

WHAT MAKES SPIRITUALITY CHRISTIAN?

By Steve Harper*

"Spirituality" is a popular term today. As I have browsed through bookstores, I have seen it connected with such topics as nutrition, aerobics, business management, stress reduction, counseling, marriage enrichment, recovery programs, human sexuality, and religion. Publishers and authors seem to think that if they can associate a particular topic with its respective "spirituality," they will sell more books! Likewise, the daily talk-shows regularly parade across the screen a wide variety of gurus and spiritual "experts" in the never-ending quest to help the American people feel better, transcend their circumstances, overcome past abuse, find their true selves, and know God. Everyone from Jerry Falwell to Shirley MacLaine uses the word. And therein lies our dilemma.

Somewhere along the line it is inevitable, natural, and essential to ask, "What makes spirituality Christian?" We need a controlling perspective to provide boundary and guidance. In a culture where spirituality is attached to everything from soup to nuts, we must have some idea of what it means when it is connected to the

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Christian life. We must be able to speak authentically of "Christian" spirituality, otherwise we are merely putting a thin veneer over a wildly undefined phenomenon. In this article I hope to provide a general framework to assist you in developing a spiritual life which is characteristically and genuinely Christian. Because the readers of this journal come from a variety of traditions, I must speak generally, trusting that you can take this framework and interface it with the distinctives of your own theological and ecclesial systems.

Furthermore, it is important to speak generally as a means of reminding ourselves that just as we must avoid a spirituality that is unbounded, we must also avoid any definition of Christian spirituality which imprisons it in a single tradition, denomination, or point of view. In fact, I have come to believe that Christian spirituality can provide a basis for true ecumenism at the very time in history when "labels" mean less and less to people. Christian spirituality provides an avenue for mutual appreciation and united activity in Jesus' Name. Christian spirituality offers us the opportunity to discover how large, deep, and rich the Body of Christ really is! But none of this can happen as it should unless we wrestle with the question, "What makes spirituality Christian?"

Preliminary Considerations

I want to begin by acknowledging the suspicions of some of my Christian friends when it comes to spirituality. For more than two decades I've encountered sincere Christians who believe that spiritual formation is simply too vague, and that it offers too many opportunities to go off on tangents. I would not be honest in this article if I did not acknowledge that this has happened. As I have ministered across America and in a number of foreign countries, I have occasionally been embarrassed by something that was being believed and being done under the umbrella of "the spiritual life." In a few cases, I have felt that the aberration was serious enough to confront and correct. To say it another way, not everything which occurs in the name of Christian spirituality is genuine. The folks who have concerns are not without justification. I want to acknowledge that right up front. In the final section of this article, I will return to the issue in greater detail.

However, at the same time, I must point out that exaggeration or aberration is not sufficient to dismiss the serious consideration of a topic. Anything which is genuine can be counterfeited. For example, our Roman Catholic friends can point to numerous errors regarding the Mass or the veneration of Mary. Likewise, our charis-

matic colleagues can speak long on the excesses of that movement. Mainline Christians can describe what goes wrong when you emphasize institutionalism too much. And evangelicals can testify to the problems which arise when the authority of Scripture is interpreted in a narrow or legalistic way. Christian spirituality is not exempt from error. But rather than use this as grounds for dismissal, I believe we should use it as proof that serious scholarship and thought must attend our use of the concept.

Second, we must also recognize that spirituality is not the exclusive possession of Christianity. Spirituality is a quality of human life, because human beings are made in the image of God. It is the *imago dei* which forms the basis for all considerations of spirituality. Because of this, writes Benedict Groeschel, "the individual is increasingly aware of a spiritual craving within."¹ The fact that we are made in the image of God not only means that we have this yearning for the divine, but that we have the capacity to respond to God. Adrian van Kaam calls the yearning our "aspiration for transcendence" and describes spiritual formation as "how people respond to this aspiration."² Groescehl is again helpful as he calls the spiritual life, "the sum total of responses which one makes to...God."³

