

Talk on Theology and Energy Healing
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I. Barbara Brennan

In her book, *Hands of Light*, Barbara Brennan speaks of **her childhood** on a farm in Wisconsin. She did not have many playmates so she spent time alone. She would sit for hours in the woods alone, sitting perfectly still and waiting for small animals to come up to her.(5) She practiced blending in with her surroundings. She learned later that she was expanding her consciousness. She knew where each small animal was without looking. She practiced walking blindfolded and could feel the trees before she touched them. She was sensing their life energy fields around them. She noticed no space existed without an energy field – all was connected. In adolescence, she stopped going to the woods. She began to question how things were ordered and this took her to college for a degree in “atmospheric physics” and she later worked for NASA doing research. She later trained as a counselor, and after some years she saw auras around people’s heads and recalled her childhood memories. That was the beginning of so-called “High Sense perception” or “clairvoyant vision.”

She gives an **example of a candle and its flame**. We normally identify ourselves as a body (the wax and wick) with consciousness (the flame). “When we enter a state of expanded consciousness, we perceive ourselves also as the light coming from the flame.”(6) Where does the light begin and the flame end? The flame is completely penetrated by the light, and the light pervades the room. According to the physics, there is no boundary to the light – it reaches to infinity. So also, her HSP seemed to reach to infinity, but she also began to perceive different levels of the energy field, different intensities, and she also received “information” (a kind of “channeling”) in the form of words or images. She heard in one case, “She has cancer,” and she saw a black spot in her energy field, which correlated in size and shape to what was later discovered in a CAT scan. The illness shows up in the energy field before it shows up in the body. The illness leads to the disorder. One needs to listen to it, and then seek to change or balance the energy field, or the illness will recur in another place. “To deal with the source usually requires a life change that ultimately leads to a personal life more connected to the core of one’s being. It leads us to that deeper part of ourselves that is sometimes called the high self or the spark of divinity within.”(7) One needs to learn to follow the direction of one’s energy.

During her counseling in Washington, she began to see what might be called *past lives*. “I would see the individual I was working with in a completely different setting in a different time frame...For example, a woman who was afraid of the water had drowned in another lifetime. She also had difficulty in asking for help in this lifetime.” (15) She didn’t know how to deal with this information and prayed for guidance. She was led, on a starry night on the beach in Maryland, to Phoenicia Pathwork Center, where she learned to accept and understand her experiences and to follow her “guidance.” It was her “guidance” that led her to move her practice to New York. She was also consulting her “inner child” in order to humbly follow her guidance.(16) That child knows she is “fully and completely loved” as she is right now in this moment. She needs only to ask for help and it will be given.

Barbara Brennan had studied physics and a number of **recent developments in physics** had helped her understand what she was seeing in the energy fields. Newtonian physics, which

presupposed fundamental building blocks called atoms, was being replaced by field theory. This began by studying electromagnetic fields and their interactions. Later, in 1905, Einstein published his special theory of relativity which saw three-dimensional space in a continuum with time – “**space-time**.” Time will be different according to the velocities of the observers – all appeared to be relative. In studying clairvoyants, Lawrence Le Shan found he had to distinguish between two times: regular linear time and Clairvoyant Time, where past lives might be seen to be affecting a person’s present life. As Brennan comments: “We are all too ready to accept past lives as literal physical lives that have happened in the past...Our past lives may be happening right now in a different space-time continuum...But we rarely speak of how our future lives are affecting the one we are experiencing now. As we live our life NOW, it becomes more likely that we are rewriting our personal history, both past and future.”(24)

Besides space-time, modern physics is revealing **paradox**, how particles are interrelated to probability waves, the probability of interconnections, and are not Newtonian building blocks. All particles are energy packets that can be transmuted into other particles. There is a constant “dying and rising” and interaction of opposites (positive and negative particles). As David Bohm has said, there is an “implicate enfolded order” that exists in an unmanifested state and is the foundation upon which all manifest reality rests. Reality cannot be analyzed into parts, but must be seen as a whole. A holographic view states that “every piece is an exact representation of the whole and can be used to reconstruct the entire hologram.”(25) This seems to be the nature of the brain, according to Dr. Karl Pribram. Each fragment can produce the information of the whole. So, when Barbara “saw” the events of a client’s puberty when he broke his coccyx, she was accessing such a “holographic” message. If our fields overlap each other, a larger “holograph” would include our ancestors back to the beginning of the human race. All experience is interrelated. As Brennan says, “Holistic awareness will be outside linear time and three-dimensional space and therefore will not be easily recognized.”(26) Meditation is one way of transcending those limits.

