

Chapter 1 : Spiritual Practices - Oxford Handbooks

Simon Chan's Spiritual Theology is a theology of Christian spiritual practice for the intellectually inclined. If you want a deep, well researched, theoretical grounding for Christian spiritual practice start with this book.

Review Article Alan D. Let me offer two reasons for reviewing a book published in First of all, the distinguished editor of this journal asked me to. Secondly, though the book is more than a decade old and a number of books like it have been written since then, the basic theme of this book is a popular one of the last quarter century: I agree that we do not want to separate theology and praxis—who would want to? I also agree that we tend to, not just in the post-Enlightenment era, but since Eden. There is, however, as one might suspect, more to this story than just that. The work is titled *Spiritual Theology* and serves as a kind of synonym for another word frequently used therein: *Spirituality*, taken thusly, means that which comes not by the agency of man but by the agency of the Spirit of God. Adhering to religion then is taken as merely outward and thus inherently hypocritical. It is true that one may have the merely outward, as did the Pharisees. The falsehood present here, however, is that true inward spirituality never manifests itself in outward religious organization and observances. One may be religious without being spiritual; one cannot be spiritual, however, without being religious. The church, to come at it from another angle, is both an organization and an organism, having both outward religious forms and inward spirituality the latter pertaining to those who have saving faith. The task of the church is a spiritual one the gathering and perfecting of the saints and she uses spiritual means the Word, sacraments, and prayer to carry it out, bearing the power of the keys, not of the sword as does the state or the rod as does the family. The power is said to be spiritual because her task is carried out in and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers the means of grace so that the church might be gathered and perfected. So there is a tie between the way that we use spirituality as Presbyterians when we speak of the spirituality of the church and the way that the broader theological world uses spirituality to indicate the spiritual life that the Christian faith produces. Chan begins his work with a first chapter setting forth the nature and criteria of Christian spiritual theology. Chan sets forth formal criteria for an adequate spiritual theology: The rest of this orienting introductory chapter was devoted to material criteria for a Christian spiritual theology: This sets the plate for the rest of the book, together with what Chan calls ascetical theology, basically the living of a disciplined Christian life. The book is divided into two main parts: The theological enjoys, after the first foundational chapter described above, treatment in chapters 2–5. Chapter 2 treats the doctrine of God as the foundation of Christian spirituality. Chan rightly understands that the doctrine of God is foundational to the rest of the theological loci and thus to any development of a spiritual theology. He criticizes all the demythologizing that reduces Christian experience to sociology. In chapter 3, he treats sin and human nature. He identifies himself with Augustine in this. But he also differs from Augustine in arguing that sin is relational as much as, if not more than, forensic. What he seems to forget is that the prodigal son was a son and that we are such, after the fall, only by adoption, which is a legal declaration that provides the basis for restored relationship. Chan is to be commended throughout this book for seeking to be balanced, trying to find the best in each tradition Roman, Eastern, and Protestant, though also failing to be as critical as he should at points. His criticism of the overly legal nature of Protestantism is not as careful and balanced as it should be, however. He does take sin quite seriously, though, and calls for a disciplined approach to the Christian life that fights the devil, the flesh, and the world and seeks to recognize the alien character of the church in a hostile world. One of his strengths in chapter 5 on the church as the community of saints is to argue, on the one hand, against a ghettoized church, and, on the other hand, an overly relativized church that loses its pilgrim character and its witness to a sinful world. This is clearly the sentiment of Simon Chan. Chapter 4 deals with salvation and the life of spiritual progress, in short, the doctrine of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Chan notes that Gnosticism, neo-Platonism, and Buddhism see salvation as deliverance from a transitory history to a timeless eternity. Chan proceeds at some length to unpack grace and its effects, discussing justification, sanctification, and glorification, offering some helpful insights of Calvin and the Puritans, as well as views of other traditions, ending with a discussion of perfection, which he affirms, though

