
Conclusion

It is crucial that Christians understand the philosophical and theological issues that are generated by the use of the technology and by the culture that has grown up around it. Clearly, the extreme individualism and autonomy that is evident within the culture of Cyberspace is approaching a view of self that is transcendent. The power to transcend time and space with a few clicks on the keyboard is seductive. Personal accountability and responsibility are too often in short supply. And while something that resembles community appears to be possible, distortions of authentic community are more common. The section discussing the key virtues of community was an attempt to provide practical advice on how to make CMC less destructive of community while at the same time maximizing its potential to support the Church in its efforts to model a more authentic form of community.

The challenge for the Church is to create community wherever it can, especially in real life, but also in Cyberspace to the degree that it is possible. While the very nature of Cyberspace and the infrastructure of CMC present a plethora of difficulties and challenges, the Church cannot afford to ignore this new medium. As Pope Paul VI, in his 1976 *Evangelii Nuntiandi* said of religious (radio and television) broadcasts: “the Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not use these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect.” While the same could be said for the Internet, it is critical that the Church recognizes the limitation of this medium and safeguards the flock, and the virtues of community, from compromise.

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216 should be required to read the acceptable code of conduct and “sign” an official chat-room checklist. “Netiquette” should be included on the welcome or greeting page. Facilitators should also give members the freedom to enforce agreed-upon standards at any point according to predetermined guidelines. Such egalitarianism and diffuse leadership were characteristic of the communal structure of the tribe.¹⁹

¹⁹Ong, *Orality and Literacy.*


All Suffer the Affliction of the One: Metaphysical Holism and the Presence of the Spirit

By Brad J. Kallenberg

When Copernicus and Galileo proposed that the earth circled the sun and not the other way around, Christian believers faced the difficult prospect of surrendering a long-held belief that had seemingly undeniable support from the biblical text. After all, Joshua reported that the sun, not the earth, stood still; what could this mean if not that the sun orbited the earth? Today, centuries later, believers unanimously hold a heliocentric view of the solar system and are somewhat embarrassed by the ignorance of our pre-Enlightenment brothers and sisters. Ironically, however, such embarrassment masks the possibility that we ourselves may one day be found guilty of having held notions yet to be realized as “backwards.”

We face just such a possibility with our conception of the Holy Spirit’s presence. It is my suspicion that, contrary to some of our most trenchant modern sensibilities, we are mistaken when we construe the presence of the Spirit in largely individualistic terms. Yet in this case, it is not the biblical text that is misleading. In contrast, a close inspection of the biblical record and of its earliest interpreters reveals that the earliest Christians naturally understood the presence of God’s Spirit primarily in corporate rather than individualistic terms.

The holism that marks first- and second-century conceptions of community life tends to strike our modern ears as a form of primitive hocus-pocus. However, very recent discussions of “emergence” and “supervenience” in philosophical circles may provide us moderns with the conceptual resources necessary for better owning the biblical record. In this paper, I will argue that biblical notions of the Spirit’s “indwelling” and “filling” ought to be primarily understood as descriptive of the Spirit’s relation to the believing community and perhaps only secondarily in rela-

Since the Enlightenment, systematic theologies have almost invariably described the Holy Spirit in terms of an interface between God and human individuals as individuals. Since the biblical text leans the other way, there are good reasons for seeking out better conceptual resources for understanding the presence of the Holy Spirit than can be offered by reductive theories of metaphysics that became so influential in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This paper surveys recent work in supervenience and emergentism in order to suggest ways for recapturing a more holistic, which is to say more biblical, pneumatology. Brad J. Kallenberg is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Dayton.
Holism in the Biblical Text

Paul writes to the motley group of believers in Corinth that "there are many members, yet one body." Moreover, God has so arranged this body that "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it." It is difficult to convey the strength with which Paul writes this last sentence. He does not say that members of a believing community "ought to suffer" with one of their afflicted members, or that the affliction of the one is grounds for empathy and sacrificial care. Rather, he uses an indicative verb to express a fact: "all suffer the affliction of the one." Paul's language is clear on this point: the body of Christ is so constituted that no individual member can escape affecting or being affected by the condition of the rest.

Now, I am puzzled by this, not by Paul's view of the body, but by the curious fact that contemporary believers who take biblical texts very seriously display a consistent tendency to conceive the action of God's Spirit in individualistic terms. To cite but one example, Millard Erickson construes the corporate action of the Holy Spirit as exhausted by the piecemeal distribution of spiritual gifts to individuals. Erickson consistently emphasizes the primacy of the Holy Spirit's action toward individuals: "The work of the Holy Spirit is of special interest to Christians, for it is particularly through this work that God is personally involved and active in the life of the believer." In Erickson's eyes, the Holy Spirit initiates the individual into the Christian life by playing the dominant role both in conversion, which he calls "the individual's turning to God," and regeneration, which he defines as "the miraculous transformation of the individual and implantation of spiritual energy."  

