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A Way of the Soul: The Use of an Introductory Course in Christian Spirituality as a Path Towards Personal Ministry in the Local Parish

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A WAY OF THE SOUL:

THE USE OF AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AS

A PATH TOWARDS PERSONAL MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL PARISH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

NEWTON W. KERNEY

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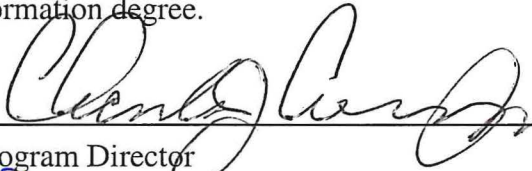
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**Title: A WAY OF THE SOUL: THE USE OF AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE
IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AS A PATH TOWARDS PERSONAL
MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL PARISH.**

**Presented by: Newton W. Kerney
April 15, 2002**

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation degree.



Program Director



Reader

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION	1
A Description of the Problem	1
How do We Understand Spirituality?	5
How do We Define Spirituality?	7
Lutheran Reactions to Spiritual Formation	15
A Distinctive Lutheran Spirituality	17
Description of the Paper	23
2. MINISTRY CONTEXT	25
The Community of Rohnert Park	25
Cross and Crown Lutheran Church	26
3. BIBLICAL THEMES	31
Biblical Spiritual Formation?	31
The Old Testament	37
The New Testament	47
4. HISTORICAL ROOTS	59
Spirituality Anchored in the Word	66
Spirituality in the Catechism	67
Spirituality in Luther's Hymnody	70

Communal Transformation	74
5. CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES	85
Worldview Analysis	86
Spiritual Typing	90
Spiritual Disciplines	98
6. CONCLUSION	106
Curriculum Proposal	106
Curriculum Outline	109
Concluding Thoughts	116
APPENDIX	
A. Circle of Sensibility	117
B. The Spirituality Wheel	118
C. Sager's Types of Christian Spirituality	119
D. Finding Your Spiritual Path	120
E. Following your Spiritual Path	121
F. Introductory Course and Compass Points	122
G. Concentric Circles Leading to the Arena of Personal Ministry	123
H. Courses in the Nurture Path	124
I. Courses in the Service Path	125
J. Courses in the Worship Path	126
K. Courses in the Education Path	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

TITLE: A WAY OF THE SOUL: THE USE OF AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AS A PATH TOWARDS PERSONAL MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL PARISH.

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Committed laity in the local parish seek ministry opportunities with depth and purpose. The use of an introductory course in Christian spirituality as a tool towards personal ministry is one way to develop a more vitalized lay ministry within the local parish.

A definition of spirituality is proposed and used as a backdrop for the development of a course curriculum. The dissertation examines spiritual formation concepts in the Old Testament and New Testament with an eye to their application in daily life. Martin Luther's spirituality as expressed in scripture, catechism and hymnody is explored along with the spiritual formation concerns of the German Pietist movement. Contemporary approaches to spiritual formation are an important aspect of lay development. Worldview analysis, spiritual personality typing and spiritual disciplines are three highlighted approaches in the paper.

The six-session introductory curriculum sets the stage for the movement to personal ministry within one of four areas marked as ministry compass points: Nurture, Service, Education, and Worship. Sessions in the course include material on worship forms, spiritual disciplines, Biblical spiritual formation and assessments of personal spirituality. Following the introductory course, members move along a specific path of courses in one of the ministry compass points designed to develop an integrated spirituality and personal ministry.

It is the conviction of the author that laypeople desire to make a difference in the lives of others. This curriculum will provide members of the local parish a path to develop a more effective personal ministry.

CHAPTER 1

The life-giving and life-emptying experience...

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Susan is a life long Lutheran and has been a member of the parish for over 15 years. She served on the church council prior to my arrival at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church and was involved in a variety of leadership roles within the Women's organization. Susan came to me to talk about her fears and concerns as she struggled with a debilitating illness. The conversation turned to faith. "Frankly, I have to confess I really don't know much about God," she said. "I don't know if God is real. I guess I haven't learned much about Him in all these years." I sat there dumbfounded. Thinking about her comment, I realized she might be right in her assessment of her theological ignorance and her lack of a holistic spirituality. But what could I do? Most of our Adult Education classes presuppose a certain amount of knowledge. There wasn't much time for me to teach anything of substance on Sunday morning. As a solo pastor trying to rebuild a church, how could I find the time to develop programs that would help her and others to develop formative spiritual disciplines in their lives and come to an authentic relationship with God?

A week later, I sat down with members of my mutual ministry committee for a discussion about spiritual growth and formation as a part of our monthly meeting. After I introduced the subject and my interest in exploring it, Bob spoke first. "I came to this parish because it has many of the markings of a traditional Lutheran parish. It appeals to people familiar with Lutheran tradition and I like that. It makes me comfortable to be with people who are like me."

"But," responded Jack who has been in the church for many years and is interested in change, "for a lot of those people, their formative Christian education came in the 1930's-50's era of catechism memorization, single worship services, and 17th and 18th century hymns. I don't think that cuts it anymore. This congregation is 95% Caucasian, with a university in town reflecting new ideas. There are six mainline churches; the others are evangelical, fundamentalist or Pentecostal. At the same time, over 60% of the current membership of our church has come from non-Lutheran backgrounds. Their spiritual formation needs have little to do with the Small Catechism and classes about the liturgy. They are interested in a walk with Christ that may not be reflected in classical Lutheran language."

Carol, who has been through a journey of 8-10 denominations in her life, spoke next. "I spent some time studying Eastern religions, and actually enjoyed a brief time with the Bahai faith. I want an internal walk that has meaning and integrity. I'm not interested in European traditional Christianity. I like to read Merton and other Christian Mystics. How can I find a place in this congregation that will deepen my relationship with Christ?"

I wondered what pathways to spiritual formation could be designed to meet the diversity of traditions within this congregation.

Sam interrupted my thoughts. “This congregation is struggling with identity. Some long-term members say that if we are Lutheran, we should act it and practice it. Worship and hymns should reflect distinctive Lutheran practices and tradition. I understand that. Our history shouldn’t be thrown away. But others feel worship and hymns should move to reflect contemporary culture and language. Our contemporary service consists of praise choruses and very little traditional music.”

“Wait a minute,” said Bob. “Our traditional worship does change during the course of the month and our contemporary service uses six different worship settings. Our governing structure is being dramatically changed to reflect an empowering style of ministry. Within a few years the church will not have committees; it will have teams that are created and empowered to do ministry. Right now, most aspects of our church style do not reflect a traditional Lutheran organization and the newer members can relate to that. I think we need to get back to the question at hand.” “Which is what?” asked Jack.

“I believe the question is about spiritual growth that is intentional and makes me aware of Jesus each day,” responded Carol. “Our educational structure is highly dependent on the pastor as the chief teacher of the congregation. Small groups struggle as traditional members do not want to attend something that is not led by the pastor, yet others desire more than the standard Bible study. They ask for studies that will help them in their daily walk to understand who they are in light of God’s grace. If we don’t provide something for people to do this, I think we fail them.”

She went on as others nodded in agreement. “Think about our history. The church in its 35 years has had 5 pastors. Only two have served longer than 7 years. Prior to the last pastor’s arrival, the church prided itself on not having debt, not needing a stewardship program and being a place where Lutherans could have a church. During that pastor’s tenure, it developed a vision to expand the school from the pre-school to include an elementary school. Today, worship comes from 4-6 different sources each Sunday, we have a debt of over \$1.3 million, a Pre-K through 8th grade school with over 300 students, a developing stewardship program, and a variety of ministries in the community that serve anyone who comes to the church.”

Sally, the president of the congregation spoke next. “The clearest symbol that reflects the founding vision of the church is the church name. It speaks to the two main aspects of the life of Jesus: death and resurrection. The founding vision remained strong for the first 32 years of the church’s history. The vision has been challenged in these past years and a new vision cast with all the conflict that comes with the casting of a new vision. Maybe we should explore new ways of enhancing the spiritual growth of the members. It would have to be based on Lutheran theology and who we understand ourselves to be as Lutherans, but yet open to other Christian traditions and their understanding of spiritual formation. There is much that comes from our Lutheran roots, and I think we need to honor that. But at the same time, there are many other Christian authors who write about spirituality and I think we can learn from them. Other denominations have much to teach us about spiritual formation.”

I thought of the woman who was in my office earlier last week. Sally is right. That is the question. How can I develop an adult spiritual formation program at Cross

and Crown Lutheran Church that is grounded in Lutheran theology and open to other Christian traditions?

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND SPIRITUALITY?

Spiritual formation and the discussion of spirituality is not familiar territory for Lutherans. Lutheran spirituality is a foreign idea to many. Some have wondered if it is an oxymoron.¹ Lutherans have not spoken the same language of spirituality as Roman Catholics have. Lutherans have no contemporary authors writing on spirituality to match the power of Henri Nouwen or Thomas Merton. Some Lutheran leaders have acknowledged that “we have no Lutheran resources in spirituality which are not themselves already involved with wider traditions of belief and practice,” and “our task is to engage and integrate the classical Christian tradition and the best contemporary resources in a theologically and pastorally responsible fashion.”²

The term *spirituality* is commonplace in today’s society. One can simply go to the bookstore to see shelves of books about the spirituality of work, play, sex, money and self. Spirituality is a big moneymaker in American culture. The word itself, as Lisa Dahill, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastor points out, “translates the Latin *spiritualitas*, a noun derived in the fifth century from the New Testament adjective

¹Bradley Hanson, *A Graceful Life: Lutheran Spirituality for Today* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000), ix.

²Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, *Spirituality and Spiritual Formation* (Columbia, South Carolina: A Position Paper of the Faculty of Lutheran theological Southern Seminary, October 1998), 3.

pneumatikos, or *spiritual*.”³ She states that *spiritualitas* “originates as a noun describing the quality or shape of a Christian life in its entirety formed by the Holy Spirit.”⁴

The early English use of the word referred to clergy. Cheslyn Jones writes,

In its original English use, it meant the clergy, as in Phillip Stubbes’s *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), the *corruptions and abuses of the spirituality*; or the ecclesiastical office as distinct from the secular office, so that a man, instituted to a living, was given by one in various associations, to describe things of the spirit as distinct from things of matter, such as an immaterial essence, a spirit, a ghost, a soul. The meaning of devotion or piety came still later, chiefly through the Catholic writers like Challoner.⁵

In France the term came to be associated with “mystical or ascetical devotion as a term of reproach against the Quietist writers of the later seventeenth century.”⁶ Dahill quotes a seventeenth century definition that clearly reflects the otherworldly viewpoint. Spirituality was defined as “everything connected with the interior exercises of the soul free of the senses which seeks only to be perfected in the eyes of God.”⁷

Jones writes that there was a gradual change in the word usage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in France as spirituality came to be associated with personal piety, prayer and devotion. Spirituality as understood from the French perspective did not come into English literature until the mid-nineteenth century and it wasn’t until 1932 that an English author used the word spiritual relating to the interior life.⁸

Dahill indicates that the resurgence of the term has come in the early twentieth century through French Roman Catholics scholars, spread to Protestants and non-

³Lisa Dahill, “Spirituality in a Lutheran Perspective: Much to Offer, Much to Learn”, *Word and World: Theology and Christian Ministry* (XVIII) Winter 1998: 70.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Arnold, SJ. eds., *The Study of Spirituality*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), xxiv.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Dahill, 70.

⁸Jones, xxiv-xxv.

Christians and has now become a household word.⁹ Like many words, spirituality does not have the same content it did centuries ago. As used today by New Age proponents and people of all stripes of secular religion, it can mean anything people want it to mean.

HOW DO WE DEFINE SPIRITUALITY?

Definitions of *spirituality* and *Christian spirituality* abound in contemporary Christian literature. Some definitions are open-ended while others provide more direction for applying the definition to the practice of faith.

Michael Downey defines spirituality as having both a lived experience and an academic discipline.¹⁰ As a lived experience it,

Describes the whole of the Christian's life as this is oriented to self-transcending knowledge, freedom and love in light of the ultimate values and highest ideals perceived and pursued in the mystery of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the church, the community of disciples. That is to say, spirituality is concerned with everything that constitutes Christian experience, specifically the perception and pursuit of the highest ideal or goal of Christian life, e.g., an ever more intense union with God disclosed in Christ.¹¹

Downey sees the other aspect of spirituality as "an academic discipline, increasingly interdisciplinary in nature, that attempts to study religious experience and to promote its development and maturation."¹² In this way, his definition encompasses both the interior disciplines and is open to the exterior practice of faith in a systematic way.

⁹Dahill, 70.

¹⁰Michael Downey, "Current trends in Understanding Christian Spirituality: Dress Rehearsal for a Method," *Spirituality Today*, Vol. 43. No. 3 (Fall 1991): 271.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

Jay Rochelle expresses a much more open view as he defines spirituality as “the entire complex of words and signs in which we dwell and by which we appropriate the faith.”¹³ He uses the word piety to describe one pattern of Lutheran spirituality:

Lutheran piety cannot be defined as a set of religious practices. If we look at it from the viewpoint of the person who dwells in the complex of words and signs, the Lutheran piety is a perception or an attitude before it is a set of practices. One might say that we focus attention on the substructure of faith. Because the distinctively Lutheran slant on faith is attitudinal more than it is devotional, we tend to think of ourselves as not having a *spirituality*. At the same time, because the distinctively Lutheran approach to faith is attitudinal and perpetual rather than expressed in devotional practice, we have always had a broad understanding of what’s Lutheran, and thus have produced a wide variety of forms.¹⁴

The openness of his definition allows Lutherans a variety of entry points to apply the definition to one’s faith life. However, the strength of the definition is also its weakness. By providing any number of entry points, it does not provide direction for specific application. That, presumably, is left to the believer and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Benjamin Holt sees spirituality in similar way to Downey. He views spirituality as both a *lived experience* and a *theological field, an academic discipline*.¹⁵ He differs from Downey in that Holt stresses that Christian spirituality is contextualized in the community of faith and describes a unique style of discipleship.

A. Skevington Wood points to a balanced faith life when he defines spirituality as having components of both an interior life --communion of the believer with God-- and

¹³Jay Rochelle, “Lutheran Spirituality: Lost, Found, Revised,” *Pneuma*, Vol. No.1.(Spring 1994):

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Benjamin P. Holt, *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993), 6.

the exterior life --the response of the human spirit when activated by the Spirit of God.¹⁶ He clarifies this definition by saying, "It is more than a matter of devotional exercises or forms of prayer. Spirituality is not to be regarded simply as an effort of man to reach out to God. It is rather the outcome of God's initiative in reaching out to man in grace and enablement."¹⁷

Lisa Dahill also defines spirituality from a balanced faith life viewpoint. "Spirituality is the world-encompassing and life transforming action of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ in the life of a person or community, and her/his/their experience of and response to that action of God."¹⁸ She follows this definition with a comment on the confusion behind the term spirituality and the difficulty in developing a definition. While she is writing with a focus on scholarship, her point is applicable to a generic understanding of spirituality. She notes that there are four levels of abstraction to the term (the framework is adapted from the work of Walter Principe)¹⁹, and some definitions do not incorporate each of the levels.

The first level refers to the basic existential experience of feeling or understanding something that connects us to God. Christianity expresses this as the experience of God as revealed in the person of Christ. This level incorporates the basic human understanding of God as something beyond the individual.

The second level relates to the community response to the experience of God. Communities respond in a variety of ways, including writing, song, worship, dance, art

¹⁶A. Skevington Wood, "Spirit and Spirituality in Luther," *The Evangelical Quarterly* Vol. 61 (O 1989): 311.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Dahill, 72.

¹⁹Ibid.

and other forms of expression. The community comes together to make sense of this individual experience through corporate response and invites individuals to interpret their unique understanding of God through the community.

The third level focuses on the academic study of the first level. This is accomplished through the disciplines of sociology, psychology and history among others. Work in this area can be detached and formal as opposed to the informal individual expression of spirituality.

The fourth level again moves back to the individual. This time, however, the individual scholar is drawn into reflection about his or her own first level experience of God. In essence, the fourth level encourages and challenges the scholar to move from academic detachment to embrace the existential human religious experience. The scholar is invited to become student and not teacher.

Some definitions of spirituality focus on only one or two of the levels. For example, Dahill acknowledges that her definition is related more to the first and third levels. Using her framework we can see that Wood's definition focuses on the first and second levels. Rochelle's definition has strength in the first level and assumes a movement to the second level. Holt is firmly in the first and third levels while Downey's definition comes closest to intentionally incorporating all four levels.

Bradley Hanson, Professor of Religion at Luther College, comes to the discussion from a different perspective. He uses Bernard McGinn's description of the

anthropological, historical and theological approaches to the definition of spirituality to fashion his own definition:²⁰

The anthropological approach views spirituality chiefly as a human quest for meaning that finds expression in a host of outlooks both religious and secular. The historical procedure carefully traces the development of a spirituality through time. The theological method concentrates on the theological outlook that gives shape to a particular spirituality.²¹

Dahill adds greater clarification,

Scholars...tend to take one of three approaches to its study. Some see Christian spirituality as primarily a sub-discipline of theology, i.e., the necessary experiential or lived component of Christian doctrine and truth; this is known as the *theological* approach to the field. Others assert that Christian spirituality is a particular manifestation, among many others, of a broadly human phenomenon, namely the capacity inherent in every human being for connection to the Ultimate, however a particular individual or group may describe the Ultimacy. These scholars define spirituality as part of human nature itself (the *anthropological* approach), rather than as a function primarily of the Christian revelation. And still other scholars tend to treat spirituality as an historical phenomenon (the *historical/contextual* approach), examining the concrete manifestations of particular belief systems as found in texts, individual lives, groups, or social movements in history.²²

Hanson's method is theological though he sees ways in which the three approaches complement each other. He indicates the anthropological approach works best when discussing spirituality in general while the theological and historical approaches are best utilized when attempting to analyze specific religious spiritualities. Hanson does not offer personal definitions grounded in each of the approaches. He does use Sandra Schneider's anthropological definition, but only to offer critiques. Schneider defines spirituality, as "the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in

²⁰Hanson, ix.

²¹Ibid.

²²Dahill, 71.

terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self- transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives.²³

Hanson finds Schneider's definition limiting in two respects. First, he is concerned about limiting spirituality to *consciously striving*, contending that this leaves out children and adults who are not yet *striving* to develop a clear faith perspective.²⁴ Secondly, he disputes her contention that "integrating one's life in terms of isolation and self-absorption cannot be considered a spirituality."²⁵ Hanson does agree with Schneider's assessment that "spirituality is understood as the experience of integrating one's life through transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives."²⁶

Hanson offers his own definition from a theological perspective: "a lived faith plus a path."²⁷ In examining his definition, Hanson highlights four key thoughts. First, spirituality is not generic; it is specific to a person. Secondly, Hanson states that spirituality involves a particular lived faith with the components of commitment, belief and trust. Third, spirituality will by its nature incorporate theology as a lens through which we understand our relation to God and God's relation to humanity. Theology in this sense is not theory or speculation; it is a lived faith. Finally, he sees the path in his definition as "a holistic way in which a particular faith is nurtured and expressed."²⁸

It is clear that any definition of spirituality (particularly Christian spirituality), must be grounded in an understanding of what we are being spiritual about and to whom

²³Bradley Hanson, "Theological Approaches to Spirituality: A Lutheran Perspective", *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, (Spring 94):5.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Hanson, 6.

²⁷Hanson, *A Graceful Life*, 11.

²⁸Ibid, 11-12.

we are applying our spirituality. Is this simply a spirituality about us? Our narcissistic society with its focus on self can push us to feel that we need to create a spirituality to feed our own needs and ego. Many spiritualities in our culture begin and end with the letter I.

Christian spirituality moves us in a different direction. It provides grounding for our identity, centering for our theology and direction for our activity. Christian spirituality is a relational spirituality; one that combines our story with God's Story, what Hanson calls *the Big Story* of the Bible.²⁹ It must concern itself with the paradox of Christian life, the shift between activity and silence, emptiness and fullness, death and resurrection. Finally, Christian spirituality while personal, has implications for corporate life. It is not narcissistic in its approach and application. I define Christian spirituality in this way: *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around me that points to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.*

Phrases of the definition link to the attributes of spirituality listed above. The personal and communal aspects of spirituality are addressed in both the first and last phrases. *Life-giving and life-emptying experience* incorporates both personal and communal transformational aspects of spirituality. God's presence in Word and Sacrament adds to life and challenges us to empty our lives that God may fill them. God's presence in Word and Sacrament challenges our dependence on our own

²⁹ Ibid., 171.

understanding and effort to solve our communal problems. The spiritual life moves in paradoxical ways: giving and giving up are two paths to wholeness found in the definition. The word *experience* reminds us that spirituality is not theory but is a *lived faith* as other definitions have described it. The phrase also encourages the connection between our story and God's Story. When that occurs, the gospel of grace and forgiveness is manifested in our lives. It is in that connection that we understand who we are and who God claims to be. We understand how we act and how God has acted on our behalf. Christian spirituality is relational.

Being alive to God's movement within and around speaks to the grounding of our identity. We belong to God. This phrase also tells us that our theology is centered in God's present movement and future challenges to our desire for transformation.

The phrase, *accomplished through reflection and response*, is applied not only to reflection and introspection, but also to academic study. How personal and communal transformation occur is important to know.

This definition has elements of each of Dahill's four levels of abstraction. There is first the *raw* existential level of human experience. Secondly, there is a personal or community response to the movement of God within and around us. Third, there is the opportunity for study of the spiritual experience through lay or academic reflection and response. Finally, the layperson or scholar will find some connection to his/her own story as the individual reacts to God's movement as seen or experienced in the study or observation of others.

LUTHERAN REACTIONS TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

If Lutheran spirituality is an idea foreign to many Lutherans, spiritual formation is an almost unknown concept. Lutherans do not speak in the language of spiritual formation but in different words and concepts.

Lutherans have traditionally shunned anything remotely involved with habits that might lead to works-righteousness. Martha Stortz suggests,

Any talk of 'formation' in Lutheran circles immediately meets the formidable challenge that this reintroduces 'works-righteousness' into the Reformation. Identifying certain practices as 'formational' risks prescribing a series of 'self-chosen works' by which one might advance in holiness. These 'works' habituate one into a certain way of life; one becomes a Christian by doing them. Being follows from doing.³⁰

She continues her thesis by stating,

Luther, it is argued, rejected such an Aristotelian understanding of practice and habituation...one becomes a Christian by grasping and being grasped by Christ in faith. Works follow naturally in response to this new identity. Organic metaphors describe this response: Works follow from faith as fruit from a tree. Thus doing follows from being, and both proceed organically from baptismal faith.³¹

Russell Seabright reflects a similar concern when he says,

Spirituality has a long and honored tradition in the history of the Christian church. It has often been difficult, though, for Lutherans to feel totally at home with the emphases that emerge from western spirituality. Lutheranism's distrust of a focus on change within an interior life, its fear that justification would be compromised by sanctification as a form of personal growth, and its strictures against merit-earning self-deprivation have made it cautious in approaching trends in piety and practice.³²

³⁰Martha Stortz, "Practicing Christians: Prayer as Formation," in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, ed Karen Bloomquist and John R. Stumme (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 58.

³¹Ibid.

³²Russell Seabright, "Luther's Perspective on Spirituality," *Trinity Seminary Review*, Vol.8 No.1(Spr 1986): 3.

