



Six Spiritual Profiles

The purpose of these profiles is to assist us in our work with Christians and other interested participants who come from different theological traditions or perhaps no particular spiritual orientation. These profiles intend that our work be sympathetic and edifying yet in a way that directs those with whom we work to Christ and him crucified for us, and to all this can mean for a Christian faith and life. The aim is not to make the other person a Lutheran (or some other specific ecclesiastical identity) or to win debates or trump the other's ideas, but to help the other person better understand their current perceptions about how God has come to us in Christ and how this contributes to or impedes spiritual formation and Christian community. We are better equipped to do this work when we understand our own Lutheran tradition as well as other views on spirituality. (Note: possible later inclusions may profile a postmodern spirituality and a scientific spirituality, each with a Biblical orientation.)

Theology meets practice in spirituality. But right away, we run into difficulties defining “spirituality.” In the broadest sense we can think of spirituality as the accumulation of our thoughts, words, and deeds that confirm our identity as a person or self, whether in relation to Christ or not. Within a Biblical view, perspectives on spirituality seem to have to do with some comprehensive way by which we think about how God relates to the world generally, to us personally, and how we relate to one another in community. What’s more, in order to understand these relationships, a spirituality relies on certain ideas about who God is, who we are, and what the Bible is. For instance, what do you believe is the content or substance of “the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit” for the Christian? (See the Holy Spirit texts in John 14, 15, and 16 for Biblical points of departure about this question. Then see Set #7 in the Spiritual Setups document linked at the Other Traditions page where you found this document.)

For a thorough treatment of twelve views on Christian spirituality, see *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* by Kenneth Boa (Zondervan, 2001).

Behind any perspective on spirituality is a set of theological preconceptions that inform and shape how we talk and teach about the Christian faith and life. These theological and spirituality ideas are important in practical ways because they set up the sorts of decisions and practices we pursue in our ministry. They’re also important because when these ideas differ among us and among those we serve, confusion can result. And these differences do exist because down through the centuries Christians have proposed several different approaches to spirituality. (The other document noted above provides an inventory for discussion of several presuppositions that differ among the spiritualities and helps demonstrate how and why these differences can matter.)

The usual way to distinguish differences among Christians is by comparing and contrasting various church denominations and their histories. While this method is informative, it is no longer entirely accurate and instructive. Many Christians now aren’t much interested in denominations (perhaps for both better and worse). What’s more, no particular version of spirituality can any longer be contained within one denomination or even within one congregation. Influences such as Christian magazines and journals, Christian radio, Christian Web sites, Christian book stores, pop Christian music, inter-congregational Bible studies, Christian conferences and retreats, and para-church organizations all cross-pollinate each other and generate a hybrid of spiritualities among sincere Christians. This composite then gets carried by members into the practices of their

congregations, each member then emphasizing different features from the various spiritualities and their sources both historical and current.

These different spiritualities overlap but sometimes conflict. Because they do both, distinguishing among them takes a bit of effort. They generally share many of the orthodox teachings of the historic church. Yet they also have some deep-rooted differences which can lead to real confusion when members seek to apply them within the same congregation, school, or other organization. Taking a siege mentality and erecting bunkers is not a realistic or helpful response. Doing so won't keep out the various spiritualities even if we resorted to a heavy-handed, hierarchical form of leadership.

We do better to educate for recognizing these different spiritualities and for skills and practices in respecting them while being careful not to let some particular spirituality play a trump card and not be aware that this has happened. We can learn the various spiritualities and where they show up in our practices. Doing so can help us maintain a more distinct and coherent identity and direction in our congregation, school, or organization while being cognizant and respectful when alternate views are expressed. We can avoid attacking and excluding people, yet without lapsing into the syncretism problems at Colossae (Col. 2), mixing and matching spiritualities to the point where the Gospel is eclipsed. But to do this, we have to know something about the profiles of these spiritual traditions.

This document provides six profiles (in no special order) on different spiritualities but not from a denominational approach. Rather, it features themes now common in the church at large, though they vary depending on the source and application. The reader familiar with church and denominational history will detect the roots, but these themes have taken on altered meanings and uses in the church today. The reader should also know that I operate from a Lutheran ethos. I have composed these spiritualities for instructional purposes in that tradition and am predisposed toward Spirituality 6, a Spirituality of Christian Liberty, though with a genuine interest in themes from the other profiles. Thus, the document will be useful for introducing and exploring other heritages in the historical church in a respectful and compassionate way.

