



## Vital Christianity: Spirituality, Justice, and Christian Practice

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In theory and in practice, Christians often sever spirituality from social justice. As a counterbalance, this collection of essays explores ways to connect these two spheres of corporate and individual faithfulness. The contributors recognize that even the very definition of these terms can sharply divide one from the other. For instance, some Christians assume that spirituality refers to the "inner life" whereas social justice refers to the "outer life," perhaps further equating the former with passive Christianity and the latter with active Christianity. Similarly, some define spirituality as the maintenance of one's "vertical relationship" with God, contrasting it to the notion of nurturing compassionate "horizontal relationships" with the people one encounters in life. Vital Christianity seeks to challenge these debilitating distinctions by exploring the numerous threads that can and should connect these two components of holistic Christian living. This volume provides both a critique of the persistent division between spirit and body in the contemporary church and constructive, theologically responsible suggestions for overcoming that bifurcation. While a number of fine books rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition have addressed this issue, to our knowledge no companion work exists that is written largely from a Protestant perspective. Employing sensitivity to the sources of the Christian tradition as well as the practice of discipleship in the real world, the contributors to this volume seek solid ground on which to build bridges between spirituality and social justice. Organized to highlight both significant conceptual and theological issues, as well as applications to various dimensions of the Christian life, these essays offer penetrating insights from different vantage points into how contemporary believers can connect spirituality and social justice

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