Stortz describes Luther's approach to spiritual formation as a three legged stool: worship, catechesis and individual prayer.³³ For many Lutherans however, spiritual formation is only equated with catechetical studies or Sunday school classes. Lutheran churches are full of men and women like Susan of the opening contextual story: life-long Lutherans who never venture into the deeper water of intentional interior spiritual disciplines. They support their congregations, act in caring ways to their neighbors and help to make their communities a better place to live. Wonderful things occur in Lutheran congregations, yet something is amiss within a number of adult Lutherans.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a large mainline denomination. It has a rich history and strong theology. Yet, its membership drifts lower, Sunday school attendance diminishes and it has fewer congregations than when it formed twelve years ago. In 1998, the church had 5,251,534 baptized members, 11,120 congregations and a Sunday school enrollment of 1,013,312 with 152,747 teachers.³⁴ As of December 31, 2000, the church reported figures of 5,125,919 baptized members, 10,816 congregations and a Sunday school enrollment of 787,535 students with 129,833 teachers.³⁵

There are many reasons for this decline. I contend however, that one reason for this trend is that the church has misplaced a piece of its soul. It is out of balance and it is reflected in members like Susan, who have a sense of what they are missing, but do not know how to find it. A solution to this problem within the local parish is to encourage a holistic faith that develops the interior spiritual disciplines thereby feeding the exterior practice of the faith. This encouragement must be done in such a way as to gingerly

³³Stortz, 63.

³⁴The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *1990 Yearbook* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 579.

³⁵The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *2002 Yearbook* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2001), 89.

avoid the errors of a 'works-righteousness' approach to spiritual formation that would include an obsession on 'being right with God', a need to focus continually on behavior and holiness and a pre-occupation with God's laws over against God's grace. Yet at the same time, it is clear that the exterior practice of the faith must have focus and direction. It is not an easy task.

A DISTINCTIVE LUTHERAN SPIRITUALITY

In spite of a lack of spirituality language, the Lutheran Church does offer a distinctive spirituality. This spirituality is grounded in God's Word and announces God's redemptive activity in Jesus Christ. It is a holistic spirituality, noting how God speaks to us through a variety of ways and encourages us to live out our spirituality in all aspects of life. This spirituality has both public and private dimensions, as we are to be attentive to the inward spiritual disciplines that feed the outward activities of faith. This spirituality understands spiritual maturity as a process involving growth, risk and critical response to contemporary culture.

Bradley Hanson states that in his view, spirituality within Lutheran circles has seven characteristics:

1. Conviction that alienation from God is the deep and persistent root of our problems as individuals and communities.
2. Trust that God's merciful grace undergirds all of life.
3. Reliance on the word of God in scripture, proclamation, and music as the primary source of spiritual nurture and guidance.
4. Confidence that God's grace is present in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper and may also work through other rites, gestures, and physical objects.
5. Participation in the communal life of the church with responsibility for the nurture of one another.

6. Deep loyalty to core traditions as expressed in the classic creeds and Lutheran confessions and both respect and freedom towards secondary traditions.
7. Conviction that God's twofold rule summons all people to seek justice and calls Christians to faithful service in their daily relationships in life.³⁶

From a different perspective, Lisa Dahill views Lutheran contributions to Christian spirituality as potential correctives to other contemporary approaches. She offers three general contributions:

1. Lutherans can explore from within their rich and living tradition the role of music and hymns in conveying the very presence and reality of Christ; such study might involve the integration of many disciplines-ritual studies, music theory, philosophical aesthetics, physiology/neurology, poetics, etc- to help illumine a key aspect of what is in many ways an aural tradition of spirituality.
2. Lutherans offer an anthropology which can critique the sometimes overly optimistic views of human nature some other traditions employ.
3. Lutherans can offer other Christian traditions the centrality of grace which is a theological hallmark of this tradition; in the realm of spirituality, this emphasis has the effect of challenging all those spiritualities that seem to rely on human effort, 'ascent,' and specific disciplines as a condition for growth in the spiritual life.³⁷

The *Spirituality and Spiritual Formation* position paper from Lutheran

Theological Southern Seminary states that Lutheran spiritual formation as a distinctive formation has these elements:

1. Christian Spirituality is participation in the life of the Triune God.
2. Formation is the work of the Spirit who brings us to Christ and joins our lives to his, so that in struggle and newness of life we bear the image of the crucified and risen Lord and make him known to the world.
3. Christian spirituality is not the search for the *fat relentless ego* (Iris Murdoch), but *metanoia and metamorphosis*.
4. Christian spiritual formation is essentially sacramental: it is intentional engagement with what Luther loved to call the *bodily word*, the array of outward words and signs, rituals, discourse, persons, artifacts and institutions through which the Holy Spirit makes Christ known in and through the church.
5. Spiritual formation is being formed by a word encountered in the public,

³⁶Hanson. *A Graceful Life*, 18.

³⁷Dahill, 73.

- bodily world out beyond the self.
6. Christian spirituality must be understood as baptismal struggle and hope.
 7. The primary locus of ...formation is common worship, especially the communal celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
 8. Every Christian's personal discipline should be founded on the remembrance of Baptism, centered in Eucharistic worship and reflect the normative pattern of Christian formation. That is, it should involve daily engagement with God's word as an *external word* concretely other than the self, and it should involve the practice of prayer as thanksgiving and praise, confession and intercession.³⁸

Both Hanson and the position paper from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary approach Lutheran spirituality within the categories expressed at the beginning of this section. Spirituality is a lived-faith. It develops and adjusts alongside our pilgrimage with God. Lutheran spirituality is not static adherence to regulations or formulas. Dahill sees this spirituality as an offering to the entire church, offering both an incarnational approach to Lutheran spirituality and a challenge to other contemporary Christian spiritualities.

My foundation for Lutheran spirituality consists of two concepts: *Transformational Engagement* and *Intentional Grace*. The scriptures use the theme of engagement as a way of telling the metanarrative of God's revelation. Bradley Hanson refers to this theme as the "Big Story of the Bible that communicates a comprehensive vision of life and reality."³⁹ Through scripture, the Big Story tells us how God engaged the world with transformational intent at a variety of crisis points in the development of God's people. The metanarrative describes God's actions.

Initially, God used charismatic leaders to form the people and develop the early cultural and religious values of Israel. After the entrance into the Promised Land and the

³⁸Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 4-5.

³⁹Hanson., 171. Cf. pg 197 for Hanson's acknowledgement of borrowing and adapting this term.

establishment of tribal culture, God used other leaders, Judges, to intervene and save the people in times of crisis. Still later, kings and prophets were used by God to engage the world through prophetic words and actions. Finally, the scriptures indicate that when the time was right, God engaged the world in a radically different way. God came. Alone.

God engaged the world with a name: Emmanuel. God engaged the world with a mission statement expressed in Jn. 1:17; 3:16; 10:10. God engaged the world with a series of signs, culminating in the sign of the Cross. This sign became the mark of the Christian and is the sign of God's engagement with the world. God's engagements through scripture and the work of Christ were designed to transform the people, prodding them to reflect on God's presence and to align their lives to God's purposes.

H. Richard Niebuhr is very helpful in exploring *transformational engagement* through his description of the relationship between Christ and Culture. He describes five different relationships between Christ and Culture: 1) *Christ Against Culture*, in which the world is seen as evil; 2) *Christ of Culture*, an embrace of cultural values and mores; 3) *Christ Above Culture*, a synthetic view reflecting a positive view of human nature; 4) *Christ and Culture in Paradox*, a view that holds the law and gospel in tension; 5) *Christ the Transformer of Culture* which invites conversation as a means to Christ.⁴⁰

Of these typologies, I find Lutheran spirituality struggles with an *accommodational engagement* with culture that limits the effectiveness of the message of Christianity. This type of engagement in its extreme form substitutes justice issues for

⁴⁰Jones., 592-605.

the gospel. Some see this engagement style reflected in the ELCA with its continual discussion about sexuality.

At the same time, Lutheran spirituality provides a strong corrective to those churches that practice a *contrasting cultural disengagement* from society. Aspects of such diverse practices as home schooling (to protect children from the influences of culture) and obsessive concerns about the end of the world reflect this disengagement.

The second foundational concept for my understanding of Lutheran spirituality is *Intentional Grace*. Hanson and Dahill see grace as central to their understanding of Lutheran spirituality. Lutheran spirituality doesn't make sense without grace. It reflects unconditional love as manifested in the Incarnation. *Intentional Grace* is the vehicle by which God brings love to the world. God offers *Intentional Grace* with deliberate purpose and direction. The purpose underlying this grace is the restoration and reconciliation of the forgiven person. Its direction moves the forgiven person to a deeper authentic relationship that triggers new awareness of the power of a restored, reconciled life. This grace is applied within the framework of *transformational engagement*. I see this as being consistent with Niebuhr's typology of *Christ the Transformer of Culture*.

The above concepts are foundational for my understanding of Lutheran spirituality. In the construction of this spirituality, three general principles are laid upon these two foundational concepts. First, spirituality is Word and Sacrament based. Sacramental life is essential for the nurture of the Christian. Spirituality is steeped in the waters of Baptism and fed at the Eucharistic table. Baptismal identity allows for the application of *transformational engagement*.

Secondly, spirituality is rooted in a clear understanding that we are made right with God by what God does, and not by what we do. In other words, justification by faith guides the application of spirituality. Lutheran spirituality is built upon the *intentional grace* of God. It is not built upon our activities as a means to achieve God's acceptance. The exterior practice of faith is in response to this grace.

Third, spirituality is communal. The image of the body of Christ (I Cor 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:12; 5:30; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:19) is the image for the pilgrim people of God. We are linked together and any form of spirituality must pay attention to the impact that one activity has on another part of the body. This is particularly true when we speak about ethics and justice issues. Finally, spirituality understands that we are a priesthood of all believers, again a pilgrim image for the practice of the faith.

The application of my understanding of Lutheran spirituality (built upon the two foundational concepts and the three general principles) is expressed in four specific directions. The biblical premise for this is recorded in Jesus' response to the scribe in Mark 12:28-31,

And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that he had answered them well, asked him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.' "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

This comment from Jesus sets the parameters of spiritual application. The four directions of spirituality are linked to the four parts of loving God as quoted by Jesus. Heart is linked to nurture; Soul is linked to worship; Mind is linked to education; and Strength is linked to service.

Nurture is the communal aspect of this spirituality. It is reflected in relationships and the image of caring for the members of the body of Christ. Worship is the activity that applies to the sense of intimacy with God. It touches us at our core. Worship, in this application also includes prayer, meditation and solitude. Education and Service have application to all four aspects of Jesus' response to the scribe.

These applications have an interior and exterior side to them. Nurture is both self-care and care for others. Worship can be done individually and communally. Self study and corporate Bible studies are both important in developing a well rounded theology. Effective service to others enhances self-esteem and promotes a desire to serve that is not ego-based. It is most effective when we are clear about whom we are serving.

The above four directions offer significant application in both exterior and interior faith practices. The foundation and the general principles offer guidance and direction on the ways my definition of spirituality can be applied to my ministry context.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPER

This paper examines the ministry context of Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, Rohnert Park, California, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Demographics of the congregation and community are described. Specific ministries and programs of the congregation that encourage the use of spiritual formation practices are highlighted.

A brief exploration of Biblical themes underlying spiritual formation is essential if we are to understand how formation can occur in the contemporary church. This exploration includes material from the Old Testament, Gospels and Epistles. Attention is

paid to the role of pilgrimage in the Old Testament as a formation paradigm. The Gospels provide parables, pronouncement stories, as well as the mission statement of Jesus as formation examples. The Epistles offer a window into the struggle of formation in the early church and demonstrate the variety of formation concerns of the first believers and their leaders.

A third portion of the background relates to the historical roots of Lutheran spirituality. Luther's writings provide the direction for this section. While spiritual formation is not referred to directly in his writings, we can glean from them a variety of formative practices that speak to both the interior spiritual life and the exterior practice of the faith. The theological roots of Lutheran spirituality are further described through an overview of Lutheran Pietism. Missionary work, catechetical instruction and the role of personal faith in Christ are important aspects of the Pietism movement that continue to play a vital role in the lives of many Lutherans today.

If we are to enhance the spirituality of the adult church member, it is vital we look at contemporary approaches to Christian spiritual formation and their application to Lutheran spirituality. The ecumenical movement provides the impetus for Lutherans to look outside their own history for practices that encourage the exploration of authentic spirituality. This is particularly true of the interior disciplines, many of which come from the Roman Catholic Church.

The chapters on Biblical Themes, Historical Roots and Contemporary Examples are the backdrop for a course of study to be used as an introductory adult spiritual formation class for the members of Cross and Crown Lutheran Church. The course

incorporates a Lutheran perspective on spirituality and uses the wisdom and practices of other Christian traditions.

The class serves as a *hub* from which specific courses in interior and exterior practices follow. It is structured as Spirituality *101*. Each class emanating from the *hub* is designed to encourage the participant to develop a personal ministry that is expressed both within the congregation and in the participant's daily life activity.

CHAPTER 2

The life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive...

THE COMMUNITY OF ROHNERT PARK

Cross and Crown Lutheran Church is nestled between two hill ranges an hour north of the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge in the town of Rohnert Park, California. Once a 2,700-acre seed ranch, Rohnert Park is now home to over 42,000 residents in a planned community. The community, incorporated in 1962, is modeled after a planning concept used in Levittown, Pennsylvania. Eight neighborhoods or sections comprise the town. Each section includes a ten-acre school site, five-acre park site and a series of bike paths connecting the sections. Rohnert Park has the largest number of city parks and recreational facilities per capita in Northern California and is one of the largest designed landscaped communities in California. The community is home to Sonoma State University and has a number of technology companies that serve as major employers for the residents.

The demographics of Rohnert Park reflect a fairly stable community. The town is 88% Caucasian with a 60% white-collar work force. 9% of the population is over 65

years old and the median age of the community is 33. The median household income is over \$51,000.⁴¹

CROSS AND CROWN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Cross and Crown Lutheran Church was organized as a mission congregation of the American Lutheran Church in 1968. It is located on land donated by an individual who provided land for a number of churches in the community. Four pastors have served the congregation in its history. The founding pastor served nine years and established a preschool as a part of the outreach ministry. A pastor who served the congregation for three years followed him. The most significant growth in the congregation occurred in the seventeen-year ministry of the third pastor. During his tenure, a kindergarten class was added in 1983 and each year a new class was added to the school until 1989 when the church offered a full elementary school ministry to the community. In 1996, the congregation leased property next door to its location and expanded the school to include a seventh grade. The following year, the church purchased the property and added an eighth grade class. The church complex expanded to 4.6 acres with total usable floor space of 31,000 square feet and an appraised value of \$4,200,000. Four building projects including a new sanctuary were completed in his seventeen years of ministry. Sunday morning worship attendance grew from 125 in 1980 to 392 in 1997.

The congregation added staff during his tenure. A series of seminary interns served the congregation, and one of the interns was called by the congregation in 1992 to

⁴¹Rohnert Park Community Resource Directory, 2001-2002 (El Segundo, CA: Performance Publishing, 2001), 8.

serve as associate pastor. A youth director and a parish administrator were added later.

In September of 1997, the senior pastor retired and the church quickly fell into conflict. The call committee of the congregation chose not to consider the associate pastor for the senior pastor position. He accepted a call to another congregation in July of 1998. The decision not to consider the associate made it difficult for the congregation to call another pastor. The call committee did bring a recommendation to the congregation, but there was so much internal tension that the candidate turned down the call and suggested the congregation needed to spend significant time working through its conflict. The call committee disbanded and a number of people left the congregation.

The congregation contracted with a consultant who worked with them to develop a process to grow through the conflict. The results were mixed. Some felt there was progress and others felt that it was a waste of time and money. Extensive surveys and discussion groups were used to help members clarify feelings, prioritize ministry and speak openly about ways to move forward. A reconciliation process was developed and a team was put in place to enable reconciliation to occur among disaffected members.

During this time, the church was served by two interim pastors. The first served from the senior pastor's retirement until after the failed call attempt. The second served after that point until June of 2000. It was during this second interim period that a second significant conflict broke out when the youth director was dismissed. The congregation was still in a fragile state when this occurred and this conflict polarized the congregation again. In June of 2000, the second interim pastor left and the congregation was served by pulpit supply clergy until my arrival three months later.

Today, the congregation has an average Sunday morning worship attendance of 282, a membership of 850 and a budget of \$550,000. The staff consists of the senior pastor, parish administrator and administrative assistant. A new call committee has been formed to call an associate pastor. The school has 315 students, a budget of \$1,000,000 with 39 full and part-time staff members. The congregation has a debt of \$1,300,000 primarily related to the purchase of the school property in 1997.

In addition to the standard Sunday school and confirmation programs, the congregation currently has four programs that are intentionally designed to use spiritual formation practices and disciplines. Three of these initiatives have begun in the last year. The third has its beginnings nine years ago. However, in the period of conflict, its activities have been diminished.

The first program is the Small Group ministry. The church uses the Stephen Ministry model for small groups and has specific training for leaders of groups. Currently, the congregation has three married groups, a young couples group and three senior groups. Each meet once a week and use a variety of materials. Built into each session is a time for prayer, education, reflection and support. Leaders are required to attend monthly training sessions to keep their skills sharp and to talk about specific ways to develop their skills as facilitators. The ministry leaders sent another team this year for additional training and they anticipate beginning two new small groups; one for college students and the other for single women.

A new program entitled Retreats Ministries was developed in 2000. Its focus is to target specific groups within the congregation and develop retreats that have a spiritual formation focus. The ministry plans to have four retreats this coming year.

A third program began this year and is designed to develop youth sponsors for all aspects of youth ministry. It consists of a call process to identify youth mentors followed by a commissioning service for those who undertake the training. Members commit to a three-month training followed by a one year ministry with the youth program. Each session of the training incorporates spiritual formation topics and activities. Examples include praying using a Labyrinth, application of personality tests for spiritual formation, and spiritual gift analysis.

The fourth program works with the leadership of the congregation. When I came to the church, boards did not meet on the same night; they met on eleven different nights. Part of the reason for that came from the conflict in the congregation. For some boards, it was easier to meet on a separate night than it was to be in a church building filled with tension. Two months after my arrival I asked the boards to move to a single night. I told them that this was part of the healing process and meeting on separate nights made it difficult for boards to share information and work together for the good of the congregation.

The board meetings now begin with a general meeting of the entire leadership team in the sanctuary. The Christ Candle is lit, and people come to be in silence prior to the meetings. I spend the first 20 minutes of evening leading them in a hymn, prayer and a teaching time. The teaching is on some aspect of spiritual formation. One month it might be on prayer style, another month it might be on how to read for spiritual formation insight. I speak from my own spiritual journey, sharing parts of my life that have been critical junctures of transformation. I have shared my personal spiritual formation paradigm and each month ask them to work on some specific spiritual discipline that will

have an impact on both their interior faith life and their exterior practice of the faith.

Following this, the boards go to their respective board meetings.

The council meetings have changed their structure to include a spiritual formation component. Meetings begin at 6:00 PM with dinner followed by 45 minutes of private teaching time. Topics include Bible study, leadership practices, management styles and conflict resolution. At 6:50, the group shares the Eucharist and a candle is placed at the seat of one council member. Members are encouraged to pray for that person and be in contact with them during the month.

In the months since I have begun this, significant changes have occurred in the style of the board meetings as well as in personal relationships between leadership team members. Individuals are much more willing to listen to each other, sit with each other and laugh with each other.

The four spiritually formative initiatives have encouraged members of the congregation to think about what types of programs the congregation offers. Members are beginning to look at programming through the lens of spiritual formation to see how congregation activities may enhance the *life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around us that points to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.*

CHAPTER 3

*The life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement
within and around us...*

BIBLICAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

Spiritual formation is the foundation of religious life in biblical times. It is implicit in the activities of teaching children, ethics and relationships between neighbors. In the Old Testament, the formation of spirituality is linked to the formation of the people of God as evidenced in the desert wanderings, the development of a non-theocratic government, the building of the temple and the prophetic ministry of both early and later prophets.

In the New Testament, spiritual formation in the gospels is quite different from formation in the Epistle literature. The Gospels focus on the words and actions of Jesus. In the Epistles, the words and actions of Jesus are lived out in various communities each with their own orientation and purpose. What we discover in an analysis of biblical spiritual formation is that no one form is applicable to both Old Testament and New Testament living. There is no single biblical spirituality.

Leonard Doohan understands this: “In the Bible we are always dealing with real people faced with real choices in concrete situations. We are not presented with biblical spirituality but, rather, with biblical spiritualities.”⁴²

Viewed in this way, any number of “lenses” can be used to view spiritual formation themes in the Bible. For example, spiritual formation can be viewed through the lens of individual biblical characters and their relationship with God. Abraham and Moses are two examples where a significant amount of biblical material illustrates spiritual formation activity.

Tracking specific word usage through the scriptures can be a second lens to view spiritual formation themes. Examples would include holiness as explored in the Old Testament and in Matthew’s community and grace as reflected in the parables of Jesus and the writings of Paul. These themes are in evidence throughout the writings and can be applied to specific situations in the life of the believer.

Thirdly, spiritual formation can be viewed through specific biblical books as Pamela Scalise and Gerald Borchet have done with the Psalms and Ephesians.⁴³ Each of these books exposes patterns of faith life. The Psalms provide a wide variety of contexts that have application for spiritual formation as songs and prayers. They teach us how to address God both in formal and intimate settings and speak to the height and depth of human experience. The book of Ephesians provides instructions for the Christian life and a model of spiritual preparation in times of struggle.

⁴²Leonard Doohan, “Current Trends: Scripture and Contemporary Spirituality,” *Spirituality Today* Vol.42 No.1, (Spring 1990): 64.

⁴³Pamela J. Scalise and Gerald L. Borchet, “The Bible and the Spiritual Pilgrimage,” in *Becoming Christian: Dimensions of Spiritual Formation*, ed. Bill J. Leonard (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 32-44.

A fourth lens used in viewing spiritual formation themes is the lens of historical development. Biblical life changes as the people of God move through the Old Testament and into the New Testament. Viewing spiritual formation through this lens provides a panoramic view of the different communities and styles of spiritual formation expressed in the Bible.

Metaphor offers a fifth lens to view spiritual formation. Les Steele refers to three metaphors for life: treadmill, saga and pilgrimage. In describing them he writes,

If treadmill, we live a most dreadful experience...Saga is appealing with its romantic sound of the Old West. It adds a dimension of adventure and meaning... It is the rugged individual living alone without need for anyone, particularly God. Pilgrimage, on the other hand, is a life journey lived before God. It is infused with meaning no matter what the circumstances.⁴⁴

A treadmill life is a sojourn without community and risk. It is a solo journey and a person on a treadmill has little interest in anyone else. Think of a treadmill at the gym. You program it for time and distance and you begin to walk or run. Perhaps you put earphones on or you watch the bank of televisions in front of you. Your focus is on yourself and your goal. When you are on the treadmill, your neighbor's goal is of little concern. Faith in the treadmill journey is virtually non-existent. If life is a meaningless treadmill, faith in something outside yourself is of no use.

A Saga life is a sojourn with risk, but without community. It is the sojourn of the Lone Ranger who lives wild adventures and always has plenty of hair-raising tales to tell, but has little use for fellowship, community reflection and companionship. The one who lives a Saga life is focused on self. Faith in the saga sojourn is primarily faith in oneself.

⁴⁴Les L. Steele, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 43-44.

A Pilgrimage life is a sojourn with both risk and community. More than the other two images, it is a life linked to others in a way that develops meaning and purpose. It is a life that incorporates faith as an important value. The pilgrimage metaphor is the clearest metaphor for community spiritual formation in the scriptures.

Not only do we need to appreciate the types of lenses to be used in viewing biblical spiritual formation, but we need to clarify the relationship between scripture and spirituality. Doing so provides a foundation for specific discussion of spiritual formation themes in the scriptures. Doohan explores six elements in the relationship. First, he indicates that *scripture is a source*. It is more than information; it leads us on a path of discovery, of God and God's dreams for us. It is a source of inspiration.⁴⁵ Secondly, scripture is *the means for growth in Christian life*. Doohan explains,

The Bible is a source of spirituality, not because it is the best formulation (it isn't), but because it is the presentation of foundational events that established humanity's relationship with God in Christ. We see how others tried to be faithful, and what means they used. We read the results of their convictions and faith.⁴⁶

Third, scripture is an *inspired synthesis and vision of what discipleship was understood to be*. Doohan points out that Jesus was not a systematic theologian but through parables, pronouncements stories and prophetic actions, He embodied discipleship and obedience. The same is true for Old Testament figures like Moses and Elijah.

