

## Integral Salvation in the Risen Christ: the New "Emergent Whole"

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**Abstract:** This essay examines current mind-body theories and argues that "emergentist monism" is preferable to "nonreductive physicalism" in the search for an adequate model of personhood. It demonstrates the compatibility of the emergentist account of evolving nature with Karl Rahner's notion of "active self-transcendence", and the need to appreciate the "integral" character of final salvation understood as participation, through the Spirit, in the divine *identity* of the risen Christ who is the new definitive "emergent whole" in person. The essay concludes with the proposition that integral salvation in Christ is *fully* actualised in the privileged event of death as the gift of "admirable exchange" of natures in the person of the risen One.

THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM has engaged the minds of philosophers down the centuries and shows no signs of abating in our own time. Plato taught that the soul inhabits the body as a material dwelling place, but the final end of the soul is to exist independently of the body in the eternal realm beyond space and time. The somewhat loose connection between body and soul in Platonic thought was tightened up by Aristotelian philosophy's doctrine of material and formal causality, according to which the soul, as the form of the body, can have no independent existence from the material body. Both of these schools, in spite of their differences, offered indispensable elements of an anthropology demanded by the Christian faith. For what needed to be formulated was an anthropology which acknowledged that the human being, in its unified totality, is created by God, and at the same time it was required to distinguish between an element that perishes in the human and one that abides, in such a way that it was possible to satisfy both the belief in life with Christ beyond death, and the incompleteness of the intermediate life prior to the resurrection of the body at the end of time. In sum, the anthropology desired "should weld together Plato and Aristotle precisely at the points where their doctrines were mutually opposed".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* in Johann Auer and Joseph Ratzinger (eds.), *Dogmatic Theology* 9 (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1988) 148.

The task was to take on board Aristotle's doctrine on the inseparable unity of body and soul, but without undermining the spiritual nature of the soul, that is, without making the soul wholly dependent upon matter for being what it is – the soul could not be interpreted as an "entelechy". It required the mind of Thomas Aquinas to resolve this seemingly insurmountable difficulty by the development of his formula *anima forma corporis*: the soul is the form of the body. At first glance this formula may appear to be identical to Aristotle's teaching that the soul is wholly tied to matter and thus cannot be something individual or personal. But for Thomas this formula contains the twofold affirmation that the soul is something personal and also the form of the body. The soul belongs to the body as form, yet that which is the form of the body is still spirit, in which case the human being can be thought of as a person and as open to immortality, although the latter is not something that is intrinsic to human nature; it is not something that is achieved by the human, but rests wholly on the power of God who creates out of nothing. The formula *anima forma corporis* is designed to reinforce the fundamental point that the very essence of the human being is its indelible relationship to the sovereign God who has called it into existence.

In Thomas's interpretation of the formula, while body and soul are entities that constitute an inseparable unity, they are nevertheless not identical, from which follows two important consequences for a Christian anthropology: firstly, the soul can never be fully separated from its relationship to matter, hence the resurrection of the body can be seen as a postulate of human existence; secondly, human identity cannot be reduced to matter, rather the identity of the living body derives from its being formed by the expressive power of the soul. The notion of the body as the corporeal expression of the soul makes it possible to distinguish between "physiological unit" and "bodiliness".<sup>2</sup> The latter is something more than the mere summation of corpuscles for it implies that the soul is not complete on its own but tends towards embodiment, without which there can be no sense-perceptions, no movement, no feelings, no real interaction with others; and, vice versa, it implies that the body is not altogether discrete since its identity derives from the expressive power of the soul which is directly created by God.

Thomas's central insight regarding the inseparable unity of body and soul is certainly not without relevance for our time inasmuch as it emphasises the psychosomatic unity of the person and that what bears the enduring identity of the person (the "soul") is not wholly dependent upon matter for being what it is (the "spiritual" nature of the soul). Yet it would fair to say that few today would accept Thomas's formula just as it stands, for we can no longer think of God directly creating a

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2. Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 179.

"rational soul" so as to make the human species distinct from the infra-human species. In the current climate we must take seriously the evidence indicating that new species *emerge* in the course of evolutionary history. Within such a processive and dynamic framework, the need arises to treat the uniquely human capacities for rational, moral, and spiritual activity as "emergent properties", which is to say that they are genetically conditioned, although they are not to be viewed as genetically determined.<sup>3</sup> The reference to "properties" is significant because it implies the rejection of a mental "substance" to account for the mental life of the human being. What is in view here is a strictly monistic view of the human being where there is simply no room for entertaining the notion of a dualism of substance. This means that statements made by biologists or neuroscientists about the physical nature of the human are about *exactly the same entity* as statements made by theologians about the spiritual nature of the person. We are faced today, though, with reductionistic or materialistic forms of monism, and those engaging in the science-faith dialogue from the perspective of faith repudiate these forms of monism, espousing instead positions such as "nonreductive physicalism" and "emergentist monism".

The first part of this essay will discuss current theories pertaining to the mind-body debate, including "identity" theory, "epiphenomenalism", "correlation" theory, "nonreductive physicalism", and "emergentist monism", with the intention of illustrating why emergentist monism is the best model of personhood on offer today. The second section will be concerned with showing the compatibility of the emergentist model of personhood with Karl Rahner's understanding of the process of "active self-transcendence" which he portrays as giving rise to the attainment or leap to a "higher" nature. It will be suggested that Rahner's thought can be enhanced by portraying this process as the work of the Spirit whose "proper" role is that of bringing all creatures into ecstatic union with the triune God as their final end. The final part of this essay will discuss consequences of the findings of the previous two sections for our understanding of the essence of the Christian faith and final salvation in the risen One who is the new "emergent whole" in person. It will be argued that the integral dimensions of the complex reality of the human person as agent, as relation, and as subject, can be seen as corresponding to the physical, moral, and eschatological aspects of integral salvation in the glorified Christ, respectively. The essay will conclude with the proposition that the "not yet" of God's promises revealed through the risen Lord will be made good in the saving event

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3. For a recent collection of essays on scientific and theological portraits of human nature, see Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

of our own death as a dying into the death of Christ who has transformed integral death into “new” life.

