

The Sacramental Life: Towards an Integrated Christian Vision

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Abstract

Within mainline Evangelical churches the doctrine of holiness is most commonly explicated in terms of the ongoing sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. But to many a contemporary mind the language of 'spirit' belongs to an out-dated metaphysical framework of supernaturalism that sets God over against the world, spirit over against matter and soul over against body. It is this supernaturalistic framework that makes it difficult for many contemporary believers to make sense of the traditional holiness language and teaching. By drawing on the type of evolutionary Christology outlined by Karl Rahner and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, I will attempt in this paper to reorient the discussion on holiness by shifting attention away from the traditional model and language of 'spirit' in order to explore a more integrated and holistic vision in which holiness is understood as living the sacramental life.

Introduction

Modernity has bequeathed to the west a world largely divested of the sacred. With the rise of science and technology human kind has found itself in less and less need of a God 'out there.' Even for the faithful living against the grain, religion has largely been marginalised and privatised with many Christians living their lives between two worlds, the sacred and the secular, the world of the body and the world of the spirit.

As Grace Jantzen highlighted a generation ago now,¹ western theological discourse has for the most part been stuck supporting a destructive binary logic that sets God over against the world and the material over against the spiritual. At the end of one era and the beginning of another,² I, like a growing number of Christians are caught on the horns of a dilemma; on the one hand wanting to reject a reductive materialism, but to do so find ourselves reinforcing its binary opposite - a supernaturalism that has little currency in a 21st century scientific western world. This has left us at odds with the very reality that does have currency in the 21st century scientific western world—the material world and our lived life in a physical universe.

This is none more evident than in my own tradition where the doctrine of holiness is emphasised and explicated in terms of the ongoing sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit within the believer's life.³ The problem here is not with the doctrine as such but with the metaphysical framework of supernaturalism that informs the traditional language of "spirit". This has only served to reinforce the God-world, spirit-matter and/or soul-body dualism that has characterised much of western theology.

Now while it is certainly not my intention to jettison the language of spirit from a discourse on holiness, a criticism that no doubt will be levelled at me, I do want to disrupt the traditional discourse around holiness by exploring the implications of an alternative and complimentary model informing our understanding of the same. What is the traditional way of understanding that I wish to disrupt? Teilhard de Chardin spells it out much more clearly than I could in the following quote:

Speaking in general terms we may say that until quite recent times, and in the West, mysticism has never doubted but that God must be looked for only 'in heaven', that is to say in more or less direct and profound discontinuity with 'here below'. To be spiritualised = to be de-materialised. Such was (and such, in a static Cosmos, had to be) the basic equation that expresses Holiness.⁴

My hope then is to recover⁵ an expanded vision of the holy life rather than a restricted one. If holiness is to regain the ability to capture the imagination and intellect of western Christians then the model informing our practice needs to take the material world seriously and the substantial dualism of a model that pits body against spirit needs to be overcome/transcended.

In recent times there have been creative and productive attempts by theologians to go beyond the well-worn theological paths and in the process expand our theological vision. Joel Green has presented his kaleidoscopic view of the atonement⁶ as a way of broadening the debate beyond any one single model of the atonement. Sallie McFague and other feminist writers have encouraged Christians to move beyond the traditional theological patterns of thinking and speaking about God⁷ in the hope that we might break free of the dominant paternalism tied to traditional theological models. In turning to the topic of holiness I too hope to encourage Evangelical Christians to break free of the well worn theological paths in the hope that revisiting alternative ways of thinking about holiness might breathe new life into Christian faith and practice.

I might best describe the position taken in this paper as a Christocentric approach to holiness rather than a Spirit-centred one. Now one should not read this as an attempt on my part to replace the later with the former. Rather, in a quite legitimate Wesleyan move I have taken seriously the Eastern orthodox emphasis on the Incarnation as a resource that will enrich our understanding of what it means to live the holy life.

In this paper I will seek to reorient the discussion on holiness around a more generalised sacramentality with particular reference to the evolutionary Christology of the type outlined by Karl Rahner and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. In this evolutionary model the divine is at the very centre of material reality and does not enter our reality from outside. Within this framework, awareness of the unfolding of the divine at the centre of life becomes the practical work of the Christian. Life itself takes on a sacramental quality. Holiness then is understood in terms of living the sacramental life. Integration at the conceptual as well as the practical level becomes possible with profound implications for living our life in the world.

