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What is the “Subtle Energy” in Energy Healing?

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Lawrence E. Burkholder



Subtle energy is at the core of many modern alternative (holistic) healing therapies. Acupuncture, Therapeutic Touch (TT) and homeopathy are three popular modalities based in subtle energy ideology. Holistic theoreticians have combined the theory of vitalism – both eastern and western – with quantum speculation in forming modern energy ideology. This article’s premise – that subtle energy is really the action of personal, demonic spirits – is explored with reference to mechanistic-scientific, holistic, and biblical-theological paradigms. On the one hand, energy healing fails the tests of the scientific-mechanistic paradigm. Conversely, leading holistic theorists acknowledge subtle energy as psi; and also clearly note the role of spirits in it. Biblical theology traces such “nature” forces to the Old Testament doctrine of *chaoskampf* (conflict-with-chaos) – God’s creational conflict with Satan. The New Testament disavows any use by Jesus of subtle energy, and warns against false demonic signs and wonders.

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It is prime time for alternative medicine (energy healing). Many people in western societies are disenchanted with conventional medicine’s invasiveness, cost, complexity, impersonality, chemical toxicity, technical focus and failures. As a result, increasing numbers of people are choosing a holistic option.

The New England Journal of Medicine reported in an early 1990s’ survey that Americans went to providers of alternative therapies more that year than to conventional doctors (425 million visits compared to 388 million visits).¹ Depending on the country, between 30% and 70% of the Euro-American populations presently use some form of the 500-odd alternative or holistic treatments. Grassroots’ testimonials, combined with explicit endorsements by some Christian health professionals, pastors, and other leaders,² indicate that increasing numbers of Christians are part of this phenomenal movement.

The purpose of this article is to identify the energy source(s) in alternative healing. The holistic community is quite clear that such energy is “subtle energy,”³ defined as, “A general term denoting energy that often exists outside the ordinary or positive space-time frame, i.e. magnetoelectric (ME) energy which moves faster than light.”⁴ In this model, a person typically is seen as a web of interlacing energy fields; sickness and wellness are measures of how these energies function within a universe which is itself a vast network of energy fields.⁵ This is a modern version of the theory of vitalism, which may be defined as an essential, self-organizing, invisible teleological force that somehow permeates and gives structure to the material realm, including life.⁶ This vital force can have deficiencies, excesses, or mis-patterning of its energy flows, and since wellness and sickness represent fluctuations in energy, the goal of vitalistic healing is to re-power or re-balance the energies.

Victorian era labels for vitalism included life force, physiological gradient, *élan vital*, biological energy, *entelechy*, and *gestalten*. Current descriptors include energy medicine, energy field healing, energetics, quantum energetics, quantum vitalism, vibrational healing, quantum healing, bio-energy intuitive meditation and others. The term coined

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for this article, "Vital Energy Medicine" (VEM), effectively captures the various connections among the philosophy of vitalism, holistic energy theories, and medicine.

To narrow the focus, three popular therapies have been chosen. These are acupuncture, Therapeutic Touch ("TT," to be distinguished from massage, stroking, and hand-holding) and homeopathy. Each has deep historical roots as a healing modality⁷ and, as we shall see, an unabashedly vitalistic theoretical foundation. Therefore, together they form a particularly valuable database to assess the nature of subtle energy.

It will become clear that subtle energy theory raises profound questions about the nature of God and creation, their interrelationships, and especially their energies and powers. Against the claims of VEM, I shall contend that subtle energy is not an energy at all, but is the operation of personal demonic beings within healers and clients. This conclusion follows from a sequential analysis of subtle energy's claims to be scientifically coherent, of its self-identification as a vitalistic/holistic philosophy and of the biblical view that "nature power" is demonic.

VEM and the Mechanistic-Scientific Paradigm

The mechanistic paradigm—whether Newtonian, Einsteinian or quantum—reduces reality to physical cause-and-effect phenomena. This reductionism is at once the paradigm's strength and weakness, offering great descriptive and predictive power for restricted data fields. It likewise carries an inability to deal with issues of uniqueness—the creation of the universe and life within it—and of metaphysical truth: the existence of God. Current research in information cosmology and anthropic design, which shows a universe of incredible complexity apparently designed for carbon life, underscores mechanistic science's limitations.⁸

The mechanistic paradigm brings these same strengths and weaknesses to its analysis of energy medicine. For example, consider a homeopathic substance which statistically has no active agent molecules left after repeated dilutions. If the preparation nonetheless appears to have at least occasional efficacy,⁹ the explanations available to the mechanistic paradigm include: lack of observational data, the placebo effect, experimental bias, research incompetence, labeling (e.g., paranormal phenomena) or presently-obscure physical laws and processes.¹⁰

In evaluating VEM's efficacy, one notes first that up to 80% of ailments that doctors treat will self-heal with no treatment at all.¹¹ In addition, VEM may offer healing-enhancing psychological benefits such as sympathetic listening, stress reduction, love and respect for clients, and building the person's courage. But after these "soft" factors,

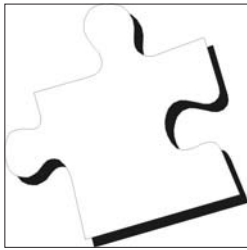
is there scientific verification of energy healing claims? Though the evidence of the following nine research synopses at first seems affirmative, from a mechanistic perspective, the answer turns out to be "no."

Is there scientific verification of energy healing claims? Though the evidence ... at first seems affirmative, from a mechanistic perspective, the answer turns out to be "no."

Acupuncture: Dr. Barbara Apgar performed a 1999 meta-analysis of nine trials involving 377 patients with chronic back pain and what the author calls "a poor prognosis." The major finding was "that the combined results of the studies show acupuncture to be superior to various control interventions."¹² In a 1999 systematic literature review and meta-analysis presented to the Novartis Foundation by Adrian White of the University of Exeter (UK), he stated that there is "conclusive evidence" that acupuncture eases various pains, but that there is also "conclusive evidence" that it is no more effective than placebo in smoking cessation and weight loss.¹³ The Yale University School of Medicine performed a controlled study of 82 persons with cocaine addiction who were also on methadone. The study, reported in 2000, stated that 53.8% of patients were cocaine-free during the last week of treatment compared to 23.5% in the acupuncture control group, and to 9.1% of the control group which watched relaxation videos.¹⁴

TT: Pioneer TT researcher Bernard Grad of McGill University reported results of clinical trials of laying-on-hands (LOH) by two healers in 1970. The trial tested the healer's ability to restrict goiter growth in mice; the hands never touched the mice, but only held the mice cage below and above. The conclusion was that goitre growth was significantly retarded by the LOH procedure.¹⁵ A double-blind TT study done at JFK University found that surgically administered test wounds healed at a statistically significant faster rate with TT treatment than did nontreated wounds.¹⁶ In 1997, Anna Easter, then a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, reviewed articles that reported on primary TT research in refereed professional journals. She chose nine as the best-researched trials, most of which claim to show the validity of TT.¹⁷

Homeopathy: J. Patterson and W. Boyd, "found the Schick test for diphtheria was changed from positive to negative by oral administration of alum-precipitated toxoid in a dilution of 10⁶⁰."¹⁸ A 1997 meta-analysis of placebo-controlled homeopathic trials concluded that results "are not



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compatible with the hypothesis that the clinical effects of homeopathy are completely due to placebo." The multi-university analysis reported 89 research trials which covered twenty-four clinical categories.¹⁹ Morag A. Taylor, of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, led a study, reported in August 2000, indicating that homeopathic remedies for allergic rhinitis gave a 21% improvement compared to 2% for placebos.²⁰

