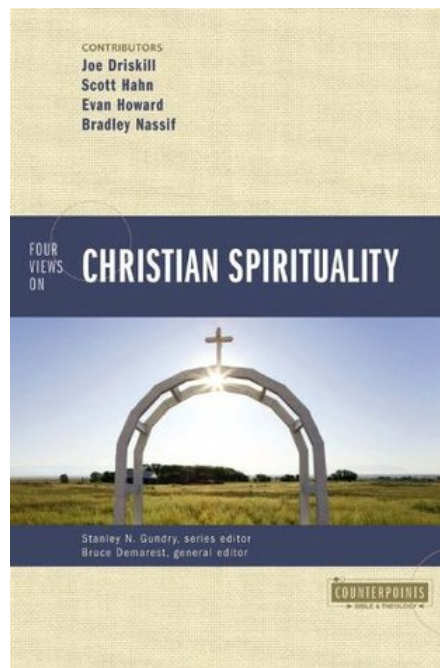




Four Views on Christian Spirituality

Bruce A. Demarest , Brad Nassif (Contributor) , Scott Hahn (Contributor) , Joe Driskill (Contributor) , Evan Howard (Contributor)

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Spirituality, or the cultivation of the with-God life, lies at the heart of what it means to be a Christian in the body of Christ. Bored by consumerism, satiated by sensualism, stressed-out by technology and depressed by the loss of the transcendent in life, people today are turning from the scientific 'what' and 'how' to the transcendent 'who' and 'why.' Indeed, the spiritually inclined represent one of America's largest 'faiths.' Interest in spirituality within the church thus is not a fleeting fad but a return to historic Christian roots. A book that focuses on the Church's search for identity, meaning and significance as interpreted by the major Christian traditions possesses considerable relevance to many in our day. Perspectives include the Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Liberal Protestant viewpoints. Currently, there exists no work that contains a side-by-side comparison of the major perspectives on spirituality as found within these Christian traditions. As such, there is great need for a volume that will examine and compare how the Church views and understands the topic of spirituality. In order to maintain a balance in content from the various traditions, contributors will focus their entries on the following areas: definition and key emphases of spirituality in their tradition; the relation of spirituality to spiritual formation; the means, disciplines or regimens by which spirituality is achieved; the ultimate goal of spirituality; and the role of Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Church in the process of spiritual growth.

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From Reader Review Four Views on Christian Spirituality for online ebook

Gregory Strong says

Four theologians from different perspectives (Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, progressive Protestantism, and evangelical Protestantism) present their views on Christian spirituality and interact with each other's chapters. The book provides a helpful overview of some of the chief approaches to and issues in Christian spirituality from the early church to the present.

Pauline says

I find it enjoyable, instructive, and challenging to read books by people from a variety of views, and books that bring together multiple views and have the authors interact with each other provide one of the best ways to do this. So I was excited to read this book that presents views of Orthodox, Catholic, progressive Protestant, and evangelical Christians.

I think I learned quite a bit from each section (though less in the case of the evangelical view, not because it was not very well presented, but because that being my own background, little there was new to me). I grew up in a progressive Protestant church, but have wondered sometimes whether my view of it had been skewed by my youth, as I left when I was 14 upon being converted in a fundamentalist church, and the extreme contrast between those two traditions. Based on that section, the church of my childhood as I remember it was very typical of that progressive tradition.

I'm not sure whether to consider it a limitation of this book or reflecting the very nature of the differences among these views, that each chapter approached the subject using a different framework, making it difficult to draw direct comparisons and contrasts among them. The editor does this in the conclusion, but his view clearly is that of the evangelical, so I wonder how the Orthodox, Catholic, and progressive Protestant would written that kind of concluding chapter.

When I read books, years ago, on the different world religions, I was struck by how, far from being similar at their core as some people claim, they don't come up with either the same or different answers to a standard set of questions, but rather provide answers to very different questions. I got somewhat the same sense reading this book, that it is hard to compare the different views because their basic approach to spirituality is distinctly different. But I guess that's what makes each of them what it is, and from reading this book I understand each better.

Anna says

Catholic and Orthodox writers: "Wait, why are we schismmed again?"

Mainline Protestant writer: "You guys are pretty terrible at social justice but also my tradition is collapsing :("

Evangelical writer: "I'm just so happy to be invited and I love all you guys!!"

Some rousing discussions of faith. I wish everybody could talk about their traditions this way. When I closed the book I was left with an unmistakable sense of how each branch of Christianity is weak in some vital areas of lived faith, and how the other branches can offer their strengths in return, if we'd only move forward in the same direction.

How much we need each other. All of us.