more modestly asserted than is often the case if such can be said. We already noted chapter 5 on the church, but Chan is to be commended in seeing all of this theology as developed and lived out in the life of the church and the communion or community of the saints. The second part of the book takes what Chan has developed in the first part, in examining the traditional theological loci, and seeks to apply it to life, examining how this faith that we profess is lived out among us. This involves a variety of disciplines whereby we embody and practice the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints. And such shallow theology undermines rich experience, yielding instead immaturity and Christian adolescence. The Reformed, on the other hand, have such rich theology and yet sometimes settle for beautiful doctrine not lived out. To be sure, a lack of vibrant spirituality is not what marks our tradition at its best, and even in many of its historic expressions. So we need spiritual discipline. We need among us a hearty spirituality. Chan starts with prayer in chapter 6. This is clearly the fountainhead of our spirituality. He discusses prayer as act and habit, the divine initiative in prayer, growth in prayer, praying by the rule, and other matters. Now we could wish for a fuller exposition in this second section of the book of what marks a healthy Reformed and Presbyterian spirituality: We are to be seeking the Lord personally in prayer regularly, as well as praying in our families, catechizing, and using all of our time, treasures, and talents, to the glory of our great God and king. Again, however, a judicious use of this book by someone from our tradition, particularly by a well-trained pastor or other church member, may prove beneficial. Spiritual breadth of this sort, as long as we are discerning, can be quite helpful. In chapter 10, for instance, Chan discusses a rule of life, with a view to encouraging the broad laity to benefit from the best of monasticism. He does not call for the church to live under the Rule of St. Benedict, but rather calls for us all to have scheduled times of devotional prayer, and to avail ourselves of a wide variety of spiritual disciplines. These are helpful but are, arguably, best packaged within our tradition. The problem is “do we attend to these things? Some Orthodox Presbyterians these days seem to think that Sabbath observance is the only thing needful. Sabbath observance”neglected as a subject by Chan”admittedly is necessary for a vibrant spirituality, but it is not sufficient. After discussing prayer fairly extensively, Chan proceeds, in chapters 7”9, to treat various spiritual exercises focusing on God and self, the Word, and the world. With respect to the first, Chan deals with the practice of the presence of God, conformity to the will of God, fidelity to grace, and self-examining prayer. With respect to his treatment of the Word, rather than a focus on preaching as a divine act he thinks Protestants have too much focus on this to begin with, he urges a spiritual reading of the Word and meditation on the Word. While there are useful insights here, this is altogether too mystical for me in its attempts to bypass reason and appeal directly to emotion. And in the chapter on the world, he deals not only with questions of political engagement, but has a rather interesting treatment of spiritual friendship. Spiritual friendship is not quite the same as spiritual direction, the subject of chapter Chan thinks that the Anglican and Roman Catholic practice of spiritual directors ought to be employed by all of us in some measure, and he is convinced that, without such directors, real spiritual growth will likely be stunted. I believe that our standards do address the spirituality of the church, both in terms of the proper province of the church and in terms of the church being a spiritual agency, the body brought into being by the work of the Holy Spirit. Our standards do teach that our faith has an accompanying spirituality, or as Calvin put it: Before addressing some ways in which our standards address the kinds of matters that pertain to spirituality, it might be helpful to note, contrary to much popular perception, that spirituality, and particularly the development of the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit, is central to the Reformed project. This is not at all true. This is why it might prove helpful to note here that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as we know it is a distinctly Protestant and Reformed development. One can witness its absence from the ancient and medieval church, where there was a great deal of development of the doctrine of God and the person of Christ. Previously, as with Aquinas, theologians would proceed from Christology to Ecclesiology bypassing, largely, Pneumatology or Soteriology, which means of course that the means of grace must work on their own steam, as it were. Calvin argued that all the blessings and benefits of Christ do us no good, in fact, as long as we remain outside of him. It is the Holy Spirit who brings Christ to us and us to Christ. This is the heart of any real doctrine of spirituality. How is this insight of Calvin expressed in our standards? This reality is vividly realized in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters 25 and The former chapter, 25, is on the doctrine of the church,