Though these citations suggest that the three representative VEM therapies have some efficacy, they mask several problem areas. First, there has been a multiple selection process involving the reviews chosen for this tabulation, the studies which the citations excluded from their meta-analyses, and, of course, the original fashioning of the particular primary studies. The research quality difficulty is shown in Joseph Helms' search for reputable trials for his analysis of acupuncture; he was left with only ten out of a start-list of over 150.²¹ In 1995 the World Health Organization published guidelines for clinical research in acupuncture,²² acknowledging in diplomatic language the truth of Helm's assertion that "all acupuncture trials reported in the medical literature can potentially be criticized for flaws in design and execution."²³

It is notoriously difficult to design acupuncture trials for several reasons. Trials must bridge western and eastern medical philosophies;²⁴ true double blind trials cannot be done;²⁵ sham needling is hard to define²⁶ and often is nearly as effective as real needling,²⁷ thus casting doubt on placebo controls;²⁸ and acupuncture more than occasionally works when a pin is stuck randomly in the body.²⁹ In addition, the alleged meridians, channels, and points do not correspond to the body's blood vessels, to the peripheral or autonomic nervous systems, or to the lymphatic or organ systems.³⁰

The pattern holds for TT and homeopathy. Easter's nine "successful" TT trials were the survivors from a master list of thirty-seven which had been published in peer-reviewed journals.³¹ Though it was not a formal meta-analysis, a literature search of information on TT by the University of Colorado during 1993-94 noted that "there is not a sufficient body of data, both in quantity and quality, to establish TT as a unique heal-

ing modality." This review – which included practitioners' and skeptics' observations – stated that "there is virtually no acceptable scientific evidence concerning the existence or nature of these energy fields. TT should remain on the curriculum, mainly for reasons of academic freedom."³² As to homeopathy, K. Linde, et al. found that only 31% of studies in 105 publications were reported in a fashion that permitted re-evaluation of the data.³³ In 1996, an expert panel convened by the Commission of the European Communities examined 184 unpublished reports of controlled trials. Only seventeen were deemed qualified for consideration by the panel.³⁴

Second, VEM trials are often unrepeatable. French biologist Jacques Benveniste's research with an anti-immune antibody solution illustrates the point. After four years of his own work, and duplications by labs in Israel, Italy, and Canada at *Nature* magazine's request, he published his results in 1988.³⁵ *Nature* printed an editorial disclaimer in the same issue entitled "When to believe the unbelievable." It warned that the results were unproven, that they contradicted 200 years of observations and that their application to homeopathy would be premature. This disclaimer was triggered by Benveniste's conclusion that the diluted anti-immune antibody was still effective even when statistically there was only distilled water present.³⁶ The dénouement came when skeptical observers went to his lab to observe further replications. Benveniste, who had replicated the original experiment seventy times himself, was unable to repeat it fully in their presence.³⁷

In the same vein, Daniel T. Benor and Norman Shealy note that VEM does not meet replication criteria. Benor, who is a vigorous holistic apologist, calls the problem "vexing and serious"; he labels VEM as psi and regards its erratic replication as typical of such phenomena.³⁸ Shealy, citing Lawrence LeShan, writes that replication should be redefined to be a standardized procedure conducted under conditions most likely to produce the desired outcome phenomena, here meaning TT clairvoyance.³⁹

Third, despite this combination of flawed clinical trials and a psi-echoing inability to meet replication criteria, mechanistic research continues in hot pursuit of VEM's holy grail. Acupuncture, for instance, em-

plays a variety of exotic electrical and electromagnetic technologies. Helms lists SQUID (Super-conducting Quantum Interference Device), SLSEP (Short Latency Somatosensory Evoked Potentials), Kirlian photography (a procedure allegedly able to record the skin corona on a negative) and electrodiagnostic measurements with skin galvanometers.⁴⁰ The issue is complicated by the fact that acupuncture is claimed as a therapy for most branches of medicine,⁴¹ yet it cannot be demonstrated to function primarily through any single system, whether neuromuscular, circulatory, neurohumoral, immune, or endocrine.⁴² That is not all. Dr. Felix Mann has been called the leading western acupuncturist. From his perspective as a medical doctor who has practiced and taught acupuncture for forty years, he states that neither meridians nor points actually exist. They function merely as conceptualizations.⁴³ In the end, vitalists looking for mechanistic-scientific validation for acupuncture—like Stuart Hameroff of the University of Arizona—acknowledge that "... efforts to fully characterize its physical basis have been quite unsuccessful."⁴⁴

Physical explanations of TT rely on healer-controlled inter- or intra-personal energy transfer of quantum and higher-dimensional energies.⁴⁵ In 1992 the Nurse Healers Professional Association claimed "[TT] is a consciously directed process of energy exchange ...,"⁴⁶ even though a person-to-person exchange has never been experimentally observed.⁴⁷ In any event, the mechanistic paradigm cannot accommodate the theory. One, the human will must—impossibly—control physical energies⁴⁸ of the magnitude of gravitation, the strong and weak nuclear forces, and electromagnetism. Two, the VEM postulation that subtle energy is faster-than-light vibrations⁴⁹ is contradicted by Einsteinian relativity.

The active agent is homeopathy's central theoretical problem, as the industry routinely markets solutions whose dilution can have no active molecule present. Homeopathy uses a labeling system based on either root 10 (using the Roman numeral "X") or root 100 (using the Roman numeral "C"). For example, a 30C (100³⁰) solution has a ratio of one part "active" drug to a distilled water carrier of 1 followed by 60 zeros. This product would require a container of solution more than 30 billion times the size of the earth for it to contain even one molecule of the ingredient.⁵⁰ Even more astounding, some functioning dilutions are 100,000C, that is, 1 followed by 200,000 zeros. These numbers explain Benveniste's hypothesis that the original active agent had left a memory of itself in the distilled water. The memory theory prompted speculation that it might be possible to encode memory information within an electromagnetic field in polarized water.⁵¹ Thus the explanatory chain demands that the kinetic energy of homeopathic potentization (shaking, striking) transfer chemical information from molecules to electromagnetically charged polarized water.

The dosage issue would still be unresolved in such a physical energy conversion. The question is how infinitesimal amounts of a chemical agent can effect cures in light of the much larger drug dosages required for conventional allopathic medications to be effective. One argument is that the "Law of Similars"⁵² shows how homeopathic medications function as a sort of vaccination process—except that the "Law" is based on symptom-correlation, not on biological causes of disease. On both statistical and biological grounds, therefore, an explanation for homeopathy must be sought outside of conventional scientific channels.

On both evidential and theoretical grounds, the mechanistic-scientific paradigm cannot identify subtle energy.

Thus physicist Bruce A. Robinson argues that science can come to only one conclusion about the hypothesized healing energy field. He says:

It cannot be detected by any scientific instruments. If the field exists, then it is not formed from alpha, beta or gamma radiation, from electromagnetic radiation (radio waves) or from electrostatic, ultrasonic, gravitational or magnetic energy. It must be a totally new form of energy that is unknown to science and which bypasses all known sensors.⁵³

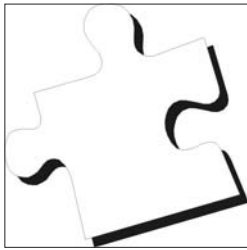
In summary, original acupuncture, Therapeutic Touch and homeopathy trials are often flawed; there are problems of trial repetition; and the theoretical scientific basis for each therapy is implausible or impossible. On both evidential and theoretical grounds, the mechanistic-scientific paradigm cannot identify subtle energy.

VEM and the Holistic Paradigm

Although the VEM therapies under consideration employ radically different methodologies, they are all vitalistic energy philosophies. This may be seen, first, in the explicit designations of the therapies as vitalistic, then in the peculiarities of subtle energy phenomena they produce, and finally in the relation of both of these to theories of the structures of creation. Each of these distinctives deserves due attention, beginning with the following philosophical definitions of VEM energies.

Acupuncture is rooted in Chinese Taoism "The Way."