A Pastoral Context

Just as Paul Tillich was critical of much of the theology of his day because it seemingly addressed the questions nobody was asking, we who call ourselves theologians need to be constantly on our guard lest the same criticism is levelled at us. This was a vital concern for the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner who believed that theology should develop in response to the questions people are asking. Pastoral theology especially has the task of bringing theology down to earth.⁸

I have to acknowledge at this point something of the autobiographical nature of this paper. It in fact represents a response to my existential questioning as a result of my experience of alienation throughout my life within the context of the church. My experience as a child and then as a teenager was one of living a fundamentally divided life. I lived my life between two realities - the world of church and family and the world of school and work. I valued the world that nurtured my "spiritual" needs and was completely ambivalent about the other areas of my life.

Quite early on in my Christian experience I recognised that the traditional language of holiness, of the infilling and sanctifying work of the spirit within my soul did not help to overcome my sense of alienation but rather actually reinforced it. At this stage in my experience I had no conceptual tools to deal with my cognitive and existential dissonance. This would come much later.

In his book *Small is Beautiful*, E. F. Schumacher argues that many of our contemporary problems are related to the failure of metaphysics.⁹ These are the big ideas that guide our reasoning and our praxis. These are literally the ideas through which we think and by which we live. What I have come to be convinced of is that the problem needing to be addressed is the alienating metaphysics that has until recently informed my conceptual world, the lens through which I interpreted my life in the world.

It was in the deep world and life affirming sacramental theology of Karl Rahner and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin that I would eventually find a metaphysics and a language that was able, to a much greater degree than ever before, to overcome my alienation both conceptually and existentially. This for me is a significant point given that my own tradition was not well equipped to respond to my quest. The sacramental thinking in my own tradition had been a source of division and disagreement with the emphasis being on why we did not practice the sacraments rather than on developing an adequate sacramentality based on sound theological principles.

The question that has exercised me for some time now and the one that I am endeavouring to respond to is this: "Could it be that a recovery of a deep sacramental theology might help us in the Evangelical tradition to overcome the tendency we have to compartmentalise our lives and to challenge our commitment to an unhealthy binary system in which one binary symbol is emphasised at the expense of the other. For example, transcendence over against immanence, God over against the world, soul over against body and the divine over against the human in Christ. John Macquarrie certainly thinks that the

sacramental principle is one very important way of maintaining a balance.¹⁰ Dare I suggest that a deep sacramental theology may aid in healing our alienation and help us in living out an integrated Christian vision? Further, could a rethinking of our sacramental theology actually precipitate the rehabilitation of our doctrine of holiness?

The Sacramental Life – Where to Begin?

In a not particularly Evangelical move I will begin my explication of the sacramental life with the notion of our being part of a sacramental universe. Macquarrie certainly follows this pattern in his *Guide to the Sacraments*.¹¹ He begins his exposition of the Sacraments with a chapter entitled 'A Sacramental Universe' and here he identifies that

perhaps the goal of all sacramentality and sacramental theology is to make the things of this world so transparent that in them and through them we know God's presence and activity in our very midst, and so experience his grace.¹²

Genesis 1 first presents the credentials for the claim of a sacramental universe in its opening statement 'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth ... and God saw that it was good.' Paul Collins refers to the universe as the primary sacrament of God¹³ and Jürgen Moltmann speaks of the universe as destined to become the icon of God.¹⁴ Such is the importance and sacramental status of the world that, according to Thomas Berry, without a beautiful world belief in God becomes less possible.¹⁵

To speak of the world as a sacrament counters all the views that at worst, treat the world as evil, and at best, treat it as an encumbrance to all things spiritual. The Psalms in particular witness to the fact that nature is a reliable source of God's revelation. While in the early part of the twentieth century Karl Barth's stress on the transcendence of God and his rejection of natural theology is to be understood as a corrective to the excesses of the liberal theologians' stress on the immanence of God, we find ourselves again in need of recovering the depth dimension or immanence of God in the world. Evangelicals in particular need to recover the notion of a sacramental universe.

Unpacking the Definition of the term 'Sacrament'

Duns Scotus defined a sacrament as 'a physical sign, instituted by God, which efficaciously signifies the grace of God, or the gracious action of God'. The definition of sacrament as outlined in the Book of Common Prayer is this: "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." According to these definitions a sacrament links the two worlds in which we have to live, or the dualities under which the one world keeps appearing.¹⁶ The sacrament links outward and inward, physical and spiritual. Macquarrie makes the important point that these dual aspects while distinguishable, and sometimes even at variance, are not separable.¹⁷

This is a particularly important point to consider given that in some Christian contexts, my own included, 'sign' has often been interpreted as merely 'a pointer to.' When we interpret

sacrament in this way the outward sign then becomes unnecessary to the mediation and experience of Grace. However as Maquarrie emphasises, the sacrament is that which unites (links) the outward sign and inward grace. As we will see below this is particularly important if the Incarnation is to be central to a generalised sacramentality. According to Christian teaching the Incarnation provides us with the clearest model of sacramentality. It is in the humanity of Christ that we have the outward and visible sign of the inward divine life of grace. In Christ we have a profound sacramental reality.