1 Cor. 12:20, 26, NRSV.

Stanley Hauerwas observes that "our normal reading of 1 Corinthians 12:23-25 as a 'metaphor' is a mistake. It is not as if the church is, like the body, interconnected, needing all its parts even the inferior one. The church is the body from which we learn to understand our particular bodies." See his "The Sanctified Body: Why Perfection Does Not Require a 'Self'," in Sanctify Them in the Truth (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998). For recent helpful exegesis on the nonmetaphorical use of "body" in the Corinthian correspondence, see Dale B. Martin, The Corinthian Body (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).


7Erickson, Introducing Christian Doctrine, 268, emphasis added.

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I take Erickson's views as symptomatic of a broader pattern of individualism in contemporary theological conversations. I suspect that we are so thoroughly steeped in individualism that we have great difficulty even imagining what pneumatology could be about if not about the empowerment of the individual. Yet consider an alternative reading of the biblical record.

When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees as to the details of the coming kingdom, he responded with the words, "The Kingdom of God is . . . within you." Or did he say, rather, "in your midst"? We rightly object on theological grounds that the kingdom ever be considered "within you," since Jesus' original audience included, among others, his nemeses the Pharisees. Rather, Jesus seems to be intimating that he himself was the embodiment of the kingdom who stood in the midst of the those who interrogated him. Unfortunately, this reading strategy appears to be an exception to our more general exegetical practice. What I find most puzzling is the instinctive way we assume that phrases such as ἐντὸς σαρκὸς or ἐν μυρίσσῳ ought to be translated as "within each of you" rather than "in the midst of you all." For example, the NASB translates Romans 8:9 as, ". . . you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." Here again the Greek pronouns are plural—as they nearly always are—and therefore, the text is probably better rendered in the plural: "you all are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in the midst of you all."

I am not denying that the Spirit indwells and fills individuals. Peter, after all, was full of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. What I am questioning is whether in the long run the notion of "individual filling" makes any sense at all when treated in isolation from the communal form of life that is conceptually linked with the corporate filling of the Spirit.

Consider Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Believers typically turn to 5:18 as the locus classicus for individualized Spirit-filling. However, note that the notion of Spirit-filling there is qualified by five participles, the first and last of which—namely speaking and subjecting—are especially bound up with intracommunal living. Apparently, believers cannot be filled with the Spirit apart from speaking and acting in a certain manner toward others. Moreover, the object of Paul's address is plural: "Be you all filled with the Spirit." Since this is a corporate command, are we not obligated on textual grounds at least to entertain the possibility that the content of the action envisioned is likewise corporate in nature? After all, Paul rarely concerns himself with "new persons" but with a singular "new person." Recent New Testament scholarship confirms that the Pauline "new person" in Ephesians is not a new nature internal to each regenerate individual, but a new corporate personality spelled out most clearly in chapter 2: Christ himself is the communal peace having made


One might respond that the Spirit's filling of an individual is logically prior to changes in behavior and speech. Yet is this the emphasis of the text? It seems to me that the text assumes that filling and acting are internally related, two sides of the same coin, neither of which can be rendered logically (or chronologically) prior to the other.
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out of both groups—Jews and Gentiles—one new corporate person (ἐνὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦ συνὸν ἴδρυτος). The reality of this new entity has radical implications for the individual. An individual does not possess identity solely on the basis of his or her difference from others but on the basis of his or her connection with them. Thus, believers are each members of one another (4:25) by virtue of the new reality, the church, which Paul identifies as Jesus' "body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (1:20). As a whole, this body constitutes the temple of God's spirit who indwells—not the bricks—but the building as a whole (1:21, 22).

Similar lines of reasoning might be teased out of other Pauline passages. For example, Luke Timothy Johnson argues helpfully that Paul's concept of practical wisdom (prudence—σοφία and its cognates) demands that we see pneumatology as internally related to Christian moral behavior within the believing community. Likewise, Richard Hays, commenting on Romans 12, writes, the primary sphere of moral concern is not the character of the individual, but the corporate obedience of the church. Paul's formulation in Romans 12.1-2 encapsulates the vision: "Present your bodies (σώματα, plural) as a living sacrifice (θυσία, singular) holy and well pleasing to God. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... ." The community, in its corporate life, is called to embody an alternative order that stands as a sign of God's redemptive purposes in the world. 6

This emphasis on the corporate presence of the Spirit makes sense out of the earliest apologists' employment of descriptions of the believing community in order to trump all objections raised against Christianity. Consider a concrete example excerpted from the pages of a second century apology written by Aristides to Caesar Hadrian,

But the Christians ... show kindness to those near them; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly ... . They do good to their enemies ... . If one of them has bondsmen and bondswomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is ... 