All things in the created universe arise from the *Tao*. And all things created in the universe are composed of the conflicting yet harmonious forces which are called *Yin* and *Yang*. When the physician considers any illness in the human being, he is looking for the imbalance between these forces and seeks to under-



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stand where the life force, or the *Ch'i* or *Qi*, is deficient or overabundant.⁵⁴

According to traditional Chinese medicine, the life force *Qi* is at the very heart of acupuncture.

... acupuncture depends entirely on the flow of *Qi*. The acupuncturist senses and directs *Qi* through the needle ... Without *Qi* there is no Chinese medicine. Without an understanding of *Qi*, Western medicine, with all its powerful science, will remain ignorant of the single greatest gift of Chinese medicine.⁵⁵

Next, consider TT's blend of Indian Hinduism ...

From the perspective of this philosophy [i.e. Indian], TT is primarily concerned with the use of *prana*, which is difficult to translate and define in Western culture, but may be seen simply as the vigour and vitality of the body and all the underlying processes, such as growth, breathing, and healing. In a healthy individual, *prana* is abundant, while a lack of *prana* is the corollary of a disease.⁵⁶

with quantum⁵⁷ physics.

The Therapeutic Touch Network (Ontario) believes that the technique ... involves a transition from the mechanistic Newtonian model to the acceptance of the Einstein paradigm of a complex, yet interconnected, energetic field-like universe.⁵⁸

Homeopathy's pedigree can be traced from Hippocrates through medieval alchemy, Renaissance natural magic, and eighteenth century vitalistic medical schools. In his first article on homeopathy published around 1796, German systematizer Samuel Hahnemann acknowledged the vitalistic principle.⁵⁹ He wrote:

Incredibly great are the resources of the spirit-like vital principle imparted to man by the infinitely benevolent Creator, if we physicians did but know how to keep it right in days of health ... and in diseases to summon it forth and stimulate it up to the proper mark by pure homoeopathic treatment ... The spirit of the drug acts on the spirit in man.⁶⁰

This modern description reiterates the spirit-nature of homeopathy's action.

Practitioners believe that the body, not a drug, fights the disease. A person's inherent vital force is stimulated to restore balance and bring about rapid yet gentle relief of the particular illness ...⁶¹

How are vitalistic subtle energies perceived by the human senses? Here are some personal accounts.

- One nurse says that she “gets odd vibrations from the tips of her fingers up to her elbows when she touches the surface of the body over a diseased organ or tissue.”⁶²
- Another, a nursing professor, says: “I feel it as a thermal thing,” noting that “areas of low energy are warmer to her hand.”⁶³
- A counselor who works with auras agrees. He says: “I can feel the fragments of [my client's] energy on the palms of my hands.” He uses this ability to “heal” gaps in patients' post-surgery auras in order to fight infection and relapse.⁶⁴
- Barbara Brennan reports: “[Through clairvoyance] the acupuncture points look like little vortexes of energy or tiny chakras. An imbalanced acupuncture point will have energy squirting out of it, or it will feel like a tiny whirlpool that sucks energy in.”⁶⁵
- “Frequencies associated with chakra colors and tones,” says Victoria Slater, “are not the same as frequencies of visible light and audible sound ... If they were, everyone with normal vision and hearing would see and hear them.”⁶⁶

These VEM phenomena—heat, electricity or tingling sensations, clairvoyant visions, intuitive knowledge and so on—substantiate Benor's equation of holistic healing with psi and the paranormal phenomena traditionally associated with psychic healing.

These anecdotal data highlight VEM's central contention that there is an unbroken continuum between the instrumentally-visible physical energies and the instrumentally-invisible subtle energies.⁶⁷ Gary Zukav writes in his *New York Times* best-seller, *The Seat of the Soul*:

You are a system of Light, as are all beings. The frequency of your Light depends upon your consciousness ...

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The continuum of nonphysical Light extends below and above, so to speak, the frequency range in which the human exists.⁶⁸

He makes it clear that "Light" is not mere metaphor; that physical light is seen via the five senses, but soul light operates at a deeper/higher level. This is illustrated also by Andrew Weil, director of the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, and a clinical professor of internal medicine. He refers to the physical energies of X-rays, CAT scans, radiation treatments, electrical nerve stimulation, magnets, heat, light, and sound. Then he speculates that scientific study might determine how subtle energy functions, identifying it as, "the kinds of energy that are found in ancient healing traditions such as acupuncture, tai chi, and qi gong, as well as homeopathy and the energy produced by energy healers."⁶⁹

Quantum holistic thinkers hypothesize the quantum level as the frontier between material energies and subtle energy. Slater, who is a TT practitioner and doctoral-level theorist, illustrates this with quantum electromagnetic (EM) healing. She states:

Infusions of [subtle] energy permit information-carrying EM waves to change. Changes of information, both physical and emotional, at a person's quantum and EM core changes the person. Physical and emotional healing happens in an instant—when the information underlying the wound is altered.⁷⁰

Even so, VEM theoreticians, including Slater, admit that subtle energy has only ever been detected through psychic means like clairvoyance, but never by instruments.⁷¹

In VEM anthropology, quantum energy is the basement of a multi-storied house consisting of quantum energy, subatomic particles, atoms, organic submolecules, DNA, cells, tissue, organs, and system.⁷² This sequence is the launchpad for claims that quantum-level energy manipulation is able to heal human diseases which, in the end, are problems down in the basement of a deficit, surplus, or mispatterning of quantum energy. The level below—or above, if the conceptual model is the theosophic seven-layer body—is where subtle energy begins.

Physicists, however, offer several trenchant category criticisms of the quantum argument: (1) quantum physics is not a complete description of reality but a statistical means of gaining information about systems; (2) it cannot account for biological reproduction; (3) quantum physics works for classes of elementary particles but not for living organisms where individuality arises; and (4) this uniqueness demands organizing laws which cannot be derived from the laws of quantum physics but which do not contradict them.⁷³ This mechanistic rebuttal parallels remarks from transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilber, who agrees that holists are committing a category error. According to

Wilber, quantum physics' vaunted interpenetrability of fields is a mere one-dimensional experience of its own level. "What relationship," he asks, "does ionic plasma have with, say, egoic goals and drives?"⁷⁴

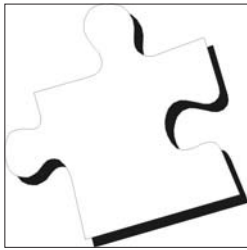
Fritjof Capra's answer comes from a mystical vision on the beach in California. He says: "I 'saw' the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy ... I *knew* that this was the Dance of Shiva, the Lord of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus."⁷⁵

VEM's fascination with quantum physics is not scientific but metaphysical ... VEM supposes that subtle energies devolve from a higher dimension to the physical realm.

As Capra's vision shows, VEM's fascination with quantum physics is not scientific but metaphysical. Philosophically, VEM is monistic and fits within a framework variously called "The Great Chain of Being,"⁷⁶ the "Perennial Philosophy,"⁷⁷ and "The Primitive Tradition."⁷⁸ Whatever the label, the system is the venerable gnostic scheme in which a series of levels of being have emanated from the Absolute—the completely "other," the ineffable One—to the human. The tally of levels does not matter. Huston Smith, depending on the Neoplatonic tradition, has four;⁷⁹ Ken Wilber lists six, five of which he correlates to Hindu and Buddhist categories.⁸⁰ (By comparison, a leading Gnostic, Basilides, had 365).⁸¹ The point is that VEM supposes that subtle energies devolve from a higher dimension to the physical realm.

