

A Distinctively Evangelical Spirituality?

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A little over a decade ago, a prominent British theologian wrote an editorial calling for the articulation of a Christian spirituality from a distinctively evangelical perspective. He declared that many evangelicals were abandoning their Reformed heritage in pursuit of a more catholic spirituality, perceived to be superior to their own. That same year, a prominent American theologian published just such a proposal for a characteristically evangelical way of living the Christian life. Would the former author have been gratified by reading the work of the latter—would they have agreed upon the tenets that render a spirituality ‘evangelical’? Moreover, would the proposed spirituality address the areas that were allegedly lacking, in order to stem the tide of evangelicals changing their church affiliations? These questions were the impetus for the following project.

Alistair McGrath’s Call for a Distinctively Evangelical Spirituality

In a 1993 editorial in *Christianity Today*, Alister McGrath, professor of historical theology at Oxford University, noted that the greatest weakness evangelicalism faced at that time was “the lack of a credible and distinctive spirituality.”¹ He argued that his seminary students, who generally begin their academic careers as evangelicals, eventually “gain the impression that evangelicalism has little help to offer those who are trying to deepen their understanding of God, develop approaches to prayer and meditation that will enrich their faith, and keep them going in the Christian life.”² In McGrath’s experience, then, many students later commit to what he called “a form of catholicism,” and some go so far as to adopt “more catholic forms of theology” as well.³ He asked evangelicals not to borrow spiritual practices from other Christian traditions, but rather to revive the spiritual practices used by the Reformers and the Puritans so that they will not be lost to the church at large. He warned that evangelicals must either revive their unique and historic spiritual practices or design new ones that are firmly rooted in their tradition, or they will witness the development of a generation of ex-evangelicals.

Although McGrath did not advance a proposal for a distinctively evangelical spirituality,⁴ he did offer four ways in which such a proposal could provide a distinctive outlook to benefit the larger church. First, such a spirituality would demand that its premises and practices be founded upon Scripture. Second, it would focus upon the atoning and saving work of Christ, leading Christians to humility, wonder, and delight. Third, it would involve the practice of spiritual disciplines, not as a method for achieving salvation, but rather as a means of expressing and developing that salvation. The spiritual disciplines allow Christians to cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s work in their lives, “strengthening [his] energizing control.”⁵ Finally, McGrath called evangelicals to remember that a believer’s faith can be strengthened when he or she has a

role model who can offer wisdom gained through the transformative experience of walking with Christ. He urged Christians not to merely teach the faith, but to live it in full view of others.

The editorial closed with McGrath’s assertion that each of these premises was grounded in the history of evangelicalism, and thus could serve as a part of the foundation for this characteristically evangelical spirituality. Moreover, he recognized that others might wish to add to his preliminary list of premises. Nonetheless, his call for evangelicals to wake up and develop their own spirituality clearly arose from his passionate belief that they had something of infinite value to offer to the wider church, and that failure to rediscover that treasure might lead to the demise of the movement.⁶

Later Developments

Six years later, in 1999, McGrath published a textbook entitled *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* in which he described his understanding of what he had termed ‘catholic’ spiritualities as compared to an evangelical Protestant one.⁷ He introduced his overview by postulating that theological, historical, and personal variables, as well as gender, socioeconomic class, and race, exercise determining influences upon the development of the wide variety of Christian spiritualities. He concluded, “Even if each person were to share identical theological beliefs and emphases, differences in personal temperament and social context would lead to a multiplicity of spiritualities. It could reasonably be argued that there are as many spiritualities as there are Christians, in that each Christian attempts to respond to the Christian faith in terms of her specific (and unique) circumstances.”⁸ In addition, of course, McGrath recognized that there are different types of Christianity, each with distinctive features crucial for the discussion of spirituality. The chart below summarizes his brief treatments of the attributes of Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and evangelical Protestant spiritualities.

Spiritual Distinctives of Three Major Forms of Christianity⁹

Roman Catholicism	Eastern Orthodoxy	Evangelical Protestantism
is strongly corporate	stresses history/tradition	stresses the Bible
is strongly liturgical	focuses on incarnation of Christ and deification of humanity	emphasizes the atonement of Christ
is strongly sacramental	practices veneration of icons	focuses on personal conversion
emphasizes the role of the Virgin Mary and the saints	uses the Jesus prayer; sees monasteries as important	is committed to evangelism

Roman Catholicism

McGrath acknowledged that describing any Christian tradition with only four major tenets was extremely reductionistic. Nevertheless, so that his readers could understand what he believed to be Roman Catholicism’s particular contributions to Christian spirituality, he began with the assertion that Catholicism views the church as a visible divine institution. This view is founded upon a corporate understanding of both Christian life and church authority. Second, he contended that

Catholicism is marked by its strong liturgical emphasis. Forms of worship are fixed and function as a statement of beliefs (*lex orandi, lex credendi*), wherein the liturgy itself is a form of public proclamation of what the church believes. This tenet also draws attention to the importance of the church community for spiritual nurture. The third aspect of Catholic spirituality is its focus upon the sacraments—“the view that the benefits of Christ, which result from his death and resurrection, are communicated to the church through the sacraments.”¹⁰ Finally, McGrath drew attention to the Catholic emphasis on the role of the Virgin Mary and all the saints as intercessors for the living and the dead. He mentioned the practice of praying the rosary and participating in novenas. These four areas of emphasis, then, characterize Roman Catholic spirituality in McGrath’s analysis.¹¹

Eastern Orthodoxy

Turning to Eastern Orthodoxy, he drew somewhat different emphases. First, he described the Orthodox focus upon history and tradition, its sense of continuity with the earliest Christians.¹² Orthodox Christians see their tradition as a vital resource for the present, and rely upon the writings of many eastern church fathers as a basis for contemporary theological and doctrinal reflection. Next, McGrath mentioned theological distinctives, including the Father’s sole spiration of the Holy Spirit,¹³ but perhaps most importantly the strong conception of salvation as deification. This doctrine links the significance of the incarnation of the Son of God with the idea that human beings were created to participate in the divine life, sharing in the being of God. In addition, the incarnation plays a role in the Orthodox use of icons as “‘windows of perception,’ through which the believer may catch a glimpse of the divine reality.”¹⁴ The final important principle includes two other practices: first, the use of the Jesus prayer; second, the vital role of monks and monastic life in expressing and defending Orthodox theology and spirituality.¹⁵ With these four attributes, McGrath laid out his view of Orthodox spirituality.