Now the Church has always been careful to protect the real connection (union) between the humanity and the divinity of Christ, between the outward and visible sign and the inner divine reality. The technical term for this connection is the hypostatic union. What this means in the case of Christ is that the outward and visible sign (the humanity of Christ) not only stands for or points beyond itself to another (divine) reality, but it is united with or linked to that reality in such a way that it actually **is** the mediator of grace to the world.

Karl Rahner provides a beautiful analogy from everyday experience to explain the importance of a real connection between a sign (the outward manifestation) and that which is signified (the inward reality). Rahner offers the kiss or the handshake as examples of the outward signs of love. It would make very little sense for us to think of love without its physical or 'outward' manifestations or signs. We show love (an inner disposition) by way of physical signs (outer manifestation). Psychologists have conclusively shown that without human touch infants simply do not develop properly and may even die. It would be no defence for a parent up on a charge of neglect to say that although they offered no physical signs to their child they nevertheless really loved them. It would also be a most unsatisfactory situation if one of the partners in a marriage were to suggest to their spouse that henceforth the marriage would be conducted on a purely 'platonic' or 'spiritual' plain without the diversions of physical signs. Here I am not just referring to the sexual union of husband and wife, but rather the entire range of physical signs of love and affection. Few would seriously consider this to be an acceptable course of action, yet it is sometimes imagined that when it comes to divine reality the outward sign is unnecessary for the mediation of this reality. It is only when we loose sight of the Incarnation as our model for sacramentality that we can fall into the trap of thinking that a real connection between the outward and visible sign of inward divine grace is not important. To do so, however, is to sever the connection between the human and divine in Christ and to call into question the very act of Incarnation itself.

In the debate over the sacraments there are those who do reject the notion of a real connection between the outward and visible sign and the inner grace that is signified in the Lord's Supper. This in fact was the position of the Reformer Huldrych Zwingli who believed that sacraments were nothing more than memorials and so no real means of grace. He did not believe that the Real Presence of Christ was in the sacrament. The other Reformers rejected this view and retained the more traditional understanding of Christ being in some sense 'really present' in the act of communion. Those come close to the view of Zwingli who make the claim that outward signs are no more than pointers to grace. Indeed this distinction

has sometimes been emphasised to the point where one is encouraged to focus on some purely 'inward' or 'spiritual' experience of grace without the outward sign or symbol being necessary.

But Christians of an orthodox stripe simply cannot make such a claim without falling into the not so uncommon dualistic heresy of docetism. Docetism was an early belief that Jesus was purely spiritual in his manifestation and only appeared to be a real human being. Some Christians, and dare I here include my own tradition, have at times come close to this view when it is imagined that spirituality is some reality divorced from its historical and physical instantiation. This has for some become the rationale for not practicing the traditional sacramental rites. We can experience the inner grace, so the logic goes, without the need of any outward sign. Again, to reach such a conclusion is to lose sight of the Incarnation as the basis of our deep sacramental view. If we accept the truth of the Incarnation then we cannot but be a sacramental people in the very deep sense of the term. That is, grace is mediated through its outward manifestations or signs.

Within orthodox Christianity we get a glimpse of how certain physical signs can be mediators of grace. But what if our entire universe of signs was being directed toward a sacramental end? What if it were true that human endeavour could be seen to cooperate to complete the world in Christ Jesus? What if not only our passivities but also our activities could be seen as being part of the divinisation of the world?