Earlier, various healers' anecdotal data gave a snapshot picture of subtle energy in action without trying to define it further. In the context of the gnostic structure of creation which VEM turns out to have, what does "subtle realm" mean? Wilber writes:

Beyond mind, according to Hinduism, is the *vijnanamayakosa* (what Buddhists call *manas*). This is a very high form of mind, so high, in fact, that it is better to refer to it by a different name—the most common being "the subtle realm." The subtle is said to include archetypal processes, high-order insights and visions, ecstatic intuition, an extraordinary clarity of awareness, an open ground consciousness that reaches far beyond the ordinary ego, mind, and body.⁸²



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This definition is extremely elastic. In its archetypal usage, for instance, the subtle realm might mean Rupert Sheldrake’s morphogenetic forms, his variation of “Plato’s ideal, the alchemists’ *prima materia* and Jung’s collective unconscious.”⁸³ Sheldrake proposes that the human body receives its pattern and sustenance through feedback loops which connect the subtle and physical realms. Second, Wilber defines the subtle realm as the place of “high-order insights and visions, ecstatic intuition, an extraordinary clarity of awareness, an open ground consciousness.” This is a partial listing of paranormal psi phenomena, which in VEM includes clairvoyance, clairsentience, retro-cognition, and precognition, as well as various other psychic healing abilities. The holistic paradigm sees paranormal abilities as the “normal behaviour of some very sound, serious, and creative people.”⁸⁴

Finally, moving beyond Wilber’s definition, VEM defines subtle energy as disincarnate spirits.⁸⁵ Carolyn Myss, a close Shealy associate, candidly links her healing power to cosmic spiritual presences. She describes the first time a being came and gave healing help. “Suddenly I was flushed with an energy I had never felt before. It moved through my body, as if it were pushing me aside in order to make use of my vocal cords ... A voice spoke through me to the woman ...”⁸⁶ The voice took the client back through a lifetime of memories of injury, trauma, and the like. Myss’ experience is echoed by many others who also refer to the healing help given by “spirit guides,” “daimons,” “disincarnate spirits,” and so forth.⁸⁷

A recap of subtle energy findings yields the following: that anecdotal and clinical evidence indicate that acupuncture, Therapeutic Touch, and homeopathy work occasionally; that these therapies fail the tests of mechanistic science because of selective and flawed trials, and theoretical implausibilities or impossibilities; that holistic theory sees creation as structured with higher-level subtle energies which flow into lower emanations to produce healing; that the subtle energy of alternative healing therapies is functionally equivalent to psi phenomena; and that subtle energy/psi phenomena are empowered by personal spirit beings.

VEM and Biblical Theology

In this section, I will examine spirit-empowered VEM healing from the stance of biblical theology. If, as I am arguing, subtle energy is really demonic manifestation, then a connection must exist between the demonic and the structures of creation. Scripture establishes this link with the interlocking theologies of creation and *chaoskampf* (conflict-with-chaos).

In biblical theology, creation begins, not with what or how as in mechanistic science, or with holistic philosophy’s Absolute, but with whom. God is a person and through the pre-existent Word, Jesus Christ, has created all things (John 1:3; Col. 1:16) by direct *fiat*, which he upholds “by his powerful word” (Heb. 1:3). Through a series of six or so creation typologies,⁸⁸ Scripture repeatedly calls attention to God’s awesomeness as kingly Creator. For example, God as Author of an ordered creation may be seen in Ps. 95:3–4, “For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also,” or Ps. 99:1, “The Lord is king; let the people tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake.”

God’s directly spoken word also creates humans. When Paul addresses the Athenian philosophers—themselves well aware of emanationist thought—he specifically says that “The Lord of heaven ... himself gives to all mortals life and breath ... in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:24, 25, 28). Paul’s words reflect Genesis’ statements that peoples’ bodies are from dust, *adhamah* (Gen. 2:7). The soul, *nephesh*, is directly inbreathed by God; and a 120-year maximum life-span results when God withdraws his spirit, *yadon* (Gen. 6:3). All of this mirrors the God-human, subject-object construct which ontologically separates God from the whole of creation. Biblical theology anathematizes holism’s theory of multiple correspondences which, in any one person, devolve from the Divine Energy Source through spiritual, soul, mental, astral, etheric, and physical bodies.⁸⁹

Nonetheless, God’s kingship over the good creation has been met with resistance, a situation which is reflected in the *chaoskampf* typology in Scripture.⁹⁰ Various biblical creation stories allude to the mythological Canaanite monsters Tiamat, Leviathan

(Seven-Headed Serpent), Yamm (Raging Seas), Rahab (Storm) and Behemoth. They show that creation was and is a battleground where God alone proves to be the warrior powerful enough to subdue the chaos and its inhabitants, and to preserve order.⁹¹ Consider some examples whose chronology ranges from creation to “that day”:

- [God] who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the Sea, who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south; ... God will not turn back his anger; the helpers of Rahab bowed before him ... (Job 9:8, 9, 13).
- Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, a God feared in the council of the holy ones ... who is mighty as you, O Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. You crushed Rahab like a carcass (Ps. 89:6, 7, 9, 10).
- Look at Behemoth ... It is the first of the great acts of God—only its Maker can approach it with the sword (Job 40:15, 19).
- You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan (Ps. 74:13–14).
- On that day the Lord with his cruel and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea (Isa. 27:1).

Such texts have affinities to the near eastern *chaoskampf* motif, wherein a sea monster obstructs the pre-creation waters,⁹² is overcome by a heroic god who releases the waters, and then regulates what has been made.⁹³ Whether *tohu wabohu* (“without form and void”) and *tehom* (“deep”) in Gen. 1:2 imply a pre-creation angelic revolt,⁹⁴ or refer to the unformed primordial material of creation which comes to harbor creaturely resistance later, or mean that the earth was a wasteland unfit for human habitation,⁹⁵ does not matter here. Chaos represents both opposition to God’s will⁹⁶ and the state of affairs whenever God’s sustaining word is withdrawn.

Thus *chaoskampf* functions as a recurring framework to illustrate how God continues to confront the hidden forces which threaten human well-being. Isaiah 45:18–19 states that God did not create the earth formless and void. In fact, the following prohibition—that Jacob not seek God in chaos—carries the implication that chaos is the realm of demonic operations.⁹⁷ The chaos-demon linkage is direct in Isa. 34:8–17, where Edom’s judgment is marked by pitch, sulphur, everlasting smoke, and unending wasteland. In this context, several demonic animals, including Lilith, the night hag or satyr, take up residence in the chaos (*tohu wabohu*). Edom’s disaster also threatens Jerusalem; Isaiah visualizes a time “when the city of chaos is broken down” (Isa. 24:10). After Jerusalem’s destruction and Israel’s exile, Jeremiah couches his report in chaos language, “I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the

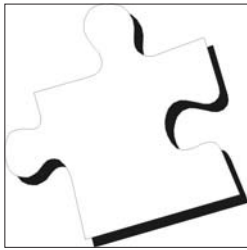
heavens, and they had no light” (Jer. 4:23). And when Israel languishes in exile, chaos reappears (Jer. 51:9–11) as a three-layered reference to the destruction of Rahab at creation, the defeat of Rahab at the crossing of the Sea, and as God’s promise of restoration from the [implied] Rahab of Babylon in the future.

Though Rahab, Leviathan, Behemoth, Tiamat, and Yamm are true opponents of God, they are strictly limited. When their corporate identity is conjoined as ha-satan, the adversary Satan ..., he is not an inherent part of God ... [nor] is his opposition radical Manichean dualism, for there is no eternal nor equal competitor to God.