Every person, therefore, has a spirituality precisely because he or she is essentially spiritual. Every religion has a

spirituality because it attempts to describe the nature of God, of human beings, and the ways in which human beings respond to God. Even conservative Christians acknowledge this dimension of spirituality. For example, E. Stanley Jones has noted, "the Way is written not merely in the Bible, but also in biology. The demands of religion and the demands of life are the same. The Way, then, is written in our nerves, our blood, our tissues, in the total organization of life."⁴ Likewise, Lawrence Richards recognizes that "spirituality is a term broadly applied across the range of religions."⁵

We must not miss this. If we do, we will not see the more comprehensive understanding of spirituality which pervades human existence. We will make the mistake of narrowly viewing the Christian faith as "spiritual" and other religions as "unspiritual." Again, we must begin by recalling that spirituality is connected to human existence, not to religion per se. This is St. Augustine's description of the "restless heart." It is Wesley's understanding of prevenient grace, at work in general and particular ways long before a person professes faith in Jesus Christ.

On a practical level, this should encourage us. It means that every person we meet has already been created for God! The God-shaped vacuum is really there, and the capacity to respond to God is given to

everyone. In our evangelism, for example, we will get farther with people as we take the time to acknowledge the ways in which they are already "on the journey." As we celebrate the ways in which they already yearn for God, we can lovingly lead them to Jesus, the Incarnation of the God for Whom they yearn! To put it another way, as we seek to win persons to Christ, this universal understanding of spirituality cuts through any notions of triumphalism, because we are constantly aware that the Holy Spirit always gets there first!

These preliminary considerations enable us to approach the question, "What makes spirituality Christian?" The first consideration validates the importance of the question and the need to provide definition and boundary. The second consideration enables us to ask the question with a solid theology underneath us--a theology of *imago dei* and a theology of prevenient grace. It also enables us to approach the question with the spirit of humility.

Primary Convictions

No single article can fully grasp the magnitude of the question, "What makes spirituality Christian?" No single article can completely answer it either. Within arm's reach, I probably have several thousand pages of attempts to answer this question. And the books keep coming out!

To remember that is a means of recognizing the profound mystery with which we are dealing. We need that in a highly analytical culture. We also need to remember that the answer is conditioned in part by the one who proposes it. Spirituality has objective dimensions, some of which I will work with in this section. But spirituality also comes via the interpretation of the author, preacher, testifier, etc.

This means I must tell you a little about myself, so you will have a context for understanding why I answer the question the way I do. In brief, I would say I am an ecumenical evangelical reared (and at home) in the Wesleyan tradition. By "evangelical" I bear witness to my belief in historic Christian orthodoxy. I believe the Bible is the Word of God. I believe that Jesus is God's only-begotten Son. I believe all the doctrines expressed and implied in the normative Creeds of the church. By "ecumenical" I communicate my belief that Christian orthodoxy winds its way through every age and through every legitimate ecclesial expression. Consequently, I am a pilgrim in search of true Christianity wherever I can find it. I do not limit myself to Methodism, or even Protestantism. I thrill at exploring the richness of the faith in the classics of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. I rejoice in every believer (living or dead) who sheds light on

my path and deepens my devotion to Christ as Savior and Lord. By "Wesleyan" I mean that I have found a theological home--a place to locate myself--as a means of describing and nurturing life in Christ. I look upon John Wesley, the early Methodists, and the conservative Wesleyan tradition which emerges, not as a wall, but as a "window" through which to look in order to see Christ and the church better. As the ecumenical, evangelical, and Wesleyan components converge, I embrace the perspective which enables me to provide an answer to the question, "What makes spirituality Christian?"

In this article I will provide four primary convictions related to the question. Taken together, they will frame my answer but not exhaust it. Again, no article can do that. But I do believe it is possible to set forth key consensual parameters which enable us to speak of "Christian spirituality." At the end of my examination of each conviction, I will state briefly what response we can make which will enable the conviction to be a formative experience in our lives.

