

# Book review: The Physics of Heaven

## New Age influence in Christianity

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The book “*The Physics of Heaven*” is authored by Judy Franklin and Ellyn Davis. The first author is a staff member of Bethel church in Redding, California. The preface is written by Kris Vallotton, Senior Associate Leader of the same church. It is a multi-author book. Chapter authors include Bethel’s Senior Leaders Bill and Beni Johnson and Dan McCollam, keynote speaker on Bethel’s “School of the Prophets”, originally scheduled for 3-7 Aug 2020.

While Senior Leader Bill Johnson’s two chapters are excerpts from different books, his contribution as well as the ones of other lead figures of Bethel church clearly shows that the contents of this book has support from Bethel’s leadership. Kris Vallotton says in the preface: “This book reads like a journal that emerged from a holy spirit think tank...”. It is also praised by leaders of other Bethel branches in its first pages. The book is available from Bethel’s online book shop<sup>2</sup>. I therefore believe that it is fair to say that the contents of *The Physics of Heaven* is endorsed by Bethel church. This church is one of the hubs of charismatic Christianity with worldwide influence. For example, there is a German translation of the book that appeared with the publisher “Schleife” with an additional preface by Lilo Keller, one of the founders of the influential Christian organisation with the same name based in Switzerland. Part of the book is available from the web page: <http://heavensphysics.com>.

The *Physics of Heaven* argues that there was a significant overlap and agreement between quantum physics, New Age and Christianity. However, their representation and interpretation of quantum physics contain severe errors eroding the justification for any spiritual implications. The theological work in support of adopting New Age views and practices is unconvincing to me. The purportedly prophetic texts from senior figures of the movement appear questionable regarding their authority. Many examples of obscure healing methods, pantheistic and esoteric thought may be found in it. Starting from a wrong understanding of the relationship between Christian faith and miracles, they promote a world view with man at the centre. As a physicist, I would like to develop my critique from the scientific aspects, starting from Chapter 12, “Quantum Mysticism” by Ellyn Davis. In the second part, I discuss my theological concerns as a Christian.

I include physics references to Wikipedia articles that I have personally checked at the time of writing (mainly during 2020) and believe to be useful for further reading, especially for non-physicists. A primary reference would be a standard quantum mechanics textbook like Griffiths & Schroeter<sup>3</sup>. I have also included quotes from influential physicists that should be more accessible to the non-specialist. All book quotations are from the Kindle version and therefore without page reference but chapters and sections are given; bible quotations are from the New International Version. Underlinings are mine throughout.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://shop.bethel.com/products/the-physics-of-heaven>

<sup>3</sup> Griffiths & Schroeter, 2018, Introduction to Quantum Mechanics, Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13 : 978-1107189638.

# 1. Scientific Critique

The key claim of *The physics of heaven* is that Christian faith is connected to quantum mechanical effects and may be used in a mechanical way to access supernatural power. I show in the following that there is no scientific basis for this.

## 1.1. Quantum Mysticism

Chapter 12 is the heart of the book where Ellyn Davis argues that Christian faith has a physical correspondence in quantum mechanics. She mounts tremendous claims on this that result in magician-like superpowers that were accessible to (and perhaps not necessarily restricted to) Christians.

### 1.1.1 Claim 1: “Belief in the power of consciousness to influence material reality.”

In Chapter 11, Ellyn Davis offers a reasonably accurate review of quantum mechanics. One of the issues she discusses is the measurement problem<sup>4</sup>. This is related to the fact that a microscopic particle (for example electrons, protons, neutrons, atoms or molecules) can be in a quantum state that corresponds to mutually contradicting classical states. An example would be that an electron would be at multiple locations at once, described by a “wave function”. A “measurement” can then turn the system into another state, where it is found in one specific location, only. In the example, the electron shows up in one particular location. This process is called “collapse of the wave function” and frequently referred to as “popping a quiff (spelled qwiff in the book)” in the book. The term “measurement” is frequently used by physicists and is a technical term that summarises interactions that may happen between the electron when it is in multiple places at once (non-local state) and the environment, such that the electron appears in one particular place. Such interactions take place constantly for the multitude of elementary particles throughout the Universe. They also take place in lab experiments, no matter, if the computer that registers the data coming in from the experiment is looked at by the person who oversees the experiment or if it runs robotically with humans checking the

#### **Collapse of the wave function**

In quantum physics, an elementary particle, even if point-like within current measurement capabilities, carries with it an extended cloud of possibilities where it could “show up” in a measurement. The behaviour of this cloud has some similarity to water waves. For example, if the particle encounters a wall with two holes, that extended possibility cloud will pass through both holes. The parts will interact (“interfere”) behind the wall to produce a pattern similar to what water waves would show in an analogous situation. However, if we position a detector screen behind the holes, we will detect the particle at one specific location. At this point of measurement, the cloud of possibilities spontaneously collapses and only one possibility materialises. We can, however, prove the wave-like behaviour of the possibility cloud by using many particles. For example, if we do the experiment until we count one million particles on the screen, we will see a distinct pattern that reveals the wave nature. If we then modify the experiment and first close one hole, count half a million particles on the screen and then close the other hole and count another half million particles on the screen the pattern changes in accordance with the expectations for waves. This shows that when two slits are open the possibility cloud passes both holes at once, whereas a classical particle can only pass through one of the holes. This proves the existence of the possibility cloud that is described by the wave function. The fact that the particle is then observed in one specific location on the screen is called *collapse of the wave function*. More specifics may be found on Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double-slit\\_experiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double-slit_experiment)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measurement\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measurement_problem)

data a year later.

Ellyn Davis, however, claims in Chapter 12 that a conscious human observer is necessary for the electron to make the transition from a non-local to a local state (here and elsewhere, underlining added):

*“The fact that it happens forces us to consider [...] that in order for a particular energy to assume material form, it needs an observer, a “consciousness” expecting it to become matter.*

*Another idea that ‘popping a quiff’<sup>5</sup> forces us to at least entertain is that somehow human consciousness is a fundamental creative force in the Universe, since it is our consciousness (as the ‘observer’) that seems to determine whether something appears as matter or not.” (both quotes: Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: *Metaphysical Interpretations of Quantum Physics*)*

This is wrong. First, after a measurement of a quantum object, it may appear in one place, but it has not “become matter”. It is still a quantum object as before (a more or less complex arrangement of fields), but in a different quantum state. Second, in quantum mechanics, as in all other parts of physics, the outcome of experiments is completely independent from the mental state of the observer, but depends only on the setup of the experiment. This is, why science is called *objective*. Werner Heisenberg, eminent physicist who received the 1932 Nobel Prize in Physics “for the creation of quantum mechanics”<sup>6</sup> says this:

*“Of course, one must not misunderstand the introduction of the observer as to include subjectivistic elements in the description of Nature. The function of the observer is restricted to the registration of decisions, i.e., events in space and time. Here, it does not matter, if the observer is a device or a living being. However, the registration process, i.e., the transition from potentiality to factuality, is indispensable and must not be omitted in the interpretation of quantum mechanics.” (W. Heisenberg: *Physik und Philosophie*, S. Hirzel, Stuttgart 1959, S. 128, quoted from Martin Lambeck, *Physik im New Age. EZW-Information Nr. 110, EZW, Stuttgart XI/1989, [https://www.ezw-berlin.de/downloads/Information\\_110.pdf](https://www.ezw-berlin.de/downloads/Information_110.pdf), and translated from the original German by the author)**

In the example with the electron in a quantum state that includes the possibility to show up at two locations, if we repeat the experiment many times, we will find the electron a certain number of times in location one and in location two the other times. If somebody repeats this in another country a year later and concentrates on finding the electron only in location one, they will still find it the same number of times in locations one and two, respectively, within measurement and statistical uncertainties.