Fourth, scripture *becomes the occasion for biblical spirituality*. He contends,

It is the Church's preaching of the Bible which becomes for us the Word of God. Many of today's faithful are victims of the distancing that modern technology has put between them and the Bible. Points of immediate and natural contact between the Bible and people today are now very few and far between, and often the text

⁴⁵Doohan, 67.

⁴⁶Ibid.

cannot speak to them anymore. As a result, several read their *simple faith* into the text and out of the text. This spiritualizing of the Bible can be devotionally helpful, but it is not being challenged by the biblical text. Such biblical pietism does not generate biblical spirituality. Thus, it is necessary that the text be an occasion for the proclamation of the Word of God, which calls to biblical spirituality. The Word of God is invitation, call, dialogue, it is also symbolic—evoking response, and it is sacramental, since it is charged with power.⁴⁷

Fifth, *the Bible is the measuring rod for authentic spirituality*. Doohan

acknowledges that scripture is used to battle all manner of doctrinal disputes, but he insists that it should be used to monitor the authenticity of spiritual practice. He further asserts:

All elements of life must be measured by its call. However, there is no prior presupposition of harmony or agreement among the authors of the New Testament regarding spirituality, and thus each individual book cannot be considered normative when taken alone. Christian traditions have either posited the immediate supervision of the Spirit (Protestant) or continuous Church tradition (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox) to safeguard the common norm of the Bible's teachings.⁴⁸

Finally, Doohan posits, "the relationship between the Bible and spirituality is also one of *constant dialogue* between the unchanging Word and the changing situations of the disciples."⁴⁹ Scripture is alive and continues to speak to generations with power to change lives and give insight to today's complex problems.

Gordon Mursell takes a different approach to exploring spirituality in the Bible.

Two traditions shape Christian spirituality. The first is the Hebrew tradition of the Old Testament. Spirituality, he says, "in the Hebrew tradition of scripture is that process by which God seeks continually to work upon, or address, the raw unstable chaos of our

⁴⁷Ibid., 68.

⁴⁸Ibid., 68-69.

⁴⁹Ibid., 69.

lives and experience, and of our world, drawing forth meaning, identity, order and purpose.”⁵⁰

While the Hebrew tradition is the foundation for New Testament spirituality, Mursell states that the Greek tradition of Plato “exerted a profound influence on how that spirituality developed.”⁵¹ He explains,

Where the Hebrew tradition sought to hold the physical and the spiritual together, Plato wanted to separate them. For him, broadly speaking, what is good is *spiritual* (invisible, incorporeal, immortal), while what is bad is *physical*, not only because it does not last but also because it draws us downwards, so to speak, and makes us earthbound. For him each human person consisted of a physical body and an invisible soul: the body is transient and ultimately worthless, while the soul is immortal—it came from an invisible spiritual world and will return to it when we die.⁵²

The impact of the Greek tradition on the spiritual life and development of Christianity was tremendous. On the negative side, it,

Encouraged many Christians to regard *spirituality* as essentially world-denying, the practice (often called asceticism) of disciplines designed to repress or redirect physical drives and longings and to experience, as far as was possible in this world, the life of the Spirit.⁵³

Plato and his tradition provided a positive influence on Christian spirituality.

Mursell states:

His (Plato’s) emphasis on the beauty, the sheer attractiveness, of the divine or spiritual world encouraged Christians (such as Augustine of Hippo) to see that world as the fulfillment of all our deepest desires, and thus to give Christian spirituality a dynamism and energy that it might otherwise have lost.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Gordon Mursell, “Christian Spirituality”, in *The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, from East to West*, ed. Gordon Mursell (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 9.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 10.

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

He concludes that these two traditions with their roots in Old Testament times play an essential role in understanding the development of New Testament spirituality. The Hebrew tradition stresses *integration* of the whole of life, while the Greek tradition places its stress on *desire*,

An insistent longing not only, or even primarily to leave this world for the next one, but to experience and manifest the next one in the midst of this one, until the whole of creation is transformed and made new.⁵⁵

The exploration of the variety of lenses, the discussion on the relationship between scripture and spirituality, and the insight of the Hebrew and Greek traditions prepare us to look at spiritual formation themes in the Bible, where we encounter *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to the movement of God within and around us*.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament writings are a rich resource for understanding contemporary spiritual formation. The biblical figures presented, psalms, proverbs and the stories of the development of the people of God all point to an interactive relationship with a God who calls forth faith from his people.

John Barton offers two directions in discussing Old Testament spirituality and its implications for spiritual formation. One direction looks at the material of the Old Testament and studies the history of spirituality as evidenced through the development of

⁵⁵Ibid.

the Old Testament. A second direction studies the ways Old Testament spirituality nourishes us today as a finished product.⁵⁶

The two views are not opposed to each other. Barton acknowledges “in many ways the finished Old Testament is the natural outcome of the long and winding course of religious beliefs and practices of ancient Israel.”⁵⁷ The ancestral study opens a window to a people of faith who believed they owed their existence to the God who saved them and brought them to a holy land.

Steele’s metaphor of life as pilgrimage is appropriate to the understanding of part of the formation of Israel. Barton views communal or corporate spirituality emanating from the liturgical or worship life of the people. Hence, he sees little evidence for individual spirituality and formation.⁵⁸ Kenneth Leech, as a counterpoint to Barton’s communal perspective sees Abraham’s individual relationship to God clearly “established within the context of pilgrimage.”⁵⁹ He explains that Abraham

Became the key figure in a tradition of wandering, a tradition in which individual pilgrims came to know and experience God in the course of travel. In stark contrast to the resident gods of paganism, territorial and static, the God of Abraham was a *deus mobilis*, a moving God who called people out of uncertain paths, and whose presence went before them...Abraham became the founder of a pilgrim people, a people whose knowledge of God would come through wandering and through movement, a wilderness people.⁶⁰

In Abraham’s call, his encounter with God becomes a personal conversation that carries through his successes and failures. Abraham is shown as both faithful in his

⁵⁶John Barton, “The Old Testament,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, SJ. eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 48.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Kenneth Leech, *Experiencing God: Theology as Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 28.

⁶⁰Ibid.

acceptance of his call in Genesis 12 and in his painful travels to Mount Moriah for the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22. Abraham is rewarded throughout biblical history as being a person of faith as evidenced by the only person to have two entries in Hebrew's Hall of Faith chapter (Heb. 11:8-10;17-19; see also Rom. 4, Gal. 3:6-18, and James 2:21-23). Abraham's failures are also exposed (Gen.12:10-20; 20:1-14).

The personal conversation as a literary technique between God and God's servant is shown in God's announcement to Abram promising an heir (Gen. 15), as well as in Gen.17; 18:2; and 18:23-33. This technique is used of many of the first biblical figures as a method to show the power and the importance of their relationship with God.

The same technique of personal conversation is used to elevate Moses as another hero of the faith. Moses' call story begins his personal conversation with God, though God has his eye on him from infancy (Ex. 2:1-10). Moses has numerous conversations with God, some gentle, some pleading, some angry and the scriptures imply that his status gives him the right to address God directly. Examples include Ex. 7:1-6; 19:3-25; 32: 7-14; and Num. 11:25. So great is the admiration for Moses that God speaks to Moses as friends speak to each other (Ex. 33:11). Moses, like Abraham is not without his faults and the scriptures present them without hesitation (Ex. 2:11-15; 18:13-27).

There are spiritual formation themes in these figures and others in the Old Testament as related to individual spirituality. The first theme is summed up in *personal relationship*. These figures as well as Jeremiah, Job, Amos and others experienced their relationship with God in a personal way. They were *alive to the movement of God within and around them*. There was no concern about whether or not God existed. Their

relationship with God was one that consumed their lives and focused their energy on living for God.

Secondly, *accessibility to God* is a significant theme. Barton sees this theme in both intercessory activity and arguing. He notes,

Not everyone associates intercession with *spirituality*; in some traditions it does not belong to the higher reaches of the spiritual life, where the soul enjoys communion with God, and prayers of *asking* are left behind... it may well be that the further advanced people were in the *spiritual life* (a term that sounds anachronistic in Old Testament study), the greater the part intercession played in their prayer. Whoever was thought, in different periods and by different groups, to count as *a prophet*, it seems clear that this term was understood to imply peculiar closeness to God, and that this closeness could be seen most clearly in the prophet's powers of *mediation* between God and his people.⁶¹

Barton also views *arguing with God* as a sign of power and closeness associated with accessibility. Abraham and Moses argue with God as does Job (indirectly through his friends), Jeremiah (Jer.18:20) and Amos (Amos 7:1-9). Barton concludes,

These confrontations with God are by no means always successful, indeed most often they produce no more than a compromise...but they are a proper part of the calling of the heroes of the faith. To submit to God's will without a struggle would not be an improvement.⁶²

A third spiritual formation theme involves *response to Torah*. Barton refers to this as *torah-mysticism*, an Old Testament method of *practicing the presence of God*. He elaborates,

This belief that God is present not with those who seek to see him, but with those who obey him, lies at the root of a style of spirituality that probably arrived in Judaism some time after the Exile, but which has coloured the whole Old Testament record by its influence on the minds of the biblical compilers. Its classic expression is Ps.119. Here the law- the system of detailed regulations that were believed in post-exilic Judaism to sum up God's will for Israel- becomes an object of veneration, to such an extent that some have spoken of God's being *incarnate* in the Law for Judaism... It is the one normative expression of the mind

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Barton., 50-51.

of God and of his intentions for humankind, and by observing all its detailed provisions the worshipper knows God as far as that is either possible or desirable.⁶³

Individual prayer and response to the Torah is found throughout the description of statutes. Deuteronomy 11:18-25 is clear example of how the individual is to internalize the words of God that represent the relationship. The words are to be *impressed, bound, taught, spoken, and written*. These actions involve a full range of sensory response as well as an emotional commitment to reflection, prayer and identification with the Torah.

Another way to view spirituality in the Old Testament is through worship activities, and the individual's identification with the community. Walter Brueggemann offers five *mediations* that he considers prominent in the practice of daily life in Israel: Torah, kingship, prophecy, cult and wisdom. He notes,

These practices generated, constituted, mediated, and made Yahweh available in Israel... Yahweh, as known, trusted, obeyed, and feared in Israel, is *there* in Israel only because of these sustained mediations that incessantly focus on Yahweh's oddity. Without these sustained mediations, Yahweh who is so odd and irascible, so wondrous and awesome, would disappear from the life of Israel and from the life of the world.⁶⁴

He further posits,

The day-to-disciplines and practices of the community are indeed theological activities, for such activities are the modes and arenas in which the utterances and gestures of Yahweh can be nurtured... The conclusion at which we arrive is that available, visible daily practice, constituted and undertaken humanly, implements the defining linkages between Yahweh and Israel.⁶⁵

In other words, this relationship between Yahweh and Israel is so intimate, so all encompassing that all life has theological implications, all life is holy, all life is lived in

⁶³Barton., 57.

⁶⁴Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1997), 575.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 576.

obedience to the Other and all life finds meaning in *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to the movement of God within and around* Israel's daily activity. The five mediations as practiced in the community serve as a framework for spiritual formation to occur as a natural part of community life.

The Torah is the clearest description of the relationship between God and Israel. It marks the boundaries of the relationship through command and instruction, provides transactional guidance for the practice of faith and community life, and lifts up the singular commitment that God has to Israel. It is a reminder of the first covenant and the proactive nature of God in establishing the covenant.

Kingship is a reluctant addition to God's relationship with Israel, but the king is authorized by God to act as God's agent of political power. Brueggemann notes that Kingship was a concept fraught with danger and played a significant role in the downfall of Israel.⁶⁶

Prophets were people commissioned by God to speak on behalf of God. They spoke with an authority unrestricted by the community. They responded to God's call to speak to the people in the midst of community or national trouble and to call them to faithfulness through prophetic word and action. Brueggemann points out that their prophetic utterances generally took one of three forms: Lawsuit speech, appeals for repentance and oracles of promise.⁶⁷ Prophetic ministry was often crisis ministry and was used to get Israel's attention in dramatic ways.

⁶⁶Ibid., 614.

⁶⁷Ibid., 635-637.

The cult of public worship is the arena of community life that mediates God's *real presence*. Worship, with its sacrificial orientation to priests, complex rituals and orders helps the community find ways to speak to God. Worship defines Israel's relationship to God by how God is addressed and revered. There is much in scripture that details aspects of worship life, from the construction of the tabernacle, to the building of the temple and the requirements for sacrificial worship by the community.

Wisdom, and wisdom teaching served as a *parallel* style of reflection to the Torah. It is a literature focused on the lived experience of the community and the family. Wisdom literature helped to bring order and make sense of some of the peculiar ways people acted. Wisdom teaching pointed out causes and effects, reasons and reactions to life situations.

Brueggemann offers five conclusions concerning the mediations and their purpose in Israel's community life.

1. Each of these modes of mediation is, according to Israel's testimony, *instituted as Yahweh's gift to Israel*. These modes are not human devices, whereby Yahweh may be mobilized, manipulated, or coerced into a particular agenda.
2. These modes of mediation are *situated in the midst of real-life circumstances*, designed and intended to address real issues and to position Israel on the *Yahwistic side* in disputed issues of the day.
3. Although these modes of mediation are authorized and legitimized by Yahweh, they are in actual practice, *concrete human enterprises*. And because they are human enterprises that depend on human courage, passion and fidelity, they are *subject to profound perversion*.
4. Each of these modes of mediation *makes Yahweh available* to Israel.
5. These mediation are *concrete communal practices* conducted by human agents.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Ibid., 695-701.

These five mediations fit well into a pilgrimage view of spiritual formation. The Torah was offered as a gift for instruction and guidance on the journey of faith. Pilgrimage life was risky and the way was not often clear. The Torah provided boundaries, protection, and a description of life with God. As Israel journeyed from its desert beginnings to its capital city, the Torah gave direction for faithful living. In times of risk and uncertainty, the Torah gave clear words of instruction and counsel.

As God's agent for political power, the King was a symbol of God's presence in the midst of the people and was a sign of God's authority. The role of King in the history of Israel is certainly not always a shining example of integrity and leadership. Many kings were abysmal failures politically and morally. Yet, as a developmental step in Israel's history, it shows how God used Kings to develop community and keep the nation (for awhile) intact.

The prophet is another guide along the way. The community was not always responsive to God and was found to ignore God's call to be the blessing they were called to be. Prophets came in crisis times to call the people back to faithful living and tell them where exactly where they went off the path. Prophetic words were not always welcome words to pilgrims and the truth was not always pleasant to hear.

Worship connects the community to each other in the pilgrimage. Songs, prayers and ritual link the community with its roots. Those elements interpret community life to future generations who hear the songs and memorize the prayers their ancestors taught them. Worship provides a measure of security in uncertain times and reminds the community of where it has been and Who has been with them along the way. Worship is the pillar of cloud and fire that guides the pilgrim through life.

Wise mentors also provide guidance for the pilgrim. They know the territory the pilgrim is going through; they offer advice and teaching on the pitfalls of life. They provide the common sense wisdom that helps the younger members of the community remain tied to the values of their tradition.

Scalise and Borchet explore another viewpoint in Old Testament spirituality:

The diverse forms of spiritual expression and experiences with the presence of God that are recorded in the Old Testament may be grouped around the two dimensions of surprise and stability. The ancient Israelites knew God through the divine surprises of creation and election, theophany and call, and in the holy stability of sacred times and places, worship ritual, and Law-governed community life.⁶⁹

They find four spiritual disciplines in the Old Testament that have application to contemporary Christian spiritual life. *Praise*, incorporated in worship and in response to God's presence; *Study and Meditation on God's word*; *Tithes and offerings* as stewardship response; and *Sabbath* as the practice of upholding sacred times as a discipline.⁷⁰ These disciplines help the pilgrim in *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to the movement of God within and around*.

Scalise and Borchet view the spiritual life as "a pilgrimage undertaken with trust and hope in God in spite of the dangers that threaten from without and within."⁷¹ While they do not place their disciplines within categories as detailed as Brueggemann's, it is clear that their disciplines fit within the cultic worship structure of Israel.

Their construct of *surprise and stability* fits within Brueggemann's modes of mediation. *Stability* was found in each of the mediations as they developed and were

⁶⁹Scalise, 33.

⁷⁰Ibid., 37.

⁷¹Ibid.

institutionalized in Israel's community life as Israel passed through periods of contact with other sophisticated cultures. *Surprise*, however, represents the early manifestation of those mediations and includes theophany experiences, call stories and the raw beginning of worship forms. *Surprise* seems to represent the God of the wilderness who claims territory and leads the people as pilgrims on a risky mission to salvation, whereas *stability* represents a more refined God, with a building, priests to intercede on behalf of the people and a exacting form of worship that includes specific music instructions (Ps 57:3,6; 67:70), and stylized prayer forms (2 Chr 6:4). Both *surprise* and *stability* are part of the pilgrim journey, lived before God in all circumstances.

A final perspective on spirituality is viewed from the standpoint of history. An understanding of history was central to the beliefs of the people of God, for in history they saw the beginning of their nation and God's role in leading them. The history expressed in the Bible reveals God's purposive activity in the world during that time.

In understanding history, God's people find meaning in life and the pilgrim journey. The historical experiences as interpreted by faith lay open an underlying meaning that points them to the One who gives them meaning. History is not just the disclosure of wars, famines etc., but is the theological statement of God's activity in those events and the intention of his purpose in Israel's life. The application of faith, as understood in the Old Testament, gives history its peculiar claim to be sacred history. History is the theater of God's actions and the Old Testament is the narrative of that action. The people recall it, hide it in their hearts and teach it to others.⁷²

⁷²Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 1976), 284-288.

Old Testament spirituality has its roots in the wilderness encounters with a God who roams the earth, calling individuals, and leading them as pilgrim people. God creates a covenant relationship and backs it up by displaying mighty acts of power in the salvation of his people. Through the development of the people from a loose tribal community with judges to a nation with kings, God continues to remind them of the relationship He established. His use of prophets and wisdom literature provide opportunities for renewal and reflection. This ancient spirituality nourishes those who read the encounters of the wilderness pilgrims, their success and failure as written and sung in the books that comprise the Old Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Old Testament spirituality focuses on Israel and its pilgrim theology lived in response to the call of God. It follows the long, arduous path of wilderness theology through the development and collapse of the nation of Israel. It is a journey of centuries, filled with generations of faithful ancestors, brilliant poets, storytellers as well as unscrupulous leaders.

New Testament spirituality is also pilgrim theology. The Old Testament becomes a backdrop for God's new initiative of salvation focusing on "Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of the faith" (Heb. 12:2). This journey is not one of centuries, but of decades. Only two or three generations are represented and few of the figures presented have much material written about them. Many of the early followers of Jesus are unnamed and even some of his closest followers have no material written about them. The focus is on Jesus.

The New Testament is interested in only some aspects of Jesus the man. Only Matthew and Luke provide birth stories (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk 2:1-20). Luke describes the only childhood incident recorded in the gospels (Lk. 2:41-52). Mark's interest in Jesus begins with John the Baptist and the Gospel of John moves in an entirely different direction as he provides a series of spiritual vignettes instead of parables and blocks of teaching material.

Paul has little interest in anything but the end of Jesus' life. His writings emanate from the implications of the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Paul provides no significant details of the life of Jesus and repeats no words of Jesus except the Eucharistic words of blessing (I Cor. 11:23-25). He does allude to teachings of Christ in I Cor. 7:10 and 9:14. Paul has concerns for the faith development of the church (Gal. 1:6-9), the moral activity of the believers (I Thess.4:11-12; 2 Cor. 12:20-21; 1 Cor.5: 1-5), and the imminent return of Christ (I Thess. 5:1-6).

Luke links the New Testament together with his brief history of the early years of the church, describing the transition of leadership from Peter to Paul as well as the spiraling expansion of Christianity from Jerusalem to Asia and Europe. He offers an index to some of Paul's writings and allows readers a glimpse of the creative power of the Holy Spirit and the struggle of human dynamics in the early church.

As in the Old Testament, there is no single spirituality to be found in the writings of the New Testament. As Cheslyn Jones states,

We have had to pass through a phase which sought to identify *the theology of the NT*, behind all the writings, to recognize a plurality of theologies of the NT. Less attention has hitherto been paid in detail to *spirituality*, except in so far as it is

implicit in *theology*; but it is equally clear that we can no longer expect to extract *the* spirituality of the NT, but we have every chance of detecting many.⁷³

The material of the New Testament is derived from a variety of communities and much of it is written in the last third of the first century described by Raymond Brown as the *Sub-Apostolic Period*.⁷⁴

The communities these authors represent offer a diverse view of New Testament spirituality based on the contexts of their communities and the way they lived out the words and actions of Jesus. Spiritual formation themes abound in this literature that takes us from the early words of Jesus to periods of persecution in the early church.

The Gospels approach the message and mission of Jesus from different perspectives. Matthew writes the gospel for the new people of God. It is the teaching gospel of the church. Brown notes that, “of all the gospels it was best suited to the manifold needs of the later church, the most cited by the church fathers, the most used in the liturgy, and the most serviceable for catechetical purposes.”⁷⁵

Matthew has a concern for the misuse of authority within the church (Chapter 18); an interest in righteousness and obedience as aspects of faith life (Mt. 5:6; 6:33) and uses the Old Testament to footnote his gospel (Is. 7:14; Mic. 5:2; Is. 11:1; Is. 40:3; Is. 62:11;

⁷³Jones, 60.

⁷⁴Raymond Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 15. Although beyond the scope of this paper, Brown stresses the importance of this period as he observes, “With the exception of the undisputed letters of Paul, most of the NT would have been written in this last one-third of the century—a period when the authors who are preserved in the NT wrote without using their names and occasionally under the mantle of the apostolic forebears. (An exception would be the otherwise unknown prophet named John who identifies himself as the author of the Apocalypse or Revelation). Later tradition tended to assign authors to the originally anonymous gospels; but modern scholarship has called into doubt the accuracy of those assignments which, in any case, may have been meant to tell us more about the authority behind the individual work than about the actual writer. As for the Deutero-Pauline epistles (the Pastorals, Ephesians and Colossians) and the Catholic epistles, the designation of the authors as Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude probably represents a claim to the apostolic adherence rather than an objective ambience where fidelity to the memory of the great apostles is the dominant characteristic.”

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 124.

Zech 9:9 are examples). Matthew's contention is that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament picture of the Messiah. He speaks with authority (7:29). He is the royal Messiah, the last King of Israel, coming to Jerusalem to claim his kingdom. Jesus dies, only to return and promise his guidance to those who follow him.

Mark is the gospel of frenetic activity. Jesus barely stops (except to pray) as he is the consummate miracle worker, exorcist and healer. In Mark's gospel, miracles win him little faith and all fail to understand his mission. It is left to the Roman Centurion (15:39) to profess what even the disciples are unable to confess. Jesus is a person of action with a messianic secret that he attempts to keep from his followers. He dies alone, feeling forsaken, but trying to do his father's will.

Luke is the gospel for humanity. He has a special concern for women and the outcasts as exemplified by the Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55) and his use of alternating stories between men and women (10:25-42). The Jesus of Luke manifests the gracious love of God in the parables of the Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, and Lost coin. Jesus is seen as the innocent Savior of the world. He is concerned with a more literal approach to the needs of life (blessed are those who hunger; blessed are the poor). His emphasis on the poor is also reflected in 1:52-53; 4:16-19; 7:22; 16:19-31; 18:9-19. Jesus dies, forgiving his enemies and knows his father awaits his spirit.