#### 1. CONTEMPORARY MIND-BODY THEORIES: EMERGENTIST MONISM

In reaction to the strong dualism which holds that body and soul are such distinct substances that the soul has a separate existence to the physical body, which reached a climactic point with Cartesian metaphysical or psychophysical dualism, there has emerged in the modern period the position of reductive materialism: there is no “ghost in the machine” said Gilbert Ryle, there is just the machine. Materialists such as Ryle believe that soon we will be able to understand and control the electrochemical processes in the brain, so that all our experiences will be shown to be determined by physical states of the brain. This identification of mental activity and brain activity, which is known as the mind-brain “identity” theory, amounts to complete determinism and the wholesale removal of human responsibility and guilt, in which case the personal dimension of human existence is destroyed.<sup>4</sup> But the Achilles’ heel of this reductionist argument is that it is simply irreconcilable with the undeniable empirical facts: that is to say, the facts of self-consciousness and the awareness of an enduring “I” which is more than a chronological sequence of human experiences (person as subject), the need to exercise free-will in enacting one’s thoughts and intentions (person as agent), and the facts of moral activity and obligation in forging meaningful relations with others (person as relation).<sup>5</sup> The conscious human agent must assume what philosophers call “ontological priority”, for mental phenomena have the quality of *intentionality*: “The simple definition of intentionality is *aboutness*; it is the characteristic of referring to something else. The referring relationship is intrinsically different from the causal relationship, where A causes B to occur.”<sup>6</sup> All human knowledge is acquired only by way of our experience and activity as conscious agents marked with the quality of intentionality, hence it is important to appreciate just how compelling is the argument that “consciousness as a fact of experience withstands any form of reductionism”.<sup>7</sup>

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4. Keith Ward, in his work *Defending the Soul* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1992) 137, points out that in this view law courts will eventually be replaced by panels of psychiatrists and brain surgeons who will deliberate about how to modify an individual’s behaviour (social manipulation).

5. This fundamentally important point is stressed, for example, amongst many others, by Russell Aldwinckle, *Death in the Secular City* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972) 68-81.

6. Philip Clayton, “Neuroscience, the Person, and God: An Emergentist Account”, in Robert J. Russell, Nancey Murphy, Theo C. Meyering, and Michael A. Arbib (eds.), *Neuroscience and the Person: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action* (Vatican City: Vatican Observatory Publications, 1999) 181-214, at 191.

7. Malcolm Jeeves, “Brain, Mind, and Behaviour”, in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, 90.

The reductionist programme is further plagued by the problem that in the end it subverts itself because it destroys rationality by replacing thought with electrochemical neural events which cannot confront one another in rational discourse; such events are neither right nor wrong, but just happen.<sup>8</sup> How can any argument be rational if intellectual freedom is done away with? The problems inherent in the mind-brain identity theory apply equally to the "epiphenomenalist" thesis according to which mental activity is an epiphenomenon or byproduct of the physical activity of the brain, in which case the states of my brain determine the states of my mind, but never vice versa. The mind as an epiphenomenon is unilaterally dependent upon the physical brain. As with the mind-brain identity theory, the epiphenomenalist thesis suffers from the fundamental flaw that it does not accord with the facts of practical experience: mind influences body as much as body influences mind, which suggests that human consciousness is intimately related to both kinds of entity which are in continuous interaction. In other words, the empirical facts seem to point strongly in the direction of some kind of mind-brain "correlation", not identity or epiphenomenalism.

Research findings relating to the vexing problem of the mind-brain relationship point to an ever tightening link between brain activity and mind activity. In light of these findings, which must not immediately be taken as support for causal reductionism or reductive materialism, many today believe that a case can be made for affirming only one set of events; that is, it is most fruitful to regard mental activity and correlated brain activity "as inner and outer aspects of one complex set of events which together constitute conscious human agency".<sup>9</sup> In this perspective, mental activity is regarded as *embodied in* brain activity, but not identical with it, so that while it is conceded that there is an irreducible duality of human nature, this duality is not one of substance, but a "duality of aspects".<sup>10</sup> This clearly amounts to a monistic portrayal of human nature; however it is distinct from the monism of the mind-brain identity theory inasmuch as it acknowledges an irreducible duality of human nature. The term *nonreductive physicalism* has recently been coined to express this portrait of human nature.<sup>11</sup> To put it briefly, this

8. This point is highlighted by John Polkinghorne, *One World* (London: SPCK, 1986) and John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (London: Collins, 1976) 117.

9. Jeeves, "Brain, Mind, and Behaviour", 89.

10. Arthur Peacocke, it is worth noting, says that the only duality of substance (ontological dualism) to which theists can commit themselves is that between God and the world. The "world-as-a-whole" or "all-that-is" refers to all that is created, all that is not God. See his essay, "The Sound of Silence: How Does God Communicate With Humanity?" in *Neuroscience and the Person*, 234.

11. The publication *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* is committed to this view. Nancy Murphy, in her essay "Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues", at 129-30, explains that this term refers to a constellation of positions: (i) the acceptance of *ontological reductionism* = the claim that no new kinds of metaphysical "ingredients" (e.g. "life force", "entelechy", "mind", "soul") need to be added to produce higher-level entities from the

is the view that “the human nervous system, operating in concert with the rest of the body in its environment, is the seat of consciousness .... Consciousness and religious awareness are *emergent properties* and they have top-down causal influence on the body.”<sup>12</sup> The talk of “emergent properties” is significant because it serves to indicate that the “higher” human characteristics such as rationality, morality, and spiritual activity, while genetically conditioned, remain a matter of personal choice. What we traditionally refer to as “soul” designates the human’s emergent capacity for personal relatedness, a capacity which is dependent upon, but not reducible to, the neurophysiological structural features enabling enhanced intelligence and higher forms of cognition.<sup>13</sup>

The difference between reductive and nonreductive physicalism can be stated by appealing to an important distinction made in philosophy of mind between “type identity” and “token identity”.<sup>14</sup> The latter is the thesis that every mental event or property is identical with *some* physical event or other, which is perhaps better expressed by saying that every mental event is *realised* by some physical event, but is not identical to it; while the former is a stronger thesis to the effect that every type of mental event (for instance, a type of sensation, such as pain) is identical with a type of physical event (a particular type of neuron firing). Notwithstanding this distinction, some thinkers have reservations about the label “nonreductive physicalism” because those who adopt this label tend to talk about the “physical realisation” of mental events, which is deemed to be questionable insofar as it may give the impression of assigning insufficient ontological commitment to the reality of the “emergent whole” and of not attributing causal powers to the higher level whole. Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke, for example, therefore argue that it is better to use the label *emergentist monism* instead of nonreductive physicalism, since the former more adequately expresses an ontological commitment to the reality of the emergent whole of a

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lower; (ii) the rejection of *causal reductionism* = the view that all causation in the hierarchy of levels is “bottom-up”; (iii) the rejection of *reductive materialism* = the view that the higher-level entities are nothing but the sum of their parts, thus only the lower-level entities are *really* real. Nonreductive physicalists build upon the seminal work of the American philosopher Roy W. Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1932).