The Organic Sacramentality of Karl Rahner and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

In the evolutionary Christology of Karl Rahner and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin the Incarnation is central to understanding a more generalised sacramentality in which Creation and Incarnation are seen as moments in the one process of the coming to be of the world in *Christo Jesu*. The term given to this process by Teilhard is Christogenesis. This understanding of Incarnation and creation is particularly significant given that during the 20th century a good many theologians were at best ambivalent to the view that creation is in any sense a true sacrament. McKinlay highlights the fact that while Karl Barth affirmed baptism and Eucharist, he was sceptical of a generalised sacramentality.¹⁸ Consider the following quote from Barth:

And was it a wise action on the part of the church when it ceased to recognise in the incarnation....the one and only sacrament, fulfilled once and for all, by whose actuality it lives as the one form of the one body of its Head, as the earthly-historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ in the time between His ascension and return?¹⁹

By correlating Christology with an evolutionary worldview, Rahner and Teilhard place the incarnation at the centre of God's creative impulse. Incarnation is then to be understood not as a unique supernatural event in the history of the world but is both precursor and goal of all creation - the divinisation of the world. With this approach the world takes on a much more

important status. It is not just a stop on our journey to heaven; it is not a place to be escaped. Rather it is our home and with us is destined to become the icon of God.

Quite early in his reflections Teilhard settled on a term to describe the way he had come to see reality. He speaks of the *Divine Milieu* by which he means both the divine centre which animates and has the power to unite all things *and* an environment of transformation. “God reveals himself everywhere, beneath our groping efforts, as a *universal milieu*, only because he is the *ultimate point* upon which all realities converge”.²⁰ According to Ursula King, one can think of it (the divine milieu) as a field of divine energy that has one central focus—God—from which everything flows, is animated and is directed.²¹ King goes on to explain:

For Teilhard the idea of the “divine milieu” was particularly important in capturing the universal influence of Christ through God’s incarnation in the world, in its matter, life and energy—an extended, cosmic understanding of the incarnations that far transcended the historical limitations of time and place associated with the person of Jesus.²²

Of course Teilhard was concerned about the pastoral implications of his mystic vision of the world as a divine milieu. Teilhard wanted to help Christians see that their action in the world can indeed be sanctified and that human endeavour is important in relation to God. He was unhappy with the traditional solutions to holiness and perfection that led people in the direction of seeking an escape from the material world and the denying of the importance of anything other than “spiritual” endeavours. In a divine milieu the divinisation of our activities and the divinisation of our passivities “represent a continuous process of transformation whereby we can find communion with God in the world.”²³

Is it then possible to believe that our entire lived reality can be the site or locus of God’s overflowing grace. Paul refers to believers as being ‘in Christ’²⁴ and Peter speaks of our participation in the divine life.²⁵ Our embodied life ‘in Christ’ **is** the sign of God’s grace by virtue of our union with Christ our living sacrament. We, as the corporate body of Christ, the church, and we, as members of that body, are the outward sign of the divine life and energies within us. We are a sacrament! The Real Presence of Christ is lived in and through us in both our activities and our passivities.

Participating in the Sacramental Life

Now that I have outlined what I mean by ‘the sacramental life’, I now need to say something about what this looks like in practical terms. For my purposes I would like to explore the contours of the sacramental life under the following headings.

Seeing

Living the sacramental life is as much about learning to see rightly. While it may be true according to Rahner and Teilhard that the world is destined for completion in Christ, this truth alone is not a sufficient condition for living the sacramental life or Life with a capital L. There needs to be a conscious participation in the divine reality at the corporate and individual level. Living the sacramental life does not happen automatically. As the Wesleyan scholar Randy Maddox has captured in the title of his book *Responsible Grace*, our relationship with God is to be thought of in terms of both grace and responsibility. In our ongoing experience of redemption there is God’s part and there is our part. Our part is corporately and individually to appropriate the grace that informs our life. Without corporate and individual discipline the sacramental remains only at the level of potential and we live life with a small l. It is discipline that helps train our vision so that we can learn to ‘see’ the sacramental reality before us. Our life, our activities our multifarious being in the world can be truly sacramental but only to the degree that we learn to ‘see’ things in a sacramental way. The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning had learned to see things this way. She expressed it beautifully in the following lines:

Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.²⁶

Consider also the vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin:

Throughout my whole life, during every moment I have lived, the world has gradually been taking on light and fire for me, until it has come to envelop me in one mass of luminosity, glowing from within ...The purple flush of matter fading imperceptibly into the gold of spirit, to be lost finally in the incandescence of a personal universe...This is what I have learnt from my contact with the earth—the diaphany of the divine at the heart of a glowing universe, the divine radiating from the depths of matter a-flame.²⁷

This profound vision, this way of seeing must be cultivated and we must train ourselves and our people to see the presence of God in the world and in the people around us. I believe that the term ‘mindfulness’ best captures the discipline by which we train our vision so that we can truly live and experience the sacramental life. I am well aware that this is a term traditionally used in Buddhist philosophy and practice; however I see no reason why as Christians we should not appropriate it for our own purposes. I could just as easily have used the term

awareness. Whatever language we choose to use we certainly need to become more intentional, more mindful, as we train our vision as Sacramental people.

