

Pneumatology: The Spirit of Reiki

by

Ruth Mayeux Allen

**Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Theology of the University of the South
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts**

May, 2009

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M.A. Abstract

PNEUMATOLOGY: THE SPIRIT OF REIKI

RUTH M. ALLEN

Thesis under the direction of Professors Robert Hughes and Cynthia Crysdale

Reiki is a complementary medicine, a form of “hands on healing,” used in hospitals, hospice, medical doctors’ offices, in private practice, and in conjunction with psychotherapy sessions and spiritual direction. This thesis focuses on Reiki as practiced and interpreted from a Christian point of view. The initial focus is on the person and role of the Holy Spirit as discussed in the Old Testament, New Testament, and by leading theologians.

The Spirit represents life itself and indwells in all creation. The terms *ruach* in the Old Testament and *pneuma* in the New Testament refer to the Spirit as breath, wind, and spirit. The Spirit and the Word share a mutual relationship.

Of the various charisms given to each human by the Holy Spirit, the charism of healing is chosen to demonstrate the manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s role as the “source of life” or “universal life force.” The charism of healing was surveyed through a review of the healing ministry of Jesus, healing practices in the Christian tradition, and the practice of Christian healing today. Charisms are associated with the precise role(s) each Christian is called to by God.

Unlike glossolalia or prophecy, the gift of healing is mentioned by Paul as a fact of Christian life. Using Jesus’ ministry of healing as a model, Christians have used this gift of healing from the time of the apostles through today. Authentic Christian healers focus on the Lordship of Jesus or the Holy Spirit and leave the healing to God.

All charisms must be trained and have a means of being expressed. One means of training and expressing a gift of healing is the practice of Reiki. Reiki transcends all religions, cultures, creeds, and nationalities. It is not a religion. Reiki is a method of stress reduction and relaxation which promotes healing at the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical levels. It is a non-invasive technique of gentle touch that restores dysfunctional vibrations to resonances that are in closer harmony with the indwelling Trinity, thus producing healthier dimensions of being. All Reiki practitioners are conduits for Universal Life Force energy. Christians call this energy the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1

The Holy Spirit: Who Do We Say You Are?

Introduction

In general, theology and the church had lost sight of the Holy Spirit until approximately twenty years ago. Until 1985, when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was retrieved, it was common to speak of the Holy Spirit as “the forgotten God.” Pneumatology had been neglected.¹ Often the Holy Spirit was given a secondary role, especially in the West where Christology is emphasized. One purported reason is St. Augustine’s depersonalized approach to the Spirit in his doctrine of the Trinity. Augustine’s perspective that the Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son presented a foundation for *filioque*, the phrase in the creed that indicates belief that Spirit proceeds both from the Father and Son, and it divested the Spirit of full personality.² One biblical reason for the theological deficit is that the Spirit calls persons to the Son and never to the Spirit’s own self.

The church has been another reason for the subordinate role given to the Holy Spirit. Charismatic and prophetic movements have encouraged the church to attempt to

¹ Kilian McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God: The Holy Spirit as the Universal Touch and Goal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 2.

² Bernd Jochen Hilberath, “Identity through Self-Transcendence: The Holy Spirit and the Communion of Free Persons” in *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 2-4.

control the work of the Spirit out of fear.³ Dialogue happened in response to challenges from inside and outside, and until the 1980s the ecumenical movement did not appear to understand the need to engage more fully in a discussion of pneumatology.⁴ Presently the need is apparent, and, in response, numerous works have been published on the Spirit.

Biblical Views of the Spirit

The Bible informs us about the Spirit in terms of stories and symbols, and it emphasizes the works of the Spirit. The images of the Spirit in the Bible are taken from the material, animal, and personal worlds as illustrated below.

Life-breath

One of the earliest biblical concepts of the Spirit is found in Genesis 2:7. This passage speaks of the Lord's breathing into the nostrils of man, who then becomes a living being. In the Hebrew Bible, "life-breath" is often expressed by the Hebrew word *ruach*, which means "breath," "wind," or "spirit."⁵ The story of God's breathing life into human beings is the predecessor of John 20:22, in which Jesus says, "Receive the Holy

³ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 18.

⁴ Konrad Raiser, "The Holy Spirit in Modern Ecumenical Thought," *Ecumenical Review* 41 (1989): 375.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

Spirit” as he breathes upon the disciples. Therefore, the Spirit can represent life itself and is a gift of God.

Wind

Wind is closely related to breath. John 3, when speaking of the mysterious nature of wind and the Spirit’s role in a believer’s new birth, clearly connects the idea of wind with God’s Spirit.

Fire

Breath and wind are more common than the use of fire as a description of the Spirit. One example of the use of fire is found in the preaching of John the Baptist concerning baptism with the Spirit and fire (Matt. 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17).

Water

In the Old Testament, Isaiah predicts the coming salvation in terms of God’s Spirit being “poured out” (32:15). This provides the background for the Gospel of John where water symbolizes the Spirit (4:10; 7:38-39).

Cloud

In the Old Testament a cloud represents God’s presence and glory with Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod. 24:15-18), at the tent of meeting (Exod. 33:9-10), in the desert (Exod. 40: 36-38), and at the dedication of the Solomonic temple (1 Kings 8:10-12).

Where God is, God's presence is made possible only through the universal Spirit, so that the symbol of the cloud can justifiably be connected with the Spirit.⁶

Dove

All four Gospels record Jesus' baptism in the Jordan when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. Kilian McDonnell has hypothesized that the dove offers a cosmic meaning: the dove delivered news of a new creation to the ark, so the Holy Spirit announces that the world will have a new beginning with Jesus' baptism.⁷

Paraclete

Jesus is the first Paraclete, and the Holy Spirit is the second. This is the only personal image of the Holy Spirit and proclaims that the Spirit speaks in our defense.⁸

The Spirit in the Old Testament

In some writings in the Old Testament, *ruach* indicates God's outgoing activity and presence to the world in a creative, quickening, renewing way. These writings do not depict the Holy Spirit as a personal being separate from God the Creator (Ezek. 36:26; Isa. 44:3).

⁶ Ibid., 24-25.

⁷ Killian McDonnell, "Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 209-236.

⁸ Ibid., 25.

The Hebrew term *ruach* is in most cases equivalent to the Greek term *pneuma*, and both are used to refer to the Holy Spirit. The term *ruach* in the Old Testament and *pneuma* in the New Testament have multiple meanings: “air,” “wind,” “breath,” or “soul.”⁹ *Ruach* also means the life-force of the individual (Judg. 15:19) and of the group (Num. 16:22). It is present in God and the Messiah, but not in idols made to represent God.¹⁰ In the Old Testament pneumatology, *ruach* is present in animals as well as humans, and God is the source for both. *Ruach*, as a charismatic power, can strongly envelop a human being (Judg. 14:6; Sam. 16:13). This Spirit, *ruach*, can allow humans to execute supernatural deeds, as the judges physically saving Israel (Judg. 6:34), and can indicate the source of the craftsman’s skill (Exod. 31:3) or any exceptional ability (Dan. 6:3).¹¹ Whenever *ruach* is connected with an outpouring, it is inevitably eschatological in nature. From inception, Israel’s faith was oriented to promise and the future it contained.¹²

The works of the Spirit reveal the person of the Spirit to us. In Isaiah, the Spirit ordains and empowers the Messiah (11:1-8). It is through the Spirit that the missionary work of the Messiah, including the salvation of the Gentiles, will be achieved. (42:1-4;

⁹ Friedrich Baumgartel, “Pneuma” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 6:360.

¹⁰ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹² Kilian McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 34.

49:1-6).¹³ Ezekiel 37:14 credits the resurrection of all Israel, not of individuals, to the spirit/Spirit of God.¹⁴ God prepares the prophets in the Old Testament so that humans might become accustomed to carrying the Spirit and to having communion with God.¹⁵ The Spirit's work is a new creation. It is nothing less than resurrection (Ezek. 37:1-14). Numerous allusions to the Spirit are found in Wisdom literature: Wisdom can be identified with the Word/Logos or the Spirit (Prov. 8:22-31).¹⁶

The Spirit in the New Testament

The counterpart of *ruach* in the Old Testament is *pneuma* in the New Testament, and both mean “air” and “breathing.” In the ancient world, this sense was significant because the air breathed was deemed the carrier of life. *Pneuma* refers to the human spirit, which is that facet of a human through which God most directly encounters the person (Rom. 8:16; Gal. 6; 18; Phil. 4:23; Heb. 4:12, etc). This facet is one in which a person is most directly open to God (Matt. 5:3; Luke 1:47; Rom. 1:9; 1 Peter 3:4).¹⁷ Paul

¹³ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 27.

¹⁴ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁶ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

compares the Spirit breathing life into the old Adam at creation to the Spirit breathing life into the new Adam at the Resurrection.¹⁸

In the Synoptic Gospels, we learn that Jesus' success as an exorcist was irrefutable, and credit is given to the Spirit of God for his success (Matt. 12:28). The effective power of the Spirit is used to define the presence of the kingdom.¹⁹ Jesus saw his ministry in the Spirit in terms of eschatological blessing: good news, freedom, and healing. Jesus' role as baptizer in the Spirit is an indicator of the eschatological ministry of the Spirit. Jesus is depicted as a dispenser of the Spirit in the Gospels (Matt. 10:20; Mark 13:11). By the power of the Spirit, the church ministered to and healed people just as Jesus had done. The Gospels generally refer to Jesus as the Man of the Spirit. The Spirit realized his birth (Matt. 1:18-25, Luke 1:35). At his baptism he was anointed with the Spirit (Matt 3:16—17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:22; John 1:33). The Spirit led Jesus to the desert for his temptations (Matt. 4: 1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1).²⁰ Rogers adds the overshadowing of the Spirit at the transfiguration, the Spirit's anointing Jesus at his burial, the Spirit's indwelling his body at the resurrection, and the Spirit's continuing his mission at Pentecost.²¹ In general, Jesus' ministry was born of the Spirit.²² It is

¹⁸ Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 80, 201.

¹⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 23.

²² Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 30.

comforting to realize that if the Spirit launches and sustains the life of the resurrected Lord, then the Spirit will launch and sustain the life of the believers in their resurrection.²³ At Pentecost, a powerful work of the Spirit gives birth to the Church, and the same Holy Spirit empowered the church in its ministry and miracles. The Spirit gave boldness of speech and inspiration to the first Christians (Acts 4:8; 13, 29-31; 13: 9) by facilitating successful testimony and teaching (5:32; 6:10; 18:25).²⁴

According to Basil of Caesarea, everything that occurred since the Lord's assuming flesh comes to pass through the Spirit. At his baptism and subsequently, the Holy Spirit was present in every action Jesus Christ performed.²⁵

Did Jesus speak of the Spirit? Yes, but only rarely. Exegetes generally agree that Jesus rarely spoke of the Spirit, yet the manuscripts portray Jesus as impelled by the Spirit (Luke 4:1), as one who acts in the Spirit (Luke 4:18-21; 6:19). Jesus was probably aware of being a Spirit-bearer (Mark 1:12; 3:22-29).²⁶ Did the tradition restrain the prophetic apocalyptic nature of Jesus' preaching? What are the possible reasons for Jesus not including the Spirit more often in his teachings? Rudolf Bultmann asks if the reason is that the Synoptics wanted Jesus presented as a less threatening teaching rabbi, or was it because Jesus claimed to be more than a prophet and so did not want to pronounce himself as a bearer of the Spirit, and therefore a prophet. Or is the reason for the rarity of

²³ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 37.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁵ *On the Holy Spirit* 16:39; cited in McDonnell, *The Right Hand of God*, 84.

²⁶ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 65.

citations in the Synoptic Gospels to be embedded in the messianic secret, meaning that if Jesus verbalized more of the Spirit he would divulge himself prematurely as the Messiah? Jesus' stated intention was to keep this secret until his resurrection (Mark 9:9).²⁷

Pauline Letters Concerning the Spirit

Paul expands our understanding of the Holy Spirit. According to Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Paul's pneumatology is christologically founded, that is, the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Phil. 1: 19). It is the Holy Spirit who makes it possible for us to recognize and know Christ. To be "in Spirit" and to be "in Christ" are practically synonymous, hence we cannot experience the Spirit apart from Christ.²⁸ In the same mode, Eugene Rogers states that "the Spirit is in us, means we are in God."²⁹ One can say that the Spirit cannot be experienced apart from Christ (1 Cor. 12: 1-3), and Paul also states that Christ became "a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15: 45). Paul teaches about the Spirit's soteriological dimension saying that a basic sign of belonging to Christ is the gift of the Spirit that renders one Christian (Rom. 8:9) and a partaker in sonship (8:14-16; Gal. 4:6). Paul tells us that the reception of the Spirit is fundamentally a synonym for grace (Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 1:15), and another name for

²⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 108-130.

²⁸ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 32.

²⁹ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 82.

justification (1 Cor. 6: 11; Gal. 3:14).³⁰ The word “spiritual” is commonly used due to the fact that what is typically acknowledged is not the Holy Spirit in person but the Spirit’s grace-giving energies, powers, and acts and activities on human beings.³¹

In addition to Paul’s teaching concerning the soteriological facet of the Holy Spirit are the charismatic sayings and acts (1 Cor. 1:4-7; Gal. 3:5). Paul teaches extensively concerning the correct use of the *charismata*.³²

Although there is an eschatological side of the person of the Holy Spirit in Luke, it is Paul who is extremely precise in stating that the Spirit of the new age has entered into the old. Paul calls the Spirit the *arrabōn*, i.e., a down payment of the glory to come (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14), and as the initial payment of the believers’ inheritance in the kingdom of God (Rom. 8:15-17; 14:17; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 15:42-50; 4:6-7). Paul and Luke both give special emphasis to the communal feature of the Spirit’s ministry. The rationale for the *charismata* is to develop the community (Rom. 12: 4-8; 1 Cor. 12:14-26; Eph. 4: 11-16). Through prayer, the Spirit opens the way to God. Once in union with God, one may then reach out in a more proactive way to one’s neighbor.

Charisms are very important according to Paul. He believes they participate in a crucial role in an individual believer’s life and in the communal life. *Charismata* may be regular ministries (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-30; Eph. 4:11) or more dramatic Spirit-

³⁰ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 32.

³¹ Pavel Florensky, “Letter Five: the Comforter,” in *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, trans. Boris Jakim (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1977), 80-105.

³² Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 32-33.

motivated acts or words (1 Cor. 12: 8-11). Our responsibility, according to Paul, is to search for an equilibrium between undervaluing and exploiting the charisms (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 2:12-14; 1 Thess. 5:19-22) and not confining the implementation of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19-20).³³

Paul's theology of the Spirit is summarized by Gordon Fee as follows:

1. The Spirit plays an absolutely crucial role in Paul's Christian experience and his understanding of the gospel.
2. Equally crucial to the Pauline perspective is the dynamically experienced nature of the coming of the Spirit in the life of the individual and community.
3. The coming of the eschatological Spirit meant the return of God's own personal presence to dwell in and among God's people.
4. Trinitarian presuppositions are absolutely fundamental to the Pauline theology of the Spirit.
5. Paul's Trinitarian pneumatology is foundational to the heart of this theological enterprise, namely, salvation in Christ.
6. The Spirit is the key to all truly Christian spirituality, including prayer in the Spirit.³⁴

³³ Ibid., 33.

³⁴ Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 1994, 896-99.

Paul comprehended the Spirit as the power of God. He also believed the Spirit as the power of God initiated the proof of Jesus being the Son of God by raising him from the dead (Rom. 8:4).³⁵

Romans 8:11 is an example for identifying all three Persons by the resurrection of the crucified Christ.³⁶ Pre-twentieth-century commentators on this verse have typically observed a different characteristic, that is, the Spirit comes to rest upon, or “dwells in” a human body. Paul’s notion is that the body appears to be something the Spirit can assume, assimilate, or catch up into the triune life.³⁷ Around 360, Hilary of Poitiers referred to Romans 8:11 when stating that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are the same Spirit, not two, and therefore it is the Spirit of God that dwells in Christians.³⁸ The inclusion of the Spirit of the Raised and the Spirit of the Raiser indwelling a human becomes the inclusion of the human within God. The assumption of the human into the Trinitarian life is the only way the resurrection can be made to work.³⁹ When the Spirit is in us, we are in God.⁴⁰

³⁵ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁸ Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, in Philip Schaff et al., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Trans. E. W. Watson (*Second series*) (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 9:21; cited in Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 81.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 82.

John's Gospel and Letters on the Spirit

John repeatedly utilizes the Old Testament metaphors of the Spirit associated with the life-giving power of breath and water. This is obvious in his illustrations of spring of life (John 4:14; 6:63; 7:38-39), rebirth (John 3:5-8), and reception of the Spirit as new life (John 20:22; cf. Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 37: 9). John is partial to using another Old Testament imagery, that of anointing, when speaking of the Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27).

Like Paul, John has a deep interest in the essential association between the Spirit and Christ, albeit he portrays it differently. Although John believes that Christ is divine and one and the same as God, he presents the importance of the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit at the Jordan (John 1:32). There has been no limit to the giving of the Spirit to Jesus (3:34).⁴¹ In addition, John connects the bestowing of the gift of the Spirit to Jesus more intimately with his death (John 6:53, 62-63), e.g., it is written that Jesus gave up his spirit (John 19:30), an allusion to the divine Spirit.⁴²

Introducing the Spirit as the "other Paraclete" (John 14:16) is one of the unique characteristics of Johannine pneumatology. Paraclete basically means an advocate as well as "intercessor," "comforter," and "the one who urges or encourages." Many multifaceted functions are given to the Paraclete in John's writings; and, therefore, many

⁴¹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 34.

⁴² Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John 13-21*, Anchor Bible 29A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 931.

translations of the word are required.⁴³ One can witness the many roles assigned to the Spirit, e.g. revealer, leader into the truth, witness, and interpreter.⁴⁴

John and Paul both connect the Spirit to eschatology, albeit in different ways. Paul proclaims that the Spirit is the foretaste of things to come, but John spotlights to a greater extent the current experience of salvation already come in Christ through the Spirit.⁴⁵

Other New Testament Writings

The Pastorals

These letters demonstrate much less consciousness of the Spirit as a current reality. The Spirit's expressions have become more formalized and institutionalized, because they are connected with ordination for ministry and the laying on of hands (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). The Spirit's function in the motivation of prophecy and prophetic Scriptures is one of the key themes (2 Tim. 1:7; 3:16). In one Christological segment Jesus is spoken of as "vindicated by the Spirit" (1 Tim. 3:16).

⁴³ Ibid., 1135-43.

⁴⁴ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 1:54-56.

⁴⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 35.

Hebrews

Obviously the author is aware of the charismatic vigor that was evident in earlier times.⁴⁶ “God confirmed the gospel with signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Heb. 2:4). Corresponding with the Pastorals, Hebrews also links the Spirit with Christology, namely Christ’s self-offering through the Spirit (9:14) and the inspiration of Scripture (3:7; 9:8; 10:15).

The Letters of Peter

1 Peter 1:11-12 cites that the Spirit is the power of the gospel, the inspirer of mission, and the source of prophecy. In passage 4:14 the Spirit is discussed as the source of blessing and strength in the midst of suffering.

Jude

In verses 19-20, Jude states that believers are those who have the Spirit.

The Revelation to John

The Spirit has a vital role in vision and inspiration (1:10; 4:2; 14:14; 17:3; 21: 10; 22: 17). The prophet of the apocalypse believes “the testimony of Jesus” is “the spirit of prophecy” (19:10).

⁴⁶ Ibid., 35-36.

In summary, scripture offers a diversity of perspectives on and approaches to the Spirit. There is a common core, albeit there is no one “doctrine.” The Spirit is the principle and source of life in the Old Testament. This is a foundation for the New Testament’s spotlighting the Spirit’s role in Jesus’ life and the charismatic power that Jesus passed on to his disciples.⁴⁷

Typically, in different periods diverse questions are raised and carefully analyzed by theologians. The Christian tradition’s growth was initiated with an appropriate doctrine of God. During the first centuries the doctrine of the Trinity was developed, and subsequently questions arose about Christ that needed to be answered before the church was prepared to concentrate on the doctrine of the Spirit. The propelling question concerned the divinity of the Spirit.⁴⁸ On the basis of the Old and New Testament and side by side with the life of the church, its ministry, and its liturgy, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit gradually expanded.⁴⁹

The Cappadocian Fathers

The Cappadocian fathers, Basil the Great of Caesarea (c. 330-379), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-c. 395), and Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389) were theologians of the Trinity and the Spirit.⁵⁰ Basil of Caesarea challenged the convictions of Eunomius,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 44.

bishop of Cyzicus in the Hellespont, who belonged to the neo-Arian party. Eunomius had believed that the Holy Spirit is third in a Trinitarian order, and he deduced that the Spirit was alien to the Godhead and lacked the power of creation.⁵¹ Basil challenged Eunomius' denial of divinity to the Spirit. Earlier in Basil's life he belonged to the *homoios* party (of like substance absolutely), and only about 362 AD, thirty-seven years after Nicaea, did he move toward an obvious support of Nicaea and its *homoousios*.

Basil's first doxology was a vertical statement: "Glory be to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit." This could be comprehended as subordinating the Spirit to the Son and to the Father, but not in an ontological sense, i.e., inferior to their essential being, which the main tradition viewed as unacceptable. This doxology was accepted by most, but his second doxology was a horizontal statement for the belief in the equality of the persons: "Glory be to the Father, with the Son, and the Holy Spirit." This doxology upset many people.⁵² In response, Basil wrote the foremost Eastern discourse on the Holy Spirit, *Treatise on the Holy Spirit* (374-75), in the hope of quieting the uproar his doxology caused; however, even Basil was fearful that a very clear pronouncement of the divinity of the Spirit would cause some to charge him with tritheism (three gods).⁵³

⁵¹ Maurice Wiles, "Eunomius: Hair-splitting Dialectician or Defender of the Accessibility of Salvation?" *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (New York: Cambridge University, 1989) 157-72.

⁵² Basil, "On the Holy Spirit", 1.3, *Sources Chrétiennes* 17bis. ((Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1941-2005), 286; cited in McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 132-33.

⁵³ Hermann Dorries, *De Spiritu Sancto: Der Beitrag des Basiliius zum Abschluss des trinitarischen Dogmas* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 81-90; cited in McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 133.

Basil, like Athanasius (c. 293-373) before him, was reluctant to label the Holy Spirit, “God,” because this language does not occur in the Bible. Safeguarding the biblical, “economic” language was of utmost importance to the Cappadocian Fathers. Although these were strong feelings, the Cappadocians facilitated convincing the church that the Spirit belonged, both in equality and dignity, to the Holy Trinity.⁵⁴ Basil emphatically stated that the contents of the *Treatise on the Holy Spirit* were dogma to be studied and scrutinized in silence. He emphasized it was not information for public proclamation.⁵⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus agreed with Basil that the discussion of theology was not for each person or for every audience; however, when it came to the divinity of the Spirit he did not want silence. He wanted to shout it out.⁵⁶

Gregory of Nazianzus was considered the “Theologian” of the East, and he was perhaps the first Eastern Father who dared to call the Holy Spirit “God.” Gregory believed that the best way to access a better comprehension of the Spirit was through the Trinity. “The name of the one who is without beginning is Father; the name of the beginning is Son; the name of the one who is with the beginning is Holy Spirit.” Images such as river, sun, ray, stream, source, and light were used to more easily facilitate this relationship.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 44.

⁵⁵ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 139.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁷ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 45.

Gregory of Nazianzus had a clear interest in the divinity of the Holy Spirit. It was a difficult issue because the divinity of the Holy Spirit is not stated in the Bible, and his critics said he was suggesting a “rival God.” Gregory and Basil both countered and stated that inference from scripture was necessary in this instance.⁵⁸ Gregory explained his belief that there is gradual, progressive, unfolding of revelation by God in history. This doctrine of slow unfolding proceeds with God enticing believers from stage to stage. Gregory teaches that after Jesus had departed, God influenced the tradition of the divinity of the Spirit by giving clarity through progressive revelation, i.e., “in gradual states proportionate to their capacity,” reaching further than the scriptures to “a later stage” including Gregory’s own time in history.⁵⁹

In the Old Testament there is a clear disclosure of the Father, but a less exact revelation of the Son. In the New Testament one finds the Son made manifest, and we are given a glimpse of the Spirit’s Godhead. However, if the New Testament fully revealed the Son, the Spirit is also encountered there.⁶⁰ The Son is disclosed, and there are hints of the deity of the Spirit. The rationale is that it would not be correct to preach the Son openly while the deity of the Father had not yet been confessed or to force the acceptance of the Holy Spirit before the deity of the Son had been recognized.⁶¹ But

⁵⁸ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 141-42.

⁵⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration*, 31:26-27; cited in McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 143.

⁶⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration*, 31:26; cited in McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 143.

⁶¹ *Ibid*; cited in McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 143-44.

Gregory believed the most complete revelation of the Spirit is outside the scriptures as a required and gratifying deduction from what had preceded in the scriptures.⁶² Gregory was certain of this fact: The Lord said that after he has departed for the Father, the Spirit dwelling within will teach “everything” (John 14: 26; 16: 13). We will learn more about the Godhead of the Spirit, which will be more understandable when the timing is better for this knowledge to be received.⁶³ Gregory argued that the post-biblical tradition discloses more completely what was present in the biblical witness. He stated that currently the Spirit lives amongst us and continues to give us a more lucid manifestation of himself than previously.

Gregory of Nazianzus maintained that inference from scripture is not only acceptable, it is necessary.⁶⁴ Gregory’s theology was instrumental in elucidating the process by which the church came to a better understanding of the Spirit.⁶⁵

Gregory of Nyssa, Basil’s brother, continued to develop the doctrine of the divinity of the Spirit. Gregory believed that together with the Father and the Son, the Spirit produced all grace, power, direction, life, comfort, the road to liberty, the change to immortality, and every good that exists and descends on us.⁶⁶ Using the work of his brother’s and Athanasius’ formulations, he argued that according to Christ’s model the

⁶² *Oration*, 31: 26; cited in *Ibid.* 143.

⁶³ *Oration*, 31:27; cited in *Ibid.* 144.

⁶⁴ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 143.

⁶⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 37.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

forming of the Christian and his perfection were the labor of the sanctifying Spirit; and, therefore, the Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and Son. Gregory is stating that there is a distinction between *hypostases*, yet there is a unity of *nature*.⁶⁷ One of the models of the Trinity for Gregory is “the revolving circle of glory from like to like.”⁶⁸ Gregory desired to portray the equality of the three persons in the powerful, continuous, and eternal circular movement. “This intra-Trinitarian stream of glory begins from the Father, moves through the Son, in the Spirit, in whom it returns through the Son, and back to the Father, a movement from like (Father) through like (Son) in the (Spirit).”⁶⁹ In this circular movement, the Spirit is the point at which contact is made with people. Believers are united among themselves and with God by the Spirit in a manner comparable to the way the Spirit joins the Father and the Son in the circle of glory. How can the Spirit achieve this? The Spirit achieves this because she not only *possesses* glory, the Spirit *is* glory. Because the Spirit possesses glory and is glory, the Spirit can operate at all three levels of glory: (1) within the Trinity itself; (2) between God and humanity/ and (3) within humanity itself. The Spirit must be equal to the Father and Son and share in the divine glory, or the Spirit would not unify the Father and the Son. Therefore, there

⁶⁷ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 44.