NASV. Perhaps the phrase τὸ πληρώμα τοῦ τὸ καίνα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρώματοι might be illuminated by the paraphrase: "the one filling each by virtue of filling all." Luke Timothy Johnson, "Transformation of the Mind and Moral Behavior in Paul" (paper presented at the AAR, San Francisco, CA, 1997).


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not found among them; and they love one another ... . And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their own homes and receive over him as a very brother ... . And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity ... . And if there is any among them that is poor and needy, and they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food ... . Such, O King, ... is their manner of life ... . And verily, this is a new people, and there is something divine in the midst of them." 7

Apparently, Aristides felt that he could not speak intelligibly of the Spirit's presence without preceding this undefined notion with several pages of text describing the manner in which Christians lived with each other.

Ludwig Wittgenstein may shed some light here: "the words you utter or what you think as you utter them are not what matters, so much as the difference they make at various points in your life ... Practice gives the words their sense." 7 If I read Wittgenstein correctly, the pair of statements "Behold, how they love one another!" and "God is among them" are not descriptions of two states of affairs that stand in causal relation to each other; they are two sides of the same coin. The cash value of talk about divine presence is precisely that of talk about a Christlike manner of living. We are only fooling ourselves (not to mention attempting to fool outsiders) when we maintain in the absence of concrete practical differences between our community and others' that, nevertheless, talk about the Spirit's presence must mean "something." No. If our theology is to resonate with the New Testament and second century apologists, we must ground our pneumatological statements in concrete descriptions of community life.

To sum thus far, the earliest Christ-followers moved effortlessly between descriptions of community life and descriptions of the Spirit's presence precisely because they understood these descriptions to be internally related. Just as faith was embodied in action, so too the Spirit's presence was embodied in the hurly-burly of the christomorphic community. Perhaps our fluency in this earlier, richer, biblical language of the Spirit's corporate presence has atrophied, while our modern penchant to construe fundamental spiritual realities in primarily individualistic terms has grown overly strong. Speculation as to why or when this fluency was lost is outside the scope of this paper. However, I suggest that recent discussions in philosophy of mind and philosophy of science may provide us with conceptual resources for enriching our language once more. It is a summary to some of these discussions that I turn next.


Metaphysical Holism

Metaphysical holism names the school of thought that resists the modern urge to explain complex wholes simply in terms of their parts. Molecules, holists aver, are more than the sum of their constitutive atoms; human beings are more than the collection of their respective cells; communities are more than the aggregation of their members. Since the nineteenth century, this resistance has taken two forms. In the case of “emergentism,” something real is thought to emerge when a system reaches a certain level of complexity giving the emergent reality (the whole) real downward influence over its members. In the case of “nonreductive physicalism,” descriptions of the systematic whole are said to supervene in an irreducible way on descriptions of the parts. Both notions, emergence and supervenience, may profitably illuminate aspects of pneumatology that seem overlooked today.

Emergence

Emergence is a version of metaphysical holism born of nineteenth-century romanticism. Like the Romantics, emergentists were unhappy with the scientific (which is to say, deterministic) descriptions of the world that seemingly precluded the possibility of real novelty. Unlike the Romantics, emergentists did not think that real novelty indicated an intrusion into the material world by an immaterial property, force, or entity. (Belief in such an invasion is called “vitalism.”) Consequently, emergentists tried to retain the spontaneity and creativity of romanticism but edged away from the romantic notion of vitalism. In his poem “The Metamorphosis of Plants,” the Romantic thinker Johann W. von Goethe portrays “Life” as an animating force that jobs the life cycle of flowering plants. His perception of a perduing vitality enabled Goethe to classify all the parts of the plant, as well as phases of its life, as different modes of this single life force. At the turn of the twentieth century, Oswald Spengler applied Goethe’s romantic vision to an analysis of culture. In Spengler’s mind, science inevitably describes the world-as-nature in terms of cause-effect pairs that operate on the microcosmic scale. But when science tries to think macrocosmically, it unwittingly assumes that the explanatory power of its theorems depends on the integrity of the entire cause-effect chain linking the present with the past. Thus, for example, Darwinism must postulate the existence of transitional types between species even when evidence for these is lacking. For the same reason, turn-of-the-century scientists tended toward reductionism; even properties as significant as “life” and “free will” were thought to be completely explainable by reference to purely physical parts in a purely aggregative causal arrangement under the constraints of general laws of nature. Spengler objected that such a stance necessarily overlooked the pulsating presence of the life force that alone provides the real unity of what he called the world-as-history on the macrocosmic scale. Other romantics joined Spengler in envisioning life as a force that manifested its periodicity through the “forms” embodied in living things—even human culture as a whole. In other words, not only are individual human beings alive, the species itself has a kind of life cycle, and human life as a whole is the progressive actualization of the “form” of humanity. Thus, cultures “evolve” in the same way that animal species evolve, namely, by the spontaneous emergence of new and unrelated modes of life. Spengler contended that this is the only way to make sense out of the historical fact that empires rise and fall without transitional types serving as causal links from one empire to another.