In continuity with these texts, Herbert G. May argues that the *mayim rabbim* (“many waters,” RSV) of Hab. 3:13–15 illustrate Yahweh’s conquest of Leviathan and Rahab in dualistic terms. May writes:

There is a suggestion of a cosmic dualism, for there continues throughout history the kind of conflict which is posited at creation when Yahweh’s wind blew over the watery abyss, or at the time when, in the distant past, Yahweh slew the dragon Leviathan or Rahab, or conquered the rivers and the sea. In this sense, Yahweh’s conquest over the enemies of Israel, whether at the Red Sea, or in the present, or at the beginning of the new age (cf. Isa. 27:1) is a victory over cosmic evil and wickedness, over the demonic, or more properly the dragonic.⁹⁸

It is crucial to clarify this dualism from the point of view of biblical theology and VEM. Though Rahab, Leviathan, Behemoth, Tiamat, and Yamm are true opponents of God, they are strictly limited. When their corporate identity is conjoined as *ha-satan*, the adversary Satan (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:9; 20:2–3), he is not an inherent part of God (Jesus’ elder brother) as in C. G. Jung’s monistic quaternary.⁹⁹ On the other hand, neither is his opposition radical Manichean dualism, for there is no eternal nor equal competitor to God. Satan is very much a created being whose opposition demands policing. Scripture uses enforcement terms like “piercing Leviathan’s nose,” “damning the raging Seas,” and “cutting Rahab’s helpers to pieces.” Other texts simply state that angels left their proper stations and were severely punished by God (Gen. 6:1–4; 2 Pet. 2:4;



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Jude 6). These data underscore that Satan's opposition to God's creational purposes are a consequence of God's self-limitation, the necessary result of granting demons freedom to rebel (cf. God's creational self-limitation with Jesus' salvational *kenosis*, i.e. self-emptying, in Phil. 2:6-8).

Accordingly, the meaning of *chaoskampf* is unavoidable. Biblical theology rejects all benign and impersonal emanationism, and teaches the existence of a definite moral/spiritual dualism within creation, complete with hierarchies of personal evil powers with whom God still contends. In Judeo-Christian sources, these foes of God appear as Old Testament Canaanite nature deities,¹⁰⁰ cosmic spirits of divination and astrology,¹⁰¹ as disease-causing demons in Intertestamental literature,¹⁰² as the spirits of illness which Jesus cast out,¹⁰³ and as the principalities and powers in the pastoral epistles.¹⁰⁴ Today, these ancient nature demons manifest in part as subtle energy healing.

This generalized relationship between *chaoskampf* and subtle energy may be refined and amplified by reference to several New Testament healing data, beginning with Jesus' stilling of the storm on his way to heal the Gadarene demoniac (Mk. 4:35-41). The structure of the passage leaves little doubt that the chaos of the sea and the deep first encountered in Gen. 1:2-3 has deployed the storm against Jesus' ministry. Consequently, this powerful Satanic opposition to Jesus' healing mission recapitulates God's combat with Leviathan from of old. William Lane, quoting P. Reymond, observes that the sea is rebelling against its lord, *kurios*, and that the account "must be understood with all its cosmic overtones."¹⁰⁵ Lane himself states that Jesus' order to the wind employs the same verb as when he rebukes demons in three other Markan [healing] texts.

A directly-related question has to do with the nature of Jesus' power. The VEM community asserts that Jesus used subtle energy, labeled as *dunamis*, (power) in his healing miracles.¹⁰⁶ The meaning which holistic theorists attribute to *dunamis* is borrowed from Egyptian thought transmitted via pre-Christian Greek philosophers like Poseidonius. In these cases, it did mean "cosmic principle," and as W. Grundmann remarks, this ancient system stands for "dunamistic and manistic

[preternatural] ideas."¹⁰⁷ But this is not the meaning of Jesus' exercise of *dunamis*. There is no hint of an innate vital force or cosmic principle empowering Jesus' healings; to the contrary, it is significant that the healing miracles were manifest only after his baptism in the Holy Spirit and his wilderness refusal to worship Satan. On the one hand, Jesus' healings were direct functions of Holy Spirit empowerment and on the other of explicit rejection of the subtle-energy powers which are rooted in Satan and chaos. Thus Jesus' healings were signs, not of a universally-accessible subtle power flowing through all people, but of the continuation of God's battle with the demonic beings who inhabit chaos. Constantine Sarantis says:

... one common theme that runs through most of the miracles of Jesus is the theme of conflict. Jesus refers to his own miracles as "works," and they are intended to recapture nature from the hostile powers of evil, sickness, and fragmentation. In the miracles of Jesus, God restores order and wholeness to his creation.¹⁰⁸

Thirdly, subtle energy healing is a prime vehicle of Satan's deception of humankind. Consider Matt. 7:21-23, where at the last day "many will say to [Jesus]" that they have prophesied, exorcized and done powerful deeds in his name. In Luke's parallel (13:26), the spiritually-deceived claim to have eaten and drunk with Jesus while he taught in their streets. In each case, Jesus' answer will be, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers." This can only be if the "many" are unaware that the name upon which they called is not truly Jesus of Nazareth but an impostor. This is borne out in Matt. 24:24, where Jesus warns of false messiahs and false prophets who will produce great signs and omens designed "to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Paul also, in the direst language, warns against an impersonator in 2 Thess. 2:4. The Lawless One will exalt himself and take his seat in the temple of God, that is, in the human soul itself, "declaring himself to be God." It is this same one, Satan, who in 2 Thess. 2:9 performs "power, signs, lying wonders, and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing."

VEM's vulnerability to and promulgation of deception must not be underestimated.

When it uncritically welcomes spirit guides who come as the Christ light, or equally deviously, as spirits who claim the name "Jesus,"¹⁰⁹ VEM is, as 2 Cor. 11:4 says, in contact with "another Jesus." Satan's duplicitous and malicious use of subtle energy ideology is exposed by the fact that prayer in the name of the crucified and raised Jesus of Nazareth¹¹⁰ actually deactivates energy healers' abilities.¹¹¹ VEM operates through the practitioner and user as demonically-empowered psi, a conclusion fully consistent with VEM's open reliance on disincarnate power spirits.

At the end of the day, Vital Energy Medicine has fatal philosophical, scientific, and theological views rooted in erroneous premises about God and creation, and their relationships. Mechanistic science's assessment of these therapies will always be inconclusive, since the basic operation of VEM is preternatural. For its part, the holistic community stands in the tradition of Neoplatonic and gnostic world views, with a dash of pre-Renaissance natural magic thrown in for good measure. Theologically, Vital Energy Medicine has exchanged the worship of the Creator for that of the creation, and is therefore under God's condemnation. ♦

