when I studied in Paris in the late 1960’s, Cgnu. He was

a thirty-five year old French Dominican and a notable scholar and very important at the second Vatican council, he's really the grandfather of Liberation Theology, he's the one who named Creation Spiritual Traditions. When he did, it was like scales dropping from my eyes, very much of the moment of an awakening it made so much sense to me.

**Dr. Dave:** I can imagine. Now, you have the distinction, some might say the dubious distinction, of having been a priest in the Catholic Church and having been ex-communicated. Briefly, when was that and what did you do to bring that on?

**Fox:** Well, um, I really wasn't excommunicated, I was expelled from the Dominican Order which I was a member for thirty-four years. But, what I did to bring it on was to think and that was not welcome under the previous two papacies, John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger. They brought the inquisition back so as I wrote about it, they condemned one hundred and five theologians and expelled many of them. They really brought the inquisition back, they discouraged thinking so in the list of objections to my work by Cardinal Ratzinger, the first was that I'm a feminist theologian and that was a heresy. The second was that I called God Mother and that I preferred original blessing to original sin and I don't condemn homosexuals and they said quote, I work too closely with Native Americans, end quote. I don't what that means although it's true that I had Native Americans teaching with me at Holy Names College, a Catholic College in Oakland and he had sweat lodges on campus for students and staff and so forth. So, um, you know the problem was theirs not mine. They condemned not just me but Father Boff, Leonardo Boff the most read South American as a Liberation theologian. And the most read Catholic theologian in Europe, Father Eugene Drewelman who was a psychologist. So we all got dumped the same year, so obviously it was the perfect act. They were trying to strike fear into other thinkers, getting people to fall in line and I, what can I say, I wasn't eager to acquiesce.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah! Well, good for you and I imagine that might be something like getting fired from a job and having it turn to be one of the best things that ever happened.

**Fox:** That's right. Like the rabbit, please don't throw me into that briar patch. But it's, yeah, I got my pink slip and I try to wear the honor lightly.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, great. Well you've been a prolific writer over the years and much of your writing has been about Meister Eckhart. I imagine that there might be listeners out there who, like myself, have encountered references to the name Meister Eckhart without really knowing much or anything about him. So a good place for us to start might be to ask, who was Meister Eckhart?

**Fox:** Well, he also was a Dominican like I was. Who got himself into trouble with the Pope in the late, or well the early fourteenth century. He was a contemporary of Hafiz who came right after Rumi in the Sufi tradition. And, um, he's probably the greatest minister the West

has ever produced in terms of writing about the experience. But was also very prophetic, he was socially engaged with the women's movement of his day, which were condemned seventeen times by the same Pope who also condemned Eckhart a week after he died. And he was also engaged with the peasants in Germany, he was the first intellectual to preach in German, which at that time, was peasant dialect languages. We found transcripts of his trial in the nineteenth century and in it the inquisitors complained about how he preaching to the poor and telling them that they're aristocrats and that they're noble. That they're sons and daughters of God in their own language and they said if you preached in Latin we'd let you go but you're disturbing the poor. Eckhart said, well the poor need to know and need to learn to live in the light to die and ten years after he said that the peasant wars broke out in Germany. So he was well aware of the division between the haves and the have-nots of his day and he stood up on behalf of the have-nots and behalf of women and paid a big price for it.

**Dr. Dave:** Now one of the first things you said was that Meister Eckhart is a mystic. So what do you mean when you use the word mystic?