Her statements seem to derive from a misunderstanding of the technical terms “observer” and “measurement”. The measurement problem is one of the most complex and debated issues in physics. It is however clear that quantum behaviour is determined by the physical arrangement of the experiment, or the local conditions in nature and not by the conscious thoughts of the person who performs an experiment. Niels Bohr, who received the Nobel Prize in Physics 1922 for his research on atomic structure<sup>7</sup> puts it this way:

*“It is crucial that in no case the appropriate extension of the semantic framework includes a reference to the observing subject. The latter would preclude a unique communication of experiences.” (N. Bohr: *Atomphysik und menschliche Erkenntnis*, Friedr. Vieweg & Sohn, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1985, S. 110, quoted from Martin Lambeck, *Physik im New Age*.*

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<sup>5</sup> this refers to the collapse of the wave function

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner\\_Heisenberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Heisenberg)

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niels\\_Bohr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niels_Bohr)

*EZW-Information Nr. 110, EZW, Stuttgart XI/1989, [https://www.ezw-berlin.de/downloads/Information\\_110.pdf](https://www.ezw-berlin.de/downloads/Information_110.pdf) and translated by the author)*

But Ellyn Davis mounts far-ranging conclusions on this and related misunderstandings (Chapter 12, section: Metaphysical Interpretations of Quantum Physics):

- (1) “Belief in the power of consciousness to influence material reality.” (this section, 1.1.1)
- (2) “Belief in a single, universal consciousness that permeates all things” (Section 1.1.2)
- (3) “Belief that everything—even our thoughts and emotions—emits energetic vibrations” (Section 1.1.3)

### 1.1.2 Claim 2: “Belief in a single, universal consciousness that permeates all things”

Ellyn Davis claims that quantum physics suggests the existence of a universal consciousness permeating the Universe. She bases this on another misunderstanding of a quantum effect called “entanglement”. This effect is related to pairs of elementary particles. In an entangled state, an interaction with one of the particles will not only fix the state of the measured particle, but also put the paired-up particle in a specific state instantly. This effect has been observed over distances of more than 1000 km. In physicist slang (technical terminology) this is often referred to as “one particle knows what the other does”. This terminology is not meant to imply that the particles have a consciousness of their own and decide what they do in perfect harmony after talking to one another and the rest of the material world. However, Ellyn Davis claims that

*“Quantum physics implies that everything that exists, even atoms and sub-atomic particles, has a form of consciousness (sometimes called a “mind”) and is interconnected through a universal consciousness (the One Mind). This would explain “quantum entanglement” effects, also called “spooky action at a distance” by Einstein.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: Metaphysical Interpretations of Quantum Physics)*

Davis seems to take Einstein’s expression “spooky action at a distance” literally. However, quantum entanglement is exactly the opposite of conscious actions. When the state of one of the entangled particles is fixed by the measurement, the other state is fixed as well. There is no “decision” to be made any more, no random factor involved: the second particle will always have exactly the properties required to complement the measured properties of the first one. Einstein called the interaction spooky not because he believed that electrons are little ghosts who communicate via telepathy, but because this was the first example found in physics where a cause in one place immediately effects a change elsewhere. An interaction in classical physics is always involving something that moves, then reaches a certain place, and when it is there it does something, not before it is there. That for entangled particles a measurement of one particle has an immediate effect on another particle elsewhere goes against this classical experience. Ellyn Davis’ claim that all action at a distance would automatically involve electrons with spirits who communicate via some kind

#### **Quantum entanglement**

The cloud of possibilities is not limited to single particles, but many particles together can be in a common state. Also, “location” is not the only property of particles that is “fuzzy” and has multiple possibilities. The same is true for velocities and spins of the particles.

For example, one can prepare a pair of identical particles with a total spin of zero. If then one particle is measured in a detector, by which process its rotation axis acquires a certain orientation, and its spin is determined to be clockwise, this automatically determines (“fixes”) the spin of the other particle. The other particle acquires its spin state instantly, once the first particle is measured. More on Wikipedia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum\\_entanglement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum_entanglement)

of telepathy is very far fetched and not justified from the physics literature.

Regarding the *universal consciousness*, it is possible in principle that such a universal consciousness controls all things, also the experimenters and their setup, so that free will was an illusion. This is, however, far from being a common conclusion among physicists. For example, J. S. Bell, one of the first to realise quantum entanglement experimentally says:

*Now even if we have arranged that [the entangled particles] a and b are generated by apparently random radioactive devices, housed in separate boxes and thickly shielded, or by Swiss national lottery machines, or by elaborate computer programmes, or by apparently free willed experimental physicists, or by some combination of all of these, we cannot be sure that a and b are not significantly influenced by the same factors X [which include a universal consciousness] that influence [the results of the measurements] A and B. But this way of arranging quantum mechanical correlations would be even more mind boggling than one in which causal chains go faster than light. (J. Bell. BERTLMANN'S SOCKS AND THE NATURE OF REALITY. Journal de Physique Colloques, 1981, 42 (C2), pp.C2-41-C2-62. 10.1051/jphyscol:1981202 . jpa-00220688 downloaded from <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/jpa-00220688/document>)*

The overwhelming majority of the physical literature sees the physical world as inanimate (apart from biological life forms). “Universal consciousness” is of course a pantheistic concept, frequently found in New Age world views.

1.1.3 Claim 3: “Belief that everything - even our thoughts and emotions - emits energetic vibrations”

Regarding Davis’ point (3) above, it is true that thoughts are related to electromagnetic phenomena, measurable for example by EEGs. This is, however, not directly related to quantum theory, which she claims. I have explained already that the thoughts of observers in an experiment do not influence the outcome of that experiment. Therefore, there is no requirement that anything emerges from the human brain to produce such an influence, also no energetic vibrations.

The author equates physical electromagnetic waves associated with brain activity to “vibrations” and “energies” in the context of New Age healing methods:

*“Quantum Physics suggests that everything is “vibrations”—fields of vibrating energy. [...] Therefore, most metaphysical and New Age healing modalities center around ridding ourselves of negative energies and balancing our flow of positive energy in order to reach states of better health and higher consciousness.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: Metaphysical Interpretations of Quantum Physics)*

New Age quackery indeed makes such claims. But there is no scientific basis for this. First, it is not a suggestion, but an established firm result of quantum mechanics that all elementary particles, and therefore all matter, are made of quantum fields that also have energy. Quantum fields fluctuate in general, i.e., the probability to find particles in certain places will in general be different at different times. One may call this vibrations. But such vibrations are not related to emotional or spiritual effects in any way. And finally, the terms “negative energy” and “positive energy” are used in physics, but with completely different meanings than in the New Age context (blue box for details). These physics terms have nothing to do with health or a higher consciousness.

### Negative and positive energy

In physics, energy describes the potential of a thing to perform certain actions. Energy in the Universe is conserved, so it can neither be created nor destroyed. This may seem counterintuitive as in everyday language we think about power stations producing power and losing energy, when we waste it. However, in both cases energy is just transformed from one form into another (or sometimes multiple other forms). For example, matter is associated with a certain energy in proportion to its mass in kilogram. In a power station, one takes some substances (e.g., coal and oxygen) and converts them to less kilograms of another substance (e.g., CO<sub>2</sub>), with the energy of the missing mass converted to heat energy. The heat is used to spin up some parts in a generator, so we have kinetic energy. The generator converts it to electric energy, and so on. Negative and positive energy are frequently used to denote energy missing or being in excess with respect to a reference level. For example, the term “negative energy” may refer to atoms, where electrons are located around an atomic nucleus. The energy such electrons need to get away from the vicinity of a nucleus is called binding energy and will sometimes be referred to as having a negative sign. If such an electron then gets more energy than the one needed to escape the atom (this is the reference energy level in this example), it has a positive energy (n.b.: positive energy is not related to positive charge. The electron keeps its negative charge throughout the processes mentioned here.)