Evangelical Protestantism

In comparison, McGrath’s discussion of evangelical spirituality began with a strong focus on the Bible as the word of God in written form, issuing from the movement’s roots in the Reformation. “One of the most important features of the Reformation,” he pointed out, “was its emphasis on the importance of the public and private reading of the Bible.”¹⁶ Evangelicals not only read their Bibles during personal devotions; they also study the scriptures in small groups and listen to biblical preaching each week in church. The second facet of this spirituality is its concentration on the atonement, the saving work of Christ, which McGrath said is especially prominent in both its musical heritage and contemporary hymnody. Next, he mentioned the evangelical insistence upon Christians’ personal conversion to Christ, who transforms them into his likeness as an ongoing consequence of that conversion. Finally, evangelicals are strongly encouraged to practice evangelism—sharing the stories of how they came to faith, and inviting others to join them in believing that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. With these four characteristics, then, McGrath concluded his overview of evangelicalism, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism. Although limited, it provided a deeper understanding of the foundations of his original thesis.

Analysis

Two major questions arise from a comparison of McGrath’s two presentations. First of all, noticing that the four ‘distinctives’ from the editorial apparently differ from those offered in the textbook, what might have been the reason(s) for the changes? Might we assimilate the two sets of characteristics to create a more thorough portrait of a truly evangelical spirituality? Secondly, does his portrayal of the ‘catholic’ forms of Christianity (Catholicism and Orthodoxy) indicate

specific areas in which evangelical spirituality might be weak? In other words, does McGrath's summary offer any hints about why evangelicals might abandon what he depicted as their characteristic spiritual practices in favor of a more catholic approach?

Assimilating the Two Presentations

At first glance, the attributes of evangelical spirituality in the editorial and the textbook appear to demonstrate significant differences. Each began by citing the Bible as a central feature of the movement, and continued by acknowledging the focus upon the atoning work of Christ at the cross. However, the last two facets in the two presentations appear to be somewhat dissimilar: spiritual disciplines as a means of strengthening the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life vs. personal conversion and transformation, and role models who provide experiential wisdom vs. a commitment to evangelism. The textbook's paradigm offers a more typical conception of evangelical spirituality as it currently exists, focused upon evangelism and conversion or transformation. In contrast, the earlier editorial articulated a vision for the future of evangelical spirituality and highlighted spiritual practices and recovery of role models.

Nevertheless, the 'discrepancies' between the two lists can be assimilated without undue strain. To speak of the necessity of personal conversion and transformation could certainly include the entire realm of spiritual disciplines, as well as the ongoing sanctification effected by the Holy Spirit. McGrath's editorial affirmed that practices are valuable "as a means of expressing and developing the salvation that is already ours. Spiritual discipline is what keeps many Christians going through spiritual dry patches; too often, we have neglected this resource."¹⁷ To state it differently, evangelical spirituality begins, as it were, with a personal commitment to the triune God. Then it is nurtured by individual and corporate practice of spiritual disciplines, and fostered and empowered by the Holy Spirit, toward the goal of transformed lives on earth and eternal life in the eschaton. These two attributes, although not identical, can be united in this way.

In addition, McGrath noted that the practice of evangelism is often associated with the evangelical movement.¹⁸ How, specifically, is that activity carried out? Often, through non-believers' observation of role models—whether they are expositing the scriptures or simply testifying about God's work in their own lives. Hearing the preaching of an evangelist such as Luis Palau, or listening to the story of the conversion of the woman who lives next door, can help a person to move closer to comprehending both what the gift of salvation entails and how to receive that gift. As Christians live their lives and endeavor to follow Christ, God can use their example and their wisdom to draw others to faith or to deepen the faith that they already have. Surely McGrath would have agreed that evangelical spirituality is characterized by a concern for unbelievers that can be addressed, in part, by believers who become living role models, expressing the joy and freedom they have found in Christ.

Thus, assimilating the two presentations might yield something like this: Evangelical Protestant spirituality stresses the Bible, emphasizes the atonement of Christ, focuses on personal conversion leading to transformation by the working of the Spirit through their spiritual practices, and is committed to model life in Christ in ways that draw others to him.¹⁹ Working from this simplified description, while recalling the broader discussion as well, how does evangelical spirituality differ from a more 'catholic' approach?

'Catholic' vs. 'Evangelical'?

The thesis for McGrath's editorial was that "many who begin their Christian life as evangelicals end up on the more catholic wing of the church on account of the perceived superiority of its spirituality."²⁰ But why would evangelicals regard catholic spirituality as superior to their own? By combining McGrath's presentation of Roman Catholic and Eastern

Orthodox attributes²¹ and comparing them to the assimilated evangelical ones,²² it is possible to discern some of the variations between the two. Although this brief analysis can in no way substitute for thorough sociological research about why people ‘change churches,’ so to speak, it may offer some insights that can be used to evaluate an actual proposal for a distinctively evangelical spirituality. (Throughout the following discussion, please refer to the chart below.)

For example, although both spiritualities view relationships within the church community as formative, the catholic conception of Christian life as fundamentally corporate differs from the evangelical stress on the conversion and transformation of the individual Christian. Moreover, catholic traditions understand church authority as corporate and hierarchical/episcopal; evangelical believers are often more familiar with the beliefs and opinions of their local pastors than of their denominational catechisms as authoritative.²³ They also experience Sunday morning worship services that may change as musical styles evolve, as denominations update their liturgies, or as cultural factors affect local congregations, whereas catholics are accustomed to a fixed liturgy that does not depart from the rubric.