For those interested in denominational studies, these books are widely respected and readable:

The Religious Bodies of America, F.E. Mayer and A.C. Piepkorn (Concordia Publishing House, 1968)

Creeds of the Church, John H. Leith (Westminster John Knox, 1982)

Christian Confessions: a historical introduction, Ted A. Campbell (Westminster John Knox, 1996)

Church History in Plain English, Bruce L. Shelley (Nelson, 2008)

The History of Christian Thought, Jonathan Hill (IVP, 2008)

The Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity, Jonathon Hill (Zondervan, 2006)

Niebuhr's five perspectives on Christ and Culture are also helpful for understanding distinctions among various approaches to Christian spirituality and some (not all) theological differences among denominations. *Christ and Culture Revisited* by D.A. Carson is recommended.

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Preface Notes:

1. Each profile is presented in a positive style that seeks to affirm the perspective such that the reader can take the view seriously. The profiles are not polemic or dismissive. The aim is not to persuade but to alert the reader to why many sincere Christians find value in a particular spirituality. You are likely to notice elements in each that resonate in some ways with your own perspective. If you are continuing your own exploration of spirituality, you will want to read and study beyond the brief treatments in this document.
2. Each profile begins with three Biblical points of departure. These are not intended as proof texts but as Biblical content that signals the reader to an important theme in Scripture. Attention to such texts raises important exegetical topics that influence any spirituality but that are beyond the scope of this brief set of profiles.
3. The profile descriptions are limited to a dozen or fewer key points. These are enough to give the reader a sense of that perspective, likely recognize it other Christians or Christian sources, and compare and contrast it with their own ideas. None of these profiles captures the complexity of a spirituality deeply rooted in the church's history and complicated by the proliferation of sources in our information age.
4. Each profile is followed by a few discussion/reflection questions, the first of which is, "*What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?*" For example, Luther was asking, "How can I find a gracious God?" Augustine's famous questions were, "Who am I?" "What is the world?" and "Who is God?"
5. Each profile includes several Biblical texts that may help to inform that spirituality and why it endures among Christians with whom we may not agree.
6. Each profile concludes with a very brief summary statement that attempts to capture in a constructive way the "spirit" of that orientation to spirituality.

Profile 1

A Spirituality of Perfect Love

1. Biblical points of departure
 - a. Jn 14:15, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
 - b. Eph 2:10, For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
 - c. 2 Cor 3:18, And we...are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2. God's chief characteristic for us sinners is not his mercy, justice, sovereignty, or omnipotence. His chief characteristic is his holy love for us. This love is "holy" because it is whole, complete, and pure, it "sets us aside," and he imparts it to us entirely, not partially.
3. Though the Christian continues as sinner / saint, the Christian's heart is no longer locked in the self-love of the old Eve or Adam. The friend of Jesus can, like Jesus, truly love the Father. Despite our lapses due to our persistent sinful nature, we can even now possess and practice this perfect love. Thus, our performance and behavior may still fall short, but the intent of our heart is, by the Spirit, holy and pure. If not, we have to doubt the testimony of Scripture about the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit.
4. So, our sinful nature persists, but our sinful choices desist by the power of the indwelling Spirit. Mistakes and involuntary sins of ignorance and weakness are compatible with the perfect love bestowed upon us by the Spirit and sustained in us by the same Spirit. (Willful, voluntary sin is, of course, not compatible with our perfect love.)
5. This practical spiritual love doesn't "add" to us the righteousness already ours in Christ but actualizes that righteousness in our true, heart-felt love for God and genuine love and works for neighbor.
6. God's holy love entices sinners from sin to faith. God winning us over and saving us is a first blessing. God's holy love further entices the faithful Christian away from wooden, dulled, heartless life and worship to a vibrant and active faith applied to both our formal corporate worship and our living worship of sacrificial works (Rom 12:1). This is a second blessing that Christians can have.

Compare: Israel escapes Egypt>>>>>Israel enters the promise land
apostles called by Jesus>>>>>>>apostles receive the Holy Spirit on Pentecost

For Discussion and Reflection:

- What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?
- What features do you find helpful? not so helpful?
- Is this a valid spirituality? Does it reflect a Biblical view? a Christocentric view? a view that keeps the Gospel predominant?
- Do you notice this orientation at your place of ministry? Is that okay? not okay?
- Does this approach to spirituality set up the old Eve and Adam for another fall, or does it enhance the new person in Christ?
- Other reactions and impressions?