First, spirituality is Christian in relation to the Christian story. To say it another way, it is the Christian story which interprets spirituality, not spirituality which interprets the Christian story. As people guided by the revelation of Scripture and twenty centuries of responsible

tradition, we bring certain understandings to the table, understandings which enable us to speak more specifically about the spiritual life. By way of reminder and summary, I would mention the following: the nature of God (as Trinity), the nature of humanity (as *imago dei*), creation, fall, covenant, the cycle of exile and return, Incarnation, redemption, church, Kingdom of God, and consummation.⁶

Once we have worked our way through these classic doctrines, we will define spirituality differently than people in other religions do, and differently than adherents of various "new-age" movements do. The reason is this: we begin with revelation, not metaphysics. And more precisely, we begin with revelation as it comes to us through the Bible. In determining what makes our spirituality Christian, we do not begin with the nature of being (philosophical ontology), we begin with the gospel (biblical hermeneutics). The starting point makes all the difference. It shapes the question in a new form--not "what does it mean to be spiritual?", but rather "what does it mean to be **Christian?**"

This means that the story itself is formative. Tell me what you think it means to be Christian, and you will already have begun to specify what you believe it means to be spiritual. To say it another way, theology is transformational. What we believe about the journey and what we

experience on the journey are the inhaling and exhaling of spiritual breathing; they cannot be separated. This is one of the mistakes some make who would put spiritual formation in the category of "practical" theology. Yes, it is that. But it is also intrinsically biblical, historical, systematic, developmental, etc. Spiritually becomes "Christian" when it is viewed through the lens of the Christian story.

Given this, our response is to increasingly familiarize ourselves with the Christian story through devout and deepening study of the Bible and the secondary devotional literature which enriches our knowledge and piety. This is why we cannot define spirituality as "my experience of God." My experience of God may be wrong! It may be conditioned by bad teaching, by past abuse and present dysfunctionality, etc. Spirituality is highly experiential, but it is not exclusively so. I submit my experience to the story as revealed in scripture and tradition. I commit myself to be a true "disciple"--which means "learner," all the days of my life.

Second, spirituality is made Christian in its relation to Christ. If you are familiar with spiritual formation literature, you know it falls into two broad categories: theo-centric and Christo-centric. Theo-centric literature uses a lot of "God" language to communicate its ideas. Much of this type of literature is valid and

helpful. Even Christian writers have employed such language and style to write devotionally. But if our spirituality is to be overtly and substantively Christian, we need the benefits of Christo-centric literature as well. Christian spirituality is not merely metaphysical; it is Incarnational. We are people who believe that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

Dr. William Barclay expertly develops his commentary on the Prologue of John's Gospel (1:1-18). He shows how the concept of *Logos* was already present in Jewish and Greek thought. When he comes to 1:14; he writes, "This is where John parted with all thought which had gone before him. This was the entirely new thing which John brought to the Greek world for which he was writing. Augustine afterwards said that in his pre-Christian days he had read and studied the great pagan philosophers and their writings, and that he had read many other things, but he had never read that the Word became flesh."⁷ Barclay calls the phrase, "the Word became flesh," staggering new and unheard of.⁸

Barclay provides a good analogy between the first century and the twentieth, between theo-centric and Christo-centric spirituality. The *Logos* corresponds to theo-centric spirituality. That is, it was a general concept known to many people, and one which incorporated numerous truths. But

to say that the *Logos* became flesh is to compare with Christo-centric spirituality. That is, it takes all that the general idea communicated and puts it into a staggeringly new framework. This is precisely what Christian spirituality does: it draws on all that is generally beautiful, good, and true concerning the spiritual life. But it puts it into a radically new framework--the Incarnation. In Jesus we see the fullness of God in human form, and we see spirituality revealed in its finest sense.