Comparing Tenets of Catholic Spirituality and Evangelical Spirituality²⁴

catholic	evangelical
corporate conception of Christian life; community important	personal conversion/transformation; community important
corporate conception of church authority	individual pastors lead autonomous congregations
fixed liturgy; both word and symbol proclaim	worship/liturgy often changes; Bible as source of proclamation, less emphasis on symbol
church communicates grace via administration of sacraments	grace mediated by Christ and the Spirit, not necessarily (or solely) via church/sacrament
continuity with history and theological tradition	continuity with Reformation history and tradition
salvation = deification based on incarnation	salvation = eternity in heaven based on atonement
selected practices: intercession through the Virgin Mary and saints; veneration of icons; use of Jesus prayer	selected practices: personal Bible reading, prayer, and evangelism

Another variation in this regard concerns the manner of proclamation: in catholic spirituality, both word and symbol are prominent, with symbol often eclipsing word in importance;²⁵ conversely, in evangelical spirituality, biblical preaching is the most prominent means of proclaiming, while symbol is not well understood (or may even be lacking altogether). This variation is evident in the following comparison too, where catholics see grace as communicated through the church’s administration of the sacraments (symbol), but evangelicals understand grace as im-mediate, coming directly from Christ through the Spirit to the believer.²⁶

Other differences between the two types of spirituality concern their relationships with history and tradition, their theological understanding of salvation, and specific spiritual practices. Both evangelicalism and catholicism are founded upon the history of the church, from its beginnings at Pentecost through the present day. Nonetheless, catholic thought emphasizes continuity with the theological tradition handed down through the fathers and the great theologians of the church in obedience to the magisterium. On the other hand, evangelical thought, although acknowledging the importance of the early church in its stress upon the Bible, tends to focus upon continuity with the work of the Reformers as normative for contemporary theology. In addition, perhaps due in part to these differing sources, the understanding of salvation as a corporate participation in the being of God through the incarnation of the Christ differs significantly from the concept of salvation as the changing of one's eternal destiny from hell to heaven as the major benefit of the atoning work of Christ. Lastly, although both traditions encourage regular church attendance and personal devotion, other spiritual practices vary a great deal between the two traditions. Evangelicals generally focus much of their spirituality on the Bible, participating in personal, small group, and corporate study, and they also consider various forms of prayer and evangelism to be high priorities. Catholics, in contrast, often pursue spiritual practices that are almost unknown among evangelicals: intercession through the saints and the Virgin Mary, veneration of icons, and repetition of the Jesus prayer as a means of recollection.

These striking variations between catholic and evangelical Christian practice may provide some clues concerning reasons why persons might be drawn to one more than to the other. It is beyond the scope of this project to determine which of the catholic attributes are most attractive to evangelicals, however. Our next step is to explore the work of another evangelical theologian, Stanley Grenz, and his ideas about a 'revised' evangelical spirituality. Would McGrath accept Grenz's proposal as a credibly distinctive evangelical spirituality that could help to keep evangelicals from abandoning their own theological heritage?

Stanley Grenz's Proposal for a Revised Evangelical Spirituality

In the same year that McGrath was calling for the recovery of a distinctively evangelical spirituality, Stanley Grenz, then a professor of theology and ethics at Carey/Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, was proposing one. His 1993 book *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* gave voice to his desire to rearticulate "the biblical, evangelical vision in a manner that both upholds the heritage we embrace and speaks to the setting in which we seek to live as God's people and share the good news of the salvation available in Jesus Christ our Lord."²⁷ He began his task by exploring the foundations of evangelical identity, locating them in both theological reflection (doctrine) and spiritual experience (spirituality), but giving preference to the experiences of conversion and piety as the heart of evangelicalism. Having established this point of reference, Grenz proposed a specifically evangelical spirituality based upon his own reflection about its unique attributes.

The Development of the Evangelical Identity

Grenz introduced his discussion of evangelicalism by highlighting its roots in the theology of the Protestant Reformation. He referred to the example of Martin Luther as searching for a gracious God in his intense study of the scriptures, and to John Wesley's search for a perfect love for God, or holiness, in his daily life. With these references, Grenz articulated the two strongest emphases in evangelical theology and spirituality: biblical doctrine and personal salvation.²⁸ He reminded his readers of "the great *solas*: *sola scriptura*, *solus Christus*, *sola gratia*, *sola fide*. As a result [of this Reformation heritage], the emphases on the authority of the Bible and the sole salvific work of Christ leading to

salvation by grace through faith alone have characterized evangelicals wherever they have been found since the sixteenth century.”²⁹ By describing these doctrinal tenets, Grenz laid out the foundation of evangelicalism.

This first phase of the movement was followed by a second phase, reflected in the particular form of Christianity of the English Puritans and the Lutheran Pietists, which was expressed in the American revivalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁰ From the Puritans, evangelicalism gleaned two ideals: personal assurance of election (certainty that one was truly part of the family of God) and the development of a Christian government for the nation. The pietists (and the English Methodists) added the pursuit of both a living personal faith and a consciousness of social problems that would result in ministry to the society at large. The revival meetings in America contributed a stress upon the need for each individual to have his or her own experience of conversion. Hence, the second phase of the evangelical movement shifted the focus of reflection from doctrine to spiritual experience and the living of the Christian life. “Because of these roots,” Grenz wrote, “the genius of classical evangelicalism its concern for or emphasis on a conscious experience of the grace of God in conversion.”³¹

The third phase of evangelical development is more complex. Because of the wide variety of religious traditions that immigrants had introduced into America, no single one of them could exercise authority over all the others. This reality ushered in what Grenz called “an ingenious innovation in ecclesiology: denominationalism, the principle that the one body of Christ is ‘denominated’ into the various ecclesiastical bodies and traditions.”³² With this understanding of the church, members of a wide variety of Christian traditions grew to accept one another, and by participating together in missions societies and social service agencies, they were united in spirit despite their theological and spiritual differences. Any more-visible unity was veiled by the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the early twentieth century, but began to reemerge after World War II with the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals. However, many of the ‘new’ evangelicals still held to the “five fundamentals: the inerrancy of the Bible; Christ’s virgin birth, substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection; and the authenticity of biblical miracles.”³³ Thus, in this third phase, evangelicals tended to identify themselves by agreement with these particular doctrinal tenets, with less of the focus upon the individual’s spirituality that had distinguished the second phase.

Grenz concluded his brief historical survey of the evangelical movement by arguing that the term evangelical “refers first of all to a specific vision of what it means to be Christian. This vision, of course, is connected to a set of shared convictions. But it is not exhausted by them.”³⁴ Rather, he asserted, evangelicalism is best considered with reference to a sense of belonging together with others who share that specific vision of the Christian life, which transcends the diversity inherent in the movement. In short, the uniqueness of evangelicalism is its spirituality, its understanding of how to live as a Christian. Having arrived at this conclusion, Grenz went on ready to describe the characteristics of evangelical spirituality.