Let me reiterate, we live the sacramental life when we come to **see** that everything we do is a potential sign of God's inward grace. Notice the way I have qualified the statement through the use of 'potential.' As stated earlier there is nothing automatic about the sacramental life and without intention much of what we do remains in the realm of possibility and does not live up to the idea of being sacramental in any real sense.

If the various outward signs, words and actions are the channels through which we access grace, intention must be the key. Without intention signs at best are dead signs. Without intention words are mere sounds, actions – activity without significance. Intention is what helps us to awaken openness to transcendence-in-immanence.

The sharing of a meal at the family table can be a true sacrament, a true 'breaking of bread' or it can be simply individuals meeting their basest needs. Our work can be a sacrament if it is seen in the right way or else it becomes nothing more than an encumbrance to our more 'spiritual' pursuits. It is important to realise that there is nothing automatic about living a sacramental life. Without intention there can only be for us an unrealised or impoverished existence.

Doing and Acting

However, for the person trained to see their life as a sign of God's grace, there is no limit to what can become a sacrament and means of grace for us. As a faithful Anglican, Wesley encouraged his people to seek God's grace through the various outward signs, words and actions that God had ordained as 'ordinary' channels for conveying saving grace to humanity.²⁸ These included both corporate and individual practices like the Lord's Supper, corporate worship, prayer, communal support, mutual accountability, private exercises, and works of mercy. There is a certain pre-eminence given to traditional means of grace that have sustained the Church throughout the centuries, and this is only right and proper. However, there is nothing stopping us from moving beyond these traditional means to incorporate other outward signs, words or actions.

If, as I have been arguing, our entire life can become the locus of God's gracious unfolding activity in our lives, I see no reason why, in addition to the traditional means of grace, we should exclude any practice as a possible means of grace. That is, if we have trained ourselves to see our actions in such a way. Given my rejection of our tendency to dualise, I pose the following question. What would it be like if not just our 'spiritual' life but our entire bodied life was included in our sacramental vision and our so-called 'ordinary' actions became the means of grace?

Let me suggest a number of very, dare I refer to them as 'ordinary' activities that may become sacramental when approached in the appropriate way. Take the common activity of walking. I have no doubt that Henry David Thoreau understood walking to be a sacramental activity. He wrote much about this activity and if you read his accounts you get the impression

that he was very aware of informing grace as he went for his many long walks. I too can testify that I also find the act of walking a sacramental activity. Here is a quote from Thoreau about walking:

I think I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them,—as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon,—I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago.²⁹

Consider the following list of everyday activities that may also become sacramental activities if seen in the right light:

Walking³⁰
Taking Tea
Reading
Gardening
Driving
Listening to Music
Shopping
Working
Making Love
Sleeping³¹

Being

I represent a tradition of activists and so probably do not have difficulty conceiving of our actions as means of grace and therefore as having sacramental significance. However, we should also consider the possibility that being is also a means of grace and therefore has the potential to have great sacramental significance. Let it be said though that Being is always qualified being. We are embodied beings so it is always being-with, or being-for, or even being-there for another. There may be no words spoken or any obvious actions performed. It may simply be the case that we are present for another person. You may have heard the story of the little girl who was expressing her fear of the dark to her father and her desire that he stay with her while she fell asleep. Don't be afraid, said the father to his little girl, God is with you. I know that, said the little girl, but I need someone with skin on. Most of us know that God is with us but like the little girl find comfort in the presence of someone 'with skin on.'

In the context of a discussion on the practices of the Church in the book *Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition*, Nancey Murphy identifies witness as an enduring practice of the church and identifies the virtue of 'presence' as being necessary for the practice of witness.³² Our being present for the other can, I believe, be a means of grace. By being present for another, we can be the sacrament given for and on behalf of Christ who is living in and through us. Consider the following quote referred to in the book from James McClendon:

Presence is being one's self for someone else; it is refusing the temptation to withdraw mentally and emotionally, but it is also on occasion putting our own body's weight and shape, alongside the neighbour, the friend, the lover in need.

...