**Fox:** The mystic emphasizes the experiential side of religion. The experience of God, the experience of unity and oneness and beauty and compassion. One thing that's really uncanny about Eckhart and this is really what the new book's about is that he was so deep into his own soul and his own tradition that he comes out at times speaking like a Buddhist and at other times, speaking like a Hindu, and at other times like a Sufi. Jung says that he owes the key to the unconscious to Eckhart, Carl Jung loved Eckhart, quotes him over thirty times. That's what uncanny about Eckhart and what's fitting for him at this time because, I in many ways, we couldn't understand him before today because we weren't aware of the deepest teachings of Buddhism and but Eckhart hasn't so Suzuki, a Japanese Buddhist in 1959 had a dialogue with Thomas Merton a Catholic monk. At the end he said, Tom you're a typical Western dualist your one outside chance of understanding Buddhism is to read Meister Eckhart. Merton said he'd been condemned by the church and Suzuki said well I can't help that can I? Merton thought it over and in 1960 he did nothing but read Eckhart and Zen poetry and there was a completely 180 degree shift in Merton from then on, he becomes a very prophetic figure in American culture and Eckhart was the key. He wrote this in this Asian journal which he wrote on a trip to Asia which was his trip because he died there, he wrote in the margins Eckhart is my lifeboat. Eckhart is my lifeboat. So there you have an important Buddhist, Suzuki saying Eckhart is Buddhist. Then you have Kumar Swami a great Hindu saying that reading Eckhart is reading the Upanishads. Well that's about as great a praise as you'll ever get from a Hindu. Then when I published my first book on Eckhart over thirty years ago, I got a twelve page article back from a Sufi. And, it was an exegesis of just about four sentences that I had on Eckhart, he said Eckhart is a Sufi. So, Eckhart is amazing, he touches into so many traditions because he's so deep. He never read

Buddhism, he just travels into his own depths and really its complement to Buddhism he came up with language of experience that Buddhism also speaks of and it's the universality of a lot of Buddhist teachings.

**Dr. Dave:** Well it really strengthens the notions that there really is one common religion, maybe uncommon would be a better description.

**Fox:** Well, that's right. Nicholas of Cusa, a great fifteenth century scientist and mystic, David Bohm the late physicist said he owes more to Cusa than he does Einstein which quite a mouthful. Cusa said that we call ourselves by many religions, but only one religion and that is wisdom. And that's really what Eckhart was about and that's what mystics are really about, East and West, North and South. In this book then, I try to take out these topics by chapters, the first chapter is Rabbi Heschel, the Jewish meeting Eckhart. The second is about Thomas Berry, cosmology encountering Eckhart because Eckhart was interested in cosmology as of course most pre-modern thinkers are. And then the divine feminine in Eckhart because Eckhart was very much a feminist he says what does God do all day long, God lies on a maternity bed giving birth. And creativity is the essence of the godhead. And then I have a chapter on Kumar Swami and Hinduism and indigenous shamanism in Eckhart and so forth. And then Jung and Eckhart so it all adds up to showing that, hey we're in this together and that this time in history we humans have to draw wisdom from wherever we can and start living it and I think Eckhart would very much be on that bandwagon.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, as you kind of just hinted at, your book is structured in a very interesting way. At first, I thought this is going to be made-up conversations with these different figures and it wasn't structured quite that way but it really does, in each chapter you link Eckhart to the work of the personalities that you're treating in that chapter. And I found that not only was I getting a great introduction to Meister Eckhart, but also to those other people who you were featuring in each chapter, so I learned a lot about other people too.

**Fox:** I'm glad, yeah. Thich Nhat Hanh was my representative of Buddhism, too, and he speaks a lot about the need to recover the apophatic divinity, the god of darkness. Eckhart talks a lot about that, too, that God is super-essential darkness who has no name will be given a name. So, um, and Thich Nhat Hanh says that when Christians rediscover this, we'll have a whole new Christianity. It will be able to get to the stolen treasures and so forth. I couldn't agree more, and Eckhart is a champion of the apophatic or the god of darkness and silence. There's a lot to learn from all these thinkers and I'm glad that you were exposed in this book and not only Eckhart but these other people too because they're all worthwhile they're all speaking about a wisdom to us today.

**Dr. Dave:** There were new theological terms too that I encountered and you were just using one, apophatic, and I think was cataphatic the other one? So say again what those two are?

**Fox:** Well those two are Greek words and they're about, the cataphatic is drawn to the light and apophatic is about no light. Phatic is the Greek word for light, we get the word photography from that for example. And so the god of light is the god of awe and wonder and creation and beauty. But the apophatic is the god of darkness and silence and nothingness and no projections. So you need both, there's time for light in our life and there's time for darkness like each day has both light and darkness. Too much Christian theology, in the West anyway, is all about presuming we know who God is whereas the apophatic is missing and that's who god is not, and that's the great mystery you might say, the god of history and light and creation but there's a god of mystery and darkness and that's what you encounter in meditation. But also, in dark times like we're living in, I talk about time of the dark night not only of our soul but the dark night of our species. So we're in kind of a collective darkness today, our species is wondering if we're going to survive, if we're going to change our ways enough to survive and this is where the apophatic comes in too because it's an invitation to be in the dark, to be in the quiet and to allow things to happen.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, speaking of these dark times, there's a lot of focus in the Middle East with the turmoil that's going on there right now and you already mentioned a Sufi connection that Sufis experience Eckhart as speaking to them. Do you think Eckhart would have any light to shed on darkness in life with him, that he'd like to shed on the current conflict in the Middle East?