## 1.2. The Zero-Point Field

In quantum mechanics, the zero-point field is the field that remains present in a vacuum, if all other matter and radiation is removed. In Chapter 1, Judy Franklin, another author of the book claims that

*“One square yard<sup>8</sup> of the zero-point field contains enough energy to boil all the water in the world.” (Judy Franklin, chapter 1)*

Different predictions about the energy content of the zero-point field have been made in the physical literature. There is, however, a current observational limit of the energy content of the zero-point field of 10<sup>-9</sup> Joule in a cubic meter (compare blue box). This is a tiny energy, much less than, for example, what the human body would get from a slice of bread. Not even one gram of water could be heated from room temperature to the boiling point with this energy. Franklin’s claim is therefore wrong.

Further, Franklin implies that the zero-point field in a human being can be used to move a mountain:

*“As I questioned God about whether we really have the power to move a mountain, I slowly realized that if this power within us is a zero-point field, if this power is what God first spoke into the creation of the earth because He wanted Adam and Eve to be powerful then His*

*original intent was for them to multiply and expand the Garden of Eden to the point where our entire world would be like an Eden.” (Judy Franklin, chapter 1)*

If we assume 0.1 m<sup>3</sup> (corresponding to roughly 100 kg) for the human body, we find an energy of the zero-point field, that indeed permeates also the human body, of 10<sup>-10</sup> J. Let us say, we wanted to lift the mountain by 1m in order to move it. This would restrict the mass of the mountain we could move to a hundredth of a microgram<sup>9</sup>. It is hard to imagine that this is what Jesus had in mind when he was talking about moving mountains.

Franklin clearly believes that the energy associated with the zero-point field can be extracted to put to a certain use:

*“[...] we need to know what this power is, this ‘sea of quantum light’ that undergirds everything. And, more importantly, we need to know how to access it.” (Franklin, Chapter 1)*

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<sup>8</sup> A volume unit should have been used here. I assume that the author meant “cubic yard”, which a bit more than a cubic metre.

<sup>9</sup> Energy conservation: energy  $E = m g h$ , so  $m = E / (g h) = 10^{-10} \text{ J} / (10 \text{ m s}^{-2} \times 1 \text{ m}) = 10^{-11} \text{ kg} = 0.01 \text{ } \mu\text{g}$

It is commonly agreed among physicists that the zero-point energy cannot be extracted (compare also the references in the blue box). The zero-point field is associated with vacuum with the lowest possible value for the energy. It is called zero-point field, because of the surprising realisation that quantum mechanics does not allow for true nothingness, but that there is always some amount of energy in every bit of space. In other words, the only vacuum that we know of is the one with quantum fluctuations, that is with the energy of the zero-point field. If we wanted to take out that energy, we would also have to remove that space altogether (which is not possible). It is hard to imagine, say, a cube kilometre of nothingness standing on some beach after somebody used the energy to stop a tsunami, as Franklin suggests earlier in the chapter. This is nonsense.

### 1.3. Experimental evidence for an influence of consciousness on matter?

Between Chapters 13 and 14, the book claims in an interlude entitled “Mind over Matter” that scientific evidence would show a statistically significant correlation between human intent and quantum mechanical random number generators. No formal reference is given, but the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research lab at Princeton University is mentioned. A google search brought up a Wikipedia website for a *Global Consciousness Project*<sup>10</sup>. The project also has its own website<sup>11</sup>. The current experiment seems to be a successor of earlier experiments on smaller scale. It operates 70 quantum mechanical experiments, distributed over the globe, that generate random numbers and send the numbers to a computer in Princeton. The experimenters then define time windows around events of global significance, like the terrorist attack in New York on 11th September 2001 or New Year celebrations. Their claim is that for an individual event, there is no deviation of the set of experimental numbers from randomness, but for a sequence of events, the numbers would tend away from the expected random result and show a statistically significant connection with events of global significance. I have checked their statistical methods and they seem ok to me. The data is publicly available. From the Wikipedia page, I found only one scientific paper

#### The zero-point field

The physical reality of that field is an accepted consequence of quantum theory. Space is filled with fluctuating force fields and quickly appearing and disappearing pairs of particles and anti-particles (same mass, opposite electric charge). Successful predictions include the Lamb shift, where a subset of the fluctuations interacts with atomic nuclei and thus affects the binding energy (i.e. the energy required to remove the electron from the atom) of some electrons. The zero-point field also changes the effective charge of an elementary particle in its individual vicinity.

Calculating the exact energy content of the zero-point field is an unsolved problem of contemporary theoretical physics. First attempts have led to values that can be firmly excluded by the observation of the expansion of the Universe which is accelerated by the zero-point energy. The accelerated expansion has been established experimentally over the last 20 years (Nobel Prize 2011). The aforementioned prediction from quantum theory is firmly excluded. The observed acceleration of the expansion of the Universe allows at most for the zero-point field to have an energy density of  $10^{-9}$  Joule in every cube metre. For comparison, normal functioning of the human body requires about  $10^7$  Joule per day, which would be equivalent to about  $(200 \text{ km})^3$  of zero-point field.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero-point\\_energy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero-point_energy)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vacuum\\_energy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vacuum_energy)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmological\\_constant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmological_constant)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food\\_energy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_energy)

<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global\\_Consciousness\\_Project](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Consciousness_Project)

<sup>11</sup> <http://noosphere.princeton.edu/index.html>

from authors not involved in the project. They demonstrated that there was no significant deviation of the sequence of numbers from randomness during the September 11 attacks, which seems to be recognised by the people who lead the experiment. Criticism includes the selection of time windows for the analysis: If one looks at the data and only then defines how long the event lasts, one can select a data range that shows the desired effect. The project scientists claim they would not do this, and would use the same recipe for repeated events. More independent analysis would be helpful to judge the outcome of the experiment.

Even, if the statistical correlation could be confirmed, this would not prove a link of consciousness or intent, as claimed in the *The Physics of Heaven*, with the quantum mechanical experiment, because of the lack of a scientific theory that explains why the connection occurs and that makes testable predictions. Also, at least one more direct effect of the non-local consciousness would be needed. From astrophysics, we may take the discovery of gravitational waves as example: When two neutron stars orbit each other, they emit gravitational waves as predicted by Einstein's theory of general relativity. This effect reduces the orbital separation of the two neutron stars. When the shrinking of this orbital separation was first discovered, and shown to correspond to the predictions of the theory, it received high credibility, because of the correspondence with the theory. But the existence of gravitational waves was not regarded as demonstrated until they were directly measured by a dedicated experiment. The *Global Consciousness Project* is at least two steps away from this and thus the claim that

*Scientists [...] have demonstrated a connection between intention and the behavior of quantum electronic devices (interlude "Mind over Matter?" between Chapters 13 and 14)*

has to be rejected.

#### 1.4. Endorsement of quantum mysticism by physicists

The book claims support for quantum mysticism by physicists. For example, Ellyn Davis says in chapter 11, The rise of quantum mysticism, that famous physicists like Niels Bohr, Wolfgang Pauli and Erwin Schrödinger were inspired by "mystical ideas". The latter is a very broad term, and the only specifics we are given is the theory of synchronicity, apparently a kind of premonition in connection with dreams, which Wolfgang Pauli seems to have been involved with. I do not see how this would be connected to the physics they discovered. Quantum mysticism is generally rejected by physicists, as evidenced by the quotes above from important physicists, including Niels Bohr.

Davis is wrong to connect these famous physicists with quantum mysticism:

*"Several early quantum physicists were inspired by mystical ideas [...] Later, quantum mysticism became a part of mainstream thought [...] (Ellyn Davis, chapter 11, "The rise of quantum mysticism")*

as represented by the works of New Age author and physician Deepak Chopra<sup>12</sup>. One of the few physicists she names who actually appears to endorse quantum mysticism is Alan Wolf, a former professor at San Diego state university<sup>13</sup>.

