



January 2002

Volume 2, No. 1

Prayer Research: Descriptors and Outcome Measures within Perspectives of Science and Spirit

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Introduction

There is a hilarious scene in one of the Pink Panther movies, where Inspector Clouseau (Peter Sellers), a klutzy, feckless detective, arrives at an Alpine inn laden with lots of pieces of luggage. He manages, with great difficulty, to open the main door and come in from a snowstorm. Inside is a huge welcoming log fire, a recumbent German Shepherd dog, and an elderly, not-easily-impressed, unfriendly and altogether arrogant desk clerk. Sellers asks "Does your dog bite?" Without even lifting his gaze from his work, the clerk replies "No, monsieur." Sellers deposits several bags on the floor, thus freeing up one hand and reaches out to pat the German Shepherd, whereupon the dog promptly savages him. In total alarm and with a hint of betrayal in his voice, Sellers reprimands the clerk "I thought you said your dog doesn't bite?!" Stiffly and with great dignity the clerk disengages himself temporarily from his tasks to haughtily declare "That is not my dog."

Asking the wrong questions based on false models of reality and unproven expectations can only give irrelevant or even dangerous answers - in Alpine inns or in scientific research.

In the arena of human enquiry, the questions, the models, and the expectations have varied throughout history. To put it simplistically, there have been two main movements, each with twin poles. Within the first movement, "Homo Religiosus," acknowledging the presence of a first cause, created a way of doing. This, in its purest form, became personal, Experimental Mysticism, and, in its corrupt form, dogmatic, sectarian theology. In the "Age of Enlightenment," a second movement swept dramatically center stage. In its purest form it is the rigorous but open-minded Scientific Method; in its corrupt form, it is materialistic, reductionistic, closed-minded Scientism.

Prayer research should be careful not to be hijacked by the allegedly-revealed dogma of any organized religion, nor sabotaged by the self-professed infallibility of scientism.

It is time to create a synthesis between the *enlightened* poles of science and religion and to abandon the war between their corrupt excesses. A new wedding is called for, a union of science and experiential mysticism. The practitioners will, I believe, be a blend of mystics and scientists. I will call them "MYSTICISTS." They will have the courage to radically review the two basic pillars of human enquiry - first, our models of reality, and second, our research methodologies. Obviously, these two pillars are inextricably interconnected, as hen and egg, in an ongoing cycle. But for the purpose of this paper, I will temporarily tease them asunder.

So I will divide the body of the discussion into two sections. In section one, I will examine our models and their underlying assumptions. In section two, I will look at design methodologies.

I. Our Models and Their Underlying Assumptions

A. Models of Spirituality

There are embedded models and postulates in all research. I propose that for the kind of research we are undertaking there needs to be a new and more adequate cosmology. I believe it may contain, among many others, the following elements as examples:

Higher forms do not emerge from lower forms by some kind of a fortuitous concatenation of accidental coincidence. Rather the evolution from Matter to Life to Mind to Soul to Spirit was only possible because Spirit was the origin and very essence of the evolutionary thrust to begin with. Higher forms, then, are the manifestation of pre-existing possibilities in the synthesizing of lower forms. A group of letters from the alphabet doesn't accidentally take on meaning because it falls together in a particular configuration, rather the grouping manifests a *preassigned* meaning.

Therefore trying to do prayer research without a mystical cosmology is like trying to do biological research without a theory of Life.

The mystical literature speaks of four stages of the process in the spiritual unfolding of mystical experiences.

1. In stage one "God" never reveals teachings but only *experiences* of Herself. These are unitive experiences in which all sense of self and time disappears and are totally ineffable.
2. Stage two begins after the mystical experience has ended. The blissed-out experiencer wants to try to make maintain a link, so s/he comes up with *symbols* that somehow represent this ineffable event.
3. Stage three is the development of *concepts* in order to make mental sense of the symbols.
4. Stage four is the articulation in *words* (spoken or written) in order to share the concepts with others.

B. Models of the Human Person

Biology (the study of "bio" - life) has a strange way of conducting its research. It kills and dissects in order to figure out how life works. Psychology (the study of the "psyche" - soul) has a stranger way of conducting its research. For most of the 20th Century it totally ignored soul and purported to research the human condition while denying that soul even exists. One may as well try to study anthropology (the study of "anthropos" - humans) while denying that humans exist.