In a day of "new-age" monism⁹ this Incarnational focus is as radically new as it was in the day when John declared the *Logos* to be manifested in Jesus. And it is no less controversial. E. Stanley Jones has called this "the scandal of particularity." It flies in the face of syncretism (as we will see in the final section of the article). But it is a position we must take if our spirituality is to be genuinely Christian. Edward Yarnold confirms this as he writes, "The highest and unique instance of God's self-giving is his entry into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. The highest and unique fulfillment of the human capacity for God is found in the life of Jesus Christ."¹⁰ Benedict Groeschel further underscores this seminal truth by saying, "The center of Christian spirituality is the Incarnate Word of God. He is the center, not as a point of gravity, but as a single source of light in an utterly dark and

lifeless universe. Just as He is the source of light and life to the material creation (John 1:3), so is He the source of salvation and spiritual life."¹¹ Groeschel goes on to note that this Christological center and our relation to it (Him) forces us to ask, "How Christian is my spirituality?" Just as Christ divides time into B.C. and A.D., so too he becomes the line of demarcation between the general and the particular in Christian spirituality.

This truth not only applies to his person, but also to his work. Unfortunately in our day there is a rising tide against Christ's atonement. It is a rejection not only of Christ as the mediator, but also of the need for an atoning sacrifice as described in orthodox Christian theology.¹² At stake here, for Christianity in general and Christian spirituality in particular, is the nature of sin and the process by which the grace of God operates to forgive us. Spirituality must address the question of one's right relationship with God. A theology (and experience) of sin and redemption is intrinsic. Christian spirituality asserts that human beings are sinful and that Christ died for our sins. In both his person and work, Christ makes spirituality Christian.

Our response, of course, must be to "abide in Christ" (John 15). Christian spiritual life is life in Christ. It is living in Christ and having Christ living in

us.¹³ I have come to define Christian spirituality as the lifelong process of abiding in Christ and bearing the responsibilities of that relationship. If Jesus is indeed the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8 and 22:13), he must be the starting point, guide, and culmination of our spirituality.

Third, spirituality is made Christian by its church connection. At the core, this means that our spirituality can never be purely individualistic. We are people of Covenant. As such, we are people of creed and community. We affirm the faith declared through the Apostles', Nicean, and Athanasian Creeds, as well as those later formulations which are in harmony with them. Furthermore, we are people of particular faith traditions (e.g. Lutheran, Calvinistic, Wesleyan), each of which professes orthodox belief and the Christian experience which flows from it.

To be sure, our ultimate authority is the Bible. But Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia rightly points out that "We read the Bible personally, but not as isolated individuals...We read in communion with all other members or the Body of Christ in all parts of the world in all generations of time...Book and Church are not to be separated."¹⁴

But today they are! And the spirituality which emerges from the separation is simultaneously erroneous, individualistic,

and unaccountable. I will never forget Dr. Robert Cushman, one of my doctoral professors at Duke University, saying that the main problem with contemporary theology is that it is "free-lance"--that is, it is operating with no connection or accountability to the Church. I could not agree more! There is great irony here. Evangelicals are frequently accused by liberals of being triumphalistic in their focus upon Christ and the presentation of him as the Savior of the world. But what could possibly be more triumphalistic than the assertion that it is possible to produce good theology which stands apart from and in contradiction to two thousand years of orthodox interpretation?

Here is one place where Christian theology is general and Christian spirituality in particular are in great danger of being captured by cultural ideology. It is the danger of open-ended, free-floating, radically independent **individualism**. Spirituality will never be fully Christian adrift from the Church. In the presentation of truth and the spiritual life which flows from it, we are not free to re-invent the gospel, but only free to proclaim it as it has been handed to us by the Church. When we presume an authority to step outside twenty centuries of tradition and advocate "another gospel," we have the civil right to do so, but not the ecclesiastical right. Spirituality is made Christian by its

connection with the Church.

Our response must be to be devoted churchpersons. When I joined my denomination, I took the vow to uphold it with my prayers, presence, gifts, and service. So long as I remain a member, I am not free to violate those vows or to substitute rank individualism for them. Likewise, those of us who are clergy stand in the line of apostolic succession--the vocational priesthood which has always had two primary tasks: guiding people in the ways of God and guarding the gospel. If I abdicate the guardian role through self-avowed assertion of my own views, I sever spirituality (and ministry for that matter) from its vital context.