In this way, the romantic explanation did what scientific reductionism could not do: give prominence to the apparent interconnectedness of all things living. It was this explanatory power of romanticism that emergentists sought to preserve—yet without all the hocus-pocus associated with vitalism. For example, C. Lloyd Morgan argued that the steps forward taken by the process of evolution were novel and in an important sense discontinuous with any real or imagined causal chain, simply because the emergence of new species is a brute fact; no further explanation was needed. In terms of cosmogeny, Morgan held that psychophysical events give rise to life, which give rise to mind and from which emerges spirit, even deity.

At stake for all emergentist accounts is the distinction made in the nineteenth century by J. S. Mill and G. H. Lewes between resultant (sometimes called hereditary or mechanistic) forms of causation and emergent (or nonmechanistic) forms of causation. The former refer to the broadly Human view of nomological regularity, while the latter signify those that do not succumb to nomological description.


Similarly, Samuel Alexander lists five emergent levels: space-time, matter, life, mind, deity. Later accounts were more circumspect with respect to deity. For example, Hilary Putnam and Mario Bunge first conceived of a “merological” ontology that began with elementary particles which gave rise to atoms which gave rise to molecules, then cells, multicellular organisms, biological individuals, and, finally, social groups. See Gouge, “Emergent Evolution,” 2: 475.

Emergentism enjoyed a brief heyday in the 1920s but fell on tough times with the advent of quantum physics.\(^9\)

However, since the late 1970s, there has been a renaissance of emergentism occasioned by the inability of reductive physicalists to account adequately for the apparent causal power, which, for example, the human mind is commonly supposed to exert over the physical world. As Paul Humphreys notes:

For if mental properties are causally impotent vis-a-vis physical properties, the traditional worry about epiphenomenalism confronts us: What is the point of having them in our ontology if they are idle? Abstract objects escape this worry, for we do not expect them to do causal work, but mental properties are retained in part because we believe them to affect the course of the world.\(^10\)

Emergentism is once again becoming respectable, although today it is commonly thought of in connection with the reality of the human mind (vis-a-vis the brain) rather than the reality of World spirit or Life force or God.

The easiest way to begin getting a handle on contemporary emergentism is to recall the familiar hierarchy of scientific disciplines. The discipline known as particle physics is distinct from chemistry precisely because it studies a different class of phenomena, namely, those having to do with sub-atomic particles. Chemistry cannot be reduced to physics precisely because it studies properties unique to the molecular, rather than atomic, level of complexity. Of course, some properties, such as mass, are simply additive. However, other properties can be thought of as distinctive, unique to a given level of complexity; such are the particular domain of that scientific discipline.

Thus, stereoisomerism (the study of D-3 structural differences between molecules with identical constituent parts) at the level of chemistry has no analog at the level of physics, because for molecules, but not for sub-atomic particles, three-dimensional structure is functionally significant (for example, “right-handed” versus “left-handed” enzymes). This fact tempts us to say that a new entity is being studied at this level of complexity despite the fact that such an entity is made up entirely of atoms, which is to say, elements that comprise the next lower ontic

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\(^9\) See Brian McLaughlin, “The Rise and Fall of British Emergentism,” in Emergence or Reduction?, 49-93; see also R. E. Tully, “Emergence Revisited,” in Pragmatism and Purpose: Essays Presented to Thomas A Gough, eds. L. W. Sumner, John G. Slater, and Fred Wilson (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 261-277. Unfortunately for the emergentists, C. D. Broad had built his case for emergentism on what classical physics regarded as the “fact” of the nonpredictability of chemical properties. However, the advent of quantum mechanics, with its surprising successes to predict just such properties, fueled relentless attacks on emergentism by very robust physical reductionists. Eventually, emergentism died the death of a thousand qualifications when Hempel and Oppenheim conceded that in the face of indisputable scientific progress, perhaps emergentism was no more than a stop-gap theory—a temporary way to talk about matters that would eventually succumb to purely physicalist explanation.