John offers the gospel of eternity. In his gospel, Jesus is the Messiah from the beginning of creation. The purpose of John's gospel is to encourage faith in those who follow the first believers. John writes, "these (words) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that in believing, you may have life in his

name” (Jn.20:31). His gospel follows its own chronology as evidenced by his placement of temple disruption in 2:13-17 and three visits to Jerusalem (2:13; 7:10; 12:12).

Jesus shares his mission statement through John. While that phrase is not used, it is clear that the purpose of Jesus as interpreted by both John and Jesus is evident in three places: John 1:17, which describes what is different about Jesus and his intention for ministry; John 3:16, the specific reason for the ministry of Jesus; and John 10:10, which describes the purpose for his ministry.

John has no ethical exhortations as do the other gospels (Mt. 7:1-5; 23: 13-28; Mk.10: 11-12; Lk. 6:31, 35-37) and no apocalyptic warnings or exorcisms. There are no miracles in his gospel; only *signs* used to manifest his power (2:11; 4:54; 6:1-14). John stresses the glory of Jesus and not his self-emptying. In contrast to the synoptic gospels, John’s Jesus is in full control in his passion and death. Jesus uses the phrase I AM as a pattern of self-identification (6:35,41,51; 8:12; 10:7,11; 11:25; 15:15). He dies in the confidence that he will return to the father.

Characteristics of spiritual formation are scattered throughout the gospels. Steele consolidates the material into eight general themes. He lists the *Great Commandment* first (Mk. 12:30-31). He contends that this commandment forms the basis for all other following as it incorporates both the horizontal (relational) and vertical (God-related) dimensions of discipleship.

Secondly, Steele views the teachings on the *Kingdom of God* as critical formation material. Our response to the teaching on the kingdom shapes how we live. Christ never defines the kingdom; he tells us what it is like. The challenge of faithfulness is for us to complete the picture by *living into* (realized eschatology) Christ’s picture of the kingdom.

Self-Denial is a third theme placed in the gospels (Mk. 8:34-35). Jesus affirms *self-denial* for the sake of the kingdom and promises a reward for those who deny themselves. This form of “life-emptying” strengthens the resolve of the Christian to follow Jesus. At the same time, this theme is fraught with the danger of “worm theology” and a misplaced works righteousness that attempts to demonstrate before God how spiritual we are by letting everyone else know how much we are suffering for God. Little is accomplished toward mature spirituality through flaunting our faith walk in front of others (Mt. 6:1-18; Lk. 11:42-44). This theme is linked to suffering which is an important aspect of mature formation. Steele indicates, “A part of self-denial is the ability to deal honestly and openly with suffering, to look it square in the face, and go on our way in faith.”⁷⁶

Service is a consistent theme. Steele states that, “service, generosity and hospitality characterize Christian formation. We serve others not to create networks or so that someone owes us something, but simply because someone is in need”.⁷⁷ Service themes are recorded in Mk. 10:45 and Mt. 5:42. The essence of the service theme is that service comes before self. It involves detaching from personal ego needs so that the needs of others may be seen and embraced.

A fifth theme reflects *Childlikeness* as written in Lk. 18:15-17 and Mt. 18:1-5. The focus is not on ignorance or innocence. It is on wonder, openness, faithfulness and exuberant adventure, things that adults often outgrow in the search for meaningful spirituality.

Simplicity themes challenge our view of materialism. Steele defines simplicity:

⁷⁶Steele., 31

⁷⁷Ibid.

It is a willingness to disentangle ourselves from too many commitments, relieve ourselves of the debts and obligations that keep us anxious and burdened. It implies that we release the control we think we have over money, time and career. It is not total disengagement from life, but it does imply an honest estimation of what each of us can do without losing our primary focus on God.⁷⁸

A seventh spiritual formation theme focuses on *Peacemaking*. Peacemaking is a habit of the heart, a lifestyle choice. Jesus' non-violent response to his arrest and betrayal is an example that has not always been followed in the bloody history of Christian conflict. It is best known in our past through the efforts of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Peacemaking themes are found in Mt. 5:9, 38-45 and implied in Lk. 6:35-37 and 10: 25-37.

The role of the *Holy Spirit* is the final theme. Steele views the Spirit as the activator in the process of formation. There is too much of a tendency for us to think that we are the ones who activate faith and spiritual depth in our lives. Luther is quite clear about the role of the Spirit when he writes in his Small Catechism,

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.⁷⁹

Steele indicates the Spirit plays three roles in our formation. First, the Spirit is *in us to transform us*. Secondly, the Spirit *assists us in fulfilling the great commandments*. Finally, the Spirit *helps us pay attention to our Christian lives*.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Ibid., 33.

⁷⁹Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 345.

⁸⁰Steele., 34.

Dallas Willard uses the image of hearing as a metaphor for spiritual formation. He presents God's communication as occurring through a variety of means including "dreams, visions and voices; through the Bible and extraordinary events."⁸¹ Other means utilized by God include scripture, prayer and the "still, small voice" of I Kings 19:11-12. Willard notes that hearing is but one part of an interactive relationship with God. Being attentive to the voice of God will focus our attention on God's activity in the world. Willard provides a seven-step formula for "living with God's voice".⁸² This conversational approach to spiritual formation presents God as a willing participant in the formative process.

Werner Kummel uses *the encounter with the love of God* as a formative principle. He notes, "the experience of God's love in the encounter with Jesus is quite clearly the precondition and the enabling of obedience to the demand of God proclaimed by Jesus".⁸³ This encounter enables the Christian to understand the principle of love as a guiding force in the exterior practice of the Christian faith. Kummel adds, "God has caused his salvation promised for the end of the world to begin in Jesus Christ, and that in this Christ event God has encountered us and intends to encounter us as the Father who seeks to rescue us from imprisonment in the world and to make us free for active love".⁸⁴ This in Kummel's view, is the "heart of the New Testament".⁸⁵

⁸¹Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 87.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 212-215.

⁸³Werner Kummel, *The Theology of the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1973,) 55.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 332.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

Formation occurs as Christians respond to the Jesus of the gospels. Christ challenges our thinking and life activity. Formation work is hard work, for we are stretched in ways that are often uncomfortable. We are invited by Christ's words to follow a path that may be foreign to us. Formation themes call us to follow the model, listen to the mentor and seek to guide our lives with his values.

The focus in epistle formation is on the *therefore* of life (God through Christ has saved me; therefore my life can change in response to that saving act in these directions...). Epistle formation is concerned with growth and its development through belief, behavior and attitude. Steele incorporates these categories as *Orthodoxy*, *Orthopraxis* and *Orthopathy*.⁸⁶

Orthodoxy is a central concern for Paul. The early church struggled through a series of attempts by the Judiazers to add to the gospel message Paul taught. He knew that if the fight for orthodoxy was lost, the message of Christ was meaningless (Gal. 1: 6-9; 2: 2-9; 5:1-10; see also Col. 2:16-23). Orthodoxy is also a significant theme in Romans as Paul systematically lays out the gospel to a church he has not visited.

Orthopraxis and Orthopathy are responses of behavior and attitude that come from belief. They are the application of orthodox life reflected in ethics, emotion and activity. Examples of Paul's concern for these aspects of the *therefore* of Christian life are found in I Cor. 5: 1-13; 6:1-8, 18-20; 7:20; 8: 4, 7-13; II Cor. 6:14-18; 9:7; 13:5; Phil. 2:1-11, Eph. 4:1-3; 5:1-10; Col. 3:12-17 and Philemon. Paul encourages his readers to imitate his

⁸⁶Steele., 53.

life as an example of one who lives a devoted life to Christ (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; I Thess. 1:6; II Thess.3: 9).

The movement from Orthodoxy to praxis and pathy does not happen without the work of the Holy Spirit. Examples of the Spirit's work include Rom. 8:9-16; 26-27; Gal. 5: 22-23; Phil. 1:6; I Cor.2: 13; chapters 12-13; see also Eph. 4:11-12). In these examples the Spirit is a cooperating factor in the formation process, offering the gifts to make it possible and the power to sustain both interior and exterior development.

The non-Pauline epistles continue this theme. Hebrews, a writing on the superiority of Christ,⁸⁷ encourages its readers to follow Christ as he is described as God's "High Priest of our confession"(Heb. 3:1). The eleventh chapter with its description of pilgrims and their faithfulness culminates with an exhortation (*therefore*) to run the race of life and faith that is set before us (12:1-2).

James is the premier Orthopraxis epistle. James 1:22-26 expresses this through concern for the activity of the faith, being *doers* of the word. He describes an example of pure religion as the activity of visiting widows and orphans (1:27). Works and gracious activity are essential to truly practicing the tenets of faith (2:14-26).

The epistles of Peter stress suffering as a potential outcome of orthodoxy. These epistles reflect images of persecution and suffering as a potential outcome of faith (I Pet. 1:6; 5:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:7-9). The author's point is that suffering is intertwined with spiritual formation whether it is on a physical or emotional level. God's sign of hope in the midst of our suffering is the Cross.

⁸⁷Brown, *New Testament*, 683-689.

New Testament formation looks to Jesus as its model. His commitment to God's orthodoxy over against the orthodoxy of his adversaries is seen in the cleansing of the temple (Mk. 11:15-17), his healing activity on the Sabbath (Mk.1: 21-27; Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-4; Jn. 5:1-16), his challenge to the hypocrisy of his adversaries (Mt. 23:13-32), and his elevation of the outsider (Mt. 19:13-15; 18:1-6; Mk. 12: 41-44; Lk. 6:30-31; 7:1-10, 37-50; 10:25-37; 16: 19-31; 19:1-10; Jn. 4:5-43).

His commitment to Orthopraxis is reflected in his healings and exorcisms (Mt. 4:23-24; 8:16; 9:35; Mk.1:40-44; 5:1-19; Lk. 4:38-40), his ethical teachings (Mt. 7:1-5,12;18:15-17; 19: 16-24; 22:16-21; Jn. 15:12,17), and his parables that challenge the religious commitment of his listeners (Mt. 13:3-9; 18:21-35;25:31-46; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk.14:7-11,16-24; 15:11-32).

Orthopathy is expressed in the emotional response of Jesus to those who come to him for help (Mt.11:28-30; 20:30-34) and as a call to repentance (Mt. 10:34-37; 14:24-31; Jn. 21:15-17). It is also seen in the washing of the disciple's feet (Jn. 13:1-15) and the response of Jesus during the crucifixion (Lk. 23:34, 39-43; Jn 19:26-27).

Spiritual formation in the epistle literature follows from the model of Jesus. Each writer encourages the early followers to live a *therefore* life, being attentive to role that belief, behavior and attitude play in daily life. Though the epistle audiences vary widely in culture and context, the individual writers are quite clear that formation does not occur without a central focus. In all instances, the central focus is Jesus.

Spiritual formation in the scriptures is written from both a corporate and individual viewpoint. God's people travel as a group, reflect alone or join each other in small house communities. Pilgrims wander through the desert, gather by the water's edge, run from

an empty tomb and pray from a jail. They speak of a God in cloud and fire, on a mountain and on a Cross. Pilgrims sing, pray, teach, and work as methods of responding to the call of God. It is a wild journey full of both hardship and joy. It took the people to a holy land, full of promise. Through their journey they developed ways of speaking to God and representing God's vision before others. Their journey brought them to face God in a new way: not on a mountain, but in a manger. This new way taught them to live with a different religious intimacy that embraced other cultures. From those pilgrims and the scriptures they composed, we have learned how the people of God understood *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around them...*

CHAPTER 4

The life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around me that points to personal and communal transformation...

Martin Luther changed the world with his personality and his pen. His writings encompass commentaries, sermons, treaties and letters. Numerous authors have written his biography, each with their own view as to the importance of Luther's life and legacy. Films have been made depicting Luther's defiant role as the focused leader of the Reformation movement, using his considerable intellect as a tool against the abuses of the church of his time.

This chapter highlights three elements of Luther's spirituality noting that his grace-focused spirituality is expressed most clearly after Luther's personal faith struggle with God and his re-discovery of the Gospel. His spiritual practices prior to that time did not offer comfort, nor did they encourage a reliance on a loving God.⁸⁸

The first element to be recognized is Luther's focus on the Word of God as the anchor for his spiritual teaching. Next, his use of the catechism as a devotional guide is

⁸⁸Walter von Loewenich, *Martin Luther: The Man and His Work* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986) chronicles Luther's *Anfechtung* in the monastery. Luther did not find comfort in the sacraments, nor in the confessional. Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) offers a similar viewpoint in describing Luther's 'years of silence'.

explored through Luther's letter on prayer to his barber. An analysis of Luther's hymnody with its teaching and spiritual emphases concludes the discussion.

Luther's *personal transformation* resulted in a *communal transformation* encompassing much of Europe in the century after his death. The effects of this transformation as noted in the beginnings of Lutheran Pietism conclude the chapter.

It is not easy to encapsulate Luther's teaching and influence. Rowan Williams notes,

Luther was not in any sense a philosopher and, whatever the prevailing influences were in the philosophical world of his day, his response to them was not that of a professional. He was not a humanist, a cultivator of classical learning determined to reinstate Plato, as some reforming Catholics of his generation were. He was far more identified with those who interests lay in the rediscovery of Scripture and primitive tradition...⁸⁹

While much is made of Luther's intellectual prowess, Luther's spirituality has not received the same attention. This aspect of his theology has been overlooked. Frank Senn notes,

Luther's spiritual experience cannot be separated from his exegetical discoveries and theological reflections. It is amazing how many older interpretations of Luther failed to recognize the significance of the fact that his basic convictions were not arrived at as a result of pure academic research but as a consequence of his struggles with God. It was his personal experience of a gracious God who forgives sinners for the sake of Jesus Christ which sent his reform movement on its way.⁹⁰

Endel Kallas echoes this point: "No serious appraisal of a Lutheran spirituality can be made, of course, without regard to that profound spiritual crisis Luther

⁸⁹Rowan Williams, *Christian Spirituality: A Theological History from the New Testament to Luther and St. John of the Cross* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 142.

⁹⁰Frank C. Senn, "Lutheran Spirituality," in *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*, ed. Frank C. Senn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 10.

experienced in the monastery.”⁹¹ Luther’s struggles with God, whether in the monastery or within his own mind, shaped his writings and theology.

Various attempts have been made to gain insight into Luther’s spirituality. Egil Grislis categorizes previous interpretive themes by Bouyer (piety and feeling), Reinke (devotional consciousness and language), Yule (prayer), Wicks (“the heart clinging to the Word”) and Lienhard (justification).⁹²

Throughout Christian history, Senn indicates the elements of asceticism and mysticism have been consistently practiced in models of spirituality: “asceticism represents an active or expressive kind of spirituality while mysticism represents a more passive or contemplative kind.”⁹³ Asceticism and mysticism are not mutually exclusive and are essential balances to each other. Senn cites St. Paul and the early martyrs as examples where both elements are in evidence.⁹⁴

Senn offers ascetic examples from Luther’s life to bolster his position. He notes Luther’s background included a stint at a school in Magdeburg known for its *devotio moderna*, a teaching “which advocated an eminently interior piety based on self-analysis achieved through meditation and the confessional.”⁹⁵ Later he received a Master in Arts from the university of Erfurt, a university steeped in nominalism and the *Via Moderna*.

Senn concludes that to follow the ascetic path to a monastery would have been consistent with Luther’s educational experiences.

⁹¹Endel Kallas, “The Spirituality of Luther: A Reappraisal of His Contribution”, *Spirituality Today* Vol. 34, No. 4 (Winter 1982): 293.

⁹²Egil Grislis, “The Spirituality of Martin Luther”, *Word and World* (XIV) Fall 1994: 453-454.

⁹³Senn, 11.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 13.

Luther's monastic experience was a struggle. His monastery practiced a strict rule and Luther strove to be a "monk's monk." Luther writes:

It's true. I was a good monk, and kept my order so strictly that I could say that if ever a monk could get to heaven through monastic discipline, I should have entered in. All my companions in the monastery who knew me would bear me out in this. For if it had gone on much longer, I would have martyred myself to death, what with vigils, prayers, readings, and other good works.⁹⁶

Another example of Luther's interest in ascetic activities includes his comment from *The Freedom of a Christian*:

Although, as I have said, a man is abundantly and sufficiently justified by faith inwardly, in his spirit, and so has all that he needs, except insofar as this faith and these riches must grow from day to day even to the future life; yet he remains in this mortal life on earth. In this life he must control his own body and have dealings with men. Here the works begin; here a man cannot enjoy leisure; here he must indeed take care to discipline his body by fastings, watchings, labors, and other reasonable discipline and to subject it to the Spirit so that it will obey and conform to the inner man and faith and not revolt against faith and hinder the inner man, as it is the nature of the body to do if it is not held in check.⁹⁷

Luther's ascetical perspective was rooted in his personal story. His view of God as an angry taskmaster, his desire to prove himself before his father and his struggle with *Anfechtung* all played a part in his need to be "good enough for God". Luther himself noted, "I was very pious in the monastery, yet I was sad because I thought God was not gracious to me."⁹⁸ Bradley Holt describes *Anfechtung* in Luther's life as "a deep despair, a challenge to his standing before God, falling into an abyss of guilt and the taunts of Satan."⁹⁹ Senn adds, "*Anfechtung* has to do with the experience of being in the presence of

⁹⁶Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke*. Weimar Kritische Gesamtausgabe (38:143) as cited in Senn.

⁹⁷Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," in *Luther's Works*, vol 31, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1957), 358-359.

⁹⁸Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works*, vol 54, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 95.

⁹⁹Bradley Holt, *Thirsty For God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993), 70.

God (*coram Deo*) and experiencing God's wrath against the sinner."¹⁰⁰ So important is this struggle to understanding Luther that Rowan Williams asserts that the Reformation itself "cannot be understood at all without some sense of the agony of Luther's interior battles..."¹⁰¹ Senn notes,

It was only later when he understood it in the light of Scripture that he could deal with it effectively, as the marvelous exposition of Jonah (1526) and the sermons on the story of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) illustrate. "I find in the Scriptures that Christ, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Job, David, Ezekiel and many more have experienced hell in this life." Luther identified with these biblical personalities who murmured against God, thus committing the sin of blasphemy as Luther had done.¹⁰²

Luther received help in his struggle, not only from Scripture, but also from the vicar-general of the Augustinians, Johannes von Staupitz. Through his wisdom in sending Luther off for additional study, Staupitz provided the opportunity for the gospel to take root in Luther's life. That experience occurred in Luther's personal discovery of the Gospel through the phrase *the righteousness of God* in Romans 1:17. Luther describes the moment,

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what god does in us, the power of God, with which he

¹⁰⁰Senn., 16.

¹⁰¹Williams., 143.

¹⁰²Senn., 16.

makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.¹⁰³

Luther's ascetical practices offered little comfort and spiritual relief. His obsessive use of private confession, self deprivation and spiritual self-torture provided a painful path to spiritual dysfunction. The events of monastic life coupled with his personal internal spiritual struggles provided the opportunity for Luther to be attentive to *God's movement within and around him that pointed to personal transformation*. Luther did not appreciate God's graceful *movement within and around*: he could not see the gift of passive righteousness. It was only when he was captured by the gospel that he was able to see the loving movement of God that *pointed to personal transformation*. That transformation was key to the Reformation.

Luther was not only affected by the ascetical dimension of spirituality, he was also impacted by the element of mysticism. As Bengt Hoffman points out, "Luther used expressions like 'the mystical Christ,' 'mystical incarnation,' 'mystical theology,' and 'mystical eyes' when he wanted to depict life in God."¹⁰⁴ Luther had various opinions of those who wrote in the mystical tradition. He had high praise for Romance mysticism portrayed by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of St. Victor and St. Bonaventure. He dismissed the tradition flowing from Pseudo-Dionysius and placed the highest value on the German mysticism of Johann Tauler and the anonymous fourteenth-century tract *Theologia Germanica*. In 1518 he had the entire work published. He thought of it so highly that he wrote, "To boast with my old fool (St. Paul), no book except the Bible and

¹⁰³ Martin Luther, "Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings," in *Luther's Works*, Vol 34, ed. Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1960), 337.

¹⁰⁴ Bengt Hoffman, "Lutheran Spirituality", in *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, eds. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell O.P. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 150.

St. Augustine has come to my attention from which I have learned more about God, Christ, man, and all things.”¹⁰⁵

Tauler’s influence on Luther is documented mainly in the margin notes Luther wrote in Tauler’s published sermons as well as in the preface to the partial edition of the *Theologia Germanica* he had published in December 1516. Jared Wicks lists four themes Luther developed through his reading of Tauler and other German mystics. The first theme, Wick notes, was a “confirmation of the stress he had long placed on God’s contrary work in the life of a Christian man.”¹⁰⁶ Luther, in comments on Psalm 91:7 and 92:4, expounded on the ways God works in the lives of people in contrary fashion. Tauler’s comments underlined and expanded Luther’s thought that God “acts in a manner directly contrary to our plan, our hope and our intention, all in order to carry out a plan and intention of his own, which is incomparably better for us than any other plan we might conceive.”¹⁰⁷

Tauler’s second influential theme related to “the rule of passivity under the work of God’s hand.”¹⁰⁸ Examples of this influence are shown in comments written concerning Rom. 7:18; Gal. 4:9 and a letter to Spalatin in December 1516.

Luther’s stress on “Christ’s presence ‘in’ the Christian” is the third influence of Tauler.¹⁰⁹ Luther discovered a parallel idea of the *old Adam* in us that he found in the

¹⁰⁵Martin Luther, “Preface to the Complete Edition of a German Theology,” in *Luther’s Works*, Vol 31, ed. Harold J. Grimm, (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1957), 75.

¹⁰⁶Jared Wicks, S.J., *Man Yearning for Grace: Luther’s Early Spiritual Teaching* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1968) 145.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 148.

sixteenth chapter of the *Theologia Germanica*. He used this to speak more directly about both Christ and the *old Adam* living in the Christian.

The final influence was “the confirmation and strengthening of the theme of conversion from all complacency, pleasure, and confidence in one’s own works and uprightness.”¹¹⁰ Luther had a concern for ego, self-esteem and self-will in the Christian. Pride was to be avoided at all costs. The danger of placing confidence in one’s own ability to affect God through personal works was a primary theme for Luther.

Wicks notes that while Tauler and the anonymous author of the *Theologia Germanica* were not the seedbed of new ideas for Luther, they did support his thinking and development. These influences were important to Luther, particularly during the difficulties in Wittenberg involving his Lectures on Romans.

SPIRITUALITY ANCHORED IN THE WORD

This chapter explores three significant expressions of Luther’s spirituality. First, his spirituality is acknowledged as being anchored in the Word, which Hoffman describes as “both outward and inward, an external sign and an inner experience.”¹¹¹ Lawrence Denef notes, “It is not we who approach God; God approaches us. But we can prepare ourselves to receive God by locating ourselves at the place he has promised to come to us, that is, in his Word, and by opening ourselves to his presence.”¹¹² Luther adds,

Therefore you must continually keep God’s word in your heart, on your lips, and in your ears. For where the heart stands idle and the Word is not heard, the devil breaks in and does his damage before we realize it. On the other hand, when we

¹¹⁰Ibid., 150.

¹¹¹Hoffman., 152.