Distinctives of Evangelical Spirituality

As was the case with McGrath’s presentation, Grenz depicted evangelical spirituality by means of several broad categories, which by no means presume to capture entirely this way of life. Still, these six characteristics give the reader a broad overview of his perspective. The chart below summarizes and compares them to McGrath’s assimilated distinctives.

The centerpiece of Grenz’s characterization was identical to McGrath’s first tenet: the Bible is the norm for faith and practice. Grenz elaborated that evangelicals tend to favor a straightforward interpretation of biblical texts and stories as “in some sense true as they are told,”³⁵ and further that members of the tradition look to the scriptures for answers to their questions about how to live the Christian life. Unlike McGrath, however, Grenz did not place the importance of the

atonement anywhere on his list. Since he had already briefly explained the theological distinctives of the movement (including the five fundamentals, for example), this lack is not especially surprising. It certainly does not mean that McGrath viewed the atonement as central to evangelical spirituality while Grenz denied its centrality; rather, Grenz simply did not acknowledge the theological doctrine of atonement as a specifically spiritual emphasis.³⁶

Portraits of Evangelical Spirituality: Grenz and McGrath

Grenz	McGrath
Bible-centered; truth and application	Bible as normative
-----	atonement of Christ
personal, relational faith	personal conversion
prayer and daily “quiet time”	transformation through the working of the Spirit
church as fellowship	-----
Grenz	McGrath
expressing praise during worship services through music and testimony	-----
evangelism = shared stories of transformation	evangelism = modeling life in Christ in attractive ways

In addition, Grenz and McGrath agreed that a focus on personal faith or personal conversion was a vital component of the evangelical ethos. Grenz declared that the shared evangelical vision includes the idea that one’s religious faith must be central to life, and that believers speak of the Lord as participating in their lives. The two theologians also would have concurred that prayer, and time devoted to Bible study and reflection, are two of the spiritual practices through which the Holy Spirit can transform Christians’ lives.³⁷ Grenz indicated that evangelicals expect that God will hear and answer their prayers, and that they also expect to sense the Lord speaking to them as they read the Bible and pray.

Moreover, Grenz included two tenets that McGrath did not mention. The first was the evangelical understanding of the church as a gathering of believers, where “we anticipate an experience of fellowship—the enjoyment of a spiritual bond with each other.”³⁸ The second mentioned two characteristically evangelical worship practices: singing hymns and other music that express joy and praise to God, and testifying about his goodness and faithfulness, whether in song or testimony. In their final points, though, the two men were of one mind again. Whether describing evangelism as sharing stories of personal transformation or as acting as role models by living the Christian life before witnesses, both accounts of

evangelical spirituality place a strong and appropriate emphasis upon the practice of evangelizing those who do not yet believe in Christ.

Grenz ended this portion of his work by asserting that evangelicalism “is a shared experience cradled in a shared theology, which serves as the context for our ongoing life as believers.”³⁹ He upheld the primacy of the experience of being ‘born again’ as being at the heart of evangelicalism. In contrast, McGrath would argue that neither spirituality nor theology is necessarily primary, but that the most important thing is the process of correlating the two. He stated, “Spirituality is not something that is deduced totally from theological presuppositions, nor is it something which is inferred totally from our experience. It arises from a creative and dynamic synthesis of faith and life.”⁴⁰ Even though he felt strongly that evangelical *identity* was rooted in experience more than in theology, Grenz would have concurred with McGrath’s statement about spirituality’s synthesis with theology. Despite minor variations between the two, then, they generally were united in their depictions of the unique characteristics of evangelical spirituality. But does Grenz’s proposal actually provide the “credible and distinctive” evangelical spirituality that McGrath said was necessary to satisfy members of the movement?

A Revisioned Evangelical Spirituality

Grenz noted that the impact of postmodern philosophy upon the evangelical movement enabled a shift from a propositional or doctrinal basis for calling oneself an evangelical to the recognition that the distinctively Christian experience of conversion is at its core. However, he would not portray spirituality exclusively in terms of that single experience, for conversion implies being converted *to* something—in this case, to the almighty and everliving God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ At the outset of his proposal, he defined spirituality as “the quest, under the direction of the Holy Spirit but with the cooperation of the believer, for holiness. It is the pursuit of the life lived to the glory of God, in union with Christ and out of obedience to the Holy Spirit.”⁴² The *telos* of a truly Christian spirituality, according to Grenz, is fullness of reconciled relationship both with other persons and with the triune God.⁴³ He depicts the movement toward this *telos* as a creative tension among inward, outward, individual and corporate commitments and practices.

Balancing Inward and Outward

Grenz opened his proposal for evangelical spirituality by drawing attention to the tension between the inward and outward dimensions of the Christian life. Of course, given his emphasis on each person’s experience of conversion, he recognized the importance of the inward dimension of religious life. Still, he maintained that a balance must be struck between that inward experience and its practical outworkings; inward piety must be in equilibrium with outward activity.⁴⁴ He appealed to the New Testament as providing evidence of these two streams within the life lived in obedience to Christ: “The documents articulate both a call for a holy detachment from the world and an admonition for dedicated involvement in the world.”⁴⁵

The inward dimension of religious faith, more than merely an assent to certain theological propositions, involves the emotions as well, which Grenz referred to as “heart affections, the inner core of one’s being.... Convictions must not only be lodged in one’s head; they must penetrate the whole person, so that they become near and dear to one’s *heart*.”⁴⁶ In other words, feelings of love, joy, and peace customarily accompany one’s relationship with God. Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is inextricably intertwined with love for Him as Redeemer and Savior. For Grenz, these affections should give rise to several desires within evangelicals. For example, Christians desire to attend church regularly, operating from an inward

motivation to enjoy fellowship with the people of God.⁴⁷ They also want to continue on spiritual pilgrimage with their Lord, living the Christian life and growing in holiness, experiencing his transforming power at work within them as they walk with him.⁴⁸ Moreover, they sense that since their confession of faith in Christ, they long to please him, to live in ways that honor and glorify him. The dynamic presence of Christ, mediated by the Holy Spirit, transforms their fleshly motivations and desires into holy ones.⁴⁹

