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# Spiritual Formation and Trust Building Envisioned for Nerima Baptist Church's Leaders in Japan Through Group Spiritual Direction

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO:

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND TRUST BUILDING ENVISIONED

FOR NERIMA BAPTIST CHURCH'S LEADERS IN JAPAN THROUGH GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

PORTLAND SEMINARY

BY:

NOZOMU MAKITA

PROJECT FACULTY:

DR. DONNA K WALLACE

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2023



## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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This certifies that the doctoral Project Portfolio of

Nozomu Makita

has been approved by  
the Evaluation Committee on March 15, 2023  
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation.

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# Dedication

To the congregation of Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, who walk with me on a lifelong spiritual journey.

# Acknowledgments

No one can fully walk the spiritual journey alone. I am so grateful to walk this journey in the love of God and others.

Sachi Nakamura, the spiritual director, you have spoken words of wisdom to me at critical moments even before I entered Portland Seminary and offered your gifts as the keystone of the group spiritual direction. Sachi, without you, this project could not have been fulfilled.

The congregation of Nerima Baptist Church, you accepted my call to study spiritual formation abroad and sent me off to Portland with smiles and prayers, despite three years of COVID. Thank you.

Akira Izuta and Tadao Ishii, your pastoral leadership is an incredible legacy to the church.

MaryKate Morse, Ken Van Vliet, and Kurtley Knight, you have guided me through the process of putting down roots to bearing fruit and growing an orchard. Thanks to your leadership, I drink the Water of Life.

Loren Kerns, Clifford Berger, Heather Rainey, and Jen Macnab, you truly embody, "Be Known."

The wonderful cohort LSF6, The Awesome, you share honesty and vulnerability.

My project faculty, Donna K. Wallace, you always hold me in your gentle prayers. I cannot count how many times I have been saved by your words of prayers. The reassurance of being in your prayers guided my project journey.

Michie Takahashi, your way of life has set the direction of my life.

My wonderful parents, Mamoru and Ryoko, I'm blessed to be born as your child.

My wife, Momoyo, and four daughters, Yuzuri, Manaka, Asahi, and Mizuha. Thank you for always showing me the abundance of God's love.

# Epigraph

Jeremiah 1:7-8

But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

# Table of Contents

Dedication .....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Epigraph .....	v
Table of Contents .....	vi
List of Figures .....	ix
List of Tables.....	ix
Research Method.....	x
Abstract.....	xi
Introduction .....	1
Journey of the Project.....	1
Discovery Phase .....	1
Design Phase .....	2
Delivery Phase .....	2
Evaluation of Experience and Learning.....	3
Next Steps .....	4
Summative Reflection .....	4
Doctoral Project.....	6
Introduction .....	7
Presentation of Project.....	7
Introduction .....	7
Preparatory Phase .....	9
Finding The Spiritual Director .....	9
Reference Materials for Participation in Group Spiritual Direction .....	10
Finding Participants For Group Spiritual Direction .....	14
Approval of Group Spiritual Direction Trials at General Meeting of The Local Church .....	16
Summary of Preparatory Phase .....	17



Practical Phase.....	17
Description of the group spiritual direction at Nerima Baptist Church .....	17
Step-by-Step Session Contents.....	18
Details of Group Spiritual Direction Explanation Part .....	20
Details of Group Spiritual Direction Practice Part.....	52
Summary of Practice Phase.....	56
Feedback on Group Spiritual Direction Sessions .....	57
Feedback by Sachi Nakamura, Spiritual Director .....	57
Feedback from Participant.....	58
My Self-Assessment as a Participant.....	60
Summary of Feedback.....	61
Assessment.....	62
Project Launch Plan .....	64
Doctoral Project Description.....	65
Audience.....	65
Development Plan .....	65
Continuation of Group Spiritual Direction.....	65
Group Spiritual Direction 2.0 with New Members.....	65
Follow-up Group Spiritual Direction 1.0 Session.....	66
Searching for New Spiritual Directors .....	66
Spread of Group Spiritual Direction to the Congregation and Beyond .....	67
Development Workshop for Third Year and Beyond.....	67
One-day Retreat for congregations with the spiritual director .....	67
Development Process .....	67
Appendix A– Milestone 1 The NPO Charter.....	68
Appendix B– Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay .....	91
Appendix C–Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report .....	110
Appendix D–Milestone 4 Design Research Report .....	126

Appendix E–Project Appendix Documentation .....	136
Bibliography .....	171

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Formative Strands of Spiritual Formation .....	102
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## List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of the Group Spiritual Direction Sessions.....	56
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## Research Method

This Doctoral Project utilized a blended research and design methodology called 'Collaborative Design for Ministry and Nonprofit Contexts'. In Collaborative Design, practitioners work with stakeholder representatives to address a Need, Problem, or Opportunity (NPO) in their context. Using a combination of bibliographic resources, local knowledge derived from stakeholder Workshops, and an iterative process of continuous adjustment using 'just enough' feedback information at each juncture of development, practitioners produce an application-oriented Project that seeks to effect Christ-centered change.

## Abstract

Group spiritual direction with participant leaders within Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan, was introduced across eight monthly sessions wherein directees developed the practice of silence, listening to themselves, others, and Holy Spirit. The experience of being accepted by God and others through safe relationships found the church in a relational culture of authentic relationships. The residual effect was the experience of one's own full acceptance by God and others, which further carries potential for lasting impact on the leadership style of the church through the 1-on-1 interaction.