12. Nancey Murphy, “Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues”, 131. Emphasis added.

13. Francisco J. Ayala, in his essay “Human Nature: One Evolutionist’s View”, *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, 43, says that ethical behaviour derives from the “eminent intellectual capacity of human beings”; and Warren S. Brown, in his essay “Cognitive Contributions to Soul,” in the same publication, outlines a number of human capacities that are critical for personal relatedness, including language, a theory of mind, episodic memory, conscious top-down causality, future orientation, and emotional modulation (pp. 103ff).

14. See Owen Flanagan, *The Science of Mind* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991) 218.

given total system.<sup>15</sup> Peacocke is keen to extend and enrich the notion of causality beyond the simple notion of a regular chain of events, especially in light of new insights into the way complex systems, such as biological ones, behave. He suggests using the term “whole-part influence” in order to more effectively convey the “net effect of all those ways in which the system-as-a-whole, operating from its ‘highest’ level, is a causal factor in what happens to its constituent parts, the ‘lower’ level”.<sup>16</sup> The label emergentist monism is intended to emphasise the reality of “top-down” effects from whole to part, without ignoring, of course, the “bottom-up” effects of parts on wholes. To my mind, the label does have the merit of conveying this emphasis more effectively than the phrase “nonreductive physicalism” which, by adopting the term “physicalism”, seems to suggest that the focus is more on the causal powers of the lower level rather than on the whole-part influence of the higher level.

Clayton makes an important clarification in regard to emergentist monism when he explains that while it breaks with dualism and asserts no need to introduce nonphysical entities such as souls into the portrait of human nature, this nonetheless does not amount to the acceptance of “ontological reductionism” as proposed by physicalists. The reason emergentists cannot support reductionism even with respect to ontological questions hinges on their central assertion that “the history of the universe is one of development and process. The one order exists at each stage in its history, but *what it is* that exists is not identical through time. Genuinely new properties emerge which are not reducible to what came before, although they are continuous with it.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, it seems that the emergentists are wanting to say that the new species which emerge during the course of evolutionary history represent an *increase of being* (greater ontological reality) in relation to the previously existing reality from which it has emerged. This being the case, the major emphasis of the emergentists calls to mind Karl Rahner’s understanding of the evolutionary process of becoming based upon his notion of “active self-transcendence”, which will be discussed in section 2 below.

In the case of the human species, what emerges is a particular psychosomatic unity, a complex organism in which mental phenomena “supervene” upon physical processes. The concept of “supervenience” is an important one in the mind-body debate because it demonstrates the possibility of accepting some form of ontological reductionism without at the same time falling into “causal reductionism” which not

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15. Clayton, “Neuroscience, the Person, and God”, 209-11; Peacocke, “The Sound of Sheer Silence”, 217-20.

16. Peacocke, “The Sound of Sheer Silence”, 221.

17. Clayton, “Neuroscience, the Person, and God”, 211.

only undermines the traditional conceptions of free-will and personhood, but also threatens the meaningfulness of intellectual endeavours. Supervenience, simply put, grants the *dependence of mental phenomena on physical phenomena while denying the reducibility of the mental to the physical*, in which case supervenience has to do with properties or groups of phenomena, not relations between substances. There is as yet, however, no agreement on the concept's proper definition, and so I think it will be better to steer clear of definitions for the purposes of this essay and focus instead on two discernible tendencies in the formulation of the concept: namely, what Clayton calls "strong" and "weak" supervenience.<sup>18</sup> Those views of supervenience where the physical determines the mental not merely in its emergence but also in all its subsequent behaviour (the mental as mere epiphenomenon) represent a strong form of the concept. Such a position leaves no room for genuine mental causes, since all the determination of outcomes is seen as flowing from the physical substratum, so that any given mental event could be predicted if sufficient knowledge of the brain, its structure, and its past and present inputs, were available. The problem with this form of supervenience, as already stressed, is that it simply does not accord with the facts of self-consciousness and the person's intentionality, that is, the referring to something else, or, to put it differently, the referring to the world of "otherness" (both the cosmos and other persons).

What is required is the formulation of a "weak" version of supervenience where the central tenet of the theory remains intact, yet at the same time it is argued that the underlying physical state of affairs is not sufficient for explaining the emergent properties of the higher-level entity: the physical does not fully or solely determine the outcome of the mental life, in which case genuine mental causation is safeguarded. This particular view is referred to as *emergentist supervenience*, a label which is intended to express a "whole-part" causative relation or influence, and which gives rise to an emergentist theory of personhood. According to the emergentist theory, the human person is "the highest level, the whole, in that unique system which is the human-brain-in-the-human-

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18. Clayton, "Neuroscience, the Person, and God", 199-202. Nancey Murphy, in her essay "Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues", cites the following works as evidence of the wide use of the concept of supervenience in the philosophy of mind: Jaegwon Kim, *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); John Heil, *The Nature of True Minds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). While there is no agreement on the concept's proper definition, Murphy offers her own "complex" definition: "Property S is supervenient on property B [base property] if and only if something instantiates S in virtue of [as a non-causal consequence of] its instantiating B under circumstance c" (p. 134). Her emphasis on "circumstances" serves to illustrate how the concept of supervenience can be extended to include ethical and religious predicates, so that the emergent properties of the human remain a matter of personal choice.

body-in-social-relations".<sup>19</sup> The exercise of personal *agency* by individuals in the pursuit of personal identity is the most powerful instance of whole-part influence which is exerted on both their bodies and the surrounding world of otherness.