Scientists are now finding evidence for a “**superluminal**” (**beyond the speed of light**) connectedness. J. S. Bell’s theorem mathematically supports the concept that subatomic “particles” are connected in some way that transcends space and time, so that anything that happens to one particle affects other particles. This is beyond Einstein’s space-time. This theorem has now been supported by experimentation. One related area is **morphogenetic fields** (see Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life*) which act by “morphic resonance” such that a change in one part of the field affects the whole field (as shown by crystals, or the Hundredth Monkey Principle). (27) Sheldrake concludes: “The creative process could be seen as a successive development of more complex and higher-level wholes, through previously separate things being connected together.” [much as Teilhard’s vision of evolving forms]

Returning to Barbara Brennan’s view of **Universal Life-Energy Fields** (UEF), she comments: “This field is the opposite of entropy, a term used to describe the phenomenon of the slow decay that we so commonly observe in physical reality, the breaking-down of form and order. The HEF has an organizing effect on matter and builds forms. It appears to exist in more than three dimensions. Any changes in the material world are preceded by a change in this field. The UEF is always associated with some form of consciousness, ranging from highly developed to very primitive. The highly developed consciousness is associated with the “higher vibrations” and energy levels.”(40) As Teilhard de Chardin would say, we live in a universe that is evolving

in ever more complex and unified forms (with radial and tangential energy) to a complex unity, a goal of universal LOVE. There is a universal force of LOVE which is the force of healing. What Barbara Brennan has discovered is that we can access this field of love ever more deeply through meditation and acting according to it. Our change changes the whole field.

The UEF manifests itself in the **HEF (human energy field)**, a luminous body that surrounds and interpenetrates the physical body, emitting a characteristic “aura.” Brennan has seen seven layers of such energy fields, associated with the seven chakras of Kundalini Yoga. She identifies the following overlapping bodies of energy of ever higher frequencies.

- 1) **Physical** (lower etheric body) Feeling physical pain or pleasure. 1 ¼” hands
- 2) **Emotional body**: vehicles through which we have our emotional life and feelings
3-4” emotional body (varied colors in the aura, fluid)
- 3) **Mental** Linear thinking. Concrete thought
- 4) **Astral body**: Associated with heart and love. And Out of the Body experiences
- 5) **Etheric template**: Word. Causal. Speaking things into being, listening and taking responsibility for one’s actions.
- 6) **Celestial body**: higher emotional aspect. Higher Love
- 7) **Ketheric body**: (higher mental aspect) . Spirit, contacting the “divine spark within”
Extends beyond the human range, encompasses all life as precious manifestations of God. It also connects to past life. See Barbara Ann Brennan, Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing through Human Energy Field, 47f

Brennan finds that the higher bodies include and heal the lower ones. She gives exercises to experience the energy fields, such as holding hands, pushing and pulling, stopping energy, or holding one’s own hands 2 to 5” apart then 8-10.” She could only see the lower layers, which were more dense. The higher the layer, the more expanded her consciousness needed to be to perceive it. (p. 42) For the 5th to 7th layers, she needed to be in a meditative state with her eyes closed. The alternate layers are structured (i.e., the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th) while the 2nd, 4th and 6th layers were fluid-like and had form only by flowing through the odd layers. (p. 43) Each higher layer interpenetrates the lower. Scientifically, they are like higher vibration which extend further the higher the vibration. The higher levels contain all the forms the physical body has, including internal organs, blood vessels, etc., and additional forms the physical body does not contain. There is a vertical flow of energy that pulsates up and down the field in the spinal cord, extending above the head and below the coccyx. Then there are “swirling cone-shaped vortexes called chakras in the field.