**Fox:** Well I definitely, well justice is very very important to him he says, the person who understands what I have to say about justice understands everything I have to say. So his is not a spirituality of withdrawal or of mere contemplation alone, but it's about compassion and action and justice and healing and mending. In that regard, I think he's very imbued with a Jewish spirituality in that regard. But I'll lay out with what I call the four E's in the last chapter of the book. The e of ecology, the e of economics, of education and of ecumenism of faith. And I think that these are well represented in Eckhart's worldview and I think that if we were really working on developing a new economics, one that works for everyone in the world, and not just all the two-legged ones but for the forests and the soils. If we were doing this I don't think we'd have all the appeal to radical political movements today because there would not be all of the suffering and poverty that launches so many wars. So just that alone is one of the issues, so too with ecology so if we could, as a species work shoulder to shoulder no matter what our particular religious traditions or lack of them about what is an obvious common problem which is the survival of this planet as we know it. This would eliminate a lot of the strife that arises when we've fallen to our sectarian, tribal natures. The reptilian brain which is that brain that wants to strike out at others in a win-lose consciousness, this brain has to be tamed. That's what contemplation does, that's what meditation does, that's what a spiritual practice does, it calms the reptilian brain. A lot

of the mammal brain which is half as old but extremely important, the mammal brain is about kinship and family and compassion, it allows that to flourish and assert itself more. So spiritual practice is very important for world peace because without it were just lashing out at each other like crocodiles in a fight. The reptilian brain just runs away with everything and it's obvious when 9/11 happened, the Bush administration and Cheney went to war in Iraq- just the wrong place at the wrong time. That's a pure reptilian brain response, it was not a fuller brain response that included thoughtful awareness and was really the cause of this thing and not an appropriate response.

**Dr. Dave:** They seem to have forgotten about Vietnam. I was very impressed by that at the time and I actually joined marches against it and it's just shocking that don't these guys remember Vietnam? Now, that's really a new idea that you've just given us there, at least for me, of meditation, spiritual disciplines, having the effect of quieting the reptilian brain.

**Fox:** Well, you know one of the reasons I say this is because reptiles are not very good at bonding. It's not their thing. They're good at solitude, they like to lay alone in the sun, your snake and your crocodile and so forth. And being alone entertaining solitude, is exactly what meditation accomplishes. So that's why I'm convinced that the calming of the reptilian brain happens with meditation. Without that, you have this explosion of reptilian energy and I think it's clear that that's what's dominating our species at this time. It has to be tamed and that's part of the contribution of the spiritual practice.

**Dr. Dave:** It sounds like meditation would be best practiced on a hot rock in the sun. Say a little bit more, you mentioned Judaism in passing, say a little bit more about the connection between Eckhart and Judaism.

**Fox:** Yes, well, as I said the book begins with the chapter on Heschel and of course Heschel was such a spiritual genius. One of his biggest emphases, and he had many, but this was probably his main one was the importance of awe and wonder and he said the sacred is counter to awe. He said that oneness with the divine begins with wonder. So that's an agent to his teaching that awe is the beginning of wisdom. So Eckhart is very big on awe and Heschel talks about radical amazement, well Eckhart talks often about amazement and being amazed. To develop our capacity for awe and wonder and amazement is really the first step in a mystical life and it opens the soul up and what results from that is a sense of reverence and a sense of gratitude and a positive view of the world. And Heschel is amazing writing about that for example he talks about how the universe is not expected, it's really a big surprise that the universe is so amazing and beautiful and it works and that we can understand it. All of this is part of the awe and wonder and amazement of living. He's very poetic and terrific in naming these experiences. There's a real echo with Eckhart, so they both protect that depth of awe. What the mystics called the *via positiva*, the path of wonder and awe and delight. Heschel also is very big on justice, as of course the whole Jewish

tradition is, and you know Ghandi said I learned to say no from the West, meaning from Jesus and the prophets of Israel because in the Hindu tradition the idea of reincarnation or repetition of cycles was an excuse for not standing up for the poor or the lower classes. And Ghandi was disturbed by that as a Hindu and he had to step out of Hinduism and encounter this Western message of saying no, the prophetic no to injustice. When it comes to the untouchables in his world. So this is part of what the West has been to the East, the East has to give the West a lot especially on the theme of contemplation and meditation and practices. The West also can give the East a lot in terms of what I call “holy impatience,” so there’s room for serenity in patience and there’s room for impatience. The West is better at the latter and the East is better at the former. So when we need each other.