while the latter chapter, 26, is on the communion of the saints. The relationship of those two chapters has very much to do with true spirituality. Chapter 25 sets forth what the Bible teaches about the invisible and visible catholic church. It then proceeds to address matters pertaining to the visible church: Chapter 26 picks up on the invisible again, at least in the first section, teaching that all saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces To whom does this refer? Chapter 26 starts by highlighting that those in whom the Spirit has truly worked, the elect, enjoy union with Christ and communion with their fellow believers. This is true spirituality. The questions in the Larger Catechism from here to WLC 90 make it clear that it is only those in whom the Spirit works who enjoy all the blessings and benefits of Christ, as opposed to those who are in the visible church only. As important as the visible church isâ€”all those in whom the Spirit has worked are to be, and usually are, in itâ€”not all its members partake of true Christian spirituality, because not all of its members enjoy the efficacious grace given by the Holy Spirit in the exercise of the means of grace. This is why we have not only a chapter on the church, but a chapter on the communion of the saints following it. We can think of these two as addressing church as institute and organism, religion and spirituality, the outward and the inward. We must not pit these against each other but insist on both. In recent years, not only have partisans of Federal Vision, but others tending toward formalism resting in the outward forms , sought to downplay these realities. The answer to our perceived spiritual ailments is not an over-objectification of the visible church and the means of grace but a vibrant visible church leading to a vital spirituality. An overstress on the outward is a departure from the witness of our standards particularly and that of the Reformed faith more broadly. All the means are to lead us to rest and trust in Christ alone. That is the beginning and the end of true spiritualityâ€”life in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. Chan has produced a work on Christian spirituality fitting for evangelical theology.

Chapter 2 : Free Religion Story & Spiritual Theology & Books Online

Simon Chan (Ph.D., Cambridge) is Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. He is the author of Man and Sin, Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition, Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life and Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community.

Sheffield Academic, , reprint , paperback, pages. Simon Chan dares to offer an answer to a question many contemporary Pentecostals are only recently even daring to ask. For apocalyptic and eschatological restorationist movements, that is not always an obvious issue. My children are, and, hopefully, my grandchildren will be, fourth and fifth generation Pentecostals, respectively. Today we need to know how to pass on the faith properly. Chan is professor of systematic theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. In an earlier work, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* InterVarsity, , he established a reputation as a Pentecostal analyst and sympathizer of the classic Christian spiritual tradition. In *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* he recommends a Pentecostal appreciation, and appropriation, of the rich history and experience of that tradition as a means of defending and extending the Pentecostal tradition. Scholars and students interested in the present cause and future course of Pentecostalism will wish to give his suggestion serious attention through this small but significant book. Chan seems to have a dual purpose in writing this book. Specifically, he uses glossolalia, Spirit baptism, and ecclesiology as a kind of case study for his methodology, thus making it a means for advanced discussion of these timely topics. One of the major causes of this predicament is a failure of properly passing on the energy and vitality of the tradition of the early Pentecostal movement to its heirs a hundred years hence. Chan expresses both hope and concern regarding the future of Pentecostalism and its tradition. It primarily addresses a biblical perspective of Spirit baptism, a theological perspective of Spirit baptism, and a cultural-linguistic perspective of Spirit baptism as its accents Spirit baptism as spirituality and theological perspective. Here Chan talks about ascetical tongues and offers a profile of a Pentecostal ascetic. He also discusses the doctrine of subsequence in this context. It also explores eschatology and ecclesiology, and suggests explicating Pentecostal reality and everyday life under a rubric of playful worship. The book has an extensive bibliography and scripture reference and author indexes but no subject reference. In *Depth*, Winter About the Author: Tony Richie, D. He is the author of *Speaking by the Spirit: Encountering Cornelius Today* CPT Press, as well as several journal articles and books chapters on Pentecostal theology and experience.

Chapter 3 : IVP Spirituality Collection (2 vols.) - Logos Bible Software

Simon Chan (Ph.D., Cambridge) is Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. He is the author of Man and Sin, Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition, Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life and Liturgical Theology.