The Perennial Philosophy claims that reality exists on two levels - the unseen, mystical, unmanifest level, and the seen, secular, manifest level. The secular is conceived, birthed and sustained by the mystical. We have a special term, in Gaelic, for a place or experience that temporarily renders diaphanous the divide between the manifest and unmanifest worlds. We call it a *Caol Áit* (a Thin Place). Those who hang out regularly in such spaces claim that we are not just physical entities but spirits in spacesuits.

Since we have been doing research without an adequate understanding of "human,," we have most certainly not had operational definitions of what a fully-alive human might look like.

C. Models of Body

Our Western medical model of body - a kind of a WYSIWYG notion - may well be very inadequate. Other systems have much more sophisticated models. For example, Hinduism teaches that we have seven levels of body, all vibrating at different frequencies and manifesting different levels of energy. The "Chakra system" operates as transforming stations to step up or step down the energy from one level to the next.

Any research coming out of such a model is bound to ask different questions and create different scientific models of the phenomenological world.

D. Models of Illness

The Spindrift researchers claimed that the further an organism was from homeostasis the more dramatic were the results of prayer interventions. They worked primarily with plants, which they could "stress" by watering them with a saline solution. The more stressed the plants, the more astounding were the prayer effects - up to a point. Stressed beyond a certain point, the plants could not be restored to health. On the other hand trying, by prayer, to push the plants out of homeostasis proved a more difficult task.

Homeopathy reports the same phenomenon. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder, was a German allopathic physician who became disillusioned with Western medicine's efforts to treat disease by suppressing symptomology. He believed that illness existed on three levels. Unlike healing which (as in embryonic development) proceeds from head to tail and from the center of the body outwards, illness, he said, begins with physical symptoms. As it progresses, illness goes inwards and upwards. Since symptoms are evidence of the body actually healing itself, the suppression of symptoms inevitably drives the illness into the next level - the emotional arena. The symptoms manifested here are a further attempt by the organism to heal itself, but again suppression means that the illness has nowhere to go but to the third and most serious level of all - the mental/spiritual level.

So, we need an adequate model of illness and wellness. I believe that illness is a composite of several sources:

1. Genetic predisposition - different families and different ethnic groups are more prone to different illnesses.
2. Environment - by which I mean everything from our in-utero experience, to family and social, physical, emotional and mental experiences.
3. Personal lifestyle - diet, exercise, sleep patterns, behavior etc.
4. Personal belief systems - prejudices, and what we hold about the existential, political, cultural and social issues.
5. Karma - the lessons we have come to learn in a particular lifetime.
6. The Bodhisattva dimension - there is a little of the bodhisattva in each one of us. Perhaps a particular illness is our gift to the scientific community that it may exercise its ingenuity or to the extended family that it may exercise its compassion.

Any prayer that attempts to influence a disease caused by numbers 1 through 4 above, may well prove "successful,," but prayer that seeks to undo any illness occasioned by numbers 5 or 6 above is obviously "kicking against the goad" and may be "unsuccessful."

E. Models of Healing

In counseling clients who are wrestling with a life-threatening illness, I have developed a six-stage model of intercessory prayer.

1. The first stage is *meditation*, in order to try to determine the origins and purpose of the illness. Meditation is, I believe, one of the most powerful practices for bringing a person into alignment with mission and disidentifying with ego. If I am badly out of alignment, I may well be attempting, through my prayer, to push myself further away from homeostasis.
2. Stage two, once I have gotten into alignment, in so far as I am able, is to *pray* for the outcome which, I think, is indicated.
3. Stage three is to *do* all in my power to facilitate the emergence of that outcome (e.g. activate resources via professionals, family and friends, as well as interior abilities like creative visualization and exterior behaviors like adequate sleep, diet and exercise etc).
4. Stage four is to *detach* and work with the outcome, even if I believe it to be merely a temporary outcome.
5. Stage five is to go back to *meditation* and try to fine-tune my alignment and thinking about the source and purpose of the illness, in the light of stages one through four.
6. Stage six is to consciously develop a *personal cosmology* that buoys me up and assures me that whatever the final outcome, I cannot fail, since I am a spirit in a spacesuit. My origin, my journey and my destination is about God.