Additional Texts:

1. Rom 5:4-5, Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
2. Rom 8:9-10, You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.
3. 1 Cor 4:4, I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
4. 1 Cor 13:13, And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.
5. Rom 8:13-16, For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of son-ship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
6. 1 Th 2:10, You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.
7. 1 Th 3:12-13, May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.
8. 1 Th 5:23, May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.
9. 1 Jn 4:16-18, God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.
10. 2 Cor 6:1-2, As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. (Note: Paul is addressing this to the Corinthian Christians, not to unbelievers.)

Summary: God follows His pattern of salvation history in Bible history with us as individuals in the sequence of conversion (cf OT exodus, NT following), then personal salvation (cf OT the Red Sea, NT the cross), then a personal Pentecost (cf OT conquest, NT Pentecost) through which the Holy Spirit leads the believer to a second conversion and brings about Christian perfection, perfect love, and entire sanctification lived out and encouraged through the method of small group Bible study and inspirational gatherings. See also: 1 Th 5:23 Eph 4:12-16 Gal 5:20

I Jn 4:12-13 II Cor 3:18

Profile 2: A Spirituality for This Present Darkness

1. Biblical points of departure:
 - a. Jn 15:18, The world hates you.
 - b. Jn 3:19-20, This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.
 - c. Mk 6:11, And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.”
2. God’s chief attribute is not his eternal being, his holy love, his grace, his justice, or his sovereignty. His chief characteristic is his divine and unquenchable wrath. God is a warrior, and he is engaged in spiritual warfare against the powers and principalities arrayed against him. We are the battlefield of this cosmic conflict. And sin is the manifestation of the battle that rages unseen in the spiritual realms.
3. Sin, of course, has persisted throughout the ages, but it has escalated alarmingly as we now approach the end times. The powers of this present darkness and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12) have opposed themselves against God and his church in increasingly militant ways. We can see this clearly in the moral degeneration and political apostasy of this age.
4. From time to time, God continues to raise up a godly, Josiah-like leader for us to renew the Law and encourage the faithful to not lose heart. (2 Kgs 23). But as were the wicked days of Noah, so shall it be at the close of the age and the coming of the Son of man. (Mt 24:37) We see very few true spiritual leaders in the nation, and even the church has grown lukewarm to the harmful and impious conditions of our society (Rev. 3:15).
5. Yet, as Paul says in Rom 1:18, there is no excuse. In the Bible, God has made his truth plain to us. Each sentence and word is there for our instruction in godliness so that we may be pure and ready for each day--and especially the last day (Mt 24:36-44). Without the Spirit guiding us by means of these words, the powers of iniquity both seen and unseen will overcome us and defeat us. But with this divine guidance, we have a book and a verse for every spiritual threat and for every fiery dart from the devil (Eph 6:10-20).
6. As these last days of apostasy commenced, faithful voices sounded the alarm calling for temperance, family values, a return to the Bible, prayer in our public places, defending God’s truths in our schools, and holding government officials accountable to God for their votes and decisions. That faithful fight must continue, but the day is surely drawing near when God himself will exact his judgment.
7. Meanwhile, Christians must keep themselves apart. We are still in the world, but the form of this world is passing away, and we must have no dealings with it (I Cor 7:31). When it does pass away, we must not be left behind. We must be among those who have resisted spiritual assaults by finding and applying that appropriate Word of God.

For Discussion and Reflection:

- What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?
- Do you regard resisting the world and the devil as an authentic spirituality?
- What features do you appreciate? not appreciate?
- Does this approach to spirituality set up the old Eve and Adam for another fall, or does it enhance the new person in Christ?
- Does this approach reflect a Biblical view? a Christocentric view? a view that keeps the Gospel predominant?
- Which attribute(s) of God would you say a spirituality ought to emphasize?
- Do you notice this orientation at your place of ministry? Is that okay? not okay?