⁶⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *Against the Macedonians*, 22; cited in McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 106.

⁶⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 45.

would be no Trinity. Humans would have no internal relationship with other humans, no communion among themselves or with God.⁷⁰

The Council of Constantinople

In 381 AD the Council of Constantinople drafted the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the first significant move toward a doctrinal understanding of the church concerning the Spirit. This Creed stated neither that the Spirit is God nor “consubstantial” with the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is the “Lord and life-giver, proceeding from the Father, object of the same worship and the same glory with the Father and the Son.”⁷¹ Since only God is worshiped, this statement is as bold as the church was willing to make at this time in acknowledging that the Holy Spirit is God. The Trinity is a triadic unity composed of three co-eternal and co-equal persons. The heresies that led to the definition of this doctrine had made the mistake of overly spotlighting the distinctness of the three persons to the detriment of their community or by overly spotlighting the community of the three persons at the cost of the distinction among the persons.⁷²

Stanley Burgess states that the main Eastern patristic orientations in pneumatology include the divine Spirit being the giver of life, which means his main

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Bernd Jochen Hilberath, “Pneumatologie” in *Handbuch der Dogmatik* (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1992), 1:448-49; cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 45.

⁷² Robert Davis Hughes, *Beloved Dust: Tides of the Spirit in the Christian Life* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 99.

soteriological operation is the divinization of human beings (*theosis*). Emphasis is placed on the experiential nature of the divine Spirit.⁷³ Therefore, in 381 AD at the Council of Constantinople, the climax was reached in the argument over the divinity of the Spirit. Although it was indirectly stated, a profession of the divinity of the Spirit was declared and signed.⁷⁴

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Augustine, in the Western wing of the church, gave the basis for the position on the Holy Spirit. His interest in the Holy Spirit was a life-long concern. His most comprehensive treatise on the Holy Spirit was *De Trinitate* (399-419). John 16:13 reveals, for Augustine, the basic truth that the Father is only the Father of the Son and the Son is only the Son of the Father, but the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son! While the Spirit is quite separate, he is common to both as their shared love and holiness. Augustine also cited passages concerning the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20; Rom. 8:11) and passages that refer to the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son (Rom 8:9; Gal. 4:6).

According to Augustine, three of the traditional names given the Holy Spirit, e.g., Holy Spirit, Love, and Gift, are most characteristic of the nature of the Spirit. However,

⁷³ Stanley Burgess, *The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Traditions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 1-9.

⁷⁴ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 154.

Augustine finds a problem in regard to the name Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ The name can also be properly used for the Father and Son; therefore, it does not reflect uniqueness. However, this provides an important clue to who the Holy Spirit is. One can conclude that the Spirit shares what the Father and the Son have in common. Kärkkäinen states that the Spirit is the *communio* between the Father and the Son. Additionally this relates to ecclesiology, that is, the Spirit is the *communio* between Christians and God and among Christians.

Love is another name for the Spirit in the Bible. “God is love” is found in 1 John 4:16. Augustine ingeniously deduced from 1 John 4:7-16 that “God is love” applies specifically to the Spirit as well as to the undivided divinity and from Romans 5:5 that the Spirit is the gift of love.⁷⁶

In regard to the above, an all important conclusion was formulated by Augustine that the principal presence of the Holy Spirit is love, not knowledge. Augustine’s reasoning directed him to vital ecclesiological inferences, that is, the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity.⁷⁷

Augustine stated that Gift is the third fundamental name for the Spirit. New Testament teaching is the foundation for this name and specifically John 4:7-14. “The water” is the pledge given in John 7:37 and explained in John 7:39. 1 Corinthians 12:13 states, “We were all given the one Spirit to drink.” A close link between Christology and

⁷⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 46.

⁷⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, “The Holy Spirit as *Communio*: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine,” *Communio* 25 (1998): 327; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 47.

⁷⁷ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 47.

Pneumatology is created; and, for Augustine, this facilitates understanding the distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit: “He [the Holy Spirit] comes from God not as born but as given.” The Holy Spirit is not born like Jesus so he is not called son, and he was not created as we were.⁷⁸ In his essence, the Holy Spirit is the “gift of God.”⁷⁹ Immutability and other theistic attributes were important for Augustine, but he also appeared to propose that humans are all sharers and participants in the very being of God. Although there are significant ambiguities existing in Augustine’s concept of the Spirit, the Spirit is portrayed as God dynamically connected to the world.⁸⁰

Even through the Middle Ages Augustine’s work was formative. Medieval mystics Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), Bonaventure (1132-1202), and Catherine of Siena each upheld the Augustine perspective.⁸¹ In accord, nothing unique in reference to pneumatology was constructed by Thomas Aquinas (1224/25-1274) who concentrated his efforts on a more exact comprehension of Augustine’s writings.⁸²

Martin Luther’s Perception of the Spirit (1483-1546)

The entire Western theological tradition has highlighted Christology in contrast to the Eastern Church which has deliberately constructed its theology on pneumatological

⁷⁸ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 5.14.15; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 48.

⁷⁹ Ratzinger, *The Holy Spirit*, 330-33; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 47.

⁸⁰ Blair Reynolds, *Toward a Process Pneumatology* (London: Associated University Presses, 1990), 119-31.

⁸¹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 52-55.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 48.

foundations. The Lutheran form of Reformation theology follows the Western focus. In different manners, both Lutheran and Eastern theologies have been Trinitarian.⁸³ Some have presented Luther as not very concerned with the Spirit because his writings emphasized Christ and the Trinity. This is not necessarily a true deduction. Although Luther did not write a separate work on the Spirit, his study of the Spirit is part of the body of his theological work. In Luther's explanation of the third article of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, Luther associates everything with the Spirit, e.g., forgiveness of sins and the church.

Augustine's work was frequently the basis for Luther's theology.⁸⁴ A distinction had been made between the "person" of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit as "gift," and at times Luther accepted this view. In later years, Luther heartily embraced the idea of Spirit as Gift. The Spirit was identified with "grace" and this established the essential link between soteriology and pneumatology. In general Luther emphasized the Spirit's Godhead and personhood.⁸⁵

Luther teaches in the Large Catechism that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of sanctification, separate from the Father of creation and the Son of redemption. In 1538 Luther wrote that the Son was born in flesh unlike the Father and the Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit proceeded in a material/bodily way. For Luther "proceeding" relates to intra-trinitarian relations, and the "material/bodily" sending refers to his relationship to

⁸³ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 79.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

creation. He states that the Son and the Holy Spirit possess an image corresponding to their internal essence.⁸⁶ In accord with traditional dogma, Luther declared that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son but unlike the Son the Holy Spirit is not born.

Luther intimately interwove the inward and outward works of the Spirit. Therefore, there is an “incarnational” side to the work of the Spirit. It follows that in the world, the Holy Spirit’s work corresponds in many ways to that of the Son. In Luther’s Pentecost sermons he refers to the sending of the Spirit as a perceptible coming to the world. While the Holy Spirit operates through material signs at a specific point in time, the Son took on flesh, a human nature and retained his nature as God-man even after the resurrection and ascension.

Luther believes that the work of the Trinity is indivisible. How does this affect the role of the Holy Spirit? While the work of the Trinity is indivisible according to Augustine, each of the three persons has a specific role. Even in creation the Spirit was active; the Spirit made creation live.⁸⁷ When discussing Genesis, Luther likens the Holy Spirit to a chicken sitting on eggs to cause them to hatch.

Luther states that the mission of the Holy Spirit is to point to Christ, and whatever the Spirit does his main focus is to glorify Christ or to mediate the work of Christ to us. Luther believes that when Jesus speaks, the entire Godhead is speaking. Luther points to John’s gospel concerning the sending of the Spirit by Christ to do his work and to prompt

⁸⁶ Martin Luther, *Weimarer Ausgabe 50: 275*; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 81.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

us to remember what Christ had spoken. Luther embraced the belief that there was not one doctrine in all theology in which the work of the Spirit was not fundamental.⁸⁸ We cannot limit the Spirit's work and activity to the realms of faith and the church alone.

Luther declares that the law, the Ten Commandments, was also given by the Holy Spirit who, in turn, elicits the feelings of the sinfulness of man. He believes that without the Holy Spirit it is impossible for the law to convict people of sin and to move them to contriteness. According to the law, it is necessary to have Christ and his Spirit. The Gospel declares here is Christ and his Spirit.

Perhaps the most characteristic fact of Luther's view of the work of the Holy Spirit is that the Spirit works in the preached Word and in the sacraments.⁸⁹ Luther did not think he could believe in Jesus Christ or come to him by his own reason or power. He believed the Holy Spirit, through the gospel, called him and informed him with his gifts, sanctified him, and supported him in true faith.⁹⁰ The tools of the Holy Spirit given to the church are found in the Word and the sacraments. Luther believes God moves toward humans in two ways, the "outer way" through the sacraments, and the "inner" way through the Holy Spirit and his gifts. He states that God does not give the Spirit apart from the Word and Sacraments, the visible word. He was against the spiritualists who he believed sought immediate grace and did not believe the Word and sacraments

⁸⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 83.

⁹⁰ Luther, *Weimarer Ausgabe* 30, 1367- 68; cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 84.

are necessary for that end. Luther did believe that the Spirit lives inside believers. Several spiritual gifts, such as healing, were a common part of spiritual life in Luther's perspective.

Generally Reformation theology believed faith to be the significant work of the Spirit, but later expressed a more christological than pneumatological view. The most recent Luther scholarship generally agrees that the commonly believed forensic doctrine of justification by faith as some present it is one sided. Luther actually spoke of the real presence of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit in the believer. When theological talks began in the 1970s between the Eastern churches and the Lutheran churches, they looked back to original Lutheran sources to expose abounding pneumatological resources. An unexpected motif of deification and a pneumatological concept of grace were discovered within Luther's writings.⁹¹ Deification is a pneumatologically-filled illustration of salvation and makes feasible an approach to soteriology from the viewpoint of the Spirit. It is by the influence of grace of the Holy Spirit that deification occurs by a deep and genuine faith together with hope and infused by love (1 Cor. 13:13).⁹²

Luther's main idea that Christ is present through faith can be approached pneumatologically, that is, through the Spirit of Christ salvatory gifts are arbitrated. The

⁹¹ Ibid., 84.

⁹² Hannu Kamppuri, ed., *Dialogue between Neighbours: The Theological Conversation between the Evangelical-Lutheran church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church 1970-1986* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1986), 73, cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 86.

Spirit of Christ makes participation in God possible. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no justification by faith.⁹³

John Calvin (1509-1564)

Calvin emphasized the presence of the Holy Spirit in nature as the source of “essence, life, and movement.” Human beings are required to be stewards of nature, because they are in it and of it. Humans and nature are united.⁹⁴

John Calvin had an extraordinarily balanced understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing persons to faith through the preaching of the gospel. He said that God’s plan is to have men spread the seeds of the Bible which can only be responded to by the Holy Spirit. In Scripture it is clear that that the word alone is not enough to penetrate and alter the heart of natural man (who is hostile to God’s word), but that the heart must be opened and the mind elucidated by the simultaneous work of the Spirit. A biblical example of this can be found in 1 Thes. 1:4, 5. “For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. . . .”

Calvin taught that not only faith, but also all understanding of spiritual things, is a special gift of God. Consequently ministers do not accomplish anything by speaking, unless the inward calling of God is added at the same time.⁹⁵

⁹³ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 86.

⁹⁴ Hughes, *Beloved Dust*, 319.

John Wesley (1703-1791)

Wesley's success with the workers in northern England and later in London paralleled the work of George Whitefield in the "Great Awakening" in America. He believed the revivals were works of the Holy Spirit. In 1738, when Wesley was at Aldersgate, he had a conversion experience when his heart was "strangely warmed." Wesley's move toward interiority was realized in his perception of faith of assurance as an experiential knowledge of God, the Holy Spirit, being in a person's heart. This experience was not for the elite. He was adamant that this is for all Christians who are called to Christian perfection.⁹⁶

Wesley believed that sanctification is the healing of the spiritual life in men and women, and there are stages that believers experience in their growth in sanctification. In the last stage believers are completely interpenetrated by the Holy Spirit and reach the state of Christian perfection, the *theosis*. For Wesley, this was the final goal, instead of an achievable experience in this life. Therefore, sanctification, being filled with the Holy Spirit, was viewed as an active waiting for complete salvation.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *Reform Theology*, Jan. 16, 2007, "Word & Spirit by John Calvin," http://www.reformationtheology.com/2007/01/work_spirit_by_john_calvin.php// (accessed 11/28/08).

⁹⁶ F. L. Cross, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1739-40.

⁹⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 165.

Leading Contemporary Theologians' Perspectives on the Holy Spirit

The focal point of several representative theologians will be highlighted to exemplify the diverse perspectives on the person of the Holy Spirit in this day and time. These theologians are: John Zizioulas of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, Karl Rahner of the Roman Catholic Church, Wolfhart Pannenberg of the Lutheran tradition, Jürgen Moltmann and Michael Welker of the Reformed Church, and Clark Pinnock of the Baptist/evangelical tradition.⁹⁸ In addition, Robert Hughes of the Episcopal tradition, feminist Roman Catholic theologian Elizabeth Johnson, Eugene Rogers formerly of the Presbyterian tradition, and Yves Congar, the Catholic Church's most prominent contemporary theologian, will have their viewpoints presented. It should be noted that there are several Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Pentecostal/charismatic theologies, and these theologians do not confine themselves specifically to only the theologies within their tradition.

John Zizioulas (1931 -)

John Zizioulas, the Metropolitan of Pergamon, Greece, is typically thought of as the most noteworthy Eastern Orthodox theologian of current times, and he has been significant in spanning the gap between the East and West. His most unique perspective, infusing all of his theology and view of the church is *koinōnia*, that is, communion. In the Trinity, the three Persons interconnect with each other in a love relationship and

⁹⁸ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 105.

being in relationship is the main characteristic of God. The love encountered among the members of the Trinity is the same love with which the Trinity relates to human beings and the world and embraces them in divine-human *koinōnia*.⁹⁹ Since the time of Paul, the Holy Spirit has been linked with the idea of *koinōnia*, and Christology's aspect of communion is generated by pneumatology.¹⁰⁰ The integral relationship between Christology and pneumatology is the basis of Zizioulas' communion ecclesiology.¹⁰¹

One of the several foremost effects of a pneumatological positioning for the life of the church is that there are consequences for ministry. Christ's ministry is the ministry of the church, and when it is pneumatologically founded the Spirit constitutes the relationship between the ministry and Christ. This stance agrees with Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 12, that is, in terms of the gifts of the spirit, the life and ministry of the body of Christ is regarded pneumatologically. Among the members of the body of Christ, in regard to the ministry of the ordained or the laity, the correct context is the *koinōnia* of the Spirit. The church's being is constituted by the charismatic life.¹⁰²

Karl Rahner (1904-1984)

Karl Rahner is said to be the single most influential theologian of the post-conciliar Catholic Church, and he has provided a revolutionary perspective on the Spirit.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 106.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 107.

¹⁰² Ibid., 111.

Rahner states that a person may live as one whose life receives ultimate meaning from that person's openness to God. By nature, humans are "spirit," which means human beings are open to accepting revelation. God is an intrinsic part of human nature as an inherent part of it that is the required condition for human subjectivity.¹⁰³ Each person is the occasion of a gratis, unmerited and forgiving, and total self-communication of God.¹⁰⁴ In his Holy Spirit, God has communicated himself forever and universally and to every human being as the innermost center of human existence.¹⁰⁵ At a foundational level, our encounter with God occurs in our encounters with others.

Rahner was very uneasy about the place of the charismatic constituent of the church. He stated that the Spirit is everywhere and will not be able to obtain adequate expression only in the forms of what we call the church's official life, her principles, sacramental system and teaching. Immediately before Vatican II began, he wrote a fervent appeal for openness to the Spirit, and while Vatican II was occurring he published an appeal for the charismatic component in the church. Rahner made a powerful call for the charismatic organization of the church by bringing to the fore that the Holy Spirit is pledged and given foremost to ecclesiastical ministry to create room for it, not to hinder

¹⁰³ Ibid., 112.

¹⁰⁴ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 116.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 139.

the limitless flow of the Spirit.¹⁰⁶ The church should always be the dwelling place of the Spirit.¹⁰⁷

Rahner proposes that one must become aware of *charismata* when they first emerge instead of canonizing charismatic persons after their death. Rahner states, “It is almost of greater importance to perceive such gifts of the Spirit on their first appearance, so that they may be furthered and not choked by the incomprehension and intellectual laziness, if not ill-will and hatred, of those around them, ecclesiastics included. . . .”

Rahner continues by stating that the charismatic is basically new and constantly surprising. It stands in internal though concealed continuity with what came previously in the church. It is new and immeasurable and not instantly evident that all is as it was in the lasting totality of the church. Therefore, when the charismatic trait is new it has an element of being rather shocking.¹⁰⁸

Rahner also states that the church is fundamentally the “historical concretization of the charismatic as brought about by the Spirit of Christ.”¹⁰⁹ It is very obvious that Rahner’s perception of the term *charismatic* does not indicate any particular group in the church; instead, it refers to the life and ministry of all believers.

¹⁰⁶ Karl Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, trans. W. J. O’Hara (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), 42ff; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 114.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-48; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 114.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

Yves Congar (1904-1995)

Yves Congar is the most prominent contemporary Catholic theologian on the Spirit. He believes the challenge of the Spirit experience should be approached by seeking a balance between a distrust of “personal principle” and a concealment of an “institutional principle.” The “personal principle” is concerned with the position given to the initiatives of individuals as persons and to what those persons say on the basis of personal beliefs. The “institutional principle” views the church as a communion of these people led by the Spirit.”¹¹⁰

Congar maintains that in the beginning the church viewed itself subject to the action of the Holy Spirit and filled with the gifts of the Spirit. Clement of Rome is given as an example. Clement stated that the apostles set forth on their journey filled with the assurance of the Holy Spirit, to declare the good news of the approaching of the kingdom of heaven. Near the end of the first century, Clement was required to supply rules for the church at Corinth as to the correct use of charisms. This implied that spiritual gifts were effective at that time. In the middle of the second century, this supposition is confirmed by the witness of Justin Martyr when he declared that prophecy and charismatic gifts still existed, and in fact it was understood that charisms should accompany the church to the end.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 2:152-153.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1:65-72.

Congar states that during the period of Clement of Rome there was no disagreement between “hierarchical” and “charismatic” ministries in the church. At this time ministry, as well as the entire church, was considered charismatic. Anyone who doubted the church’s charismatic nature was perceived as sectarian. According to Congar, bishops were charismatics; and, therefore, their emerging role was not viewed as a way of quenching the Spirit.¹¹²

Elizabeth Johnson (1941 –)

Elizabeth Johnson is a Roman Catholic feminist theologian. She states that while love portrays God as a whole, it is a particularly appropriate term for that discrete manner of divine subsistence which is truly present and active in the world and which people call Spirit.¹¹³

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as gift. A genuine gift is given freely, out of love and not because it is necessary. Receiving a gift is a time for thankfulness and happiness. The Spirit is the first gift, given freely and giving. Her loving in the world is gracious and appealing, respectfully summoning to human freedom, as is suitable for a gift.

Love and gift, each are names for the Spirit, are meant to point toward both the innermost nature of divine mystery and the outmost scope of God’s power freely flowing

¹¹² Ibid., 1:152.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing company, 2002), 142.

around creation to quicken and renew. Johnson cites Paul's words, "The *love* of God is poured forth in our hearts by the *Holy Spirit* who is *given* to us." (Rom. 5:5) Love and gift have the possibility of contributing to feminist discussion about God, but they must be appropriated critically for truly liberating language to emerge.¹¹⁴

Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928 –)

Pannenberg's life's work reached maturity in his *Systematic Theology*. He, a leading theologian of the Lutheran tradition, believes that theology, and consequently pneumatology, is not an exercise in piety but a public discipline. There is no special "religious truth"; therefore, theology has to speak to common concerns. The rapport between theology and science is essential, because they have the same object of study, creation. "There can be only one truth," and if it is true then it is true for all people, not just one.¹¹⁵ Pneumatology is interfingered throughout every significant point.

Pannenberg is critical of pneumatology being given a secondary place in theology and the limits imposed on the Holy Spirit's actions to reference to soteriology in Reformation theology.¹¹⁶

The Spirit is portrayed as the life-giving principle in the Bible, and the one to whom all creatures owe their life, activity, and movement. Psalm 104:30 declares, that "When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." In

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 143.

¹¹⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 117.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 118.

accord with this, the second creation account says that God “formed the man from dust and the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Conversely, when God extracts his Spirit, all life expires (Job. 34: 13-15). The breath of all humans and the souls of all living things are in the hands of the Spirit (Job. 12: 10).¹¹⁷

The question Pannenberg asks is how this biblical view can be merged with today’s biology where life is a behavior of a living cell of a living organism as a self-sustaining and reproducing system? He uses the term “field concept,” a term borrowed from modern physics (Michael Faraday), to address this vital question. This depiction of the Spirit as a “force field” is Pannenberg’s unique proposal. Karl Rahner used the term “energy field” in the 1970s.¹¹⁸ Pannenberg believes that the utilization of “field concept” in relation to the Holy Spirit is consistent with the biblical use of *ruach/pneuma*. He predicts “surprising possibilities” for consensus between theological concepts and newer scientific theories. This has been an impetus for a new approach in viewing modern physics in a “spiritual” manner and not only a “physical” manner. Bodies are also forms of forces that are independent realities and not qualities of bodies.

¹¹⁷ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 2:76-77.

¹¹⁸ Pannenberg and several modern systematicians and pneumatologists have come to speak about the Spirit as “field of force/field force,” using a standard concept of modern physics: Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); and Bernd Jochen Hilberath, *Pneumatologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1994). Even Karl Rahner, already in the 1970s, referred to the concept of “energy field” in his “Experience of Self”, in *Theological Investigations* 13 (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); quoted in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 119.

Pannenberg uses the term “Spirit” in two ways. First, God is spirit, a non-physical entity. Second, it refers to the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹ The Holy Spirit binds together the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the personal hub of activity as well as the common life of the Father and the Son. The Spirit of God includes both transcendence and immanence. The Spirit exists in and extends into all parts of creation, the life principle, and the Spirit transcends the world.¹²⁰

Pannenberg believes the Spirit is a distinct person, as are the Father and the Son. He rebuffs the *filioque* outlook, that is, the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, because it presupposes that the Father and Son are in a fundamental relationship from the beginning and the Spirit is added. Placing the Spirit in a secondary position corresponds to subordination of the Spirit.¹²¹

He offers us a trinitarian doctrine of creation, and the Spirit participates in a crucial manner. The Spirit is the causal factor of the immanence of God in creation, and the causal factor of the involvement of creation in the divine life.

Pannenberg is a very strong proponent of the Spirit as the life-principle as set forth in the Bible against the setting of “life is essentially ecstatic.” This means that every organism subsists in an environment that nurtures it, and each organism is directed by its own drives beyond its immediate environment, on which it is dependent, to its future and the future of its species. The environmental system or “field” that lifts

¹¹⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 119.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹²¹ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2:317-319.

creatures above their environment and directs them toward the future is the Spirit.

Simply because creatures are alive, they participate in God through the Spirit. The Spirit is the “force” that raises organisms above their surroundings and orients them toward their future. The Spirit as force field is the most all-inclusive and mighty field in which organisms move.¹²²

Universally the work of the Spirit is intimately connected to that of the Son. Jesus receives the Spirit and his work in conception (Luke 1:35), baptism (Mark 1:10), and resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 8:11).¹²³ John tells us that the Spirit is given to Jesus Christ “without limit” (John 3:34), but believers receive the Spirit as a gift corresponding to their becoming sons and daughters by fellowship with Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:15; 6:3ff).¹²⁴ Because the risen Lord is totally infused by the divine Spirit of life, he can give the Spirit to others insofar as they have comradeship with the Lord.¹²⁵

Pannenberg gives another example of the work of the Spirit being closely related to that of the Son. He states that Paul’s writings tell us that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:11), while in Acts the church appears to be founded by the “power” of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Therefore, the Spirit and Jesus Christ are co-creators of the church.¹²⁶

¹²² Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2:198-99, 2:451-52.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1:316, 2:84, 3:4-5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:9.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:269

¹²⁶ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 124.

Jürgen Moltmann (1926 –)

Jürgen Moltmann, a theologian of the Reformed Church, is cited as one of the most prolific and creative modern theologians. His most significant pneumatological work is *The Spirit of Life* (1992).¹²⁷ His book spotlights the essential role of the Spirit of God giving birth and supporting life, and he aspires to produce a pneumatology that is inclusive to all areas of life. His approach is ecumenical, as is Pannenberg's approach.¹²⁸

He believes there is a mutual relationship between the Word and the Spirit, and he expresses that there are no words about God without human experiences of God's Spirit. In some way, the Spirit is the subject determining the Word, not just the operation of the Word. The Word and Spirit are envisioned as existing in a mutual relationship.

Jürgen Moltmann maintains that revelation "is to be found in God's immanence in human experience, and in the transcendence of human beings in God." Due to the fact that God's Spirit is at hand in human beings, the human spirit is self-transcendently pointed toward God.¹²⁹ Moltmann also believes that each experience of a creation of the Spirit is, therefore, an experience of the Spirit. And each encounter of the self will be an encounter of the divine spirit of life in the human being.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Ibid., 125.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 126.

¹²⁹ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 7.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 35.

Moltmann believes that the Holy Spirit has been basically ignored in the Spirit's role in the world and creation due to the *filioque*. He excitedly greets the new approaches to the study of the Spirit. These slants are initiated with the Hebrew comprehension of the Spirit as the Spirit of creation. "So experience of the life-giving Spirit in the faith of the heart and in the sociality of love leads of itself beyond the limits of the church to the rediscovery of the same Spirit in nature, in plants, in animals, and the ecosystems of the earth."¹³¹ The life force in every living being, in body, sexuality, ecology, and politics is God's *ruach*. The typical view of the "communion of the Holy spirit" is expanded to include the entire community of creation, from the most basic particles to atoms to molecules to cell to living organisms to animals to human beings to communities of humanity. Every human community is entrenched in the ecosystems of the natural communities and lives on the trading of energy with them.¹³²

Moltmann further expands the customary pneumatological divisions, and speaks of *charismata*, the gifts of the Spirit, in expansive terms. The two traditional groups are "supernatural" (1 Cor. 12: 6-10) and "natural" (Rom. 12:6-8), and they functioned within the limits of the church and individual piety. Moltmann maintains that the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts for service in the world, e.g., prophetic words in liberation and ecology movements.¹³³

¹³¹ Ibid., 9-10.