Doing prayer research with subjects who practice such a method and who hold such a cosmology would, if we were using appropriate instruments (e.g. the Alignment Scale, of which I will speak later), yield very statistically significant results, I believe.

F). Models of “Successful” Prayer

How does one judge the "success" of a ballpoint pen? If I attempt to use it to clean my ears and then report that it failed to clean them, but rather has smudged my outer ear and pierced my eardrum - then the ballpoint pen could be judged a total failure. Except, of course, it was not designed or intended for that job. How about if I test its writing capacity instead?

We may have forced prayer to do things it was not intended to do, and then claimed it failed. Wouldn't it be better to see what prayer *actually* does and take it from there? Our operational definition of successful intercessory prayer is at the core of the problem. The scientist in us wants to define "successful prayer" as that which impacts a dependent variable in the desired direction; but the mystical literature always avers that "successful prayer" is that which aligns us with the ineffable ground of our being.

We may be forcing through a definition of success that is at variance with the purpose of the instrument. It is a modern-day version of the old "God indulges the prayers of holy people by changing His intended outcome" model. We are simply substituting the word "scientific" for the word "holy."

So we first need a model of how prayer works. I believe that prayer does NOT operate in any of the following manners:

1. It is NOT merely chatting about the inevitable i.e. it's not that "God," who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and eternal, knows what I am going to ask for and has already taken it into consideration and so my petitions are superfluous.

2. It is NOT a satellite-dish model, whereby I bounce my request off God and She redirects it to my intended target.
3. It is NOT an Abrahamic model, whereby I can bargain with God in the good, old-fashioned, middle-Eastern fashion (e.g. Genesis 18:23-32).
4. It is NOT a discover-the-trick model, in which, like Moses, in a battle against the Amalekites, I try to figure out what the secret is (e.g. Exodus 17:8-13).
5. Prayer is NOT a hose turned on selected subjects by an experimenter-directed process, but rather a pool of cosmic compassion into which anybody (even someone in the control group) is free to plunge. Hence, expectation and belief penetrate the artificial barriers of controlled, blinded studies. And we need to see expectation and belief as valuable allies rather than as contaminating, extraneous variables. "Blindly" constructed blinded, controlled studies may be part of the way in which we are failing to recognize how prayer really works. It may well be giving us lots of false negatives because the control group receives healing and obscures the healing received by the experimental group. Perhaps, instead, we may need to build expectation and beliefs into our methodologies.

Prayer may be more like a garden-sprinkler system, in which all the water comes from one source (whatever name we choose to give this source), and resides *within* the system, but whose flow may be impeded or facilitated by the state of the pipes (our intentionality).

Is successful prayer then miraculous? Does God really change cosmic laws to gratify faith? Or is the universe, perhaps, so much more complex that what passes for a miracle is merely the manifestation of its deeper recesses? And do the very laws governing evolution, themselves evolve - driven, perhaps, by consciousness (laserized through intention and amplified through the collective?)

II. Design Methodologies

A). Two Ways in Which Science Has Been Done

There have always been two ways of doing good science. The first way is to look at a bunch of data; try to identify some inherent pattern; formulate a hypothesis to explain the putative pattern; conduct an experiment to establish whether or not the hypothesis is correct; replicate the experiment, if it appears to be correct, in other laboratories; establish a principle or law; and then construct a model that can accommodate and explain all the data. This is a kind of "bottom-up" system. It is very powerful, though mistakes can enter in at any one of the stages.

The other way of doing good science is to start with an "aha experience," an insight; conduct a thought-experiment; and then set about looking for data that uphold the intuitive flash. Einstein, among others, was a master of this technique.

One method starts with pieces and finally constructs a model; the other method starts with a model and then casts about for the pieces ("I know they're around here somewhere!"). But whichever technique we favor, there is no gainsaying the fact that the two methods are inextricably interconnected. Even the most dyed-in-the-wool empiricist is operating out of presumed models which unconsciously bias his new searches; and even the most esoteric of thinkers has to learn to tie her shoelaces. Each of these two operates with some measure of *faith*. Kurt Gödel shocked the scientific community in 1931 by showing that any axiomatic system (even Pure Mathematics, the most rigorous of all the sciences), ipso facto, must contain at least one postulate which can neither be confirmed nor denied. Whether we like it or not, every scientific model is a house of cards. Add to that the realization that all formulas, all equations and all models are, at best, approximations of the phenomenological world, and it well behooves us to walk with humility. Science has put its foot in its mouth almost as frequently as has organized religion.