At this point in the discussion it will be helpful to summarise key points held by emergentists who basically share the view of the physicalists, although there are some notable differences in emphases which illustrate why, in my opinion, the label emergentist monism is preferable to nonreductive physicalism. (1) The world is fundamentally one, there is a basic unity of nature, yet *what it is* that exists is not the same through time, for new properties emerge which are not reducible to the previously existing reality, so that we must assign clear ontological commitment to the reality of the emergent whole of a given total system. (2) This means that we must be wary of the term "ontological reductionism" because it seems to undermine the appropriate commitment to the ontological reality of the new emergent whole. In light of the multiple layers of ontological reality in a complex system, it would be better to speak of *ontological pluralism* in order to more effectively convey the many interrelated, but not mutually reducible, aspects of a given complex system. (3) With respect to the life of the human mind, then, study cannot be restricted to the acquisition of knowledge of the brain and its workings, for the mental life demands that it be described and expounded in terms *intrinsic to itself*: thoughts and actions have the quality of intentionality which points to a referring relationship, to continuous engagement with the world of otherness, not a causal relationship. (4) The notion of top-down causation of the emergent whole of a complex system is better referred to as *whole-part influence*. The term "causation" tends to be understood in a Humean sense as denoting a chain of causally related events, which fails to appreciate the wider use of causation applicable to the way complex systems generally behave. (5) What emerges in the case of the human person is a particular psychosomatic unity which is the *supreme exemplar* of whole-part influence. Each of the layers (physical, biological, psychological, social, and spiritual) in the complex whole that is the person needs to be understood by a science appropriate to that level, and while the constituent levels of the person are interdependent, they are not to be regarded as mutually reducible. It is through the exercise of agency that the person strives to integrate all the levels of the complex system which is the human-brain-in-the-body-in-social-relations, so as to realise personal identity and integrity.

I believe that emergentist monism, and nonreductive physicalism upon which it builds, are important new schools of thought which go beyond the hitherto commonly held positions regarding the mind-brain

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19. Peacocke, "The Sound of Sheer Silence", 232.

problem, namely, dualism of substance, identity theory, epiphenomenalism, and mere correlation. While much still remains to be done in order to clarify emergentist monism and to relate it to the sciences and to fields such as ethics and theology, some important steps have been taken in this direction by arguing for an “ontological holism” that is not causally reductionist, so that freedom, personhood, and the meaningfulness of our intellectual efforts remain intact. What is wrong with reductive materialism is that it takes too low a view of matter, for it sees it in terms of its simplest, lowest level, measurable and publicly observable properties. While this approach of methodological reductionism has provided a quantitative set of models for explicating natural processes, matter or materiality has much greater potential and complexity than can be expressed by these models. Ultimately, matter will only be fully understood when it is regarded “in its innermost tendency towards consciousness and realization of value”, that is, when it is reflected upon from the perspective of its final purposive end, and not its simplest initial states.<sup>20</sup> This implies that efficient causality alone is not able to fathom the reality of the evolving world: it is only from the perspective of final causality that the person is able to fathom all-that-is, not as knowledge, though, but as free response to the call of the wholly Other, which is the call of the person’s own selfhood, heard in the human conscience.

## 2. RAHNER’S NOTION OF ACTIVE SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

The intention of this section is to illustrate just how similar the model of emergentist monism is to Karl Rahner’s portrait of the unity of spirit and matter, at the centre of which lies his notion of “active self-transcendence”.<sup>21</sup> Rahner expressly states that talk of the human as made up of body and soul is a primitive (Platonic) way of viewing human nature, since we are really made out of “spirit and *materia prima*”.<sup>22</sup> The problem with talking of “body” and “soul” is that “spirit” is not yet factored into the equation, with the result that when it is added the whole tripartite structure is affirmed as the human being. But, says Rahner, the body is already spirit, it is the expression of the spirit itself reaching out into space and time; it is always “an entering into the truly Other”.<sup>23</sup> On this view, what is meant by spirit is “an a priori datum of human knowledge” from which we can determine

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20. Ward, *Defending the Soul*, 147.

21. Karl Rahner, “The Unity of Spirit and Matter in the Christian Understanding of Faith”, *Theological Investigations* 6, 153-77, at 174-76; and “The Body in the Order of Salvation”, *Theological Investigations* 17, 71-89.

22. “The Body in the Order of Salvation”, 83. Rahner follows Thomistic philosophy here, which in turn follows Aristotelian philosophy, according to which *materia prima* is matter which has no form (pure potency).

23. Rahner, “The Body in the Order of Salvation”, 85.

metaphysically what is really meant by “matter”.<sup>24</sup> We cannot begin with matter and then proceed to discover spirit, for this would be trying to deduce what is logically and ontologically prior from what is posterior in both these senses: we must start, in other words, with the data of self-consciousness. Rahner thus regards the material as “frozen spirit”, that is, as limited being, which, outside such a limitation, means “being-conscious-of-itself, knowledge, freedom, and transcendence towards God”.<sup>25</sup> If matter is to be interpreted as frozen spirit, then, conversely, this implies a highly material explanation of the finite spirit, as is made clear by the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of the eternal Logos. To Rahner’s mind, the emergence of the human on the cosmic stage represents a watershed in the evolutionary process since matter has now transcended itself into self-consciousness before the living God, but when we turn to the incarnate One this event represents not only a high point but the final and irrevocable stage in the evolution of life. For in the person of Jesus Christ what takes place is the *total* and complete acceptance, and thus the radical immanence, of God’s absolute self-communication to humanity and the world, which is at one and the same time the definitive transcendence of the movement of creation as a whole toward the living God. In order that God’s universal salvific will toward the world be realised in an historically tangible way, what is required is that God’s self-bestowal in grace be communicated to an individual “in such a unique manner that this man would become the definitive and irreversible self-gift of God to the world”.<sup>26</sup> This implies that Jesus Christ can be thought of as the total actualisation of the human’s deepest potential as being created in the divine image.