However, the interior motivations are not enough without the outward practice of the Christian life. Indeed, they can disintegrate into dangerous errors, including locating the divine within the self, asserting that experience is the only valid path to God, or fulfilling one's own selfish desires, seeing religion as a means of benefiting oneself.⁵⁰ Instead, Grenz pled for the inward affections and desires to be manifested in outward practices appropriate to the Christian life, declaring that only in this way does true spirituality emerge.⁵¹ He again highlighted the need for balance between the two by recalling that the evangelical understanding of the need for practices is not based on the hope of earning salvation through them. Evangelicals do these things not so that they may receive grace, but rather as a result of the grace they have already received. "The outward acts we are called to perform...derive their significance from our desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The spiritual life is above all the imitation of Christ."⁵²

In what ways should evangelical Christians imitate the life of Christ in their outward behavior? They should participate in baptism and the Lord's Supper, so that they may be reminded of the grace of God received by faith at their conversion, and in obedience to Jesus' commands.⁵³ They also should attend worship services, not as if they were compelled to do so, but because they want to be together with other believers and to be encouraged to continue living godly lives.⁵⁴ Employing this encouragement, evangelicals should make every effort to reflect the character of Christ in their daily walk of obedience.⁵⁵ Lastly, they are enjoined to play a part with other believers in the mandate of the church, ministering both within its walls and beyond them in the world. Grenz concluded, "We seek to hold in creative tension the warm heart and the life lived in imitation of Christ. We give priority to the inward dimension as the wellspring of the outward, but we consider the inward dead if it does not lead to its proper outward expression in the life of discipleship."⁵⁶

Balancing Individual and Corporate

The second axis where this creative tension must be maintained is the interplay between the individual and corporate aspects of evangelical spirituality. Due to its roots in the Reformation, in reaction to certain perceived abuses within the Roman Catholic juridical priesthood, Protestant theology stresses the priesthood of all believers and the concomitant doctrine of 'individual competency.'⁵⁷ This assertion that every individual person "is both spiritually responsible before God and capable under the impulse of the Holy Spirit to respond to God" drives the evangelical understanding of conversion as an individual decision.⁵⁸ In turn, evangelicals tend to view spiritual growth largely as the responsibility of the individual as well. The tension becomes evident in their understanding of the nature of the church. Most evangelicals would agree that each believer, having received the Holy Spirit at the moment of personal conversion and commitment of her life to Christ, is one of the building blocks of the church. The church, then, is comprised of persons "who see themselves as standing in relationship to the God who saves them and to each other as those who share in this salvation."⁵⁹ They work to maintain a balance between their own individual responsibility to work toward spiritual growth and their participation in the corporate community of faith.

Grenz stated that both conversion and subsequent growth in faith are primarily the task of the individual believer in whom the Spirit is active. "All believers must shoulder responsibility for their own spirituality, for each is individually

responsible to become holy and Christlike.”⁶⁰ Thus, he urged individual participation in spiritual disciplines. Evangelicals encourage one another to exercise diligence in these disciplines so that the community may be strengthened. Grenz articulated three central disciplines for his proposed evangelical spirituality: a daily time of Bible reading and prayer, faithful church attendance (including close attention to the sermon and joyful participation in worship), and purposeful evangelism.⁶¹ Through attention to these disciplines, the believer puts himself in a place where he cooperates with the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work, allowing himself to be transformed into the image of Christ.⁶² As evangelical author Dallas Willard put it, “Spiritual growth and vitality stem from what we actually *do* with our lives, from the *habits* we form, and from the *character* that results.”⁶³

Nonetheless, God did not design human beings to grow and develop in isolation from one another. Grenz employed the analogy of logs in a fireplace, noting that Christians who do not participate in the corporate life of the church are like logs separated from the fire—both lose their energy and grow cold.⁶⁴ Hence, the individual pursuit of spiritual growth must remain in tension with the corporate aspect, if only so that believers may receive encouragement from one another. Assembling together, most often on Sunday mornings but also for midweek services, is perhaps the most characteristic corporate practice of this proposal for evangelical spirituality. Grenz called each local congregation “an encouraging, supporting, admonishing community.”⁶⁵

First and foremost, the Sunday morning worship service provides care and admonishment as the gathered believers listen to the sermon, preaching that is most often drawn directly from exegesis of biblical texts. The pastor prepares through prayerful study and then delivers a message to the congregation that they receive as an “encounter...with the divine. We listen to the sermon with the expectation of hearing ‘the word of God.’”⁶⁶ Moreover, Grenz invited evangelicals to rediscover the importance of corporate worship as a secondary focus of church attendance.⁶⁷ The third vital corporate discipline he proposed was that each attender should be involved in some way with the work of the church, because through that involvement one can nurture spiritual growth in others and invite the Holy Spirit to work in one’s own life simultaneously.⁶⁸ As the members of the congregation minister to one another, those who received the ministry are enabled to grow to maturity and become participants who, in turn, instruct and encourage others.

In conclusion, Grenz summarized the two axes, inward/outward and individual/corporate, that believers must keep in balance in order for their spirituality to be distinctively evangelical:

“As evangelicals we understand spirituality as the inward conviction of the heart warmed by the regenerating power of the Spirit. This inward conviction, however, must be given expression by a life of discipleship in imitation of our beloved Master, the living and present Lord. Christian spirituality is an individual project, in the process of which we must dedicate all our personal resources. But it requires as well personal participation in the corporate body, the fellowship of Christ.”⁶⁹ In addition, he acknowledged that maintaining this balance is a difficult task. Nevertheless, he offered this proposal for what he saw as a uniquely evangelical spirituality as a contribution to the greater church and to the kingdom of God.⁷⁰ Would it satisfy McGrath, who wanted evangelicals to come up with a distinctive and credible spirituality, rooted in the Reformation? Perhaps more importantly, might it address some of the differences between evangelical and catholic spiritualities, in order to keep evangelical adherents from shifting to more catholic spiritualities?

Grenz’s Proposal: Would It Reassure McGrath?