Failure to dream outside the box in both our intuitive models and our empirical methodologies will, inevitably, lead to stagnation. The dogma of science is no less stultifying than the dogma of religion.

I believe that we have been rather lax in our application of Validity. Validity is meant to ensure that we are really measuring what we claim to be measuring. If I step on a weighing machine and watch it climb to 183, and then believe it shows that I am six feet tall - I have mistaken pounds for centimeters and weight for height.

By the same token we are in danger of merely measuring associated features when we think we are measuring the "thing in itself." For instance, EEG equipment can show when I am dreaming, but it can say nothing about the content of my dream. Similarly, blood pressure levels, respiration rate, and heart rate may say something about the physiological correlates of meditation but can say nothing of the subjective spiritual experience of the meditator.

I believe that we may, in the past, have been primarily concerned with the correlates of meditation, of prayer and of intentionality - and mistaken the results for evidence of the Holy Grail.

B). A New Way of Doing Science

Is it time for a different kind of science, what Ken Wilber calls "Deep Science?" In essence, all true science consists basically of just three parts:

1. An injunction
2. An apprehension, and
3. A confirmation/falsification.

For example, if I want to establish scientifically how many legs a flea has, I must firstly look at the flea (the injunction); secondly, I must count the legs (the apprehension); and then, thirdly, subject my findings to a test, by comparing my results with those of other researchers who have gone through the same process (the confirmation/falsification).

Or if my research is in the mental domain rather than in the physical domain and I wish to solve a quadratic equation (e.g. $ax^2+bx+c=0$), then I go through the same three steps. First I slot the values of a, b and c into the formula (the injunction); then I calculate my answer (the apprehension); and, finally, I compare my result with those of others who have solved the same equation (confirmation/falsification)..

And if my research is not in the physical nor mental realms but in the spiritual, I follow the same three steps. Over five millennia of practice has suggested what kinds of injunctions give what kinds of results, and these have been compared across spiritualities. This is exactly the same type of deep science we use in physical and psychological research.

Moreover, there are new techniques (such as Organic Inquiry, which comes out of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto) that make the outrageous claim that research should also be about *transformation*, and not merely about *information*. What if they are right?

Perhaps, we need the courage to have a two-pronged approach: intuitively creating models which we can subsequently test, in order to give us the data; while, at the same time, garnering data which will lead to the creating of new models.

C). A Theory of Change

Any research that attempts to influence a dependent variable has to begin with a theory of

change. What constitutes "movement"? The spiritual literature is replete with such information. For example, in Christian mystical writings, it is held that the seeker, through prayer and meditation, moves through four distinct stages of development - the Purgative (in which one is conscious of one's own inadequacies), the Illuminative (in which one is more concerned with God's beauty than one's own sin), the Dark-night-of-the-soul (in which God seems to have vanished in spite of one's best efforts to live a holy life) and, finally, the Unitive stage (in which one merges with God).

Our research needs an adequate theory of change before we can meaningfully engage in rewarding experimentation. We would be well served by culling the great mystical literature (as distinct from the divisive, sectarian, dogmatic theologies) for such models. These are the experiential experts, and there is an extraordinary agreement among them, over several millennia, and across all spiritual traditions.

I am convinced that an instrument could be constructed, based on the distillation of these mystical traditions, which would be a far more suitable measure of the effectiveness of prayer. As a temporary name, I will call such an instrument "The Alignment Scale." Physiological and psychological improvement may, sometimes, be correlates of movement along this scale, but they are not core to it. I would predict that whereas prayer may or may not positively affect physical or emotional scales, it will ALWAYS positively affect the Alignment Scale.

D. The Alignment Scale

A first stab at creating an Alignment Scale might look like the following (a simple Likert measure could be used for each section of each question):

+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Definitely True	Slightly True	Not Sure	Slightly Untrue	Definitely Untrue

1. Irrespective of circumstances, I *increasingly* feel at peace with:

- My body
- My emotions
- My mind
- My core self
- My relationships
- My "God"
- My work
- My life

2. I *increasingly* try to live my life with mindfulness for:

- The planet
- All life forms.
- Future generations

3. I *increasingly* have experiences of being connected to the whole universe.

4. I *increasingly* experience life as purposeful rather than as a series of accidents.

5. I *increasingly* find it easier to forgive:

- Myself
- Others
- "God"

6. *Increasingly* I am able to accept illness as a part of life
 - a. My illnesses
 - b. The illnesses of others

7. I *increasingly* feel compassion for

- a. Myself
- b. Others
- c. All life forms

8. *Increasingly* I am able to directly experience life rather than to need to understand it and explain it.