II. Other Versions

Another version of these overlapping fields of energy is given by **Richard Gerber** in his book, *Vibrational Medicine* (Bear & Co, 1988), chapter 4. Gerber distinguishes six levels of energy:

- 1) **Physical** What we see, touch and hear. What ordinary medicine treats
- 2) **Etheric** An energy system surrounding the physical: acupuncture (meridian) Chakras. Illnesses can start here and move to physical
- 3) **Astral** Body that sees oneself from outside: OOB experiences or astral projection
- 4) **Mental** Ability to think about and effect previous levels, concrete thought
- 5) **Causal** Ability to grasp essences beyond the concrete, get to realities
- 6) **Spirit** True Self, can “choose” which body to enter

All these levels are interrelated.

A different approach to overlapping systems is presented by **Ewert Cousins**, the editor of the Paulist Press series on world spirituality. In an article called “States of Consciousness: Charting the Mystical Path,” (in *Fires of Desire*, edited by Fredrica Halligan and John Shea (Crossroad, 1992)) Cousins points out four levels from the work of Masters and Johnson on altered states of consciousness:

- 1) the *sensorium*, (a heightened awareness of color, texture, connected to the body)
- 2) the *ontogenetic* realm (the personal unconscious, such as Freud explored),
- 3) the *phylogenetic* realm (the collective unconscious of ancestry etc. of Jung),
- 4) the *mysterium* (experienced by mystics of various traditions).

These states are not as nuanced as those presented by Brennan, but they include aspects connected to the body and personal unconscious (mental state), and expand out to ancestors (the astral body) and ultimately to the working of God. Cousins notes the same influence of the higher on the lower. Each higher level solves problems of the lower levels. He writes:

“It is interesting that often when a problem arises on the ontogenetic level, the psyche will not attempt to solve it there, but rather the subject will be spontaneously drawn into the phylogenetic level where its more powerful energies will provide a solution. The same is true between the phylogenetic and the mysterium levels. A problem, such as the threat of death, on the phylogenetic level may be resolved by the energies emanating from the eternal sphere of the mysterium.” (*Ibid.*, p. 138)

The levels are organically knit together, the higher including the lower even as it goes beyond it to a deeper level. Something similar was found with homeopathy. What “healed” an illness was a tincture that imitated the symptoms of the illness in a healthy person, but diluted to such an extent that only the pattern remained. The more diluted, the higher the potency. It must work by influencing the energy system.

Consegrity Therapy:

As I was preparing this talk on energy, another approach came to my attention. Consegrity Therapy (from *consciousness* and *tensegrity*: the architectural balance between compression and tension which also applies to living cells) was developed by **Mary Lynch, MD**, a graduate of Georgetown Medical School as a sports medicine surgeon. Lynch was meticulous from the beginning about studying the outcome of her patients. After 13 years of conventional practice she concluded that she was just managing the complaints, not healing. So she toured the world looking for therapies and tried them out (some 70 different practices) in her two offices in Wichita, KS. Each worked for some but not all. So she went deeper to discover the nature of illness and how it affected the cells.

She investigated the research of Harold Saxon Burr of Yale University. It was Burr who studied the energy field around Salamanders and found that the energy field, traced back to the unfertilized egg, replicated the adult salamander. It was as though this energy blueprint preceded the growth of the salamander. Further, if a leg was cut off of a Salamander, it would grow another. Burr studied the cycle of energy as the salamander lost and re-grew its leg. He then

studied a frog (that does not re-grow a lost leg) and found that the energy cycle leveled off with the loss of the leg and did not increase as when the salamander re-grew its leg. So he artificially increased the energy field for the frog, and the frog did re-grow its leg. That healthy energy field facilitated the re-growth of the leg. Pursuing the idea of energy with living cells, she writes:

“The human being is made up of over 70 trillion cells, all held together by connective tissue sheets that form highways for all forms of communication both to and from cells. This highway holds and supports the blood vessels, lymphatics and nerves, delivering nutrition, oxygen, and information with cellular debris leaving through the veins and lymphatics. All cells contain DNA, the *information blocks* that you inherited. The DNA tells the cells how to repair and replace themselves. This should be able to go on forever if the environment around the cell stayed clean and clear of the accumulated energy from trauma. Trauma may be physical, emotional, spiritual, inherited, or environmental. When the trapped energy reaches a certain tension, the cells undergo a loss of tensegrity (the ability to balance tension and compression). The cell changes shape and the DNA locks up. The DNA can then go into a degenerative mode, which means it can't repair itself. Over time this results in diseases like arthritis, and all chronic degenerative diseases, headaches, back pain etc. The second option is cell death, such as end stage heart disease, diabetes, and Alzheimer's. The only other choice for the cell is to convert to a new cell line creating tumors and cancer. If the trapped energy in the connective tissue is removed, the cell reverts to normal, the DNA unlocks, and healing occurs. Clearing this extraneous energy is what **Consegrity@** does. “

Lynch found that what is needed for healing is that the facilitator be in the NOW and be totally open to mirror the energy field of the one being helped. One Study showed that the persons studied spent 95% of the time in their thoughts (of the future or past) and not aware of the present moment. Being in the present moment (not in some meditative altered state) enables the cells to be reprogrammed to work as they were originally intended to be. Further, the facilitator is taught to locate the places of excessive energy and to help the person (by touch and focusing) to resolve the impasse. It is the person's own energy that heals. The facilitator is to mirror that energy (analogous to having a deep empathy for one depressed, etc.), and that mirroring, without judgment, facilitates a release of the block and a return to healthy activity. Lynch also has found various levels of energy, four proven, 12 close to proven, and 49 discovered by her therapy, which extend out to some 55 feet. She does not differentiate them hierarchically (as the above systems), nor does she access “higher guides” or address the issue of parapsychological experiences. Her method “works” whether or not the recipient believes in it, but it does require of the facilitator that he or she remain open to the other and in the NOW, with a non-judgmental receptivity.

Theological Reflection:

A. Evaluating the Facts:

Our first question is how reliable are the various “bodies” seen by Brennan? Do we have scientific evidence for them? We do have the evidence of Kirlian photography from healers hands. It seems clear (from the experiments that Gerber cites of Kim, who located the meridian system in rabbits, etc. and Harold Burr's work with Salamander's and their replacing a leg, etc. (*Vibrational Medicine*, p. 125f) that something like an “**etheric**” body does exist. This is interfaced by the meridian system grounding acupuncture and the chakra system. It is a kind of

subtle energy "body" that predates embryologically the formation of glands, etc. and so can be looked at as a holographic template of functioning (for good or ill) antedating the physical body. Changes in the etheric body will gradually affect the physical body. [In this sense, Jesus' life/death/ resurrection could be seen as establishing at least (if only the etheric body existed) a healthy template, which could reorder diseased functioning.]

When we come to the **other "bodies" (astral, mental, causal, spiritual)** the evidence seems more difficult to evaluate. The first to look at is the "**astral** body." (or emotional body) (pp. 136ff). "It is invisible to all but the trained clairvoyant eye."(137) Since it is of a higher frequency than the etheric body, it can occupy the same space non-destructively. According to esoteric sources, it also has chakras corresponding to the etheric chakras. "Unlike the etheric body, which supports and energizes the physical body, the astral body also functions as a vehicle of consciousness which can exist separately, yet connected to, the physical body." (139) Thus, out of the body experiences is one source to hypothesize this level of energetic body. It may interact with its environment via the astral body, while the physical body is inactive or asleep (explaining near death experiences, or out-of-the-body experiences, or astral projection). It is connected to the physical body by a "silver cord" that is severed at death, leaving only an empty shell.(140) Some gifted individuals can control this "projection of themselves" and bring back valuable information.(140) The experiment of Robert Morris with a student's "projection" of his astral body to the presence of kitten (140f) showed the kitten perceived something, but was it the astral body? or simply a projected mental image? Other experiments (the peep hole experiment of Dr Karlis Osis (141), and the superconductor-shielded magnetometer measurement of Targ and Puthoff (142) seem more conclusive that wave-stimulation did occur when the OOB subjects said they were viewing the magnetometer.