¹³² Ibid., 225-226.

¹³³ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 129.

Jürgen Moltmann considers the church as a “charismatic fellowship” of equal people. The people and the office-bearers have no separation.¹³⁴ For Paul (1 Cor. 12-14) and Moltmann, the church is where the Spirit’s self-manifestation takes place in overflowing powers, *charismata*. Subsequently God’s people view themselves in their existence as “the creation of the Spirit.”¹³⁵

Michael Welker (1947 –)

Many pneumatologies have been written in the past ten years or so, but Michael Welker’s *God the Spirit* is the most distinct in its structure and subject matter.¹³⁶ The book is a comprehensive coverage of biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments where they relate to the Spirit of God, and it could be called a “biblical theology of the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁷ However, it is not a traditional approach.¹³⁸ Welker is a leading theologian in the Reformed Church.

Welker’s approach is both “realistic” and “pluralistic.” Welker concludes that “we encounter the attested experiences of God’s Spirit firmly embedded in various life experiences, particularly in experiences of life that is threatened and endangered, but also

¹³⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 298.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹³⁶ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 132-133.

¹³⁷ Welker, Michael, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), xii.

¹³⁸ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 133.

life that has been delivered and liberated.” Welker discusses the experience in today’s world that he calls “the modern consciousness of the distance of God.”¹³⁹ He points out the difference between this impression of being alienated from God, which occurs in most modern (Western) people, with the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians’ vibrant, almost childlike fervor of God’s presence here and now.¹⁴⁰ Welker affirms that there are many biblical testimonies regarding the encounter of God’s Spirit entering into varied realities of human life.¹⁴¹

The Spirit of God is responsible for making God’s power knowable, that is, the creative power of God which brings the variations of all that is creaturely into rich, fruitful, life-sustaining relationships. The modern mind-set favors the belief that experiences of God’s Spirit are only personal experiences, and the Charismatic mind-set prefers to believe that these experiences are limited to isolated groups. Theological pneumatology’s foremost challenge is to confront the conflicts and tensions between the biblical testimony of the Spirit God acting in concrete manners that can be experienced and the claim of secular common sense that God is remote and powerless.¹⁴²

Welker calls attention to the fact that Jesus’ life was portrayed by the concrete presence of the Spirit. Jesus, through the power of the Spirit, aided powerless individuals

¹³⁹ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 134.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 135.

by expelling demons and liberating those imprisoned with no escape. The Spirit-filled Messiah's authority was then given to his followers to heal the sick and free the prisoners.¹⁴³ One can declare that the Spirit is Christ's domain of resonance, a kind of force field.¹⁴⁴

Welker contends that the true and real church, the ecumenical and transcontinental church, reaches beyond specific epochs, is concretely present here and now, was and is built up by the Holy Spirit. He is adamant that God's Spirit is not satisfied to work only in observable churches. The Holy Spirit is also identifiable in numerous religious and secular environments.¹⁴⁵

Clark Pinnock (1937 –)

Clark Pinnock, of the Baptist/evangelical tradition, is one of the leading theologians of the evangelical movement. Evangelicalism asserts to safeguard the classical doctrines of the Christian tradition and also to encounter openly the challenges of the post-Enlightenment and postmodern world. Pinnock is a Free Church theologian who spotlights the Baptist heritage. *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* is his main pneumatological work, and he challenges the fact that the Spirit is usually given a

¹⁴³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁴⁴ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 314.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 280-283.

secondary role.¹⁴⁶ The book's experiential and nearly enthusiastic style renders it quite appealing. He desires to engage both the mind and the heart.

Outside of the church/Christ, is there salvation or minimally salvific elements? Pinnock has written extensively on a responsible inclusivist position and has made an important appeal for a truly pneumatological theology of religions.¹⁴⁷ This stance declares that although Christ is the standard and unquestionable Savior, salvation cannot be limited to the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁴⁸

Pinnock views glossolalia as associated with renewal, albeit he does not assert that is necessary for every believer to speak in tongues. Glossolalia is one confirmation that the Spirit is present. Therefore, it is more accurate to state that speaking in tongues is normal rather than normative. When the apostles were filled with the Spirit, they spoke in tongues; however, this may not be the pattern for everybody forever.¹⁴⁹ For Pinnock, speaking in tongues is a noble and edifying gift (1 Cor. 14:12). Speaking in tongues is not a comprehensible language. It is a manner of replying to the inexpressibility of God, "a way of crying to God from the depths and expressing the too-deep-for words sighings of the heart. Tongues is prayer without concepts, prayer at a deep, noncognitive level."¹⁹³

¹⁴⁶ Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 10-11; cited in Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 139.

¹⁴⁷ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 139.

¹⁴⁸ Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 185-215; cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 140.

¹⁴⁹ Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 172; cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 144.

Pinnock declares that in baptism the Spirit is given and is brought to fruition in experience through life. Believers who are unaware of charisms and whose experience runs dry should seek renewal. Individual Christians receive the Spirit in the form of a particular charism: “Each has a particular gift from God” (1 Cor. 7:7 NRSV).¹⁵⁰

Eugene Rogers (1961 –)

Eugene Rogers’ teaching concerning the Holy Spirit was influenced by his opportunity to dabble unhurriedly with Greek and Syriac texts of previous centuries of the Christian era. He noticed that when the Holy Spirit was discussed the Spirit was typically connected to holy places, holy people, and holy things. The Spirit was not freely floating around in space outside of bodily existence as is found in North Atlantic Christian discussions and worship. The Spirit was embodied, and not only transcendent. The Spirit was immanent in bodily things.¹⁵¹

Rogers, formerly a Presbyterian, believes that the deeds of the Trinity toward the world are indivisible, and the only time one could differentiate the Spirit from the Son would be when the accounts give glances of their *intratrinitarian* interaction. Therefore, the only communication of the Spirit with plan and circumstance that could differentiate the Spirit from the Son will be the Spirit’s interactions with the Son. Rogers states that the theologian is never in quest of the identity of the Spirit separate from that of the Son. Normatively, the Spirit is identified in her communications with Jesus; and, therefore, is

¹⁵⁰ Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 173; cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 144-145.

¹⁵¹ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 1-2.

then neither identical with him, nor apart from him. Doctrinally, the Spirit abides, alights, or comes to rest on the Son. Doctrine and narrative are brought together in the creeds.¹⁵²

Rogers declares that the works of the Trinity toward creation are inseparable. Therefore, the Spirit is the Creator, as is the Father; and the Spirit is the Redeemer, as is the Son. The persons are indivisible in their actions toward us, and they are differentiated by their actions among themselves, that is, the Trinity.¹⁵³ Rogers believes that intratrinitarian relationships are glimpsed because the Holy Spirit reveals them in Scripture. The Holy Spirit also reveals (1 Cor. 12: 7) them in humans as the circumstances for the opportunity of human participation in the trinitarian life.¹⁵⁴ Rogers uses Paul's version of the resurrection to depict a time when all three Persons are present and identified, and their relationships are illustrated. Paul states: "If the Spirit of the One Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the One who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11). Rogers believes that by reflecting on Scripture we gain glimpses into God in Trinity.¹⁵⁵ In addition, he writes that at baptism humans are in the process of moving to the interior of trinitarian life so they get a true peek, although they will probably not

¹⁵² Ibid., 7.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 12.

comprehend what they are glimpsing.¹⁵⁶ Rogers believes that the Spirit either crosses the distance between God and humans by entering into the heart; or the Holy Spirit integrates human beings into the triune community.¹⁵⁷

Robert Hughes (1943 –)

Robert Hughes, an Episcopal theologian, maintains that spirituality is about the life of the Holy Spirit. He speaks of the Holy Spirit as the “fitting” author of the spiritual life, and writes that each appropriate theology of the spiritual life has the actions of the Holy Spirit as its principal subject. He states that pneumatology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, should be an autonomous theological *locus*, coming between Christology and the church. Hughes believes that the Holy Spirit needs to be afforded her own *locus* in systematic theology in order to move past binitarianism or christological monism.¹⁵⁸

Robert Hughes promotes the dividing of pneumatology into two parts as is done in Christology. The first division of pneumatology would study the teaching on the person of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, particularly as seen mirrored in the dance with the Word in the mysteries of the incarnation. The second division would focus on the Spirit’s sanctification mission in which spiritual theology would be included among other things, such as moral theology, the practical application of the Spirit’s gifts of virtue(s), character, and beatitude. Spiritual theology would be included as teaching

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵⁸ Hughes, *Beloved Dust*, 44.

on the life in the Spirit. It is the study of the plan for the universe from creation to final consummation or the work of the Holy Spirit in the divine economy. Spiritual theology should be related to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as soteriology is related to Christology. Hughes suggests that spiritual theology should be based not only in a new pneumatological locus but explicitly in a doctrine of the Spirit's mission.¹⁵⁹

In the Holy Spirit's own proper mission she is accountable for directing the entire universe toward its perfect consecrated fulfillment, the concept of the sacramental *pleroma* – the fullness of all things. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the “already-but-not-yet” nature of the commonwealth, for the reign of God being current and inbreaking, but also still approaching.¹⁶⁰

Hughes believes that many of the things that Western theology in particular has attributed to Christ should be attributed to the Spirit, especially everything in the third paragraph of the creeds. He also reminds us that we must be cognizant that all grace is basically a name for the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, at work.¹⁶¹

Kathryn Tanner (1957 –)

Tanner, an Episcopal theologian, teaches that through the power of the Spirit, Jesus' humanity received everything for its good directly from the source of goodness that is the Father. The Word as a human being is favored by God the Father with gifts

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 45.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 99.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 43.

through the workings of the Holy Spirit, e.g., at Jesus' baptism, over the course of his struggles, and on the cross.¹⁶²

Through the working of the Holy Spirit, gifts are inpoured from the Father on Jesus, and once perfected by these gifts Jesus' humanity becomes the means by which those gifts are out poured to us. Replicating with humanity what occurs in the dynamic life of the Trinity which is separate from us, the Spirit proceeds from the Father to rest on Jesus, the Word incarnate. Tanner states, "The Spirit radiates from the humanity of Jesus with the Father's own gifts of light, life and love; and shines through him, not simply back to the Father, but through his humanity to us, thereby communicating to us the gifts received by Jesus from the Father."¹⁶³ Correspondingly, the gifts of the Father live within us and through the gift of the Spirit itself shining through the glorified humanity of the Son. Therefore, the Spirit living in us effects created gifts in and for our humanity.¹⁶⁴

The stipulation for our inclusion in the dynamic of the Trinity's own life is our being united with Christ, which is made possible by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, the Son, who was sent by him for the completion of the Father's work *ad extra*. In the manner we are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, we obtain the perfections that Jesus received in his humanity. By the action of the Holy Spirit we are united with Christ and then go with Christ to the Father. Subsequently from the Father we receive, as the

¹⁶² Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 51.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

humanity of Christ did, gifts from the Father. The Holy Spirit unites us in Christ as the Holy Spirit promotes the uniqueness of our persons by a variety of gifts of the Spirit. Our differences are respected by the Holy Spirit while uniting us in Christ in the same way that the Holy Spirit respects and upholds the differences between Father and Son.¹⁶⁵ Through this unification with Christ, the Father's gifts flow to us. The visible manifestation of this is the Eucharist.¹⁶⁶

The transmission to us of the perfections of Jesus' humanity takes a trinitarian form, because Jesus' humanity saves in virtue of its being in the mode of the second Person of the Trinity. It is the specificity of Jesus as a person, not his humanity *per se*, that has universal efficacy, in so far as everyone is drawn to it, united with Christ's own life. We are made to participate in this life by the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter one has focused on the person and role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, New Testament, and in the thoughts of leading theologians. Inquiry into the theologians' individual understandings of the Holy Spirit reveals connections between their theologies and their overall theological contexts. However, it is also noted that the positions among the individual theologians are not necessarily synonymous with the specific church tradition to which they belong. If there is any one common aspect to the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 82.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 60.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 54.

continual variety of contemporary theologies, it is the unity-in-diversity nature of the theologians' "confessional" theologies. With each individual theological approach, the doctrine of the Spirit is integrally connected to the particular structures and emphases of each theologian's own general theology.¹⁶⁸

There are many conclusions concerning the Holy Spirit that can be deduced from reading Scripture and the teachings of theologians. The Spirit represents life itself, is a free gift of God to us, and indwells all of creation. The terms "*ruach*" in the Old Testament and "*pneuma*" in the New Testament refer to the Spirit as breath, wind, air, soul, and spirit. The Holy Spirit is the "life force" of an individual and is known as the "life-giver." God breathed life into human beings, and Jesus Christ said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" as he breathed on his disciples (John 20:22). The Holy Spirit is the causal factor of the immanence of God in creation, and the causal factor of the involvement of creation in the divine life.

It is believed that there is a mutual relationship between the Word and the Spirit, and there are no words about God without human experiences of God's Spirit. In some way, the Spirit is the subject determining the Word, not just the operation of the Word. The Word and Spirit are envisioned as existing in a mutual relationship.

Rahner, in the 1970s, was the first to refer to the Holy Spirit as an "energy field." Subsequently, Welker and Pannenberg used the term "force field" when referring to the Holy Spirit, and Moltmann used the term "life force." The idea of the Holy Spirit as "life force" corresponds to the Old Testament presenting the Holy Spirit as the "source of

¹⁶⁸ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 105-106.

life.” This is the basis for the New Testament’s focusing on the role of the Spirit in Jesus’ life, and the charismatic power that Jesus passed on to his disciples,¹⁶⁹ which will be with the church until the end.¹⁷⁰ It would appear that, of the various charisms given to humans, the charism of healing would be an excellent demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s role as the “source of life,” or “life force,” or “energy field” being manifested. Individual Christians receive the Spirit in the form of a particular charism. “Each has a particular gift from God” (1 Cor. 7:7). These “gifts of the Holy Spirit,” the charisms, that Jesus bequeathed to his disciples will be discussed in general, and the “charism of healing” will be discussed specifically in the next chapter.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 37.

¹⁷⁰ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:65-72.

Chapter 2

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Scripture

The Bible acknowledges the activity of the divine spirit that permeates the human being in service, worship, and religious ecstasy, whether in the Old Testament as *ruach Yahweh* or in the New Testament as the Holy Spirit. Possessing “spiritual gifts,” however, anticipated the messianic age when the prophecy in Isaiah 11:2 was to be fulfilled, and the spirit of Yahweh was alleged to rest upon and endow God’s anointed one. The latter is connected with Jesus’ baptism and ministry, e.g., Luke 4:18-19, and typified in Acts 2:22; 10:38. Following Pentecost, the birth of the Church was confirmed by “signs of power” as a sign of the new age of messianic fulfillment which began with the exaltation of Jesus the Messiah and the gift of the divine Spirit (Acts 2: 17-39).¹⁷¹

Miroslav Volf asserts the importance of differentiating between the “gifts of the Spirit” and the “fruits of the Spirit.” The “fruits of the Spirit” designate the overall character of the Christian existence, “the lifestyle of those who are indwelt and

¹⁷¹ Ralph P. Martin, “Gifts, Spiritual” in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:1015.

energized by the Spirit.”¹⁷² The “gifts of the Spirit” are associated with the specific roles to which God calls each Christian.¹⁷³

Old Testament

Isaiah

The first citing in the Bible of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is found in the Old Testament. The impressive poem found in Isaiah 11:2 depicts the great emphasis on spirit-endowment at this time in history. *The spirit of the LORD*, the charismatic gifts of King David, is articulated in three pairs of attributes: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. The Septuagint, LXX, appends “the spirit of piety,” providing the foundation of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology.¹⁷⁴

Joel

It was promised that “It will come to pass in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; and your sons and daughters will prophesy.” (Joel

¹⁷² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians. A Commentary on the Greek Text. NIGTC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 251; quoted in Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 111.

¹⁷³ Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 111.

¹⁷⁴ Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 995.

2:28). Moltmann interprets this verse to mean that in the kingdom of the Spirit, every person will experience his and her own gift(s), and everyone will experience the new fellowship together. All persons, men and women, will be equal, and there will be no old or young, no masters or slaves.¹⁷⁵

New Testament

In this thesis I will primarily focus on two listings of gifts of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Although there are a variety of ways to categorize the gifts of the Spirit, I have chosen to focus on the categories designated by Jürgen Moltmann. He states that traditionally the gifts, *charismata*, have been divided into two groups: “supernatural” (1 Cor. 12:6-12) and “natural” (Rom. 12:4-8). Each of these groups has functioned within the boundaries of the church and individual piety.¹⁷⁶ The “supernatural” gifts which are found within 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 follow:

1 Corinthians: 12:6-8

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of

¹⁷⁵ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 239-241.

¹⁷⁶ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 186.

miracles, to another prophecy, and to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.¹⁷⁷

The “natural” gifts of the Spirit, as declared by Moltmann, are listed in Romans 12:6-8. They, along with introductory verses Romans 12:4-5, follow:

Romans 12:4-8

⁴For as one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.¹⁷⁸

Interpretations of Various Leading Theologians

The various spiritual gifts that have been enumerated are all related, though not exclusively, to the very adaptable ministry of the early church, a ministry of varied functions inspired by the Spirit for the good of the corporate body. As the number of Christians increased and the church more clearly comprehended its needs, new abilities or gifts were found to meet these needs which clearly indicated the constant provision of the Spirit. Paul introduced the

¹⁶⁵ Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford*, 285.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 261.

correlation of the body (I Cor. 12:12-26) with its organic unity, variety of functions, interdependence of members, to the gifts of the Spirit in order to illustrate how the gifts are also varied in function, interdependent, and designed to give unity, solidarity, and beneficial growth to the Christian fellowship. All gifts of the Spirit are powers and activities given by God. Their worth is to be judged by the degree in which they encourage the church's well-being.¹⁷⁹

Jürgen Moltmann challenges Paul's statement that to each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7) and the corresponding statement by Andrews that the worth of a gift should be judged by its promotion of the welfare of the church. Moltmann asks if the charismata must be wholly judged on their relation to their usefulness in building up the Christian community and our life together. Moltmann senses the charismata have a value in themselves that is very different from their usefulness for the community, and charismatic experiences also have a value for the people involved, even separate from "the common good."¹⁸⁰ I agree with Moltmann in this matter. It would seem that all *charismata* are gifts for the common good, as well as having an inherent value in themselves and for the people involved. It would be surmised that the "gifted" people feel fulfilled when they realize their gift(s) from the Holy Spirit and closer to God because they are utilizing the

¹⁷⁹ E. Andrews, "Spiritual Gifts" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abington, 1962), 4:435.

¹⁸⁰ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 184.

Spirit's gifts to them. Simultaneously the common good of the community would be expected to be enhanced.

Paul lived in the enthusiastic springtime of a youthful Christianity. The early congregations obviously experienced an 'overflowing abundance' of spiritual gifts. Paul believed that different gifts should be united by love; but today we realize that freedom is required to release this variety of gifts. Jürgen Moltmann states that there are as many powers and energies as there are created beings.¹⁸¹ Since all gifts are given by the one God, there is a basic unity and equality among the gifts. All gifts are for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7), not by accidental choice of an impersonal force, but by the guidance of a personal spirit, the action of a living God (1 Cor. 12:11).¹⁸² Paul and other New Testament writers hold an extremely egalitarian view of these gifts, and believe that every Christian possesses some of the spiritual gifts, with varying degrees of fullness (Rom. 12: 7).¹⁸³

Yves Congar concurs that the early church viewed itself as subject to the action of the Spirit and filled with the gifts of the Spirit. He states that near the end of the first century, Clement of Rome was required to make available rules for the correct use of charisms for the church at Corinth, suggesting that spiritual gifts were active at that time. This hypothesis was corroborated by the witness of Justin Martyr in the middle of the

¹⁸¹ Moltmann, *The Spirit*, 184.

¹⁸² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation, Revised Edition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 309.

¹⁸³ Andrews, "Spiritual Gifts", 435.

second century, when he declared that prophecy and charismatic gifts still existed. It was also believed that the charisms would accompany the church until the end.¹⁸⁴

In agreement with the belief that the charisms have been with the church since its inception and will remain with the church until the end, Donald Gelpi, a Roman Catholic and Jesuit theologian, is critical of his own church for not taking seriously the Second Vatican Council's charismatic and pneumatological teaching. He believes that the charisms of the Spirit have an indispensable role in the life of the church, and they therefore cannot be confined to the first generation of Christians, as most Catholics were taught to believe before Vatican II.¹⁸⁵ Substantial changes in the thinking of the Roman Catholic Church occurred during Vatican II, which is often alluded to as the "Council of the Holy Spirit." The Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* insists that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God through special charisms bestowed freely on all the faithful in a variety of ways as well as through the sacraments and church ministries. The document emphatically stated that believers have "the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of humankind and for the upbuilding the Church."¹⁸⁶

According to Kilian McDonnell, during this early time in the church, the basic elements of Christian initiation were water baptism, "inviting and welcoming the Holy

¹⁸⁴ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:65.

¹⁸⁵ Donald. J. Gelpi, *Charism and Sacrament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 97-110.

¹⁸⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, par. 3; quoted in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 75.

Spirit,” with accompanying gifts such as prophecy and tongues as “patrimony.” Gifts of the Spirit were expected and received during baptism, because they are part of the Christian tools for building up the community.¹⁸⁷ Clark Pinnock is in agreement with McDonnell concerning the Spirit’s being given in baptism. He believes that the Spirit is realized in experiences all through one’s life. Pinnock reemphasized that each Christian receives the Spirit in the form of a particular charism: “Each has a particular gift from God” (1 Cor. 7:7 NRSV).¹⁸⁸

In the New Testament the term “spiritual gifts” is used to label the special gift(s) of the members of the church for its service. From the beginning the church was pictured in the New Testament as a community under the guidance of the Spirit. Being in the church, Christians were depicted as “in the Spirit” and as having tasted the “fruits of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:9, 23). Exceptional signs of the Spirit’s presence and power are obvious everywhere. The gospel of salvation, that was first stated by Jesus and later by those who had received it, has been authenticated by God “by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will” (Heb. 2:4). These phenomena are designated as “spiritual gifts.” In agreement with Paul (1 Cor. 12:7), Andrews declares that their worth is to be judged by the degree to which they

¹⁸⁷ Kilian McConnell, “Five Defining Issues: The International Classical Pentecostal/Roman Catholic Dialogue,” *Pneuma* 17, no. 2 (1995): 180; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 98.

¹⁸⁸ Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 173; cited in Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 145.

promote the well-being of the church. The primary gift, the source of all others, is the Spirit.¹⁸⁹

Charisms are very important according to Paul. He believes they participate in a crucial role in an individual believer's life and in the communal life. *Charismata* may be regular ministries used for service in the everyday world (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-30; Eph. 4:11) or more dramatic Spirit-motivated acts or words (1 Cor. 12: 8-11). Our responsibility, according to Paul, is to search for an equilibrium between not overemphasizing and exploiting the charisms (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 2:12-14; 1 Thess. 5:19-22) and not confining the implementation of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19-20).¹⁹⁰

Jürgen Moltmann states that call and gifts, *klesis* and *charisma*, are transposable terms. This conclusion infers that every Christian is a charismatic, albeit many people never live out their gifts. The gifts which humans bring or receive are at the service of their calling; for it is God who calls and takes people at the place *where* he reaches them and *as they are*. God is quite specific when accepting people and, thus, places their entire life at the service of his coming kingdom which renews the world. Therefore, Moltmann states, if we ask about the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit, we must not look for the things we do not possess. First, we must discern *who* we are, *what* we are, and *how* we are, at the point in time where we feel the touch of God on our lives. According to Romans: 6:23, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to all believers in common and equally: "The

¹⁸⁹ Andrews, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:436.

¹⁹⁰ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 33.

charisma of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” To each person, individually and uniquely, is given a different gift(s) which is filled with diversity: to each his or her own! These gifts, individual powers and energies, become charismatic in the relationships which give form to the shared life-process. Frequently in these living relationships people discover these powers for the first time and become aware of them.¹⁹¹

Karl Rahner recommends that people learn to perceive *charismata* when they first materialize.

It is almost of greater importance to perceive such gifts of the Spirit on their first appearance, so that they may be furthered and not choked by the incomprehension and intellectual laziness, if not ill-will and hatred, of those around them, ecclesiastics included....And so the charismatic feature, when it is new, and one might almost say it is only charismatic if it is so, has something shocking about it.¹⁹²

Karl Rahner has informed us that the charisms need to be recognized and nurtured early in their reception so they will develop. His reasons for charisms being stifled are the laziness of the person or the ill-will around them. Jürgen Moltmann discusses another reason that charisms are not materialized by individuals. He believes that most people can do more than they believe they can. What is the reason for this? Humans are fearful of attempting things because of their fear of failing. We tell ourselves, “If you don’t try, you can’t fail.” But when people withdraw and pull into their shells because they fear

¹⁹¹ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 180-81.

¹⁹² Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church*, trans. John Griffiths (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 72-73.

defeat or losing some personal relationship, they will not have the opportunity to know their own potentials. They are saying they will not participate in all the opportunities life is offering them. To do this is also never to learn one's own limitations.¹⁹³

One would want to believe that the possessors of the gifts, each of us, would be nourished and encouraged by other Christians to utilize our gifts. As Rahner points out so knowingly, that is often not the case. He states that too often the gifts are not used overtly because of the negative attitude demonstrated against any person who claims to possess them, especially the "supernatural gifts." Sarcastic remarks, eyes rolling, supposedly clandestine smirks aimed at the gifted people are frequently noticed by the gifted people to whom they are directed. These seen gestures frequently, very frequently, coerce the person to hide their gift(s), because it is human nature to want to be accepted and respected. And, yes, both Christian laity and clergy are guilty of such acts. I suspect that the person who has been given the gift of healing is probably the person who is most often the recipient of ill-wishes, jealousy, and even hatred. On the brighter side, there are those who recognize the gift(s) in others, show them respect, give encouragement, and support them in the realization of their gift(s). We are all gifted and in need of mutual support in following God's call for which we have been given the appropriate gifts. It is God's call and the Holy Spirit's dissemination of gifts to whomever the Spirit chooses. We have no voice in the matter. We are simply the recipients of God's call and the gifts

¹⁹³ Moltmann, *The Spirit*, 186.

of the Spirit, and we are charged to go into the world, guided by the Holy Spirit, to utilize these gifts in service for the kingdom of God.

The Charism of Healing

Healing Discussed in Scripture and in the Ministry of Jesus

Even a superficial reading of the gospels demonstrates the centrality of healing in the ministry of Jesus. Healing means restoration to wholeness, and this wholeness is what God intends for body, mind, and spirit. This is what Jesus' ministry entailed. Jesus' physical healing of people encompasses one-third of the stories in the gospels. If the definition of "healing" is expanded to include spiritual and relational healing, then all stories about Jesus concentrate on some form of healing.¹⁹⁴ In the Synoptic Gospels healing stories appear twenty-five times in Luke, seventeen times in Matthew, eight times in Mark, and three times in John.¹⁹⁵

Literally interpreted, *charismata iamatōn*, "gifts of healings," are found three times in the New Testament, I Cor. 12:9, 28, 30. "Gifts of healing" are designated by other terms in other places in Paul and in the New Testament.