9. I spend *more time* now than I used to in:

- a. Prayer
- b. Meditation

10. *Increasingly* I believe that the purpose of prayer and meditation is NOT to bend "God" to my will, but to bring myself into alignment with "Him"

11. I am *less and less* disturbed by the notion of death

- a. Mine
- b. Others'

E. Descriptors

I want to suggest that, in prayer research, there may be (at least) two kinds of useful descriptors, namely demographics and belief systems.

1. Demographics - the following is a partial list of factors that may correlate with outcomes of prayer intervention:

- a. Age.
- b. Gender.
- c. Educational level.
- d. Ethnicity.
- e. Spiritual orientation (Jew, Christian, Muslim etc).
- f. Frequency of formal worship.
- g. Marital status.
- h. Does the subject have children, and if so, how many.
- i. Employed, and if so, occupation.
- j. Family income level.
- k. Stress level of life and work.
- l. Ability to manage stress.
- m. Recent trauma.
- n. Birth order, and number of children in family of origin.

2. Belief System

The following three items may correlate with the outcomes of a prayer intervention:

a. Do you believe in the power of "prayer for others"?

Yes, No, No Opinion.

b. Where do you believe God acts in your life?

Inside, Outside, Both, Neither, No Opinion.

(In my own research, both of these items, administered at pre-test, correlated very significantly with improvement).

c. Do you believe you were in the experimental (prayed-for) group or not?

Yes, No, No Opinion.

(In my own research, this item, administered at post-test, correlated very significantly with improvement - though it may, merely, have been a kind of "retroactive prognosticator.")

From the models of Spirituality, of the Human Person, of the Body, of Illness, of Healing, and of "Successful Prayer," which I outlined in Section One, a large group of questions, could easily be constructed and scaled e.g. a five-point Likert:

- 2 -1 0 +1 +2

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, No Opinion, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree.

F. Near Outcomes and Far Outcomes in Research

Now I want to distinguish between Near-Term and Far-Term outcomes, and between what I will call Core issues (having to do with Alignment outcomes) and Correlated issues (having to do with physiological and psychological outcomes). Most simply this can be done in a 2x2 matrix:

Table 1. Near Outcomes and Far Outcomes in Research

	Correlated Issues	Core Issues
Near-Term Outcomes	1. TV Evangelism	3. Mainstream Religion
Far-Term Outcomes	2. Mainstream Science	4. Mysticism

1. Near-term correlated issues are the domain of TV Evangelism e.g. did the "cripple" walk away without the wheel-chair? TV Evangelists insist on big, near-term outcomes. These make the headlines and "prove" that prayer "works."

2. Far-term correlated issues are central to Mainstream Science. It still hasn't grasped that physiology and psychology are not of the essence of the human being and insists on repeated, long-term measuring of these factors as the only indicators of a successful intervention.

3. Near-term core issues are the specialty of Mainstream Religion. These outcomes will be directly due to the intervention and be immediately obvious e.g. a person may report that she spent 15 minutes of quiet time each day for a month or that he gained a greater knowledge of a scriptural tradition.

4. Far-term core issues bring us into the heart of Mysticism. People in this place may say they have experienced a whole new level of inner peace, or made significant lifestyle changes, or acquired a higher degree of understanding of life's purpose. I believe that the most important of the far-outcome core-issue measures will be progress on the Alignment Scale.

However, more cosmologically-sophisticated models, ranging from that of Plotinus (in the 2nd. century C.E). to that of Ken Wilber (a contemporary philosopher), could easily be rendered "scaleable" and, also, be used as measures of far-outcome core-issues, since they all have one thing in common - they provide empirical, testable stages for a theory of change as a result of engaging in prayer or meditation (or other spiritual practices).