Kris Vallotton explains in the foreword that the book "Physics of Heaven" was not written by scientists. It may therefore be irritating that one author, David van Koevering, is introduced as "quantum physicist" in the section "About the authors". This does obviously not meant to imply a formal training in physics at a university, which would likely have been

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<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deepak\\_Chopra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deepak_Chopra) (there seems to be a typo in the first name in the book)

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred\\_Alan\\_Wolf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Alan_Wolf)



mentioned<sup>14</sup>. Ellyn Davis, who describes many quantum mechanical phenomena well in chapter 11, has a degree in biochemistry. If physics was among her further degrees in the “About the authors” section, this would again likely have been mentioned.

## 1.5. Promoted New Age practises

The *Physics of Heaven* mixes established scientific knowledge with obscure New Age methods, for example:

- magnets to increase blood flow (just before Chapter 4)
- tuning forks to produce healing sound frequencies (just before Chapter 4)
- Kirlian/aura photography to visualise “healing energy” (just before Chapter 5)
- pulsing biomagnetic fields to accelerate healing (just before Chapter 5)
- infrasound from New Age healers (just before Chapter 5)
- musical tones to repair DNA (just before Chapter 12)
- sound and radio transmitters to clear Sea pollution (just before Chapter 12)
- 100% cancer healing with electric currents (just before Chapter 16)

All of this is quackery, which can be easily verified by a quick search in the internet. The book is so full of New Age philosophy, techniques and quackery that it is hard to decide which examples to choose.

## 2. Theological Critique

The reason why this book discusses New Age philosophy and techniques so much is their believe that, since Satan can only copy the original works of God, the existence of the New Age copy implies the existence of an original thing that God has made:

*“If there is a counterfeit, there is an authentic that we need to find and reclaim” (Jonathan Welton, Chapter 5, section: Counterfeits Reveal Authenticity)*

In addition, they believe that the bible is insufficient to teach us about techniques how to heal people by miracle and perform arbitrary miracles at will, but that Jesus expects us to do so:

*“Why? Because I believe what the Lord has been showing both of us is the absolute truth that will help us bring God’s kingdom to this earth. The Lord is ready to use sound, light, and energy in ways we never dreamed, but we first need to have some foundational understandings.” (Judy Franklin, Introduction: A Glimpse of Things to Come, section: Visions, underlining by the author)*

*“It shouldn’t be a stretch for us to believe that, as “observers” to whom Jesus gave all power in heaven and earth, we can, through faith, intent, prayer and declaration, call things into existence.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: God-Truth: By Faith, We Can Speak Things Into Existence)*

As discussed below, the claim that Jesus gave all power to the Christians is wrong. But following the argument, if Jesus gave us that power, but we don’t see ourselves having it, we need to do something about this. The solution they propose is to clean the New Age practises of their demonic stains and embrace them, so the church is empowered:

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<sup>14</sup> Confirmed by authors of a biographical webpage, <http://www.evidences.net/vankoevering.php> bestätigt.

*“All of the Christian leaders who contributed to this book [...] agree that there are precious truths hidden in the New Age that belong to us as Christians and need to be extracted from the worthless.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 2, section: Skating to the Puck)*

*“Many in the church have tended to write off all dabblings into quantum mysticism as blasphemous and demonically inspired. However, there are a few courageous Christians who are beginning to speak up and say, “Wait a minute, there may be some God truth there that really belongs to us and that we should know about!” These Christians are spearheading an effort to extract the precious from the worthless and make those truths available to the church at large.”(Ellyn Davis, Chapter 2, section: The Time Delay)*

Such add-ons to Christianity go obviously directly against scripture:

*“Do not go beyond what is written.” (1 Cor 4, 6),*

*“Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.” (Proverbs 30, 5; 6),*

and disagree with the separation from other religions in the Old Testament and from magic in the New Testament:

*“A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.” (Acts 19, 19)*

In Acts 16, Paul is confronted with a woman with a spirit of divination that proclaims very precious truth:

*“She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” “ (Acts, 16, 17)*

In contrast to what is suggested in the Physics of Heaven, Paul and his fellow workers make no attempt to extract anything precious:

*“Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.” (Acts, 16, 18)*

Instead of searching for new kinds of spirituality, the bible urges us to focus on Christ:

*“[...] Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.” (Colossians 2:2-4)*

In order to sell such an agenda to Christians, they need to address several key issues including:

- (1) Can quantum mysticism as a basis of their belief system at all be integrated into christianity or is it incompatible with basic Christian beliefs?
- (2) Is it acceptable to seek new spiritual revelation apart from the Bible that could justify the integration of parts of New Age philosophy and practises in Christianity?
- (3) Is such new revelation available so that we could proceed with integrating New Age?
- (4) Does God want the church to go ahead and integrate New Age now?
- (5) If the church does integrate New Age, where will this take Christianity?

The book makes an attempt to address all five points. In the following five subsections, I discuss their work and evaluate their findings.

## 2.1 Quantum Mysticism and Christianity

Ellyn Davis works out in detail what she thinks Christian faith would consist of and how it relates to her unsubstantiated claims about consequences of quantum mechanics.

### 2.1.1 God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, sin, the Bible and life after death

In Chapter 12 (section: “Compatibilities with christianity?”), Ellyn Davis discusses the question:

*“Are any of the ideas advanced by quantum mysticism compatible with Christianity?”*

She affirms that they are not compatible in some “most important ways”, namely God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, sin, the Bible and life after death and I share this assessment. For example, the Bible associates consciousness with the spirit that God breathes into some particular biological systems he has made, not into electrons and the entire Universe. If the quantum world is the “real” world, how can some be separated from God (sin), if God is the “Ultimate observer” and his consciousness is connected to the world-consciousness as all other consciousnesses are? Being incompatible with the Bible and the triune God means to be incompatible with the entirety of Christianity. What would Christianity consist of other than the triune God and the revelation contained in the Bible?

Nevertheless, Davis decides that it is not worth to explore the differences between Quantum Mysticism and Christianity, but devotes several pages to the commonalities she sees.:

*“[...] there are many precious “God-truths” hidden in Quantum Mysticism for us to claim as our own.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section Compatibilities with Christianity?)*

She equates the wrong claim of quantum mysticism that the conscious thoughts of the experimenter would cause quantum effects in a physics experiment to miracles enacted by the faith of Christians. She claims that Jesus gave the believers all power in heaven and earth (without a citation, I don’t know what this claim is based on) and that thus faith and intent can perform miracles in a mechanistic way, similar to the alleged influence of the consciousness of an experimenter on quantum physics experiments:

*“Christians believe that through faith (which could be considered a form of “intent”) we can affect changes in the material world, and, as Romans 4: 17 says, “call the things that are not as if they are.” [...] It shouldn’t be a stretch for us to believe that, as “observers” to whom Jesus gave all power in heaven and earth, we can, through faith, intent, prayer and declaration, call things into existence. Jesus has given us the power, through our faith and our intent, to “pop a quiff<sup>15</sup>” and bring things from the unseen world into the visible.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: God-Truth: By Faith, We Can Speak Things Into Existence)*

To quote Romans 4,17 more completely: [...] *God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.* It is God, not man, who calls things into being. From Matthew 28, 18: *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* Again it is Jesus our Lord and God to whom all power has been given, not to men. Davis wrongly claims a position for man that, according to the bible, belongs to God.

### 2.1.2 Faith and miracles

Christian faith in the bible is not just the intent (or the wish) to perform something but involves trust in and commitment to God. For example, “righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” (Romans 3, 22); the apostle Peter heals “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” (Acts, 3, 6). A central passage is Matthew 6,6, “But when you pray,

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<sup>15</sup> this refers to the collapse of the wave function

go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Biblical faith cannot be understood in the framework of quantum mysticism as presented by Ellyn Davis. Christian faith involves trust in and commitment to God, not some sort of (imagined) physical mechanisms triggered by thoughts.