Fourth, spirituality is made Christian by its grace-orientation. Those of us in the Wesleyan tradition understand theology as an "order of salvation." The order itself is the story of grace: prevenient, converting, sanctifying, and glorifying.¹⁵ With respect to Christian spirituality this means that we are always responders to God's prior action. Ours is not a spirituality of human effort or merit--i.e. "working our way up to God." Rather, it is a spirituality of "having been found" by God and living in ever-increasing gratitude for "God's coming down" to us. To say it another way, we grow spirituality as we respond to grace.

Such response is made possible through the use of the means of grace, often called

the spiritual disciplines. John Wesley called the means of grace "the ordinary channels of conveying [God's] grace unto the souls of men."¹⁶ In our day, Richard Foster has refocused and renewed our interest in the spiritual disciplines, showing how they shape the inward, outward, and corporate life of Christians.¹⁷ Grace thus becomes the priority and the means of living the spiritual life.

This understanding of grace is what lies at the heart of viewing Christian spiritual formation as a journey. Lawrence Richards rightly notes that "Spiritual life must be nurtured...Spirituality does not come automatically."¹⁸ In the history of Christian spirituality that journey has been defined in many ways. Those in the mystical school have described it in terms of purgation, illumination, dark night of the soul, and union with God.¹⁹ As we just saw, Wesleyans emphasize the order of salvation, which is itself a journey motif. Persons in the Reformed tradition frequently use the paradigm of God's Providence and our response to it as a means of articulating the journey.²⁰ Christian educators and psychologists connect the human journey and the spiritual journey by showing how the spiritual life is lived in relation to childhood, adolescence, adulthood, midlife, and older age.²¹

Kept in the context of everything we have said up to this point, it is possible

to define Christian spiritual formation as the process of becoming fully human.²² This process is enabled through imitation (of Christ and the healthy examples of godly people) and penetration (as the grace of God is mediated to us by the Holy Spirit). Understanding spiritual life as a journey sanctifies every age and state of life, and it puts every age and stage of life into its proper graced relationship to God. Benedict Groeschel gives a useful summary of all we have been saying in these words, "To develop spiritually as a Christian means to grow as a child of God according to the example of Christ and His grace."²³

We respond to grace by abandoning all efforts at self-salvation and the legalisms which can so easily provide false limits and comforts. At the same time, we do not erase the role of our will in making obedient and faithful responses to God's movements in our lives. To say that Christian spirituality is grace oriented does not mean we are passive. It simply means that "Jesus is Lord" and we are always content for it to be that way! It means that we never "outgrow" our reliance upon God, we never come to a spiritual state which enables us to live henceforth on our own.

To be sure, there is much more we could say about making spirituality Christian, but these are my primary convictions regarding the matter. When we utilize the Christian story, focus on Christ as the center and

source of our spiritual life, maintain accountability to and community in the Church, and live by grace throughout our lifetime, we will have gone a long way in understanding and experiencing Christian spirituality.

Problematic Challenges

Such a view of the spiritual life is not universally affirmed or supported in our time. In fact, the question "What makes spirituality Christian?" is one given to me as an assignment to address by those who recognize that the spiritual life is being wildly reimagined in our day. If Christian spirituality is to continue to exhibit its distinctiveness (a quality which some view as narrow and obscuranist), the above characteristics will not be absent. At the same time, those characteristics are under fire on a number of fronts which must be recognized.

Perhaps the most pervasive is **syncretism**. In the past twenty years we have witnessed an unprecedented attempt to blend all things into one, universally-accepted reality. Traditional beliefs and values are not seriously questioned and often undermined. Categories of "right" and "wrong" are threatened by an attempt to make everything an "alternative." With respect to Christian spirituality in particular, the syncretists would have us merge our views

with virtually all others--especially those of the great religions of the world, and even the most-responsible advocates of "new age" perspectives. The end result would be a kind of B'hai spirituality--a view of reality and a resulting experience that puts Christianity and Christ in a respected, but not distinctive position.