¹¹²Lawrence W. Denef, “Praying the Catechism: Spirituality as Luther Envisioned it,” *Lutheran Forum* 19. No. 4. (1985): 18.

seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It always awakens new understanding, new pleasure, and a new spirit of devotion.¹¹³

Luther's appreciation for the centrality of the Word provides the basis for his *theology of the cross* and his insistence that a *theology of glory* is misguided and a misappropriation of scripture. Luther developed this insight in the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518. The twentieth thesis contains the pivotal statement, "He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross."¹¹⁴ This thesis, derived from I Corinthians 1:18-25 shows God as the one who turns the values of the world upside down.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE CATECHISM

Secondly, Luther's spirituality is evidenced in the Catechism. Denef asserts, "the catechism was meant to be more than a primer on religious doctrine. Luther's intention was that of a spiritual guide, not a classroom instructor."¹¹⁵ In a preface to one of the later catechism editions Luther writes,

"Nothing is so effectual against the devil, the world, the flesh and all evil thoughts as to be occupied with God's Word, in conversation and meditation...eagerly then, should we read, speak, think, and practice the catechism, even if we had no other blessing and benefit from it than the fact of thereby driving away the devil and evil thoughts."¹¹⁶

¹¹³Martin Luther, Large Catechism, in *The Book of Concord*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1959) 379.

¹¹⁴Luther., *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, 52.

¹¹⁵Denef., 18.

¹¹⁶Martin Luther, *Luther's Large Catechism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1935), 37-38.

Luther's best example of devotional use of the catechism is recorded in a letter to his barber.¹¹⁷ This essay addressed to Peter Beskendorf in 1535¹¹⁸ describes a pattern of prayer that Luther himself used. Luther designed a four-stranded garland that was his method for praying the commandments and the Creed. The strands represented a particular response to each commandment or article of the Creed: instruction, thanksgiving, confession and prayer.

Luther encourages Peter to begin and end the day in prayer. He writes,

It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you, "Wait a little while. I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that." Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer for that day.¹¹⁹

Luther gives an example of how to pray based on the Lord's Prayer, but he cautions Peter not to use the examples of Luther's words in the letter. Doing so, he says would "make it nothing but idle chatter and prattle, read word for word out of a book as were the rosaries by the laity and the prayers of the priests and monks."¹²⁰ Rather Peter is invited to use his own words that come from his heart.

Luther offers examples of how to pray in this form using the Commandments and the Creed. His example of the fifth commandment, "You shall not kill", is particularly instructive:

Here I learn, first of all that God desires me to love my neighbor, so that I do him no bodily harm, either by word or action, neither injure nor take revenge upon him

¹¹⁷Robin Maas, "A Simple Way to Pray: Luther's Instructions on the Devotional Use of the Catechism," in *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, eds. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell O.P. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 162.

¹¹⁸Denef, 18.

¹¹⁹Martin Luther, "A Simple Way to Pray," in *Luther's Works*, ed. Gustav K. Wiencke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), Vol. 42, pg 193.

¹²⁰Ibid., 198.

in anger, vexation, envy, hatred, or for any evil reason, but realize that I am obliged to assist and counsel him in every bodily need. In this commandment God commands me to protect my neighbor's body and in turn commands my neighbor to protect my own. As Sirach says, "He has committed to each of us his neighbor" (Ecclus. 9:14).

Second I give thanks for such ineffable love, providence, and faithfulness toward me by which he has placed this mighty shield and wall to protect my physical safety. All are obliged to care for me and protect me, and I in turn, must behave likewise toward others. He upholds this command and, where it is not observed, he has established the sword as punishment for those who do not live up to it. Were it not for this excellent commandment and ordinance, the devil would instigate such a massacre among men that no one could live in safety for a single hour- as happens when God becomes angry and inflicts punishment upon a disobedient and ungrateful world.

Third, I confess and lament my own wickedness and that of the world, not only that we are so terribly ungrateful for such fatherly love and solicitude toward us- but what is especially scandalous, that we do not acknowledge this commandment and teaching, are unwilling to learn it, and neglect it as though it did not concern us or we had no part in it. We amble along complacently, feel no remorse that in defiance of this commandment we neglect our neighbor, and, yes, we desert him, persecute, injure, or even kill him in our thoughts. We indulge in anger, rage, and villainy as though we were doing a fine and noble thing. Really, it is high time that we started to deplore, and bewail how much we have acted like rouges and like unseeing, unruly, and unfeeling persons who kick, scratch, tear, and devour one another like furious beasts and pay no attention to this serious and divine command, etc.

Fourth, I pray the dear father to lead us to an understanding of this his sacred commandment, and to help us keep it and live in accordance with it. May he grant us his grace that we and all others may treat each other in kindly, gentle, charitable ways, forgiving one another from the heart, bearing each others faults and shortcomings in a Christian and brotherly manner, and thus living together in true peace and concord, as the commandment teaches and requires us to do.¹²¹

Luther later described this four-strand garland approach of instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and prayer as "a school text, song book, penitential book and prayer book."¹²² Each of the strands offers a different approach to the commandment and highlights something that Peter would either receive or offer to God. The full garland provides as complete a prayer experience as possible for Peter.

¹²¹Ibid., 205-206.

¹²²Ibid., 209.

Luther's letter was well received and four editions were published that year. However, in a terribly ironic moment, Peter forgot the wisdom of the fifth commandment and Luther's counsel.¹²³

SPIRITUALITY IN LUTHER'S HYMNODY

Finally, Luther's spirituality is explored through his hymnody. His liturgical reform includes his revision of the Latin Mass in 1523 entitled *An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg*¹²⁴, the *German Mass and Order of Service*¹²⁵ and various other revisions to baptismal, marriage and ordination orders.¹²⁶ Luther outlines his liturgical concerns in the pamphlet, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, published in 1523.¹²⁷ In this document he discusses three abuses in liturgical practice and offers specific solutions to correct those failings.

Luther held music and hymnody in high regard. He writes:

Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate...what more effective means than music could you find?¹²⁸

Ulrich Leupold lists thirty-five hymns ascribed to Luther, either through text or tune. Of those thirty-five, there are eighteen texts still used in the *Lutheran Book of*

¹²³Ibid., 191. Peter was invited to dinner at the home of his son-in-law, Dietrich on the Saturday before Easter, March 27, 1535. At the dinner, his son-in-law, an army veteran boasted that he survived conflict due to his ability to make himself invulnerable to wounds. Peter, evidently drunk, took up the boast, grabbed a knife, and plunged it into Dietrich, killing him. Peter was sent off to exile in Dessau and died there, having lost everything.

¹²⁴Martin Luther, "An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg", in *Luther's Works*, Vol 53, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 19-40.

¹²⁵Ibid., 51-90.

¹²⁶Senn., 20-21.

¹²⁷Luther., *Luther's Works*, Vol 53, pg 11-14.

Worship (LBW). Luther adapted the texts for two hymns (LBW 308 and 471) from earlier antiphons and supplied the first stanzas for two others (LBW 48 and 317).¹²⁹

Luther did write two other published songs prior to his hymn writing career and produced or assisted in the production of liturgical chants including settings for the *Agnus Dei*, *Te Deum*, *Magnificat*, and *Gloria in excelsis*.¹³⁰

Sixteenth-century German hymnody, as Leupold points out, sounds awkward. More of our popular “old-time” hymns reflect the period of Romanticism and offer a smoother poetry. Examples include *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*, *Silent Night*, *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*, *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. The phrases are more refined and the music is set to rhythms that evoke an emotional response. Leupold notes that, “Luther’s hymns were meant not to create a mood, but to convey a message. They were a confession of faith, not of personal feelings.”¹³¹

Luther’s hymnody contains two separate styles. The first style consists of ‘teaching’ hymns. These hymns instruct the singer by relating specific biblical passages, stories or doctrines. Examples of these ‘teaching’ hymns include *Isaiah in a Vision Did of Old* (LBW 528), that recounts the call story of Isaiah; *From Heaven Above* (LBW 51), that tells the story of the incarnation from the voice of an angel (the last verses convert to the voice of the singer); *To Jordan Came the Christ* (LBW 79), a teaching hymn on the Baptism of Christ with a warning in verse six to those who ignore the message; *We All*

¹²⁸Ibid., 323.

¹²⁹In contrast, *The Service Book and Hymnal* (SBH), the hymnal used by eight Lutheran denominations including the American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church in America from 1958-1978 lists only seven, all of which were carried into the LBW.

¹³⁰Marilyn Kay Stulken, *Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 22.

¹³¹Luther., *Luther's Works*, Vol 53, 197.

Believe in One True God (LBW 374), a paraphrase of the Nicene Creed; and *Dear Christians, One and All* (LBW299), written from the perspective of Christ (v.5-8) after a description of the hopeless state of the singer (v. 1-4).

Luther's second style of hymnody is less explicit in its intention to teach. These hymns speak to the activity of the spiritual life. Examples of this genre include *To God the Holy Spirit Let us Pray* (LBW 317), which speaks to Christian hope; *Grant Peace We Pray, In Mercy, Lord* (LBW 471), an adaptation of an antiphon praying for peace; and *God the Father, Be Our Stay* (LBW 308), an adaptation of a litany that invokes "the aid of angels, prophets, patriarchs, apostles, and so on."¹³² In his adaptation Luther looks only to the Trinity for aid and support, using the same prayer petition for each member of the Trinity.

Luther's spirituality in song is shown to be both anchored in the Word and strongly catechetical in nature (LBW 229, 374, 350, 317). Examples of the biblical grounding of Luther's hymns include *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* (LBW 228,229), based on Psalm 46; *Out of the Depths I Cry to You* (LBW 295), a versification of Psalm 130; and *Isaiah in a Vision Did of Old* (LBW 528). This hymn describes Isaiah's call to ministry:

Isaiah in a vision did of old
The Lord of Hosts enthroned on high behold:
His splendid train was wide out spread
until its streaming glory did the temple fill.
Above his throne the shining seraphim
with six fold wings did reverence unto him:
With two each seraph hid his glorious face,
And two about his feet did interlace,
And with the other two he soared on high;

¹³²Stulken., 367.

And one unto another thus did cry:¹³³

Catechetical hymns include *To God the Holy Spirit Let us Pray* (LBW 317), a hymn to the Spirit; and *Even as We Live Each Day* (LBW 350), Luther's alteration of an earlier hymn text. In this text, Luther alters the original cry for help and turns it to a more positive statement of faith:

Even as we live each day, Death our life embraces.
Who is there to help, Rich forgiving graces?
You only, Lord, you only!¹³⁴

A final example of a catechetical hymn is *We All Believe in One True God* (LBW 374), Luther's expansion of a fourteenth century hymn that was placed in Luther's German Mass of 1526 and later accepted within the Lutheran liturgy;¹³⁵

Luther's role in liturgical reform was a critical aspect of the Reformation. Congregation singing was designed with the proclamation of God's Word in mind. His hymns offered new ways to teach the basics of the faith and counter the theological ignorance of the laity. Marilyn Stulken comments,

While it is commonplace to note that Luther's restoration of congregational song to a place of prominence was a significant contribution of the reformation to the entire church, what is less commonly observed is that Luther viewed the congregational hymn or chorale as an integral and vital part of the *liturgy* and not merely as a general Christian song loosely attached to worship. It was *liturgical hymnody*- in which doxa and dogma were united in doxological proclamation...¹³⁶

Luther's liturgical revisions are more than a result of his *experience of being alive to God's movement within and around him that points to personal transformation*. These revisions played a major role in the *communal transformation* of the Reformation. As the

¹³³*The Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978), 528.

¹³⁴Stulken., 350.

¹³⁵Ibid., 374.

¹³⁶Ibid., 19.

Word was put into common language and liturgy was accessible to all, it was only a matter of time before one man's *personal transformation* became a movement's *communal transformation*.

COMMUNAL TRANSFORMATION

In the century following Luther's death, *communal transformation* continued. The early Lutheran reformers battled with internal conflicts between the Philippist party led by Philipp Melanchthon and the Gnesio-Lutherans, "A rival group of religious leaders who," according to Lund, "feared that compromise in times of persecution on matters of ceremony as well as doctrine would undermine the reform of Christianity which Luther had inaugurated."¹³⁷ The disputes over doctrine and practice resulted in a series of confessional material compiled and published as *The Book of Concord*. This document, published in 1580 on the fiftieth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, was signed by a majority of the ruling nobles, cities and theologians. Its intention was to provide a normative confessional document for adherents of the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists. It condemned the extreme positions of both parties, and as Lund notes, "the Lutheran movement affirmed that the Christian life is a middle course between the two styles of life which Luther criticized in his treatise *The Freedom of a Christian*."¹³⁸

The Age of Orthodoxy with its concern for right teaching and pure doctrine set the stage for polemical preaching and teaching. Lund, in another article, notes, "Theologians

¹³⁷Eric Lund, "Protestant Spirituality: Orthodox and Piety in Modernity", in *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, ed. Louis Dupre and Don E. Saliers (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 214.

¹³⁸Eric Lund, "The Problem of Religious Complacency in Seventeenth Century Lutheran Spirituality", in *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays*, ed. Bradley Hanson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 143.

produced elaborate systematic treatises demonstrating continuity between the Formula of Concord, the theology of Luther, and the Scriptures.”¹³⁹ Eric Gritsch writes, “Lutheran universities were instructed to teach *pure doctrine* and to develop polemics against both Catholics and Calvinists.”¹⁴⁰ He adds,

These institutions bred dogmatic theologians concerned with orthodox interpretations of confessional Lutheranism who produced heavy tomes dealing with various aspects of theology. Called *loci*, the various theological points were dealt with in a system of Aristotelian divisions of paragraphs and categories. Martin Chemnitz, for instance, wrote a voluminous *Examination of the Council of Trent* in which he refuted the Council point by point, accusing it of being unscriptural and totalitarian.¹⁴¹

Other examples include Johann Gerhard’s nine-volume treatise considered to be the centerpiece of Lutheran orthodoxy and Abraham Calov’s literalist defense of Scripture, which he used to condemn non-Lutheran teachings.¹⁴² Holt adds that sermons in the orthodox period followed a similar style to that of the academics. They “came to be highly formal, academic denunciations of the errors of Catholics, Reformed, Anabaptists, and unorthodox Lutherans.”¹⁴³ Gritsch recounts an example of an orthodox sermon gone awry,

One congregation... had to listen to a sermon on Matthew 10:30 (“And even the hairs of your head are all counted”) which the preacher subdivided into sections: the origins, style, and form of hair; its correct care; reminiscences, warnings, and comfort derived from hair; how to care for hair in good Christian fashion; and how to make use of it.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹Lund, *Spirituality*, 215.

¹⁴⁰Eric Gritsch, *Fortress Introduction to Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 28.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³Holt., 72.

¹⁴⁴Gritsch., 31.

As the Lutheran orthodox period continued, two events set the stage for a dramatic shift in the *communal* response to Luther's *personal transformation*: the writings of Johann Arndt and the Thirty Years' War.

Johann Arndt (1555-1621), a pastor and later general superintendent of the church of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, penned the most important devotional book of the Post-Reformation period. His concern for spiritual renewal led him first to address the issue of religious complacency in a book of sermons entitled *A Book of the Ten Egyptian Plagues*, which provided an allegorical comparison between the evil of the Egyptians and the sinfulness of his readers.¹⁴⁵ In 1605 his four books of *True Christianity* according to Lund attempted to "convey the importance of rebirth and renewal in a psychologically effective manner."¹⁴⁶ Senn notes, "It was in Arndt's writings especially that the Augustinian mystical tradition represented by St. Bernard and Johann Tauler first came back into Lutheranism in full force."¹⁴⁷

Arndt was not as concerned with doctrinal purity as were his orthodox contemporaries. He spoke to the heart of faith stressing the importance of the Christian living *in Christ*. Christianity was more than belief in specific doctrines: it involves personal transformation. In the preface to *True Christianity* he wrote, "True Christianity consists in the exhibition of a true living faith, active in genuine godliness and the fruits of righteousness."¹⁴⁸ Salvation was described as rebirth, a term that became important in the Pietism movement. Arndt described this rebirth:

¹⁴⁵Lund, *Complacency*, 146.

¹⁴⁶Lund, *Spirituality*, 223.

¹⁴⁷Senn., 43-44.

¹⁴⁸Johann Arndt, *True Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 21.

The new birth is a work of God the Holy Spirit, by which a man is made a child of grace and blessedness from a child wrath and damnation. And from a sinner a righteous man through faith, word and sacrament by which our heart, thoughts, mind, understanding, will, and affection are made holy, renewed, and enlightened as a new creature in and according to Jesus Christ. The new birth contains two chief aspects in itself: justification and sanctification or renewal.¹⁴⁹

His section entitled “Some beautiful Rules for a Christian Life”, addresses the interior faith walk with a focus on distancing oneself from the things of the world. Arndt writes, “Shun the sorrow of this world, for it brings about death that arises out of covetousness, envy, out of sorrow for food, and out of unbelief and patience.”¹⁵⁰

In the four books, he first painted a picture of humanity before and after the Fall. In doing this he hoped to encourage sorrow for sin from his readers. Following that, he offered his readers the consolation of the gospel. Eric Lund notes, “He portrayed the saving work of Christ in such a way that his readers would anticipate an empirically observable and graciously experienced change in their lives under the influence of grace.”¹⁵¹ In the succeeding books, Christ was presented as a model to imitate and Arndt offered his readers a promise of union with Christ. In explaining the purpose of his writings to the Duke of Brunswick in 1621, Arndt said that his hope was to direct theological students to a doctrine of the spiritual life and away from the strict polemics of the orthodox.¹⁵² Louis Bouyer adds, “Thus they would be able to foster a living faith in the faithful. A faith--as he put it--that would form the inner man in us by union with Christ, and produce its fruit in a transformed life.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 37.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 179.

¹⁵¹Lund., *Complacency*, 148.

¹⁵²Louis Bouyer, *Orthodox Spirituality and Protestant and Anglican Spirituality* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1969), 100.

¹⁵³Ibid.

Arndt was not without his critics. He was accused of being a heretic and his use of Catholic sources such as Angela de Foligno and Thomas a Kempis incited his adversaries. They charged him with reviving the heresies of synergism, perfectionism and the enthusiasm of Valentin Weigel.¹⁵⁴ His friendship with Johann Gerhard (1582-1637), a prominent defender of Lutheran orthodoxy and professor of theology at Jena, helped to save him. Gerhard published nine volumes of his teachings between 1610 and 1621. Louis Boyer notes, "They make up a veritable theological *summa* of Lutheranism. But all their doctrinal exposition is directed to the life of grace within us and constitutes, as it were, the theological justification for Johann Arndt's spiritual work."¹⁵⁵ Gerhard later used some of the themes in *True Christianity* in the publication of his own devotional books, *Sacred Meditations* and *The School of Piety*.

Arndt's writings paved the way for others to write about spiritual growth and the interior development of the Christian life. Joachim Lutkemann, Heinrich Muller and Christian Scriver followed Arndt's lead and became the most influential devotional writers of the mid-seventeenth century.¹⁵⁶ These writers and others greatly affected the *communal transformation* of Lutheranism as it moved from the orthodox period to the period of Pietism in the late seventeenth century.

The other major event affecting the *communal transformation* of Lutheranism was the Thirty Years' War that ravaged Europe from 1618-1648. This war radically changed the political and religious map of Europe. By the time of the signing of the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, Switzerland and Holland were independent countries, territories were

¹⁵⁴Lund., *Spirituality*, 223. cf. Lund., *Complacency*, 150

¹⁵⁵Boyer., 101.

¹⁵⁶F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 219-225.

fragmented, and religious affiliation (Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed) was determined by the local prince. If a person was not of an approved affiliation, the choices could be summed up in the phrase, *convert, move or die*.

No genuine resolution ended the war: the combatants finally wearied of carrying on a battle that brought only personal and economic misery to an entire continent. The war left Europe decimated; over one-third of the population was destroyed and the people were exhausted. Weborg summarizes the political situation, “What it all added up to was a depopulation of the land, dehumanization of people due to the sheer need to survive, and a dissolution of morals and manners.”¹⁵⁷

The effect on the religious life of the people was also damaging. Gritsch notes,

The post-war years were filled with attempts to restore order and create greater tolerance. In Lutheran territories, many people, especially lay people, vented their frustrations against the oppressive orthodoxy imposed on them by their territorial princes and church leaders. Lay people complained that Lutheranism had become a ‘religion of the head’ rather than a ‘religion of the heart.’ The latter appealed to them as a more attractive form of Christian life-style.¹⁵⁸

The social and religious setting of the seventeenth-century set the stage for a dramatic change in the religious landscape. The writings of Arndt take hold in the life of a pastor, born in the midst of the Thirty Years’ War, whose revival movement terminates the age of orthodoxy. If Johann Arndt is the father of Pietism, Philipp Jacob Spener is the one who develops Arndt’s ideas and creates a reform movement.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷John Weborg, “Pietism: The Fire of God Which Flames in the Heart of Germany”, in *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*, ed. Frank C. Senn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 185.

¹⁵⁸Gritsch, *Lutheranism*, 31.

¹⁵⁹Stoeffler asserts Arndt’s place twice in *Evangelical Pietism*, 202, 211. Heiko Oberman in his preface to Peter Erb’s translation of *True Christianity*, xi, makes a similar claim. Stoeffler refutes the argument raised by Albrecht Ritschl that conventicles were the mark of Pietism and because Arndt did not hold these meetings, he could not be considered a Pietist. He adds, “That Lutheran Pietism in the seventeenth century took its rise with Arndt and ended with Spener is quite obvious to anyone acquainted with this development.” 203.

Philipp Spener was born in the midst of the Thirty Year's Wars on January 23, 1635 in Ropoltzweiler, Upper Alsace. As a pastor, Arndt's *True Christianity* and other devotional writings including Bayly's *Practice of Piety* and Baxter's *Self-Denial* influenced his theology. He was also influenced through relationship with Jean de Labadie, a former Jesuit who began to gather Christians together in small groups. Weborg speculated that this relationship influenced the development of the conventicles used by Spener and others.¹⁶⁰

Spener wrote a forward, entitled *Pia Desideria* (Pious Desires), to an edition of sermons by Arndt. In 1675, the preface was published separately with the subtitle, *Heartfelt Desire for a God-Pleasing Reform of the True Evangelical Church, Together with Several Simple Christian Proposals Looking Towards this End*. Dale Brown states, "The publication of this preface in 1675 is regarded as the precipitating event in the birth of German Pietism."¹⁶¹ Nicknamed the "Pietist Manifesto", it caused an immediate sensation as Spener reiterated Arndt's concern for the religious life among the people of Germany. Lund notes, "Spener lamented the lack of true Christian piety in each social class and expressed dissatisfaction with the disputational preoccupations of orthodox Lutheran theologians."¹⁶² Holt adds, "What Spener did that went beyond Arndt was to publish a program of church reform and to organize groups to accomplish it."¹⁶³

Pia Desideria contained three parts. The first section detailed Spener's assessment of the moral defects among the civil authorities, the clergy and the laity. In commenting

¹⁶⁰Weborg., 197.

¹⁶¹Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 12.

¹⁶²Lund., *Spirituality*, 231.

¹⁶³Holt., 86.

on the civil authorities, he notes, "From their manner of life one must conclude with sighs that few of them know what Christianity is, to say nothing of their being Christians and practicing the Christian life."¹⁶⁴ The clergy fair no better as they are lambasted for caring more for themselves than for their flocks and for allowing themselves to be drawn into useless controversies. The defects of the common people include the nominal practice of the faith, drunkenness and lawsuits.¹⁶⁵

The second section described possibilities for healthier church life and the third section proposed six specific reforms that would enhance the life of the church and return it the vitality Luther envisioned for the church. The six proposals became a short summary of Pietism.

1. Thought should be given to a more extensive use of the Word of God among us.
2. The establishment and the diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood.
3. The people must have it impressed upon them and must accustom themselves to believing that it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice. If we can therefore awaken a fervent love among our Christians, first toward one another and then toward all men... and put this into practice, practically all that we desire will be accomplished.
4. We must beware how we conduct ourselves in religious controversies.
5. Ministers... must be trained in our schools and universities. It would be especially helpful if the professors would pay attention to the life as well as the studies of the students entrusted to them...
6. Sermons be so prepared by all that their purpose (faith and its fruits) may be achieved in the hearers to the greatest possible degree.¹⁶⁶

Spener's proposals spoke to the heart of faith and not so much to the "head" of

¹⁶⁴Philip Spener, *Pia Desideria* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 43.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 43-62. Spener's sharp tongue is evident when he turns his attention to his critique of the laity: "Since conditions are such in the first two estates, which ought to govern the masses and lead them to godliness, it is easy to guess how things are in the third estate." 57.