The group spiritual direction was facilitated by Sachi Nakamura, a spiritual director certified in the United States, conducted through an online platform. It was essential for participants to commit to the group spiritual direction voluntarily, not compulsively, as having an open heart to God and others had a great impact on group dynamics. While Group spiritual direction generally prohibits dual relationships, this experimental effort with three leaders from one local church revealed that participants were more open to the collective format than imagined. Even with initial anxiety about revealing one's heart to the same church leader, it became clear that trust was indeed fostered through the actual experience of the sessions. Self-evaluations of participants indicated that Group spiritual direction with a certified spiritual director as facilitator for members with open hearts created a safe, compassionate space wherein vulnerable hearts were held in peace, and opened to trust in God in new and empowering ways.

# Introduction

## Journey of the Project

My project was to develop group spiritual direction sessions for the leaders of Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan. Group spiritual direction was one effective means of intentional community practice for spiritual formation and trust building in the local church. The ministry of spiritual direction or group spiritual direction was not well known in the evangelical church in Japan, but with the help of a trained spiritual director, I reached out to church leaders and held eight group spiritual direction sessions each month. Group spiritual direction reminded participants that the journey of faith could not be walked alone. There was risk and anxiety in opening our vulnerable hearts to God and others, but the experience of being gently held, like a soap bubble, made the trust in the faith community more secure. This project realized my NPO (Need/Problem/Opportunity) statement: The experience of being accepted by God and others through safe relationships finds the church in a relational culture of authentic relationships.

## DISCOVERY PHASE

In Japan, the term spiritual formation itself was not very familiar, and those who knew about it understood it as a personal discipline or Catholic practice. I had organized retreats and other events to help members of the church in their personal formation, but I felt something was missing. But what was missing was not immediately apparent. Called as a pastor of Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan, I set out on a journey to explore spiritual formation for the local church.

At an online discovery workshop which included: local church members, a seminary teacher, a pastor, and a missionary in Canada as stakeholders, my first question, "How can we introduce spiritual formation to the local church in Japan?" led to an unexpected turn. A typical church member who had never heard of spiritual formation expressed strong concern that the way spiritual formation was introduced would negate the history and traditions of the church to date. Although the unexpected reaction upset me and I had to drastically change the workshop plan, the point was very illuminating and many participants agreed with it. The perspective confirmed the project's stance that the proposal should be made with love and based on understanding and respect for the faith journey of the Japanese church up to the present. It was my prayer throughout that this project, which was distant to the stakeholders at that point, would become their project as well. Also, recalling the failure of implementing successful examples from overseas without considering the Japanese context, the direction of the project was clarified as a proposal for a unique spiritual formation adapted to the situation of the local church. Not that I paid enough attention at the time, but a focus on community maturity as well as personal faith maturity emerged as one of the benefits of promoting spiritual transformation in the local church. One-on-one interviews with three influential individuals resulted in overwhelmingly positive feedback. All of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of my project to the Japanese church. The NPO Topic Expertise essay first revealed the biblical and theological foundation of spiritual formation based on the Trinity, key points in contextualization, and love for the congregation. Next, I investigated the

origins and concerns of the spiritual formation movement in evangelical churches. In addition, practices in local churches were collected. Thus, in the discovery phase, I received stakeholder input on the topic of spiritual formation for the local church in Japan and investigated it from biblical, historical, and practical perspectives.

## **DESIGN PHASE**

The second year was for the design of the project. An online workshop was held to design a feasible approach to spiritual formation for a local church in Tokyo, with members of the local church in Tokyo, an American chaplain with missionary experience in Japan, and a Japanese missionary in Canada as stakeholders. The unexpected upset from last year's workshop made me nervous about holding this workshop, but the most significant aspect was the more cooperative attitude of the participants from the local church. The key findings for designing were: starting small, a focus on Japanese culture where it is difficult to speak honestly, the need for a safe place, a sense of playfulness, and spontaneity rather than coercion. With these considerations in mind, two different directional concept pitches were created:

- Monthly Small Group Spiritual Direction in the church
- Monthly Spiritual Formation Course in the church
- Spiritual Exercises in Small Groups

Two of these three were developed as prototypes. The first was the invitation to group spiritual direction. The scope of the prototype included explanatory materials about group spiritual direction and a process with time for prayer and response. The invitation process was critically important because the dynamics of group spiritual direction would not work well without participants understanding the importance of opening their hearts to God and others. The second prototype was the implementation of a spiritual formation program based on Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises for the small groups. Instead of increasing their biblical knowledge, participants practiced how to pray in connection with their daily lives. Additional background research focused on group spiritual direction. This survey organized basic information about group spiritual direction and investigated experts' perspectives on concerns about group spiritual direction. Considering the prototype and background research, the most viable prototype (MVP) is a monthly group spiritual direction for core leaders of Nerima Baptist Church. I identified group spiritual direction as one way to fulfill the need for a safe place where people could confide their true feelings.

## **DELIVERY PHASE**

The scope of the project was for the leaders of Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan. This group included men and women, pastors and congregation representatives. In contrast to the one-on-one spiritual direction, the group made mutual trust more significant. The preparatory phase required a certified spiritual director as facilitator and a minimum of three participants from the church. As a practical phase, eight monthly sessions were practiced. In order to familiarize the participants with the dynamics of group spiritual direction, the spiritual director gave an explanation of group spiritual direction for the first four sessions, and the content of the sessions was simple at

first. Payment for the spiritual directors was made from the church's pastoral activity budget. Benchmarks were set as follows:

- After a period of prayer and reading materials with basic knowledge about group spiritual direction and the intention of trying group spiritual direction with leaders of the local church, potential participants felt comfortable making the decision to participate or not as indicated by interviews about the reasons for the decision.
- At least three participants signed up to participate in the group spiritual direction from April to January.
- The trial of the group spiritual guidance was presented to the local church's general assembly for approval.
- A certified spiritual director who speaks Japanese participated as a facilitator to help the group spiritual direction proceed effectively through one-on-one interviews with participants.
- The content of the sessions progressed in a step-by-step manner to help the smooth participation as indicated by self-evaluation of group members.
- Participants felt spiritually secure in the sessions and had a sense of vulnerable hearts being held through the group interactions as indicated by the participant's own self-evaluation.

