

Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community

By Simon Chan

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Bad worship produces bad theology, and bad theology produces an unhealthy church. In *Liturgical Theology*, Simon Chan issues a call to evangelicals to develop a mature theology of the church--an ecclesiology that is grounded in the church's identity as a worshiping community. Evangelicals, he argues, are confused about the meaning and purpose of the church in part because they have an inadequate understanding of Christian worship. As a remedy for this ailment, Chan presents a coherent theology of the church that pays particular attention to the liturgical practices that have constituted Christian worship throughout the centuries. With a seasoned eye and steady hand, he guides the reader through these practices and unpacks their significance for theology, spirituality and the renewal of evangelicalism in the postmodern era. Chan's proposal advances the conversation among evangelicals regarding the relationship between theology and worship. In contrast to some theologians who have tended to emphasize a sociological analysis, Chan argues that we need to consider what is essential to the church's theological identity. Drawing on the larger Christian tradition, Chan argues that we discover that identity primarily in the structure and significance of Christian worship.

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Editorial Review

Review
"This book is an eloquent and well-reasoned critique of many trends in evangelicalism today, and it challenges ministers to examine the liturgical decisions they make for their churches." (Zach Gautier, Bibliotheca Sacra, October-December 2008)

"Chan's volume represents a step forward in the evangelical discussion of ecclesiology and deserves to be engaged with care by those who, like Chan, hope to overcome evangelicalism's ecclesiological deficit." (W. Ravis McMaken, Evangelical Review of Theology, October 2008)

"This is a book for Catholics as well as Protestants. Its modest title doesn't do justice to its fundamental critique of Evangelical Christianity in the West, or its wisdom in pointing toward those churches' true identity." (L.P. Fairfield, Touchstone, September 2008)

"Evangelicals need to care enough about their Lord, His word, and the people gathered at worship on Sundays to read this book. Lutherans and other Christians from liturgical traditions who imitate (or are tempted to imitate) American Evangelicals MUST be encouraged to buy and read this book." (PJC,Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review, Vol. 2, issue 4)

"Chan issues a call to evangelicals to develop a mature theology of the church." (Theology Digest, Spring 2006)

"The book is accessible and the best work written on church, ministry and sacraments in a very long time." (Trinity Journal for Theology and Ministry, Fall 2007)

"Simon Chan offers here a timely word to the evangelical church. Things 'liturgical,' once shunned by some, are now being embraced by a generation of believers who have renewed interest in ancient practices and ritual arts. This book provides a solid theological framework for the working-out of best practices as the evangelical world renews its worship." (Clay Schmit, Arthur DeKruyter/Christ Church Oak Brook Associate Professor of Preaching and Academic Director for the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology and the Arts, Fuller Theological Seminary)

"Convinced that the practices of the liturgy shape and form faith and life, Chan has written an utterly compelling book that calls the evangelical tradition to a new commitment to worship. It is just the wake-up call that evangelicals need to hear." (Leanne Van Dyk, academic dean and professor of Reformed theology, Western Theological Seminary)

"Worship both expresses and forms us in a particular theological vision. Oddly, evangelical Christians have been reluctant to explore this topic. Indeed, an 'evangelical proposal' for 'liturgical theology' still sounds like an oxymoron. But this reluctance must end--and kudos to Simon Chan for helping the cause. He explores the significant worship-theology relationship in conversation with a wonderfully broad range of Christian theologians. The result may not only change how you think about worship, but how you practice it in your congregation." (John D. Witvliet, director, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, and associate professor of worship, theology and music, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary)

"In this day of confusion about the meaning and purpose of worship, Simon Chan returns worship to its place of belonging in the church. His calling to return to the catechumenate, to the *ordo* of Sunday worship and the reinvigoration of the historic liturgy is especially timely given the postmodern moment in which we live." (Robert Webber, Myers Professor of Ministry, Northern Seminary)

"Simon Chan asserts that if long-standing criticisms of the evangelical tradition are to be addressed, evangelicals must begin to develop a more adequate ecclesiology. In this book he presents a vision of the church as an ontological reality in which sound theological and ecclesial practices can be developed. In so doing he has produced a thoughtful and significant book that should be read carefully by all those concerned for the future of ecclesial life and witness in the evangelical tradition." (John R. Franke, professor of theology, Biblical Seminary)

About the Author
Simon Chan (Ph.D., Cambridge) is Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. He is the author of *Man and Sin, Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition, Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* and *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community.* He is also the associate editor of the *Global Dictionary of Theology* and the *Dictionary of Mission Theology.*

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