With regard to the first question posed above, analysis indicates that Grenz’s delineation of an evangelical spirituality would have met McGrath’s specifications. Especially since Grenz’s list of attributes of an evangelical spirituality

harmonized well with McGrath's similar list of distinctives, this is not surprising.⁷¹ For example, Grenz's discussion of various spiritual practices included several that revolved around Bible reading and study, fulfilling the first of McGrath's qualifications—the insistence on scripture as normative. His emphasis upon personal conversion as the foundation for Christian spirituality is also clearly present within Grenz's presentation. After all, Grenz claimed that the conversion experience is the “irreplaceable, non-negotiable beginning point of the believer's walk with the Lord, which in turn is the pathway of spirituality.”⁷²

Furthermore, both theologians agreed that spiritual disciplines are an important vehicle through which the Holy Spirit works to transform believers. Grenz's proposal included opportunities for the Spirit to move in persons, whether during an individual's devotional time or through church attendance and participation in ministry. McGrath might have wanted to include a wider variety of distinctively evangelical spiritual practices than Grenz mentioned, however.⁷³ Finally, the thrust toward evangelism appears as well, through sharing testimonies of God's gracious working and through living the Christian life in ways that encourage others to persist in faith. In short, although Grenz likely crafted his proposal for an evangelical spirituality before McGrath wrote his editorial, the proposal would certainly have been an acceptable way to begin teaching evangelicals about their unique Christian heritage and its impact on their lives of faith.

A separate but more-pressing issue is the usefulness of Grenz's proposal for keeping believers ‘in the evangelical fold,’ so to speak. McGrath argued that evangelicals worldwide had developed the lazy habit of borrowing spiritual practices from the medieval period, for example, rather than developing or rediscovering practices from the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformers.⁷⁴ He made no effort to describe the mechanism by which evangelicals became disenchanted with their own tradition and thereby moved toward more-catholic spiritual practices. Presumably, however, exposure to catholic spirituality eventually led them to view catholic theologies, in their correlation with spirituality, as superior. Grenz's balancing of inward, outward, individual and corporate practices was founded upon his own exposure to the Reformation writers, especially the Puritans and the pietists, as well as biblical truth. Therefore, McGrath could not accuse Grenz of borrowing practices from catholic writers that could cause evangelicals to stray. Both in what it does and what it does not do, then, Grenz's proposal should have gratified McGrath.

Grenz's Proposal: Can It Save Evangelicalism?

Still, Grenz's proposal does more than *not* borrow from catholic spirituality; in fact, in many ways it bridges the gap between evangelical and catholic.⁷⁵ For instance, McGrath depicted catholic spirituality as fundamentally corporate and evangelical spirituality as giving primacy to the individual believer. Grenz, though, consistently called for ways to hold these two poles in tension. By endeavoring to give more equal weight to the roles of the individual and of the corporate body, he may have provided a way to reconcile evangelical and catholic attributes in this area. If evangelicals are shifting toward catholicism because of this discrepancy, Grenz might have given them a reason to reconsider.

Moreover, although Grenz never would have agreed that evangelicals should voluntarily place themselves under the hierarchical authority of Roman Catholicism (or of Eastern Orthodoxy, for that matter),⁷⁶ he located more common ground in the area of corporate worship. Noting the catholic emphasis on the role of symbol in worship, he lamented its neglect in Protestant circles. Without diminishing the significance of biblical preaching, he encouraged evangelicalism to explore its own symbolism and to recover a more catholic understanding of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁷⁷ He affirmed, “We do well to foster a heightened use and awareness of symbols in our corporate worship.”⁷⁸ If evangelicals are

turning to catholic spiritualities in search of a more thorough understanding of symbol, Grenz has again offered a way to enrich evangelicalism that might meet their needs.

As in the case of church authority, Grenz would not entertain the catholic teaching that the church mediates grace through the ordained priesthood to believers through their participation in the sacraments.⁷⁹ However, the evangelical conception of saving grace as mediated only by Christ through the Holy Spirit is one of its strongest attractions. The recognition that one has ready access to the living God through his indwelling Spirit, that one has a personal relationship with God by which he may be called Father, is not likely to drive evangelicals to embrace a more catholic view. Also, despite catholics' apparent continuity with the history and tradition of the church from its earliest days to the present, Grenz did not focus so heavily on the Reformation as to exclude the broad sweep of Christian history. In truth, Grenz worked hard throughout his career to include rather than to exclude, to engage others in conversation despite significant disagreements with their positions.⁸⁰ This irenic spirit carried over into his proposed spirituality in ways that, again, might persuade evangelicals to glean the best of catholic spirituality without abandoning the evangelical tenets they had once embraced.

Considering the differing emphases in the theological understanding of salvation between catholic and evangelical, Grenz again was surprising. Based on the catholic understanding of the incarnation of the Son of God as permitting the deification of humanity and its corporate participation in the divine life, the evangelical doctrine that the atonement merely makes it possible for individuals to experience eternal bliss in heaven seems both weak and somewhat arrogant.⁸¹ However, Grenz's systematic theological work clearly indicates that he saw beyond the 'simple' evangelical understanding, recognizing that participation in the life of God is indeed the destiny of a humanity that has been reconciled with one another, with all of creation, and most of all with God himself.⁸² Although this theological understanding is not explicit in his proposed spirituality, his refusal to emphasize a 'me and Jesus' conception of eternity opens the door for dissatisfied evangelicals to explore other, more-satisfying options while remaining evangelical.

The only area of difference between evangelical and catholic spiritualities mentioned by McGrath that Grenz did not address adequately concerns spiritual disciplines or practices distinctive to the two groups. McGrath mentions a number of practices as catholic, including intercession with the Virgin Mary and the saints, the use of icons, praying the rosary and the Jesus prayer, and participating in novenas. This list is in no way exhaustive—catholic spirituality is rich in forms of meditation and prayer, ascetic practices, and many other attractive options that may seem inviting to evangelicals. For his part, Grenz limited his evangelical discussion to three or four core disciplines: daily Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, and evangelism. Indeed, if only those four disciplines are uniquely evangelical, adherents may well be persuaded that catholic spirituality is superior. In the matter of practices, then, Grenz's proposal really offers little help to discontented evangelicals.

In order to do so, an evangelical spirituality must broaden its consideration of spiritual practices that are not distinctively catholic, but rather distinctively Christian. To weigh practices such as hospitality, simplicity, submission, fasting, or giving to the poor is not 'borrowing' from catholic spirituality—after all, such practices can be found in the writings of the Reformers, Puritans and pietists as much as in Catholic or Orthodox writers. Rather, such consideration, if it led to a multiplicity of helpful practices through which the Holy Spirit could work in believers' lives, could be the key to restraining McGrath's threatened wholesale evangelical exodus into catholic spiritualities.