¹⁹⁴ Jay A. Gible, ed. *The Lafiya Guide: A Congregational Handbook for Whole-Person Health Ministry* (Elgin, IL: Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC), 1993), 19.

¹⁹⁵ John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 119.

Only in the Corinthian context is the noun used here for “healing,” *iama*, found. There is no known reason for comprehending anything other than the typical meaning of the Greek word, i.e., healing, physical cure. The other noun utilized in the New Testament for healing, *iasis*, also occurs only three times, in Luke 13:32 and in Acts 4:22 and 4:30. Here the Lukan contexts demonstrate the meaning with miracles of physical healing of the stooped woman (Luke 13:10-17), the dropsical man (Luke 14:16), and the lame beggar (Acts 3:1-10, the referent of 4:22 and model for 4:30, picking up on the “wonders and signs” pattern of 2:19, 22, 23). Since Paul typically associates *charismata* with *charis* (the grace of God), *charismata iamatōn* are accurately experienced as gifts of God, not merely as human abilities.

Paul’s position is that different persons have been given different gifts for the benefit of the community. This position implies that certain Christians have been given the special ability to mediate physical cures on a regular basis. Therefore *charismata iamatōn* is a standard phrase referring to a charism parallel to the eight other *charismata* (see 1;7; 7:7;12:4,31) or *pneumatika* (“spiritual gifts”; 12:1; 14:1) listed by Paul in 1Cor. 12:8-10, or to the seven others listed (twice) at verses 28-31, or to the seven listed at Rom 12:6-8 (described there as *charismata* deriving from the *charis* [“favor”] “bestowed upon each of us”). Different from glossolalia or prophecy (see Corinthians 14), the gift of healing is merely alluded to as a fact of Christian life, and it never becomes a focal point of Paul’s pastoral concern.

Although all divisions of the gospel tradition (Q, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John) testify to healing as a part of the activity of Jesus, it is Luke who most closely duplicated Paul in presenting healing activity as a divine gift, e.g., Luke 4:14-44, where Jesus' ministry is understood as an expression of a divine gift of the Spirit. Luke's explanation of Jesus' healing as a type of prophetic gift is most precise in Acts 10:38, where the healing work is a result of divine anointing with the Holy Spirit and power. Luke also interprets healing in the ministry of the disciples according to the identical model of prophetic gift. The healing actions of both Jesus and his disciples are referred to as "signs and wonders" (Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12), a standard Old Testament phrase recalling the signs and wonders accompany the first exodus (Acts 7:36; see Exod. 7:3; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 26:8).¹⁹⁶

Jesus came to earth to "save," and the meaning of this word in its original Greek is "to heal." Actually, biblical Greek has only one word to represent the two words, "save" and "heal," and this Greek word can be translated into either depending on the context. One example of Jesus' whole-person healing ministry is the story of the paralytic being brought to Jesus by four friends (Mark 2:1-12). It is blatant that the paralyzed man's friends want him to be healed. In fact, they are so determined to approach Jesus that they cut a hole in the roof of the house where Jesus was addressing a crowd of people.

¹⁹⁶ M. Dennis Hamm, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, *H-J* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 89.

Jesus did not heal him, but instead forgave him. This upset some religious leaders who disputed his authority to forgive sins. Jesus ended the argument by speaking to the paralytic, “Stand up, take your mat and go to your home” (Mark 2:11).

When Jesus is expected to heal, he forgives, and when he forgives, he also heals. This is an attribute of whole-person healing, and the gospels have many stories similar to this one. Would it not be logical to glean from the fact that healing was central to the ministry of Jesus, that Christians are called to do the same? The church has answered “yes” throughout the ages. We witness this in the Acts of the Apostles, in the writings of the church fathers, in the establishing of medical schools, in the building of hospitals, in the establishing of support groups, and in the sending of medical missionaries.¹⁹⁷

Marita Aicher-Swartz wants to be more like Jesus, and this goal has led her to discover various ways of ministry as a nun, a teacher, a minister of religious education, in married life, and as a spiritual director. She writes about Jesus and his impact on lives. She emphasizes that Jesus saw goodness in all people, even his enemies. Jesus taught his disciples and followers that “the Kingdom of God is at hand (in him) and within you (us).” As some of us experience daily, Jesus found God’s presence in the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, and in eating and drinking with enemies and friends alike. He found comfort in prayer and meditation as well as in walking the roads and hills of his native land. Jesus is a Christian’s role model. Jesus’ love for God and people overflowed into a ministry of physical, mental, and spiritual healing which touched some

¹⁹⁷ Gibble, *Lafiya Guide*, 19-20.

and frightened others. Aicher-Swartz discerns that healing was the heart and soul of Jesus' ministry. Jesus, the Jewish healer, perceived people in terms of their original wholeness long before the appearance of whole-person medicine in the West. Body, mind, and spirit interweave with each other seamlessly. She states that during times of prayer and meditation on the life of Jesus, she felt drawn to a ministry of healing and began to question what has happened to the practice of hands-on healing that Jesus taught the twelve disciples and others around him. Aicher-Swartz notes the following quotations in scripture which depict Jesus giving his followers the power to heal and charging them to do so.

Jesus now called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority to overcome all demons and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1). At another time it is written, "After this, the Lord appointed a further seventy-two and sent them in pairs before him to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them....Into whatever city you go, and they welcome you, eat what they set before you; cure the sick there who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10, 1-9).¹⁹⁸

Another example of Jesus empowering and charging his disciples to heal follows.

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness (Mark 10:1). These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions....Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons (Mark 10:8)

¹⁹⁸ Marita Aicher-Swartz, "Reiki and The Teachings and Values Of Jesus," 2006, www.christianreiki.org/info/articles/teachings_and_values.htm. (accessed January 5, 2009).

The occurrences of healing in physical and mental illnesses also belong to the charismatic experience of life. In the environment of faith, healings are indicators of the new creation and the rebirth of life. If the Holy Spirit is encountered as the Spirit of the resurrection of the dead, then healings experienced should be comprehended as foretokens of that resurrection and of eternal life. Grave illnesses are foreshadowings of death, and healings are to be recognized as foretokens of the resurrection. In each serious illness “we fight for our lives.” In every healing, we experience being restored to life. Miraculous healings were common in the ancient world, and were, in fact, witnessed throughout all of history, as well as today.¹⁹⁹

Characteristics of Authentic Healers

Jerome Frank, a psychiatrist who was quite influential in the 1960s and 1970s, spoke of characteristics found in true healers. In his book, *Persuasion and Healing*, Frank calls attention to the interdependence of psychological and other biological processes, and to religious healing as a model for physicians in developing their bedside manner. He emphasized that religious healers see “illness as a disorder of the total person, involving not only his body but his image of himself and his relations to his group.” To further his thoughts he writes,

Instead of emphasizing conquest of the disease they, the healers, focus on stimulating or strengthening the patient’s natural healing powers. They believe that this can be done by the ministrations of a healer who, whatever his methods, enters into an intense relationship with the patient....Those

¹⁹⁹ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 189.

operating in a religious context, which includes all forms of healing in primitive societies and faith healing in industrial ones, also see themselves as bringing supernatural forces to bear on the patient, with the healer acting primarily as a conduit for them.²⁰⁰

It is safe to state that most human beings want to be whole, and when they become ill they often pray for healing. Donald Gelpi instructs us to remember that God wills our salvation; and salvation brings healings. God's will to heal should never be doubted. However, those who pray for healing must consent to God being God and to heal them in the way God chooses. God may choose to transform their sufferings into an opportunity for deeper conversion and growth in faith instead of removing their suffering.

People who are authentic Christian healers, like the authentic teachers, will not be concerned with demonstrating the charismatic power bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit. The healer will focus only on proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus, and will leave the healing to God. The genuine healer is not superstitiously apprehensive about the human mechanics of healing, i.e., with pronouncing the "correct words" or using the "correct gestures" to insure God's healing action through the power of the Holy Spirit. Nor will the healer endeavor to dictate to God in advance the form the healing will manifest. The authentic healer will be peacefully content with a deepened conversion or with the transformation of suffering or distress into grace, if this is the will of the Lord. Simultaneously, the healer will not attempt to suppress God's healing power by

²⁰⁰ Jerome Frank, *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy*, rev.ed (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 47; quoted in Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 15.

discouraging others from believing in the divine power of the Holy Spirit to heal efficaciously and even miraculously.

When healers pray with others for healing, they must be attentive to their being properly disposed and properly instructed, in order that in approaching the divine healer they may truly seek the Holy Spirit who is selfless love, rather than covet the Spirit's healing gifts. It is important that in every healing granted, the authentic healer will always give all glory to God.²⁰¹

Agnes Sanford reminds us that authentic healers are deeply aware that no human being has power to heal, and according to the will of God, God's love is sent through the healer to his children. Jesus healed people because he loved them. The essence of all healing is the healer's becoming so immersed in the Being of God that everything about oneself is entirely forgotten.²⁰²

Healing in the Christian Tradition

Healing in the Early Church

Healing is a component of many, if not all, religions and is powerful in explaining why propensities to be religious and capacities for religious feeling and ideation appear to have evolved as instinctive parts of human nature.

²⁰¹ See endnote 25 on page 95 of Gelpi's *Charism and Sacrament* for the complete bibliography used for this source of information cited in Gelpi, *Charism and Sacrament*, 90-91.

²⁰² Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Macalester Park Publishing Co., 1947), 114-115.

However, even in the framework of long-standing, worldwide insisting for religious healing, Christians have distinguished themselves, and they have frequently borrowed techniques and ideas from other religions and from numerous forms of medicine. Christians have repeatedly disseminated their religion as a channel to healing and eternal good health. Christian healing is more concerned about a sense of relationship to a divine person than it is about doctrine, albeit doctrine has been significant in preserving and inspiring this sense of relationship and defining its boundaries. It is true that many have been healed because they believed; however, we need to be cognizant of the fact that others believed because they had been healed.²⁰³

Jesus Christ, the charismatic healer, commissioned his disciples to exorcise and to heal.

¹⁵And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. ¹⁶The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe; by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes in their hands.^a and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:15-18).²⁰⁴

Did the early Christians obey the charge of Jesus to heal? Yes. To prepare and outfit themselves as fitting containers for the healing power of Christ, many early

²⁰³ Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 8-10.

²⁰⁴ Coogan, *The New Oxford*, 91.

Christians took time to purify their bodies. An early second-century sermon taught Christians to “guard the flesh” in order to “receive the Spirit.” They believed the spirit of Christ was manifest in their bodies (1 Cor. 6:13-20).²⁰⁵

As Christianity spread throughout the ancient world, belief in Christ’s healing power came to be expressed in various ways. In Syria and Egypt, holy men retreated from society in order to fight demons and prepare their bodies for Christ. They attracted streams of visitors to their settlements enthusiastic to be cleansed and healed. In urban areas, Christians came together for worship services that included exorcism and healing along with other practices that strengthened individuals through union with Christ and with one another as members of his collective body on earth. Missionary outreach programs began to the sick and poor of the ancient world, especially around Constantinople. Churches and monastic communities provided nursing care, medical services, and religious rituals through which people found repentance for their sins and absorbed the protective, cleansing, and transforming vitality of Christ.²⁰⁶

As the Christians ministered to the sick, they adopted a simple rite, based on descriptions of the healings that Jesus performed, using oil to anoint the sick “in the name of the Lord.” They anointed the sick on the lips, ears, and eyes, where demons could enter. Early Christians performed rites “to guard the flesh as a temple of God.”

The Epistles of James, strongly acclaimed the ritual of anointing as an enactment of Christian faith. This letter was known to Irenaeus in the second century. It indicated

²⁰⁵ Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 44.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

that anointing the sick was an important task performed by church elders. The writer asked, “Is one of you ill?” The writer said, “Let him send for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord; the prayer offered in faith will heal the sick man, the Lord will restore him to health, and if he has committed sins they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:14-16).²⁰⁷

Barrett-Lennard also found healing to be important in some of the earliest documents associated with monasticism. In the mid-fourth-century Egypt, five letters to ascetic holy men indicate that these men were celebrated for the healing effects of their prayers for the ill. Barrett-Lennard deduced that these letters were evidence that healing held a central role in the rise of monasticism in Egypt. The letters also indicated that holy men in late antiquity had continued the performance of healing earlier associated with Jesus and the apostles; outreach to the sick was an essential part of their holiness.²⁰⁸

In early Christianity the rite of baptism was an exalted form of healing. It was a rite of initiation in the mystery of Christ that gave people eternal life and strengthened them against sickness and sin. It was also an initiation into the Christian community, which remade individuals into members of the living body of Christ. As the ultimate healing ritual in early Christianity, baptism reenacted the death of Jesus, his resurrection, and triumph over evil.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 47.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 48.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 60-61.

Dramatic performances of Christian healers, the attractive resonance between Christianity and medicine and the good reputation of Christians as caretakers of the sick were well known. However, some Christians were disappointed by their high expectations of being transformed in baptism. Their yearning eventually led to new ways of eliciting Christ's healing power. Craving for healing in Europe, Asia, and Africa led to the veneration of saints who healed and whose lives and deaths characterized the spiritual purity and proximity to Christ that so many believers sought. The miraculous healing associated with Jesus and his disciples was renewed and revitalized by relics, images, and stories of these saints.²¹⁰

Healing in Medieval Christianity

In *The History of the Franks* (c. 592), Gregory of Tours described a healer who lived outside of Nice. Hospicius had "iron chains wound round his body, next to the skin, and a hair-shirt on top." Gregory described Hospicius as a direct spiritual descendent of the founders of Christianity, and he linked his actions as a local saint in sixth-century Gaul to cures performed by Jesus, the apostles, and the holy men of early Christianity. In casting out the demon which had caused a young man to lose his hearing and speech, Hospicius duplicated one of the cures credited to Jesus in the gospels (Mark 7:31-37) as well as the rite of exorcism that played a prominent role in early Christianity. He also used oil as a component of his healing the young man, which followed the path of the apostles, bishops, deacons, and lay exorcists in early churches who used oil to

²¹⁰ Ibid., 64-65.

exorcise and heal. Gregory was emphasizing that the sick did not need to travel to Rome to be cured, because they had saints near them through whom the healing power of Christ flowed as it had five centuries earlier.

During the early medieval period, Christianity underwent changes as it spread into Europe. In its medieval European movement into the countryside, Christianity became less philosophical and less sophisticated than it had been among Jews and Gentiles in Hellenistic culture. Albeit it lost some of the intellectual complexity it had demonstrated in early medieval Europe, its pragmatic side flourished. In a time filled with violence, blindness, bloodshed, crippled limbs and festering sores, Christianity showed progress in the Middle Ages as a popular aid to human healing, strength, and vivacity.

During this age, Christian healing expanded in Africa, Asia, and Europe through devotion to the miraculous powers of the saints and their relics. Healing miracles were attributed to the bones and even the dust of saints. Tonics made from the detritus of saints' remains and from the dust where they fell in battle were highly advertised and praised.²¹¹

Although Christians venerated saints for many different reasons, including victory in battle, revenge, happiness, repentance, goodness and purity, fear of hell, and desire for eternal life in heaven, by far the most common reason was expectation of a cure. In Ronald Finucane's analysis of three thousand miracles reported at twelfth-and thirteenth-

²¹¹ Ibid., 69-70.

century English and French shrines, he discovered that 90 percent of them involved healing.²¹²

Especially in the West after the tenth century, commercial traffic and marketing developed around shrines and monasteries, religious and health care centers, which contained the relics of saints. The entrepreneurial culture of medieval Christian healing was a factor in Christianity's development as a pragmatic religious tradition dedicated to experimental effects and healing outcomes.

Medicine developed in a kind of symbiosis with Christianity within the context of monastic life. Gregory of Tours was an avid advocate of the superior efficacy of Christianity over ordinary medicine, because the power of the saints succeeded after the efforts of doctors had failed. However, he did not discount their subordinate effects, and he consulted medical and pharmacological handbooks derived from Greek texts. Like Pope Gregory (d. 604), he championed the healing miracles of the saints while maintaining a physician from Alexandria as part of his household.²¹³

There was tremendous enthusiasm for miracles at this time, but miracles played an important role in Christianity from the start. Even the most learned Christians acknowledged miracles, especially miracles of healing, as a crucial characteristic of

²¹² Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 69; cited in Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 70.

²¹³ Darrel W. Amundsen, "The Medieval Catholic Tradition" in *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers and Darrell W. Amundsen (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 82; cited in Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 71.

Christian life and a symbol of the power of Christian faith. As Christianity spread throughout Europe with rather lax theological management and ecclesiastical oversight, this Christian enthusiasm for miracles flowered everywhere and, as critics charged, ran unbridled. To some extent, the profusion of miracles in medieval ethos, which were thought to be a part of nature, reflected enthrallment with nature and its hospitality to miraculous displays of beauty and power.²¹⁴

Baptism, with the warlord uprisings, tribal conflict, and reform by military conquest, did not represent the culmination of an extended process of individual transformation as it had previously. It became a representation of collective camaraderie or collective surrender or hope of miraculous aid in battle.²¹⁵

Penance and the Eucharist were other forms of healing during this era. Penance was considered analogous to medical treatment from antiquity, and healing was a component of the Eucharist from the beginning of Christianity. Early Christians expected bodily resurrection because of participation in fellowship with Christ during the Eucharistic meal, and physical healings in the course of the meal were common.²¹⁶

Healing in Early Modern Christianity

The sixteenth century felt an atypical kind of religious turbulence in that the belief in the existence of spiritual realities declined under extensive scrutiny, albeit the material

²¹⁴ Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 73.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 83.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 81-82, 87.

demonstrations of those realities and testimonies increased. The strong desire for religious purity typical of early modern reformers coincided with increasing unease about religious authority. They wanted religious truth and had an increasing concern related to the proper reach of human knowledge and power. Resistance to clerical authority flourished. Insistence for religious purity and truth escalated with the invention of the printing press, expanding market economies, civil unrest, the growth of urban centers, and the exploration of the world.

Religious grandeur and evangelical fervor of Catholic Christianity had never been greater. The emergent prosperity of the middle class, the wealth of guilds affiliated with saints and chantries (endowments for masses and prayers), the popularity of devotion to Mary and the Eucharist gave impetus to a profusion of religious art.

Amid the grandeur and evangelical fervor, the clergy was mocked and there was growing resistance to clerical authority because of the appeal to particular saints to address specific problems. Lay people published pamphlets ridiculing the clergy and condemning the cult of saints and images as ruses for deceiving them and keeping them submissive to the church.²¹⁷

It was a violent and revolutionary time due to the anger against the Catholic Church and the cult of saints. Participants insisted on a return to the primitive Christianity portrayed in the New Testament and to direct communication with Christ. In northern Germany, home of Martin Luther (1483-1546), apocalyptic rhetoric, street

²¹⁷ Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 37-38, 95.

dramas, pamphlets and woodcuts depicted a world upheaval in which Christ materialized to unmask princes and prelates as swine. There was radical religious activity in the streets of northern Germany announcing, “The time is now and the place is here!”²¹⁸

Sectarians who believed the declarations of the nearness of the end of time engaged in laying on of hands, anointing, and other performances designed to manifest God’s living spirit and healing power.²¹⁹ Luther and other more conservative reformers opposed such dramatic, inflammatory performances, but they also sought healing in Christ. Numerous radicals desired to see Christ himself and witness miracles of healing performed in the Holy Spirit; other reform-minded Christians yearned to live in complete consciousness of God without the diversion of saints or priestly rigamarole.

Vocal minorities of the theologians and lay people challenged the soundness of healing miracles promoted by, and benefiting the Catholic Church. The French reformer, John Calvin (1509-1564), was one of the most clear and most influential expositors of this challenge. Calvin condemned petition to the saints for healing miracles. He said this was misguided and sinful, and he composed a framework for Christian living that spotlighted worship of a transcendent God. In his work to restore Christian life to its initial strength and simplicity, he used the letters of Paul as a yardstick to determine what constituted Christian life and ministry. However, Calvin dismissed Paul’s reference to healing as one of the gifts that Christian saints could claim. Calvin, in this sweeping and

²¹⁸ Peter Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 7.

²¹⁹ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner’s, 1971), 125-128.

almost offhanded dismissal, removed healing from the list of Christian ministries. He stated that healing and interpretation were extraordinary gifts of the spirit bestowed only on Christ's earliest followers to remind us of the momentous events of his actual appearance on earth.

Martin Luther, the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), and other theologians critical of corruption in the Catholic Church, had a poor view of many of the practices and beliefs connected with miracles of healing and with the cult of saints that was so prominent in religious life and brought considerable capital to the Church. Luther condemned any effort to manipulate God through petitions to healing saints and was infuriated by the materialism of the church.²²⁰

Healing in Western Christianity's Global Expansion

Starting in the sixteenth century, Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, and other Catholic orders again introduced Christianity to Persia, India, Africa, and China, where it had abated or died out during the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century British, German, Dutch, and Danish Protestants began organizing mission societies, and Protestant missions were growing faster than any other branch of Christian missions by the middle of the nineteenth century. Supporting foreign missions became a hallmark of

²²⁰ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. J. Pelikan et al. (St. Louis: Fortress Press, 1955), 40:146; Eire, *War Against the Idols*, 65-86, cited in Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 96.

evangelical religion in Britain and America, and missionaries, especially evangelical women, were greatly admired for their self-sacrificing benevolence.²²¹

Endeavors by Western missionaries coincided with Western political and economic expansion. Later in the nineteenth century, the fast-growing global expansion of Protestant Christianity coincided with full-scale development of industry in Western Europe and the United States.

At this time, in contrast to the de-emphasis on transcendence in some types of social justice theology, many converts integrated Christianity with traditional values and customs with an ease that surprised many Western missionaries. These new native forms of Christianity frequently revolved around healing and incorporated miracles of healing into modern forms of social consciousness. In Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia, Christians merged social visions of Christian healing with practices of spiritual healing obtained from indigenous traditions. This investment in indigenous types of spiritual healing stimulated fresh interest in the miracles of Jesus, Mary, and the apostles and saints.²²²

Interaction between Christianity and indigenous religions came about in the situation of the revolutionary social and cultural changes Western expansion produced in virtually all areas of the world. These changes included the development of market

²²¹ See endnote 1 on page 199 of Porterfield's *Healing in the History of Christianity* for the complete bibliography used for this source of information cited in Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 119.

²²² Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 121-133.

economies, the breakdown of traditional kinship structures, and the appearance of modern forms of individualization. To find a way to manage these forces, people turned to religion. Often religion was a means of negotiating social change and exercising some control over it. In these circumstances, healing came to the fore, both as a means of dealing with the suffering produced by social change and as a way of constructing new visions of society that would enable people to be healthier and more productive.

A feeling of living relationship to the healing miracles of Jesus and the Apostles has been vital to Christianity's reception in numerous locations. Pentecostalism emerged as a worldwide movement and affirmed that miracles of healing poured down on God's people in the middle of secularized societies. In countless parts of the world, Pentecostals' celebration of healing miracles offered continuity with traditional forms of religious healing, even as they addressed modern types of social stress and alienation. These people embraced the healing miracles performed by Jesus and confirmed their reappearance in the current world.²²³

Christian Healing Practiced Today

Pentecostals

According to David Martin, Pentecostalism has been the most dramatic development in the twentieth century. It is proliferated mainly among the poor of the non-western world; however, it is also developed in the West and

²²³ Porterfield, *Healing in the History*, 125-26.

globally. A reasonably conservative estimate of the number of Pentecostals is about a quarter of a billion people, and, therefore, the most widespread form of non-Roman Catholic Christianity. Pentecostalism includes one in eight Christians. It is attached to Christian “fundamentals” and to a conservative comprehension of Scripture; however, the basis of its unique appeal lies in empowerment through spiritual gifts offered to all.²²⁴

There has been a long tradition of belief in divine healing throughout Christian history, especially among Roman Catholics. The modern stress on supernatural healing was entrenched in the late-nineteenth-century Holiness movement and inherited by its Pentecostal descendants. Albeit speaking in tongues was believed to be confirmation of Holy Spirit baptism, divine healing was equally important to the movement in its early years.²²⁵

William J. Seymour, an African-American preacher, was the motivation for the beginning of Pentecostalism when he sparked the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906. This was the first newsworthy outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This event is regarded as the beginning of the Pentecostal renewal

²²⁴ David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 2002), 1.

²²⁵ Scott Billingsley, *It's a New Day: Race and Gender in the Modern Charismatic Movement* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2008), 22.

because of the impact it had on the world, and subsequently it spread across the world.²²⁶

The contemporary Pentecostal movement is a renewalist religious movement within Christianity typified by belief in the possibility of receiving the same experience of Spirit and spiritual “gifts” as did the first Christians on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Pentecostalism is an umbrella term including a wide range of different theological and organizational perspectives resulting in no central organization or church which directs the movement. Most Pentecostals are part of broader Christian groups, e.g., Evangelical groups, Protestants, or Restorationists.

Emphasis is placed on the corporate constituent in worship which is frequently marked by great spontaneity. Special emphasis is placed on the practice of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as found in 1 Cor. 12:8-10, and recorded in Acts, e.g., speaking in tongues, prophecy, divine/spiritual healing, and exorcism. It is professed that all true believers possess these gifts. Most believe that the ability to exercise these gifts is given initially in an experience known as “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” This baptism is seen to be different from conversion and from sacramental baptism with water. The claim was first made in 1900 that “Spirit baptism” is typically signified by the recipient’s breaking into speaking in tongues. Many Pentecostal churches have formed, e.g., the “Church of God,” the largest Black Pentecostal church, “Church of God in Christ,” and the

²²⁶ “Pentecostalism,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostal/> (accessed January 10, 2009).

“Assemblies of God,” which is the largest such church and formed from an affiliation of churches in 1914.

Pentecostalism is theologically and historically related to the Charismatic Movement which was influenced by the Pentecostal Movement, and various Pentecostals use the two terms interchangeably.²²⁷

Charismatic practices

In 1960, two marginal parishioners of a California Episcopal parish attended a neighborhood prayer meeting led by a neighbor who was a Pentecostal. They wanted the joyous faith their neighbor had, and so they went with him to his Pentecostal church. The pastor prayed they would receive the Holy Spirit and the gift of glossolalia, speaking in tongues. In addition to becoming able to speak in tongues, they were able to guide neighboring parish priest Dennis Bennett (1917-91) to do the same.²²⁸ Similar experiences began to be reported by Episcopalians in different areas of the United States. The growing number of Episcopalians who experienced glossolalia was joined by Christians from the Lutheran and Methodist traditions. In 1967, they were joined by the Roman Catholics. These Christians discovered in the exercise of spiritual gifts a

²²⁷ Cross, *Oxford Dictionary*, 1262; “Pentecostalism,” *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostal>. (accessed 1/10/09).