Progress is viewed from the perspective of restoring the image of God rather than from the perspective of developing innate human potential. The Christian life is from beginning to end a work of divine grace. Actual progress in that life, however, comes through diligent exercise of the means of grace. Acts are basic, small acts, which over time form the Christian character. Without this base of discipline, or training, the practical implications of our theology remain theoretical at best. There were no divisions in theology before the rise of rationalistic philosophy in the Enlightenment. Spiritual theology is concerned with life in relation to God, whereas practical theology is more broadly concerned with action in the world, or the practical application of theology. Without spiritual theology, Christian practice is reduced to mere activism. Spiritual life grows out of the two basic components: Theological reflection and prayer are not discrete activities but exist in a dynamic, ongoing relationship in which one activity enriches the other, stimulating the Christian to new insights and greater fervor. A good Christian spiritual theology must be characterized by: The doctrine of grace that does not include this aspect of divine operation remains impoverished. Complexity of the world and expression of the Gospel: In the West in recent years a return to Trinitarian doctrine emphasizing the truth of the eternally self-giving persons in the Godhead has offered hope to a world starved of meaningful and intimate personal relationships. In addition the implications that God is not about power, self-sufficiency, and assertion of authority, but about mutuality, and equality, and love, provides vision for restructuring society to alleviate racial and sexual inequalities. There is one God and no other. There is a decision to be made between faith and unbelief, between God and not-God. In highly structured society, where relationships are static and secure, the conflict between monotheism and polytheism is more pronounced. Faithfulness to the Christian story An openness to the Christian past is one important sign of a genuine Christian spirituality. At the heart of spiritual theology is prayer, and it is in prayer that past and present are linked. Prayers bring the world of time in touch with eternity. It is possible to be selflessly committed to the world without being a Christian. That is the difference between a moral person and a spiritual person. The essence of evangelical spirituality is to be found in the particular way it understands the coming of God in Jesus Christ to the believer. The preaching of the evangel mediates the experience of that truth. Each conversion experience involves a living contact with the transcendent person of Christ. This is not to deny that Christ is also present in the world. But he is present in the church in a way that he is not present in the world. The kind of piety that forsakes the world in order to cultivate an otherworldly experience is in fact a false and sub-Christian piety. It is a piety that is preoccupied with self. Engagement with the world: The Constantine model calls for the church to take up citizenship in the world in order to influence it. Yet as a citizen, the church has to play by the rules of the world. Its smallness to the world gives sharper focus to its distinctive way of life. This is community of character, a people marked by discipline and cross bearing. Spirituality is at its very core. Charismatic Reality Traditional Roman Catholic spirituality has been built almost exclusively on a concept of grace working with us, lifting up nature. While it acknowledges a doctrine of grace, that doctrine has never really played a significant role in the development of the spiritual life. Protestant tradition has polarized between enthusiasm on one hand and rationalistic theology on the other. Pentecostal spirituality seeks the intimate presence of God. Ideally, there should be no distinction between charismatic and non-charismatic Christians; every Christian should be both a charismatic and an ascetic. Foundational to Christian Spirituality The doctrine of the trinity is shorthand for the nature and working of God revealed to us in the Scriptures. The God of the Bible is a personal God working intimately in his creation, unlike the passionless, nameless one of Platonists. The hiddenness of God is related to the mystery of iniquity. If creation is a free act, then God is God even without creation. The otherness of God is essential. If we are to distinguish between what is of God and what is not of God. A conception of God who is both one and three, whose being consists in a relationality that derives from the otherness-in-relation of Father,