Gerber admits that the scientific tools for measuring the further bodies do not now exist.(153) The **mental** body "is the vehicle through which the self manifests and expresses the concrete intellect."153 It also has corresponding chakras. For instance, a clairvoyant might see images of ideas, concepts and inventions a person has been mentally laboring over, floating like bubbles in that individual's auric field. If that body is functioning well, the person will be able to focus and think clearly.

Next there is the **causal** body. "Causal consciousness deals with the essence of a subject while the mental level studies the subject's details. This is the world of realities, no longer emotions, ideas or conceptions. Healing from the causal level will have more powerful effects.(155) Again he says: "The causal vehicle is less like a single bodily form associated with an individual personality, and more like that which has been referred to as a group soul. The Higher Self, as expressed through the causal body, is the gestalt consciousness of all that the soul has learned and experienced throughout its many lifetimes upon the physical plane."(167) Time as we know it is left behind. Past, present and future are seen to exist simultaneously.

Higher still are thought to be a higher level of **spiritual** energy. He does not consider that in this book. (155) I am not sure where he would put psychokinesis, travel through space, going through matter (as Jesus' resurrection), and possibly other phenomena. He is focusing on the healing aspects of these systems.

B. Interpreting interlocking energy systems theologically:

How are we to interpret these different views from a Christian theological perspective? I have discovered a view of faith development from salvation history. The five stages are:

- 1) **Initial Faith**: the beginning stage of the child, and body
- 2) **Familial faith** –the socialization process, traditions of family, church and culture.
- 3) **Individuating faith** – immediate contact with God, NOW, beyond time and space.
- 4) **Communitarian faith**: the forming of individuated community, forgiving enemies.
- 5) **Mission faith**: life in the power of the death/resurrection of Jesus as Holy Spirit.

The period we are now experiencing culturally, I believe, is individuating faith, which would explain why people are so affected by “centering prayer” and “new age,” and “God within.” The individuating faith stage is a breakthrough to an immediate relationship with God, a “new creation” springing from the inadequacies of the old system “familial faith.” It is an opening to new creative energies.

Here also, the higher stage includes, heals and transcends the lower stages. The only difference is that these stages are not ultimately grounded in experience but in revelation. They are not just energies, but an interpersonal relationship in the Spirit, through the Son with the Father. **Their ground is Trinitarian Love.** Our Triune God has incorporated all created energies, all creation, into God’s own life. All creation “is condemned to futility” for the sake of the children of God. (Rom 8:20) **The resurrection of Jesus has actually re-grounded all energy fields in their absolute ground in God.** (Eph 1:20-21; 4:9-10; Col 2:8-9) What Brennan has discovered on the level of created energies is included yet transcended in this new ground. As all created energies, they are meant to lead beyond themselves to God, but can become an end in themselves and thus an ultimately futile quest. It is not “energy” that is the ultimate ground, but their creator, our infinite God who transcends creation and all energy. To end in “energy,” no matter how universal, is to end in oneself (as a hologram of the cosmos, a micro-cosmos).

On the other hand, to be grounded in Jesus is not to ignore those created energies. Jesus assumed a full human nature and all that involved. All things are to be subjected to him as he subjects all to the Father (1 Cor 15:27-8). All is created and cannot exist apart from the ongoing creative presence of God. The saints themselves exemplified the types of experiences now being evidenced by Barbara. They, as Jesus, had insight into past influences. They bi-located and saw things at a distance. A Christian friend of mine gets insight into generational influences. She touched someone’s ailing knee and saw an image of the client’s grandmother who was similarly wounded. There is nothing in these experiences themselves that need prevent them from being Christian.