²²⁸ Dennis J. Bennett, *Nine O’Clock in the Morning* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1970), 8-20; quoted in Robert W. Prichard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 266.

reassurance of God's personal presence in a time in which many other Christians preferred to speak of faith in social rather than personal expressions.²²⁹

The Charismatic Renewal Movement is also known as "Neo-Pentecostalism." Herald Bredezen, originally a Reformed and later a Lutheran minister, did not like the term so he coined the term "charismatic" in 1962 to differentiate themselves from the older Pentecostal denominations such as the Assembly of God.

This movement, which was begun in North America, has expanded world-wide. Like Pentecostalism, from which it originated, it is characterized by a focus on group worship and the exercise of the "spiritual gifts," charisms, especially divine or spiritual healing and speaking in tongues, glossolalia.

There are several differences between charismatics and Pentecostals. The charismatics do not have Pentecostalism's tight connection between glossolalia and "baptism in the Holy Spirit." Also, within the Charismatic Movement the commitment is embedded within the full variety of historic denominations, and, therefore, in each context theology, culture and acceptance can vary tremendously. The Pentecostals are a family of separate denominations.

Since the 1970s, the Pentecostal roots of the Charismatic Movement and "enthusiastic" features have become less noticeable, and its advocates have extensively emphasized its orthodoxy. In the Roman Catholic Church since c. 1980, it has become

²²⁹ Robert W. Prichard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 266.

one of the major lay movements and was documented as such by the Vatican. Since it first appeared it has become more structured and theologically conservative.²³⁰

Healing Services: Three Representative examples

Worship directs persons toward the source of all healing and wholeness. In worship, we affirm that God's healing love surrounds us, arises from the depths of our being, and bursts forth in actions of healing touch, symbols, and songs. When one worships, God's love is recognized as the source of the original wholeness that grounds creation's journey and motivates our own healing adventures. In being cognizant that we live, move, and have our being in God's creative and transformative energy of love, we are stirred to let that love flow through us by our words, touch, silence, presence, forgiveness, or intercession. Flowing out of the abundance of God's love is our encouragement and impetus to mediate God's healing touch to our neighbor.²³¹

Three examples of healing services are presented in detail in Appendix 1. The first example is a healing service used in the Episcopal Church. The second healing service is a Reiki healing service for application in any Christian church. A service of healing and blessing for application in any Christian church is the third example provided.

²³⁰ Information on the Charismatic Movement found in the following articles was intertwined throughout the discussion presented. Cross, *Oxford Dictionary*, 324. *Wikipedia*, "Charismatic Movement," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charismatic Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charismatic_Movement). (accessed 1/11/09).

²³¹ Bruce G. Epperly, Katherine Gould Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch and the Way of Jesus*, ed. Michael Schwartzentruber (Kelowna, BC, Canada: Northstone, 2005), 107.

Anointing of the Sick

Anointing is the sacramental use of oil as an outward sign of God's active presence for initiation, healing, or ordination. Anointing with oil by smearing or pouring typically accompanies prayers for healing and the laying on of hands.²³²

The rite of Ministration to the Sick in the Episcopal Church is found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. A detailed, step-by-step procedure is given demonstrating the anointing with oil.

From ancient times in the liturgical traditions of both East and West, there are testimonies to the fact that the sick were anointed with blessed oil. Over time and centuries the Anointing of the Sick was bestowed more often exclusively on those near death. Subsequently this practice received the name 'Extreme Unction' which means "final anointing." However, the liturgy has always beseeched the Lord to strengthen the sick people so they would recover.²³³

²³² Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, eds., *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church: A User-Friendly Reference for Episcopalians* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2000), 21.

²³³ *Christus Rex*, "Catechism of the Catholic Church," <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/heal2.html> (accessed January 10, 2009).

Roman Catholic Church

Today Anointing of the Sick is the ritual anointing of a “dangerously ill” person, and it is a Sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church. A less common name for the sacrament, used in some ecclesial communities, is the “Administration to the Sick.” In the Eastern Church the later technical name, i.e., *euchelaion* (i.e., prayer-oil) is used. Other names which have been and still are in use are *elaion hagion* (holy oil), or *hegismenon* (consecrated).

Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament, and only a priest or bishop can administer it because of its relationship to sins being forgiven. Canon Law in the Roman Catholic Church designates who may receive the anointing of the sick can be administered to any member of the faithful who, having reached the use of reason, begins to be in danger by reason of illness or old age. A new illness or the renewal or worsening of the first illness enables a person to receive the sacrament again. If a person is chronically ill, or elderly and in a weakened condition, the sacrament of anointing may be repeated when in the pastoral judgment of the priest the condition of the sick person warrants the repetition of the sacrament.

The established form for administering the sacrament of the “Anointing of the Sick” is to use olive oil; however, other vegetable oil may also be used. Typically this oil is blessed by the bishop of the diocese at the Chrism mass celebrated on Holy Thursday or on a day near it.

The following form was established in 1972 for the Roman Rite through the papal document *Sacram unctionem infirmorum*. The Roman Catholic Church priest anoints the

ill person's forehead with oil (usually in the form of a cross) saying: "Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit." Then the hands are anointed while the priest says, "May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up." The priest may anoint other parts of the body as he sees fit, but he does not repeat the sacramental formula.²³⁴

Episcopal Church

Anointing of the sick is administered on various occasions under different circumstances. The anointing may be in conjunction with a healing service in a church, or in a home, hospital, retirement home when someone is seriously ill or not.

Healing service in the church. Under the section of Healing Services in the Episcopal Church found on the previous page in this thesis, any person who wishes may be anointed at a healing service, because every person faces health, or emotional, or mental, or spiritual problems to different degrees during their life. The anointing gives strength to the person to persevere with God's blessing in facing his/her particular problem or challenge. In the Episcopal Church, the sick person's rector should be called when a person is ill and wants to be anointed; however, a deacon or lay person can also be the one who officiates at the service and administers the anointing, especially in a hospital

²³⁴ *Wikipedia*, "Anointing of The Sick (Catholic Church)," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anointing_of_the_Sick_\(Catholic_Church\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anointing_of_the_Sick_(Catholic_Church)) (accessed January 10, 2009).

setting or in an emergency. Oil to be used, however, must be blessed by a bishop or priest.

Ministry in a home or health care facility. The Episcopal Church anoints sick people with blessed oil whether they are at home or in a health facility. The service includes an opening greeting, the reading of a Collect, the reading from the Old Testament, the recitation of a Psalm which is followed by a reading from the New Testament. Subsequently, the gospel is read, prayers are said for the world and the Church, particularly for God's healing grace, and there is a general confession of sins. This is followed by a confession of the need for God's healing grace and the laying on of hands and anointing with oil of the sick person. Next is the exchange of peace, the administration of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, and a closing prayer. The complete service is found in *Ministry with the Sick* on pages 13-24.²³⁵

Ministration at the time of death. The service is officiated by the clergy in charge of the congregation of the dying person's church. The service includes opening prayers, a psalm, the Litany at the Time of Death, the recitation of the Our Father, and the laying on of hands and the anointing. This is followed by Holy Communion, concluding Collects, and the Commendation at the Time of Death. The complete service is found in *Ministry with the Sick* on pages 90-100.²³⁶

²³⁵ Episcopal Church, *Ministry with the Sick* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2005), 13-24.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 90-100.

Ministration when life sustaining treatment is withheld or discontinued. This rite is proper when family, friends, and/or caregivers gather for prayer to mark a transition from life-sustaining to palliative care. This rite may also be used when extraordinary measures are to be withheld or discontinued.

The service is appropriate for situations when death is anticipated to follow not long after the withholding or discontinuing of treatment. When death is expected immediately after the discontinuing or withholding of treatment, traditional rites at the time of death may be preferred. The rite takes the form of opening prayers, a reading from the Old Testament, the reading of a Psalm, a reading from the New Testament, the Gospel, a Litany for the Discontinuing of Life-Sustaining Treatment, and, if communion is not to follow, then the Our Father is recited by all. The laying on of hands and anointing with blessed oil is followed by an act of commitment by family members and/or friends to the individual from whom treatment will be withdrawn. Next, the peace, and then the Eucharist may be celebrated by a priest or bishop beginning with the Offertory. If the reserved sacrament is to be used for Communion, the service continues with the Lord's Prayer, followed by a closing prayer. The complete service is found in *Ministry with the Sick* on pages 108-118.²³⁷

²³⁷ Ibid., 108-18.

Summary and Conclusions

The major topics that have been discussed thus far are the Holy Spirit as demonstrated in the Old and New Testament and discussed by noted Christian theologians throughout history, the charisms of the Holy Spirit as written in the Old and New Testament, and specifically the charism of healing. The charism of healing has been surveyed through a review of scripture focused on the healing ministry of Jesus, a discussion of the subsequent practices of healing in the Christian tradition, and the practice of Christian healing as it is practiced today.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are associated with the precise role(s) each Christian is called to by God. These “gifts of the Spirit” are varied, and they are discussed both in the Old Testament (Isaiah 11:2 and Joel 2:28) and in the New Testament. Paul preaches that charisms, “spiritual gifts,” are very important. Charisms may be regular ministries used for service in the everyday world as depicted in Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, and Ephesians 4:11, or charisms may be the more dramatic Spirit-motivated acts or words as found in 1 Corinthians 12:6-12. Every Christian is a charismatic, and our gift(s) are to service our calling. It is God who calls and accepts us where he finds us and as we are. Each person receives a particular gift, and we are duty-bound to use the gift(s) we have been given as Christ did for the world and to allocate them to others.

Different people have been given unique gift(s) for the benefit of the community. Unlike glossolalia or prophecy, the gift of healing is merely mentioned by Paul as a fact of Christian life. Using Jesus’ ministry of healing as a model, the followers of Jesus have done as they were charged by Jesus and used their “gift of healing” from the time of the

apostles through today. This continues a tradition of healing first declared in the Old Testament accompanying the first exodus (Exod. 7:3; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 26:8).

Today the “charism of healing” is practiced in Christianity in numerous and varied ways for spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical healing, e.g., by Pentecostals, charismatics in various denominations, and in public healing services in main-line and other churches as well as in private locations. Authentic Christian healers will focus on the Lordship of Jesus or the Holy Spirit and leave the healing to God.

Each person has been given a charism(s) by the Holy Spirit and must go through training to more fully develop the charism. Subsequently the charism(s) need a means of expression. The focus of this thesis will narrow once more into a detailed discussion concerning one means of training and expressing a gift of healing, a specific approach to healing that began thousands of years ago and is still being practiced today, i.e., the practice of Reiki. This thesis will focus on Reiki as practiced and interpreted from a Christian point of view.

Chapter 3

Reiki: One Means of Expressing and Training the Charism of Healing

Healing and the Holy Spirit

The healing ministry of Jesus is being rediscovered both within and outside the church. Twenty-first century Christians are “meeting Jesus again for the first time” as they encounter the healer’s compassion, healing touch, and commitment to justice, thus providing a spiritual foundation for the growing interest in complementary medicine and spiritual formation. Within Protestant and Roman Catholic communities of faith, Jesus the healer is being given new emphasis, and this has promoted interest in traditional religious practices, such as laying on of hands and anointing with oil. The healing power of compassionate touch is being claimed at a time in our world in which touch is often objectionable or even abusive.²³⁸

Healing practices did not originate with Jesus. From the beginning of the history of mankind healing methodologies have always been present. Healing methodologies were founded on the transfer of universal all-pervading life energy from the healer to another, the identical energy which brings forth all life in the universe and nourishes it.²³⁹ This universal life energy is what Christians now refer to as the Holy Spirit. This information appears to contradict the words of Jesus when he was leaving the earth and

²³⁸ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki: Healing Touch*, 12.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with us (John 20:21-22; Acts 2:1-4). It seems that the Holy Spirit already was indwelling human beings before Jesus made this statement. Karl Rahner confirms the latter statement when he writes, “God...has already communicated himself in his Holy Spirit *always* and everywhere and to every person as the innermost center of his existence.”²⁴⁰ Rahner speaks of “anonymous Christians,” a state of being of explicit faith prior to the hearing of the gospel when a person is able to respond positively to the grace of God. Rahner believes that Christ is present and efficacious in the non-Christian believer, and therefore in the non-Christian religions, through his Spirit. Anonymous Christians are “justified by God’s grace and possess the Holy Spirit.”²⁴¹ An understanding of the Spirit of God as the power of creation and the wellspring of life is theologically grounded. To experience God in all things from the beginning of time presupposes that there is a transcendence which is immanent in all things and which can be inductively discovered.²⁴² Thus, healing energy, the Holy Spirit, has been with all creation since the beginning of time, because a creator is in the creator’s creation. The Holy Spirit is as equally the Creator as any member of the Trinity. It can be concluded that the power of the Holy Spirit, the Universal Life Force, has indwelled humankind since humans emerged, regardless of race, creed, or culture, as the “giver of life,” and thereby the source of all healing.

²⁴⁰ Rahner, *Foundation of Christian Faith*, 139; cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 112.

²⁴¹ Karl Rahner, “Jesus Christ in the Non-Christian Religions,” *Theological Investigations*, no. 17 (1981): 46.

²⁴² Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 35.

The question arises as to why Jesus told his disciples he would send the Holy Spirit if the Spirit already indwelt all of creation. Concerning this enigma, Robert Hughes, an Episcopal theologian, explains that the Holy Spirit has been in all creation since the beginning of time, however, in different degrees of intensity or in different dimensions. First, Hughes claims that the Spirit indwells organic matter more intensely than inorganic material. Second, Jesus promised he would send the Holy Spirit as an Advocate for humankind, which intensifies the relationship of human beings with the Spirit. Hughes adds that when one is baptized the level of intensity increases even more. Therefore, there is no conflict between the Holy Spirit being a part of healing throughout the history of mankind; albeit, at a much later time Jesus promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to be with us as our Advocate. The difference in these situations is one of intensity of relationship or dimensions.²⁴³ The story of ancient healing continues.

The Tibetans possessed a profound understanding of the nature of the spirit, energy and matter, and used this knowledge thousands of years ago to heal their bodies, synchronize their souls, and lead their spirits to a unified experience. We find this knowledge later in India and find modified forms of it in the Chinese, Egyptian, Japanese, Greek and Roman cultures. It is also found in the various rituals in the indigenous cultures of the Americas and other parts of the world.

This information was safeguarded and preserved by the mystery schools of the majority of ancient cultures and was accessible in its entirety to only a few people,

²⁴³ Robert Hughes, interviewed by Ruth Allen, January 21, 2009, School of Theology, University of the South.

typically priests or spiritual leaders who subsequently passed it on to their own disciples by word of mouth. Modern scholars have frequently found some handed-down forms of this *inner knowledge*; however, they usually misinterpreted it because it is masked in cryptic symbols and language. One form of this information was rediscovered at the end of the nineteenth century by Dr. Mikao Usui, who found a thousand-year-old tradition of healing in 2,500 year old Sanskrit sutras.²⁴⁴ Dr. Usui called this healing tradition, “Reiki,” and passed it on to Dr. Chijiro Hayashi, who subsequently passed it on as an oral tradition. Approximately thirty years ago, people began to write down the tradition and its techniques. The essence of the various expositions is the same, but some differences do exist due to slight changes in the oral tradition over the years and different writers recording the information.

Today, in addition to Reiki, many western Christians have discovered the healing potential of additional complementary health practices such as acupuncture, healing touch, massage, yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, meditation, and therapeutic touch. In spite of the growing interest in Reiki and other forms of healing touch among Christians, few Reiki Masters and Teachers have endeavored to create a synthesis of Reiki healing touch and traditional Christian comprehension of healing and wholeness. Unfortunately, in North America, this has led to the false belief that among many progressive and conservative Christians that Reiki is associated with New Age spirituality. Although Reiki energy is non-sectarian and universal in nature, its gentle touch uniquely manifests

²⁴⁴ Bodo J. Baginski, Shalila Sharamon, *Universal Life Energy*, trans. Judith Harrison and Christopher Baker (Essen, Germany: Life Rhythm Publication, 1988), 15.

the healing ministry of Jesus for our time. Many have been led to discover the practice of Reiki through unexpected pathways or coincidences. Numerous people, Christians and non-Christians, have discovered their charism of healing when practicing the complementary health practice of Reiki, which will be the focus of this chapter.

The Emergence of Reiki

The story of Reiki, pronounced “Ray’-Key,” involves the search for healing that unites East and West, medicine and spirituality, action and reflection, mysticism and rationalism, personal growth and world-wide healing. Some challenge the accuracy of the facts of this story, which has been handed-down by oral tradition from Reiki Masters to their students. Albeit the story may not be completely accurate historically, it illuminates a personal story and seeks to join East and West so that we can heal ourselves and our planet.

The story begins at the turn of the twentieth century. “Once upon a time” a young Japanese man, Mikao Usui, rose in the ranks of religious and academic life. Usui was born August 15, 1865, in the village of Yago in the Yamagata district of Gifu prefecture, Japan, and died on March 9, 1926, in Fukuyama. Although a Buddhist, he was educated by Christian missionaries and became headmaster and chaplain in a Christian boys’ school in Kyoto, Japan. After one of the school’s chapel services, some of the young students boldly confronted Usui with the following question: “Do you believe that the Bible is God’s word?” Usui answered in the affirmative. Subsequently they asked him if he could then heal others like those credited to Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples. After

Usui told them he had no healing powers, the students challenged his faith and his qualification to be their spiritual guide.

In response to their query, Usui began a spiritual quest for the healing light of Christ. This legend tells us his mission took him to the University of Chicago, where he studied both theology and the Bible and received a Doctor of Theology degree. Dr. Usui was quite adept in languages and had a command of Japanese, Chinese, English, and Sanskrit (one of the oldest and most sublime spiritual languages, which Buddha Shakyamuni himself spoke and taught over 2,000 years ago). Usui traveled to Europe and China to further his education in medicine, psychology, and religion. In addition, he traveled to North India and Tibet, searching manuscripts for the key to healing. He returned to Japan and sought the guidance of Buddhist teachers.

Dr. Usui sought wisdom from the East and the West. However, neither the rationalism of the liberal Protestant Christianity or the spiritual teaching of Buddhism fulfilled his quest to embody the healing ministry of Jesus in his personal life and ministry.

The liberal Protestantism of the early twentieth century believed that in light of the discoveries and conclusions of science and biblical scholarship the miracles of Jesus violated the laws of nature and were no longer relevant to modern persons. At that time, liberal and conservative Christians agreed on one thing: when someone is sick they should visit a doctor; there is no need to depend on divine intervention to heal a person. Conservative Christians believed in Jesus' miracles; however, they believed the purpose of these miracles was to prove Jesus' identity as the Son of God, and now the established

Church mediates the good news. The church no longer found it necessary to experience divine healing to affirm that Jesus is the Son of God.

The attitudes of Buddhist monks also frustrated Usui. They believed that although Gautama the Buddha may have healed people, presently physical healing was to be done by physicians. The monks taught that the search for enlightenment took humans beyond the interest for the body and its well-being.

Usui was undaunted by these setbacks, and continued to search for the keys to healing energy. His quest turned to ancient Buddhist healing texts. He deeply believed that the secret to a healing path for the modern world was hidden in ancient texts of Christianity and Buddhism. Usui continued to study and meditate on the Buddhist scriptures, or sutras. Eventually Usui found several healing symbols from Tibetan Buddhism written in Sanskrit, but he originally discovered no way to employ them. Undeterred, Usui continued to seek an answer to his prayers by meditation and fasting.

In the remoteness of a mountain near Kyoto, Japan, Usui wordlessly opened himself to divine guidance. On the twenty-first day of his retreat, in accord with one Reiki story, a light burst forth from the heavens. It hurtled across the horizon, struck Usui on the forehead, and he fell unconscious to the ground. When he regained consciousness, he recalled that the light surrounded him and transmitted the meaning of the ancient healing symbols he had found and had been studying. He immediately understood that the way to share the energy of love was through the spiritual practice of laying on of hands. Usui had rediscovered the path that was to eventually join East and West in the search for healing. He gained the gift to heal others without depleting his

own energy. Although Reiki is grounded in Japanese culture and Buddhist healing practice, Reiki complemented and presented a way to mediate the healing touch of Jesus of Nazareth.²⁴⁵

About 1925 Dr. Usui initiated Dr. Chujiro Hayashi, a retired Naval Officer, as a Reiki Master at the age of forty-seven. Hayashi opened a Reiki clinic in Japan and used the information given to him to create the standard hand positions, the system of three degrees or levels of Reiki practitioners, and their initiation or attunement procedures. At Dr. Hayashi's Reiki clinic Hawayo Takata, a woman from Hawaii who was visiting in Japan, sought treatment for a tumor, gallstones, and appendicitis. After four months of daily treatments, she was completely healed. She was so impressed with her healing that she wanted to learn Reiki. After relentless requests to learn Reiki, in the Spring 1936 Mrs. Takata was attuned to the level of First Degree Reiki by Dr. Hayashi. After one year of working with Dr. Hayashi, she was initiated to the level of Second Degree Reiki. Takata returned to Hawaii in 1936. Later, Hayashi and his daughter visited Hawaii to facilitate Mrs. Takata in establishing Reiki there. In the Winter of 1938, Dr. Hayashi initiated Hawayo Takata to the level of Reiki Master. When Dr. Hayashi died in 1941, Takata succeeded him and became the Grand Master. From 1945-1970, Takata was the only living Reiki Master in the world. Between 1970 and her death on December 11,

²⁴⁵ The information from William Rand's book was found in an article titled "What is the History of Reiki?" which was located on the website: www.reiki.org/FAQ/HistoryOfReiki.html. Mr. Rand requested that the original source be cited. William Rand, *Reiki, the Healing Touch*, Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, 1991); Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 20-23; Vennells, *Reiki for Beginners*, 15; *Begin Within Reiki*, "What is the History of Reiki," www.spreadreiki.com/ (accessed September 7, 2008).

1980, Mrs. Takata initiated twenty-two Reiki Masters. Hawayo Takata's granddaughter, Phyllis Lei Furumoto, is currently the Grand Master.²⁴⁶ Dr. Barbara Weber Ray was one of the twenty-two taught and attuned by Hawayo Takata to the Master Level of Reiki.²⁴⁷ I am a Reiki Master and Teacher, and I am in the direct lineage from Barbara Weber Ray.

What is Reiki?

Reiki practice is a form of “hands-on healing.” It is a method of stress reduction and relaxation that promotes healing at the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical levels. It is a non-invasive technique of gentle touch that recharges the *ki*, or *chi*, or *prana*, i.e., the human energy field. A Reiki session facilitates the releasing of physical and psychic blocks, as it concurrently reduces pain and stress, while accelerating the process of healing. Reiki revitalizes and rebalances the body, mind, emotions, and spirit in bringing about an overall sense of well-being and relaxation.

A Reiki session is a way of increasing one's life energy. A Reiki practitioner transmits “life-source energy” through his/her hands to the client. The hands are very lightly placed on or near the major energy centers, chakras, of the body. The energy

²⁴⁶ Baglinski and Sharamon, *Reiki Universal Life Energy*, 22-28; Diane Stein, *Essential Reiki: A Complete Guide To An Ancient Healing Art* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press Inc, 1948), 12-14. *Begin Within Reiki*, “What Is The History Of Reiki?,” www.spreadreiki.com/ (accessed September 7, 2008); Rand, “What is the History of Reiki?,” www.reiki.org/FAQ/HistoryOfReiki.html/ (accessed July 24, 2005). William Rand has requested that users of this article cite the original source. Rand, *Reiki The Healing Touch*.

²⁴⁷ The article “What is the History of Reiki?” can be found at www.reiki.org/FAQ/HistoryOfReiki.html. William Rand has requested that users of the article cite the original source. Rand, *Reiki The Healing Touch*.

coming from the practitioner's hands can feel like a warm glowing radiance that flows through the body. It is typically a very relaxing experience, and the treatment will usually release negative feelings or thoughts which results in the client feeling more positive, light hearted, and experiencing a sense of wellbeing.²⁴⁸

It is important to remember that healings happen when and where God wills it. Prayers are offered for the healing of the person who is sick, and hands are laid on the person so that the desired healing may occur. There are ways of working with the body so that the mind and soul can be healed. It is possible for tormenting and oppressive memories to be healed if the tense body is relaxed.²⁴⁹ Moltmann's words aptly resonate with what Reiki sessions are, the laying on of hands, and their results.

Also in accord with Reiki, Moltmann declares that Jesus healed the sick by restoring their fellowship with God.²⁵⁰ Paul Tillich's comprehension of disease furthers this concept. Tillich teaches that disease is the failure of a person or community to reintegrate, to reestablish the center after a change that necessitates new material being assimilated. He states that many diseases, especially infectious ones, can be comprehended as an organism's inability to return to self-identity. The process of self-integration is essential for life, but it is in an incessant struggle with disintegration, and integrating and disintegrating propensities are ambiguously mixed in any given moment

²⁴⁸ *Reiki For Christians*, "What is Reiki?" www.christianreiki.com/ (accessed January 25, 2009).

²⁴⁹ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 190-191.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

of time.²⁵¹ Tillich informs us that the Holy Spirit is the answer to the ambiguity. The Holy Spirit gives us the center, our reintegration, our grounding, as a gift. Being grounded, returning to center and integration is being in touch with the Ground of Being, God.²⁵² The Reiki energy, the life source or Holy Spirit, which flows from the hands of the Reiki practitioner facilitates the restoring of dysfunctional vibrations sporadically found in all living beings and consistently expressed in the physically, mentally, or spiritually ailing, to a resonance closer to the resonance of God who indwells all. The closer in harmony we are to the resonance of the indwelling Trinity, the healthier we are in all dimensions of our being. This describes the mechanism for healing promoted by Reiki energy.

I have entered into a Reiki session as the client feeling in extreme turmoil concerning whether or not to leave a teaching position, ask to go part-time, or whether I should stay in the position although it was causing me unhappiness. After the Reiki session I felt as though a veil had been lifted, and the answer was so clear before me. The Reiki energy had balanced my dysfunctional energy and brought me into closer resonance with the vibrations of the Trinity who indwells me.

Moltmann's statement, Reiki teachings, and the previous personal example are in accord with the understanding that the pulsing energy vibrations coming from the hands of the Reiki practitioner create conditions so that the client may become more in tune

²⁵¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3:35.

²⁵² Robert Hughes, interview by Ruth M. Allen, February 18, 2009, transcript, School of Theology, University of the South.

with the resonances of the Trinity within the client. This is what the energy of Reiki offers to the client, who is free to accept or reject it. If accepted, this self-transcendence requires a source beyond our own given nature. This is the means by which the One might account for that resonance in us that always transcends any effort on our part. This calling to transcendence is its own self-transcendence which continually transcends any effort we can make to grasp or objectify it.²⁵³ We are free to answer the call or reject it, just as we are free to accept or reject Reiki energy, the Universal Life Force, the Holy Spirit.