That matter develops dynamically in the direction of spirit is conveyed by Rahner’s notion of active self-transcendence. This notion expresses the understanding that the process of becoming something qualitatively new is truly a *self-transcendence*, yet at the same time this process is the power of absolute being that is “interior” to the finite being in its becoming, without, however, becoming a constitutive element of the finite being itself.<sup>27</sup> This process of becoming, since it

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24. Rahner, “The Unity of Spirit and Matter”, 163.

25. Rahner, “The Unity of Spirit and Matter”, 168.

26. Rahner, “The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation”, *Theological Investigations* 16 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979) 214. See also “The Christian Understanding of Redemption”, *Theological Investigations* 21 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1988) 250.

27. The Rahnerian notion of active self-transcendence intends to stress that God’s immanence in the world is not merely a conserving power, but a power of becoming in collaboration with matter. Rahner bases this notion on the Thomistic doctrine of primary and secondary causality: God as “primary” cause continually imparts existence at the level of being to all contingent and finite things (*conservatio*), but God’s continuous action as absolute being does not interfere with the actions of a particular creature as “secondary” cause, doing whatever it is inclined to do naturally (*concursus*). God, however, is not present in all things as an essential part of them, but as maintaining them in their being.

involves an *increase of being* proper to the previously existing reality, can be spoken of as a “leap to a higher nature”.<sup>28</sup> If the higher nature always contains the lower which had prepared the way for the actual event of self-transcendence, then this implies that the world must be affirmed as a fundamental unity in which everything is linked to everything else. What emerges, in other words, is the need to embrace an ecological or holistic model wherein all things are viewed as intimately related to their environments.

It is possible, however, to develop further Rahner’s insistence that God’s immanence in the world is not merely a conserving power but also a power of becoming in collaboration with matter, by regarding the process of active self-transcendence as the work of the divine Spirit.<sup>29</sup> The Spirit as the power of becoming in evolutionary history accords especially well with the biblical view of the Spirit as the giver or “breath” of life and as indwelling the human spirit, as well as with the trinitarian view of the Spirit as the principle of God’s self-communication toward the non-divine other.<sup>30</sup> If matter is seen as developing in the direction of spirit, that is, in the direction of self-consciousness, freedom, and transcendence toward God, then the notion of Spirit as the power of becoming in history gives rise to the view that it is the Spirit who empowers us to enter into union with the living God so as to satisfy the longings of the human heart. We can appropriately speak of the divine-human encounter in terms of the divine Spirit freely indwelling the human spirit (see Ps 104:29, 30; Rom 8:16), so that by “spirit” is meant that the human is a personal being capable of responding in faith, hope, and love to the Spirit of God who breathes life into the human spirit. The divine Spirit should not be understood as resting in the human spirit, though, rather we are to think of the Spirit as driving the human spirit out of itself in order to realise its full potentiality: the human spirit is “grasped by something ultimate and

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See *Summa Theologica* I, ques. 105, art. 5; ques. 10, arts. 4, 8; ques. 45, art. 5; *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, chs. 66, 67, 70.

28. Karl Rahner, “Christology Within an Evolutionary View of the World”, *Theological Investigations* 5 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) 164.

29. This proposition is made by Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution* (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1999) 90.

30. Walter Kasper, for example, in *The God of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1984) 227-28, talks of the Spirit as the internal presupposition of God’s communicability outside of the ineffable divine being. Since “the Spirit is divine love in person, he is, first of all, the source of creation, for creation is the overflow of God’s love and a participation in God’s being”. Through the immanent presence of Spirit in the world, then, creation “already has a supernatural finality and character”. Christian Duquoc, *Dieu different* (Paris: Cerf, 1977) 121-22, also views the Spirit as the ecstatic overflow of divine communion toward the non-divine other, and Yves Congar, in his *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. III (New York: Seabury Press, 1983) 144-54, talks of the Spirit as “absolute Gift” of divine communion. Denis Edwards, in *The God of Evolution*, draws the conclusion that the work of bringing all creatures into ecstatic communion with God is “distinctively and properly the role of the Holy Spirit” (p. 97).

unconditional".<sup>31</sup> When the Spirit is encountered something happens to us humans: we receive something More, something new in our being, which we did not have before.<sup>32</sup> The classical term for this being grasped by the presence of the Spirit who communicates the overflowing fullness of the divine being to the human person as its own fulfilment, is *ecstasy*. In the perspective of the Christian faith, this Spirit who freely dwells in the human spirit is "the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead" (Rom 8:11) and who makes us adopted sons and daughters of God in the risen Lord so that we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15).

Rahner's understanding of active self-transcendence as giving rise to the attainment of a "higher" nature supports the model of emergentist monism insofar as he maintains that what it is that exists in the one process of self-transcendence is not identical through time. Since qualitatively new species emerge which have greater ontological reality than the previously existing reality, this implies that it is more appropriate to speak of "ontological pluralism" rather than follow the lead of the physicalists who advocate "ontological reductionism". The phenomenon of humanity's native attunement to transcendent reality in the Rahnerian perspective also serves to underscore the need to treat the life of the mind (or spirit) in terms intrinsic to itself; that is, we must recognise that human thoughts and actions are characterised by intentionality which has to do with a referring relationship, not a causal relationship. The laws and forces of nature have their own integrity, to be sure, and it is the work of science to study and explain the regular chain of causal relations in the natural realm, but such causal relations will prove inadequate to the basic human task of reflecting upon the a priori question about the totality of reality and its absolute ground. Rahner expressly acknowledges that God's continuous activity as primary cause does not interfere with the actions of a particular creature as secondary cause, yet at the same time the human subject's self-consciousness makes it plain that the world cannot be fathomed apart from the source and term of transcendence: that is, apart from the mysterious reality named God whose absolute self-bestowal in grace is the fulfilment of humanity and the world. The indwelling of the Spirit may not be a constitutive element of the human, which allows us to think of human nature without introducing nonphysical entities (the Spirit is not a power that can be discovered amongst the laws and forces of the natural world), yet, on the other hand, without the gratuitous

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31. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, three volumes in one (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), Vol. III, 112. See also Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM Press, 1996) 73; and Geoffrey Lampe, *God As Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 34-60.