How might this relate to the individual Christian? In the first place, it seems we have to see our spiritual “Self” as united with our physical being. Our **spiritual body** then includes all dimensions of our physical body. All being, including levels of energy, is created by God through the Son, and has been transformed in its very root by the resurrection. We need purification from this source (by what John of the Cross calls a dark night of senses and spirit). Jesus is the perfect expression of the union of physical and spiritual, and we are gradually being brought into that unity through cooperating with Jesus’ Spirit. Since we are one body with all others, each of us has a role not only for ourselves, but also for our family of origin back to

Adam and Eve, always in union with Jesus (the New Adam)! All healing is ultimately a sharing in the resurrection of Jesus.

This implies that instead of merely individual growth of consciousness, each of us is responsible for the "social atom" that is essential to a person. The "**causal**" body would be this level of multi-generational influence (and would help explain why some illnesses cannot be healed simply on a personal, physical level). The "**spiritual body**" would be the resurrection body or Jesus' union with God and Trinity, which is physically made present to us in the Eucharist. (See Gustave Martelet, *The Risen Christ and the Eucharistic World* [Seabury, 1976] where he links resurrection with "absolute neg-entropy" p. 53f; 83f)

That leaves the levels of "**astral**" and "**mental**" bodies without a clear referent. If the "*astral*" is our ability to enter into the personality of another and see ourselves from the "project" selves, then it is a kind of radical empathy or sympathy, a first step in collective (= subtle?) perceiving? The "*mental*" could be the ability to "tune into" the creative ideas that are emerging in a culture, a kind of prophetic, creative insight into present conditions that will give rise soon to some physical expression. Both of these qualities were evidenced in Jesus. He not only "knew what we are as man/woman (Jn 2:24)" but also predicted and creatively corrected what would happen to Israel if they did not repent and turn to God.

However, for a Christian, God needs to lead in all things. **We do not just seek healing. We seek God's lead for what is to be done.** God can work powerfully through someone who is not healed, either physically or emotionally. There is such a thing as "innocent suffering," where one picks up the illnesses of ancestors in order to bring healing through intercession.

III. Applications:

A. Meditation: Centering is accessing higher levels. A helpful way is to center in the heart of Jesus, the highest energy, but more importantly, interpersonal. It is not for power, but for humility and love and centering in Jesus and God in the Universe. Accessing "higher masters" seems to be against Scriptural teaching unless they are submitted to Jesus (as the saints). Dt 18:11-12 says: "He who consults the dead in an abomination to the Lord." Saul's consulting Samuel through the witch of Endor (1 Sm 28) led to a prediction of his death the next day! We are to "trust in the Lord, and wait for him" (see Is 8:17-19). As Jesus says in the NT: "Do not be called rabbi (teacher), you have one teacher [the Messiah], you are all brothers and sisters." (Mt 23:8)

B. Laying of Hands: We are members of one body and are meant to bring one another to God. Since the body is interpenetrated by different levels, it depends on the spirit of the one laying on hands. Ultimately, it is the energy from the Body of Christ that brings final healing. As with the woman with the flow of blood: "energy went out from him" (Mk 5:30). Again, we need to learn discernment, that we be centered in Jesus and God.

C. Prayer for Healing: In the Spirit there is no space or time, so we can bring one another to Jesus for healing in prayer. We begin with ourselves, asking God to heal us so that we can be channels of healing for others. This healing transcends space and time. That prayer works at a distance is illustrated by a Columbia University experiment of praying for women in Australia to get pregnant (without their knowing it!). 50% got pregnant as opposed to 26% of

the control group. Columbia University expected no effect! (see N.Y. Times *Magazine*, 12-9-01, p. 92.

Conclusion:

What an understanding of these levels could do for the Christian (if rightly interpreted, without the individualism and neglect of physical particularity of the Eastern view) is open us to the various dimensions of Jesus' consciousness and real possibilities for our growth.

- 1) The **etheric** body would imply physical healing (cf. homeopathy, etc.),
- 2) The **astral** body would require forgiveness and interpersonal healing,
- 3) The **mental** body would require a more universal awareness of one's place in the right order of all things (belief therapy?).
- 4) And the **causal** body would require intergenerational healing.
- 5) And finally all would be integrated under the **spiritual** body--our union with God's creative love in Jesus.

I see energy healing as likely scientific, but open to good or bad spirits using it and therefore in need of ongoing discernment.

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