Rahner teaches that Christ is present and efficacious in the non-Christian believer, and therefore Christ is present in the non-Christian religions, through his Spirit. He states that “anonymous Christians” are “justified by God’s grace and possess the Holy Spirit.”²⁵⁴ Rahner’s statements roused my curiosity as to what non-Christian Reiki practitioners believe about the energy that is transferred from them to a client. In an e-mail I asked a very well-respected healer, a Reiki Master and a Buddhist whom I have worked with, what she believes about the Reiki energy. She responded that she is guided by “spirit life force energy,” and she believes that she acts as a conduit when this energy is passed from her to a client.²⁵⁵ Her understanding of the energy in Reiki completely

²⁵³ In this paragraph I have intertwined Reiki teachings with the theological beliefs of Robert Hughes which are found in his book. My personal discussions with Hughes have confirmed the relationship of his beliefs and Reiki teachings. Hughes, *Beloved Dust*, 166.

²⁵⁴ Karl Rahner, “Jesus Christ in the Non-Christian Religions,” *Theological Investigations*, no. 17 (1981): 46.

²⁵⁵ Pam Eveline, interview by Ruth M. Allen, September 18, 2008.

coincides with the beliefs of Christians who practice Reiki. Christians who practice Reiki name this life force energy, God, which includes the entire Trinity or more specifically the Holy Spirit. This concurs with Rahner's statement concerning non-Christians, "anonymous Christians" also possessing the Holy Spirit.

The Reiki practitioner's Reiki energy is never depleted. Actually, it is believed that both practitioner and client are in need of healing, so both receive treatment as the divine energy travels through the Reiki practitioner to and through the client. Therefore, giving a treatment increases the practitioner's and client's energy and leaves them surrounded with loving feelings of well-being and relaxation.²⁵⁶

Reiki is a complementary medical practice; and it is therefore used along with conventional therapies a medical doctor may prescribe, e.g., meditation, yoga, massage, physical therapy, Reiki, tai chi (both used for 1000s of years) in addition to prescribed medicine.²⁵⁷ I have personally been asked by three medical doctors, a rehabilitation specialist, a gynecologist/obstetrician, and an integrative medicine specialist if they could send difficult patients to me. Healing is often the result of a team effort in effecting maximum success in the achievement of wellness.

Christians have discovered the gentle healing spirit of Dr. Mikao Usui's Reiki. The number of Christians who believe Reiki is a practice that provides an opportunity to follow more closely the teachings and examples of Jesus healing the sick is constantly

²⁵⁶ *Reiki*, "How Does Reiki Work?"
<http://reiki.org/FAQ/HowDoesReikiWork.html>.

²⁵⁷ *Reiki for Christians*, "What is Reiki?" www.christianreiki.org/ (accessed January 25, 2009).

increasing. Joining East and West and body, mind and spirit, Reiki healing touch increases personal well-being, reduces pain, accelerates healing, and connects us with the universal healing energy that envelops and permeates us. Some call Reiki grace in action. A person who is attuned/initiated into the practice of Reiki requires only the intent to be an instrument of God's healing touch, because Reiki embodies the vibrant energy of love that enlivened Jesus' healing ministry.

Reiki is a Japanese word that is derived from two words – *Rei* and *ki*. In the Japanese language (*Kanji*), these words, *Rei* and *ki*, have different meanings, and each has several layers of meaning depending on how they are used and how they are combined with other words. When *Rei* and *ki* are used in reference to healing, the word *Rei* means Universal Spirit, Universal Life Force, Higher Power, God or Holy Spirit. The word *ki* refers to the life energy that flows through all of creation, which is another way of saying Holy Spirit. This energy is the power that acts and lives in all created matter whether organic or inorganic, e.g., people, animals, plants, and rocks. Christians call it God and Buddhists call it Buddha. *Ki* is analogous in thought to “*Chi*” in Chinese medicine, Hindu “*prana*” and Christian “light.” The word Reiki can thus mean life energy that is guided by God or God energy. The word Reiki is typically translated to mean Universal Life Force, which for Christians is another name for the Holy Spirit. When the two words are written together, *Rei* and *ki*, also represent the universal spirit coming together with our own spirit. Various people believe Reiki is another way of saying Holy Spirit. When one is attuned and trained in the use of Reiki, the practitioner is a conduit for the flow of the Universal Life Force energy to the recipient to be used for

self-healing.²⁵⁸ In accord with Usui's speaking of energy love, Stein states that Reiki is Universal Love.²⁵⁹ Love is another name for the Holy Spirit in Christian tradition.

It is important to note that because our culture has separated science from philosophy, which is based on the Cartesian separation of mind, body, and spirit, the idea of such subtle although powerful life-force energy has existed exterior to the general theoretical framework of modern Western medicine. Consequently it is challenging to discuss the nature or the source of *chi, prana, or ki* in precise terms, since in the West we do not have an equivalent word for this energy.²⁶⁰

This understanding of "life force energy" is in agreement with the teachings of Wolfhart Pannenberg, as we discussed in chapter 1. Pannenberg states that the Spirit is portrayed as the life-giving principle in the Bible and as the one to whom all creatures owe their life, activity, and movement. The Holy Spirit is the "life-giver" and when God extracts his Spirit, all life expires (Job.34:13-15). The *ki* of Reiki is consistent with the term "*ruach*" used in the Old Testament, and the term "*pneuma*" used in the New Testament to denote the Holy Spirit, the "energy field" or "life source."²⁶¹ It is very

²⁵⁸ *Reiki for Christians*, "What is Reiki?" www.christianreiki.org/ (accessed January 19, 2009); Baginski and Sharamon, *Universal Life Energy*, 15; *Begin Within Reiki*, "What is Reiki?," www.spreadreiki.com/ (accessed September 7, 2008); Gendaikireiki.com/gendaikihoreikifaq.html (accessed September 7, 2008).

²⁵⁹ Stein, *Essential Reiki*, 1.

²⁶⁰ Libby Barnett and Maggie Chambers with Susan Davidson, *Reiki Energy Medicine: Bringing Healing Touch into Home, Hospital, and Hospice* (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1996), 2.

²⁶¹ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 120.

important to realize that when *Rei* refers to the universal, boundless aspect of the energy that *ki* is itself a part of *rei*, as it is the vital life force energy which flows through all creation. According to this understanding of the word Reiki, one has additional evidence from which to deduce that when we speak of Reiki we are speaking of the Universal Life Force, the Holy Spirit working in the world through human beings.²⁶²

The technique used in Reiki was initially developed thousands of years ago and utilizes the laying on of hands. Reiki is based on the premise that all living things have a special energy flowing through them called “life energy.”²⁶³ “Life energy” or “life force energy” is the basis of all life. It supports, nourishes, and sustains life. When it is gone, life is over.²⁶⁴

A Mayo Clinic Health Information Article informs the public that Reiki, and other complementary alternative medicines, stress prevention of illness. Practitioners do not necessarily want to work with clients only when they are ill or have a problem, because, for example, Reiki helps to maintain balanced energy in the body and keep the body healthy. In this capacity Reiki serves as a form of preventative complementary medicine.

²⁶² Baginski and Sharamon, *Universal Life Energy*, 15.

²⁶³ *Christian Reiki*, “What is Reiki?,” www.christianreiki.org (accessed January 19, 2009).

²⁶⁴ David F. Vennells, *Reiki for Beginners: Mastering Natural Healing Techniques* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 2002), 2.

It is important that one know that her/his body is capable of healing itself. One needs Reiki treatments to encourage one's natural healing process.²⁶⁵

Human beings are composed of energy at our most basic level of existence, and the energy that flows through us in pathways can become blocked as a result of various experiences ranging from stress in everyday life, illness, exam periods, surgery, an accident, incest, rape, or death of a loved one. Unless we can rise above these situations, blockages in our flow of life force energy will result. These blockages affect our health on the spiritual, emotional, mental, and finally on the physical level.²⁶⁶

As a scientist, I was extremely skeptical when I first encountered this information regarding energy blockages, which if not addressed at the spiritual, emotional, or physical level, can lead to physical problems. The more articles I read concerning Reiki, hands-on-healing, and Einsteinian physics, the more comprehensible this information became. Subsequently I discovered that numerous medical doctors practicing western medicine, even a few I knew personally, are cognizant of this information, concur with it, and use it in working with their patients.

One example of what I discovered follows. During an interview with Dr. Kathleen Dunlap, a medical doctor specializing in gynecology and pain management, we discussed the issue concerning physical problems emanating from spiritual, or emotional,

²⁶⁵ Mayo Clinic staff, "The Philosophy of Complementary and Alternative Medicine," *Mayo Foundation For Medical Education And Research*, November 17, 2003, <http://secure.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=PN00001>. (accessed February 13, 2009).

²⁶⁶ Vennells, *Reiki for Beginners*, 2-3.

or mental sources. She told me it is routine for a patient who has chronic pain related to the female reproductive organs to be sent to a psychiatrist or social worker for an evaluation, and if necessary, for therapy. Dunlap's rationale was that patients with chronic pain may have ignored their spiritual and/or emotional and/or mental problems until they have surfaced on the physical level. If this is the case, the source of the problem must be attended to by a psychiatrist or social worker if the doctor is to have success in dealing with the symptoms of chronic physical pain and the condition or disease that has been realized. Dunlap stated that a patient's chronic pain may emanate from a mental, emotional, or spiritual level and/or a diseased or injured area.²⁶⁷

Science, the Human Energy Field, and Healing Energy

In my quest for understanding how Reiki works I spoke with Reiki Masters and read many articles and books on Reiki. One of the most informative articles I read was concerned with healing and the human energy field discussed during an interview of James L. Oschman, Ph.D., by William Lee Rand. Dr. Oschman has written a series of articles published in the world's leading journals and two books on "healing energy." He has degrees in biophysics and biology, and he has worked in major research labs in several parts of the world. He is highly qualified to do research on the energy of Reiki. His findings have given the most skeptical academic scientists a theoretical basis for exploring the physiology and biophysics of energy medicines.

²⁶⁷ Kathleen Dunlap, M.D., interview by Ruth M. Allen, January 29, 2009.

Dr. Oschman states that all medicine is energy medicine. Scientists are now certain that there is an energy field around the human body and such fields are medically important. The biomagnetic field initiates from the pulsing electric currents set up by the tissues. The overall field, seen from a distance from the body, is a combination of all the fields, the largest being the field of the heart. The blood is an excellent conductor of electricity, and the entire circulatory system pulses with electricity each time the heart beats. The second strongest source of electricity is the retina, which functions like a large battery, and changes its polarity when light strikes it. The third-strongest field is that produced by the various muscles, with the size of the muscle being directly related to the amount of electricity it produces. The overall biomagnetic field, the aura, is a composite of all these energy fields produced within the body. The people who are able to see the aura around the body possess a gene that affects the retina and subsequently allows them to detect minor changes in the biomagnetic field. It is no longer something “spooky” and “out there” for one to identify auras.²⁶⁸ Beside our aura, our energy body is also composed of the chakras (energy centers), and the meridians (energy pathways). The energy field absorbs energy, the chakras break it down, and the meridians distribute the energy throughout the body.²⁶⁹

For years doctors have made treatment decisions on the basis of biofield measurements. Oschman reminds people who react negatively to the term energy

²⁶⁸ James L. Oschman, “Science and the Human Energy Field,” interview by William Lee Rand (2002), *Reiki News Magazine*, no. 1:3 (Winter 2002).

²⁶⁹ Kathie Lipinski, “Distant Healing and the Human Energy Field,” *Reiki News*, <http://www.reiki.org/reikinews/DistantHealing.htm>. (accessed January 23, 2009).

medicine that many medical technologies use different forms of energy for diagnosis and treatment, e.g., X-rays and MRIs. Passive measures of human energy fields produced by the body are important in diagnosis: electrocardiograms, electroencephalograms, electroretinograms, and electromyograms. Each of these tools has a biomagnetic counterpart: magnetocardiograms, magnetoencephalograms, and so on. Energy medicine diagnostic tools have been used for nearly a century.

Transcutaneous nerve stimulators, cardiac pacemakers and defibrillators, lasers, pulsing magnetic field therapy are examples of energy treatment modalities that are part of conventional medicine. Energy medicine based on the use of medical equipment is being used in hospitals, clinics, and medical research centers. Reiki and other forms of hands-on healing are another form of energy medicine that is based on scientifically measureable energy fields emitted from the healer's hands.²⁷⁰

Regarding healing energy, research has shown that certain magnetic fields can jump-start the healing process in fractures that have failed to heal, even for as long as forty years. Pulsing electromagnetic field therapy (PEMT) for bone healing is being used for bone healing in mainstream medicine. At various extremely low frequencies (ELF) tissue, ligament and nerve regeneration will be initiated. One machine will emit two cycles per second (Hz) to initiate nerve regeneration, another machine will vibrate at seven Hz for bone growth, and a different machine has a frequency of ten Hz for ligament regeneration. Slightly higher frequencies are effective for skin and capillary growth. One machine is necessary for each different frequency.

²⁷⁰ Oschman, *Science and the Human Energy Field*.

What is important about this scientific information is that there is evidence that practitioners of various hands-on therapies such as Reiki emit the same extremely low frequency vibrations from their hands. Additionally, Dr. John Zimmerman's valuable research indicated that this pulsing energy field produced by machines in hospitals is the same as produced by the hands of practitioners of Reiki. Non-practitioners do not produce such signals.²⁷¹

Dr. Zimmerman confirmed that the pulsing field produced by the hands of energy practitioners is not steady in frequency, but varies from moment to moment. The frequency emitted from the hands sweeps up and down through the identical range of frequencies in the ELF band that have been identified by medical researchers as being effective for jumpstarting the healing process in the various tissues they have investigated. A major synergy between clinical biomedicine and complementary medicine has been revealed.²⁷²

Zimmerman discovered that the vibrational energy emitted from the hands of Reiki practitioners automatically switches frequencies as the need of the client changes in different areas of the body, whereas in hospitals, a different machine is needed to emit

²⁷¹ John Zimmerman, "New technologies detect effects of healing hands," *Brain/Mind Bulletin* 10, no. 16 (September 30 1985): 3; John Zimmerman, "Laying-on-of-hands healing and therapeutic touch: a testable theory," *BEMI Currents, Journal of the Bio-Electro-Magnetics Institute* 2 (1990): 8-17; cited in Oschman, *Science and the Human Energy Field*.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

each individual frequency. The vibrational biomagnetic fields produced by a Reiki practitioner's hands induce current flows in the tissues and cells of the client.²⁷³

Oschman believes that energy therapies such as Reiki are valuable for the prevention and even cure of some of the serious diseases that are so costly in terms of human suffering and health care services. He suggests that one of the ways Reiki works is by opening up the communication channels that allow cells in the body to communicate with each other and opening up the environment through which cells are able to migrate to places where they are needed to initiate repair or to fight diseases. Another result of Reiki is the calming of the clients which allows their immune functions to operate smoothly. Dr. Oschman summarized his findings by stating that the healing energy, whether produced by a medical device or projected from the human body, is energy of a particular frequency or set of frequencies that stimulates the repair of one or more tissues.

In his interview, Rand addresses the following to Oschman. Rand states that Reiki healers notice from experience that Reiki healing energy seems to guide itself and seems to contain a higher intelligence or higher power that creates exactly the correct frequency or frequencies needed by the client. He adds that the higher intelligence also appears to guide the practitioners to place their hands in the right locations and to remain in that location for the necessary length of time. Oschman gives a scientific response. He responds that the higher intelligence being referred to by Reiki practitioners is the innate intuitive inner wisdom that we all possess. It can be accessed when we relax our

²⁷³ Ibid.

mental processes and allow our subconscious to sort out what is really going on. He explains that living tissues are composed of semiconductor materials that form a sophisticated electronic circuit. He thinks that the “operating system” of the Reiki practitioner, one that is similar to a computer and works silently in the background, tunes in to the signals or vibrations being emitted by the client and causes the energy frequency emitted from the hands of the practitioner to change into a frequency that when projected into the client will produce a mirror image to the dysfunctional frequencies and cancel them out. This subsequently will balance the client’s energy flow and initiate a healthier state of being.²⁷⁴

I believe that God speaks to us and interacts with us in various ways. Is our innate intuitive inner wisdom actually one way God guides and directs us? Many answer in the affirmative, including myself, and believe God speaks to us and can guide us through our subconscious intuitive mind. In other words, our innate intuitive inner wisdom or the higher power mentioned by the Reiki practitioners is the Universal Life Force, for Christians the Holy Spirit, who indwells us and speaks to us and guides us in quiet meditative moments, as in a Reiki session, when we are able to listen attentively and hear our inner voice.

Robert Hughes, Episcopal theologian, explains that the Holy Spirit indwells both the healer and the healee and is the higher power being alluded to in the previous statements. “Wisdom as Gift” is another name of the Holy Spirit, our inner operating system, and our innate intuitive inner wisdom. He believes that the vibrational energy

²⁷⁴ Oschman, “*Science and the Human Energy Field.*”

being emitted from the hands of the practitioner can create conditions so that the client's vibrational energy may become more in tune with the resonances of the Trinity within the client.²⁷⁵ By doing so, the client's vibrational dysfunctional energy is restored to a normal state, which results in healing in the spiritual, and/or emotional, and/or mental, and/or physical levels.

Balancing Dysfunctional Vibrations

Scientific proof has documented the low-frequency energy that is emitted from the hands of a Reiki practitioner, and that this energy, upon entering the client, balances dysfunctional energy by restoring the energy to its normal vibratory rate. When Reiki energy comes into contact with the life force energy that is blocked, sluggish, or imbalanced, it effortlessly dissolves, transmutes, and raises the quality of that energy to the healthiest level that our body, mind, and environment will allow.²⁷⁶ How does this universal energy accomplish this feat? The following is an explanation of the mechanism involved when Reiki energy dissolves blockages in the energy pathway which leads to illnesses. How the use of Reiki accelerates the healing of tissues after surgery or after injuries will also be discussed.

The subsequent information is found in the Reiki Manual given to me in 1997 when I was attuned into the first level of Reiki. This information in the Reiki Manual has

²⁷⁵ Robert Hughes, interview by Ruth M. Allen, January 28, 2009, transcript, School of Theology, University of the South.

²⁷⁶ Vennells, *Reiki for Beginners*, 3.

been passed down from Reiki Masters in my lineage to their students for many years, and its essence has not been altered. Six years after my first attunement, I was attuned to the level of Reiki Master. At the Master Level in Reiki I had the authorization to update the manual using my own scientific background in corroboration with my husband who is also a scientist and professor. My goal was to produce a clearer and more comprehensive statement concerning the scientifically related information found in the manual. The following is an explanation taken from revised Reiki Manuals on how Reiki energy functions to release blockages and restore balanced energy in the body which results in a state of healthier being.

Once Reiki energy leaves the subatomic world this energy must polarize, i.e., move in one plane, because it is entering the physical, manifest world where it is acted upon by time. Because it is by nature a vibrational harmonic, it will seek out and form a “mirror image” of any disharmonious frequency in the energy blueprint, the client, which cancels out the dysfunctional frequency, thereby restoring normal energy balance and accelerating the natural healing process of the body.²⁷⁷ Mirror images are 180 degrees out of phase which causes cancellation of both phases.

Therefore, in summary, the vibrational energy emitted from the Reiki practitioner’s hands, becomes polarized when it enters a person’s body, and being a harmonic it naturally seeks out dysfunctional energy vibrations. Upon encountering

²⁷⁷ Reiki Masters in the Lineage of Barbara Weber Ray, “*Reiki Training Program*” ed. Ruth M. Allen (New Orleans, 2002), 1.56-1.58.

dysfunctional vibrations, it forms a mirror image of this vibration which, in accord with the laws of physics, cancels the dysfunctional energy vibration and restores energy balance to the body which results in relaxation and the body being able to heal itself. Every organ has its own vibrational rate and slows down if distressed or diseased. Relaxation is conducive to allowing vibrations throughout the body to return to a normal rate. Ultimately, only the client, through the power of God, can heal himself or herself.

God, Intuition, and Healing

How does this scientific explanation interweave with statements declaring that God is the healer? The Holy Spirit is the Universal Life Force energy that flows through all of creation. Is our “internal operating system” also known as our “higher intelligence” and as our “innate intuitive inner wisdom,” which we all possess, one way God speaks to us from within? The answer to this question comes from Robert Hughes, theologian. Hughes states: “As Lord and Life Giver, the Holy Spirit is the author of the ‘internal operating system,’ as well as the power that makes the ‘hard drive’ spin. ‘Innate inner wisdom’ is another name for the Holy Spirit who is also known as ‘Wisdom-As-Gift.’”²⁷⁸ One analogy is what occurs when one is listening to the radio in a car and passes near power lines. Static and muddled sounds begin to emanate from the radio. In this situation, only confusion is sensed. In a human being, every second, eleven million bits

²⁷⁸ Robert D. Hughes, Inner Operating System, Higher Intelligence, and Innate Inner Wisdom, e-mail message to Ruth M. Allen, January 25, 2009.

of information are sent to our brains from our senses.²⁷⁹ That equates with a lot of static! However, our consciousness reveals to us only a tiny fraction of this information. Most of the information goes to our unconscious, where it is processed below our level of awareness. When we contact our subconscious, e.g., in meditation or as a Reiki practitioner does during a Reiki session, all or at least most of the static experienced in a conscious state is eliminated. In a meditative state of being, one can hear more clearly what was unclear or even unheard while in a more conscious state. As a Christian and Reiki practitioner, in this meditative state I feel especially guided by the Spirit, whom I believe can choose to speak to me in whatever way chosen. I know that when I am giving a Reiki session, I have been guided many times to place my hands in unorthodox positions, i.e., positions not shown in the Reiki Manual. Invariably, after the session the client has told me that when my hands were in that position, the pulsing of energy and the breaking of blockages was experienced. As a Reiki practitioner, I knew in the depth of my being that God, the Holy Spirit, was at work through me, and I never feel closer to Jesus than when I practice Reiki. At the same time, I feel extremely humbled and fulfilled, and I give all honor to God for what has occurred in a session. I am well aware that I am only a conduit for God's healing love and energy. I have no power of my own.

It is typical for a Reiki practitioner, while practicing Reiki, to feel the closeness of God, the Trinity, in a way not experienced in other situations. Hughes explains that this ties in with the fact that the vibrations of Reiki, the Universal Life Force or Holy Spirit, flowing through the Reiki practitioner and then being emitted from the hands of the

²⁷⁹ Oschman, *Science and the Human Energy Field*.

practitioner into the client creates conditions that enable both the practitioner and the client to become more in tune with the resonances of the Trinity within the human body.²⁸⁰ The Reiki practitioner and the client, individually and to different degrees, are potentially able to tune into frequencies closer to the frequency or vibrations of God, the Trinity. Some Reiki practitioners and clients, albeit less frequently, experience a sensation of transcendence during a session.

Hawayo Takata believes that a vibrating spiritual power, a dynamic force, is the healing power of Reiki. Her writing summarizes her beliefs concerning Reiki and God. This writing supports the belief in the vibrating Life Force, the Holy Spirit, being the energy of Reiki. Reiki is the Universal Life Force at work in the world. Takata writes:

“I believe there exists One Supreme Being – the Absolute Infinite – a Dynamic Force that governs the world and universe.

It is an unseen spiritual power that vibrates and all other powers fade into insignificance beside it. So, therefore, it is Absolute!...

I shall call it “Reiki”....

Being a universal force from the Great Divine Spirit, it belongs to all who seek and desire to learn the art of healing.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Robert Hughes, interview by Ruth M. Allen, January 20, 2009, School of Theology, University of the South.

²⁸¹ Hawayo Takata, *Reiki: The Usui System of Natural Healing* (Coeur d’Alene, ID: The Reiki alliance, 1985), 5-6; quoted in *Essential Reiki*, Stein, 0.

Similarities between the Healings of Jesus and Reiki

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me, can do the same miracles I have done, and even greater things than these will you do (John 14:12).

One of the exceptional features of Jesus' life was the miracles he worked.

According to the Bible, Jesus walked on water, fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fishes, changed water to wine and raised people from the dead.

However, the healings he performed were the most meaningful of his miracles. Jesus healed paralysis, lameness, fever, catalepsy, hemorrhage, skin disease, mental disorders, spirit possession, deafness, and blindness. He used the laying on of hands to accomplish many of these healings. This is specified frequently in the New Testament, e.g., Luke 4:40 states: "When the Sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hand on each one, he healed them."

Jesus used touch to heal Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14-15; Luke 5:12-13), a man with leprosy (Mark 1:40-42), two blind men (Matt. 20:29-34), another blind man (Mark 8:22-25), a man who was deaf and could not speak (Mark 8:32-35), raise a dead man (Luke 7:12-15), and to return a dead girl to life (Luke 8:49-55).

The healings Jesus performed have numerous similarities to the practice of Reiki. One important similarity is the fact that Jesus could pass the power to heal on to others, which is comparable to the Reiki attunement process. Jesus gave his twelve disciples power to drive out all demons and to cure diseases (Luke 9:1-2). We do not know the process Jesus employed to give healing power to his disciples, but the fact that he was able to pass this power to heal on to them indicates an important similarity with Reiki.

Faith is another aspect of Jesus' healing practice that is similar to Reiki. Faith was not required for each of Jesus' healings, and it appears when someone did not have faith Jesus always touched them with his hands to heal them. One example is instance of Jesus' healing someone using touch when the person did not have faith was on the Mount of Olives. Luke 22:49-51 states:

⁴⁹When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?"
⁵⁰Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹But Jesus said, "no more of this!"
And Jesus touched his ear and healed him.²⁸²

In accord, Reiki does not require faith on the part of anyone receiving a treatment in order for it to have an effect. However, the client must ask a Reiki practitioner for a Reiki session in order to demonstrate a willingness to receive a Reiki session of his/her own free will.

Matthew 13:10-11 clearly indicates that Jesus had secret teachings he gave only to those to whom he had given healing power, his disciples. Very similar to Matthew, Mark 4:10-12 states:

When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that 'they may look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"²⁸³

²⁸² Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁸³ Coogan, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 63-64.

Reiki teachings also incorporate secret knowledge in that the symbols and the process of doing attunements are traditionally kept secret and are made available only to those being trained in Reiki.