son, and Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is not about the threeness of God per se, but about the mystery of the God who is both one and yet three, both a God-in-himself and a God-for-us in his Trinitarian existence. A proper Trinitarian spirituality can only be developed from a doctrine that gives equal place to unity and to plurality in God, both to transcendence and to immanence. Monotheism is a true part of the Christian understanding of God. Ecclesiastically, the spirituality of the Father tends toward an inclusive view of the church. If the emphasis is on Christ as the liberator of the oppressed and the friend of publicans and sinners, the ensuing spirituality is likely to be one that stresses radical discipleship and commitment to sociopolitical justice. If Jesus is held forth as the model of patient endurance and suffering, then the Christian life is expressed largely in terms of the imitation of Christ and the way of suffering which may result in an unquestioning acquiescence to the prevailing status quo. Popular evangelicalism generated a spirituality centering in the gospel of forgiveness for personal sins, a warm personal piety, and a church consisting of individuals who have made a personal profession of faith. The strength of a Christocentric spirituality is its stress on conversion to lively, personal faith in Jesus Christ. In a world of depersonalization and loss of self-identity, this characteristic accounts for its tremendous appeal across cultures. There is an implicit supernaturalism that lifts life out of its ordinariness and gives it a new depth and direction. But in a too narrowly defined Christological spirituality it can become too individualistic and can be turned into a system to support self-indulgence. The corporate life could become a purely voluntary and dispensable matter. Thus the church is ghettoized, either in self-complacency or in fear. God may yet do new things because God is personal and therefore never completely predictable. Life with God, for Pentecostals, is a journey into the unknown. God may take us through un-trodden paths. A perpetual holiday becomes boring. An unending adventure becomes unsustainable. For a spirituality to be holistic, it must be Trinitarian. It must be characterized by form and stability and a sacramental understanding of created things. It must seek a personal relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ. And it must be open to the powerful working of God the Spirit in signs and wonders as well as in holy familiarity. The familiar Christological pneumatology must be balanced by a pneumatological Christology. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you. Understood this way, our Christology and pneumatology must find their unity in God the Father. A Trinitarian theology has three major implications for Christian spirituality. Salvation is essentially personal union with God. Christ and the Spirit are encountered as the word and love respectively coming from the Father. This precipitates further listening to the indwelling word, while the outpoured Spirit inflames the soul with divine love, transforming the whole person. Spiritual life is essentially relational without ceasing to be particular. There must be mutual dependence. But individuals are not absorbed into a nameless, corporate entity. Here is where the social analogy of the Trinity provides us with rich resources for understanding the relational and particular nature of the spiritual life. Life and work are inseparable. The mission of the church is a participation in the Trinitarian mission, in which the Father sent the Son and Spirit into the world. The mission of God is the extension of the Trinitarian life in which the Father sent the Son into the world. The mission of the Son is carried out by the anointing of the Spirit. The Spirit is in turn sent by the Son to continue the mission of the Father on earth. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ and Pentecost make up one continuous mission of the triune God. For Christianity it is an existential freedom understood strictly in personal terms: Personality rather than its extinction lies at the root of the Christian conception of the ultimately real. The task of spiritual theology is to describe and analyze the nature and effects of this story not just as facts but as the facts impinge on the person whose relationship with God has been fundamentally changed by the story. Why are imperatives given in connection with good works if good works are the fruit of justification? The imperative is not the means to make us more holy that takes place by grace alone. It puts in place the condition that makes it possible for grace to be fully operative. Our love and good works in response becomes the theatre in which God does His acting. The life of prayer and meditation is but the living out of the life of faith. Growth in the Christian life may be said to be growth in the life of faith, i. Grace is not a substantial reality within believers but a favorable disposition of God toward them. When the Christian life is seen in terms of fostering a relationship there is little concern with technical precision. This view presupposes grace; a doctrine of grace as divine favor.