A Personal Question

I close with a personal question which has hounded me throughout this project: is a distinctively or uniquely evangelical spirituality the right goal? McGrath was concerned that evangelicalism seemed to be more willing to borrow catholic practices—and thereby to dilute its own doctrinal and traditional uniqueness—than to mine its own heritage for practices that would meet the needs of contemporary adherents. His hope was that such a spirituality would help to stem the tide of evangelicals leaving their churches in favor of Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy, although he never gave any sort of statistical proof of the existence of such a tide.⁸³ Having compared the work of the two men, I have argued that Grenz’s proposed revisioning of evangelical spirituality did indeed meet McGrath’s challenge. In addition, Grenz managed to provide a reasonably reliable way for evangelicals to remain evangelical while pursuing a deeper and richer spirituality.

But my own heart’s cry is for an even broader ecumenism to be conceived through the interpenetration of so-called catholic and evangelical spiritualities. Can we not agree that more unites us than divides us? We need not speak of ‘our’ spirituality and ‘their’ spirituality, but rather of a distinctively *Christian* spirituality founded upon the distinctively *Christian* theological principles that we share. Certainly as we grow in conformity to the image of Christ, and closer to obeying God’s will for our lives, we draw nearer to one another as well. I do not speak at the level of institutional and denominational unity, a too-easy ecumenism that ignores significant theological and practical differences between evangelicals and catholics. Rather, I speak at the level where one believer can say to another, “You are my brother in Christ; you know him in ways I do not; teach me!” without fear that someone will attempt to drag him back from some imaginary-but-dangerous precipice. “It is only by thinking through and talking through the great themes of faith that we can hope to make any progress at all toward [visible] Christian unity.”⁸⁴ I have no answers for institutions and denominations—merely the hope that, if the study of spirituality can provide a place for conversation, the ensuing conversations will be fruitful.

¹ Alister E. McGrath, "Borrowed Spiritualities," *Christianity Today* 37 (November 8, 1993): 20.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ McGrath has, in fact, at least attempted such a proposal. His book *Beyond the Quiet Time: Practical Evangelical Spirituality* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003 [originally published in London by SPCK, 1995]) was written as a popular Bible study for small groups that integrated stories of Christians from the Reformation with biblical texts, hymn texts, and meditating with the senses. However, this was not a scholarly proposal, but simply a book to be used by students in small groups to revitalize their devotional lives.

⁵ McGrath, "Borrowed Spiritualities," 21.

⁶ Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 137.

⁷ McGrath does not deal with the possibility that there could be an evangelical Catholicism or an evangelical Orthodoxy. For him, the three divisions of Protestant spirituality are *mainline*, *charismatic*, and *evangelical*, and he spends the vast majority of his time on the third one. See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 17-19.

⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁹ This chart summarizes the information presented in McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 14-19, as does the following discussion.

¹⁰ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 15.

¹¹ In a brief discussion of this topic in class, a Catholic classmate reacted strongly to the way McGrath structured this presentation. She declared that he should have focused instead upon the Four Pillars (the Ten Commandments, the Law, the Creed(s), and theology), and should have included an emphasis upon prayer as a distinctive aspect of Catholic spirituality. However, she also made the point that what the church prescribes can be quite different from actual practice; perhaps this absolves McGrath somewhat.

¹² I understand why McGrath would place this emphasis in Orthodox rather than Catholic spirituality; however, in my opinion, this aspect is nearly as strong in the latter as in the former.

¹³ For a brief discussion of the doctrine of spiration and the *filioque* clause, see Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 62-63 and 69-70; for a comprehensive treatment, see Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), III:19-214.

¹⁴ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 17.

¹⁵ Again, as with the concept of tradition, I understand McGrath's placement of monasticism as 'distinctively' Orthodox in some sense; nevertheless, I recognize the strength of Roman Catholic monasticism as well. Perhaps the overlap between these two traditions was a part of McGrath's thinking in the earlier presentation when he said that 'catholic' traditions were gaining adherents who were searching for something more than evangelical spirituality could provide.

¹⁶ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 18.

¹⁷ McGrath, "Borrowed Spiritualities," 21.

¹⁸ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 19.

¹⁹ For a similar but more extensive presentation of these evangelical distinctives, see McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, 53-87.

²⁰ McGrath, "Borrowed Spiritualities," 20.

²¹ Since McGrath refers in his editorial to 'a form of catholicism,' and since his textbook discussion includes both Catholic and Orthodox spiritual distinctives as over against those of evangelicalism, I presume that he would be willing to consider them together as 'catholic.'

²² I have taken the liberty of augmenting McGrath's evangelical tenets with several drawn from my own study and experience of evangelical spirituality in order to make the contrasts more apparent.

²³ For a discussion of the principle of congregational autonomy held by many Reformed churches, see Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 551-553.

²⁴ Please note that McGrath was not intending to provide an exhaustive characterization of either catholic or evangelical spirituality. For example, surely an understanding of the liturgical year is a vital part of catholic spirituality, as is ministry to the poor; similarly, a foreign missions thrust and certain forms of political and social action are integral to evangelical spirituality. Moreover, the contrasts presented here are obviously somewhat elementary and reductionistic, given the scope of this project and the 'four tenet' approach McGrath used. This analysis is simply meant to clarify some of the differences between catholic and evangelical spiritualities implicit in McGrath's discussion.

²⁵ Admittedly, the reforms of Vatican II have sought to restore the importance of the homily in the Mass.

²⁶ Perhaps the best example of this doctrine is the experience of personal conversion, where a believer prays that Christ would become her Savior and Lord; although that event may occur in a church service (where the saving grace possibly could be viewed as 'mediated' through the preacher or prayer partner), it often occurs when the penitent is alone with God. That experience of 'im-mediate' grace may lay a foundation for later understanding of the functioning of grace in the life of the believer. For a further discussion, see Stanley J. Grenz, *The Baptist Congregation* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1985), 84-85.

²⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 11.

²⁸ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 41, 22.

²⁹ Ibid., 23.