**Dr. Dave:** Fascinating. And when you were talking about the appreciation of awe and amazement, it put me in mind of Maslow and his focus on peak experiences. Which to me, seems to have a symbol or quality.

**Fox:** I think that’s really endemic to all healthy spirituality, it begins with this amazement and gratitude. It goes on from there. Heschel talks about immense preciousness of being, not an object of analysis but a cause of wonder. Just to be is a blessing, just to live is holy. He said that wonders is where we should begin our depth thinking, not doubt. So again, this is very concrete stuff and it parallels a lot that you’ll find in Eckhart, he says everything praises God. Heschel says what we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder. Stand still and behold, he says. Beauty and grandeur of the universe. So that standing still, that’s the meditative dimension that we spoke of earlier, we have to learn to be quiet. Be still and learn that I am God, that stillness is a necessary requisite to take to our experiences and wonder to deepen them and turn them into a sense of reverence.

**Dr. Dave:** You remarked earlier that Carl Jung had thirty references to Eckhart and I’ve been particularly interested in the Jungian perspective and I’ve done lots of interviews with Jungians. So I’m wondering if you can tell us a bit more about Jung and the ways in which perhaps he was influenced by Eckhart, if maybe that shaped any of his ideas or concepts.

**Fox:** Oh definitely it did and he said it, it was Eckhart that gave him the key to the unconscious. He was letting go and letting be. Jung said the unconscious has always wanted to interfere and to take charge so the key is to let go and let be and he found that key in Eckhart. Jung was a son, grandson, and great-grandson of Swiss reformed ministers. And his father was very much a fire and brimstone kind of preacher. Jung didn’t want anything to do with it and Jung’s first negative experience that struck him so deep of religion was when he underwent his first communion and he says nothing happened. It was not an experience for him, you see. And then he raised the question whether anything is happening in Christianity, in his day of course, he was born at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century so his point was there was the experiential dimension of Christianity, he did find it in his Swiss Calvinist

reform tradition. But he does say that he found life in Eckhart, he said Eckhart was the one Christian thinker that he found life and not only life, but that it nourished him and nurtured him to read Eckhart. There was this excitement in Eckhart, there's this ecstatic appreciation for being that comes through time and time again. So Jung, he doesn't just reference Eckhart, he has a whole essay on Eckhart what he calls of the relativity of God that is in Eckhart. And by that I think he means that Eckhart is talking about a relationship to the divine and how we experience it and taste it, it's not just dogma it's not just a statement or doctrine about God there's something experiential going on. And Jung continually was kind of despairing of whether religion was capable of leading us to experience or whether its just wrapped in up doctrines or dogmas and even symbols and metaphors are running out of steam that need explanation instead of just offering us immediate contact. So I think Jung was raising a lot of important questions about religion and psyche and of course he himself said that his real vocation was not just healing people from neuroses as it was leading people to the numinous, to encountering the divine. So in many ways, I feel, Jung was playing the role of a post-modern priest or post-modern minister but he was raising different questions about how to stir up the soul so that it could truly have experiences of numinosity, experiences with the divine and I give him a lot of credit for his life's work which was very fruitful for very many people.

**Dr. Dave:** That's interesting because people have raised the question of whether not Jungian psychology is in fact, in some was, a religion that people are drawn to it from a religious impulse.

**Fox:** Well that's interesting, I certainly think it's a reforming movement to religion kind of like what Luther didn't want to start a new religion but I think he was trying to reform the religion he inherited. That's true even of Buddha who was trying to reform Hinduism and Jesus was trying to renew Judaism. So in many was I think Jung was trying to renew his Protestant legacy as a son, grandson, and great grandson of Protestant ministers and he took another direction and I think he contributed a lot. I agree, I think he has a very special appeal to people who are on a spiritual quest and are looking for something more experiential than something simply doctrinal or dogmatic.