Feedback was collected through one-on-one interviews with the people involved, divided into preparatory and practical phases. The long-term project goal is the continuation of group spiritual direction sessions with Nerima Baptist Church leaders and the spread of the practice to the congregation. Furthermore, I would like to use it in the future for denominations and other churches and pastors that wish to join.

## **Evaluation of Experience and Learning**

This project was a journey of faith to an unfamiliar land invited by God. I never wavered in my call to spiritual formation for the local church, but various fears and concerns swept over me. Since this was my first experience studying in a second language, I repeatedly worried about my ability to finish the program. My project faculty, Dr. Donna Wallace, always held me gently in her prayers. Without her encouragement and prayers, I would have dropped out after the first few months. The Lord provided me with a wonderful mentor and companion for this project journey. The experience of being supported in my anxiety-filled life helped me to support others.

I also faced failure and risk many times, which made me anxious. In particular, the first workshop did not go as planned, and strong concerns from one church member made me nervous about the future of the project. Receiving an honest response in this early phase of the project was a real help, but I needed time to take this feedback in. There was a suggestion to change the project's focus from the local church, but I continued to stand in my calling. Thankfully, the concerns that arose during the first workshop were settled over time to a level that both the stakeholder and I could accept, therefore we were able to move forward with changes to adapt. In the end, the process of



that person becoming an understanding collaborator in the project was an important lesson for me. Not only did I learn about tolerance for failure and risk, but it was also an experience of journeying together as pastors of a local church. Things did not move at my pace. I had to wait. Often I was out of control, but through the process, a space was created for God to work. As a result, over the past few years my passion to be involved in spiritual formation in Nerima Baptist Church gradually expanded. I connected with Japanese trained spiritual directors. More and more of my church members expressed interest. Slowly and surely my project grew into *our* project.

## Next Steps

The development plan of the project is for the continuation of the group spiritual direction for the leaders in the Nerima Baptist Church and the spread of its influence within the church. The second year of the group spiritual direction (group spiritual direction 2.0) will invite different leaders from the church than the first year. While the bar for participation in group spiritual direction will be not lowered, testimonials from last year's participants can help encourage participation. By changing members from year to year, leaders of the church share the essence of group spiritual direction mindset. Follow-up group spiritual direction session will be the first session in six months with members of group spiritual direction 1.0. It will serve as an opportunity to remind directees of their experience and its impact. Also, searching for a second or third Japanese spiritual director who is certified in Christian spiritual direction will be essential to continue and develop group spiritual direction in the church.

The project will not concentrate solely on the group spiritual direction sessions themselves, but will gradually shift to a period of evaluating their impact on the church and considering ways to make them more influential. The development workshop will be set up as a place to pray with stakeholders for the expansion of group spiritual direction to congregations in the third year and beyond. I will invite directees, the spiritual director, and potential future participants as stakeholders to participate in the workshop. Since the project has already begun to take concrete shape, workshop participants will see even more of a sense of their own project than in the past two workshops. Also, the spiritual director will conduct a one-day retreat for the congregation. The retreat will provide an opportunity to explain and practice listening to God and others for congregations interested in spiritual formation and group spiritual direction. Further, I will continue my own study and practices with hope of one day being a certified spiritual director in tandem with pastoring. Additionally, I will turn my attention to those in need outside of Nerima Baptist Church.

## Summative Reflection

It may not be an exaggeration to say that the longing within me was kneaded into a holy longing and in collaboration with those who resonated with the holy longing, it was realized here in Japan. It began with a vague idea of spiritual formation for Nerima Baptist Church. To explain the desire that lay within me, I conducted biblical and theological research on spiritual formation, examined practices, conducted design workshops, and a concrete form of group spiritual direction emerged. It was not a path for all, but a unique path for Nerima Baptist Church. The spiritual director willingly took on the role of facilitator to enhance the quality of group spiritual direction, and someone who

had never even heard of spiritual formation until a few years ago made the decision to offer herself to the dynamics of group spiritual direction. The final session of the group spiritual direction was truly a sacred space for each participant. With the experience of the spiritual director, the offering of the participants' vulnerability and the gentle holding for each other, everyone certainly felt the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the group. This movement was a slow but sure step forward in the spiritual formation of Nerima Baptist Church.

As a pastor of Nerima Baptist Church, the attitude of listening and responding to God and others used in the group spiritual direction sessions had a profound impact on my leadership style. The discipline of paying attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit already at work here and now helped me follow the leadership of Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. Through group spiritual direction, I also reaffirmed that it is essential to need each other's voices as the body of Christ. In addition, my natural presence before God and others, which I noticed during the group spiritual direction session, gave me direction for my usual leadership behavior.

This project was not a fleeting dream but part of the reality of God's Kingdom. God's dreams always go beyond my imagination. Glory to God in reaching those in need of an authentic relationship with God and others through group spiritual direction sessions.

# Doctoral Project

## Introduction

Group spiritual direction with participant leaders within a local church in Tokyo Japan was introduced across eight monthly sessions wherein directees developed the practice of silence, listening to themselves, others, and the Holy Spirit. The residual effect was the experience of one's own full acceptance by God and others, which further carries potential for lasting impact on the leadership style of the church. This project was a preparation and practice of a group spiritual direction trial for leaders, including members of the congregation of Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan, where I pastor.