32. See Martin Buber's understanding of the divine-human encounter in *I And Thou*, tr. Walter Kaufman (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1970) 158.

presence of the indwelling Spirit driving the human spirit beyond itself toward new horizons there would be no experience of ongoing “conversion”, no continuous transformation of the human subject and his or her world, no truly dynamic quest for the full actualisation of personal identity in a new “emergent whole” imbued with ultimate meaning and inviolable goodness. The fact that human intentionality points to a referring relationship indicates that the grace-nature relationship must be reflected upon not in terms of efficient causality, that is, the production of effects, but along the lines of *formal* causality which views God’s gracious self-communication to humanity and the world as its ontological perfection. Because Rahner conceives of the human person as radically open and oriented toward God as its final end, this implies that integration of all the various levels of that complex system which is the human-brain-in-the-human-body-in-social-relations is realised by abandoning oneself to the wholly Other so as to receive the gift of an “original” identity (real freedom) of which one had been only dimly aware or had not known at all. For Rahner, then, human freedom has identity in God, the absolute ground of all-that-is, as its determinate content.

### 3. THE COMPLEX REALITY OF PERSONAL IDENTITY: INTEGRAL SALVATION IN THE RISEN ONE

One of the most obvious consequences of adopting the position of emergentist monism and its emphasis on whole-part influence, in conjunction with Rahner’s understanding of how matter develops in the direction of spirit, is that it highlights the need today to develop an ecological or holistic model of the one world in dynamic process. The ecological model represents a shift away from substance thinking and “external” relations towards event thinking, where what is sought is the “explanation of behaviour at one level in terms of behaviour at other levels and to recognise that behaviour at one level is to be accounted for in terms of complex interacting...[which]...is an event, not a substance”.<sup>33</sup> Event thinking views relations as “internal” to events, which means that things or “substantial objects” are not seen as existing independently and then subsequently entering into relation with their environments; rather, the explanation of things is given in terms of the patterns of interconnectedness among events. Thus as we move up the various levels of organisation (electrons, atoms, molecules, cells, tissues, organs, etc.), we must appreciate that “the properties of each larger whole are given not merely by the units of which it is composed but by

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33. C. Birch and J. B. Cobb, *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 86.

the *new relations* between these units".<sup>34</sup> What happens in the process of evolution is that the parts themselves are redefined and re-created as we move from one level to a higher level, hence evolution must be seen as involving more than a rearrangement of the parts. This is evident from the fact that the properties of matter at one level are simply not applicable at other levels. An electron in a piece of metal, for example, is simply not the same as an electron in a cell in the human brain.

But the full meaning of internal relatedness in the holistic model is highlighted by the way in which we humans take account of our world and are compelled to respond to it. The human cannot be fathomed as merely the product of its genetic endowment and its environment, as stressed in section 2 above, for the human is always also a creative response to these given conditions as it earnestly strives to transcend any given situation in order to meet its unrealised possibilities and potentialities. The identity of the self is not something given from the outset of one's life, rather personal identity is always a *responsive* identity forged through dynamic engagement with the world of otherness. On this view, note, being-related is not seen as rooted in some inner core of the person, but as a modus of being, hence the term "person" signifies the irreducibility of the human to his or her individual nature. The "I" of personal identity is indissolubly tied to the physical body, to be sure, but it is not reducible to the body. For the person goes beyond nature in the dynamic quest for mature selfhood, while at the same time containing nature, and in this way we can speak of the individual nature as "enhypositized": the person is always a person *in* nature, yet transcends nature in its radical orientation toward, and encounter with, the Other.

What this understanding highlights, first of all, is that human nature cannot be conceived of as a closed system; it does not refer to a definitively known quantity, but rather to an unfolding and emerging reality. As an emerging reality, we must think of human nature in dynamic terms as *openness to transcendent reality and the quest for a higher nature*. This movement towards a higher nature involves, as Rahner has underscored, not only transcendence into something "more" (the quantitatively more complex) but also transcendence into that which is substantially "new" (the qualitatively different), so that the process of becoming is to be regarded as giving rise to an increase of being (greater ontological reality) to an already existing reality. The fact that it is precisely evolving nature that makes the human possible serves to caution us against thinking of nature in purely essentialist terms, for this would mean, theologically speaking, that "neither grace nor sin can alter

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34. Charles Birch, *On Purpose* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1990) 44. Emphasis added.

the nature of *homo sapiens*".<sup>35</sup> The reality of sin prevents us humans from becoming what we ought to be, from actualising our deepest potential as beings created in the divine image, but the reality of grace, as our first ontological status, makes possible the attainment of a higher nature, namely, participation in the very life of God by being drawn up into the Spirit of the risen Christ who is the new and definitive "emergent whole" in person.

Secondly, when the human person is reflected upon from the perspective of emergentist monism, three fundamentally important points become readily apparent in relation to the doctrine of sin. To begin with, the reality of human sin and guilt, which is known in self-consciousness, cannot be attributed to the lower level biophysical properties of the human which give rise to natural drives and primal emotions such as aggression, hatred, vengeance, sexuality, and fear. These primal emotions are the "tinder of sin" (*fomes peccati*), to be sure, in which case it is legitimate to talk of a "natural concupiscence", but at the same time they are the "raw materials of holiness".<sup>36</sup> This brings us to a second point, namely, in light of the "causal" relation from whole to part (whole-part influence), the reality of sin is to be seen as having detrimental effects for the entire organism: the disorder brought about by sin is experienced not only on the psychological and spiritual levels, but also on the physical and social levels, all of which are interdependent, though not mutually reducible. When these first two points are considered within the framework of the history of the one world as a history of development and process in which genuinely new properties emerge through time, then a final point can be made about the doctrine of sin: *the reality of sin is best reflected upon from the perspective of the dynamics of the Ultimate revealed in Jesus Christ risen who has conclusively conquered sin as such, so that in his person is proleptically realised the ontological perfection of the movement of evolving nature as a whole: Jesus Christ risen is the eschaton in person.* The glorified body of the crucified-and-risen-One is the reality of the new "emergent whole" of a "higher" nature which represents the ultimate destiny of the world-as-a-whole liberated from the shackles of sin and death and raised to a dignity beyond compare. Given that an emergentist account of personhood requires us to consider the effects of sin holistically, then this implies that the fundamental tenet that Jesus Christ died for the "forgiveness of sins" must not be interpreted too narrowly as the mere forgiveness of individual sins: rather, it must be interpreted holistically as the overcoming of the detrimental effects of sin for the whole complex system which is the "human-brain-in-the-human-body-in-social-relations". An appropriate understanding of the saving significance of

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35. Gabriel Daly, *Creation and Redemption* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988) 132.