\(^10\) All Suffer the Affliction of the One: Metaphysical Holism and the Presence of the Spirit order. This mereological picture is repeatable. Moving up: molecules constitute cells, and properties unique to the cellular level emerge giving justification to biologists’ treatment of cells as “real” in their own right. On this view, the so-called “soft sciences,” such as sociology, are seen to lie farther up the same mereological hierarchy as the hard sciences. In the case of sociology, human individuals constitute a social group, and the social group instantiates properties unique to that group, a fact that justifies treating the group as a causal entity in its own right. Many (if not all) emergentists will characterize the relationship between adjacent levels in the hierarchy with the several features. The most important of these is *downward causation*: macro-properties have top-down causal influence on the parts that constitute the system. Thus, mental events have real causal influence on brain states. Similarly, as Durkheim was the first to discover, social facts (namely, group
properties such as belonging to a Protestant Church) predisposes individuals in this group toward certain behaviors (in this instance, toward suicide).28

A Conceptual Assist from Emergentism

Despite our strong tendency to consider the status of the individual as more fundamental to the workings and identity of the community than the other way around, the language of emergence may give us a way to understand the dynamic relation in which believers stand to the whole: the Body of Christ emerges from the system of individuals that embodies a particular form of life.

Saying that the Body of Christ emerges from a group of believers whose matrix of relations is configured in the imitatio Christi has the advantage of emphasizing the fact that the faithful community is itself crucial to both the salvation and sanctification of the individual. Augustine's dictum, "Outside the church there is no salvation" (ad extra ecclesiam nulla salus), does not make some sort of good work (for example, church membership) a prerequisite for salvation. It simply states a fact—the individual who neglects participation in the new relational configuration that constitutes the Body of Christ stands outside that which is being saved.

Similarly, an emergentist outlook opens the possibility of top-down influences by the community upon the individual members in ways that transcend spiritual disciplines undertaken on the individual level (such as prayer, Bible reading, fasting, etc.).29 Negatively stated, the spiritual poverty of the believing community places, in an important sense, an unavoidable upper limit to the spiritual health of the individual and beyond which ceiling no member can rise despite a host of isolated efforts on his or her part.30 Positively stated, the emergent social reality, the Body of Christ, may exercise top-down persuasiveness on those outsiders that come within range of its language and life, by showing at the corporate level what simply


30Of course, the opposite scenario is also possible: a deficiency in the form of intra-communal life exercises a negative top-down influence on its parts. (Surely we call this a dead church.)

31 Cor. 12:26 says that the suffering of the one, in fact (note the indicative verb, αἰματοτύποι), entails the suffering of the whole. The text does not limit the sort of suffering that is distributed throughout the Body merely to physical or emotional loss. Rather, the point is that believers are mystically—or meroelogically—connected within the Body and thus the spiritual health of each is bound up with the spiritual health of the other and of the whole.

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cannot be said on the level of the individual. We have already witnessed Aristides' apologetic strategy of appealing to the remarkable shape of life in the believing community. A similar example can be found in another second century apologist. In Athenagoras's mind, truthful description of the Christian community always trumps any and all objections raised against the gospel:

But among us you will find uneducated persons and artisans, and old women who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give of those who ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves.31

Such a strategy is fully commensurate with the Scripture's insistence that the church is the "pillar and bulwark of the truth," rather than the other way around.32

The concept of emergence affords the first part of an enriched pneumatology. If community life is an emergent property that cannot be reduced to the sum of properties manifested by the parts (in this case, the members of the body), and if community life has real downward causal power over its constitutive members, then we are obligated to look at community life under an aspect different than that of merely an aggregative description of individual actions; there is a patternedness and reality to the whole that must itself display Christliness if we are to intelligibly say that the Spirit is present among us.

Supervenience

In addition to claiming that the Body of Christ is an irreducible social reality that must figure prominently in Christian pneumatology, a second conceptual assist for pneumatology can be found in the notion of "supervenience." The nature of theological language is such that descriptions of the divine presence cannot simply hang in space; theological descriptions mean something only when framed by particular linguistic practices within a determinate form of life. I claim, in particular, that descriptions of the Spirit's presence supervenue upon descriptions of the believing community's form of life. In order to unpack the significance of this claim, I must recourt a little history.