## Presentation of Project

### Introduction

The last session was about to begin. Each participant joined from our respective locations via Zoom. One of the positive aspects of COVID was the general acceptance of this form of meeting, allowing a sense of private space, but also communal gathering. No one felt uncomfortable connecting Chicago, USA, and Tokyo, Japan. The group started with four members, but during the course of the meeting one of them could no longer participate due to mental illness. The group prayed for that person and continued with three members.

Before the appointed time, everyone logged in, muted, quiet and on time. The spiritual director lit the candle and turned the attention to the Holy Spirit. The meeting began with a moment of silence. Waiting for God in silence was one of the cornerstones of our group's spiritual direction. After the spiritual director's opening prayer, the check-in took place. Those of us who had been nervous or anxious in the first session did not look anxious at all, thanks to our shared experience of the past ten months. In peace and trust, we shared our current situation. After a brief check-in, participants determined the order of presentations. The cycle was repeated: a few minutes of silence, 15 minutes of presenter sharing, one minute of clarifying questions, five minutes of silence, and 15 minutes of response from the group.

Tears welled up in the eyes of several directees as the presenter spoke and the group responded. It was a moment of genuine beauty. Stories were told that came from the depths of the heart like fragile soap bubbles before God and others, which were gently held by all participants together with God. This was truly a safe place where vulnerable hearts could dare to be known.

.....

I am a pastor at Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan. The term spiritual direction is not widely known in evangelical churches in Japan.<sup>1</sup> If anyone has heard of it, they might associate it with a Catholic practice. A few translated books on spiritual formation, including spiritual direction, have appeared, but they are mainly about personal spiritual formation and disciplines. It is still rare to hear about spiritual formation or spiritual direction in the context of a local church.

It happened that the information was immediately passed on spontaneously within the local churches in Japan, where the communal atmosphere promoted discussion. Because of the relational nature of the community, it might be difficult to find a place in the local churches in Japan where personal information was kept private and people felt safe to talk about their vulnerabilities. The watchword of the church was "Bumpy is Good." God's grace accepted our bumpiness. This was where spiritual formation began. Therefore, whether they were aware of their hidden needs or not, it was desirable that opportunities were provided for leaders to honestly admit their weaknesses and experience being touched by God's love. In response, group spiritual direction was attempted to meet this hidden need.

Instead of leading, I joined the group circle as a participant. By receiving group spiritual direction together with the leaders in the church, it was expected that I could strengthen the relationship of trust with the leaders in the presence of the Lord Jesus. In addition, since I was not a spiritual director but a fellow pastor of a local church, I could ensure the quality of the group spiritual direction sessions by having a certified spiritual director who could speak Japanese as a facilitator for the group. Thus, the goal of the project was to share the experience of being accepted by God and others through group spiritual direction with church leaders who feel invited by God.

This project was divided into the preparatory phase and the practical phase. The preparatory phase involved finding a spiritual director who could speak Japanese, finding leaders within the church who expressed their willingness to participate in group spiritual direction, and obtaining approval for this effort at the church's general assembly. The practical phase included starting monthly sessions in April according to the Japanese church calendar, adopting a step-by-step approach to ensure that group spiritual direction proceeds smoothly, adjusting the content as needed, and receiving feedback from the facilitator and participants.

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<sup>1</sup> In Japan, there is still no organization that trains spiritual directors with an evangelical background. The exact number of certified evangelical spiritual directors who can speak Japanese is unknown, but it is believed that there are only a few.

## Preparatory Phase

### FINDING THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Sachi Nakamura, a professional Christian book translator, author, and spiritual director, was one of the catalysts of the spiritual formation movement in Japan over the past few years. Her book, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai* [Being Hospitable to the Souls of Others: An Invitation to Spiritual Direction],<sup>2</sup> published in December 2021 (for the Table of Contents, see Appendix E1), was welcomed not only by evangelicals, but also by the Catholic Church. Father Shimizu wrote, "Nakamura wrote this book in the hope that others would experience the spiritual direction that she experienced herself. It is wonderful that we can share the same experience beyond the boundaries of Catholicism and Protestantism."<sup>3</sup> Registered as the Spiritual Director of the Transforming Center of Illinois, her profile reads:

Sachi Nakamura (Homewood, IL)

*Remote and/or In-Person - Not accepting new directees at this time*

*Training: Tending the Holy - Christos Center for Spiritual Formation*

I have been involved with a Japanese ministry called JCFN (Japanese Christian Fellowship Network) for over 30 years. I am a Christian book translator and writer by profession. I've translated books by Dallas Willard, Scot McKnight, NT Wright, Robert Mulholland, John Ortberg, Henry Cloud, and many more. My educational background is BA in psychology, and Ph. D. in cognitive psychology. Graduate of TC15. Over the last 20 years I've gone through a major faith transition. Thus I have a particular passion for accompanying those who are going through their faith transition, although all is welcome. Mother to four (one in heaven), wife to a geophysicist.

Areas of Interest or Specialty: Transition of faith, Grief, Contemplative practices, Integration of science and Christian faith, Boundaries, Dark night. I mostly meet with Japanese directees.<sup>4</sup>

I became acquainted with Nakamura in 2015 through the president of Covenant Seminary in Tokyo, Japan, from which I graduated. I was interested in spiritual formation and had been praying about going to seminary abroad, as there were no seminaries in Japan that offered specialized studies in

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<sup>2</sup> Sachi Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai* (Tokyo, Japan: Amendo, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Hiroshi Shimizu, "Spiritual Direction," *Catholic Shinbun (Japan)*, October 30, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> "Spiritual Directors," Transforming Center, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://transformingcenter.org/spiritual-direction-4/spiritual-directors/>.