36. Daly, *Creation and Redemption*, 146.

Jesus Christ's life, violent death, and resurrection, will be one that appreciates the *integral* character of eschatological salvation in his person.<sup>37</sup> This will be further discussed below in relation to the integral dimensions of the complex reality of personal identity.

The fact that the reality of sin and guilt is known in self-consciousness indicates that the basis of responsibility and guilt is to be sought not in the direction of causality, but in the identity of the human agent, that is, what the human *ought to be*. Only from such a vantage point is it possible for us to acknowledge our actions as our own and thus accept personal responsibility for them. This means that awareness of the moral imperative must not be seen as a set of demands imposed from without, but as the *call of the person's own selfhood* heard in the human conscience.<sup>38</sup> The call of freedom is a divine call to live as we ought to live, to harmonise our behaviour with our ultimate destiny in God, the wholly Other, who is also the mystery that is wholly Present and closer to us than our own selves. It is by virtue of our capacity for self-transcendence that we humans become conscious of the distance that separates us from what ought to be, from the yet to be realised possibilities of our dynamic nature in relation to the source and term of transcendence. This implies that the doctrine of sin should be developed from the standpoint of final causality, that is, in terms of "a still unfinished process which has human identity as its goal".<sup>39</sup> This eschatological perspective of the dynamics of the ultimate, which accords particularly well with a christology done within an evolutionary view of the world, offers us, I believe, the most promising framework for a rethinking of the doctrine of original sin: the reality expressed by the term "original sin" can be conceived along the lines of a discrepancy or disjunction existing between what we humans presently are and what we are destined to become by being "drawn up" (see John 12:32) into the reality of Jesus Christ risen, by grace. "It is the grandeur of the 'second Adam' that explains the 'transgression' of the first, who is the symbol of humanity."<sup>40</sup> In such a perspective, christology rather than original sin becomes the fundamental axis for the doctrine of soteriology.

Thirdly, on the basis of the understanding of the relationship between the human spirit and the divine Spirit discussed in section 2 above, this christology must be interpreted dynamically and relationally in terms of "encounter", which in turn is to be interpreted in terms of

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37. See my essay "The Nature of Evil in Jewish Apocalyptic: The Need For 'Integral' Salvation", *Colloquium* 35/1 (2003) 47-63, where I argue for integral salvation in light of the complex reality of sin and death as having interrelated cosmological, anthropological, and eschatological dimensions.

38. This point is made by Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985) 114, 152.

39. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, 152.

40. Christian Duquoc, "New Approaches to Original Sin", *Cross Currents* 28, 197.

mutuality of sharing. What takes place in the person and history of Jesus Christ is that the living God meets a fallen humanity in an “admirable exchange” of natures: human nature is raised to the heights of the divine nature through the depths of the divine participation in the human condition. For the person of Christ *bears* the imprint of humanity’s cruelty and estrangement from the Father; the One who is excluded keeps himself related to those who condemn him to an unjust death and entrusts himself wholly to the Father in a final prayer of forgiveness (Luke 23:34) for the “sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). When put to the test, Christ faithfully clings to the Father, he does not resist evil or turn against anyone in judgement, so that in his person a fallen humanity might be “raised up” into final union with the Father as its final end (see John 6:37-40). Final salvation in the risen One should therefore be viewed not as the production of effects by a divine person (whose humanity is “anhypostatic” and thus interpreted instrumentally), but rather as the drawing up of a fallen humanity into Christ’s perfect self-abandon to the Father in unfathomable love. To participate in the divine *identity* of the risen One, who is the new emergent whole since his humanity has entered fully into the dimension of God, is to be introduced to a higher nature which is qualitatively different from the previously existing reality.<sup>41</sup> What is new in the Gospel message is God’s free acceptance of a fallen humanity, the unmerited offer of “new” life in the person of Christ, through the Spirit, which engenders true conversion of heart and the definitive establishment of the human’s original identity as being created *imago Dei*: real freedom has personal identity in the risen One as its determinate content. To sum up, two interrelated affirmations can be made in regard to eschatological salvation in the risen Christ: salvation must be considered *ontologically*, not merely morally, as the goal of the process of evolving nature; and salvation has an *integral* character since everything prior is to be regarded as a preparation for the Christ-event as the coming together of many events into one unified event.

Fourthly, an effective way, to my mind, of elaborating the integral character of salvation as participation in the divine identity of Christ, is to consider it as addressing the integral dimensions of the complex reality of personal identity, which was touched upon in section 1 of this essay: the continuity of the person has to do with the length of one’s history (person as agent), the breadth of one’s relationships (person as relation), and the depth of one’s self-reflection (person as subject).<sup>42</sup> In

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41. The assertion that the essence of the Christian faith is participation in Christ’s divine identity is made by Frans Jozef van Beeck, “Ten Questions on Christology and Soteriology”, *Chicago Studies* 25 (1986) 271; and in his *God Encountered: A Contemporary Catholic Systematic Theology*, Vol. I (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989) 159-60, 172.

42. See the discussion of personal identity by Robert A. Krieg in *Story-Shaped Christology* (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989) 9-14.

respect of the concept of *person as agent*, the self is seen not primarily as a thinker but as a doer: it is by acting that the person seeks to integrate the complex of intentions, thoughts, and affections, hence individuality emerges in the unfolding of one's personal history.<sup>43</sup> The individual, however, never succeeds in enacting and integrating his or her intentions and thoughts fully, since the length of one's history is finite and inevitably ends in the helplessness of death. So what becomes of the innate desire for personal fulfilment, of the dynamic quest for self-actualisation in one's history? Only if personal being continues beyond death in some form can the dimension of person as agent be treated in a meaningful framework. In light of the understanding that it is by virtue of our "bodiliness" that we humans go out into the world of otherness and establish the complex of relationships by which we grow into the world and we take the world into ourselves, any notion of personal existence beyond death perforce requires that we think in terms of a newly embodied self that is fit for the conditions of life in permanent communion with the glorified Christ. In this fashion we can view the concept of person as agent as pointing to the *physical* dimension of integral salvation in the risen One. On the basis of Christ's conquest of (physical) death in his being raised from the dead by the Father in the power of the Spirit, we live in the sure hope that all our strivings and concerns to realise personal integrity in this life are not in vain but are of ultimate worth because they are assumed by Christ as his very own; all our good and meaningful actions are taken up into the new emergent whole of the glorified Christ who is the new creation.