It is not known if Jesus was born with the ability to heal through touch or if this was something he acquired. His activities between the age of twelve and thirty are not mentioned in the Bible. Several researchers speculate that during these years that Jesus traveled to the East and was taught many of the mystical teachings of India, Tibet, and China. They also conjecture that during this time it is possible that Jesus was initiated into a healing technique. Also, it is possible that Jesus was taught directly by God or the Holy Spirit or simply had these abilities from birth.²⁸⁴

After my church lost its pastor, the interim priest and I had a discussion about Reiki. He told me that one of his sons has a doctorate in Oriental Medicine, and his son went to India to study Reiki. In India they teach that St. Thomas, the Apostle, brought Reiki there, and St. Thomas learned it at the knee of Jesus. Presently the Mar Thoma Church, a Christian denomination from Kerala, a state in southwestern India, has around a million members and is in full communion with Anglican Churches. Kerala is reportedly where St. Thomas first landed in India, and Kerala has been the headquarters of the church since the first century of the Common Era. The Church claims that the original Malankara Church was established by Thomas the Apostle at the same time as

²⁸⁴ William Lee Rand, "Similarities between the Healing of Jesus and Reiki," *Christian Reiki*, www.christianreiki.org/info/Articles/JesusandReiki.htm. (accessed February 27, 2008).

Saint Paul established the church in Corinth. It is believed St. Thomas prayed and laid his hands upon them in a manner similar to what other disciples did.²⁸⁵

Christians believe that Jesus was God, the second person of the Trinity, from the time of his conception. As stated previously we do not know if Jesus was born with the ability to heal through touch or if this was something he acquired, however, all gifts need to be discovered and all gifts need training and a means to express them. The above possibilities present various ideas and speculations concerning Jesus' life between his twelfth and thirtieth year and how he may have been trained to express his gift of healing.

Rand states that there is good information which would lead one to believe that the healing methods of Jesus were preserved by the Church of the East and subsequently passed on by its missionaries who traveled the Silk Road and other trade routes to India, Tibet, and China. Possibly this information on healing could have been integrated into the religious teachings of the East and, therefore, could have been the original source of the Reiki techniques that were used by Dr. Usui.

The early followers of Jesus' teachings were composed of several groups including the Docetists, the Marcionites, the Ebionites, the Thomasines, the Carpocratians, and the Gnostics. The Gnostics and several of the other groups practiced laying on of hands and claimed to have a secret knowledge that had been passed on to them by Jesus and his disciples. Their core beliefs united them, i.e., a personal experience of Jesus or the "kingdom of heaven within," their freedom and lack of rules,

²⁸⁵ *Wikipedia*, "Mar Thoma," http://www.wikipedia.org/Mar_Thoma (accessed January 30, 2009).

guidelines or creeds and their reliance on inspiration and inner guidance. The Gnostic gospels, which are a part of the Nag Hammadi Library, were discovered in Egypt in 1945, attest to the existence of this group. Jesus has additional teachings not recorded in the Bible which are attested to in a letter written in the second century AD by the early Church father, Clement of Alexandria. Clement spoke of a secret gospel of Mark that was based on the normal canonical one, but with additions for special followers of Jesus. These additions are referred to as “those who were being perfected” and “those who are being initiated into the great mysteries.”²⁸⁶

Jesus possessed tremendous self-assurance in his capability and was able to heal in an instantaneous way with dramatic results. It was evident that he had perfected many skills and used them in combination to get the results he created. It is obvious the Bible indicates that Jesus healed by laying on of hands and also indicated that we should do the same. The teachings and example of Jesus are a great inspiration for us.²⁸⁷

Frequently Asked Questions about Reiki

There are numerous questions that are typically asked about Reiki. Commonly asked questions may range from wanting to know the best way for a Christian to practice Reiki to asking how Reiki heals to questioning if all healers use Reiki energy. These questions and several others are listed with their accompanying answers in Appendix 2.

²⁸⁶ Rand, *Similarities Between the Healing*.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

Who or What is the Holy Spirit in the Charismatic Experience of Life?

Frequently in this thesis it has been stated that the Holy Spirit is the life force energy, the healing energy that flows through and sustains the life of organisms. In the charismatic experience, God's Spirit is encountered as a *vitalizing energy*. This is the reason that charisma is additionally described as *dynamis* or *energeia*. When we are near God we are happy, and life starts to vibrate. In the vibrancies of the divine field of force, we experience ourselves. From the earliest times, the charismatic encounter of the Universal Life Force energy has been depicted as a flowing, an outpouring and a shining. If we take the starting point as our experiences, we are able to comprehend that the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, appears as the well of life, the source of the torrent of energy, the origin of the light that gives the shining splendor. The language used focuses our attention on the doctrine of emanation.

The Holy Spirit is said to be "poured out upon all flesh." The gifts of the Spirit are subsequently not creations of the Spirit, because the Spirit is poured out in the gifts. Therefore we cannot distinguish between created and uncreated energies. The water of life flowing from the wellspring of life has the same excellence as the spring itself. The relation between the one Spirit and the many gifts of the Spirit, and the relation of the one light to its numerous reflections, is not the detached relation of the creator to the creation. There is more intimacy than that. Through the "pouring out" of the Spirit on all flesh, all flesh becomes spiritual. In the "pouring out" of the love of God in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, God is "in us" and we ourselves are "in God." In the experience of the Spirit, we experience a more intimate communion than in the community between

Creator and creature. This is the communion of reciprocal indwelling. In the Holy Spirit the eternal God participates in our transitory life, and we participate in the eternal life of God. This reciprocal community is an immense, outflowing source of energy.²⁸⁸

The energies of the Spirit, in which we charismatically experience divine energy, have been called *vitalizing energies*, because they awaken us to life. At one and the same time we experience our socialization and our individuation. “In the Spirit” we begin to comprehend the *love* that binds us and the *freedom* which makes us our own individual, separate selves.²⁸⁹

Jesus’ life was characterized by the real presence of the Holy Spirit. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus helped powerless individuals by freeing those ensnared with no escape, and driving out demons. The authority of Jesus Christ, the Spirit-filled messiah was then passed on to his followers to free the prisoners and heal the sick. (Matt 10:8). The power and presence of the Spirit was the determinative indication of Jesus’ messiahship. The Bible states, “but if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you? (Matt 12:28).²⁹⁰

Mark Wallace delves deeply into the theological tradition to locate resources for contemporary use. He emphasizes that in the Nicene Creed, the Spirit was named “the Lord, the Giver of Life.” The life-centered model of the Spirit expands the intra-

²⁸⁸ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 195.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

²⁹⁰ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 195-96.

trinitarian role of the Spirit to include the biocentric role as the power of healing and renewal within all creation.²⁹¹

Concurring with Wallace, I believe the Holy Spirit is the power of healing and the Universal Life Force energy which emanates from the hands of Reiki practitioners. God, the Holy Spirit, is the only healer. The Reiki practitioners have no power of their own. They are conduits for the life force, the healing energy of the Spirit.

The Practice of Reiki

Who can Practice Reiki?

Anyone can practice Reiki from any walk in life. We are all born with some natural healing ability through touch. Anyone who is attuned into Reiki will experience a higher vibration rate of healing energy than they had before the attunement. Therefore anyone can be a healer. Are there differences in healing abilities of practitioners? Yes. Just as anyone can be trained to sing to some degree, there is a tremendous difference if I sing and a person with the charisma for singing sings. Pavarotti and I could have had the same voice teacher and taken lessons the same length of time, but it would be evident who had a gift of singing and who did not if we each sang a solo. The same is found with Reiki. While everyone receives the same attunement, there will be different overall results. Each attuned person will have a higher ability to heal others than before the

²⁹¹ Mark I. Wallace, "The Green Face of God: Rediscovering the Spirit in an Age of Radical Ecology," in *Advent of the Spirit: Orientations in Pneumatology*, Conference Papers from a symposium at Marquette University, 17-19 April 1998 (unpublished, 5ff); cited in Karkkainen, *Pneumatology*, 161.

attunement. The bottom line is that anyone can be attuned to be a healer, but the one with a charism for healing will have a higher level life force vibrational energy emanating from their hands and will be more effective than the attuned person who does not have the charism for healing.

The desire to use Reiki for the benefit of yourself and others should be an honest one that is incorporated in a period of discernment. The decision to practice Reiki should not be the result of a passing whim. By taking a Reiki class, an attunement is given to the student which is comparable to turning on a switch that consequently turns on one's Reiki energy. Once the decision is made, there is nothing to stop you from taking a class, becoming attuned, and becoming a Reiki practitioner.²⁹²

It may be important to note many priests, ministers, deacons, elders, and nuns practice Reiki in different settings. Many work in hospitals as chaplains, some work in retirement complexes, others work in hospice, and some are spiritual directors.²⁹³

Reiki Attunements and Reiki Energy

The attunement is a process performed by a Reiki Master who literally turns on your healing energy. During the attunement one's own energy becomes in closer harmony with that of the rhythm of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The result is connecting the person being attuned more strongly to God's healing power, thus intensifying the

²⁹² Baginski and Shalila Sharamon, *Reiki: Universal Life Energy*, 46.

²⁹³ *Reiki for Christians*, "Nun, Priests, and Ministers Who Practice Reiki," <http://www.christianreiki.com/> (accessed Sept. 7, 2007).

healing energy emanating from the person's hands.²⁹⁴ Everyone has some healing ability, and, as discussed earlier in this thesis, there is evidence from scientific experiments that those who experience a Reiki attunement have noticeably stronger healing energies coming from their hands and are able to have more effective results in Reiki sessions.²⁹⁵

If you are a Christian, it is suggested that you say a prayer at the beginning of the attunement process and ask God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit to perform the attunement through you, the Reiki Master. Christians have discovered the attunement process to be very valuable and uplifting experience that strengthens their connection to God and increases their healing ability.

Attunements into Reiki are hands-on and of a personal nature; therefore the process used in the attunements cannot be discussed in any detail. They can only be passed on from Reiki Master-Teacher to student. Attunements open, cleanse, and transform the personal energy of the Reiki student. The following analogy is taken from gardening. The energy that flows through a student before an attunement can be compared to the intensity of the flow of water through a garden hose. After an attunement the energy will flow with the power and intensity of a fire hose. Although some students have brief mystical experiences, e.g., they see a light or experience Christ's presence in an intimate way and others feel a dramatic unblocking of energy, most students experience the attunements as gentle, peaceful, and energizing.

²⁹⁴ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 67-69.

²⁹⁵ Oschman, *Science and the Human Energy Field*.

The attunement ritual involving touch, breath, and use of the Reiki symbols by a Reiki Master and Teacher awakens the divine healing power within the student at the time of the attunement and continues throughout her/his lifetime. After the attunement, from that time on, just the intention to share Reiki healing touch will activate the lively flow of Reiki healing energy through the student's hands. It is believed that the healing energy is always flowing through our lives. The Reiki attunements increase the flow of God's energy in our lives and improve our own spiritual fruitfulness and the spiritual fruitfulness of others.

An attunement models the actions of Jesus. As Jesus made preparations to leave this world, he invited his disciples to be the pioneers in an adventure of healing and wholeness. According to John's gospel, Jesus breathes on them and thus attunes them to a higher spiritual energy, whose power will flow through them from then on.

And Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As God sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22).

As one of many spiritual practices, rituals, and healing techniques that allow Jesus' followers to share the good news, Reiki healing touch uniquely embodies the breath of life and the warmth of the Spirit. Reiki's gentle touch passes the Healing Spirit from person to person, through the limitless grace of God. Through the healing touch of Reiki, God's light continues to shine and bring healing to individuals and communities.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 67-69.

Reiki Methodology and Sessions

Before the actual Reiki session, it is typical for the Reiki practitioner and the client to sit and talk for a few minutes to make the client feel as comfortable as possible, to inform the client that strict confidentiality is insured, to find out what is expected from the treatment, and to give time for any questions or concerns the client may have concerning the session. Often the client decides on an affirmative statement or a statement of intent. The latter is not necessary, but it can be very effective. For example, the client may say he or she feels very stressed and concerned about an approaching operation. The affirmative statement is a simple statement that cannot hold any negatives within it. The statement could be, "I am going to heal quickly." An "intent" statement gives the client the opportunity to consider the possibility of an inner cause and solution to the problem, and to address and work with these ideas to enhance the extent to which Reiki can aid in lessening or healing the problem.

Some practitioners give the client a form to fill out and others do not. If a form is used, it may have questions that may concern the reason for the visit, if the client is presently seeing a doctor about a condition (Reiki is a complementary medical treatment), do they have difficulty lying on their back or stomach, and if there is anything the practitioner should know before the session begins. The patient's comfort, both physically and emotionally, is of prime importance during a session. The patient may add that she/he is cold or hot natured or that he/she has a cut on a finger. This forewarns the practitioner to have a blanket ready, or turn down the thermostat, and to be very careful in the area of the cut finger.

The Reiki practitioner also explains to the client what the client may experience during a session, e.g., heat or cold from the practitioners hands, waves of energy going through the body, the stomach may gurgle, tingling sensations are possible, colored and/or white lights may be seen, visions may occur, or they may only feel the very light and gentle touch of the practitioner's hands. The Reiki healing energy is equally effective whether or not one experiences different sensations during the session. It is best and strongly recommended that no expectations are held by the practitioner or the client. In addition the Reiki practitioner must feel unconditional love and remove all ego for a session to be effective.

The session itself lasts about one hour under normal conditions. In severe or extreme cases, the session could last longer. The patient is fully clothed except for taking off her/his shoes and lies down on a massage table. Sometimes, a couch, chair, or bed is used. The practitioner asks permission to touch the client during the session, although it is not necessary to do so. However, the power of touch can be very healing in itself, even without Reiki. Since the practitioner goes into a meditative state and the eyes are often closed, a feather-light touching of the client allows the practitioner to know where his/her hands are so they do not inadvertently "bounce" into the client, which would typically impede the practitioners meditative state and patient's relaxed mode or state of meditation.

The session is very clinical, and the hands are very lightly placed over the seven main energy areas of the body. The practitioner begins the session with a time of silence, grounding, and prayer. Bruce Epperly, Reiki Master, recites the following prayer.

Giver of life, love, and light, let your light shine through me. Let your healing light rest upon _____. Surround _____ with your love, grace, and protection, that she/he might experience the fullness of your healing. In Christ's name. Amen

Christians who practice Reiki place themselves in the presence of God by aligning their deepest desires for healing and wholeness with God's deepest desires for healing and wholeness for the world. If we listen, in the silence we can each hear God's gentle voice of guidance, inspiration, and empowerment. Silence awakens our awareness of the "inner light," the Holy Spirit, whose power can energize our spirits and inspire us more fully to become God's mediators of healing.

In the hour session, the hands are also placed over joints. The hands exert no pressure, do not slide, and there is no manipulation. The Reiki practitioner does this in a methodical manner and checks for areas of dysfunction in the client's body. When a dysfunctional area is found, the hands are held over it until the energy vibrations emanating from the area stops drawing energy indicating it has become balanced. This energy flow will adjust itself automatically to the needs of the client. If the area under the hands requires a large amount of energy, the flow will be felt very strongly. If the requirement is small, the flow will be slight. Every Reiki session is different, and the only typical result is for the client to be very relaxed.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ The following books provided information that is closely interwoven throughout the discussion of Reiki Methodology and Sessions. Reiki Masters in the Lineage of Barbara Weber Ray, *Reiki Training Program*, 1.7; Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 88-89; Vennells, *Reiki for Beginners*, 101-105.

After the Reiki session, the practitioner and client typically share experiences of the session if the client wishes to do so. The practitioner will also answer any questions and give any asked-for explanations. The Reiki practitioner is not a therapist and does not counsel a client after a session.

Distant Healing with Reiki

Physicians, scientists, and spiritual leaders have discovered that prayer is a non-local phenomenon. Our prayers radiate across the universe, creating a healing field of energy around and within those for whom prayers are offered. The healing ministry of Jesus involved direct touch and words of healing, but it also included his mysterious power to heal at a distance. While the essence of prayer, for example intercessory prayer, will always remain unidentified, we believe that our prayers interlace themselves together with God's desire for the deepest good for all things in their unique circumstance. When we pray, it's not about our changing God's mind; it is the question of our finally getting in tune with the music, i.e., desiring to be in accord to God's desires for the person.

Reiki is a prayer in action, and it is both local and non-local. In the holistic ecology of life, there is no difference between local and non-local. In touching another person, we bring wholeness to her or his body, mind, and spirit, and also create a field of healing energy which radiates beyond her or his specific psychophysical organism. When we nurture wholeness in one place, we convey wholeness to all places. In distance Reiki, our focus on the well-being of another person surrounds that person with God's

healing light, tenderly altering his or her body, mind, spirit, and relationships.²⁹⁸

Scientific studies are confirming that effects of healing attempts at a distance, for example, using prayer and distant Reiki, are effective. Over the last forty years, more than 150 formal, controlled studies of distant healing have been published and more than two-thirds of them showed significant beneficial effects.²⁹⁹ Although operations of prayer cannot be totally manipulated or completely understood, it is obvious that we become God's partners in healing whenever we surround another person with prayer, healing images, healing light, or hands-on or distant Reiki. When we pray, it's not about our changing God's mind; it is the question of our getting in rhythm with God and God's wishes for the person in this unique situation. We pray for the person's highest and best good, whatever that is, and our acceptance of it.

When I participated in a two-week class in another city, a woman I had known only a week asked me to send Reiki to her closest friend. The woman was having triple bypass surgery the next day. Doctors were coming to check her at 1 pm before the surgery for a final assessment of her condition. At 12:45 pm, when we broke for lunch, I went to my car and sent the woman Reiki. The next day my new friend asked me if I sent Reiki at 12:45 pm the day before. I responded affirmatively, and asked why. She said at

²⁹⁸ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 76-79.

²⁹⁹ Elisabaeth Targ, MD, is director of the Complementary Medicine Research Institute of California Pacific Medical Center, assistant clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, and a fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. She was the principal investigator of the studies of distant healing in AIDS described in this article. Elisabeth Targ, 1992. "Distant Healing," *Noetic Sciences Review*, no. 49 (August-November 1999): 24; D.J. Benor, *Healing Touch*, Vol.1. Deddington, England: Helix Editions, 1992.

12:45 pm she was with her friend, and her friend exclaimed that she felt energy come into her body through her feet and shoot to her heart. When the doctors came in a few minutes later they determined that she did not need bypass surgery, and they would put in one stint instead. Reiki is indeed healing prayer, and like prayer can be sent from a distance and create powerful healing effects.

Applications of Reiki

The Reiki methodology or sessions discussed previously can be administered anywhere that a quiet atmosphere can be found. Reiki can be administered to people who are standing, sitting, or lying down. Reiki can also be administered while one's consciousness attends to other details. Reiki is extremely beneficial when used in less typical situations than the home or Reiki office.

Hospitals and Medical Schools

I was sick and you took care of me...as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me (Matt. 25:36, 40).

People who are in the hospital often feel most alone and vulnerable. Every medical diagnosis and intervention reminds them of their mortality. Although comfort and curing are the goals of the medical profession and the hospital, patients are frequently frightened, anxious, and feel manipulated by the institutional way of life. Reiki healing touch provides comfort, reassurance, and connection. It augments the patients' sense of empowerment by connecting him or her to a larger healing reality and by reminding

patients that they can be partners in their own healing process. Reiki may reduce the negative side effects of medical interventions, as well as encourage the overall healing process. Reiki, the energy of the Holy Spirit, complements and supports whatever medical procedures are being utilized for the patient's well-being, not only by balancing the divine healing energy, but also by visibly witnessing to God's presence in time of crisis and need. For some, Reiki is considered a sacrament of divine healing in their life – a visible indication of their ultimate connectedness with God.³⁰⁰

Reiki is used in hospitals in emergency rooms, with ill patients, in conjunction with oncology facilities in the hospital, e.g., at M.D. Anderson in Houston, TX³⁰¹ and at Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga, TN, in the operating room, after surgery to accelerate healing, with upset or grieving family members, and is administered to the dying. In all cases, and especially in the latter case, I have witnessed patients becoming much more accepting of their situation and reaching a place of peace that was not observed before the Reiki was given.

Nurses and physicians have witnessed that Reiki helps relieve stress, agitation, and acute or chronic pain; it is beneficial as an aid for sleeping and also as an energizer. It promotes the release of emotions, e.g., grief, anger, or anxiety, and provides comfort in palliative care. By restoring balance to the patient's energy field, Reiki facilitates the patient's mobilizing of biological healing resources for recuperation. Surgeons and nurse

³⁰⁰ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 117-118, 126-127.

³⁰¹ *M. D. Anderson Cancer Center*, "Energy Therapies: Reiki Therapy, University Of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer, www.mdanderson.org/departments/cimer/. (Accessed August 10, 2008).

anesthetists discover Reiki to be helpful pre-, intra-, and postoperatively because of the lessened anxiety of the patient. Reiki also stops bleeding, and it never interferes with anesthesia.

Pamela Pettinati, M.D., finds Reiki extremely beneficial when she performs surgery in Third World countries. One day she was ready to perform surgery, except that the cautery machine had not arrived. She used Reiki to control the bleeding. Obstetricians and nurses find Reiki eases labor and delivery. Less medication is needed, labor is shorter, and there are fewer complications. An emergency room physician with fifteen years experience took a Reiki class and was attuned to become a Reiki practitioner. She reported she has increased awareness and heightened intuition which helped to support the decisive action so often needed in the emergency room. In response to these observations and data, many medical schools and nursing schools teach and/or require Reiki training of their students.³⁰² It was reported in the Columbus Monthly, December 2003, that hundreds of medical schools across the country, including The Ohio State University College of Medicine, have added alternative medicine to their programs of study (this would include Reiki).

Some of the biggest names in healthcare report that Reiki is proving beneficial in the recovery of patients. Of “America’s Best Hospitals,” as ranked by “U. S. News and World Report,” 60% have a hospital based Reiki program in place. A few examples are: Harvard Medical School affiliate Dana-Farber Institute which has been ranked the best

³⁰² Barnett and Chambers, *Reiki Energy Medicine*, 51-65.

cancer hospital in the New England states, and it asserts on its web site that Reiki has been effective in helping every known illness, including cancer; Duke Integrative Medicine, NC, which is consistently ranked among the top ten health care organizations in the country; Columbia University Medical Center's New York Presbyterian Hospital which was ranked as the sixth best hospital in the United States in 2007; and Yale University School of Medicine and Nursing's New Haven Hospital, CT, which maintains that practitioners and patients using Reiki therapy at this institute confirm its ability to promote relaxation, ease pain, and pave the way for healing.

Of the hospitals that do not use Reiki, it was reported that 50% would consider it. Additionally, Reiki research is being conducted in partnership with the National Institutes of Health at numerous facilities. A few examples follow: Johns Hopkins, MD; Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, NY; Beth Israel Medical Center, NY; Tucson Medical Center, AZ; University of California Medical Center, CA; Hartford Hospital, CT, Dartmouth Hitchcock University Hospital, RI; MD Anderson Medical Center, TX; Stanford Medical Center, CA; University of Colorado Medical School; University of Pennsylvania Medical School; and Yale School of Nursing.³⁰³

One of the beauties of Reiki is that it only requires holding the patient's hand while praying for and/or with him/her for the divine energy to flow. The practitioner

³⁰³ These two articles are interwoven to provide the information. Bioenergy Associates, 2009, "*Hospitals That Offer Reiki*," <http://www.bioenergyassociates.com/reikihospitals.htm>. (accessed February 3, 2009); Sean Mitchell, "*Reiki in Hospitals*;" *California Reiki*, June 8, 2008, [http://www.californiareiki.com/Articles/Article_00232\)_Reiki_in_Hospitals_Reiki_Medical_Settings.aspx](http://www.californiareiki.com/Articles/Article_00232)_Reiki_in_Hospitals_Reiki_Medical_Settings.aspx) (accessed February 3, 2009).

does not need to think about Reiki for the energy to flow and benefit the patient. When praying with someone, I have felt our hands become extremely warm to hot as I prayed, and it was obvious from the increasingly peaceful look in her/his eyes and the expressed gratitude that something special had happened with him/her. Quite often the patient falls asleep or enters a near-sleeping state near the end of a session/prayer. For me, the most beautiful healings are the ones that occur on the mental, emotional, and/or spiritual level. Of course, physical healings are very special too.

Reiki is being used at various facilities with patients who have cancer, AIDS, fibromyalgia, prostate cancer, nerve pain diabetes (helps to control blood sugar levels or improve heart function), ALS, depression, high blood pressure, Multiple Sclerosis, as well as people who have had strokes, spinal cord injury, and traumatic brain injury. The Department of Veterans Affairs uses Reiki in their hepatitis C treatment program, and the Fort Bliss' Warrior Resilience program uses Reiki as one tool to assist soldiers strengthen and recover following combat. A complete list of all the beneficial uses of Reiki is too lengthy to be incorporated in this thesis.

Hospice

Reiki not only address a person's symptoms, it also directly improves the quality of life. In the final weeks of life a person can be fraught with boredom, frustration, loneliness, depression, or fear. Reiki imparts comfort and well-being in addition to deep relaxation and reduction of pain, even when medicine no longer is effective, without

sacrificing consciousness. This allows the patient to be more alert to deal with the emotional issues of closure with loved ones.³⁰⁴

In my own experience with Reiki, one hospice patient was at home and the morphine would no longer control her pain. I was asked to give her a Reiki session. She was hooked up to many tubes, and I could not reach many of the typical hand positions, so I mentally pictured where my hands would typically be placed while I touched her shoulder or hand. She fell asleep during the session, and I left. There was no reason for me to hope she would live through the night. Two days later I learned from the hospice patient herself that after I left, she felt so much better that she was able to get out of bed and go to the den to spend two hours with her husband and son just chatting. The next week I was called again and told the morphine was no longer able to lessen the pain, and I was asked to go to the home and give her Reiki. The day after the Reiki session, her husband called to tell me that they had been able to take a thirty minute ride together after the Reiki session to see the Christmas lights in their neighborhood. She died a very peaceful death surrounded by her family a few days later.

Psychotherapy

It is obvious that the inclusion of Reiki in psychotherapy, when appropriate, can encourage full resolution of difficult patterns. Sometimes after a breakthrough insight is achieved in traditional psychotherapy, an emotional residue remains that continues to control the behavior. Reiki accelerates the process of psychotherapy by eliciting

³⁰⁴ Barnett & Chambers, *Reiki Energy Medicine*, 72.

additional insights in reference to the client's situation as well as by allowing the emotional residue to release gently from the body's cells. This results in a sense of well-being and empowerment.

Jane was a medical social worker at Massachusetts General Hospital, and the basic principle that guided her Reiki psychotherapy practice is that all healing comes from within. She believes the client is not fragile. The client's powerful and whole, having all the answers within. Reiki supports the accessing of this inner wisdom.³⁰⁵ For Christians, this inner wisdom, as previously noted, is the Holy Spirit, the life source.

Spiritual Direction

Maureen Conroy, R.S.M., a Roman Catholic Sister of Mercy and Reiki Master, teaches Reiki bi-annually at the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Grand Coteau, LA. She is the co-coordinator of the two developmental programs for spiritual directors at the Upper Room Spirituality Center in New Jersey and at Creighton University, Nebraska, and she has educated spiritual directors and practiced spiritual direction for many years. When I assisted her in teaching a level I course in Reiki, she was emphatic concerning the benefits of holding a forty-five minute Reiki session preceding spiritual direction sessions. Conroy related that the Reiki session relaxes the client and places them in the nearness of God which facilitates the spiritual direction session.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 76, 79.