spiritual formation. Since Nakamura lived in Chicago, I had consulted with her several times about seminaries in the United States. Among the list of seminaries she introduced me to was Portland Seminary. She had prayed for me on my spiritual journey even before I was admitted to this program. Therefore, I asked her to be the facilitator for the group spiritual direction. I informed her of the main objectives of the project, agreeing on the duration, potential dates, expected number of participants, and costs by the end of January 2022.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR PARTICIPATION IN GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

It was necessary to gather at least three members, including myself, who were leaders ready to open their hearts to God and others for the group spiritual direction. In other words, due to the nature of group spiritual direction, it was not possible to force leaders to participate. Each had to pray and confirm their readiness to open their hearts in the session to God and others before participating. Since many of the potential participants were not familiar with group spiritual direction, I prepared materials to give a brief explanation. This material was revised in response to feedback from potential participants. Reference materials for participating in group spiritual direction included my initial motivation, what spiritual direction is, what group spiritual direction is, and why group spiritual direction at Nerima Baptist Church.

### *My First Motivation for Spiritual Direction*

My first introduction to the terminology of spiritual direction was reading Eugene Peterson's book *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*,<sup>5</sup> which was introduced at Covenant Seminary in Tokyo, Japan in 2013. In that book, Peterson said that there were three main pastoral ministries: Prayer, Scripture, and Spiritual Direction. The first two were understandable, but I was not familiar with the third. I was very interested in what Peterson meant by "Spiritual Direction," which he listed as a ministry alongside the first two. This triggered my interest in spiritual direction and led me to gather information on the subject.

### *What is Spiritual Direction?*

Spiritual direction is one means of helping us to focus our attention on the reality of God. William Barry and William Connolly classically define spiritual direction as help "given by one believer to another that enables the latter to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship."<sup>6</sup> Also, according to Angela Reed, "spiritual guidance is a ministry of companionship in which Christians support one another in their Christian formation by

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<sup>5</sup> Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 8.

helping each other to notice God's presence and activity in their lives."<sup>7</sup> It is clear that spiritual direction is a ministry that helps people to turn their attention to God's presence and activity in their lives.

Sachi Nakamura identifies the following seven characteristics of spiritual direction:

- Purpose: The purpose is to be there with the person to open his/her heart to God, to pay attention to God's presence, and to respond to it.
- Listening and Silence: It is often said that we listen with three ears to hear: the voice of the Holy Spirit, the voice of the other person, and the voice of God.
- Holy Spirit is the Leader: The relationship between people is flat. Together we explore the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Prayer: The session itself becomes a prayer, an offering to God.
- Trust: Trust in God and in each other is the foundation.
- Safe Place: This is not a place to judge each other. We don't have to say the right thing. It is a place where we can be who we are.
- Contemplation: This is a time to turn to inner awareness. Away from the hustle and bustle.<sup>8</sup>

Alice Fryling, in her book *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction*, reflects on her experience as follows. "Over the years, my conversations in spiritual direction have continually reminded me that God is always waiting to extend grace and love to me in order for me to extend grace and love to others."<sup>9</sup> I would like to invite the leaders of my church to this experience.

#### *What is Group Spiritual Direction?*

Spiritual direction is done one-on-one by the director and directee, while group spiritual direction is done as a group. The introduction of group spiritual direction process by Rose Mary Dougherty is said to have brought group spiritual direction to the forefront of discussions in this area. Regarding group spiritual direction, Dougherty states, "in small group spiritual direction, people often become aware of God's ways in their hearts as they hear how God seems to be present for

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<sup>7</sup> Angela H. Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community: Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai*, 44-64.

<sup>9</sup> Alice Fryling, *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 14.



others and as they become conscious of God's presence with them as a group."<sup>10</sup> Closing in on Dougherty's point, Fryling specifies:

The purpose of group spiritual direction is to provide a place where individuals can experience what it means to be listened to and loved by others, so that they can learn to listen more attentively to God in their daily lives and be used by God to spread God's grace and love throughout the world.

In other words, whereas spiritual direction focuses attention on God in a one-on-one relationship between a trained director and directee, group spiritual direction finds God at work in a relationship between members of a group.

### *An Example of Group Spiritual Direction in Practice*

Suggested Format by Fryling:

The following schedule is based on a one-hour meeting with five participants.

Gathering of participants—5 minutes

Opening time of quiet—15 minutes

Possibilities for this time include

- silence
- quiet music
- guided meditation, Scripture reading or spiritual reading

Brief check-in time—10 minutes

Each member shares for about 2 minutes from their own lives.

Group spiritual direction—30 minutes

Directee presents—10 minutes

Time of silence—2 minutes

Group responds and interacts with directee—15 minutes

Time of silent prayer for directee—2 minutes

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<sup>10</sup> Rose Mary Dougherty, *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 35-36.

Time for directee to debrief about how the experience felt– 1 minute

If the group is meeting for two hours, a second directee can present. Or the group may decide to have a longer response time to one directee.<sup>11</sup>

### *Why do Group Spiritual Direction at Nerima Baptist Church?*

In other countries, there are many courses and groups among evangelicals that take two years to learn spiritual direction, but in Japan, it has not progressed that far. I planned to begin a spiritual director training course at the Jesuit Spirituality Center *Seseragi*<sup>12</sup> in Tokyo, Japan, from 2019. (But from 2020 I took a temporary break.) A mentor at *Seseragi* said, "Spiritual directors generally help people discover how God is at work in the directee. Not only that, a well-skilled spiritual director can help an organization grow in discernment." Since my burden is to provide spiritual direction, that mentor's words inspired me to finally approach the board members entrusted with the leadership of the church about spiritual direction. The timing was perfect since I am embarking on this immersive doctoral program where I am experiencing paths and practices of spiritual formation and direction during class times and retreats. Recognizing that open-mindedness and acceptance transcends language barriers and demonstrates God's love, the board members agreed to support my research in group spiritual direction.