As I view the issue of syncretism, the main problem with it (but not the only one!) is that it tries to answer what Christianity (and other world religions, for that matter) leaves as mystery. As far as I can tell, the Bible holds in tension Christ's declaration that he is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6) with the uncertainty of how that is so in each and every case. The main problem of syncretism is that it falsely authorizes human beings to make conclusions about things known only to God. To be sure, there are questions of how one religion relates to another, questions of the validity of those religions, and questions about ultimate destiny. But they are questions about which we have insufficient revelation. What we do know is that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and the Lord of life. The role of Christian theology in general and Christian spirituality in particular is to proclaim what we know and to remain humble before what we do not know. Syncretism is, at best, a human answer to questions beyond human knowledge. At worst, syncretism is

simply wrong--analogous to blind men who each defined "elephant" by the single part he was holding. We recognize the serious challenge of syncretism, but we also recognize it to be essentially presumptuous in relation to depth of the questions it tries to answer.

Christian spirituality is also facing the challenge of **feminism**. Womens' issues have become such a focal point in the church and society it is almost impossible to say what you mean without being misunderstood. Let me try. I believe that many women's concerns today are valid and that the church needs to take them more seriously than it has. Furthermore, I believe there is a legitimate Christian feminism in which the orthodox faith is upheld even as the problems and possibilities of women are forthrightly advanced.

There is a radical feminism in the land which not only damages the Christian faith, but actually ends up undermining the femininity it claims to uphold.²⁴ In terms of Christian spirituality it has contaminated theology and experience by redefining the Godhead, the person and work of Christ, scripture, and the church--to name a few.²⁵ In its most extreme forms it has (by its own declaration) remade Christianity into something entirely different from its orthodox precedent. In fact, orthodoxy is seen as an obstacle to "Woman Church." As far back as 1978, advocates of radical

feminism were openly saying, "perhaps the demise of the church is in fact the first step in the emergence of the new planetary consciousness, karma as it were...Feminist women would not be losing much if they lost the church."²⁶ It doesn't take much effort to see why radical feminism is a challenge to the kind of Christian spirituality we have described.

The main problem of radical feminism (but again, not the only one) is that it would substitute one extreme for another.²⁷ If we concede that Christianity has been too "male" (a charge which can be made, but not universally or unboundedly), we cannot conclude that the answer is to make it "female." Equal time is not an adequate base for theology or spirituality. Exchanging one excess for another will not bring us closer to the truth. Furthermore, we are on slippery ground whenever we begin to define our theology or our spirituality in terms of this-world categories like gender or race. While God cannot be less than our best examples of humanity, He is surely more! We must take divine attributes as our starting point, not human characteristics.

We also face the challenge of **consumerism**. With respect to Christian spirituality the danger is presenting Christian formation as essentially positive and pleasant, quick and easy. Evangelicals face this danger as much as liberals,

because the danger is not theological per se. It is cultural. It is the temptation to cater to certain groups with the message that "you can have it your way." We must remember that Christianity in general or the spiritual life in particular is not simply about getting your needs met, it is about getting your life changed. It is not merely about blessings, but also about responsibilities. It is not just about improvement; it's about transformation. Authentic Christian spirituality cannot avoid the Cross. Consumerism poses the threat to water down the spiritual life on the one hand, or to "market" it on the other in a way that promises maximum benefits for minimal investments.

Finally, we face the challenge of **ceremonialism**. This is the contemporary term for the ancient problem of having the form of godliness, but denying its power (II Timothy 3:5). It is going through the motions for motion's sake. It is "playing church." It is dabbling in discipleship. It is making spirituality superficial. It is substituting performance for reality. To use Jesus' words, it is hypocrisy. We become play actors, people who pretend to be what we are not--people who can slip in and out of our "spirituality" depending on where we are or what day it is. In its corporate manifestations it is our ritual or spontaneity divorced from authenticity. It is the vain attempt to honor God with our lips

when our hearts are far from Him (Isaiah 29:13). If Christian spirituality becomes ceremonial, it will die--and it ought to! For we will have traded in essence for illusion.

