

Consensus

Volume 45
Issue 2 *Festschrift in honour of the Rev. Dr.
Gordon Jensen*

Article 16

7-25-2024

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Héctor A. Acero Ferrer

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Recommended Citation

Acero Ferrer, Héctor A. (2024) "T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology," *Consensus*: Vol. 45: Iss. 2, Article 16.

DOI: 10.51644/WHCB1355

Available at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol45/iss2/16>

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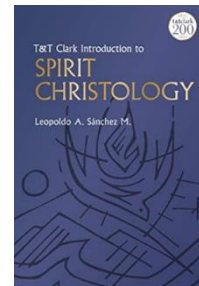
Book Review

T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology

Leopoldo A. Sanchez M.

London: T&T Clark, 2022

When attempting to understand the complexity of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, boundaries between theological subdisciplines often constrain the reach of one's scholarship. However, the act of establishing and maintaining such disciplinary boundaries helps scholars determine questions that are potentially fruitful, identify contradictory assumptions, and establish a solid ground for discussion. This tension between the desire to cross disciplinary boundaries in the pursuit of integrated insights and the need to segment scholarship into categories is an everyday reality for theologians and a challenge that constantly confronts theology students. In *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology*, Leopoldo A. Sanchez M. successfully navigates this tension through the lens of "Spirit Christology," what he understands to be a novel cross-disciplinary approach in answering the question: "How do we reconcile the confession that Jesus is truly God and truly a man in whom the Spirit dwells?" (p. 173).



While Sanchez does not commit to a specific answer to this question, he surveys an array of approaches to Spirit Christology—approaches he organizes into the categories pre-Nicene, Nicene, and post-Nicene. The accounts surveyed, Sanchez argues, bring the "Spirit back into an account of salvation in Christ, which includes the Spirit's role in all major events of his life, from his receiving and bearing of the Spirit to his giving of the Spirit to others" (p. 175). Both undertaking a creative interdisciplinary integration of learnings (between different branches of theology and biblical exegesis) and delving somewhat deeply into each subfield, Sanchez manages to provide a glimpse into the multiple accounts of the relationship between the Spirit, Christ, and the world, helping the reader understand the complex relationship between Christ and the Spirit in ways that account for the need of Christ's reception of the Spirit and his bestowal of the Spirit on others.

Consequently, *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology* is introductory in two different senses: it introduces the reader to Spirit Christology (or Spirit Christologies), and it apprentices the learner into the double practice of theological integration and disciplinary distantiation. The structure of the text itself—divided into chapters corresponding to Biblical Studies, Patristics, Missiology, and Systematic and Practical theologies—aims at integrating these insights into a coherent understanding of the development of a Spirit Christology that makes sense of it in light of the more developed Logos Christology, and which has become a promising field of exploration in response to three significant developments in twentieth century theology: "the revival of Trinitarian theology, the Second Vatican Council, and the global rise of Pentecostalism and Charismatic churches" (p. 2).

Indeed, the task of developing an understanding of the complex and multifaceted relationship between Christ, the Spirit, and the people of God is hardly an endeavour that can be accomplished within the confines of a given theological subdiscipline. In the landscape of theology, this insight is also applicable to the suspicion that exists between Christian denominations, as diverse Christian communities traditionally isolated from one another can bring the richness and complementarity of their perspectives to theological

discussions. Throughout the text, Sanchez argues that Spirit Christology is in itself a way to address the isolating tendencies of the theological subdisciplines and, instead, provides a platform for ecumenical dialogue—something he experienced in his own process of crafting the book, as the work emerged from a conversation between scholars from different Christian denominations (p. xvi–xvii).

This ecumenical aspect is likely the most significant contribution that Sanchez makes in *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology*, as he sets out to present and examine a variety of Christian perspectives in his attempt to answer the most pressing questions about the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. This is particularly evident in chapter 4, “The Spirit in the Trinity: Spirit and Logos Christologies in Trinitarian Key,” where he explores the Trinitarian theologies of Jürgen Moltmann (Protestant) and David Coffey (Catholic) in light of what appears to be an obscure relationship between the Son and the Spirit in the moments of incarnation and baptism, and chapter 5, “Who Do You Say that I Am: The Complementarity of Spirit and Logos Christologies,” where he traces the integration of Spirit and Logos Theologies in the work of Myk Habets (Reformed) and Skip Jenkins (Pentecostal), as well as his own (Lutheran).

In spite of its ecumenical and interdisciplinary achievements, *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology* leaves the reader wondering about Sanchez’s own Spirit Christology—only making a brief appearance in chapters 5 and 6, where he aims to bring the Spirit out of the role of “behind-the-scenes director” that it is usually given in Lutheran theology, and into a prominent role of sculptor of humanity, as “the same Spirit in whom Christ lived his life shapes the lives of his disciples today” (p. 167). The multiple competing voices presented through the book give the impression that the scholarship of Spirit Christology is on unstable ground, as Sanchez seems hesitant to support a specific view regarding how the Spirit shapes the life and work of Christ (and that of his disciples).

While it is clear that *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology* is an introductory text, one would expect that a comprehensive account of Spirit Christology such as the one promised in the book would eventually present the privileged approach that emerges from such historical survey. Instead, every chapter closes with a number of clarification questions that do not lead beyond what is discussed, but that invite the reader to return to the chapter. This gives the impression that the primary audience of the book is students new to theology—even though both the topic discussed and the information assumed in the chapters call for a strong knowledge of theological history and biblical exegesis.

In *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology*, Lutheran theologian of Latin American origin Leopoldo Sanchez presents a helpful introduction to the integration of theological subdisciplines around cohesive accounts of the role of the Spirit in the life of Christ and of his disciples. Sanchez retrieves insights from biblical studies, historical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology in the construction of an understanding of the significance of the Spirit that he considers promising in providing new insights into the ways in which the Spirit animates and sculpts the life of Christ and of the disciples. Although the survey presented does not fully answer the questions formulated, it points to promising and hopeful future developments for ecumenical theology globally.

Héctor A. Acero Ferrer
Martin Luther University College
Wilfrid Laurier University