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 87-122.

religious activity. Holt adds, "Most of these (proposals) would not sound radical today. He called for midweek bible studies, lay activism in the church, sermons that built up the hearer instead of arguing with other preachers or showing off classical learning, and seminaries that taught pastoral care. In his day these were seen as radical, and he faced considerable ostracism, leading even to forced departure from his parish in Frankfurt."¹⁶⁷

Spener put flesh on his proposals through the institution of the *Collegia pietatis* (pious assemblies). Bouyer points out:

It was not until 1669, in a sermon preached on the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, that he embarked on positive action for the foundation of the Pietist movement. He had put it to his more fervent parishoners that instead of their all-too-frequent Sunday occupations of drinking and card-or dice-parties, they should hold edifying meetings with pious readings."¹⁶⁸

These conventicles, which first met in his house on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1670-1682, soon became popular all over Europe. Their purpose was to strengthen the effect of regular worship. Stoeffler adds, "They were not meant to be a means to separate 'true' Christians from others and of imbuing the former with a pharisaical self-image. They were meant to constitute one of the major facets of the new reformation."¹⁶⁹ Sermon discussion, prayer, reflection on devotional material and the study of scripture were a major part of the meetings. In 1682, the city council demanded that they be moved back to the church. Spener lamented the loss of the effectiveness of the house meeting when he wrote, "Some of the middle class who had often spoken something for their own and

¹⁶⁷Holt., 86-87.

¹⁶⁸Bouyer., 170. Stoeffler, *Evangelical Pietism*, 237, has a different opinion. "It is not surprising, therefore, that Spener followed the request of some of his friends and instituted them (*collegia pietatis*) at Frankfurt."

¹⁶⁹Stoeffler., 237.

others' edification in the home, ceased to speak in such a public place and thus a certain part of the previous fruitfulness was lost."¹⁷⁰

Spener left Frankfurt for Dresden in 1686 and ultimately ended up in Berlin. While in Dresden he met August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) who was to become his successor. It is through Francke's efforts that Pietism developed its missionary and social ministry work. Francke turned the newly founded University of Halle into a center for Pietist teaching and a center for training missionaries for worldwide service. He implemented Spener's reforms and founded charitable organizations including orphanages, several schools, and a Lutheran mission in India. Influenced by Francke, one of his followers was responsible for developing the first Lutheran Bible Society.¹⁷¹

Pietism's influence on the development of missions, social activity, Bible translation and distribution is indisputable. *Communal transformation* found its heart in the writings and ministry of Arndt, Spener and Francke. The impact, both positive and negative, of the Pietist movement continues to reverberate around the world. New churches are founded, literature is printed and shared, hymns that speak to the heart of faith are composed and sung, and people are invited to seek an intimate relationship with God.

Pietism attempted to reassert and advance the tenets of Luther's vision for the Reformation as a reform movement within the Lutheran church.¹⁷² Where Luther fought

¹⁷⁰Brown, 61.

¹⁷¹Gritsch, 32.

¹⁷²Trygve R. Skarsten, "The Doctrine of Justification in Classical Lutheran Pietism: A Revisionist Perspective", *Trinity Seminary Review*, 3 (Fall 1981): 28. Skarsten asserts, "The many allusions, citations and references to Luther and the Book of Concord, directly and indirectly, leads one to believe that seventeenth century Lutheran Pietism saw itself as a reform movement returning to the dynamic and vibrantly alive doctrine of justification that Luther and the Confessions had espoused and not a movement bent upon completing the Reformation left unfinished by Martin Luther."

the good fight for the heart of the gospel, Pietism sought to capture the heart of the believer through its emphasis on a theology of experience and regeneration. Pietists, Dale Brown notes, insisted “The reformation of doctrine which was inaugurated by Luther must be carried over into the *reformation of life*. Orthodoxy must be accompanied by *orthopraxis*.”¹⁷³

Luther’s *personal transformation* had an impact well beyond Germany and life in the church has not been the same since. His insistence on the primacy of the Word reformed the Church and caused a *communal transformation* that continues to this day. Through his writings we see a man willing to die for his belief that humans are made right with God based on what God has done through Jesus Christ and not through works and adherence to the Law. We see a man who puts his beliefs into an instructional handbook for parents and children breaking down the faith into its basic components. We see a man who puts his beliefs to music and in so doing, creates words that stir the heart of every Christian that sings them. Finally, through his writings and his life we see a man who understands *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God’s movement within and around him that points to personal and communal transformation...*

¹⁷³ Brown., 27.

CHAPTER 5

The life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around me that points to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.

The Christian church, in its search for meaningful spiritual practices, has come full circle. Contemporary Christians look to the early desert fathers for wisdom and spiritual guidance. Small groups practice Lectio Divina as a prayer form. The “Jesus Prayer” is invoked in chant and mantra. Readers explore the twists and turns within St. Teresa of Avila’s *Interior Castle*. Christians have discovered the best spiritually formative material has its roots in the oldest sources.

Contemporary resources for spiritual formation are plentiful. This chapter explores three approaches to spiritual formation that are markedly different from each other. Each approach used to enhance the spiritual formation process has direct application to the personal faith journey. The three approaches to be explored are

worldview analysis, spiritual typing, and spiritual disciplines.¹⁷⁴ These approaches have specific application to the *transformation, reflection, and response* section of the definition of spirituality used in this paper. Worldview analysis provides an overview of different spiritualities, examining what they hold in common. Spiritual typing and the practice of spiritual disciplines offer specific paths to *personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response*. Spiritual typing helps the adherent to reflect on his or her unique personality and preferences and to explore ways those are applied in the practice of faith. Spiritual disciplines give specific direction to the interior and exterior practice of faith.

WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS

Spiritual formation is not unique to Christianity. Worldview analysis studies the foundational tenets of spiritualities and worldviews. Ninian Smart, Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of California, notes that every religious and non-religious worldview typically includes seven dimensions. These dimensions provide direction, common purpose, emotional connection and expression to the specific worldview. They also provide pathways for formation.

¹⁷⁴There are other approaches that are outside the scope of this paper. Two other significant approaches are the spiritual pilgrimage, discussed by M. Robert Mulholland (pp. 79-101) and stages of faith. Les Steele provides an excellent overview of psychology and Christian formation in his book *On the Way* (pp. 57-98). James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), writes the definitive treatment of this subject based on the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson. One other approach by Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (San Francisco: Harper, 1998), xv-xvi, has garnered attention. Foster analyzes six distinct traditions and practices of the Christian faith and applies them in such a way as to help the Christian find one's place in a particular "stream" or tradition.

Smart describes the *ritual* or *practical* dimension as “the aspect of religion which involves such activities as worship, meditation, pilgrimage, sacrifice, sacramental rites and healing activities.”¹⁷⁵ Christian worship varies widely from the simplicity of the outdoor campfire to the Christmas Mass in St. Peter’s Square. Some denominations use particular scripture texts to inform their worship practices. An example would be the “snake-handlers” of North Carolina and Tennessee who use Mark 16:18 as their proof-text. The *doctrinal* or *philosophical* dimension differs in each worldview with some practices having greater focus on formal teaching and abstract thought than others. For example, Roman Catholicism and Quakerism approach the need for doctrine in significantly different ways. The third dimension of *myth* or *narrative* carries the important stories of the worldview. Both sacred and secular stories teach the foundational message of the ancestors. For Christians, those stories are in the Bible and are also recorded in the history of Christian experience. Every denomination has its own set of stories that tell the beginning of its journey.

A fourth dimension involves *experience* and *emotion*. This dimension varies widely in Christian experience and includes visions, conversions and “mountain-top experiences. Worldviews also include *ethical* or *legal* dimensions. Examples in the Judeo-Christian worldview would include the 10 Commandments, the various laws of Moses, the ethical summation of Micah 6:8, the Sermon on the Mount, and Paul’s chapter on love (I Cor. 13).

¹⁷⁵Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Creed: An Anatomy of the World’s Beliefs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 10.

Another component of sacred and secular worldviews incorporates the *organizational* or *social* dimension. Smart asserts, “any tradition will manifest itself in society, either as a separate organization with priests or other religious specialists (gurus, lawyers, pastors, rabbis, imams, shamans and so on), or as coterminous with society.”¹⁷⁶ Christian denominations structure themselves differently based on culture, status and history. Finally, worldviews have a *material* or *artistic* dimension. This final dimension may be expressed in architecture, hymnody, icons, literature or statuary and is a particularly important dimension for postmodern Christian practice with its emphasis on symbol and visual expression.

Worldviews vary in the amount of attention they give to each dimension. Some Christian expressions place a high importance on the *emotional* dimension while others stress the importance of belonging to the *organization*. Still others may stress the *doctrinal* or *philosophical* differences they have with other groups. These specific emphases are often proclaimed as ways to attract new adherents. This is often done through the use of “code words” that subtly elevate the emphasis. Examples would include “spirit-filled worship”, “evangelical”, “Holy Ghost”, and “family-oriented”.

Smart uses the Roman Catholic Church and United States nationalism to demonstrate how these dimensions would operate in those systems.¹⁷⁷ Bradley Hanson takes Smart’s worldview analysis and applies it to Lutheran spirituality. In the *ritual* dimension, Hanson finds that most Lutheran churches “use the ritual of the Western rite for at least some of their worship services, while some also use patterns from older

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 11.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 12-14.

revivalist movements or the charismatic movement or contemporary church growth movement.”¹⁷⁸ The Lutheran church places significant weight on the classic creeds and the confessions as an expression of the *doctrinal* dimension.

The *mythic* dimension is expressed through the scriptures (Hanson’s Big Story) with the gospel as its heart. The Lutheran church has a high regard for the proclamation of the word as a means of God’s communication of grace to the hearers. The stories of the faith are spoken, preached, chanted and sung in the midst of worship. The *emotional* or *experiential* dimension in Lutheranism is not weighted in the same way as in other denominations. Hanson notes, “In Lutheran spirituality, the particular religious experience that has been emphasized is personal knowledge of God’s merciful grace.”¹⁷⁹ Contemplative practice and interest in mystical experiences are not well expressed in Lutheran circles.

The *ethical* or *legal* dimension in Lutheranism is linked more to ethics than to an adherence to legal precepts. Luther’s concept of the two kingdoms and vocation are specific emphases for Lutheran spirituality. The *organizational* dimension expresses itself through the structure of the Lutheran church, with assemblies, bishops, councils and ordination requirements. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in the midst of major structural changes due to its ecumenical relationships with the Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church-USA. These ecumenical agreements have resulted in an increased concern about organization and structure. Finally, Hanson notes that the *material* or *artistic* dimension

¹⁷⁸Hansen, *Graceful Life*, 171-172.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 170.

is moderately expressed in the Lutheran church through the sacraments and artistic expression in church buildings. This dimension is not as well developed as it is in the Orthodox Church with its high view of the sacraments and its use of icons as tools in worship.

Worldview analysis offers a broad view of spiritual formation that allows the believer to assess how each dimension is understood and practiced in his or her life. The person can determine how balanced they perceive their faith life to be based on these seven dimensions.

SPIRITUAL TYPING

A second approach to spiritual formation is found in the use of spiritual typing. Contemporary authors espouse two significant variations to this approach. Urban Holmes analyzed the history of Christian spirituality, summarizing major theological movements and developed a phenomenology of prayer called the “circle of sensibility”.¹⁸⁰ Two scales and four types of spirituality are incorporated in the circle. Holmes theorized that four types of spirituality were evident in Christian history. He devised two scales, a horizontal scale focusing on the apophatic/kataphatic response to God’s revelation, the other a speculative/affective vertical scale that expresses how individuals encounter God.

Holmes states the horizontal scale “raises the question of the degree to which the ascetical method advocates an emptying (apophatic) technique of meditation or an imaginal (kataphatic) technique of meditation.”¹⁸¹ How is God known in prayer?

¹⁸⁰Urban T. Holmes, III, *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 5.

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*, 4.

In images? In a lack of images? Each period of Christian history and each individual is located somewhere on that scale. The other scale, Holmes says, “raises the question of whether the spiritual method emphasizes the illumination of the mind (speculative) or the heart or emotions (affective).”¹⁸² Is God known through the intellect? Is God known through feelings? People and periods of history are located on this scale.

Intersecting these scales is the “circle of sensibility”. Holmes defines sensibility as:

Sensitivity to the ambiguity of styles of prayer and the possibilities for a creative dialogue within the person and within the community as it seeks to understand the experience of God and its meaning for our world.¹⁸³

The four quadrants surrounding the circle illustrate the four types of spirituality: apophatic/speculative, speculative/kataphatic, kataphatic/affective, and affective/apophatic (**Appendix A**). Holmes asserts that any spirituality can be classified within one of the four quadrants. He notes some spiritualities emphasize one quadrant to the exclusion of another and when that happens a variety of spiritual excesses can occur. The excesses are listed as encratism, rationalism, pietism, and quietism. As an example, pietism is the out-of-balance response of the kataphatic/affective quadrant and encratism is the excessive response of the apophatic/speculative quadrant. Spiritual health is maintained when we keep the quadrants of spirituality in tension with each other. It is not possible to achieve a perfect balance between the quadrants, but understanding the dangers of the excesses helps the adherent keep a positive tension among the four spirituality types.

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³Ibid., 5.

Corinne Ware, clinical therapist and pastoral counselor uses the “circle of sensibility”, reconstructs it as “the spirituality wheel” and expands its application to congregational style. She updates Holmes’ categories (**Appendix B**), and renames his excesses (moralism, head-trip, emotionalism, reclusivity), describing them as “aberrations of spirituality, excesses peculiar to a particular type.”¹⁸⁴

Like Holmes, Ware notes the evidence for each quadrant in Christian history. In her analysis, periods of apophatic expression include the fourth, fifth and fourteenth centuries. Speculative spirituality was active in the Renaissance period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the humanistic period of the sixteenth century and in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁸⁵ Affective spirituality was particularly expressed in the Pietist period of the fifteenth century and the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She notes Holmes does not provide a historical reference for kataphatic spirituality. Ware, however, points “to the security that came to the Christian church with the rule of Constantine. The creedal statement forged at the Council of Nicea in 325 and the later Calcedonian solution are about as concrete and incarnational as one can get.”¹⁸⁶

Ware developed a basic test for understanding one’s spiritual type based on the typology of Holmes.¹⁸⁷ A helpful addition to her test is its application to the congregation. By taking this test in large numbers, a congregation can assess its own congregational style. This assists the congregation in analysis of programs, mission, worship and fellowship.

¹⁸⁴Corinne Ware, *Discover your Spiritual Type: A Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth* (The Alban Institute, 1995), 9.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 49-53.

Alan Sager, Professor Emeritus of Contextual Theology at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Seminary uses Holmes' "circle of sensibility" and offers his own assessment tool to help individuals discover their personal approach to spirituality.¹⁸⁸ He adjusts some of Holmes' categories and renames them for his purposes (**Appendix C**). In addition to showing how these quadrants were evident in Christian history, Sager offers examples from contemporary authors for each quadrant. For example he places Anthony de Mello in Holmes' apophatic/affective quadrant in addition to St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas a Kempis.¹⁸⁹ Individuals whose spirituality places them in this quadrant

...prefer to live a contemplative life away from the world. Intuition is dominant; feelings are primary. They desire much prayer and quiet in worship. Contemplative prayer leading to mystical union is the means and goal. The excess is quietism, the tendency toward neglect of culture, and excessive concern for absorption into God. This spirituality is inward directed.¹⁹⁰

St. Paul, Augustine, St. Ignatius of Loyola and Luther are placed in the speculative/kataphatic quadrant (though Sager notes not all Catholics would agree with the placement of Ignatius in this quadrant) along with modern theologians such as Bultmann, Tillich and Neibuhr.¹⁹¹ Holmes places many of the Apostolic Fathers, Dominic and Thomas Aquinas within this quadrant.

The kataphatic/affective quadrant is home to such Pietists as Arndt, Spener and Hans Nielsen Hauge. Adherents of this quadrant:

Typically insist on an outward expression of an inner change. They search for an experiential identity in Christ that transforms and becomes evident in a Christian

¹⁸⁸ Alan Sager, *Gospel-Centered Spirituality: An Introduction to Our Spiritual Journey* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 31-35.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 39-41.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 38.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 45.

life-style. They say: commitment to Christ is transforming and will be revealed in the holiness of the believer; otherwise, they say, conversion is suspect.¹⁹²

Sager agrees with Holmes' placement of St. Benedict, and John and Charles Wesley in this quadrant. He would, with some "notable exceptions", place most of the televangelists in this quadrant.¹⁹³

Finally, the apophatic/speculative quadrant Sager notes is the least populated of all the quadrants. He places no individuals directly within this quadrant. Rather he designs a subtype of this quadrant called "The Spirituality of Societal Regeneration".¹⁹⁴ He explains:

The roots of this brand of spirituality are nourished by sources foundational to Western Christendom. Stirred by biblical cries of outrage in the face of injustices and sufferings of humanity-particularly the poor and powerless-and emboldened by the authority and power of the gospel, societal regeneratists are ready to tackle every force that stands in the way of peace, justice and human rights.¹⁹⁵

He lists Martin Luther King Jr., Dag Hammerskjold, Dorothy Day and Albert Schweitzer as examples of individuals who fit to some degree in this subtype. Proponents of various liberation theology movements would also be placed within the subtype of the apophatic/speculative quadrant.

Spirituality typing using this format is another broad-based approach. It links the individual with periods of history and provides direction for spiritual formation within the format of the four quadrants. It offers an opportunity to understand how others perceive spirituality from the perspective of their quadrant and helps others appreciate the wide difference in Christian expression and practice. Holmes comments on his survey of

¹⁹²Ibid., 47.

¹⁹³Ibid., 47-49.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 51.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., 52.

spirituality suggesting avoidance of a “shallow or doctrinaire notion as to the nature of Christian spirituality... We can develop our own spiritual theology, without considering it definitive, and be challenged at the same time to move deeper by the power of God into the hiddenness of God. What shape it takes will vary with each of us.”¹⁹⁶ Ware echoes his thoughts, “The idea of spiritual types suggests that differences are legitimate; that they reflect the god-made variety of created things. God is not threatened by what God has made nor should we be.”¹⁹⁷

A second variation on spiritual typing involves the use of personality instruments to assess spirituality strengths and weaknesses. While there are many personality instruments, the most popular tool is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), developed from the work of Carl Jung. M. Robert Mulholland notes, “Jung discovered that human beings have four essential preferences that shape the way they relate to the world around them and process the data they receive from that world.”¹⁹⁸

The MBTI organizes the preferences into four pairs: extraversion and introversion (E/I), sensing and intuition (S/N), thinking and feeling (T/F), and judgment and perception (J/P). People generally have a behavior preference. For example, the E/I pairing has to do with energy and interest. How am I energized? Is it through the outside world of people and events (extraversion) or is it through the inner world of thoughts, ideas, and concepts (introversion)? Each of the four pairings provides a different way of looking at the world.

¹⁹⁶Holmes., 158.

¹⁹⁷Ware., 115.

¹⁹⁸M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 51.

Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers took Jung's typology and developed the instrument exposing sixteen preference patterns. These patterns provide a window through which an individual may understand how people function in diverse ways. They also explain why people perceive the world in opposite ways from others.

Mulholland cautions that the use of this spiritual typology should not be abused. It is not to be used as a means of predetermining behavior in others, nor is it to be used as an evaluation tool to assert superiority over others. Our "type" is a gift, is unique, and "is part of the wonderful diversity with which God has created us."¹⁹⁹

Mulholland expands the discussion of the use of the MBTI by encouraging the development of a holistic spirituality. To do this, he notes we have to pay attention to the shadow side of our MBTI which is reflected in our opposite spirituality type. Mulholland states he is an INTJ and if he is to develop a holistic spirituality he will want to nurture the ESFP spirituality type that is within him. The activities of that type do not come naturally to him, but are required to be nurtured, so he doesn't present a one-sided spirituality. To help the process, he uses two tools from the Center for Application of Psychological Type. These charts, "Finding Your Spiritual Path" (**Appendix D**) and "Following your Spiritual Path" (**Appendix E**) map out a method of reflecting on and responding to the path towards a personal holistic spirituality. They present the specific areas needed for wholeness in each spirituality type and indicate where over-and underdevelopment of a spirituality type may lead. For example the overdevelopment of

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 54.

the J trait may lead to rigidity and perfectionism while the underdevelopment of the S trait may lead to abstraction and overlooking.²⁰⁰

Reflection and response are important when looking at this form of spirituality typing. Mulholland explains:

Our spiritual formation always takes place within our given psychological state and personality preference pattern. These dynamics are always modulating. Our preference patterns don't change all that much; by the time we reach adulthood, our preference patterns are fairly well established. But our psychological state is always in modulation... We need to be sensitive to this. If we are not, our spirituality will tend to be very superficial most of our lives.²⁰¹

Reflection and response as noted in the spirituality definition of this paper is essential if the adherent is to be attentive to the *life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement*. This form of spirituality typing requires time to listen to one's faith pilgrimage. In contrast to using Holmes's as a guide for general spiritual formation, the MBTI pinpoints precise areas of life that are out-of-balance.

Roy Oswald and Otto Kroeger have applied the MBTI to religious leadership. They pay special attention to "the dark side of each type--those underdeveloped functions that when not incorporated into the personality can potentially weaken our effectiveness".²⁰² The material posits a helpful approach in analyzing potential pitfalls of heresy and sexual impropriety based on personality type. For example they assert that Gnosticism and Scientology are NT heresies while Pietism, Humanism and Deism are distinctly NF in nature.²⁰³ Oswald and Kroeger link temperament and prayer using material

²⁰⁰Ibid., 69.

²⁰¹Ibid., 73.

²⁰²Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership* (The Alban Institute, 1999), 124.

²⁰³Ibid., 125-126.

from Chester P. Michael and Marie Christian Norrisey.²⁰⁴ This has direct application to worship, small groups and personal devotions. They state:

The implications for ministry are enormous as we come to understand that we do not experience God in the same way as others. Certain ways of praying enliven and energize us, while others leave us cold. What a gift it is to be able to understand and accept one's own preference in spiritual disciplines and expressions-yet not impose these on others. Instead we can be open enough to support and direct the unique expressions of others.²⁰⁵

Spirituality typing offers significant benefits to individuals who seek to understand why some aspects of their faith journey thrive and others wither. Through Holmes' work, history reveals periods of time when various temperament themes were predominant. The effect of these themes and their proponents impact Christian spirituality today. Jung's analysis and the use of the MBTI enable individuals to specifically focus on developing a holistic spirituality.

There are dangers with spirituality typing. People can be labeled and isolated from activities or ministry based on their type. A group, or team, may be ineffective by not creating a team that includes varied types. An individual may not see the value of his or her gifts. Yet, this approach to spiritual formation offers a helpful tool *that points to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.*

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

A third approach to spiritual formation uses spiritual disciplines as keys to growth and maturity. In this approach, various disciplines are used to challenge, deepen and strengthen personal faith. Some of these disciplines are interior-focused, others enhance

²⁰⁴Ibid., 90.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 96.

the exterior practice of the faith. Disciplines offer a multi-faceted approach to spiritual maturity.

The early church practiced four disciplines as recorded in Acts 2:42. Believers in the decades following Pentecost practiced Bible study, fellowship, prayer, and the Eucharist. Those early disciplines provided a path to faith formation and maturity. Other disciplines have been added over the centuries as Christians have discovered additional spiritual tools to enhance their faith practice.