To that end, Sachi Nakamura, a certified spiritual director in the United States, was able to assist as a facilitator for my group's spiritual direction sessions. This was a miraculous development since, in December 2021, Nakamura wrote a book in Japanese titled *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai* [Being Hospitable to the Souls of Others: An Invitation to Spiritual Direction].<sup>13</sup> This book addresses the theme of my project exactly making Nakamura the most ideal spiritual director for my project.

My interest in spiritual formation comes from contemplating this truth: The Church is the Body of Christ, and Jesus is the head of the Body. I believe that the important thing in church activities is to keep the leadership of Jesus in place. Furthermore, we can trust that Jesus knows our personalities and experiences so well that we can be sure to let His leadership take care of us. It is my hope that

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<sup>11</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 129.

<sup>12</sup> Spirituality Center *Seseragi* was founded in 1998 with the Jesuit Theological Seminary in Nerima City, Tokyo, Japan as its office. Priests, monastics, and lay people work together to find ways to deepen Christian spirituality in Japan, and to seek the image of the Church as a praying Church. Activities include: 1. help baptized persons deepen their prayer life, 2. spiritual direction, 3. daily meditation - daily prayer based on Spiritual Exercises, 9 steps, 4. daily prayer meetings in parishes and monasteries, silent meditation meetings, etc., 5. formation of prayer directors, and 6. Website. Through these activities, the Center seeks to meet the needs of those who desire deep human and spiritual growth in faith through personal prayer experiences.

<sup>13</sup> Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai*.

by receiving spiritual direction together as a group, we can share the sense of following Jesus' leadership among those who are in turn entrusted with the leadership of the church. It is my hope that by receiving spiritual direction together as a group, we can share the sense of following Jesus' leadership among those who are in turn entrusted with the leadership of the church. It is important to open up one's inner self on the spot when receiving spiritual direction together. Nakamura confirmed this for me as well. She asked me if I was comfortable with the fact that some pastors are not so open when they are with their congregation. There are parts of me that feel it is too great a challenge, but since it was presented as an opportunity, I was willing to take the plunge. I vocalized this to the other potential participants. "If you feel invited to come out together before God, please join the group. However, I believe that we can create such opportunities in the future, and if you feel that this time is not appropriate for you, please feel free to decline."

## **FINDING PARTICIPANTS FOR GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

It was necessary to gather at least three members, including myself, with leaders who were ready to open their hearts to God and others for the group spiritual direction. I invited them to the group spiritual direction, allowed time for prayer and discernment, and received responses from potential participants. Finding participants for the Project included: 1. Invitation for Potential Participants, 2. Responses from Potential Participants, and 3. Reasons for Declining to Participate.

**INVITATION FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS** I prepared and sent a letter to potential participants explaining the significance of starting group spiritual direction in the church. The following is an English translation of the Japanese text.

### *Invitation for Group Spiritual Direction*

Praise the Lord!

Thank you for your continued prayers for my Doctor of Ministry at Portland Seminary of George Fox University in Portland, Oregon, USA. I am working on a three-year project required for graduation on the possibility of spiritual formation in the Japanese church.

There is never one way to promote spiritual formation in the church. The needs of churches vary depending on their traditions and circumstances. Some of the initiatives have already begun in a natural way within Nerima Baptist Church. I am considering working on group spiritual direction currently. The attached documents will explain more about spiritual direction and group spiritual direction. It is my hope that by having congregational leaders and pastors receive spiritual direction together within Nerima Baptist Church through group spiritual direction, we will be able to make decisions as Nerima Baptist Church that will bring us closer to seeking the will of God. Would you be willing to join this effort?

Specifically, nine sessions will be held from April to February 2022 (August and December will be closed). The time slots will be from 9:00 to 11:00 (11:30) on the third Saturday of the month, Japan time. If you participate, please attend all sessions unless you have special circumstances. I would

also appreciate your cooperation as I hope to receive feedback from you at the first session and around the fall and winter.

Thank you for taking the time to think about this. If you feel God is calling you to join this effort, I invite you to participate. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at any time.

### **RESPONSES FROM POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

*Pastoral Team Member (January 26, 2022)*

"I have been interested in receiving spiritual direction for some time and would be happy to participate."

*Church Board Member A (January 30, 2022)*

"I would like to cooperate with the project, although I am unclear about the definition of group spiritual direction, etc. I am not sure if a group spiritual direction with a combination of pastor and congregation who know each other well will be possible."

*Church Board Member B (February 24, 2022)*

"Thank you for your kind invitation letter about the spiritual direction session. After giving it some time to think about it, I have decided to decline my participation in the sessions starting in April. In addition to your letter, I also read Nakamura's book, and after thinking about it for a while, I decided not to participate."

### **REASONS FOR DECLINING TO PARTICIPATE**

The reasons for not joining are three: lack of sufficient motivation, length of time, and a group of acquaintances. The verbatim responses were:

*Lack of Sufficient Motivation*

"I have considered my desire to try and participate in the sessions and my time constraints (household chores, children's school and family events and things to do, involvement with my father, and my own plans). I honestly thought that in my current situation, it would be a bit too much, and if I still wanted to do it, I would need strong motivation, but not that much right now."

*Length and Frequency of Sessions*

"I find it difficult that there are nine sessions of two to two and a half hours each, and that a commitment to attend all of them is required."

*A Group of Acquaintances*

"I assumed on my own that the session would take the form of a five-person session, including facilitator. If that is the case, I am a little concerned about whether we can smoothly establish a

relationship between the speaker and the listener, which is important for the success of the session. For example, if it were a one-on-one session with Pastor Makita, I think it would be fine.