If emergentism began with romanticism and edged away from vitalism toward a moderate center, supervenience began at the other extreme, with physicalism, and moved toward the center by edging away from reductionism. The term was first used by Richard Hare to describe G. E. Moore's contention that a pattern of human behavior in the physical world can be given a *moral* description; moral properties can be thought to "depend" on physical properties, yet without being


32 Tim. 3:15 NEB.
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reduced to these. For example, we might naturally say: "Mother Teresa gave her life serving the poor in Calcutta. This is morally good." Did Mother Teresa’s moral property of goodness cause her to behave in ways that she did? Or did her behaving in such-and-such ways cause her to gain a property called moral goodness? Here, causal questions are wrongheaded. Rather, we have two ways of describing Mother Teresa:

a. Mother Teresa gave her life serving the poor in Calcutta. (Physical)

b. Mother Teresa is morally good. (Moral)

Now the question becomes "what is the relationship between these two descriptions? Clearly, we cannot say that the second is entirely independent of the first. Rather, the second in some sense "depends on" the first for its meaning and veracity. (If Mother Teresa had lived her life in wanton greed and self-service, it would not dawn on us even to describe her as morally good.) Moreover, we cannot speak of this dependence as if it were an entirely accidental feature of this present social world. We say instead that the "dependence" between the two above claims is strong enough to warrant the assertion that caring for the poor in a manner that resembles Mother Teresa is always morally commendable—on this or any other conceivable planet.

The notion of supervenience was originally employed to do this job: moral descriptions supervene on descriptions of physical behavior. However, today the term "supervenience" appears most frequently in discussions surrounding the mind-body problem. It was in this context that Donald Davidson resurrected Hare’s term in his own 1970 lecture "Mental Events." Davidson explains that mental event language supervenes upon descriptions of physical events. This means simply "that there cannot be two events alike in all physical respects but different in some mental respect, or that an object cannot alter in some mental respect without altering in some physical respect."

The central concern appears to be the nature of the relation between mental properties and physical properties. Is the connection law-like? If so, is it a nomological regularity due to a mechanistic connection from physical events (brain states) to mental ones? If the connection is causal in the ordinary sense, then mental events reduce to physical events; determinism follows. However, Davidson avoids reductionism by denying that the connection between the physical and the mental is law-like, hence predictable and deterministic. By "supervenience," he is raising the possibility of a nonmechanical "because of" in the following sentence: "individuals have their mental properties because of their physical properties." But notice what else Davidson is doing by employing the concept of "supervenience": he is framing the discussion in linguistic rather than ontological terms. As in the case of Mother Teresa, at stake is not the direction of causation—whether her goodness causes her behavior or vice versa—but rather the nature of the relationship between two complementary descriptions. Similarly here: at stake is not whether mental events cause brain states or vice versa, but whether the notions of "mind" and "brain" are in some sense complementary and interdependent descriptions of human experience. In other words, we must speak of both mental events (for example, intentionality) and brain states (for example, synapse firing) to give a complete description of the events that comprise our lives.

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It is important at this juncture to understand what Davidson is not saying. Davidson has drawn fire from Jaegwon Kim for utilizing supervenience to defend the reality of both mentality and physicality without envisioning a nomological connection between the two. See Beckman, "Supervenience, Emergence, and Reduction"; Jaegwon Kim, "The Nonreductivist’s Troubles with Mental Causation," in Supervenience and Mind, 336-357, "Multiple Realization and the Metaphysics of Reduction," in Supervenience and Mind, 309-335, and "Downward Causation in Emergentism and Nonreductive Physicalism," in Emergence or Reduction?, 119-137. Kim parodies nonreductive physicalists as supposing that "To be real is to have causal power" (Kim, "Downward Causation," 135). In Kim’s view, Davidson, et al., "accept full ontological status to emergent properties: not only are they real and genuine properties of things in the world, in the same sense in which basic physicochemical properties are real, but in some ways they are richer and fuller features of the things they characterize" (Kim, "Downward Causation," 134; emphasis added). Kim fears that nonreductive physicalists are claiming that mental states do not work not done by physical states. This zero-sum game evidences Kim’s confusion: to say that mental causation works to the exclusion of physical causation is the very category fallacy that supervenience seeks to overcome. I suspect that for Kim the phrase ‘mental event’ refers to something out there in the real world in a manner no different than the phrase ‘physical event’ refers. Given this outlook, Kim must object to Davidson or else surrender his own physicist ontology. However, Davidson does not conceive the world as one thing and language as another. (For a discussion of Davidson’s views of language see my "The Gospel Truth of Relativism," in The Scottish Journal of Theology 53, no. 2, (2000), 177-211). Following Wittgenstein, Davidson views language as constituting, or being internally related to, the human world. Thus, Davidson is free to speak of ‘reality’ in a variety of language games and also to ask the question of the relationship between the language game of mental events and the language game of brain states. The real issue for nonreductive physicalists is not a consideration of the relation between properties or entities as Kim wrongly imagines. Rather, it is a question of the relation between descriptions. Does this mean that for Davidson the only difference between mental events and brain states is a ‘linguistic’ one? Wrong question—for that way of putting the objection only has bite for someone who holds that language corresponds to reality or that language is somehow ontologically inferior to ‘reality’ in the same way that a photo of me is ontologically inferior to me.