What makes spirituality Christian? Good question! It is a question that demands close examination and lifelong reflection. I hope these thoughts will spark your own in-depth, creative exploration. No one has forced us to be Christian or to live a spiritual life in consonance with the Christian faith. If we choose to name ourselves after the Christ, and if we choose to hold membership in the Body of Christ, let's do our best to be who we say we are and to practice a spirituality worthy of the name "Christian." May God help us all to do just that!

ENDNOTES

¹Benedict Groeschel, Spiritual Passages (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 13.

²Adrian van Kaam, Fundamental Formation (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 20.

³Groeschel, 4.

⁴E. Stanley Jones, The Way to Power and Poise (Nashville: Abingdon, 1949), 1.

⁵Lawrence Richards, A Practical Theology of Spirituality (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 11.

⁶Les Steele, On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), chapter one, "The Christian Story", 15-24. Steele draws on the writings of people like Gabriel Fackre, James Fowler, and Frederick Buechner (in addition to his own insights) to expand most of the items I have put in my list of emphases.

⁷William Barclay, The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John, vol.1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 44.

⁸Barclay, 45.

⁹A metaphysical concept that "all is one"--that is, that all reality is a participation in one ultimate reality. Thus, all religions and spiritualities are essentially the same.

¹⁰Edward Yarnold, "The Theology of Christian Spirituality," The Study of Spirituality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 14.

¹¹Groeschel, 17.

¹²There are too many sources of this rejection to cite here. Several examples are R. N. Brock's Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power (1988), B. Harrison and C. Heyward's Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique (1989), and John Hick's The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a Pluralistic Age (1994).

¹³Maxie Dunnam, Alive in Christ: The Dynamic Process of Spiritual Formation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981).

¹⁴Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, "How to Read the Bible," The Orthodox Study Bible (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 765.

¹⁵I provide a fuller treatment of each aspect of grace in my book, John Wesley's Message for Today (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

¹⁶Albert Outler, The Works of John Wesley, Volume 1, Sermons 1-33 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 380. John Wesley's sermon "The Means of Grace", paragraph 5. I also explore each of the means of grace in my book, Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition. (Nashville, The Upper Room, 1983).

¹⁷Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

¹⁸Richards, 15.

¹⁹Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism (London: Methuen, 1911).

²⁰Robert Ramey, Jr. and Ben Johnson, Living the Christian Life: A Guide to Reformed Spirituality (Louisville: John Knox/ Westminster, 1992).

²¹Groeschel does a very good job in connecting human and spiritual development. He also provides a quality portrayal of purgation, illumination, and union. Les Steel's book is also valuable in connecting Christian education and spiritual formation. In this regard, mention must also be made of Christopher Bryant's The River Within (London: DLT, 1978) and Iris Cully's Education for Spiritual Growth (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

²²Rachel Hosmer and Alan Jones, Living in the Spirit (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 30.

²³Groeschel, 29.

²⁴Ronald Nash, Great Divides (Colorado Springs: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 61-76.

²⁵Kenneth L. Woodward, "Feminism and the Churches," Newsweek, February 13, 1989, 58-61.

²⁶Richard L. LaShure, "Changing the Subject: The Promise of Feminist Theology," Occasional Papers, Volume 1, No. 21, October 25, 1978 (Nashville: The United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry), 6-7.

²⁷Points like this are presented clearly by evangelical spokeswomen such as Elizabeth Achtemeier in "Where are These Radical Feminists Coming From?" reNews, February 1994, 10-12 and Leslie Zeigler in "Christianity or Feminism?" Transactions, Volume 2, No. 3, July 1994, 1-4.