**Dr. Dave:** What do think about his warning that we in the West should not over-value Eastern spiritual traditions but rather, go back to our own Western roots?

**Fox:** Yeah, I like very much that quote of his, I use it quite often where he says, "we Westerners cannot be pirates thieving wisdom from foreign shores." It's taken Asia thousands of years to develop, as if our own culture was an error outlived. I think that's very important and really that's been important to me in my work, I've tried to dig deeply in my lineage as a Westerner, as a Christian, even as a Catholic. To dig up what's valuable there and there's much that's valuable. I don't think anyone has to apologize for Jesus, we may

have to apologize or we need to apologize for a lot of what Christians have done in the name of Jesus. But Jesus himself stands out as a unique mystic activist. A mystic warrior and the world needs him, we don't need just more contemplation. In fact the Dalai Lama said this in a speech a year or two ago to Buddhist monks, he said, "we Buddhists are great at meditating on compassion and talking about compassion but we should imitate Christians more in practicing compassion." We I'm glad the Dalai Lama has not singled out Christians but the point he's making is a good one, that we have to practice it not just meditate on it and that was Jesus' way. I've spent my lifetime digging into Eckhart and Hildegard and Thomas Aquinas and the cosmic Christ and contemporary science so I am trying to do what Jung proposes that if we go deeper into our own culture, and demand more of it. I mean what's pitiful is that we settle for some of the crazy fundamentalism that I call kooky Christianity that is available today and you see so much of it on the media and so forth. It's such a paltry and insipid and ridiculous interpretation of the tradition and of Jesus himself that it's enough to make you sick. So you have to dig and go deeper and find out what's really valuable here. And that's what Eckhart is saying that ultimately Westerners have to and the Dalai Lama is saying too, he doesn't want Westerners to become Buddhists. He keeps saying go to your own tradition and make it better so I think that exposure to other religions like Buddhism and so forth can help Westerners to demand more of their own lineage.

**Dr. Dave:** You know, I grew up somewhat in an Evangelical, charismatic version of Christianity; which I departed from, I should add. I'm wondering how to link that up with what you're saying about the importance of experience. It seems like there is a branch of Christianity that heavily values an experience and ecstatic experience.

**Fox:** Well I don't think that's something to be put down, but what does experience lead to? Experience isn't enough, Thomas Aquinas says that for teaching spirituality, experience is not enough you also need concepts. So does experience result in the work of healing and injustice and compassion? Or is it just a high that you undergo on a regular basis? Is that enough? William Hawking, the great American philosopher, says the prophet is a mystic in action. So the mysticism in the experiential has to lead to putting your feet on the ground and contributing and I think that's what we admire in people whether were talking about Dr. King or Dorothy Day or Cesar Chavez and so forth. In order to carry this experience of love into the world so that others may experience it and that's of course often the struggle and you're going to get yourself in trouble just the way Jesus did. So simply having a high from the experience isn't enough. It has to translate into service.

**Dr. Dave:** Well I think the place where I depart from those people has to do with the literal response of fundamentalists. That the bible is the literal word of God and this is the only word of God and so that kind of absolutism is not something that I think either one of us can endorse.

**Fox:** Well, exactly and in contrast to that in the tradition we have Thomas Aquinas in the 13<sup>th</sup> century saying revelation comes in two volumes, the Bible and nature. So nature itself then is a revelation, a source of awareness of God. And that's where science comes in and that's where anti-science, anti-intellectual religion, the kind you're talking about, is very dangerous. Because then it gets reduced to pure projection, what you see in the Bible and you can see anything there. So the idea that nature itself is a source of revelation, that's very important. By science I don't only mean biological or chemical or physiological or physical science, but also psychology, human nature and what we can learn from human nature, and science and psychology. So all of this is revelation, that means our study, use of our left brains is very important along with our right brain- our intuitive mystical brain. To get them both humming is very very important and that's the hope, I think, for our species, if we can do that.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, science and religion as you know are often thought to be at odds with one another yet you seem to feel that Eckhart might provide some resolution to this apparent conflict. Given that the time in which he lived might be characterized as pre-science, what leads you to believe that?