Chapter 4 : Simon Chan, Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition : The Pneuma Review

Keywords: Jesus Christ, spiritual practices, evangelicals, evangelism, Quiet Time, Christian life, conversionism, activism, crucicentrism, biblicism
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The Nature of the Church: Simon Chan The Church is the work of the Trinity. I think it would be safe to say that this statement could serve as a common starting-point for both Pentecostal and Orthodox Christians concerning the nature of the Church. The Church is the result of the two sendings from the Father seen in two pivotal events: Whether the Church belongs to the Trinitarian event is another question which I will not consider here. There are many areas of Pentecostal faith and practice which could be honed by Orthodox theological tools, such as: The relation between personal and ecclesial experience: The concept of authority: They tend to vacillate between the extremes of chaotic freedom and stifling authoritarianism. The relation of the Son and the Spirit to the Father: Pentecostals, like their evangelical counterparts, have generally forgotten the Father. The relation of charisma and institution, and many more. Pentecostals could demonstrate that Orthodox doctrines are workable in more ways than they realize. In this paper, I would like to concentrate on three crucial points where Pentecostal experience and Orthodox theology converge. The Pentecost Event is the coming of the Spirit into the church in his own person. The worship that defines the church is essentially sacramental. In the church, personal relation is not purely egalitarian by differentiated and ordered. I think these points of convergence could be a fruitful way of beginning our dialogue on the church. Let us take each of these points in turn. Yet even a personal Pentecost, individually conceived, is not entirely off the mark. Vladimir Lossky, for one, believes that the distinctive work of the Spirit at Pentecost is the coming of the Spirit to indwell each person: Then He appeared under the form of divided tongues of fire which rested upon each one of those who were present. This is no longer a communication of the Spirit to the Church considered corporately. The Holy Spirit communicates Himself to persons, marking each member of the Church with a seal of personal and unique relationship to the Trinity, becoming present in each person. What they generally lack is the corporate dimension. This is so because the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit is a true experience, even if Pentecostals had not been able to explain it adequately. Nikos Nissiotis, again, could serve as representative of Orthodox teaching on this point: Church communion is not a category of the action of the Holy Spirit but the visible reference to his presence among men. The Holy Spirit is koinonia because in him and through him, the Father and the Son are One and present in the church. The communion of the Holy Spirit is his personal revelation as the Creator of the church in time in the grace given by the redeeming act of Jesus and the love of the Father. Pentecostals often use language that suggests a more direct working of the Spirit that impinges upon their senses. The Spirit is referred to not only in terms of powerful and supernatural activities, he is often spoken of as the subject of those activities. The Spirit guides, speaks, empowers, restrains, etc. This is the language used in the Book of Acts cf. I knew this was the Holy Spirit taking over. Quick as a flash, the Holy Spirit said in my heart: This is the peace that passes understanding. This was what Bennett noticed when he first encountered two Pentecostals who made a deep impression on him: Pentecostals are supremely interested in the truth not as an abstraction, but in Truth as a concrete manifestation as person, specifically the second and third persons of the Trinity. The second person is usually at the centre of their devotion. It is about Jesus as savior, sanctifier, baptizer, healer and coming king. In much of the early history of Pentecostalism, a strong Jesus devotion, especially devotion to the Name of Jesus, was quite pervasive, as David Reed has shown. Their songs were mostly about Jesus. Pentecostals talk mostly about the Spirit, but they talk mostly to Jesus. This instinctive correlation between Jesus and the Spirit is very much in keeping with the larger Christian tradition. Historically there is a general reticence to speak directly about the Spirit and more in terms of his hidden workings. We see this across the major Christian traditions. I am not saying that no form of direct address to the Spirit is ever justified. We do in fact have a few such prayers in the Christian tradition. Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save, our souls, O Good One. But we, Pentecostals, must beware of a pneumatological fixation that distorts the Trinitarian relationship. It is