But is presence, even in this extended sense, really a virtue, or is it like left-handedness or curiosity, merely somebody's quality or distinguishing feature? Earlier in this chapter [of ethics] the black church was set forth as displaying the quality of presence. When black slaves had no other earthly resource, they knew how to be present to and for one another, and knew that Another was present for them as well...To characterise this presence as a virtue is to say that it is a strength or skill, developed by training and practice, which is a substantive part of (the Christian) life....³³

Conclusion

Might it be possible that by reorienting the discussion on holiness around a more generalised sacramentality, a new generation of Evangelical Christians unmoved by the traditional language of holiness, might find a new way of understanding and experiencing what the traditional notions of holiness have always set out to help the believer know and experience - a deeper communion with God. The deep sacramental theology of Karl Rahner and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin provide resources for understanding our sacramental reality and potential life in God. Our lives are tied to the unfolding life of Christ at the centre of the universe. In this vision the spiritual and material aspects of our life work together in the process of Christogenesis – the rise within us of the forces of communion leading to the completion of the world in Christ.

Within this framework, awareness of the unfolding of the divine at the centre of life becomes the practical work of the Christian. Life itself takes on a sacramental quality. Holiness then is understood in terms of living the sacramental life. Integration at the conceptual as well as the practical level becomes possible with profound implications for living our life in the world. Let me finish my paper with a quote from a homily given by Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in 1997,

... everything that lives and breathes is sacred and beautiful in the eyes of God.

The whole world is a sacrament. The entire created cosmos is a burning bush of God's uncreated energies. And humankind stands as a priest before the altar

of creation, as microcosm and mediator... All things are sacramental when seen in the light of God. Such is the true nature of things; or, as an Orthodox hymn describes it, "the truth of things," if only we have the eyes of faith to see it.

Notes

¹ Grace M. Jantzen, "Healing our Brokenness: The Spirit and Creation," *The Ecumenical Review* 42 (1990): 131-142.

² According to John B Cobb Jr., we are living at the end of an era. If you agree with Cobb then we stand at beginning of a new era. If Cobb and others are right then we are the inbetweeners. Having been formed in one particular era yet at the same seeking new possibilities for the present and the future.

³ I grew up in Australia during the seventies as a member of The Salvation Army, and while in recent years there has been a recovery of the Wesleyan emphases within our movement, it was other theological ideas dominant at the time that would inform my youthful mind. On the one hand there was a strong reformed theological strand that emphasised our sinful nature and the gulf that exists between us and God prior to conversion, while on the other hand the charismatic movement was exerting its own influence on our movement, highlighting the baptism of the spirit and reinforcing a view common to the holiness movements - the need of a second work of grace. The net effect of these ideas was a reinforcement of the notion of an interventionist God and a relative valuing of the spiritual over material reality.

⁴ Teilhard De Chardin, *The Heart of Matter* (London: Collins, 1978), 45.

⁵ I use the word recover here because what I am outlining is not new but rather is a recovery of an important school of thought found in mystical Christianity throughout the centuries.

⁶ James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds. *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Downers Grove, ILL: IVP Academic, 2006).

⁷ Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1987).

⁸ Robert Banks, *All the Business of Life: Bringing Theology Down to Earth* (Sydney: Albatross Books, 1987).

⁹ E.F.Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), 60-80.

¹⁰ John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, (London: SCM Press, 1997), 4.

¹¹ John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*.

¹² *ibid.*, 1.

¹³ *Compass: God's Earth*, Television Program, ABC Television, Melbourne, 1998.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Brian McKinlay, *The Meaning of Sacrament and its Links with Creation and Incarnation*

<http://nottoomuch.com/essays/e2123.pdf>

¹⁹ *Church Dogmatics: Vol IV, The Doctrine of Reconciliation – Part 2.* / Karl Barth. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 55.

²⁰ Teilhard De Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 85.

²¹ Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 110.

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*, 113.

²⁴ Paul uses this phrase 27 times

²⁵ 2 Peter 1:4

²⁶ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, Book 7.

²⁷ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Millieu*, xiii-xiv

²⁸ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, (Nashville, Tennessee, Kingswood Books, 1994), 193.

²⁹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Other Writings* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 629.

³⁰ See the book by retired Australian Anglican Priest Adam Ford, *The Art of Mindful Walking* (Sydney: Ivy Press Limited, 2011).

³¹ See what Robert Banks has to say about our need for a theology of sleep in Robert Banks, *All the Business of Life: Bringing Theology Down to Earth* (Sydney: Albatross Books, 1987), 9-10, 72-73.

³² Nancey Murphey, Brad J. Kallenberg & Mark Thiessen Nation (eds.), *Virtues & Practices in the Christian Tradition*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 36.

³³ *ibid.*