In contrast to biblical faith, Davis believes faith is equivalent to intent, and never mentions that for Christians the focus of faith is Jesus. She believes that it is not God directly who does the miracles in the context of Christian faith, but that words would carry, mechanistically, the power that then evolves into the miracle:

*“in the spiritual realm words can carry God’s power and authority and bring the promises of God’s Word from the unseen spiritual world into the natural.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: God-Truth: By Faith, We Can Speak Things Into Existence)*

In the Bible we are not taught to use the right words to trigger a miracle, like a magic formula, but what matters is that God answers prayer and works accordingly:

*“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Matthew 6, 7+8)*

Davis also believes that the thoughts of everybody have supernatural power:

*“Since Christians believe that our thoughts and attitudes (“the thoughts and intents of the heart”) can have a powerful influence on the world around us, it shouldn’t be hard for us to accept that thoughts and emotions might actually give off energetic “vibrations” that can cause changes in the physical and emotional atmosphere. [...] Christians also should have no trouble believing that some vibrations are good for us and give off healing energies while some vibrations give off damaging, unhealthy energies.”(Chapter 12, section: God-Truth: Thoughts and Attitudes Are Powerful)*

The psychosomatic effects of thoughts and words on the person who thinks them or hears them acoustically will not be discussed here. The issue is whether there is a principle in the Christian faith that can be generalised to everybody, that connects thoughts with a supernatural effect on somebody else without God answering a prayer.

Healing is a spiritual gift in the New Testament. It is only given to specific Christians: “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.” (1 Cor 12, 4). This is the Holy Spirit, one of the three persons in God. The Holy Spirit is given to followers of the true God, only, “The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.” (John 14, 17). Not every Christian can have the same gift, or a gift of his choice, but the Holy Spirit “distributes them to each one, just as he determines.” (1 Cor 12, 11), though the believers are encouraged to desire certain gifts: “Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.” (1 Cor 12, 31).

No matter how hard somebody tries and how much hidden knowledge one acquires, they will not receive the Holy Spirit, unless they repent from their sin and accept salvation by faith in Jesus’ death in their place. Even for Christians there is no technique by which they can get a certain gift. They may ask the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit may decide not to give it at his sole discretion. Christians do not believe that thoughts and emotions give off impersonal vibrations and energies that cause further healing energies by some mechanism, but that, if God heals after a prayer, it is the Holy Spirit, i.e., the sovereign God, who kindly listens to his redeemed, beloved children and acts accordingly.

Davis also promotes that the spiritual world of the Bible is realised in terms of physics, fitting with her earlier, unsubstantiated, claim that Christian faith was realised in quantum mechanics:

*In fact, some Christian leaders believe that spirit beings such as demons and angels exist on different “bandwidths” or frequencies than human beings and that is why we seldom see them or are aware of the ways they are affecting our lives. (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: God-Truth: Thoughts and Attitudes Are Powerful)*

There is currently no hint of intelligent beings (apart from mankind) who would communicate on any electromagnetic frequency<sup>16</sup>. The claim can therefore not be based on scientific results. My electronic search in several standard English translations of the bible resulted in zero hits for the words “frequency” and “bandwidth”. The claim is obviously not based on the Bible, either. However, a quick google search with the terms “angel” and “frequency” or “bandwidth” will bring up New Age related web pages. Therefore, this suggests that the “Christian leaders” Ellyn Davis refers to base their beliefs neither on science nor the bible, but, likely, on New Age sources.

In her exposition, Davis has removed the living God from the supernatural world and has replaced Him by a machinery to be useful for man. Biblical faith, in contrast, is not about man’s great achievements but about God’s power and His mighty works (John 6, 28; 29: “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’ ”). Quantum mysticism puts man into the centre and is therefore opposed to Christianity.

## 2.2 Accepting new revelation apart from the Bible

If one wanted to integrate New Age beliefs into Christianity, this would require the general openness to accept new revelation and to modify doctrines that stand in the way. Bill Johnson’s Chapter 4 addresses the issue. His chain of arguments is as follows:

- (a) God’s revelation in the Bible is incomplete.
- (b) Revelation in connection with Jesus trumps all other revelation.
- (c) Genuine revelation (comparable to the New Testament) to specific people continued at all times and still continues today.
- (d) Hence, we should accept God’s personal revelations to, e.g., Bill Johnson, one of which confirms points (a) and (b).

In the following, I summarise Johnson’s arguments, explain my problems with it and highlight conflicts with scripture.

### (a) God’s revelation in the Bible is incomplete

The title of Chapter 4 is “Recovering our spiritual inheritance”, but Johnson makes clear from the outset that he actually writes about a “spiritual inheritance for future generations”. He starts his argument that the Bible was incomplete with the claim:

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<sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_for\\_extraterrestrial\\_intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_for_extraterrestrial_intelligence), Ng et al. 2022, “Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence with the ngVLA”, The Astronomical Journal, 164, 205, freely available online at <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/1538-3881/ac92e7>, see in particular beginning of 4th paragraph of the introduction

*“When truth came to the early Church, it was to increase [...]”. (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: Truth should always move forward)*

Earlier, Johnson connects the terms truth, revelation and inheritance:

*“Jesus said, ‘The things that are revealed are for you and your children forever.’ That means that once a truth has been revealed to the people of God, it is never to be forgotten. [...]” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: Unclaimed Mantles)*

*Revelation comes [...] to move truth forward, [...]” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

*“Revelation comes [...] to create a legacy of inheritance for future generations.” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

If truth is to increase, it was not complete before. To establish now a spiritual “inheritance” means to record new revelation that has not been given before. Johnson develops this point further:

*“But there were realms of God that were entered into in past generations that were neglected.” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: Truth should always move forward)*

Using the term “realms of God” he is clearly talking about actual knowledge in connection with God. Since “past generations” have “neglected” that knowledge it should now be made available. This would imply that knowledge about God exists that did not make it into the bible, but that we should now know about. The reason is, he claims, that

*“Gods Kingdom is so focussed on increase and advancement” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section Truth should always move forward)*

backed up by comparison to Israel’s occupation of the promised land and the parable of the three man where one buried his talent so it would be safe. While these passages may speak about increase and advancement in some sense, it is clearly wrong to associate that with “increase of truth” and advancement of Christian knowledge beyond revealed scripture.

(b) Revelation in connection with Jesus trumps all other revelation.

In the second quote in (a), above, Johnson wrongly ascribes a halve-verse from Deuteronomy 29, 29 (‘The things that are revealed are for you and your children forever.’) to Jesus. This is significant as Johnson believes that Bible passages that contain Jesus teachings directly have a higher authority than other parts of the Bible:

*“[...] which means that you need to challenge any knowledge you have about God that you can’t find in the person of Jesus.” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

So, by first wrongly ascribing the above quote from Deuteronomy to Jesus, Johnson elevates this quote from the Old Testament from second-class revelation to first-class revelation. This would also prepare Johnson’s arguments against objections based on verses like the aforementioned ones (1 Cor 4,6 or Proverbs 30, 5; 6). However, Jesus also regarded the Old Testament scriptures as authoritative:

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. (Matthew 5, 17+18)*

(c) Genuine revelation (comparable to the New Testament) to specific people continued at all times and still continues today.

I have argued in (a) that one can essentially equate *revelation* and *truth* in Johnson's exposition. This helps to understand the parallelism he makes:

*"When truth came to the early Church, it was to increase [...]". (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: Truth should always move forward)*

*"When revelation comes to us, it is intended to launch us into a divine encounter [...]". (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

With revelation, Johnson means divine revelation of truth (see earlier quotes above). The parallel expressions "When truth came to the early church..." and "When revelation comes to us..." seem to imply that he sees revelation to today's prophets on the same level as the revelation to the early church that led to the New Testament. This impression is confirmed by the example he then gives:

*"When Paul was knocked off his donkey in his encounter with God, he didn't strut away from the encounter boasting, 'Wait till you see the books I'm about to write!'" (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

In the quote above, he connected "revelation to us" (the church today one supposes) to divine encounters. In the example here, he connects Paul's encounter with God to Paul's letters in the New Testament, again drawing a parallel between revelation to people today and books of the New Testament.