Notes

- ¹David Eisenberg, et al., "Unconventional Medicine in the United States," *New England Journal of Medicine* 328 (January 28, 1993): 246.
- ²John Miller represents a relatively early pastoral endorsement of modern alternative healing with his article, "The Pastorate and New Age Healing," *Pastoral Psychology* 27 (Winter 1978): 91-104. He argues that in continuity with Jesus the Great Physician, pastors ought to familiarize themselves with some of the new healing techniques: yoga, reflexology, Silva Mind Control, Sufi, TM, astrology, rolfing, health food theory, hand-writing analysis, numerology, tarot cards and psychic healing (p. 93). A current pastoral/professional endorsement of alternative modalities is found in the Continuing Education programme of the Toronto School of Theology. The Spring 2001 roster of courses offers "Learning How To 'Do' Spiritual Healing" under the direction of Don Evans, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto and a minister in the United Church of Canada. Evans connects the early Christian practices of healing with modern Reiki, Therapeutic Touch and meditation, which is defined to include "working with nature's energies, self-healing and welcoming spiritual presences in both heaven and earth."
- ³In western thought, the term "subtle energy" is only the most recent of many attempts to coin a descriptive label. Starting with Mesmer's "animal magnetism," Ted Kaptchuk lists several earlier tags: "psychic force," "parapsychology," "psi phenomena," "psionic energy," "auric or astral force," and now "subtle energy." Cf. Kaptchuk, "Historical Context of the Concept of Vitalism in Complementary and Alternative Medicine," in Marc S. Micozzi, *Fundamentals of Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (New York: Churchill Livingstone Inc., 1996), 37-8. Nonetheless, Kaptchuk's list is incomplete; see John White and Stanley Krippner, eds. *Future Science: Life Energies and the Physics of Paranormal Phenomena* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 551-5, for some 95 worldwide terms, of which more than fifty are western.
- ⁴Richard Gerber, *Vibrational Medicine: New Choices for Healing Ourselves* (Santa Fe: Beast Co., 1988), 541; cf. also Gary Zukav, *The Seat of the Soul* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 100; Victoria E. Slater, "Toward an Understanding of Energetic Healing, Part I: Energetic Structures: The Quantum Field and Chaos Theory," *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 13, no. 3 (September 1995); EBSCO Host; Database: Health Source Plus; Item Number: 9509144582; Oct. 15, 2000: Internet p. 4.
- ⁵Barbara Ann Brennan, *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing Through the Human Energy Field* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 21-5.
- ⁶Embryologist Hans Driesch (1867-1941) adapted Aristotle's term "entelechy" to describe a separate patterning entity "acting on the physical system without being a part of it." Cited in Frithoj Capra, *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 26. Cf. also Paul Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint* (New York: Touchstone, 1988), 96-7.
- ⁷Daniel T. Benor, *Healing Research Volume One: Holistic Energy Medicine and Spirituality* (München: Helix, 1992), 19-20, notes a description of TT on an Egyptian papyrus ca. 1550 BCE. Cf. Whitall N. Perry, "The Alchemy in Homoeopathy," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 16, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1984): 24, for reference to Hippocrates' principle that "Through the like, disease is produced, and through the application of the like, it is cured." Many treatises date acupuncture at around 2500 BCE.
- ⁸Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, in chap. 7, "Life: Its Nature," 93-106, and on pp. 163-4, discusses the strong anthropic principle.
- ⁹J. Benveniste, et al., "Human Basophil Degranulation Triggered by Very Dilute Antiserum Against IgE," *Nature* 333, no. 6176 (June 30, 1988): 818.
- ¹⁰Stanislav Grof in *Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death, and Transcendence in Psychotherapy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 58) illustrates the point with mechanistic science's reliance on the stochastic interpretations (hidden variables) used by physicists wrestling with quantum probabilities.
- ¹¹Elizabeth Hillstrom, *Testing the Spirits* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 166.
- ¹²Barbara Apgar, "Acupuncture for Treatment of Back Pain: A Meta-Analysis," *American Family Physician* 59, issue 7 (April 1, 1999); EBSCO Host; Database: Health Source Plus; Item Number 1754641: 1989.
- ¹³Sara Abdulla, "Jury Still out on Aspects of Acupuncture," *Lancet* 351, issue 9107 (March 28, 1998) 962.
- ¹⁴"Study Supports Use of Acupuncture as Part of Cocaine Treatment Protocol," *Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly* 12, issue 33 (August 21, 2000); EBSCO Host; Database: Health Source Plus; Item Number 3497564.
- ¹⁵Bernard Grad, "Healing by the Laying on of Hands: Review of Experiments and Implications," *Pastoral Psychology* 21, no. 206 (September 1970): 19-26.
- ¹⁶Benor, *Healing Research* 1, 214.
- ¹⁷Anna Easter, "The State of Research on the Effects of Therapeutic Touch," *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 15, issue 2 (June 1997); EBSCO Host; Database: MasterFILE; Item Number: 9705154782; December 5, 2000: Internet pp. 1-18.
- ¹⁸Perry, "The Alchemy in Homoeopathy," 44.
- ¹⁹Klaus Linde and Nicola Clausius, "Are the clinical effects of homeopathy placebo effects? A meta-analysis of placebo-controlled trial[s]," *Lancet* 350, issue 9081 (September 20, 1997). EBSCO Host; Database: Master FILE Premier; Item Number: 9709243918; October 31, 2000: Internet p. 11, "Table 1."
- ²⁰Morag A. Taylor et al., "Randomised Controlled Trial of Homeopathy Versus Placebo in Perennial Allergic Rhinitis With Overview of Four Trial Series: Results," *British Medical Journal* 321, issue 7259 (August 19, 2000). EBSCO Host; Database: MasterFILE Premier; Item Number: 3456050; October 31, 2000; Internet p. 5, "Nasal Inspiratory Peak Flow."
- ²¹Joseph M. Helms, *Acupuncture Energetics: A Clinical Approach for Physicians* (Berkeley: Medical Acupuncture Publishers, 1995), 42.
- ²²World Health Organization (WHO), *Guidelines for Clinical Research on Acupuncture* (1995), 2.
- ²³Helms, *Acupuncture Energetics*, 45.
- ²⁴Richard Hammerschlag, "Methodological and Ethical Issues in Acupuncture Research," in National Institutes of Health, *NIH Consensus Development Conference on Acupuncture* (Bethesda, MD: November 3-5, 1997), 45.