Additional Texts:

1. He will come again to judge both the living and the dead. (Ap. Creed)
2. Eph 6:12, For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
3. Rom 1:18, The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.
4. Jn 12:31, Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.
5. Jn 14:30, I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming.
6. Jn 16:33, In the world you have tribulation. But be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.
7. I Jn 2:15, Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.
8. Rev 22:18, I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
9. Rev. 3:2, Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.
10. II Tim 3:16, All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
11. Dan 10:10, Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom [Satan] resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes [angels], came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you

- what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.
12. James 4:4, 7, Unfaithful people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.... Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Summary: The world and the devil seek to destroy us. The Bible alone contains God's truth that can deliver us from destruction, and we avoid spiritual and moral degradation by reading literally, learning, and practicing what the Bible says about salvation and right living. The Bible is God's Word to us and, if we believe the Bible, the Spirit enables us to obey all of God's words to us. See also 2 Pet 1:20 2 Tim 3:16-17 1 Pet 5:8
Gal 5:19 Phil 2:12

Profile 3

A Spirituality of Prayer and Contemplation

1. Biblical points of departure:
 - a. Jn 15:4, Abide in me, and I in you.
 - b. Mt 13:11, He answered and said to them...it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
 - c. 1 Cor 4:1, Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
2. God's chief attribute is not his holy love, justice, grace, or even his omnipotence. His chief characteristic is his ineffable, immutable, infinite, and eternal being. God is the numinous, the divine, that which is beyond our words but not beyond our contemplation, and this he invites us to do.
3. Our sin alerts us to our own frailty and mortality. Yet God has put the eternal into our hearts (Eccl 3:11), and we must first look inwardly to sufficiently grasp our spiritual poverty. As we begin to appreciate our fragile and finite condition, we are compelled to look beyond ourselves for the good, the enduring, and the eternal.
4. We come to these spiritual insights through such practices as prayer, contemplation, meditation, fasting, silent retreat, and other behaviors endorsed by Scripture and confirmed by saints before us. By these inward practices, we are enabled to empty ourselves of temporal preoccupations so that God may by his Spirit replace things temporal with his mysteries of things eternal. We then come to a deep, inexpressible abiding with—a spiritual communion with—God.
5. These practices bring us to genuine spiritual anguish sometimes described as “the refiner’s fire” or “the dark night of the soul.” This is the darkness of which John writes and into which Jesus entered in order to fill us with his light. Through spiritual exercises, we move from loving self for self’s sake, to loving God for self’s sake, to loving God for God’s sake, and finally to loving self for God’s sake.

6. As we grow in love, our prayer also grows from cognitive prayer, to praying with the heart, to praying the life and mind of Christ, and then to communion with God through prayer with a pure mind *and* heart. Christ models this communion for us and invites us to join him (“abide in me,” Jn 15:4). Paul and the other apostles exhort us by their example and words to this life of the Spirit.

For Discussion and Reflection:

- What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?
- Do you regard contemplating God’s mysteries as an authentic spirituality?
- What features do you appreciate? not appreciate?
- Does this approach reflect a Biblical view? a Christocentric view? a view that keeps the Gospel predominant?
- Which attribute(s) of God would you say a spirituality ought to emphasize?
- Do you notice this orientation at your place of ministry? Is that okay? not okay?

Additional Texts:

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise, In light inaccessible hid from our eyes, Most blessed, most glorious, O Ancient of Days, Almighty victorious, your great name we praise (“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise,” hymn text by W. Chalmers Smith).
2. Eccl 3:11, He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.
3. Ps 1:1-2, Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
4. Ps 42:1, As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.
²My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?
5. Ps 139:7, Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.
6. Ps 63:1, O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; ²To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary.
7. Ps 8, When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; ⁴What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou cares for him? ⁵For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶Thou made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet: ⁷All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; ⁸The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas. ⁹O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!
8. Mk 1:35, Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
9. Lk 17:20-21, And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God comes not with

observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within [inside, within, in the midst of] you.

10. Jn 14:27, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.
11. II Cor 12:2-4, I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things; things that man is not permitted to tell.
12. I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless; Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness. I triumph still if thou abide with me. ("Abide With Me," hymn text by Henry F. Lyte)

Summary: God is not only "out there" but is present here among us. Through a double seeking (God *and* person seeking each other), we can experience communion with God, esp through prayer that contemplates God's creation and God's Word; and growth in faith and love, esp through spiritual exercises (steps and stages) in reflection on sin and on God's being and good-ness. The Spirit seeks us as we seek God and communes with us as we commune with God. See also