Pulling together this well-veiled deception spread over several pages: God continued with revelation comparable to the New Testament over the centuries and is still giving new revelation today:

*"secrets, mysteries, mantles, and realms of God that have been abandoned and ignored" [...] are "waiting for someone in this generation to come along and claim them". (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: Where do we start?)*

Johnson avoids in his summary the terms 'revelation' and 'truth', but from the context, it is clear that he means this. So, in the past, the church failed to write down much of the new revelation, but he believes that now this should be done.

(d) Hence, we should accept God's personal revelations to, e.g., Bill Johnson, one of which confirms points (a) and (b).

To confirm the previous argument, Johnson gives some new revelation, apparently given to him personally:

*"God is saying: There are things that are lying there, mysteries to be understood, inheritances that are untended, uncared for, unoccupied. But they're there for the taking". (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: Where do we start?)*

The Bible says:

*"My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2, 2+3)*

God's mystery is Christ and it seems unlikely that modern prophets will reveal more things about him than the apostles, his closest connections on earth, whose inheritance is recorded in the New Testament. Johnson pretends to be Christ-centred, but carefully avoids talking about the cross:

*"It's out of His righteousness that Jesus vindicates the effect of sin in the world [...]". (Bill Johnson, Chapter 4, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

When Jesus took our sin at the cross and rose on the third day he also established an anchor in time. Johnson avoids mentioning this anchor point. The reason why the Apostolic writings are authoritative is that they are eye witnesses of Jesus' life on earth, death for our sin and resurrection. Paul's writings are endorsed by the apostle Peter as Scripture in 2. Peter 3, 16. The canon of the New Testament is recognised by large parts of Christianity as authoritative<sup>17</sup>. It seems unwise to shift the balance towards new revelation from people who see themselves as called in some way.

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3, 16+17)*

## 2.3 New and direct revelation from God

The book has a logical structure it follows well. I have explained already why I disagree with key statements made in the book. However, following the logic of the books structure, if one would accept that that (a) there was “precious God-truth” in New Age stuff which (b) Christians should extract, and (c) in particular quantum mysticism contained elements compatible with Christianity, further that (d) the bible was insufficient to guide us here, and (e) God started with revelation with the New Testament but since then the Church has neglected writing down the ongoing revelation continuously since 2000 years, (all of which I reject, compare above) it seems logical that one would now need prophets to channel the new revelation from God to us.

Bob Jones, who is presented as a contemporary prophet (deceased in 2014 after the book appeared) in the section about the co-authors, contributes to this in Chapter 3. Starting with “God recently showed me” he prophesies among other things “prosperity” and the “fullness of Pentecost” and connects this to “power” and “vibrating together”, alluding to New Age vocabulary. Ray Hughes, according to the description of contributors “recognised internationally as clear prophetic voice”, joins in Chapter 7:

*“I believe the Holy Spirit has given me [...] information [...] about sound, light and vibration [...] based on scientific fact, confessed speculation and spiritual revelation.” (Ray Hughes, Chapter 7, first section)*

And, after a lengthy discussion of sound and light in various contexts, he connects them to the advent of “authority in the church”. Finally, Beni Johnson brings some more prophesy:

*“Then I got this revelation of what God was saying: It is time we move in authority in our prayers over territory. It is a time of territorial praying. There were things that God wanted us to take over territorially and say to the enemy, ‘You cannot have this; it’s not yours. Get away.’ (Beni Johnson, Chapter 15, section: Birds in Wales)*

In the context of the book, one probably has to understand this as an encouragement to claim New Age practises for the church, since she concludes with alluding to New Age vocabulary:

*“The vibrations of heaven are a powerful, life-changing substance. Anything is possible when you plug in.” (Beni Johnson, Chapter 15, section: Birds in Wales)*

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<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon), Michael J. Kruger, Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books, Crossway, ISBN-13 : 978-1433505003



But according to the Bible, it is the Holy Spirit who comes from heaven and is life-changing. He is a person giving gifts as he decides, not a substance that we can plug into whenever we want to. The formulation chosen by Beni Johnson fits with the mechanistic view of the supernatural, which is close to the New Age but not to the Christian message.

## 2.4 Does God want the church to go ahead and integrate New Age now?

The reader who followed my discussion up to here will understand that I would answer this with a clear “no”. The book argues for a positive answer to this question. Chapter 16, seems to first support the main line of the argument of the book that God expects Christians to change the world by regularly performing miracles, and to claim that they should start today. It’s main point is, however, to address the question in the title of this section. The title of Chapter 16, “Pulling The Tomorrows of God into Today”, refers to the future Messianic Kingdom. In a fascinating reprise of Satan’s discourse in Genesis 3, 1 (“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”), Johnson sets out to discuss the question:

*“If it’s true that the promises of restored cities and healed nations are actually millennium promises . . . and if the promise of God’s glory being manifest all over the earth is far off into the future . . . and if in fact the people of God will not reach a place of true maturity, living like one mature man—then I must ask the question—is there anyone hungry enough for what He has shown us in the Scriptures that we will pull into our day something that is reserved for another?” (Bill Johnson, Ch. 16, section: Our Greatest Challenge)*

Johnson really poses the question: Did God really say these promises are for a future age, only? The point here is not that there may be individual elements of the Messianic Kingdom that are for today like restoration for some communities and healing for individuals and relationships. What he says is that, if indeed God has decided that some are not available today (“reserved for another” age), he encourages the readers with his second question to ignore this and realise something like the future Messianic Kingdom now by some sort of human effort, fitting with the idea to integrate New Age elements into Christianity to be able to perform more miracles, as promoted elsewhere in the book. Being reserved for another age means of course that it is not God’s will for it to take place in this age. Forcing something against God’s will is impossible. Attempting it is disobedience towards God.

Johnson then devotes most of the chapter to the justification of his thesis that God would even expect us to disobey him, at least in certain circumstances, so that Christians could safely go ahead with changing the world with their miracles, whether God revealed this in the Bible or not. He underlines that this is what he means by giving an example about disobeying his parents as a child, when they sent him to bed in the evening:

*“I remember when I was a child and my parents would have guests come over to our house to visit. [...] But it was painful to have to go to bed [...] Sometimes, when I couldn’t take it any longer, I would sneak quietly into the hallway, just to listen. [...] If my parents caught me they usually sent me back to bed. But there were a few times when they thought my curiosity was humorous enough to let me come out to be with them just a little longer. The risk was worth it!” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 16, section: Only Children are ready)*

Naming the section “Only children are ready”, he is alluding to Matthew 18, 3, “unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”, apparently suggesting that disobedience is the characteristic of children that Jesus meant when he talked about salvation. He seems to suggest that if we want to get the benefits of the future messianic kingdom now in our age, the key is to disobey God regarding spiritual things we are desperate for.

This interpretation of Matthew 18, 3 is not justified from its context. The disciples were discussing ranks in the kingdom of heaven, and Jesus is making the point that “whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18, 4). Many bible verses tell us that, on the contrary, it is obedience God expects from us: “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching” (John 14, 23), “Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.” (John 14, 24). The bible also contains many explicit commands for children to obey their parents, for example Eph. 6,1; Col. 3, 20.

Johnson argues his case from the bible in several ways. First, he presents the rejection of the Messianic Kingdom and of Jesus as Messiah by the Jews and the connection to salvation being extended to the Gentiles. He concludes:

*“The implication of the story is this—if you see it, you can have it! Perhaps it would be better to say, if God lets you see future promises, it’s because He’s hoping they will hook you, and cause you to hunger for those things. It is through a desperate heart that you are able to bring the fulfillment of those promises into your day.” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 16, section: Israel was Blinded by God)*

Here, Johnson distorts scripture in several ways. For the Jews in Jesus’ day, the Messianic Kingdom was not a promise for the future, but one for their time: “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’” (Matt. 4, 17), but the offer was withdrawn after Jesus’ rejection “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.” (Matt. 21, 43). There was no requirement for the Jews to be “desperate”, or “hungry”, but to repent from their sins. The conclusion “if you see it, you can have it” reminds again on Genesis 3. Adam and Eve surely saw the fruits on all the trees in the garden. This did not imply that they could have them all. Other examples include the spiritual gifts. Not every gift is available to every believer (compare above). In Deuteronomy 1, 26ff the Jews first refuse to enter the promised land, after which God takes the promise away from them for some time. They then decide to attack anyway, but God does not change his mind and they lose and have to go on their 40 years journey before they are allowed to come back. They saw their promised land and could not have it at that time, even though they were desperate and hungry (“You came back and wept before the Lord, but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you.”, Deut. 1, 45).