the Pentecostal focus on personal intimacy with Jesus that makes sense of their most distinctive spiritual marker: Glossolalia, as I have pointed out elsewhere, is ultimately about personal relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. But in ways that they themselves could not fully explain, personal intimacy is somehow linked to glossolalia. We see this connection often recounted in Pentecostal testimonies. As Jack Hayford, a leader of the Foursquare Church tells us, he could not explain why speaking in tongues is associated with the filling of the Spirit, but each time he prays for people to be filled with the Spirit they speak in tongues. It has to do with a characteristic that is proper to the Holy Spirit. The logic of the Spirit is not the logic of productivity, but the logic of superfluity, not the logic of work but the logic of Sabbath. The Spirit like the Sabbath sanctifies. Speaking in tongues, as Pentecostals have found out experientially, involves a crossing of the threshold where one gives up control and discovers a new freedom by being fully yielded to the Spirit. The sign of total surrender is the moment they cross the threshold and break out in tongues. In other words, in the experience of Spirit-baptism, the Spirit indwells the Christian in his proper mode as pure receptivity. In such a state, as St. The Holy Spirit who is the Gift of the Father passive is himself the giver of diverse gifts 1 Cor 12 and therefore also very much active in the church and in individual lives. After one has received the Spirit in the initial act of total surrender, one must henceforth become active as one is empowered by the Spirit. The worship that defines the church is essentially sacramental Orthodox Christians speak of the church as constituted eucharistically by the Spirit. Pentecostals have no such doctrine, but in practice, the early Pentecostals manifested an implicit sacramental theology especially in worship. More significantly, the ministry of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor In the breaking of the bread He is with us as he said, With us not in bread and wine, Nor as once in Palestine, But with Resurrection power Thrilling us this very hour. In the flowing of the cup He is with us as we sup, Not in memory alone As to other he was known; In the wine faith sees the blood Of the living Christ of God. In another Eucharistic hymn Macpherson writes: My Risen Redeemer near me stands, And takes the elements Divine, And with His own dear wounded hands Passes to me the bread and wine; And thus I know what most is meant By this tremendous sacrament. There were also other practices that suggest an implicit sacramental theology, such as the service of divine healing in which the sick were anointed with oil. In the church, personal relation is not purely egalitarian but differentiated and ordered The Pentecostal communal life could be best described as egalitarian and hierarchical rather than purely egalitarian. God is no respecter of persons. This egalitarian impulse, however, sits uneasily with the hierarchical impulse. The lengths to which this concept is taken could be quite astounding at times. Yet, there is an element of truth in the spiritual instinct of ordinary Christians which should not be lightly dismissed. These two impulses are not wrong in themselves. But the failure to hold them together has resulted a history of vacillating between an extreme egalitarianism resulting in chaotic freedom, which is then over-corrected by an extreme authoritarianism and vice versa. The problem is pervasive, not only among Western Pentecostals, but more especially with Pentecostals in the Global South. We must freely admit that at this point Pentecostal experience needs to be chastened and purified. The question is how? Perhaps we could learn from the Orthodox the concept of an ordered but mutually dependent relationship. The relationship is not one of domination but of mutual dependence. Why is it so? Without a Eucharistic centre it would not be possible to develop a liturgy to hold these opposing impulses in a healthy tension. But what is the liturgy? The question needs to be asked because even among Pentecostal theologians the theological dimension of the liturgy is often missed. Worship, then, becomes a matter of personal tastes and preferences. Cathedral prayer presupposes the givenness of the liturgy: In monastic prayer, the need of the worshipper is foremost; the worshipper seeks through affective prayer to apply the truth to oneself. This trend is particularly disturbing as it shows that the Pentecostal identity is increasingly being shaped by the consumerist culture of this world. Here is where Pentecostals must be open to learning from their Orthodox counterparts. Conclusion In the foregoing I have briefly shown that in three crucial points concerning the nature of the church, Pentecostal experience and Orthodox theology converge. Of the three, I think the most basic is our shared concern for personhood. It is quite fashionable in certain theological circles to reduce the concrete particularity of truth as a person, more precisely, the Truth as the Person of Christ, to an abstraction, a cosmic principle, all in the interest of inter-religious harmony and inclusiveness. Against this trend, Pentecostals and Orthodox Christians

share a common concern in proclaiming and exemplifying the truth of personhood. Personhood is the key to understanding the whole creation; and it finds its most concrete embodiment in the church as the communion of persons. But the church is more than a communion of persons; if it were, it is no more than another sociological reality.