The concept of person as agent is clearly intimately intertwined with the concept of *person as relation* which accentuates the relational aspect of being a person.<sup>44</sup> As a relational being caught up in a web of involvement with others, as a being who seeks to forge personal identity in relation to others, the self becomes conscious not only of the good to be found in human life, but also of the pervasive reality of sin and its complicity with this negative reality which poses a formidable barrier to the genuine development of the self. Given that consciousness of personal sin emerges from personal relationships to others, it follows

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43. Some important works in regard to the concept of person as agent include: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Cornelius van Peursen, *Body, Soul, Spirit* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); John Macmurray, *The Self as Agent* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978); and Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language, I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Mention should also be made of Maurice Blondel's "philosophy of action" (there is no authenticity apart from action) and the existentialist style of philosophising which underscores the self as acting subject (against the idealist doctrine of the self as thinking subject) in prominent themes such as freedom, decision, and responsibility, all of which give rise to the two possibilities of existing authentically or inauthentically.

44. In addition to Martin Buber's *I And Thou*, another important work on the concept of person as relation is John Macmurray's *Persons in Relation* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1961).

that the person as relation can be seen as corresponding to the *moral* dimension of integral salvation in the risen Christ: to be “justified”, to be “declared” right in one’s standing before God, self, and others, is to be introduced to a new mode-of-being-in-the-world wherein the “old” self fades away by allowing the final graciousness of reality to provide the basic orientation to human life. This is not to say that the reality of sin is completely overcome in this life, for we go to our deaths knowing that we are still sinners, no matter how earnestly we have sought to lead truly sacramental lives. But this situation clearly raises the question: If Christ has abolished the powers of sin in the world by his redemptive death on Calvary, where are we to look for the manifestation of God’s liberating love in the fullness of its power so that our true relational identities will shine forth in all their splendour? In response to this basic question, I would propose that when the tenet that death is the “wages of sin” (Rom 6:23) is set in relation to the tenet that the unconditional forgiveness of sins is through the death of Christ (Col 1:14; Eph 1:7; 1 Cor 15:3; Matt 26:28; the Nicene Creed), then the inference to be drawn is that the event of our death as a dying into the death of Christ, who has already assumed our death, should be considered as the privileged locus for receiving the full saving power of Christ’s conquest of sin as such, and entering fully into the dimension of God. Only if this life is lived in the sure hope that the obstacle of sin will be no more, that God’s kingdom will come in the fullness of its glory, can we be inspired to commit our lives to the way of the cross, for the sake of the world.

Finally, the notions of person as agent and person as relation are incomplete without the concept of *person as subject* which brings into the picture the fact that since the person possesses subjectivity, that is, a relating to self, then personal being involves self-consciousness.<sup>45</sup> In light of this subjectivity, the living God calls each one of us to become an authentic self by saying “yes” to Absolute Mystery. But we invariably hesitate to adopt an attitude of total self-abandon to the mystery of God given the inherent anxieties we experience as finite existents, and for fear of giving up what little control we have over our lives.<sup>46</sup> The person as subject can be seen as corresponding to the *eschatological* dimension of integral salvation in the risen Christ, given the understanding that the deepest potential of the human person is actually realised by freely entering into union with God and sharing in the very life of God, by grace. What is in focus here is the term “spirit” in the sense of self-consciousness and freedom of the human subject who is

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45. Two notable works dealing with the concept of person as subject are Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (New York: Humanities Press, 1961) 5.632-5.641; and Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 151.

46. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. I (London: Nisbet, 1941) 195, states: “Anxiety is the inevitable concomitant of the paradox of freedom and finiteness in which man is involved.” To Niebuhr’s mind, anxiety is a precondition of sin.

capable of responding in faith, hope, and love to the Spirit of God who is the absolute ground and precondition of the possibility of all knowing and all activity in the world. Personal identity is acquired not only by interacting with the physical-cosmic and social-cultural environments of human life, but ultimately by encountering the divine Spirit freely indwelling the human spirit and driving it beyond itself toward union with God as its final end. But granted that real freedom remains ever precarious in this life given our unstable ontological constitution, that the "already" exists in dialectical relation to the "not yet", where are we to look for the full-flowering of our spiritual nature? Well, I would argue that when we take the proposition that Christ's perfect freedom is fully manifested and realised in that he bears the sin of the world on Calvary for our sake, and set it in relation to the teaching that sin is the perversion of freedom, then it is reasonable to infer that we should consider the event of our own death, as a dying into the saving death of Christ, as the gateway to the definitive establishment of personal freedom by our being drawn up into Christ's perfect freedom of total self-abandon to the Father in unfathomable love.

In conclusion, from the foregoing discussion of how the three integral dimensions of personal identity relate to the three dimensions of integral salvation in the risen Christ, the proposition can be formulated that death is a final condition corresponding to the real nature of grace as God's gratuitous self-bestowal in the person of Christ (the divine *exitus*), and to the real nature of the human person as the event of God's self-gift in grace (the human *reditus*), which definitively establishes the original identity of the human created in the divine image, to the glory of God.<sup>47</sup> The various dimensions of integral salvation in Christ must be thought of not as a chronological or linear sequence of causal events, but as forming a pattern of interconnected events which are "internal" to the transformative encounter with Christ who is the new emergent whole in person. Since in the ecological-holistic model the properties of each larger whole are given not only by the units of which it is composed but also by the *new relations* between these units, we can imagine that as we move from the pilgrim state to the final condition of death as the privileged locus for receiving the gift of "admirable exchange" of natures in the person of Christ, we actually enter into a "new" set of relations to God, self, humanity, and the cosmos, in that ultimate complex system which is participation in the glorified humanity of Christ; that is, the risen life.

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47. For the need to reflect on the privileged character of death as a dying into the Lord, see my essay "Death As Privilege", *Gregorianum* 84/4 (2003) 779-827.