- ³⁰ Grenz wrote as a North American, and the focus of his presentation is American evangelicalism, although he would have readily agreed that a similar evangelical ethos may be expressed regardless of country or culture. Nonetheless, his discussion centers upon the development of this ethos in North America, and particularly in the United States.
- ³¹ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 23.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 24.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-31.
- ³⁵ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 31; cf. Gordon S. Wakefield, who calls evangelicals “unsophisticatedly scriptural” (“Protestantism” in Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, *The Study of Spirituality* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1986], 536).
- ³⁶ McGrath’s text offered the idea that “many forms of evangelicalism have developed forms of spirituality which take the form of extended meditation on the death of Christ on the cross,” (*Christian Spirituality*, 19), and his editorial cites Isaac Watts’s hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” as an example (“Borrowed Spiritualities,” 21); however, Grenz makes no mention of meditation on the atonement as a spiritual discipline in evangelicalism, and I have no personal knowledge of these forms of meditation in Protestant spirituality.
- ³⁷ The evangelical concept of a ‘quiet time’ includes reading from the Bible, perhaps with the aid of a study guide or other materials, and prayer rooted in the message of the passage read, specifically petitioning God to help one to apply the message to that day’s activities. To explore this concept further, cf. Alister McGrath, *Beyond the Quiet Time: Practical Evangelical Spirituality* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003 [originally published in 1995 by SPCK, London]).
- ³⁸ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 32.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.
- ⁴⁰ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 9.
- ⁴¹ Stanley J. Grenz, “The Gospel and the Contemporary Pursuit of Spirituality,” *Touchstone* 12 (May 1994): 34.
- ⁴² Grenz, *Revisioning*, 42.
- ⁴³ Stanley J. Grenz, “Belonging to God: The Quest for a Communal Spirituality in the Postmodern World,” *Asbury Theological Journal* 54 no 2 (Fall 1999): 46.
- ⁴⁴ Stanley J. Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life: The Baptist Vision of Spirituality,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 18, no. 1 (Spr 1991): 61.
- ⁴⁵ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 42.
- ⁴⁶ Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 61 (emphasis in original).
- ⁴⁷ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 45.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.
- ⁴⁹ Grenz, “The Gospel and...Spirituality,” 33.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-35.
- ⁵¹ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 47.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 48.
- ⁵³ Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 63. Note that Grenz, as a Baptist, articulated a carefully nuanced understanding of these acts. He preferred to call them ‘ordinances,’ recognized only these two as normative, and would not have acknowledged them as means of grace. Nevertheless, as his thought continued to develop, he spoke more and more about the church as the community of word and sacrament; see Stanley J. Grenz, “Ecclesiology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 252-268.
- ⁵⁴ Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 64; *idem*, *Revisioning*, 48-9.
- ⁵⁵ Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 64.
- ⁵⁶ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 49.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; *idem*, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 64.
- ⁵⁹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 464; cf. *idem*, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 65, where Grenz asserts that the purpose of the church is “fostering growth toward spirituality within each other.” He would not deny the outward mission of the church, but does seem to emphasize ministry to others within the church as primary.
- ⁶⁰ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 50.
- ⁶¹ Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 65. I was surprised by the apparent reductionism here. Evangelicals, in my experience, would agree that these are, indeed, primary. Nevertheless, many other important disciplines (hospitality, simplicity, and meditation upon/memorization of scripture, just to name a few) are neglected in this proposal. Perhaps a full treatment of spiritual disciplines was beyond the scope of Grenz’s project.
- ⁶² To explore the evangelical understanding of the role of spiritual disciplines in Christian life, see Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 7; cf. Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 73.
- ⁶³ Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988 [emphasis in original]).
- ⁶⁴ Grenz, “Maintaining the Balanced Life,” 66; cf. *idem*, *Revisioning*, 53.
- ⁶⁵ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 54.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁸ Grenz, "Maintaining the Balanced Life," 67.

⁶⁹ Grenz, *Revisioning*, 56. This understanding of two poles/four components is unique to Grenz. However, many other evangelical authors have described spirituality as requiring balance among these various factors; see Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, and Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.

⁷⁰ Grenz, "Maintaining the Balanced Life," 68.

⁷¹ If necessary, please refer to the chart on pages 12 - 13.

⁷² Grenz, "Maintaining the Balanced Life," 62.

⁷³ To cite only one example, McGrath's editorial led me to infer that he would strongly encourage evangelical believers to read the writings of the Reformers and the Puritans, which he considered to be neglected classics of Christian literature (McGrath, "Borrowed Spiritualities," 20); Grenz does not mention devotional reading of any other material in addition to scripture.

⁷⁴ McGrath, "Borrowed Spiritualities," 20.

⁷⁵ If necessary, please refer again to the chart on page 8. Also, please note that McGrath was concerned about evangelicals abandoning their heritage and embracing catholic spirituality and theology, not about the reverse, and certainly not about any sort of reunification or generalized ecumenism. I am not arguing that Grenz has come up with a way to unite Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant; rather, that he has broadened evangelical spirituality in several key ways that may help evangelicals be more content by applying his proposal than they might have been before it.

⁷⁶ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 468-471.

⁷⁷ A thorough presentation of Grenz's thought in this area is beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, I was astonished as I read him by how "un-Baptist" (Baptists are notoriously anti-sacramental) he became as his theology matured. For an extensive discussion of his understanding of symbol and sacrament, see Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 495 and 511-541.

⁷⁸ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 495.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 512-515.

⁸⁰ As just one example, see Roger E. Olson, "Stanley J. Grenz: In Memoriam," *Religious Studies News: AAR Edition* (May 2005): 1.

⁸¹ I take this understanding of salvation as deification to be Catholic as well as Orthodox by virtue of its emphasis in Congar, *I Believe*, II:213-224.

⁸² I reached this conclusion after studying his thought on this particular doctrine for another class; to explore it further, see Grenz, "Ecclesiology," 260, 267; Stanley J. Grenz, "The Social God and the Relational Self: Toward a Theology of the *Imago Dei* in the Postmodern Context," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24 (2002): 56; and Stanley J. Grenz, "Belonging to God: The Quest for a Communal Spirituality in the Postmodern World," *Asbury Theological Journal* 54, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 50-51.

⁸³ I have no way to be certain, but I suspect that the 'defection' of Thomas Howard (who transferred his church affiliation from fundamentalist evangelical to Episcopalian, and finally to Roman Catholic in the early 1990s) and other prominent evangelicals may have been the impetus for McGrath's alarm. See Kim Riddlebarger, "Why Are Evangelicals Joining the Catholic Church?" in John Armstrong, gen. ed., *Roman Catholicism: Evangelical Protestants Analyze What Divides and Unites Us* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 221-244.

⁸⁴ Donald G. Bloesch, "Is Spirituality Enough? Differing Models for Living," in Armstrong, *Roman Catholicism*, 155.

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