Ps 19, Ps 139

Ps 42, Isa 55:6

Ps 46:10

1 Cor 13

1 John (entire letter)

Profile 4

A Spirituality of Personal Experience

1. Biblical points of departure:
 - a. Jn 16:13: When the Spirit of truth comes; he will guide you into all the truth.
 - b. 1 Cor 12:3, 7: No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
 - c. Gal 3:2, 4: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ...Did you experience so many things in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith?
 - d. James 1:17: Every good and perfect gift comes down from above.
2. God's many attributes that reflect his love include his fatherly kindness for all, grace for sinners, mercy for the guilty, and justice for the oppressed. But his chief attribute is his benevolence. That is, God is good—all the time—and he gives us his good gifts. By his manifold gifts, God signals his willingness and desire to communicate himself to us and make us his beneficiaries not just of his grace and mercy but of all that he is—"For all things are yours," 1 Cor 3:21.
3. Sin has separated us from God, but God in his goodness has provided us with many means of grace. These include the Bible, prayer, the convicting word of the law, baptism, our remembering Jesus' death for us in the Lord's supper, preaching the Gospel, the blessings that come from our obedience, our participation in a fellowship of faith, and, especially, instances of indwelling confirmation from the Holy Spirit. By these practices of the Spirit

(Gal 5:25, NIV), we grow in spiritual union with Christ.

4. Spirituality, then, consists of our conversion from the old life of sin along with regeneration, and then a receptivity toward God and openness to his means of grace. While conversion and regeneration may have occurred earlier (such as at our baptism), a later personal experience given by the Spirit then marks us for a pattern of life called forth and compelled by this Spirit of the sovereign creator God. This experience is a genuine inward event (and possibly manifested outwardly also, perhaps by our speaking a powerful testimony, an act of generous giving, or even healing or tongues). This experience touches us intellectually and emotionally, transforms us, assures us, and readies us for a disciplined walk with the Spirit according to his inward leading and guiding (Rom 8:14).
5. Assured by the impact and power of our own personal Spirit-given experience, we learn to read the Bible in light of that experience as his personal message to us in our daily activities. This personal religious experience connects us back to God and enables us to read this or that verse and recognize God's prompting and guiding presence with us as his children in our daily lives—just as a beloved child learns to see the personal care and involvement of a good parent and respond in loving obedience to their instruction and cues. Thus, a word God spoken, say, to David, is also a word spoken personally to us (Rom 15:4) though, of course, we may have to apply it to our own times.
6. This special event of the Spirit further grants us a personal peace, despite the objections and even hostilities of others to our spiritual insights and walk. And so we can sing,
Breathe, O breath thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit, let us find that second rest (original words)
Take away our bent to sinning, Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty. ("Love Divine," hymn text by C. Wesley)

For Discussion and Reflection:

- What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?
- Do you regard contemplating God's mysteries as an authentic spirituality?
- What features do you appreciate? not appreciate?
- Does this approach reflect a Biblical view? a Christocentric view? a view that keeps the Gospel predominant?
- Which attribute(s) of God would you say a spirituality ought to emphasize?
- Do you notice this orientation at your place of ministry? Is that okay? not okay?

Additional Texts:

1. Num 11:27-29, A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"
2. Acts 2:16, This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions; your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and

women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below.”

3. Luke 24:32, They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (The disciples on the road to Emmaus)
4. 2 Cor 12:1, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things; things that man is not permitted to tell.
5. Acts 8:27-29, On his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.
6. Acts 16:7, Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.
7. Jer 29:11, For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
8. Ps 119:105, Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
9. Prov 16:9, A man’s mind plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.
10. Jn 14:27, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you, not as the world gives do I give to you.

Summary: Experiencing faith, the baptism of the Spirit, and spiritual renewal--these three divine activities bring us into union with Christ, and this union gives us access to Christ's resources for being restored to God's image. God is sovereign in His bestowing these three; we, however, are accountable for our free response or non-response. The Spirit leads us to a positive, free response by providing some personal experience suitable to our needs, situation, and personality. (Note: in this profile I have tried to present a middle-of-the-road perspective of many American evangelicals who emphasize Scripture in a personal rather than doctrinal way, and who emphasize religious experience, though not to the extent of Pentecostalism or the charismatic movements in some church bodies.)