Johnson’s next argument for disobeying God in forcing the Messianic Kingdom to begin now against God’s will is Jesus’ first public miracle turning water into wine described in John 2. When his mother describes the need for more wine, Jesus replies

*“Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come.” (John 2, 4)*

Johnson believes this would mean that the time to “reveal Himself as the miracle worker” has not yet come for Jesus. Mary then commands the servants “Do whatever he tells you.”, and Jesus goes ahead and does the miracle. Johnson says that God the father now had changed his mind and told Jesus to perform the miracle “through her desperation”. John confirms that this miracle indeed marks the beginning of Jesus’ public supernatural ministry:

*What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2, 11)*

So, the question to answer is, if Jesus was indeed unaware that this was going to happen, and if indeed Mary’s desperate prayer caused the Father to drop his plan for Jesus’ ministry and adopt Mary’s suggestion instead. If this was true, it would have been a really significant point in the gospel: before, the father wanted Jesus to be limited to natural means, but on this wedding when finally everybody was drunk, he decided suddenly that now is the right time to start the public supernatural ministry. In this view it must seem very strange that the wedding

is mentioned nowhere else in the bible. Instead, the apostles associate the start of Jesus ministry with his baptism (Acts 1, 22), which is before the wedding in Cana. Peter says that the story of Jesus was

*“beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached — how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power,” (Acts 10, 37).*

This suggests that the power to perform miracles was linked to the Holy Spirit Jesus was anointed with at his baptism. No special decision of the father is mentioned that would be required before Jesus could perform miracles publicly. So, the time for public miracles would have started with Jesus’ baptism, and then the wine miracle in Kana would just have been the first public one he happened to perform. Jesus actually had performed a miracle three days before (John 2, 1) the wedding in Kana (but after his baptism): he sees Nathanael under the fig tree from a position where he could not see him naturally. That this is a miracle is clear from Nathanael’s reaction:

*“Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” (John 1, 49).*

But apparently, this event was not very public. If Johnson’s interpretation that Jesus was unaware about the time when he should start performing miracles in public until briefly before he did it was correct, this would at least be surprising given that Jesus just had done a miracle that involved seeing things he could not have seen naturally. Many other parts of scripture testify that Jesus could see far ahead into the future (e.g., the prophecy on his return in Matthew 24). It would therefore seem really surprising that Jesus could see things thousands of years ahead, but did not know what he was going to do minutes before he did it.

An alternative interpretation of John 2, 4, “My hour has not yet come.”, would be that Jesus was making a connection to his crucifixion. There are six similar statements in John’s gospel (7, 30; 8, 20; 12, 23; 12, 27; 13, 1; 17, 1). In each of these cases he is clearly referring to the cross. For example:

*“Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.” (John 13,1)*

At the last supper, Jesus connected wine at passover with his blood. So, when asked for wine, Jesus’ reply would mean that the hour to give his blood had not yet come, but they could have some real wine instead. The reader will judge for themselves which interpretation they find more convincing. Given the possibility of the alternative interpretation, it seems unnecessary to follow Johnson in his far-reaching conclusions about Jesus’ lack of foreknowledge and the dependence of God’s plan on human actions, here Mary’s desperate wish for Jesus to perform a miracle.

Next, Johnson claims that Jesus conversation with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well in John 4 was not yet in God’s plan, because the time for non-Jews to hear the gospel would only come after Jesus’ death and resurrection. By asking Jesus to stay with them for two days, which he did,

*“They pulled a privilege into their day that was reserved for another time.” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 16, section: The Purpose of Revelation)*

While it is true that Jesus ministry was focussed towards the Jews, this never excluded Gentiles. Examples include the worship by the Magi in Matthew 2.

The best argument for his case, Johnson believes, is that King David could break God’s law, because he had the right attitude before God. He argues that David learnt about the presence and heart of God in his youth. Then he became so hungry for experiencing God’s presence in worship that when he had brought the Ark of the Covenant and put it into the

tent in Jerusalem, David established a 24h worship for decades instead of burnt offerings. Because of his hunger, God would let David experience the 24h worship, even though that was reserved for another age. He claims that this would have been forbidden by the law and that only

*“Because of the blood of Jesus, each believer has access to the presence of God to minister to Him with thanksgiving, praise, and worship.” (Bill Johnson, Chapter 16, section: The Most Profound Story)*

Checking these things is difficult, because Johnson does not give references. He seems to refer to 2 Samuel 6, which recounts the return of the Ark to Jerusalem. Contrary to Johnson’s claim, burnt offerings do take place:

*“They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord.” (2 Sam 6, 17).*

No doubt David ordered the priests to actually carry out the sacrifices. It is not clear what Johnson means exactly that would have been forbidden by the law, certainly not thanksgiving, praise and worship. It is completely unclear why they should have been reserved for a future age. Neither does the fact that thank offerings had formal procedures (Lev 7, 12-15) exclude real thankful devotion, nor does the fact that the New Testament believer has access to God via the blood of Jesus restrict thanksgiving, praise and worship to believers from the age of the church. One of many examples from the Old Testament:

*“Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said, ‘I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him;’” (Exodus, 15, 1+2).*

## 2.5 Where will this take the church? — Elevating man to take God’s place

*The Physics of Heaven* contains 115 occurrences of the word *power*<sup>18</sup>. Words derived from the roots *sin* and *repentance* feature 14 times, taken together. The central theme of the book is power. In many places the book discusses the possibility of man attaining supernatural power in general and in particular over history and creation. Here, man is effectively given functions the Bible assigns to God. They also explicitly substitute man in the place of God in certain Bible passages that actually state God’s sovereignty.

### (a) The central theme: supernatural power

The following examples should make clear how central the theme of power is in the book.

Bob Jones prophesies increasing miraculous powers,

*“When it says in Hebrews 6:1, ‘And having tasted the good word of God,’ that was the power of Pentecost. But when it says, “and then the power of the world to come,” that’s millennial power. The power of the world to come will be 10 times that of Pentecost. [...] We’re talking about 10 times the power that was released at Pentecost. [...] We’re being prepared for the main Pentecost and millennial power, our priesthood power. (Bob Jones, Chapter 3, section: We are being prepared for the Second Pentacost),*

and associates angelic power with mysterious sounds:

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<sup>18</sup> including derivatives like “powerful”

*“in Atlanta I was at a church with Rick Joyner and there was a sound [...] It had an angel power with it.” (Bob Jones, Chapter 3, section: There’s a new sound coming)*

Jonathan Welton sees the church gaining superpowers by adopting christianised New Age practices in Chapter 5:

*“The way that God moves in power looks a lot like the New Age, [...]” (Jonathan Welton, Chapter 5, section: The Source)*

*“Jesus Himself was accused of walking in dark, supernatural power, we should be prepared for the same accusation.” (Jonathan Welton, Chapter 5, section: Resistance)*

*“Imagine that the Church had a warehouse full of 10,000 nuclear warheads, [...] we have been robbed of our supernatural goods [...] catch the thief (Satan), [...] he has launched the Church into double the spirituality and power that she had before” (Jonathan Welton, Chapter 5, section The Commission)*

Ellyn Davis is concerned about the mechanics of how these superpowers work:

*“Prophets have long recognized that their words carry a force or power that is more than just the words, but is like an “energy” that empowers what they prophesy.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 6, 2nd paragraph)*