³⁰⁶ Maureen Conroy, "Reiki," speech delivered to Reiki I class, April 4, 2003, Jesuit Spirituality Center, Grand Coteau, LA.

A Christian Theological Interpretation of Reiki

As discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis, in the 1970s Rahner referred to the Holy Spirit as an “energy field.” Subsequently, Welker and Pannenberg used the term “force field” when alluding to the Holy Spirit, and Moltmann used the term “life force.” Describing the Holy Spirit as “life force” is in accord with the Old Testament bestowing the name “source of life” to the Holy Spirit. This “life force,” the Holy Spirit, indwells all creation, both inorganic and organic, from the beginning of time, and is also known as the “life giver.”³⁰⁷ This “life force” was the Spirit of Jesus, and through the power of the Spirit, Jesus worked miracles. The power to heal was passed on by Jesus to his disciples, and Jesus commanded them to go out and heal (Luke 9:1-2, 6; John 20:21-22). Of the various charisms given to humans by the Holy Spirit, it would seem that the charism of healing would be an excellent demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s role as the “source of life,” or “life giver,” or “life force,” or “energy field” being manifested and at work in the economy, the world.

We have typically given only Jesus acclaim for his miracles. Robert Hughes believes that many of the things that Western theology in particular has attributed to Christ should be attributed to the Spirit, e. g., the healings performed by Jesus.³⁰⁸

McDonnell reminds us that Jesus sent the Spirit to us, and, therefore, the Spirit appears to be an agent of Christ. From this viewpoint, Christology is the source of

³⁰⁷ Robert D. Hughes, Inner Operating System, Higher Intelligence, and Innate Inner Wisdom, e-mail message to Ruth M. Allen, January 25, 2009.

³⁰⁸ Hughes, *Beloved Dust*, 43.

Pneumatology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, parallel to the pneumatology conditioned by Christology is a Christology conditioned by pneumatology.³⁰⁹

What is the connection of the above statements to Reiki? Reiki, a Japanese word, means Universal Life Force, another name for the Holy Spirit. People who have been attuned into the practice of Reiki transmit “life-force energy” through their hands to their client. Reiki practitioners are a vehicle for the manifestation and work of the Holy Spirit on earth. Reiki can cause no harm as it comes from God. Healing occurs at the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual level if the person accepts the universal life-force energy. No belief is required, but openness to a Reiki session is necessary. The amount of energy offered to a client is dependent on the practitioner’s Reiki level, how often Reiki is practiced, and the practitioner’s level of spirituality, i.e., their connection to God. The practitioners are a conduit of the energy and have no personal powers of their own. A Christian healer is desirous of following the command of Jesus “to go and heal.”

It is recommended that a Reiki practitioner offer a prayer before a session. In prayer, I ask the Universal Life Force to come through Jesus Christ bringing love, light, and wisdom. I ask Jesus to be with me and to work directly through me for the healing of the client. As a Christian I offer myself to Christ and pray to be used as a conduit for God’s healing love and energy, i.e., the flowing of the “life force,” Holy Spirit, offered to the client for healing. The client is free to accept or reject this healing energy. Both the client and the practitioner must accept that God heals as God chooses, and our wishes

³⁰⁹ McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God*, 109.

may not be God's wishes. We can only ask, and then accept what God chooses. The Reiki practitioners' goal is to align their deepest desires for healing and wholeness with God's deepest desires for healing and wholeness.³¹⁰

For Christians, the connection of Reiki to the healing energy of the Universal Life Force, the Holy Spirit, is evident. Reiki energy is the energy of the Holy Spirit, the Universal Life Force. As with Jesus, healing is done through the power of the Holy Spirit, the "Giver of Life." Is this correctly called Christian Reiki or is it a situation of a Christian practicing Reiki?³¹¹ I pondered this question a long time, and although I have said I practice Christian Reiki, I need to revise this belief. My thoughts flowed to the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Creator and is in all of creation, and human beings have practiced healing effectively since the beginning of human existence. The Holy Spirit had been manifested as the "giver of life," before Jesus Christ was on earth. My thoughts flowed to my e-mail interview with a Buddhist Reiki Master. She told me that when she practices Reiki she is guided by "spirit life force energy." She believes she is a conduit when this energy is passed from her to a client. Reiki Masters who are Christians also feel guided by "spirit life force energy," and they believe they are conduits when the energy of the Holy Spirit is passed from them to a client. At the basic level of

³¹⁰ All Around Fitness, "*Is Reiki A Religion?*" http://allaroundfitness.com/reiki_h.html (accessed September 7, 2008).

³¹¹ These thoughts were inspired during a lecture by The Reverend Doctor Richard Leggett when he stated "Christian marriage" is a misnomer, and it would be more correct to say "a Christian getting married." Leggett was the featured speaker of the Annual Baynard Jones Lectures at the School of Theology of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, on February 4, 2009.

understanding Reiki is the same regardless of one's religion or lack of religion. All Reiki practitioners are conduits for the Universal Life Force energy, and, therefore, I feel it is incorrect to speak in terms of Christian Reiki, Buddhist Reiki, etc. It would be more correct to speak of Christians practicing Reiki or Buddhists practicing Reiki, etc.

When one practices Reiki, it is necessary to feel unconditional love for the client and be mindfully cognizant that one is only a conduit for the healing energy of the Holy Spirit. No ego can be involved. For myself, when I practice Reiki there ceases to be a you and a me. We become "one in the Spirit."

Summary and Conclusions

All charisms must be trained and have a means of being expressed. One means of training and expressing a gift of healing is the practice of Reiki. Reiki practice is a form of "hands-on-healing." It is a method of stress reduction and relaxation that promotes healing at the spiritual, emotional, mental, and/or physical levels. Reiki is a non-invasive technique of gentle touch that recharges the *ki*, or *chi*, or *prana*, i.e., the human energy field. Reiki practitioners are conduits for the Universal Life Force energy. For Christians, the Universal Life Force is the Holy Spirit who was sent to be with us by Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is called the Source of Life; and, therefore, is the source of healing.

In order to practice Reiki, a person should be trained and must be attuned by a Reiki Master. Anyone can practice Reiki if these conditions are met. As stated previously, it can be concluded that at the foundational level of understanding Reiki is

basically the same regardless of one's religion or lack of religion. All Reiki practitioners are conduits for the Universal Life Force energy, and, therefore, I feel it is incorrect to speak in terms of Christian Reiki, Buddhist Reiki, etc. It would be more correct to speak of Christians practicing Reiki, Buddhists practicing Reiki, etc.

The amount of energy offered to a client is dependent on the practitioner's Reiki level, how often Reiki is practiced, and the practitioner's level of spirituality, i.e., her/his connection to God. Reiki is not a religion. It transcends all religions, cultures, creed, and nationalities.

The Universal Life Force energy, that Christians call the Holy Spirit, facilitates the restoration of dysfunctional vibrations to a resonance in closer harmony with the indwelling Trinity. This produces healthier physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual dimensions of being.

The healings Jesus performed have numerous similarities to the practice of Reiki. One important similarity is the fact that Jesus could pass on the power to heal to others, which is comparable to the Reiki attunement process. Jesus gave his twelve disciples power to drive out all demons and to cure diseases (Luke 9:1-2). Jesus told his disciples, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me, can do the same miracles I have done, and even greater things than these will you do" (John 14:12).

Reiki is used in hospitals, hospice, medical doctors' offices, and in private Reiki practice. It is also used in conjunction with psychotherapy sessions and spiritual direction. For Christians, the Universal Life Force is the Holy Spirit at work in the world

today. This thesis focuses on Reiki as practiced and interpreted from a Christian point of view.

I feel extremely blessed to be called to be a Christian who practices Reiki using Jesus Christ as my model. It is my wish that other Christians who read this thesis will be inspired to search their soul to discern if they too have a call to the healing ministry.

The following prayer, attributed to St. Theresa of Avila, a Spanish saint and mystic of the 16th century, concludes this thesis.

You are Christ's hands.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which Christ's
compassion is to look upon the world.
Yours are the feet with which God is to go about
doing good.
Yours are the hands through which God is to
bless women and men now.³¹²

³¹² Helen Haberly, *Reiki: Hawayo Takata's Story* (Garrett Park, MD: Archedigm, 1990), 12; cited in Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 97.

APPENDIX 1
Healing Services: Three Representative Examples

Episcopal Church

In the Episcopal Church there is a form to follow for a Public Service of Healing in *The Book of Occasional Services*. Various Episcopal churches hold this service either weekly, bimonthly, or once a month.

The service begins as appointed for a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, or it may begin with the Penitential Order, or with the following greeting,

Celebrant: “*Grace and peace be with you, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

This greeting is subsequently followed by a Collect, and then one or two Lessons are read before the Gospel. Before the Gospel and between the lessons, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said.

If the Proper of the Day is not used, the Lessons, Psalm, and Gospel are selected from the Table in this book on page 171-173.

A sermon or mediation, or a period of silence, or both may follow the Gospel. The service continues with the Creed, or with the Prayers of the People.

For the Prayers of the People, a Litany of Healing is found on page 167 of this book. The Litany of Healing begins with the People audibly naming those for whom they are interceding. This is followed by an appointed person reading the Litany as seen on page 167.

The Celebrant concludes the Prayers with one of three listed Collects or another appropriate Collect. For example:

Celebrant: *Almighty God, giver of life and health: Send your blessing on all who are sick, and upon those who minister to them, that all weakness may be vanquished by the triumph of the risen Christ; who lives and reigns forever and ever.*

All: Amen.

A confession of sin follows unless it has been said at the beginning of the service.

The Celebrant now invites those who wish to receive the laying on of hands (and anointing) to come forward. If oil for the anointing of the sick is to be blessed, the form on page 455 of the *Book of Common Prayer* is used.

The anthem is sung or said.

Celebrant: *Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us;*

All: Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

A blessing is then said over all who have come forward. Subsequently the Celebrant lays hands on each person (and, having dipped a thumb in the oil of the sick, makes the sign of the cross on their foreheads), and says one of the following.

Celebrant: *N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you with oil) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy spirit, beseeching our Lord Jesus Christ to sustain you with his presence, to drive away all sickness of body*

and spirit, and to give you that victory of life and peace which will enable you to serve him both now and evermore.

All: Amen.

Or this

Celebrant: *N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you with oil) in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, beseeching him to uphold you and fill you with grace, that you may know the healing power of his love.*

All: Amen.

Or this

Celebrant: *N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you with oil) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

All: Amen.

Alternatively prayer may be offered for each person individually according to that person's need, with laying on of hands (and anointing). Lay persons with a gift of healing may join the celebrant in the laying on of hands.

The service continues with the exchange of the Peace. If there is not to be a Communion, the service concludes with the Lord's Prayer and the prayer and blessing given below. If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, the Liturgy continues with the Offertory. In place of the usual postcommunion prayer (or, if there has not been a Communion, after the Lord's Prayer,) the following prayer is said:

Priest: *Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

All: Amen.

The Celebrant pronounces this blessing:

Priest: *May God the Father bless you, God the Son heal you, God the Holy Spirit give you strength. May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard your body, save your soul, and bring you safely to his heavenly country; where he lives and reigns forever and ever.*

All: Amen.

Deacon or Celebrant: Dismissal of the people.³¹³

A similar service titled “Ministrations to the Sick” is found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The detailed service is on pages 453-457.³¹⁴

A Reiki Healing Service for Application in any Christian Church

This service involves the use of Reiki, a method used in the “laying on of hands.” Reiki will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. The service begins with a meditation that

³¹³ The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Occasional Services: Conforming to General Convention 2003* (New York: Church Publishing, 2003), 166-73.

³¹⁴ The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer: and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 453-57.

emphasizes healing thoughts. Subsequently introductory remarks include guidelines for congregants who desire to receive healing. Comments and suggestions are requested that may be placed in a basket in the rear of the church along with any offerings one may wish to make.

Chairs are arranged in front of the church or room with one chair for every two healers. Music is played as the healers move to the front to stand beside their chairs. The music is continued as those who request healing are guided by ushers to an available chair. The person is quietly asked by the healers to state any particular request. Healers place hands on each person until the healer and participant feel the healing is complete. The maximum time is 5-7 minutes. The person is then requested to return to her/his seat, and subsequently the ushers escort another person to the chair. This process continues until all who request healing have received it. Now the healers do Reiki for one another. Now all participants and healers and anyone in the congregation join in a circle holding hands and give thanks to God for healing and then send healing to others in need and to the world. A hymn is sung by all to conclude the service.³¹⁵

In 2003, I organized similar services, arranged in conjunction with a Reiki presentation, which were held in an Episcopal Church in Mandeville, Louisiana, and others as part of Episcopal retreats in southern Louisiana. Initially I gave a presentation

³¹⁵ Marvin Witbeck has participated in organizing several healing services in two different churches with enthusiastic results followed by requests for more services and people asking to learn more about Reiki. In his article he gives detailed steps taken in order to organize the service described. Marvin Witbeck, "Creating a Healing Service in Your Church," *Reiki for Christians*, www.christianreiki.org/ (accessed 1/10/09).

to the group concerning my personal experiences with Reiki, the origin of Reiki and its methodology, and discussed scripture involving healing and Jesus sending out his disciples to heal as he did. Subsequently members of the group who had experienced Reiki told their story, if they desired to do so, concerning their Reiki session(s) experience and what how it had affected their lives. Many present had no former acquaintance with Reiki. Any participant who wanted to experience a Reiki session was invited into the church where chairs had been set up near the altar for an abbreviated Reiki session. Each session took about 15 minutes, but I did not time a session since different people require various amounts of time.

After the presentation and service, as with Marvin Witbeck, there were requests for more healing services, and several people asked for training to become a Reiki practitioner.

A Service of Healing and Blessing for any Application in any Christian Church

This service was initially written for the celebration of the initiation of 30 Christians who practiced Reiki. It can be modified for any healing context. There are many approaches to worship, healing, or wholeness. Despite cultural, liturgical, and theological expression, when healing occurs, God is its source and inspiration.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 108.

THE CALL TO AWARENESS

Touched by Water

Silent Opening to the Wholeness

Remembering Our Original Wholeness

Remembrance of Our First Touch

One: It is most unfortunate that none of us can consciously remember our first moment...that time, when, through the touch of God's love, we individually came to be.

How instantaneous that moment...like water...running between our fingers...fluid, fleeting, hard to grasp, impossible to articulate, but in our own unique moment of creation, we each personally experienced God's first touch...replete with original wholeness and love, and repeatedly echoed by all other touch found in nurture and care throughout our lives. And so, we bathe our hands this morning...not because we must – but because we may...not because we need to in any way, but because we want to, because we want to remember something beyond words, back in a moment before we even had words, back to our very first gift, the first touch of God...

Words of Prayer upon the Water

All: *In the openness of our outstretched hands, there is always*

vulnerability. In our responsive care extended to others, there is always acceptance. In the gentle strength of your healing touch, you will always reveal your love.

The Sacrament of Healing Touch: Consecrating Our Hands to God's Healing

Basin and towel are carried from participant to participant. Each person's hands are carefully bathed, and then dried.

THE CALL TO OPENNESS

Touched by God's Word

The Scripture

John 10:10

Silent Reflection

Shared Reflection

Blessing our silence and words (giving thanks for the insights we have found individually and as a group).

THE CALL TO GRACE

Touched by God through the Laying on of Hands & Anointing with Oil

The Scriptures

Psalm 133

Matthew 6:25-34

Prayers over the Oil

Anointing with oil

The laying on of hands

Prayers of the People; Petitions and Intercessions

THE CALL TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Touched by Communion

Invitation: Vine and branches (John 15: 1, 4-7)

*Eucharistic Prayer*³¹⁷

Pastor: God be with you.

People: *In wonder and awe, we claim God's love and are made whole.*

Pastor: Let us open our hearts to God.

People: *In wonder and awe, we claim God's love and are made whole.*

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God.

People: *For Holy Love is infinite and everlasting.*

**Pastor: We give you thanks, O God of infinite love and creativity, for
your constant presence in all things. You are the heart of all
creation, and in holy love we joyfully live, move, and have our
being. Your beauty and wisdom bring forth universe after
universe: both those worlds within us, and the multitude of**

³¹⁷ The consecration prayer that follows is from the original document. The discipline of some denominations may require substitution of one of their own prayers at this point in the service. Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 110-00.

worlds infinitely beyond ourselves. Your artistry brings forth the earth and colors all living things. All creation breathes your spirit. All creatures embody your love. Your holy adventure is heard in the cries of babes. It inspires the voices of prophets. It whispers in the mundane words of women and men of every tradition and place. In original wholeness, your beauty is constantly revealed as our deepest identity. As your beloved children, our most basic essence is holy love. We give you thanks, for the wisdom incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, the healer and lover, our faithful friend for the heart's journey to you. In Christ, we celebrate your gift of open vision and gentle power that reclaims the wholeness that is your intention for all things. In Christ, all wounds are healed, all sin forgiven, all alienation reconciled. In Christ, all suffering is cherished and transformed. Let your Spirit, O Loving Companion, break forth in our voice, as we and all creation give voice to the signs too deep for words.

All: *Holy, holy, holy Love. Everything resonates with your touch. With joy, we embrace your care that creates and responds. All things proclaim your love. We join with you to celebrate healing and goodness. In Christ, your tender strength is revealed. You have brought love to life, and life to love.*

Pastor: We remember your infinite love for all creation, revealed in Christ's love for us. In the midst of suffering, love is victorious. In the midst of death, new life springs forth. In Christ's suffering and earth, in the body and blood, the bread and wine, our suffering is transformed and our wounds are healed. In sharing Christ's bread and wine, all meals and all touch are made holy. As our bodies and relationships are made whole, your loving promise is fulfilled.

All: *Let your Spirit transform our lives as we share in the bread and the wine. May the bread and wine reveal to us your healing love so that we might become co-creators in your holy adventure. Enable your love to heal in word and touch, in silence and in prayer.*

Pastor: These are the gifts of God, given to God's people. Our sharing in them unites us and all others with God in the adventure of healing and wholeness.

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

THE CALL TO PARTNERSHIP

Touched by Presence

The Invitation

One: God is the circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. We are always in the divine circle; we are

always home; we are always loved, and our light and love radiates across the Universe.

Forming the Healing Circle

One: As a sign of the healing circle that encompasses all things, let us be a circle of love and healing, let us open ourselves to the flow of God's healing light, sharing healing with one another through the touch of hands and tender words of prayer. (*A time of embracing in light, love, and peace.*)

Sending Forth in the Circle of Love

One: Let us go forth always in the circle of love. Go in peace. Go in light. Go in health. Amen.³¹⁸

Although the first healing service is officially the one used in the Episcopal Church, it, as well as the other two healing services, can be adapted to use in any Christian church. One does not need to be seriously ill to greatly benefit from the "laying on of hands" and to feel the closeness and comfort of God as one is prayed for individually.

³¹⁸ Epperly and Epperly, *Reiki Healing Touch*, 108-13.

APPENDIX 2 Frequently Asked Questions

How Do We Know that Healing is Appropriate for Christians to Do?

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 14:1 enthusiastically to desire spiritual gifts. Healing is one of the gifts (I Cor. 12:28). According to Paul, gifts are best expressed with love. Unconditional love for a client is a requirement for a Reiki practitioner during a session. In addition, Jesus is quoted in John 14:12 as stating, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father.” The Bible declares that Jesus practiced laying on of hands type healing; therefore, there is a scriptural basis for Christians to practice healing by laying on of hands.

What is the Best Way for a Christian to Practice Reiki?

Reiki provides training and gives one a way for utilizing God’s power. When giving Reiki treatments, Christians who practice Reiki are told to call on God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit to work directly through them and do the healing for them. This is accomplished through prayer before Reiki sessions and attunements.

How Do We Know that Reiki Comes from God? I've Heard Some People Say Reiki Comes from Satan. How Can I Know the Truth?

Typically our understanding and knowledge of Satan comes from the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible can one find an occurrence of Satan healing someone. Satan is depicted tempting people to sin, but Satan does not heal people. In Luke 6:44, Jesus says, "Each tree is recognized by its own fruit." This can be interpreted to mean that if something is beneficial and helps people, and those results are long-lasting, such as the healing people receive from Reiki, then it must be good and come from God.

Is Reiki a Religion?

Reiki is not a religion. It is used with the same success by people of many faiths and religions, by free thinkers as well as by the followers of widely varying philosophies and ideologies. Reiki is not dependent on belief and will work if one believes in it or not. Reiki is spiritual in nature and has no dogma and no special related faith or belief is required to learn to practice Reiki.³¹⁹

Another article emphasizes that Reiki is not a religion or a system of belief. Reiki is frequently called "spiritual healing," because it is not guided by the practitioner. The vibrating and pulsating energy of Reiki has its own innate wisdom to go where it is needed and do what is necessary to achieve stabilization and healing. In addition, this

³¹⁹ *All Around Fitness*, "Is Reiki a Religion?" http://allaround-fitness.com/reiki_h.html. (accessed September 7, 2008).

article reemphasizes that Reiki is not “faith healing,” because belief is not necessary for Reiki to be effective.³²⁰

Reiki is a simple healing technique, and it does not require one to give up one’s religion or change one’s religious beliefs in any way to practice it. Most Christians who practice Reiki remark that Reiki brings them into a closer relationship with God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. They also state that because it is a method of healing, it assists them in fulfilling their Christian calling to help others. Reiki itself is religiously neutral.

What is the Purpose of the Symbols Used in Reiki?

Symbols are part of Christianity, for example, the fish and the cross are Christian symbols. Members of some religions, e.g. Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, make the sign of the cross over their chests for protection and to become empowered with Christ. Reiki symbols are used to connect with different kinds of Reiki energy and since Reiki healing energies all come from God, the symbols are a way to connect with God. It is not necessary to use symbols with Reiki; in Level I Reiki there are no symbols.

³²⁰ *Spread Reiki*, “Begin Within Reiki,” http://www.spreadreiki.com/?page_id=33/ (accessed September 7, 2008).

I've Heard of Reiki Practitioners Speaking of Reiki Guides. What Is This About?
I've heard That Christians Should Avoid Contacting Spirits.

Reiki guides are not a part of the original Reiki teaching. This idea was added by Western practitioners. It is not necessary to contact a spirit guide to use Reiki, because Reiki energy comes directly from God. Christians may opt to use a similar concept when practicing Reiki. In the Bible we read that Jesus, Mary, and other biblical figures received assistance from spiritual beings in the form of angels. Angels are spiritual beings that God has created to serve as his messengers, and some Reiki practitioners may make use of their help. The angels of God are capable of facilitating healing and providing guidance. You can also call on God directly especially Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, to be with you and to provide healing energy directly.

Sister Maureen Conroy, R. S. M., a Reiki Master whose teachings will be discussed later, informs her students that Reiki Guides refer to the Communion of Saints. She attests, and so do I, that “spiritual beings” are present and guide and protect Reiki practitioners during sessions.³²¹

How Does Reiki Heal?

Reiki heals by its energy opening the subtle energy channels of the body by removing energy blockages in order for the natural healing capabilities of the body to be

³²¹ Sister Maureen Conroy, R. S. M., D. Min., is a national renowned spiritual director, author of numerous books, retreat master, and works in adult education. Maureen Conroy, “Reiki,” speech delivered to Reiki I class, April 4, 2003, Jesuit Spirituality Center, Grand Coteau, LA.

allowed to work without restraint. Reiki can often bring new awareness on the emotional and spiritual levels that allows the receiver to leave life-limiting pain and beliefs behind.³²²

As stated previously, the reason we are alive is that life force energy is flowing through us. Life force energy flows within the physical body and it flows around us in a field of energy called the aura. It nourishes the organs and cells of the body, sustaining them in their essential functions. When the flow of life force energy is disrupted, blocked or slowed down, it causes diminished function in one or more of the organs and tissues of the physical body.

What are some of the causes of the slowing down or blockages of the flow of this life force? Life force is responsive to thoughts and feelings, and it becomes disrupted when we accept, either consciously or unconsciously, negative thought or feelings about ourselves. These negative thoughts and feelings attach themselves to the energy field and produce a disruption in the flow of life force energy, which subsequently results in the diminishing of the vital function of the organs and the cells of the physical body.

Reiki results in healing by flowing through the affected parts of the energy field and charging them with positive energy. Reiki energy raises the vibratory level of the energy field to its normal and healthy rate in and around the physical body where the negative thoughts and feelings are attached. This results in the negative or dysfunctional

³²² *Spread Reiki*, “Begin Within Reiki,” http://www.spreadreiki.com/?page_id=33/ (accessed September 7, 2008).

energy breaking up. Reiki clears, straightens, and heals the energy pathways which allow the life force to flow in a healthy and natural manner.³²³

Is Reiki a Buddhist Practice?

Although Mikao Usui, who rediscovered the method of healing we call Reiki, was a Buddhist, he had respect for all religions, including Christianity, which he had studied. At one time he lived with a Christian family and had Christian friends. It was not his wish that Reiki be a religious practice, but that it be a simple healing technique that anyone could use. Due to his desires, there are no Buddhist practices in Reiki. Reiki is religiously neutral, for Reiki energy comes from God, which is understood to be the one or Universal God, also known as Universal Life Force Energy.³²⁴

Can Reiki Energy Ever Cause Harm?

Since Reiki energy is guided by the God consciousness and is the Universal Life Force energy of the Holy Spirit, Reiki energy by its nature can never cause harm. The divine energy always knows what a person needs and will adjust itself to create the effect

³²³ *All Around Fitness*, "Is Reiki a Religion?" http://allaround-fitness.com/reiki_h.html. (accessed September 7, 2008).

³²⁴ *Christian Reiki*, "Reiki for Christians," <http://www.christianreiki.org> (accessed January 19, 2009).

that is best for them.³²⁵ Reiki is a complementary medicine and, therefore, is practiced in conjunction with conventional medical practice.

Do All Healers Use Reiki?

Although all healers use life force or Ki, they do not all use Reiki. Reiki is a unique way of expressing life force that can only be channeled by someone who has been attuned to it. There is a possibility that some people are born with Reiki or have received it in some other way. However, most healers who have not received the Reiki attunement from a Reiki Master do not have as intense of a life force energy emanating from their hands as a Reiki practitioner. People who were already doing healing work using some other method consistently report an increase of at least fifty percent in the strength of their healing energies after receiving the Reiki training and had experienced an attunement. They stated that the Reiki energies were more powerful and of a much higher frequency. These people who had previously practiced another method of healing also stated that Reiki did not need to be guided like the other healing energies they were using, and that the Reiki energies began flowing without having to enter an altered state.³²⁶

³²⁵ *Reiki*, "How Does Reiki Work?" *The International Center For Reiki Training*, 1991, <http://reiki.org/FAQ/HowDoesReikiWork.html>. (accessed July 24, 2005).

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

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