Profile 5

A Spirituality of Social Justice

1. Biblical points of departure:
 - a. Jn 16:33: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
 - b. Jn 10:10: “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd.”
 - c. Lk 4:17: The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Jesus. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
2. The Old and New Testaments identify several divine attributes that compose God’s character including such comprehensive qualities as his goodness, love, and power. But whatever God’s ultimate essence may be, the face he shows the world through the Bible is clearly his compassionate justice represented by various Hebrew and Greek terms in some 200 different texts. Justice is the divine expression of God’s combined goodness, love, and power.
3. Though we tend to think of sin in individual terms, Scripture reports that sin began as a community and corporate breach among Eve, Adam, and God. Genesis then describes the concrete effect of sin as violence (Cain and Lamech, Gen 4), decadence (the flood, Gen 8-9), and alienation (Babel, Gen 11) which plunge the world into “iniquity”—a summary term for injustice and inhumanity among the nations. Amos, Micah, Isaiah, and other prophets powerfully document the structural sin of Israel as a record for our instruction. Our individual sinfulness is real but is contained within the social, national, political, military, and economic strife of a world consumed by sin.
4. Jesus’ spirituality of justice is solidly grounded in the prophets whom he quotes liberally in his ministry. Israel is reminded repeatedly, “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” Therefore, they are to “let justice roll down like a river,” (Am 5:24) and “do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (Mic 6:8). Pursuing justice is not works righteousness: God’s people are already delivered from Egypt, sin, and the devil. Spiritual Christians seek to share that redemption in both eternal and temporal ways in order to exhibit and practice God’s goodness, love, and power. This is the peace—*shalom*—that Jesus brings.
5. Jesus begins his public ministry with the passage from Luke above (Lk 4:17ff), indicating that our spirituality consists of actively seeking to remedy this strife and injustice. This spirituality is motivated by the Gospel that brings good news to a shattered world, a world that God loves and is redeeming. He has called us through his Son to be part of that redemption already breaking in upon a world desperate for deliverance from inequalities in governments, courts, hospitals, banks, industries, genders, and the environment.
6. The Spirit leads us to caring for “the least of these” (Mt 25:40) when, by the Spirit, our hearts are broken by the things that break the heart of God. True faith is active in love (Gal 5:6), and true religion is caring for widows and orphans in their affliction (Ja 1:27).

Worship that never leaves the sanctuary is no worship at all. It merely holds the form of religion while denying the power of it (2 Tim 3:5).

For Discussion and Reflection:

- What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?
- Do you regard contemplating God's mysteries as an authentic spirituality?
- What features do you appreciate? not appreciate?
- Does this approach reflect a Biblical view? a Christocentric view? a view that keeps the Gospel predominant?
- Which attribute(s) of God would you say a spirituality ought to emphasize?
- Do you notice this orientation at your place of ministry? Is that okay? not okay?

Additional Texts:

1. Mt 25:37, "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"
2. Lev 25:10, Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you....In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property. If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other.
3. Isa 2:4, He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.
4. Lev 24:17, Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.
5. Ps 9:7, The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice. The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.
6. Ps 72:1, Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.
7. Ps 89:14, Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD.
8. Isa 1:17, Learn to do the good. Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.
9. Isa 61:1, The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

10. Mal 3:5, “So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.
11. Mt 5:9, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
12. Mt 12:15, Many followed Jesus, and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.”

Summary: God is at work in his world through the power of his Word in his people. They herald his kingdom in mighty acts of history and historical change, beginning with the Exodus from slavery in Egypt for Israel and Jesus’ ministry to all oppressed by sin. The church further effects this saving and spiritual change by transforming the Roman Empire, beginning the Reformation, eliminating slavery, emancipating women, social reform in Latin America, defeating apartheid, engaging China through educational ministry, participating in immigration ministry, sustaining a public voice in life-affirming ministries, conducting the Malaria Initiative, and in every way that we bring Good News to the oppressed, the prisoners, and the poor.

Profile 6

A Spirituality of Christian Liberty

1. Biblical points of departure:
 - a. Jn 16:27, For the Father himself loves you since you have loved me and believed that I have come from the Father.
 - b. Jn 8:31, To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - c. Gal 5:1, For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.
2. God’s attributes may be equally significant among the society of the Trinity and with the host of heaven, but for us sinners his chief characteristic is *sola gratia*, grace alone. His divine power, majesty, glory, and holiness are not good news for us. Those qualities kill and damn sinners. What we sinners need and what he gives, or graces us with, is his weakness and mercy in the crib, cross, and crypt of Christ: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).
3. Yet only when we realize our own initial spiritual poverty can we then receive the riches of God’s grace. We cannot serve two masters (Mt 6:24). We shall not serve other gods (Mt

6:33). If we are not with him, we are against him (Mt 12:30). There are no substitute gospels (Gal 1:6). We must either claim our own projects and forms of righteousness or be blessed with the righteousness that is ours in Jesus' cross and death. We Christians, then, are continually struggling between our own old campaigns for piety and with what God has, instead, done for us. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21) We are, indeed, the new "Israel"—which means "to struggle with God."