In the past, I studied to become a (beginner level) industrial counselor. I had to talk about all my problems without hiding anything, and I think I was able to do so because we had just the right relationship (no repercussions if people knew about my private life), psychological resistance was low, and we all had the same clear goal (to pass the counselor's exam), which was a special environment, in a sense. In other words, I am honestly concerned that there may be difficult to say or to be honest because we know each other and because we are members who usually talk with each other at board meetings.

I am not comfortable with the fact that the participants are church members who know each other, and that there are several church members in the group."

In summary, after receiving feedback from potential participants, it became clear that the process of prayerfully finding people who are ready for group spiritual direction is one of the processes that needs the most attention. One should take care in being intentionally "invitational," allowing potential participants to feel comfortable choosing whether, or not, to join. I had to be careful about the difficulty of having private conversations with people who already know each other in the same church, especially in a communal community such as Japan.

## **APPROVAL OF GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION TRIALS AT GENERAL MEETING OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The General Assembly of Nerima Baptist Church was held on April 24, 2022. As one of the specific activities of the pastor's basic policy of "Sitting at the Feet of Jesus," a trial of Group Spiritual Direction was proposed as follows:

### *Together Sitting at the Feet of Jesus*

It is Jesus Himself who leads each of us and the Church. Opportunities will be provided to listen to Jesus together through a variety of situations. The following activities, including new ones that may or may not work, will be undertaken to achieve the "Bumpy is Good" for individuals, local church, and society...

"Group Spiritual Direction" will be conducted by the pastor, the pastoral team member, and the board member, together with a "spiritual director." ("Spiritual direction" is a ministry that helps people become more sensitive to God's leading and deepens prayer with the help of a professionally trained "spiritual director.")<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Group Spiritual Direction, specific activities included emailing group devotions to those who wish to attend, monthly spiritual formation gatherings, and encouraging individual meetings with the pastor. The basic policy was voted on and passed unanimously. Thus, the trial of

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<sup>14</sup> Nerima Baptist Church, "2022 Nerima Baptist Church General Assembly Yearbook" (2022 Nerima Baptist Church General Assembly, Tokyo, Japan: Nerima Baptist Church, 2022), 5.

group spiritual direction was to be practiced while being remembered in the prayers of the church members.

### **SUMMARY OF PREPARATORY PHASE**

- The search for a certified spiritual director who can speak Japanese with experience facilitating group spiritual direction for Japanese Christians began.
- Leaders in Nerima Baptist Church were open to receive a trial run of group spiritual direction, discern and respond to participation.
- The minimum number of people targeted were successfully gathered.
- One person who had concerns about the dynamics of group spiritual direction decided to participate. Therefore, it is desirable that the person's concerns be dispelled during the practical phase.
- The feedback from the leader who did not participate was valuable in identifying hurdles to overcome for the expansion of group spiritual direction within the church in the future.
- Approval of the group spiritual direction trial at the church's General Assembly was helpful because the trial was conducted in the prayers of the church members.

### **Practical Phase**

This was the phase to try it out with the leaders who had prayed and then expressed their willingness to participate in the group spiritual direction. Although some of those who have decided to participate feel uncertain about various aspects, the goal of the practical phase was that through the sessions directees open their hearts to God and others with peace of mind, and their vulnerable hearts are accepted, thus making their trust in God and others more secure.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AT NERIMA BAPTIST CHURCH**

Facilitator: Sachi Nakamura

Participants: Pastoral Team Member, Church Board Member, Pastor Nozomu Makita

Schedule: Second Saturday 9-11 a.m. (Japan time), 8 times from April (except August and December)

1. Saturday, April 9, 2022
2. Saturday, May 14, 2022
3. Saturday, June 11, 2022
4. Saturday, July 9, 2022
5. Saturday, September 10, 2022

6. Saturday, October 8, 2022

7. Saturday, November 12, 2022

8. Saturday, January 14, 2023

## References

- Sachi Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai* [Being Hospitable to the Souls of Others: An Invitation to Spiritual Direction] (Tokyo, Japan: Amendo, 2021)
- Lois A. Lindbloom, *Prayerful Listening: Cultivating Discernment in Community* (Northfield: Ashmore Ink, 2007)
- Lois A. Lindbloom, *Is That You, God?: Cultivating Discernment as a Way of Life* (Northfield: Ashmore Ink, 2004)
- Guidelines for Spiritual Direction Groups (prepared by Nakamura, see Appendix E2)

## Description of Group Spiritual Direction

The group spiritual direction for the leaders of Nerima Baptist Church proceeded with consideration in two ways for those new to this form of group. The first was a step-by-step approach with a simple program of sessions at first, and then the program gradually became more complex. We began by concentrating on listening, the heart of the group spiritual direction, and gradually added responses. The second was to have an explanatory part for the first four sessions. Instead of starting the practice of group spiritual direction from the beginning of the session, the spiritual director explained the important aspects of listening and discernment for the practice. These two methods effectively created the dynamics of group spiritual direction.

## STEP-BY-STEP SESSION CONTENTS

In order to become familiar with the practice of group spiritual direction, a step-by-step approach was adopted. Step one was to focus on silence and listening, which was the core activity. If the group members prayerfully listened while offering themselves as God would offer, the presenter could embody an experience of holy acceptance while speaking. Responses began in step two. The response was not to express personal opinions, but to join in the prayer that God was interceding for the presenter. It took time and practice to get used to this kind of response, so the spiritual director helped by giving explanations before the practice and by giving practical examples in the response. Step 3 was expected to increase the dynamics within the group and deepen the relationship by allowing more time for sharing and responding.