For a brief history of the concept see Jaegwon Kim, "Concepts of Supervenience," in Supervenience and Mind, 53-78.


Now we are in position to see how the concept of "supervenience" might enrich current patristic theology, especially by helping us overcome our contemporary penchant to speak of the Spirit's presence in purely individualistic terms. In particular, I suggest that descriptions of the Holy Spirit's presence are of the same sort as moral claims: they supervene on descriptions of the communal form of life.

In one sense, my appropriation of the language of supervenience (and emergence) may simply be another way of making what Wittgenstein called a "grammatical point." For example, the word "chair" gets a grip in our lives via our multiple activities involving chairs. A "grammatical" mistake in this case would be expressed by the question, "Is this chair intelligent?" A grammatical remark, then, is simply a statement that points out that the ways in which we ordinarily use the word "chair" disallow our speaking of a chair's intelligence. So too, ordinary language prevents us from inquiring about the honesty of the letter "e" or the wetness of social justice. In the case of patristic theology, the grammatical remark I am trying to make is that talk of the Spirit's presence may be vacuous unless associated with a particular shape of community life. What do claims about the Spirit's presence amount to if not the way believers live with each other?

Please do not mistake what I have tried to say. Discussions of emergentism and supervenience might be easily and naturally associated with process theology. However, process thinkers (as well as other versions of panentheism) make ontological claims about the nature of the divine substance that supposedly enables God to interact with the physical world. In contrast, I am not making an ontological claim about the divine substance. I am not saying God supervenes upon the community. I am saying that descriptions of God's presence supervene upon descriptions of the believing community's form of life. In other words, claims such as "God is here" have determinative meaning if and only if a communal form of life is explicated in the same context.

Why the communal form of life and not that of the individual? Because the meaningfulness of language depends on the linguistic practices of a community. If Wittgenstein can be trusted, a sentence's meaning is not some occult thing that rides piggyback on a string of vocables. Rather, what we call a sentence's meaning is the use to which it is put within the context of a community's form of life. Thus, to understand a sentence requires us to look for how the speaking of a given sentence meshes with the rest of life. For example, people are bound to misunderstand claims about God's forgiveness if these are spoken against a backdrop of a community that fails to practice forgiveness.  

The practice of forgiveness in community becomes the form of life upon which intelligibility of statements about divine forgiveness hinges.

Irenaeus hinted at what I call the supervenience of the description of the divine presence upon descriptions of the form of communal life when he rejected Gnostic claims of direct knowledge of God (that is, knowledge unmediated by any social life). Rather, God and nature (physis) are categorically different. We are unable to know God in se, but we come to know God via the image of God stamped in various media—namely, Jesus and the believing community. What Irenaeus identified as the "image" of God, then, was the pattern of relationality: the primary pattern was the relationship of Jesus with the Father that became embodied in the Gospel story; secondarily, the pattern of the intra-trinitarian relationality was reproduced in the Christian community as mutual humility, service, and kenosis. Thus, while God cannot be known in se, for God is wholly other, the configuration of this relationality can be described, or better, shown, by the narrative of Jesus and by the story of historical Christian communities.  

Is not the character of God thought to be revealed by the way his worshippers sell themselves into slavery to feed the poor? In Irenaeus's mind, the telos of human existence is salvation, which on his account is nothing less than the realizing of God's likeness in the realm of human community.

Some may object that my suggestions have mortgaged the farm; my use of supervenience (in particular) appears to outlaw certain ontological commitments we hold regarding God. Who can imagine a less satisfying trade than a God who "does stuff" and to whom we are "personally related" for a set of mere grammatical points? Fortunately, this dilemma is artificial.