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- ²⁵Ibid., 46.
- ²⁶E. Ernst and A. R. White, "A Review of Problems in Clinical Acupuncture Research," *American Journal of Chinese Medicine* XXV, no. 1: 5.
- ²⁷Charles Vincent and George Lewith, "Placebo Controls for Acupuncture Studies," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 88, no. 4 (April 1995): 199.
- ²⁸Felix Mann, *Reinventing Acupuncture: A New Concept of Ancient Medicine* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1992), 5; the WHO, *Guidelines* states: "... true placebo acupuncture would appear to be impossible" (p. 4).
- ²⁹Mann, *Reinventing Acupuncture*, 17; Hammerschlag, "Methodological and Ethical Issues in Acupuncture Research," 46.
- ³⁰Beverly Rubik, "Can Western Science Provide a Foundation for Acupuncture?" *American Association of Medical Acupuncture Review* 5, no. 1 (1993): 17; Daniel T. Benor, *Healing Research 2: Holistic Energy Medicine and the Energy Body* (München: Helix, 1994), 100.
- ³¹Easter, "Method - Sample" in "The State of Research on the Effects of Therapeutic Touch."
- ³²"Therapeutic Touch Document List," Parascopes, at: <http://site034145.primehost.com/articles/1196/touch.2.htm>. Quoted in Bruce A. Robinson, "Therapeutic Touch: Healing Therapy or Hoax?" www.religioustolerance.org/ther_tou.htm; December 4, 2000: Internet p. 3.
- ³³K. Linde, W. B. Jonas, D. Melchart, F. Worku, H. Wagner and F. Eitel, "Critical Review and Meta-Analysis of Serial Agitated Dilutions in Experimental Toxicology," *Human and Experimental Toxicology* 13, no. 7 (1994): 481-92; www.rccm.org.uk/cisc.htm; March 15, 2002.
- ³⁴Stephen Barrett, "Much Ado About Little or Nothing: Unimpressive 'Research,'" *Nutrition Forum* 15, issue 3 (May/June 1998): 17 ff. EBSCO Host; Database: MasterFILE Premier; Item Number 753336; October 31, 2000. The panel, called the "Homeopathic Medicines Research Group," included homeopathic physician-researchers.
- ³⁵Benveniste et al., "Human Basophil Degranulation Triggered by Very Dilute Antiserum Against IgE," 816-8.
- ³⁶Ibid. They say: "Using the molecular weight of immunoglobulins and Avogadro's number, we calculate that less than one molecule of antibody is present in the assay when anti-IgE antiserum is diluted to 1×10^{14} ... But in the experiments reported here we have detected significant basophil degranulation down to the 1×10^{120} dilution" (p. 817).
- ³⁷Deepak Chopra, *Quantum Healing: Exploring the Frontiers of Body/Mind Medicine* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 118-20.
- ³⁸Benor, *Healing Research* I, 116-21. These observations are consistent with J. B. Rhine's results at Duke University, a fact to which C. G. Jung pointed, "... in each series of experiments the first attempts yielded a better result than the later ones. The falling off in the number of hits scored was connected with the mood of the subject. An initial mood of faith and optimism makes for good results. Scepticism and resistance have the opposite effect, that is, they create an unfavourable disposition." Cf. C. G. Jung, "Appendix: On Synchronicity," in *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Collected Works 8, Bollingen Series XX (New York: Pantheon, 1960), 524.
- ³⁹Norman Shealy, *Occult Medicine Can Save Your Life* (New York: The Dial Press, 1975), 84.
- ⁴⁰Helms, *Acupuncture Energetics*, 62-5.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 43, 71.
- ⁴²Ibid., 56. Cf. Stanislav Grof's general comment about energy fields and energy flows, "These descriptions do not make any sense in the context of the western medical model, since they do not correspond to any known anatomical structures or physiological processes." Grof, *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 110.
- ⁴³Mann, *Reinventing Acupuncture*, 13-39.
- ⁴⁴Stuart Hameroff, "Quantum Vitalism," *Advances: The Journal of Mind-Body Health* 13, no. 4 (Fall 1997); EBSCO Host; MasterFILE Premier; Item Number: 9711071677; Internet p. 1.
- ⁴⁵Slater, "Toward an Understanding of Energetic Healing," Internet p. 4.
- ⁴⁶Jeanne Sayre-Adams and Steve Wright, *The Theory and Practice of Therapeutic Touch* (New York: Churchill-Livingston, 1995), 9.
- ⁴⁷Janet F. Quinn, "A Therapeutic Touch as Energy Exchange: Testing the Theory," *Advances in Nursing Science* 6, no. 2 (January 1984): 44, 48.
- ⁴⁸Brennan, *Hands of Light*, 201-3.
- ⁴⁹Gerber, *Vibrational Medicine*, 541; cf. note 4's citation of Zukav and Slater. In fact, more than three spatial dimensions would preclude carbon life. Cf. Hugh Ross, *Beyond the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999), 45.
- ⁵⁰Barrett, "Much Ado About Little or Nothing," Internet p. 2.
- ⁵¹E. Del Giudice, "Is the 'Memory of Water' a Physical Impossibility?" in P. C. Endler, ed., *High Dilution Physiology and Physics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 117-9. Daniel Benor proposes two potentiating explanations for homeopathy. In the first, the original substance patterns the dilution's chemistry and in the second, the original substance patterns the dilution's energy field. Cf. Benor, *Healing Research* I, 113.
- ⁵²The "Law of Similars" states that a homeopathic remedy has been properly chosen if the ill person's disease symptoms correspond with those observed in a healthy person who has been given the same remedy.
- ⁵³Robinson, "Therapeutic Touch," Internet p. 2.
- ⁵⁴William A. McGarey, *Acupuncture and Body Energies* (Phoenix, AZ: Gabriel Press, 1974), 6.
- ⁵⁵David Eisenberg and Thomas Lee Wright, *Encounters With Qi: Exploring Chinese Medicine* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 89-90, quoting Dr. Ai.
- ⁵⁶Sayre-Adams and Wright, *The Theory and Practice of Therapeutic Touch*, 7.
- ⁵⁷"Quantum," the Latin word for "how much," describes the smallest sub-atomic unit that can be called a particle. The essence of quantum physics is that this particle can also be defined as an energy wave.
- ⁵⁸Bonny L Hardin and Craig R. Hardin, *Alternative Health Care: The Canadian Directory* (Toronto: Noble Ages Publishing Ltd., 1997), 228.
- ⁵⁹George Ernest Stahl's vitalistic ideas influenced medical schools at Montpellier and Paris. Stahl (1669-1734) based his theory on the *Anima Sensitiva*, the "Reasonable Soul" which governed the corporeal self, "Sickness was the effort of the Anima to re-establish the normal tone, operation and harmony of disordered organs." Cf. Elizabeth Danziger, *The Emergence of Homeopathy* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1987), 74-7. Centuries earlier, Paracelsus had used tiny dosages of active agents, so Hahnemann seems to have functioned mainly to synthesize and popularize a system.
- ⁶⁰Perry, "The Alchemy in Homeopathy," 39, 35.
- ⁶¹Linda Gray, "Homeopathy: Treating the Mind, Body and Spirit," *Executive Health's Good Health Report* 35, issue 8 (May 1999); Source: http://ehostvgw7.epnet.com/ehost.asp?key=204.179.122.141_8000_770505929&site=ehost&return=y&custid=s4274552; July 29, 2002; Internet p. 2.
- ⁶²Shealy, *Occult Medicine Can Save Your Life*, 190.
- ⁶³Joe Maxwell, "Nursing's New Age?" *Christianity Today* (February 5, 1996): 97.
- ⁶⁴Clyde H. Reid, "Some Strange But Exciting Frontiers in Pastoral Counseling," *Journal of Pastoral Counseling* XXI, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1986): 4.
- ⁶⁵Brennan, *Hands of Light*, 203.
- ⁶⁶Slater, "Toward an Understanding of Energetic Healing," Internet p. 4.
- ⁶⁷Carolyn Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit* (New York: Random House, 1996), 77; Brennan, *Hands of Light*, 25.
- ⁶⁸Zukav, *The Seat of the Soul*, 95-6.
- ⁶⁹Cited in Sara Altshul O'Donnell, "The Cutting Edge of Alternative Medicine," *Prevention* 52, issue 1 (January 2000); Source: http://ehostvgw7.epnet.com/ehost.asp?key=204.179.122.141_8000_