(b) Power over creation

*“A tsunami was coming [...] all they did was point to the tsunami and command it to stop and suddenly everything became still. In other visions I saw Christians who had been transformed by God’s sound stopping floods and natural disasters. I saw hurricanes headed towards our coast and Christians speaking to the winds and telling them to stop. I also saw believers so in love with God and so filled with power after being changed by this sound that unbelievers would run to them begging to receive what they have. I saw the greatest revival the world has ever known” (Judy Franklin, “Introduction: A Glimpse of Things to Come”, section: Visions, underlining by the author)*

Franklin continues with more miracles the believers should perform. She seems to believe that God’s kingdom means that Christians become a kind of super-hero who control natural disasters by their supernatural power and impress people so much with this that all convert to Christianity. Love of God is mentioned as well, and I have quoted a longer part to show the weight the love of God has in her exposition. This is very different from what we find in the New Testament. Jesus of course also performed miracles to confirm his claim to be the Son of God, but in essence his ministry was about showing God’s love, not God’s power:

*“Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” (Mark 15, 32).*

It is a temptation to perform miracles at the wrong time:

*“The tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4, 3-4).*

John 6 describes a situation that is in some ways similar to what Franklin envisages: Jesus performed a bread miracle, after which a great number of people are enthusiastic about him. They want to make him king, but Jesus escapes. Jesus then enters into a theological discussion with them. Point being that the miracle, even though it was performed by Jesus, did not cause them to have the right kind of faith in him:

*“But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.” (John 6, 36)*

Jesus then continues the discussion and says they must eat his flesh and drink his blood to get eternal life. Given that the passage is introduced by “The Jewish Passover Festival was near.” (John 6,4), and in light of the later events, this clearly points figuratively to the acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for one’s sin. Franklin’s vision is the diametric opposite of Jesus’ ministry, who pointed people to repentance and the cross instead of seeking reverence that is solely based on the demonstration of power. The reasons Franklin gives for revival include power but she does not mention sin or repentance. Similarly, her mentioning of love for God is very brief. The unbelievers in her vision beg men, not God.

Ellyn Davis assigns God-like power to create the material world to man:

*“human consciousness, acting as individualized expressions of divine consciousness, has the power to create material reality.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 11, section: *The Rise of Quantum Mysticism*)*

*First, there is the belief in the power of consciousness to influence material reality. (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: *Metaphysical Interpretations of Quantum Physics*)*

*“It shouldn’t be a stretch for us to believe that, as “observers” to whom Jesus gave all power in heaven and earth, we can, through faith, intent, prayer and declaration, call things into existence. Jesus has given us the power, through our faith and our intent, to “pop a quiff<sup>19</sup>” and bring things from the unseen world into the visible.” (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: *God-Truth: By Faith, We Can Speak Things Into Existence*)*

This may include the power to re-create humanity itself:

*[...] we will take an evolutionary leap of consciousness. At this higher level of consciousness, our experiences of being one with all that is will actually become a way of life, and we will consistently be able to alter the nature of reality with our thoughts and intentions. (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section: *Metaphysical Interpretations of Quantum Physics*)*

Thus man has been elevated to a God-like position as co-creator. Davis makes this explicit:

*“Christians believe that through faith (which could be considered a form of “intent”) we can affect changes in the material world, and, as Romans 4: 17 says, ‘call the things that are not as if they are.’ “ (Ellyn Davis, Chapter 12, section *God-Truth: By Faith, We Can Speak Things Into Existence*)*

The final bible quote from Romans 4, 17 actually says that God has this creative power. By misappropriating it to man, Davis formally elevates man to the position of God. She also does this in the third quote above (“It shouldn’t be a stretch for us...”), where she claims that Christians would possess unlimited power, something that is clearly true of God, only:

*“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’ ” (Mathew 28, 18)*

### (c) Bringing about the Messianic Kingdom through men’s actions

In Section 2.4, I have discussed Bill Johnson’s argument that man should seek to establish the Messianic Kingdom through their own endeavour. Judy Franklin relates this to revelations from quantum mysticism (i.e. New Age):

*“Why? Because I believe what the Lord has been showing both of us is the absolute truth that will help us bring God’s kingdom to this earth. The Lord is ready to use sound, light, and energy in*

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<sup>19</sup> this refers to the collapse of the wave function

*ways we never dreamed, but we first need to have some foundational understandings.” (Judy Franklin, “Introduction: A Glimpse of Things to Come”, section: Visions, underlining by the author)*

That is, she believes that only if Christians obtain additional knowledge other than from the bible can they establish God’s kingdom on earth. Franklin states she does not believe in the rapture and gives the following reason:

*“It is also not showing the world how powerful we are because God has given us His power.” (Judy Franklin, “Introduction: A Glimpse of Things to Come”, section: About the book)*

Franklin’s reference to the rapture supports the understanding that when she talks about bringing God’s kingdom to earth, she actually refers to the Messianic kingdom. Franklin also declares here that God has delegated all his power to Christianity, presumably to establish his kingdom on earth. This contradicts Biblical revelation. Here man wrongly takes the place of God, because according to the Bible God himself brings his kingdom to earth, as is shown in many passages in the Old and New Testaments. For example, Jesus taught to ask God “your kingdom come” (Matt. 6, 10). Isaiah says about it:

*“Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. ” (Isaiah 9, 6)*

Jesus will establish his kingdom himself after he has personally defeated the Antichrist:

*“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” (2 Thess. 2: 8).*

By claiming that men should establish God’s kingdom on Earth, she puts man in the place of God.

### 3 Conclusion

The *Physics of Heaven* promotes a mechanistic view of faith, a “faith” that is very different from what Jesus taught and has nothing to do with repentance or the cross but can allegedly perform all kinds of miracles. They see the key to achieve this in hidden knowledge acquired by (wrong) interpretations of physics and study of New Age things to extract supposedly hidden “God truths”. Johnson’s theological expositions are an important part of the book. He says God expects us to be a bit cheeky and be proactive with spiritual things and to treat some contemporary revelation equal to biblical revelation. This complements the encouragement by Kris Vallotton to leave “the safe haven of conventional thinking, [...]” and “sail in uncharted waters with a passion to discover new lands.” and the apparent assurance of Jonathan Welton that New Age practises are all ok if you are a Christian:

*“the counterfeit and the authentic will always look incredibly similar [...] (Jonathan Welton, Chapter 5, section: The Source)*

*“there are many people who operate in the supernatural. Some operate safely under the lordship of Jesus Christ and some, such as Buddhists, Hindus, New Agers, and Occultists, operate dangerously as trespassers.”(Jonathan Welton, Chapter 5, section: Resistance)*

The book is therefore a comprehensive treatise in support of embracing the New Age in the church, complete with foundations in false teaching and pseudo-science, false prophecy, and testimonies of the alleged success of New-Age quackery. It puts man into the centre rather than Jesus and the cross.

The science claims they make in support of their agenda are wrong. Scientist do not influence quantum mechanical experiments with their thoughts. There is no indication that elementary particles would have a conscience or communicate with each other via a kind of telepathy nor with any universal conscience. On no electromagnetic frequency have we ever received messages from intelligent beings other than those produced by us humans.

I see all this as very problematic for the church in the context of which this book has appeared. Especially the strong support by their leadership, contributing and openly supporting a book that promotes pantheistic ideas, a mechanistic view of the workings of the Holy Spirit as quantum fields with consciousness, and obscure New Age healing methods is deeply concerning. Clearly, false theology and New Age practises have severely impacted this church and the worldwide movement it belongs to.

## 4 Further information

A very useful review on the Physics of Heaven which focusses on theological issues and compares their bible interpretation to various standard Bible commentaries is:

Frederick Osborn: “The Physics of Heaven — The Theology of the New Apostolic Reformation”, <https://www.amazon.com/Physics-Heaven-Theology-Apostolic-Reformation-ebook/dp/B07KY6TYT8>