Dallas Willard defines a spiritual discipline as “an activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and his Kingdom.”²⁰⁶ He divides spiritual disciplines into two categories: disciplines of abstinence and disciplines of engagement. His list of abstinence disciplines includes solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice. Disciplines of engagement involve study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission.²⁰⁷

Willard notes that the disciplines of abstinence counter the traditional seven “deadly” sins, and are designed to bring our normal desires of “food, sleep, bodily activity, companionship, curiosity, and sex”²⁰⁸ into balance with God’s desires for wholeness. *Solitude*, noted as foundational for the start of the spiritual journey, is the deliberate removal of self from others in order “to be alone and to dwell on our experience of isolation from other human beings.” He adds:

Solitude frees us actually. This above all explains its primacy and priority among the disciplines. The normal course of day-to-day human interactions locks us into patterns of feeling, thought, and action that are geared to a world set against God.

²⁰⁶Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 156.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 158.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 159.

Nothing but solitude can allow the development of a freedom from the ingrained behaviors that hinder our integration into God's order.²⁰⁹

Solitude offers the challenge to be still in God's presence, to risk being vulnerable before God and to grasp the freedom found in the intimate aloneness with God. *Silence*, while similar to solitude, closes our spirit to the sounds of life enabling concentration on the voice of God and the grounding of God's grace. Solitude and silence are the basic *reflection* disciplines. The other abstinence disciplines require a more intense attitude of *reflection* in order to practice them.

Fasting is the third of Willard's abstinence disciplines. He notes it is not an easy discipline to practice, given our society's focus on self-indulgence and gratification. It can be a powerful reminder of God's provisions for our lives.

Frugality as a discipline involves abstaining "from using money or goods at our disposal in ways that merely gratify our desires or our hunger for status, glamour, or luxury."²¹⁰ Along with fasting, it is a difficult practice in contemporary society. Willard links this discipline to the freedom found in following the injunction of Micah 6:8 and the affirmation of Mary (LK. 10:42). He touches on simplicity and poverty, but sees them as expressions of frugality. The discipline of *Chastity* relates to the proper use of sexuality. Willard notes its importance in marital relations and as an orientation against the sexual obsession of society. He acknowledges, "Chastity rightly practiced as a part of an overall rich walk with God can draw the poison from sexual abstinence and prevent the sickness of heart and mind that now runs amok in the sexual dimension of life in today's world."²¹¹

²⁰⁹Ibid., 160.

²¹⁰Ibid., 168.

²¹¹Ibid., 172.

Secrecy and *sacrifice* are the last two disciplines of abstinence. *Secrecy* refers to the practice of keeping our good deeds and activities from being made public. It has a direct connection to personal ego and praise. As a discipline, it frees the believer to joyfully give to God without concern for appearance or accolade. *Sacrifice* as Willard defines it is, “total abandonment to God, a stepping into the darkened abyss in the faith and hope that God will bear us up.”²¹² He refers to Abraham and the widow of Luke 21:2-4 as examples of the practice of sacrifice in light of God’s call.

The disciplines of abstinence in this list move deeper into the soul of the believer. The first two, solitude and silence are introductory disciplines that make it possible for the deeper disciplines to be approached. The last discipline, sacrifice, with its emphasis on abandonment, demands the greatest vulnerability.

Willard uses a similar approach to the disciplines of engagement. *Study*, he notes, is the exterior application of solitude and is foundational discipline of engagement. Its focus is on God’s Word and its application for our life. Study leads to the next two disciplines of *worship* and *celebration*. Willard notes, “In worship we engage ourselves with, dwell upon, and express the greatness, beauty, and goodness of God through thought and the use of words, rituals, and symbols.”²¹³ Worship either alone or with others is directed to God in response to God’s activity in the world. Celebration is tied to worship as shown in scripture (Judges. 5; 2 Sam. 6:12-16). Celebration is linked to feast days of the church and is a proper response to God’s goodness and love.

²¹²Ibid., 175.

²¹³Ibid., 177.

Service is the application of God's grace to others practiced in work, neighborhood and home. It becomes a discipline when we are attentive to the ways we can support, care and affirm the needs of others. *Prayer*, as Willard asserts, is combined with other disciplines if it is to be effective. The disciplines of study, worship, solitude, and fasting can be related to prayer. While Willard lists prayer as a discipline of engagement, Jesus often used prayer as a time of disengagement. He disengaged from the world only to pray for the strength to re-engage, as shown in MK. 1:35-39; 7:45-56. A case can be made that the transfiguration as recorded in LK. 9: 28-36, in addition to its revelatory imagery for the disciples, is also disengagement, particularly in light of the healing story that follows it in verses 37-43. Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is the final disengagement that prepares him for the last part of his journey to the Cross. Willard would see these examples of prayer mixed with the other disciplines of solitude and private worship.

Fellowship is the arena of engagement with other people in other disciplines. It is an important discipline and one that is an underlying cause of membership inactivity in churches. Congregations have a responsibility to foster this discipline as part of its programming, but members also have a responsibility to strengthen their relationships with others through fellowship activities. *Confession* and *submission* function as a result of fellowship. These disciplines require a vulnerability before God and others.

With the exception of prayer, the disciplines of engagement are the counterpart to the disciplines of abstinence as Willard defines them. Prayer undergirds the disciplines, serving as the form of spiritual communication. Willard's pattern of disciplines provides a systematic approach to spiritual formation that highlights the interior faith work

necessary for the exterior practice of faith. Additionally, they offer a clear path *to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.*

Other authors offer opinions on the number and style of disciplines. Richard Foster writes, “The classical disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depth.”²¹⁴ His material is divided into the inward disciplines (mediation, prayer, fasting, and study)²¹⁵, the outward disciplines (simplicity, solitude, submission, and service)²¹⁶, and the corporate disciplines (confession, worship, guidance, and celebration).²¹⁷

Mulholland lists his disciplines in a different fashion including only prayer, spiritual reading (with *Lectio Divina* as the example), and liturgy. He breaks down liturgy into components of worship, daily office, study, fasting, and retreat.²¹⁸ He incorporates some of Foster’s thinking as he includes silence, solitude, and prayer as integral aspects of the disciplines.²¹⁹ Mulholland speaks to the corporate nature of the disciplines, but only in the sense of social spirituality and its responsibility within the world and corporate spirituality reflecting the body of Christ.²²⁰ Finally, his section on social spirituality integrates the some of the themes of H. Richard Niebuhr’s five types of spirituality as previously discussed in Chapter 1.

Sager doesn’t define the disciplines as such but incorporates them as *themes central to spirituality*. His list includes worship and the Eucharist, solitude and prayer,

²¹⁴Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 1.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*, 11-66.

²¹⁶*Ibid.*, 67-122.

²¹⁷*Ibid.*, 123-171.

²¹⁸Mulholland., 102-119.

²¹⁹*Ibid.*, 135-140.

²²⁰*Ibid.*, 143-168.

formative reading, faith in daily life, spiritual guides and spiritual friends, journaling, fasting and other bodily disciplines, simplicity as lifestyle, and seeking justice for the oppressed.²²¹ It is evident that aspects of Foster's three types of disciplines are represented in Sager's list.²²²

Prior to Foster, Dietrich Bonhoeffer provided a clear exposition of the inward, outward and corporate disciplines, listing them as *community*, *the day with others*, and *the day alone*.²²³ Included in the *day with others* are the disciplines of spiritual reading, worship, Eucharist, communal prayer, and daily work.²²⁴ The *day alone* lists the disciplines of solitude and silence, meditation, prayer, and intercession.²²⁵ Corporate spirituality is acknowledged through Bonhoeffer's discussion of community and ministry.²²⁶

Henri Nouwen writes about the disciplines and their application to spiritual formation. He pays attention to the contemplative nature of the inward disciplines, particularly solitude.²²⁷ He doesn't define the disciplines: rather he speaks about the nature of the spiritual life. He defines the spiritual life near the end of one book²²⁸, and illustrates the three movements of the spiritual life in another.²²⁹ Nouwen's gift to the discussion of spiritual disciplines is in the area of transformation. Spiritual formation is

²²¹Sager., 87-147.

²²²Foster., v.

²²³Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 5.

²²⁴*Ibid.*, 40-75.

²²⁵*Ibid.*, 76-89.

²²⁶*Ibid.*, 17-29; 90-109.

²²⁷Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1980), 14-15.

²²⁸Henri Nouwen, *Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 93.

²²⁹Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: the Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1975), 12. Cf. *Can You Drink the Cup?* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1996).

not a short-term event. It is a life-long process filled with twists and turns as the Christian looks at life, examining their personal wilderness areas, looking for ways to make them alive to the presence of God's grace. Formation and movement are important aspects of spiritual formation writing. Nouwen uses these themes with prayer²³⁰, worry²³¹, solitude²³², and loneliness.²³³

The contemporary resources of worldview analysis, spiritual typing and spiritual disciplines offer significant opportunity for spiritual formation. Each resource can be applied by itself, or can be used in concert with the other resources to develop a more holistic picture of personal and communal spiritual formation. Worldview analysis and Holmes' work in spiritual typing demonstrate general paths for discovering how formation is applied to churches. They also provide an interactive way of seeing oneself within a tradition.

The MBTI and the lists of spiritual disciplines focus more on the specific, intentional path of spiritual maturity. They point the adherent to particular ways spiritual formation can be explored. They offer a progressive movement to deeper spirituality as evidenced in Willard's approach to the disciplines. The use of these contemporary spiritual formation resources provide a concrete approach to *the life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around me that points to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.*

²³⁰Henri Nouwen, *With Open Hands* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1982), 7.

²³¹Nouwen., *Making All Things New.*, 13-17.

²³²Nouwen., *Out of Solitude*, 14-15.

²³³Nouwen., *Reaching Out*, 10-12.

CHAPTER 6

Spiritual formation is a dynamic process. Religious pilgrims share their journey through biblical writings, journals, and hymns. Viewing personal stories through theological interpretation deepens faith. The previously discussed themes of Biblical spiritual formation, historical roots of Lutheran spirituality, and contemporary approaches to spiritual formation lay the foundation for the proposal of an adult spiritual formation curriculum for the local parish. This course of study, entitled *A Way of the Soul*, serves as an introductory class in spiritual formation.

The title of this paper stresses the curriculum beginning point and direction. The course is *a way*: it is not *the way of the soul*. It is an overview course whose purpose is to move participants toward their own personal ministry impacting both the congregation and the community. The course functions as *a path towards personal ministry*.

The course is a *hub* from which other formation courses follow and is designed with four specific paths.²³⁴ These paths are depicted as a compass with the corresponding north, south, east, and west directional points. For the purpose of the course, the paths are listed as *Nurture*, *Service*, *Worship*, and *Education*. Classes flowing from the

²³⁴The course does not take the place of the new member class. The new member class offers an introduction to the basic teachings of the Lutheran Church and provides an orientation to the ministry of the parish. Included in this course are sections on the sacraments, Luther, and worship.

introductory course will move participants towards a *personal ministry* on one of the four paths.²³⁵ As an educational aid, the introductory course is listed as *Spirituality 101*.

Four concentric circles move out from the introductory course. The first course in each path utilizes the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, aiding the student to understand the integration of his or her own preferences with the practice of faith. Three additional courses (301,401,501) progress the student toward the outermost circle that represents the arena of *personal ministry*.²³⁶ *Personal ministry* is a bridge ministry with one foot in the parish and one foot in the student's personal community. The course goal is that students will bring members of the parish to their personal community, using *personal ministry* as an opportunity to bring the community into the parish. Examples of bridge ministry include youth ministry, nursing home ministry, and social action ministry.

The courses are intended to encourage development along a particular path, increasing the student's depth and grounding in *personal ministry*. The class does not presume a certain level of biblical knowledge or long-term participation in the Lutheran church. The courses are not an end in themselves. Students have not 'arrived' when they complete a particular curriculum.

All paths are equally important. There is no designation of 'first' or 'second' paths as though one path was more important than any other was. The path of Nurture involves caring ministries such as Stephen Ministry, Caring Callers, and the congregation's Welcome Team. Courses in this path encourage specific spiritual

²³⁵ Appendix F illustrates the initial model of the compass points and the introductory course.

²³⁶ Appendix G illustrates the concentric circles leading to the outermost ring of *personal ministry*.

disciplines of prayer, spiritual reading, and meditation as ways of preparation for working with people in vulnerable situations.²³⁷

The path of *Service* focuses on the myriad of opportunities within the congregation to offer oneself to others on behalf of Christ. Courses in this path encourage spiritual disciplines of service, fellowship, intercession, and submission.²³⁸

The path of *Worship* involves leadership of worship groups, Eucharist ministry and the exploration of personal and communal worship activities, including the congregation's retreat ministry. Disciplines encouraged in this path include personal worship, celebration, confession, prayer, and fellowship.²³⁹

Education is the path that encourages leadership in the congregation. Courses in this path are concerned with development of leadership within the congregation's organizational structure including church council, Sunday school, vacation bible school, and committees. Numerous disciplines are encouraged for the leaders of the congregation including confession, prayer, submission, celebration, guidance, and service.²⁴⁰

The introductory course contains six sessions. The material includes:

1. A discussion of Christian spirituality using Smart's worldview analysis, Hansen's application to Lutheranism, and definitions of spirituality.
2. A personal assessment of spirituality using Holmes' 'circle of sensibility and Corinne Ware's 'spirituality wheel'.
3. An overview of spiritual formation in the Bible.
4. An overview of three aspects of Luther's spirituality.
5. A discussion of Lutheran Pietism's impact on spiritual formation
6. An overview of spiritual disciplines and their use within the practice of faith.
7. Descriptions of the paths towards *personal ministry*.
8. Opportunities to experience different devotional or worship forms in each session.

²³⁷ **Appendix H** illustrates examples of the courses in this path.

²³⁸ **Appendix I** illustrates examples of courses in this path.

²³⁹ **Appendix J** illustrates examples of courses in this path.

²⁴⁰ **Appendix K** illustrates examples of courses in this path.

9. Spiritual Gifts assessment.

An outline of each session follows as part of the curriculum proposal. Sessions are designed to be two hours in length with a short break built into each session.

COURSE OUTLINE

SESSION 1

SPIRITUALITY

- I. Gathering
 - A. Introductions
 1. Name tags
 2. Seating
 3. Initial ground rules
 4. Confidentiality during personal sharing
 - B. Devotions
 1. Directed prayer format
 2. Student's personal image of community
 3. Picture path of student's current ministry
 4. Picture Christ in the midst of the group.
- II. Spirituality
 - A. Group discussion
 1. Why are we here? What do we hope to accomplish?
 2. Where will this move the congregation and each person who attends the class
 3. Overview of the curriculum and paths to toward *personal ministry*
 - B. How many spiritualities are there in the world?
 1. Components of spirituality
 2. Does everyone have one?
 3. Smart's worldview analysis
 - a) Ritual or Practical dimension
 - b) Doctrinal or Philosophical dimension
 - c) Myth or Narrative dimension
 - d) Experience and Emotion dimension
 - e) Organizational or Social dimension
 - f) Material or Artistic dimension
 - C. Hansen's application to Lutheranism
 1. Seven components represented in Lutheranism

- a) Ritual- Western rite used for liturgy
 - b) Mythic- scriptures
 - c) Emotional- personal knowledge of grace
 - d) Ethical- Luther's two kingdom teaching
 - e) Organizational- corporate and congregation structure
 - f) Material- moderate expression in Lutheranism
 - D. Moving to define spirituality
 - 1. Post variety of definitions from authors in dissertation
 - a) Downey
 - b) Rochelle
 - c) Holt
 - d) Wood
 - e) Dahill
 - f) Hanson
 - g) Schneider
 - 2. Use of definition for purposes of class
 - E. Small group discussion on definitions
 - 1. Student response to posted definitions
 - 2. Group discussion
- III. Conclusion
 - A. Homework
 - 1. Christian spirituality definition
 - 2. Reflect on the class definition and application in the student's life?
 - 3. Worldview Analysis, Hansen application.
 - a) What parts of these analyses have been most active in class members' lives?
 - B. Closing prayer

SESSION 2

BIBLICAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- I. Gathering
 - A. Review names
 - 1. Check in with students
 - B. Devotions
 - 1. Read Psalm 1
 - 2. Read II Timothy 4:6-8
 - 3. Directed prayer focus on images from each text
 - C. Review questions, comments from previous session.
- II. Spiritual Formation
 - A. How people are spiritually formed?

1. Work of Spirit
2. Bible
3. Church involvement
4. Worship, liturgy, hymnody
5. History
6. Personal stories of other Christians
7. Dyad discussion on impact of the above categories
8. Group discussion
- B. Spiritual formation in the Bible
 1. Viewing spiritual formation through a lens
 - a) Individual biblical characters
 - b) Word usage
 - c) Individual books in the bible
 - d) Historical development
 - e) Metaphor
 2. Old Testament
 - a) Personal relationship as key to formation
 - b) Accessibility
 - c) Response to the torah
 - d) History- pilgrim journey
 - e) Corporate spirituality
 2. New Testament
 - a) Jesus
 - b) Paul
 - c) Mathew
 - d) Mark
 - e) Luke
 - f) John
 - g) Epistles
 - h) Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis, Orthopathy
- C. Personal stories of formation
 1. Group discussion
- III. Spiritual Gifts Inventory
 - A. Students take the inventory
 1. Inventories will be scored and returned at session 4
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Homework- formation
 1. Review class material with specific attention to personal history
 2. Try to answer the question "How did I get to the place I am today with God?"
 3. Pay attention to people, style of church and recurrent themes in class members' lives
 - B. Closing prayer

SESSION 3

LUTHERAN ROOTS

- I. Gathering
 - A. Check in
 - 1. Play Hymn *A Mighty Fortress* (LBW 229)
 - 2. Read words from LBW and SBH text
 - 3. Read Psalm 46 in Lectio Divina style
 - 4. Discussion on text and hymn texts
 - 5. Opening prayer
 - C. Luther's spirituality
 - 1. Word
 - 2. Catechism
 - 3. Hymnody
 - 4. Group discussion: student history in Lutheran churches
 - D. Impact of Pietism on contemporary formation practices
 - 1. Spener and conventicles
 - 2. Bible Study
 - 3. Private devotional
 - 4. Hymnody
 - 5. Mission support
 - 6. Group discussion: student devotional practices
- II. Conclusion
 - A. Homework
 - 1. Review class material with specific attention to personal history
 - 2. Reflect on question: "How do I express my faith in my daily life?"
 - 3. Keep a journal of spiritual insights and events for the week
 - B. Closing prayer

SESSION 4

GIFTS FOR THE JOURNEY

- I. Gathering
 - A. Check in
 - 1. Play Hymn *I the Lord of Sea and Sky* (*With One Voice*- WOV 752)
 - B. Devotions
 - 1. Student to read hymn text

- 2. Directed prayer with attention to images of God
- C. Review questions, comments from previous session
- II. Spiritual Gifts Inventory
 - A. Share results of inventory with students
 - 1. Group discussion
 - 2. What is the point of the inventory?
 - 3. Small group discussion regarding what students learned about themselves and other class members
 - 4. What does this instrument say to students about a path towards the arena of *personal ministry*?
 - 5. Group discussion
- III. Circle of Sensibility and Spirituality Wheel
 - A. Introduce both instruments
 - 1. Importance of the instruments
 - 2. Application to personal student insights
 - 3. Application to spirituality and spiritual formation
 - 4. Application to the arena of *personal ministry*
 - B. Students take surveys
 - 1. Results to be returned next class session
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Homework- spiritual gifts inventory
 - 1. Students to reflect and pray for guidance on their path to the arena of *personal ministry*
 - B. Play hymn *You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore* (WOV 784)
 - 1. Read first and last verse
 - 2. Directed prayer on image of student and Christ

SESSION 5

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

- I. Gathering
 - A. Check in
 - B. Devotions
 - 1. Read section on prayer, *Prayer*, Richard Foster, page 6
 - 2. Pray for guidance and discernment for students in this session
 - C. Review any questions, comments, from previous session
- II. Circle of Sensibility and Spirituality Wheel
 - A. Return surveys.
 - 1. Plot students and class on graph
 - 2. Holistic spirituality within the context of the congregation
 - 3. Apophatic and kataphatic dimensions of worship

4. Group discussion on student learning about themselves and their classmates through these instruments
5. Application to a path towards an arena of *personal ministry*
- III. Spiritual Disciplines
 - A. Instruction on numbers and types of spiritual disciplines.
 1. Willard
 2. Foster
 3. Bonhoeffer
 4. Nouwen
 5. Group discussion
 6. Similarities and differences in these authors.
 - B. Disciplines in other areas of life
 1. Students give examples from personal history
 2. Examples from athletics, music, building construction
 3. Purpose of discipline in the above examples
 4. Purpose of discipline in the area of spirituality
 - C. Dyad discussion on personal experience with spiritual disciplines
 - D. Group discussion
 1. Link disciplines with previous discussion on apophatic/kataphatic spirituality
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Homework- spiritual disciplines
 1. Students to review disciplines reflect on application to a chosen path towards the arena of *personal ministry*
 - B. Homework-reflection
 1. Application of disciplines to student life, work, and family
 - C. Prayer in dyads

SESSION 6

THE ARENA OF PERSONAL MINISTRY

- I. Gathering
 - A. Check in
 - B. Devotions
 1. Students listen to two hymns reflecting kataphatic and apophatic spirituality
 2. *This is My Father's World* (LBW 554) and *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise* (LBW 526)
 3. Note differences
 4. Silent prayer
 - C. Review any questions, comments, from previous session
- II. The Arena of Personal Ministry

- A. Image of three types of people within churches: baby birds, big birds, and eagles
 - 1. Group discussion on people in the congregation who are eagles
 - 2. Small group discussion on personal history of students with this image
 - 3. Group discussion²⁴¹
- III. Personal Ministry Descriptions
 - A. Review examples of class offerings for each path. (**Appendices H-K**)
 - B. 1. Note how the paths move to a deeper involvement and faith practice
 - C. Nurture Path
 - 1. Spiritual disciplines and types of ministry associated with this path
 - D. Service Path
 - 1. Spiritual disciplines and types of ministry associated with this path
 - E. Education Path
 - 1. Spiritual disciplines and types of ministry associated with this path
 - F. Worship Path
 - 1. Spiritual disciplines and types of ministry associated with this path
- IV. Future steps along a path
 - A. Encouragement to take the next class along a specific path
 - B. Encouragement to talk with others in the class about the next steps
 - C. Encourage period of discernment and reflection
 - D. Future conversation with students three weeks after last session
 - 1. Feedback on class
 - 2. Current process of discernment and reflection
- V. Conclusion
 - A. Individual prayer in sanctuary around altar
 - 1. Commissioning/permission for students to move on paths towards *personal ministry*
 - 2. Directed prayer about the paths available
 - 3. Informal Eucharist

²⁴¹ In this analogy, baby birds are those who hop along a single branch of a tree, occasionally hopping to nearby limbs. They do not explore the whole tree. Big birds hop within all the branches of the tree, occasionally flutter above the tree, but do not fly away and explore on their own. Eagles move from the home tree and soar above, finding new vistas and territory unknown to the big birds and unimaginable to the baby birds. The task of leadership development is to encourage baby birds to become big birds, big birds to become eagles, and eagles to find their own personal ministries. The source of the analogy is unknown, but first shared with the author in 1980.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

How can I develop an adult spiritual formation program at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church that is grounded in Lutheran theology and open to other traditions? The course of study proposed in this paper is the response to that particular ministry question. Through this course of instruction, congregation members will have the opportunity to follow a path to a more holistic practice of the faith through an understanding of spiritual formation that is informed by Biblical theology, steeped in historical roots, and supported by the insights of authors from many Christian traditions.

There are numerous ways to provide instruction on spiritual formation. This class attempts to apply this material to the practical ministry tasks of the local parish. The local parish is the intentional context for this instruction. Ministry, in some sense is always local. We are called to be a 'little Christ' to our neighbor and that happens best when neighbor connects with neighbor.