4. Therefore, God sends us his Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who remains "with and along side" of us and leads us back again and again to the cross. There, the cross again and again damns us for our own spiritual and pious efforts to storm heaven (or earth); and consoles us by declaring that what Jesus has done on the cross is enough. We need not and cannot add to it. As the Spirit returns us to the cross—perhaps through baptismal death, communion blood, or the announcement of Jesus' death—we more and more get used to the Gospel that declares we are no longer threatened by or even subject to the Law. (Rom 6:11, 8:38, Gal 2:1, 5:18) This spirituality takes some getting use to.
5. Our being returned to the cross evokes in us an increasing thankfulness and a growing imitation of Christ. The Gospel frees us from our subjugation to the Law, our *paedagogos* (the slave who supervised and determined the life of the master's son and heir-apparent). When we come of-age as adult children of the Father, we live and act freely while consulting the *paedagogos*, but no longer subject to the Law's oversight. (Gal 3:23 – 4:7)
6. Freed from the Law, our imitation is not mechanical mimicry, nor is ours a life of mere license and "opportunity for the flesh." (Gal 5:1-26) Because we no longer worry about doing right or falling short in faith or in life, we no longer fear making tough decisions and mistakes. Nothing, including the Law, can separate us from Christ. And this astounding promise and assurance in the Gospel liberates us to take risks, make sacrifices, serve the "least of his brethren," and live freely, "able to do all things in him who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13) By this constant external assurance of the Spirit, we grow from children to of-age daughters and sons working responsibly in and for God's coming kingdom. This Christian liberty is truly the life of the Spirit and spirituality.

For Discussion and Reflection:

- What request of spirituality does this approach seem to be making?
- Do you regard contemplating God's mysteries as an authentic spirituality?
- What features do you appreciate? not appreciate?
- Does this approach reflect a Biblical view? a Christocentric view? a view that keeps the Gospel predominant?
- Which attribute(s) of God would you say a spirituality ought to emphasize?
- Do you notice this orientation at your place of ministry? Is that okay? not okay?

Additional Texts:

1. Rom 6:11: You must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
2. Ex 19:4: You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then

out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’

3. I Pet 2:9: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy
4. Lev 25:10: Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you.
5. Gal 3:23: Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.
6. I Cor 10:29: For why should my freedom be judged by another’s conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
7. Gal 5:13: You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
8. I Cor 4:3: I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.
9. Lk 15:28: “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ ” “My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”
10. Lk 19:8: But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

Summary: The Holy Spirit's presence in God's external Word grants us a trust that God has made us right and “good to go” with Him—no matter what (Rom 8:31-39). By our continued exposure to these means of God's grace we get more and more used to this Good News. In turn, that promise frees us from all threats, including death itself (1 Cor 15), and enables us more and more to live out our trust through thanks to God and by becoming God's image in Christ to our neighbor. See also

Rom 1:16-17 Rom 6:11 John 6:23-24
Gal 5:6 2 Cor 3:18, 5:21

Some Concluding Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Having examined all six spiritualities, do you find yourself reconsidering your initially preferred perspective? Reaffirmed in it? Revising it?
2. In what ways, if any, has this overview of several spiritualities assisted you in your work with students, colleagues, and others who may be oriented to a spiritual and theological tradition other than your own, or to no spirituality or theology to begin with?
3. Each of these six spiritualities includes important biblical themes. And sometimes we do well to combine the strengths from multiple models and perspectives. Would it be wise or unwise to attempt a combination of two or more of these spiritualities? Why so?
4. Given the several rather different spiritual profiles (each located in various historic trends and movements in the church's history), what identity and what kind of theological climate and culture should we sustain as a campus and institution of Lutheran higher education? What would be your rationale for your answer?
5. How should we practically go about fostering and practicing this identity and campus climate and culture?
6. Should this document include any other spirituality profiles such as from other religions or perhaps a Christian postmodern spirituality or Christian spirituality of science?