Far-term core-issue outcomes tend to be more subjective but they may be no less important for all that. Remember the famous study to find what were the best prognosticators of a first heart attack? The experimenters were sure it would be obesity, smoking, lack of exercise, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It proved to be none of the above but rather two very subjective measures - satisfaction in work, and with life.

One Important Contrast: "Interventionist" petitionary prayer *by others* will, I believe, affect the near-term core-issue *and* near-term correlated-issue outcomes for the targeted subjects, while a practice of prayer or meditation *by the subject* is more likely to result in far-term core-issue outcomes. In my own research those who prayed for others experienced more dramatic improvement, on all dependent variables, than those for whom they were praying. This distinction can easily be measured by follow-on post-testing at one month, three months, six months and one year intervals.

G. Following the Lead

Rather than force prayer to do our bidding (rather like using the ballpoint pen to clean one's ears), why not see what prayer does, left to its own devices? This may reveal its real strength rather than insist it be tested for a purpose for which it was not built and then pronounced a failure.

So how would it be if, during the pre-testing, the experimenter were to ask the recipient what he hopes will happen during the study - or, more manageably, to name three outcomes she would most like to have impacted by the received prayer? These idiosyncratic needs will then cluster, across subjects, and so could be measured on Likert scales, and correlated with outcome measures.

Moreover, it might be very informative to have the subjects keep a log during the study in which they record any changes they deem important in their physiology, psyche, relationships, creativity, spirituality etc. In the manner of the "provings" of homeopathy, the intersection set of such changes may be a very accurate description of what prayer really does well.

By perusing (a) the clusters of stated hoped-for results, (b) the subjects' logs,

(c) the demographics, and (d) the belief systems, it will become obvious which factors influence the outcomes. Thus the outcomes "hatch" themselves. This will allow the development of "Maturity models" i.e. models that can flush out and flesh out entire contexts and stages and mechanisms, and help determine what impacts a recipient's ability to benefit from the prayer.

The variables of implementation and effect are, then, of paramount importance. In particular:

1. Accurate measurement of the *frequency* and *duration* of the prayer. Did they pray each day for the specified amount of time?
2. Some measure of the *quality* of the prayer - perhaps two Likert scales at the end of each prayer period to assess the *mindfulness* of the session and its *intensity*.
3. A measurement of the *effects* of the prayer - the families of variables and contexts that were reported.
4. In particular measuring the "*Alignment Factor*" will be vital.

I wrote earlier of the mystical stages of the spiritual journey with its theophanies. It seems appropriate to run a set of studies to distinguish between those who do/don't have these experiences. This, at once, allows validity to be established and also captures a baseline for the field. Furthermore it can be used in such a way that each subject becomes his own control. So it becomes both a between-group and within-group measure.

Conclusion

I remember, as a young boy, watching Ireland's "Telefís Scoile" (School Television) and seeing a physics teacher with a group of 10-year-olds. He had a very simple apparatus that consisted of a glass beaker three quarters full of water, with a long pencil lolling inside and resting against the top rim. He asked the kids *"What do you see here?"* All hands shot up and a chorus of voices begged to be chosen to answer. He picked one, and the child said *"I see a jug of water with a bent pencil in it!"* The teacher took the pencil out, and, of course, it was a straight pencil. The kids all laughed. The teacher said *"I want to teach a very important lesson today - the pencil only appears to be bent because water and air refract light differently."* He then asked them to leave the lab and promised to call them back within five minutes. When they came back they found the same equipment in the very same configuration. Again the teacher asked *"What do you see here?"* Again the enthusiastic response of hands. He chose a different child who proudly announced *"I see a pencil lying inside a beaker of water and it seems to be bent but it's not. It's only because water refracts light in a different way from how air does!"* And he sat down very pleased with himself. Then the teacher took the pencil out of the water - and it WAS bent! In between sessions, he had broken the pencil at the waterline. The kids howled in delight. And I, watching at home, made a very important discovery that day. I realized that there are three different kinds of people in our world - those who see what *appears* to be, those who see what they *expect* to see and, finally, those who see what really *is*.

Scientism has seen what appears to be; sectarian religion has seen what it expected to see; now is the time to bring on the mysticists - those who have the courage to see what really is.

A version of this paper was presented at the Science and Spirituality of Healing conference, Home Moravian Church, Old Salem, NC October 26-29, 2000.

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P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099
Phone (609) 714-1885 - Fax (609) 714-3553

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