- 770505929&site=ehost&return=y&custid=s4274552; July 29, 2002; Internet pp. 2-3.
- ⁷⁰Slater, "Toward an Understanding of Energetic Healing," Internet p. 6.
- ⁷¹Ibid., Internet p. 5. Slater says: "At this time, no objective instruments exist to demonstrate the existence of chakras or to determine their functions." Cf. also Rubik, 23; Sayre-Adams and Wright, 10 (who prefer euphemisms like "difficult to demonstrate/measure"); Karen Piligian, "Therapeutic Touch: Using Your Hands for Help or Heal," in John T. Chirban, ed. *Health and Faith: Medical, Psychological and Religious Dimensions* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 139.
- ⁷²Chopra, *Quantum Healing*, 104.
- ⁷³Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, 170-9.
- ⁷⁴Ken Wilber, *Eye to Eye: The Quest for the New Paradigm* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1983), 134-5.
- ⁷⁵Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism* 3rd ed. (Boston: Shambhala, 1991), 11.
- ⁷⁶Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942).
- ⁷⁷Wouter J. Hanegraaff summarizes the *Perennis Philosophia* with this quote from Matthew Fox, "There is only one great underground river, though there are numerous wells into it—Buddhist wells and Taoist wells, Native American wells and Christian wells, Islamic wells and Judaic wells." Cf. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 328.
- ⁷⁸Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 38-48. Citing Marcilio Ficino's 1462 translation of *Pimander*, Hanegraaff refers to the supposed ancient *prisca theologia* tradition, which may be traced through Zoroaster, Trismegistus (Hermes), Orpheus, Aglaophemus, Pythagoras and Plato. Cf. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*, 390.
- ⁷⁹Smith, *Forgotten Truth*, 37-56; his categories match up with Neoplatonism, cf. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 62.
- ⁸⁰Wilber, *Eye to Eye*, 128-9, articulates a set of six dimensional levels: physical, biological, psychological, subtle (which contains the transindividual realm), causal (perfect transcendence) and ultimate (pure consciousness).
- ⁸¹Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation With Annotations and Introduction* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 422-3.
- ⁸²Wilber, *Eye to Eye*, 127. T. J. Kaptchuk suggests another model which is based on Franz Anton Mesmer's animal magnetism. Kaptchuk describes "lower mesmerism" as those forms of alternative healing which use an electromagnetic explanation, albeit one which manipulates unseen forces that evade biomedical detection. "Higher mesmerism" refers to trance states through which one contacts noncorporeal entities. Cf. Kaptchuk, "Historical Context of the Concept of Vitalism," 38.
- ⁸³June Singer, *Seeing Through the Visible World: Jung, Gnosis and Chaos* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 67.
- ⁸⁴Joyce Goodrich, "The Psychic Healing Training and Research Project," in James Fosshage and Paul Olsen, eds., *Healing: Implications for Psychotherapy* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1978), 85.
- ⁸⁵John Rossner speaks of "thought energy fields," that is "T" fields, which "would appear to act with more of the mysterious properties of consciousness rather than with the well-known physical properties of matter." Cf. Rossner, *In Search of the Primordial Tradition & the Cosmic Christ* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1989), 14. On pp. 16-9, Rossner speaks directly of disincarnate beings known through spiritualist mediums. Also see Evans, "Learning How To 'Do' Spiritual Healing," and Brennan *Hands of Light*, 203; Judith Allen Shelly et al., *A Response to Energy-based Theories and Therapies*, (Madison, WI: Nurses Christian Fellowship, 1996), 5.
- ⁸⁶Myss, *Anatomy of the Spirit* 4.
- ⁸⁷Brennan, *Hands of Light*, 203; Shelly, et al., *A Response to Energy-Based Theories and Therapies*, 5, and also note 28, which cites Barbara Stevens Barnum, *Spirituality in Nursing: From Traditional to New Age* (New York: Springer Publication, 1996), 67-8.
- ⁸⁸Douglas A. Knight, "Cosmogony and Order in the Hebrew Tradition," in Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds, eds., *Cosmogony and Ethical Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985): 134-7.
- ⁸⁹Christine Page, *Frontiers of Health: From Healing to Wholeness* (Saffron Waldon: C. W. Daniel, 1992), 39-43.
- ⁹⁰Bruce Waltke writes: "I suspect that few Bible believing Christians are aware that at least in a dozen texts of the Old Testament, reference is made to the LORD's conflict with a dragon or sea monster variously named as Rahab, 'The Proud One,' or Leviathan, 'The Twisting One,' or Yam, 'The Sea.' Moreover, at least five of these texts are in a context pertaining to the creation of the world." Cf. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Biblical Seminary, 1974), 5.
- ⁹¹Gregory Boyd, *God At War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), chap. 2, "Locking Up the Raging Sea," and chap. 3, "Slaying Leviathan." *Tohu wabohu*, which occurs twenty times in the Old Testament (eleven in Isaiah), reflects the conviction that only God can maintain order.
- ⁹²The "sea" in Scripture is often a metaphor for the cosmic demonic realm against which God battles. Thus in Rev. 20:13, the "sea," along with Death and Hades, will give up its dead, a more likely reference to the Old Testament *tehom* ("deep") than to sailors lost in shipwrecks. Cf. John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Cyrus H. Gordon, "Leviathan: Symbol of Evil," in Alexander Altman, ed. *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966): 1-9.
- ⁹³Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 6-9.
- ⁹⁴Boyd, *God At War*, 105. Knight, "Cosmogony and Order in the Hebrew Tradition," 142, contends that the mythological monsters are mere playthings for God and that there was no struggle to bring creation into being. Boyd (p. 326, note 26) musters the evidence to show that for God to be victor in creation, a real pre-creation opponent is likely in mind. In notes 40-1 (pp. 327-8), he lists some dozen biblical scholars since 1850 who have taken this position.
- ⁹⁵John H. Sailhammer, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 24-8.
- ⁹⁶In *Church Dogmatics* III, 3: *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. G. W. Bromiley and R. J. Ehrlich (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1960), Karl Barth uses the concept of *das nichtige*, nothingness/chaos, as a metaphysical construct to assert that each time God wills positively, there is an opposite will-choice which God refused (Barth, 74, 351). This leads to a theological cul-de-sac by (1) implying that God's sheer existence generates a negation in and of itself, since he wills his self-existence. Such a negation is, of course, Manichean, (2) putting Jesus in the curious situation of dying because God's positive decision to create automatically generated an *ontic* (relating to or having real being or existence) negative, and (3) ignoring Jesus' direct statement that he came to destroy Satan and his works (1 John 3:8).
- ⁹⁷Kenneth H. Maahs, "Chaos," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)* 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1979): 634.
- ⁹⁸Herbert G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of MAYIM RABBÎM, 'Many Waters,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* LXXIV (1955): 11-2.
- ⁹⁹C. G. Jung, "A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity," *Collected Works* 11, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953-1978), 165-79; Cf. also Jung, "The Autonomy of the Unconscious," *Collected Works* 11, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958-1969), 58-63.
- ¹⁰⁰Baal (Judg. 2:13; 1 Kings 16:31; Jer. 2:8), i.e. Hadad, the Semitic storm-god of death, infertility and flood waters. His consorts included Ashtaroth (Judg. 1:13; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 1 Kings 11:5), known as Astarte in Greek; and Asherah (Deut. 12:3; Judg. 3:7; 1 Kings 18:19).

Article

What is the "Subtle Energy" in Energy Healing?

¹⁰¹Sakkuth and "Kaiwan, your star-god" (Am. 5:26, NRSV; there is disagreement over the use of proper names here); Queen of Heaven (Jer. 7:18); "host of heaven" (Deut. 4:19a; note that 19b does not mean that Gentile nations are to worship the "host" but that the heavenly objects are given as natural features for the benefit of all; 2 Kings 17:16).

¹⁰²The Testament of Solomon lists thirty-six demons who produce evil effects on people, mostly illnesses but including marital separations, mental disturbances and destroyed houses. It also gives the names of angels (and folk medicines) who/which will counteract the demons. This synopsis comes from Josephine Massynbaerde Ford, "Response to Thomas Finger and Willard Swartley," in Willard M. Swartley, ed., *Essays on Spiritual Bondage and Deliverance* (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1988), 40-2.

¹⁰³The following exemplary texts where Jesus healed a person use the word *pneuma* (spirit), a term which the holistic community interprets as a biblical reference to subtle energy: Matt. 12:45, evil spirit; Mark 9:17, dumb spirit; Luke 13:11, spirit of infirmity. D. E. Aune, "Demon," *ISBE 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 919, notes that "The term *pneúma*, 'spirit,' is essentially a neutral word, but is frequently applied to evil spirits ..."

¹⁰⁴Hendrik Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1962 and 1977), cites Rom. 8:38 ff.; 1 Cor. 2:8; 15:24-26; Eph. 1:20 ff.; 2:1 ff.; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:15.

¹⁰⁵William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), 177.

¹⁰⁶Helmut Wipprecht, "Healthy Alternative," *ChristianWeek* 14, no. 15 (November 14, 2000): 11; Miller, "The Pastorate and New Age Healing," 93, 102; Gerber, *Vibrational Medicine*, 493.

¹⁰⁷W. Grundmann, "dunamai, dunamiv," in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament II* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964): 287-91, with the quote on 291.

¹⁰⁸Constantine Sarantis, "God, Miracles and Quantum Mechanics," in Chirban, *Health and Faith: Medical, Psychological and Religious Dimensions*, 131.

¹⁰⁹Brennan, *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing Through the Human Energy Field*, 203; also Mennonite deliverance healer Dean Hochstetler, who reports that "one frequently meets 'Jesus' demons, but not 'Lord Jesus' ones." Cf. Lawrence Burkholder, *Let My People Go: A Mennonite Theology of Exorcism* (Waterloo, ON: Conrad Grebel College, M.T.S. Thesis, 1999), 205; also Dorothy Brotherton, *Quiet Warrior* (Beaverlodge, AB: Spectrum Publications, 1991), 123, 128.

¹¹⁰The phrase "crucified and raised" is used quite deliberately, since VEM appeals to "the Christ" as a cosmic principle. Biblical healing is in the name of Jesus of Nazareth; the New Testament mandate is to test the spirits to see if they acknowledge that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (1 John 4:1-3). The reason is precisely because demonic spirits will impersonate a "spiritual Jesus" and "the Christ."

¹¹¹Jarl Omholt-Jensen, "Cure may be more dangerous than the disease," *ChristianWeek* (October 3, 2000): 6-7; Charles Kraft, *Defeating Dark Angels: Breaking Demonic Oppression in the Believer's Life* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1992), 85.



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