Grammatical remarks gesture toward the real. On the one hand, attention to the grammar of the conceptual language that believers speak prevents the "refutation" of their claims as if they were empirical propositions. On the other hand, grammatical points have the power they do because they reflect a "realism without empiricism." The speaking of the Christian language within the context of the believing community creates and fulfills the conditions for its own reality: a whole

\footnote{Wittgenstein wrote, "It is part of the grammar of the word 'chair' that this is what we call 'to sit on a chair.'", The Blue and Brown Books (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 24.}

\footnote{Mt. 11:25, Mt. 6:16.}
new world (κόσμης κτισμός—2 Cor. 5:17) is created for the community that speaks and lives thus. Such a linguistic community is itself an emergent reality that gathers up others into a mode of speaking that is itself partly constitutive of the praxis which gives sense to its language. In Johannes Fisher's words, "There is a kind of knowledge which is practical in the sense that it does not just state reality but rather first of all places the perceiving agent into this very reality."49 Within the form of life that believers inhabit by grace, they are entitled to robust ontological commitments—namely, beliefs in the reality of God's Spirit, of the community, and of oneself. Bridge builders calculate wave functions and rely on the "reality" of imaginary (i) numbers to tell them which bridges won't spontaneously collapse. Surely religious believers are as justified in their commitment to the reality of God's Spirit.45

An important consequence of a linguistically sensitive pneumatology is the fact that no clear boundaries need to be drawn between the realm and role of God and that of human believers. Reinhard Hütter urges us that we understand this complicated form of life under the double aspect of paracesis (exhortation). In other words, the Apostle's words "You are the body of Christ!" (1 Cor. 12:12) is both a promise and a claim. Unfortunately, we typically dichotomize God's activity and human activity such that we take the "indicative" as a reference to "God's already accomplished activity," while taking the "imperative" to name our human activity. In contrast, Hütter explains that "paracesis" thematizes God in the presence and activity of the paracletos, the third person of God's Trinity, in such a way that our activity is transformed and, at its very best, only joins the Spirit's activity.48 In this sort of pneumatology, the distinction between God's activity in the midst of our community and the communal life itself begins to be blurred in a way that rivals the mystery of the Trinity.

Conclusion

I think that the notions of emergence and supervenience may prove useful to discussions of the Spirit's presence in community on several counts. Most obviously, these two concepts enable us to avoid the language of "causality" and thereby

4Cited in Reinhard Hütter, "Ecclesial Ethics, the Church's Vocation and Paracesis," Pro Ecclesia 2 (fall 1993): 446.
5Hütter, "Ecclesial Ethics, the Church's Vocation and Paracesis," 443.
Reviews


Reviewed by Michael Lessard-Clouston, English and Language Education, Kwansei Gakuin University

As an academic and professional specialty, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is a well-established and dynamic field, yet it appears to be little understood by many academics and lay people. This is unfortunate, as excellent graduate and undergraduate TESOL programs exist at Christian and other universities, and there is an international Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (see http://www.cetesol.org) within one of the world’s largest teachers’ associations (see http://www.tesol.org). A fine collection of easy-to-read articles called *Teaching More Than English: Using TESL/TEFL on the Mission Field at Home and Abroad* (Berry Publishing Services, 1997) already exists, as well as an introductory *Handbook for Christian EFL Teachers* (Lonza J. Dickerson and Dianne F. Dow, Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, 1997). However, there have been ongoing challenges to develop a “Christian perspective” on teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), including Teri McCarthy’s recent but somewhat uninformed “call to arms” (Evangelical Missions Quarterly 36 [2000]: 310-316). Consequently, the appearance of this first book-length essay which does just that is both timely and welcomed, not only for current or potential Christian ESL/EFL instructors and teacher educators, but also for church leaders, mission organization personnel, and others interested in cross-cultural training, global missions, and teaching English.

Don Snow is a mission co-worker with the Presbyterian Church (USA), seconded to the Amity Foundation, a Chinese NGO in Hong Kong. He is also the author of an accessible and well-received methods text, *More Than a Native Speaker: An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad* (TESOL, 1996). Snow brings this background of TESOL and teacher training knowledge to this work, as well as various Christian experiences within a variety of mainline, evangelical, and independent churches and church-related missions and organizations. A theological reflection, this book demonstrates Snow’s keen ability to weave Scripture with personal insights and specific pedagogical examples concerning English teaching as a form of Christian mission. Following a thoughtful Forward by Tom Scovel (of San Francisco State University) and the Preface, the book is divided into eight chapters. The first three provide background and set the groundwork for more detailed emphasis in the remaining five chap-