**Fox:** Well, one hundred years before Eckhart, Hildegard Von Bingen who was a scientist in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, she said all science comes from God. Between Hildegard and Eckhart, there was Thomas Aquinas, who developed his entire theology around Aristotle who was the best scientist of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The 13<sup>th</sup> century was rediscovering him and to his credit, he said that a mistake about creation results in a mistake about God. And that is why we have to study science because science tells us about creation therefore it gives us insight about God and theology. So Eckhart followed right after Aquinas and both of them were Dominicans so Eckhart was very steeped in Aquinas' appreciation, and Hildegard's too, of science. That science is not objectionable to faith or religion, but rather it can open revelation up, it can open doors up. Fast forward to today, I mean Einstein said that we've been given two gifts: the sacred gift of intuition and the gift of rationality. But he says rationality's meant to serve intuition, but we live in a culture that honors rationality and ignores the sacred gift of intuition. So even Einstein says you've got to have both of these brains humming, the intuitive brain, the mystical brain, but also the left brain of analysis and the verbal. So it's a dangerous situation when we have rationality serving rationality, instead of rationality serving intuition. Einstein said values do not come from intellect, they come from intuition and feeling, therefore, he says do not make an idol of intellect. Intellect must serve the values. I think that's, that really names the crisis in education today. This is where I talk about education in my book, one of the big E's here with Eckhart, too. Because we have to make room to develop the muscles of meditation, the muscles of awe and wonder, the muscles of creativity. And look at how education is happening today, this is where I see many young people who are bored by school, that's why they drop out. Why are they bored?

Because there is no appeal to their creativity, there's no appeal to the wisdom they carry within them or to awe and wonder. It's all about taking exams, and this is no way to develop the full human person. So I think education itself has to undergo profound shakeup at this time and I think people like Eckhart are daring to develop language around the mystical brain are helping us to retrieve a balance between the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I know you have an appointment coming up and need to go, I really appreciate everything you have touched on here. And as we wind up here, is there any last word- although what you just said is a great wrap- but is there anything else you want to say to wrap things up here?

**Fox:** Well, there are two endorsements in my book that really struck me if I could site them briefly. One is Larry Dossey, who's quite well known as a medical doctor, who's done a lot of work on healing and prayer and so forth. A lot of studies about that, but he wrote me a note and he said, in my library, I have a section on Eckhart and he's very important to me, but whether our species has a future on Earth does not depend on development of more gee-whiz technologies, but on whether we're willing to move into the psycho-spiritual dimension proclaimed by Meister Eckhart and elucidate in this important book by Matthew Fox. I quoted that in, two weeks ago when I spoke in Silicon Valley, even though it was blasphemy to say that there but I really like his language "gee-whiz technology," you know it's not enough that we have gee-whiz technology but what are we doing with them? Are we making the world a better place, a more just place, a more peaceful place? Are we getting into the hearts and souls of people, and if not, how do you get there? And how do new technologies help? So what I think he's saying there is very important, especially to the younger generation, we've got to listen to these great mystics. And Eckhart is as great a one as the West has ever produced. The other line comes from Bishop John Spong, who's the Episcopal bishop and very much, well he's a Biblical scholar, but very much a reformer and critic of the church. What he said about this book really surprised me, he said "a stunning new vision of Christianity that transcends both creeds and boundaries and it's a thrilling read." I don't think of this consciously when I was writing the book, that it's a new vision of Christianity but a man of Spong's stature and experience to say that about this book and Eckhart moves me because I think he's right. Eckhart understood Christianity to be about how every one of us is another Christ and there's a danger in projecting everything onto Jesus and is at the heart of his teaching. I think Spong is right that this kind of approach by Eckhart is a new way of understanding Christianity, but really, it's very old, too. You see it in Paul, the very first writer in Christianity, Paul was a mystic. He was a cosmic mystic, a cosmic Christ he writes all the time but we've lost that in Christianity so I do think Spong is right that Meister Eckhart can help us to reinvent Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Dr. Dave:** Well that's a great wrap-up. Dr. Matthew Fox, thanks for being my guest on Shrink Rap Radio.

Shrink Rap Radio # 412, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014,

Meister Eckhart Mystic Warrior for Our Time with Matthew Fox

**Fox:** Thanks for the work you're doing, offering this opportunity.