This class is intended to impact the local congregation in three ways. First, the class will encourage and develop a culture of spiritual formation language in the parish. Teaching, preaching, counseling, and ministry activity work best when there is a shared vision and a shared theological culture. Speaking the language of spiritual formation will translate into all areas of ministry.

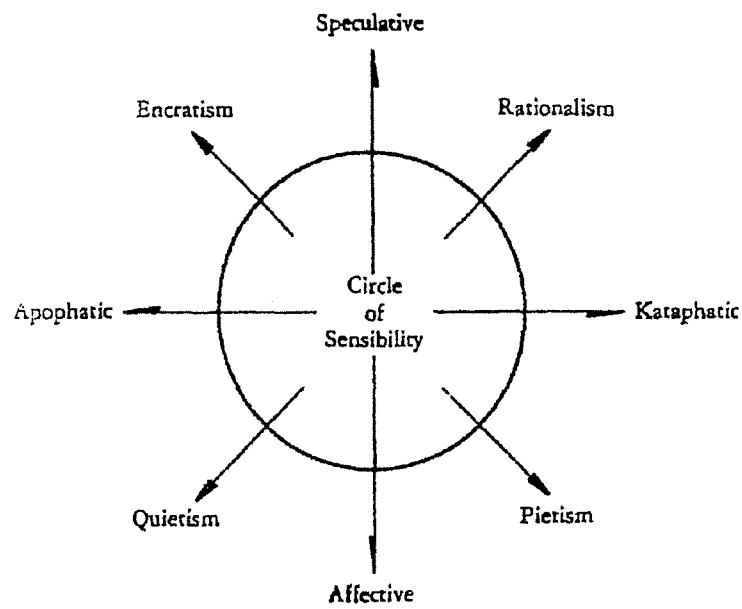
Second, parishoners will take their call to be ministers of the gospel more seriously if they are provided clear opportunities for ministry and the tools to do them. All too often, we are content to choose the warm body, eager new person, or disgruntled

ex-leader to be responsible for significant portions of the ministry. The results of this style of leadership development invariably lead to an unfocused ministry plan.

Finally, ministry will expand in new ways as a result of students practicing a more holistic faith and develop personal ministries that enhance the overall ministry of the congregation. As 'baby birds' become 'big birds', and 'big birds' become 'eagles', ministry in the local parish will take off with new enthusiasm as members discover the *life-giving and life-emptying experience of being alive to God's movement within and around them that points to personal and communal transformation accomplished through reflection and response.*

Appendix A

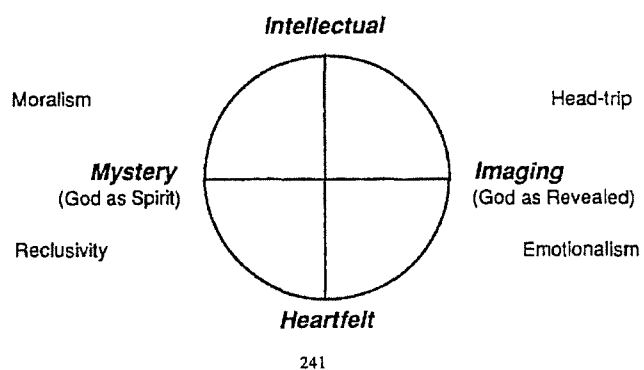
CIRCLE OF SENSIBILITY



Urban T. Holmes, III, *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 4.

Appendix B

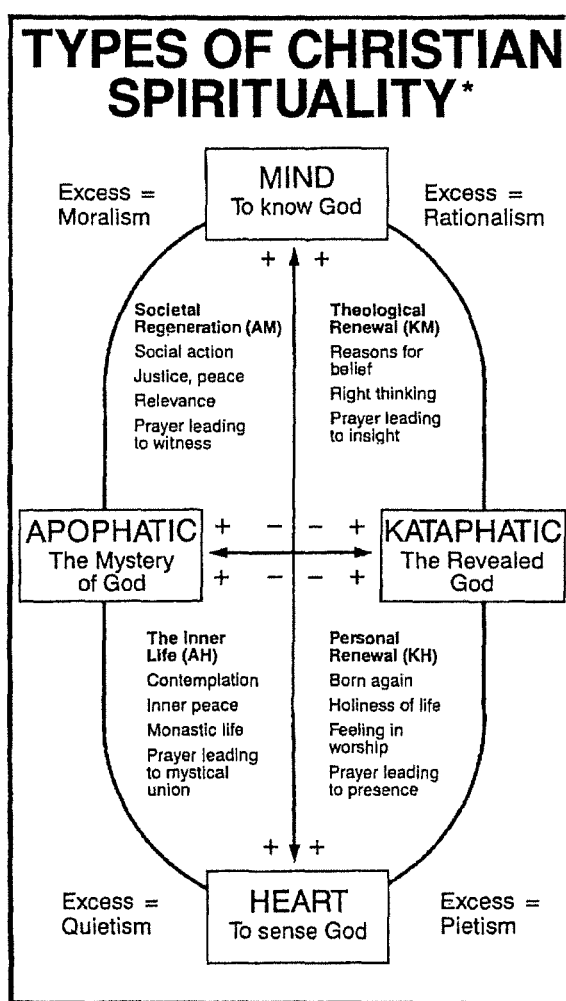
THE SPIRITUALITY WHEEL



Adapted from A History of Christian Spirituality by Urban Holmes, III, p.4,
Copyright © 1980 by Urban Holmes, III. By permission of Jane Holmes, Executrix.

Appendix C

SAGER'S TYPES OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY



*Based on "A Circle of Sensibility" from *A History of Christian Spirituality* by Urban Holmes III. Copyright © 1980 by Urban Holmes III. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

Alan Sager, *Gospel-Centered Spirituality: An Introduction to Our Spiritual Journey* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 36.

FINDING YOUR SPIRITUAL PATH

Preferred Attitude, Function, or Lifestyle	Extraversion E	Introversion I	Sensing S	Intuition N	Thinking T	Feeling F	Judgment J	Perception P
Primary Arena	World/Other	Ideas/Self	Body	Spirit	Mind	Heart	Will	Awareness
Preference for	Action	Reflection	Sensory reality Details Status quo	Possibilities Patterns Change	Objective values	Subjective values	Initiative	Response
Significant Aspects of Reality	Exterior	Interior	Immediacy Concreteness	Anticipation Vision	Theory Principles	Feeling Memory Ideal	Product Categorical	Process Conditional
Windows Through Which God's Revelation Is Received	People Events Scripture Natural world	Individual experience Inspiration Inner world	Society Institutions "The Seen"	Insight Imagination "The Unseen"	Reason Speculation	Relationships Emotions	Order "Ought"	Serendipity "Is"
Significant Aspects of God	Immanence Creator Imago Dei	Transcendence Identity of God and inner self	Incarnation	Mystery Holy Spirit	The Absolute Principle First Cause	Relational Familial (e.g. Father)	Judge Ruler	Redeemer Healer
Approach to Bible, Religious Experience	Social	Solitary	Practical Literal	Symbolic Metaphorical	Analytical Abstract	Personal Immediate	Systematic	Of-the- moment
Avoids (Hell)	Exclusion Loneliness	Intrusions Confusion	Ambiguity	Restriction Repetition	Inconsistency Ignorance	Conflict Estrangement	Helplessness Disorder	Regimentation Deadlines
Seeks (Heaven)	Participation Reunion	Incorporation Fulfillment	Physical harmony Faithfulness Obedience	Aesthetic harmony Mystical union	Conceptual harmony Enlightenment Justice, Truth	Personal harmony Communion Appreciation	Closure Productivity Work ethic	Openness Receptivity Play ethic
Prayer	Corporate	Private	Sensuous (eyes, ears, nose, hands, mouth)	Intuitive	Cognitive	Affective	Planned	Unplanned
Natural Spiritual Path	Action	Reflection	Service	Awareness	Knowledge	Devotion	Discipline	Spontaneity
Needed for Wholeness	Reflection	Action or Participation	Awareness or Understanding	Service or Embodiment	Devotion	Knowledge	Spontaneity	Discipline

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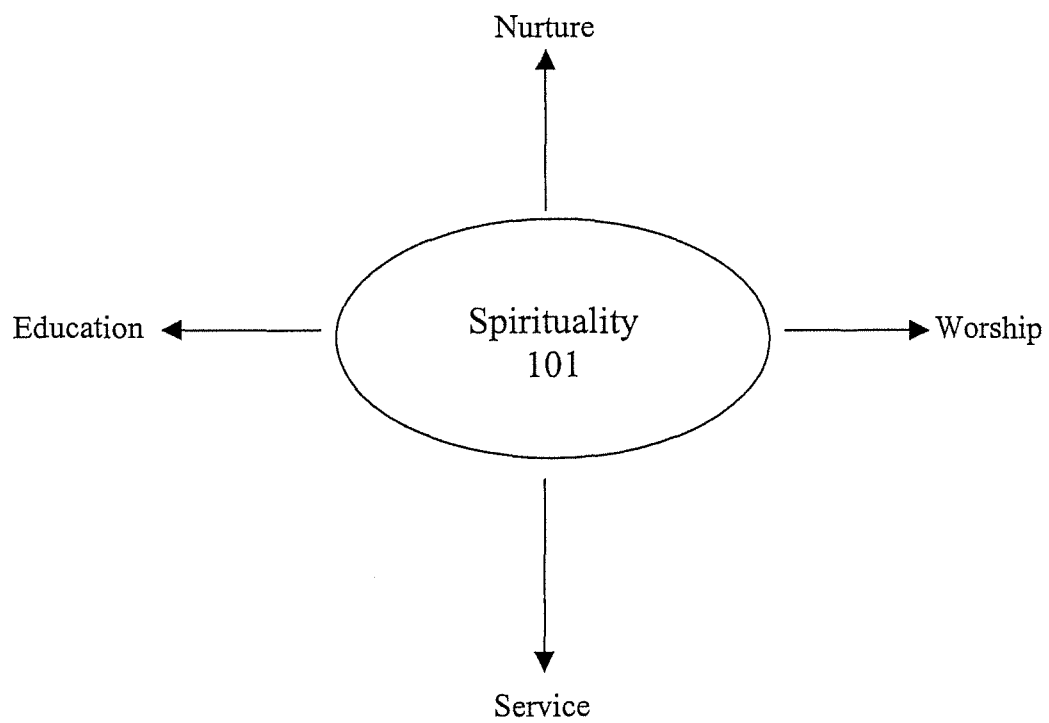
Appendix E

FOLLOWING YOUR SPIRITUAL PATH

Spiritual Path	Action E	Reflection I	Service S	Awareness N	Knowledge T	Devotion F	Discipline J	Spontaneity P
Some Positive Expressions	Asthetics Building community	Independence Deepening community	Love Pleasure	Ecstasy Anticipation	Equality Objectivity	Compassion Rapport, Trust	Discrimination Competence	Acceptance Serenity
Some Negative Expressions	Anger Attack	Fear Withdrawal	Attachment	Elation Depression	Apathy Cynicalness	Sentimentality Overprotectiveness	Inappropriate control judging others	Failure to take responsibility
Underdevelopment May Lead to	Isolation Lack of discernment	Empiness Dependence	Abstraction Overlooking	Fatigue	Confusion	Coldness Distrust	Loss of purpose Indecision	Premature closure Baseless conclusions
Overdevelopment May Lead to	Impatience Shallowiness	Withholding Idiosyncrasy Inappropriate Intensity	Idolatry Frivolity Inappropriate conformity	Illusion Impracticality Sinboresness Fickleness	Reductionism Cynicism Dogmatism Rumination	Credulity Personalizing Blaming	Rigidity Perfectionism	Passivity Impulsiveness Procrastination
Special Temptations and Vulnerabilities	Distraction Suggestibility	Inaction Inclusion by others	Superstition Suspicion Fear of change	Primitive sensuality Psychogenic illness	Escapism exploitation, indulgence Contaminated thinking	Idolizing authority Pseudo- objectivity Hurt feelings	Self-right- eousness Scruples	Rebelliousness Carelessness
Needed for Wholeness	Reflection	Action or Participation	Awareness	Service or Embodiment	Devotion	Knowledge	Spontaneity	Discipline

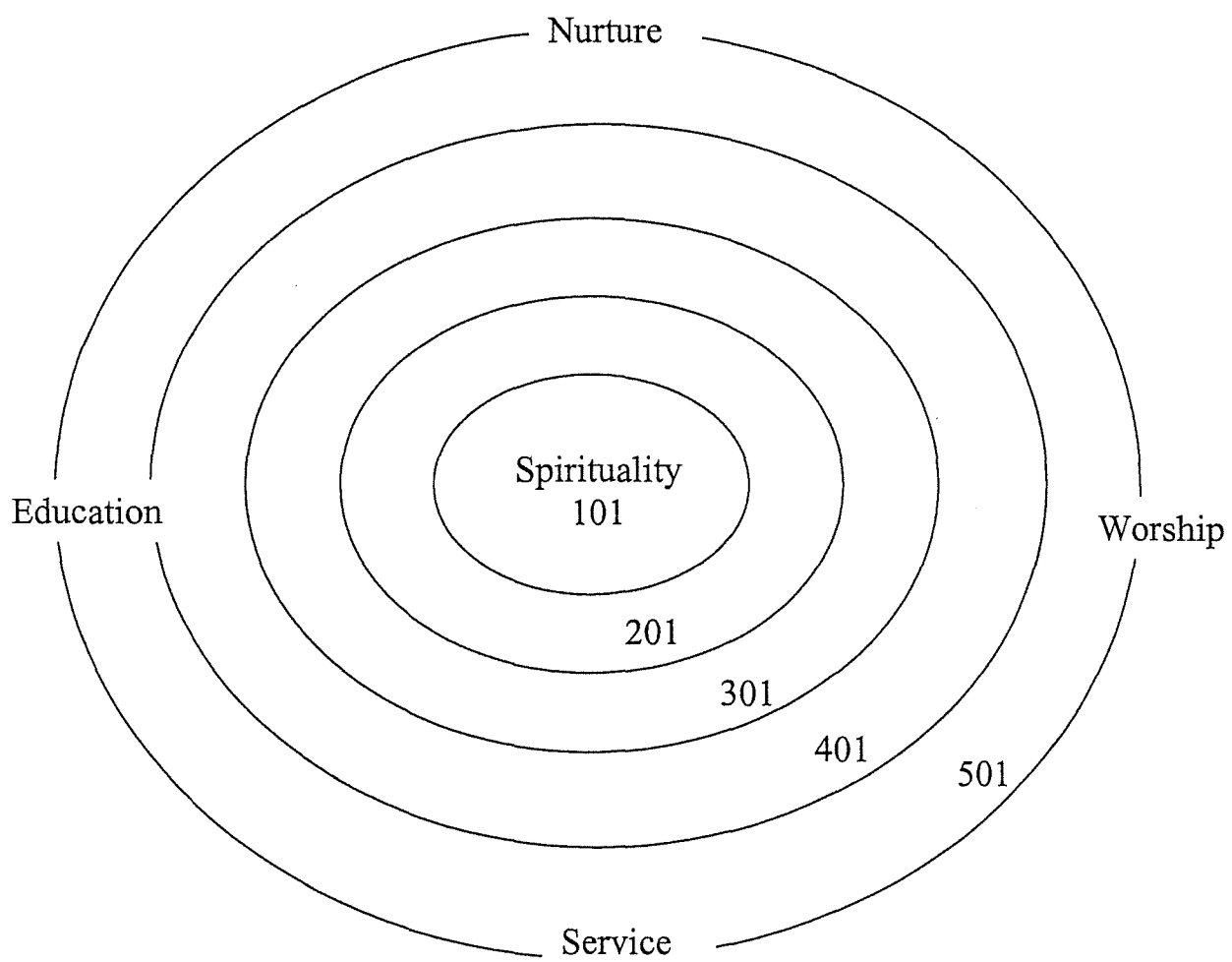
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Appendix F

INTRODUCTORY COURSE AND COMPASS POINTS

Appendix G

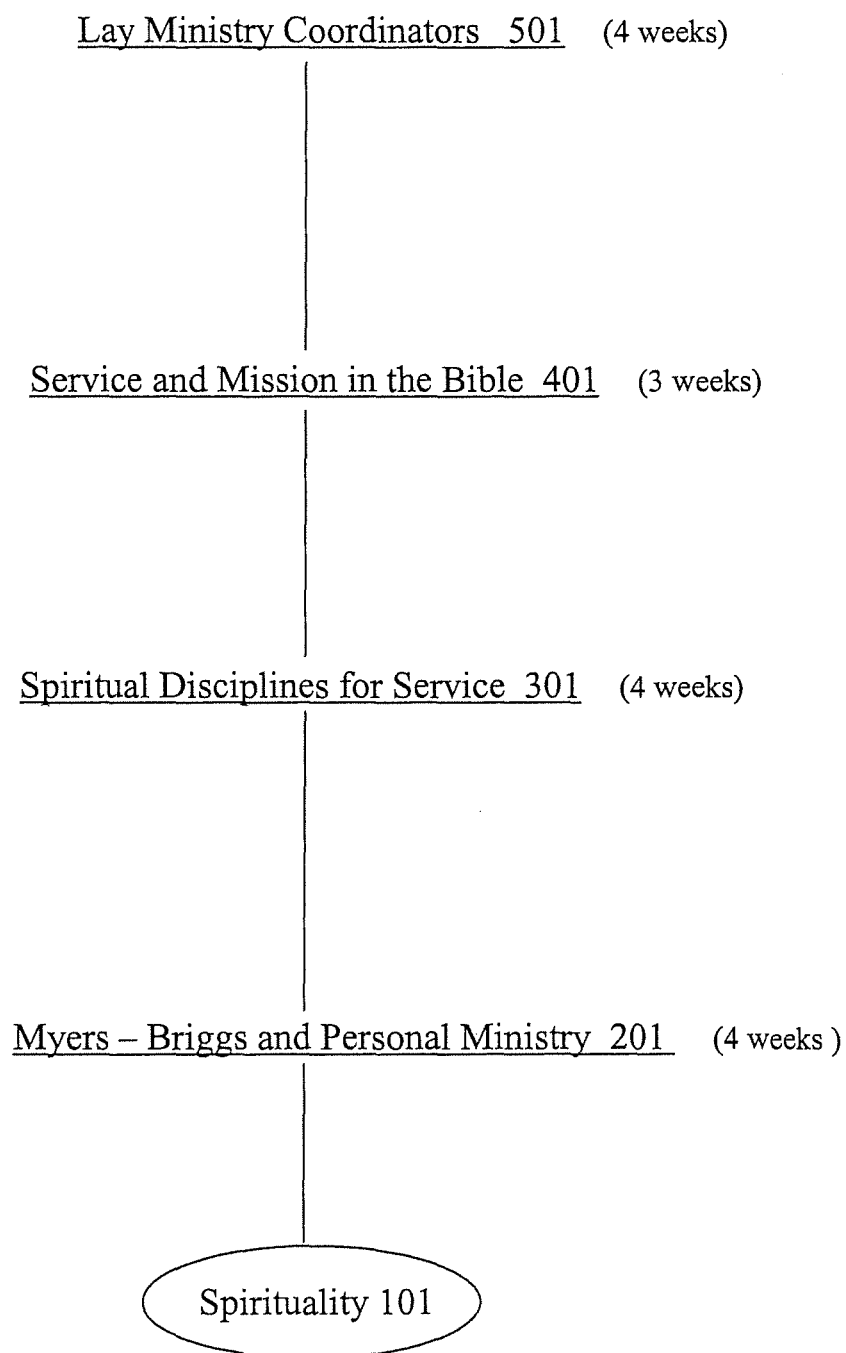
**CONCENTRIC CIRCLES LEADING TO
THE ARENA OF PERSONAL MINISTRY**



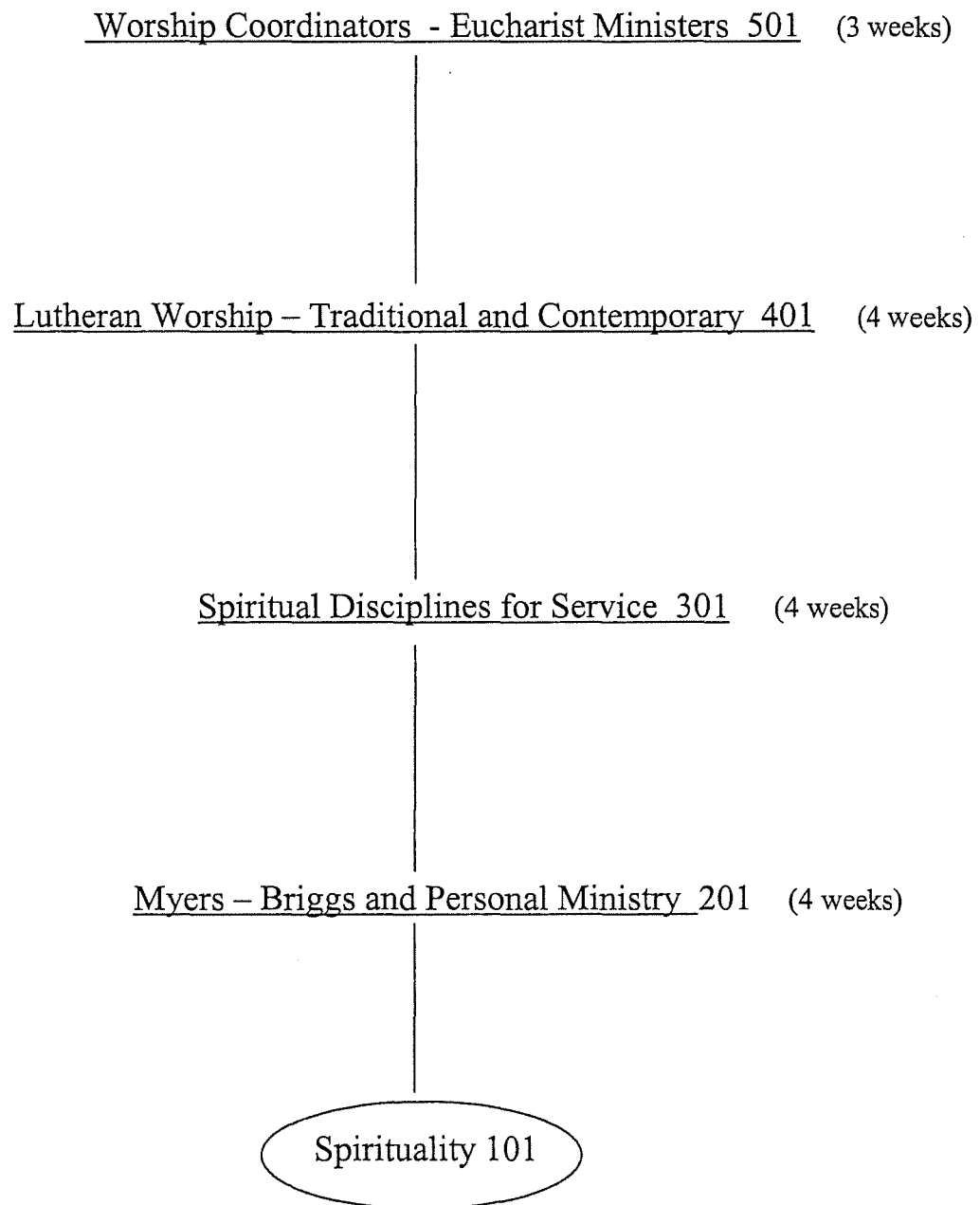
Appendix H

COURSES IN THE NURTURE PATH

Appendix I

COURSES IN THE SERVICE PATH

Appendix J

COURSES IN THE WORSHIP PATH

Appendix K

COURSES IN THE EDUCATION PATH

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