Chapter 5 : Nature of the Church

LibraryThing Review User Review - Jared_Runck - LibraryThing. Simon Chan's "Spiritual Theology" is a tremendous introductory text to what, for me, is something a new field. My seminary training treated theology from an exclusively systematic perspective, largely.

A feature story exploring the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Down in their hearts, worship leaders sometimes feel that way after Sunday worship. Why is the congregation not saving souls and adding members? Why is attendance down? What can the staff and lay leaders do to read the culture and deliver more relevant messages? The mission of the Trinity Worship leaders who want to understand the true nature of the church and its worship must back up and consider who they are worshipping. The Church as Worshiping Community. It means that God initiates worship, not worship leaders. The Bible pictures the relationship among Father, Son, and Spirit as other-centered love. The answer to that question is communion. Ultimately, all things are to be brought back into communion with the triune God. Communion is the ultimate end, not mission. This is the thinking behind worldview shorthand such as creation-fall-redemption-renewal or guilt-grace-gratitude or sin-salvation-service. Instead he proposes another storyline. Even if humans had not sinned, Jesus Christ would still have needed to come in the fullness of time, because only through that revelation is covenantal relationship realized in the fullest measure—“as communion with the triune God.” To worship leaders eager to reinvent church, Chan cites Ephesians 1: The Bible is the story of God calling out a people Abraham, Israel, the church so that the world will be transformed into the church. At Pentecost, the Spirit knit the church to its Head. The Spirit mutually indwells Christ and the church and constantly pushes this temple forward to ultimate communion. Chan sees these divine gifts as including Word, sacraments, and the fourfold worship pattern of gathering, proclaiming the Word, celebrating the Eucharist, and going out into the world. Recognizing the Holy Spirit in Worship Many Christians understand the work of the Holy Spirit mainly in individual terms, such as being convicted of sin and led to faith, or in charismatic terms, such as speaking in tongues or supernatural healing. But Simon Chan says we often fail to see how else the Holy Spirit works, especially through the church as a whole. He says Pentecostal and Orthodox insights can help congregations see that the Holy Spirit works in both surprising and ordered ways. This broader recognition of the Spirit at work in the church often changes worship practices. An intractable issue was on the floor and tension was rising. The chairman made an unusual move by asking everyone to pray. Chan admits that Pentecostals sometimes use this strategy to intimidate each other. Suddenly a cloud seemed to have been lifted. He wonders whether a similar thing happened when the Council of Jerusalem split over whether Gentile believers should be circumcised and keep kosher. Chan agrees that the freedom of the Spirit allows for many worship options. Some theologies end the gospel story at the resurrection and ascension. Chan tells of a large church in the Philippines whose pastor he knows well. The pastor and worship leaders sensed that something essential was missing in their contemporary services. They felt led to make a major paradigm shift to more liturgical worship. In his first Lutheran pastorate, Craig Satterlee remembers asking his bishop how to reverse declining attendance and giving. Chan and Satterlee say that Spirit-shaped worship includes: One church developed a highly successfully program to help expectant mothers prepare for natural births. In a poor country like the Philippines it became missiologically quite relevant.

Chapter 6 : Simon Chan on the Life of the Holy Spirit in the Church

Notes from: Spiritual Theology by Simon Chan Preface The accent of the Christian spiritual tradition is on overcoming the hindrances to man's becoming the person God wants him to be. Progress is viewed from the perspective of restoring the image of God rather than from the perspective of developing innate.

Chapter 7 : The Agora: Book Review: Spiritual Theology

Spiritual Formation for Ministry (MC) is a foundational course in the Division of Chan, Simon, Spiritual Theology: your spiritual practices and spiritual.

Chapter 8 : Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life - Simon Chan - Google Books

Simon Chan is Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. His special interest is in the relationship between dogmatics, spirituality and the liturgy from a global pentecostal perspective.

Chapter 9 : Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Simon Chan says that bad worship produces bad theology, which leads to an unhealthy church. That's why he suggests that churches make more room for the Holy Spirit to work in worship. A feature story exploring the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church.