### **Step One**

1. Silence and Prayer

2. Check-in

3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (5min) \*
5. Silence (2min)
6. Group Process
7. Prayer at the End of the Session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

### ***Step Two***

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (5~6min) \*
5. Reflection in Silence (4min) \*
6. Response (5~7min) \*
7. Silence (1min)
8. Group Process (5min)
9. Prayer at the End of the session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

### ***Step Three***

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (10-12min) \*
5. Questions to Confirm Points that were not Clear (1-2min) \*
6. Reflection in Silence (5min) \*
7. Response (10-15min) \*



8. Silence (1min)

9. Group Process (5min)

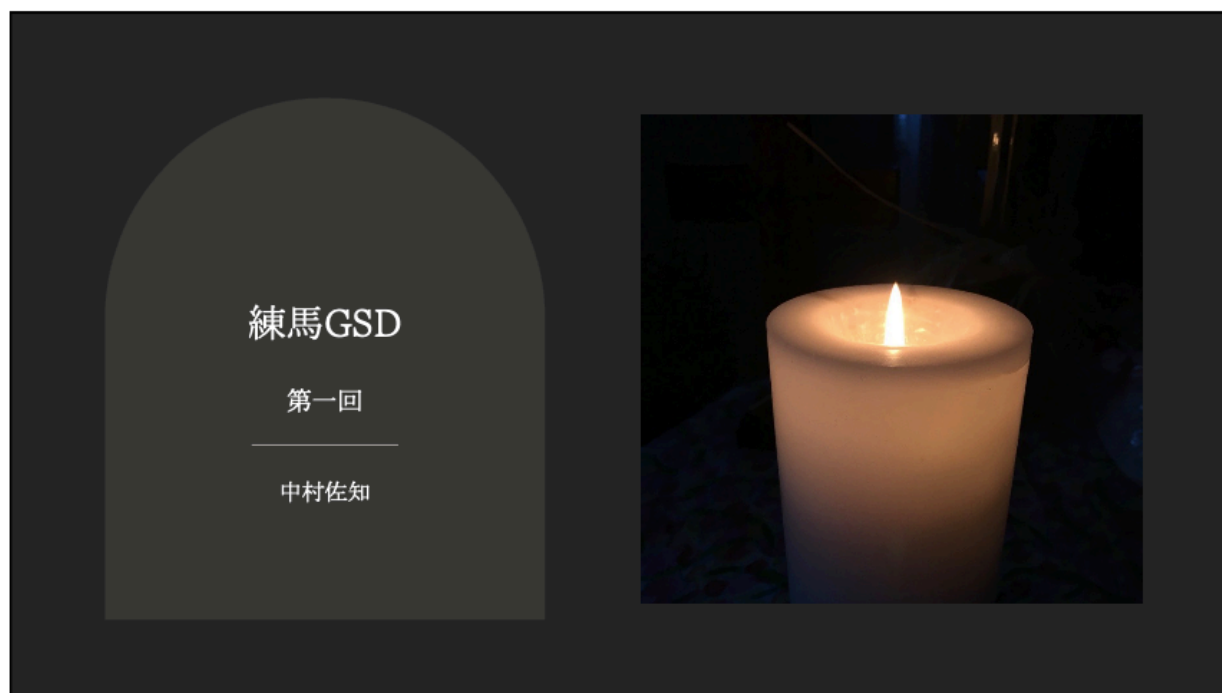
10. Prayer at the End of the Session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

### **DETAILS OF GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION EXPLANATION PART**

The first four sessions had an explanation part before the practice part of group spiritual direction. After the explanation, a question-and-answer session was held to deepen the understanding of group spiritual direction. All materials for the explanation part were prepared in Japanese by the facilitator, Sachi Nakamura. Here were the explanatory parts of Session 1 and Session 2. (For the explanatory parts of sessions 3 and 4, see Appendix E3.) The presentation was given in Japanese. The Japanese slides used are included below, and following each slide is its English translation.

#### ***Explanation Part of Session One***



1

Nerima Baptist Church Group Spiritual Direction, First Session, Sachi Nakamura

## Collect (特祷)

神よ、あなたはすべての人の心をご覧になられます。  
 あなたはすべての願いをご存じです。  
 あなたに隠されているものは何ひとつありません。  
 あなたの霊を注いで私の心の思いをどうぞ清めてください。  
 そうすれば私は完全な愛を持ってあなたを愛し、  
 あなたにふさわしくあなたを褒め称えることができるでしょう。  
 アーメン。

(Book of Common Prayer より)

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2

The Collect for Purity

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen. <sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 67.

## クリスチャンの霊的同伴とは

一人のクリスチャンが、神様との関係をより深めたいと思っているもう一人のクリスチャンと定期的に会って、安全な場所でなされる会話を通して、その人が自分の日々の生活の中にある神様のご臨在やお働き、神様の御声に注意を払い、神様に応答するのを助けること。

3

What is Christian Spiritual Direction?

A regular meeting of one Christian with another Christian who wants to deepen his or her relationship with God, to help that person pay attention to God's presence and work in his or her daily life and respond to God's voice through conversations that take place in a safe place.

- ・ Group Spiritual Direction (GSD)
- ・ 霊的同伴グループ
- ・ グループによる霊的同伴
- ・ 聖なる傾聴のグループ
- ・ 観想的傾聴の実践

などの呼び方がある

4

This activity is called:

- Group Spiritual Direction (GSD)
- Spiritual Direction by Group
- Sacred Listening Groups
- Contemplative Listening Practice, etc.

### 1対1の同伴

- ・ 同伴者と被同伴者の役割が固定している。
- ・ 同伴者はトレーニングを受けている。
- ・ セッションの進め方に特に決まったフォーマットはない。

### グループでの同伴

- ・ メンバーが順番に分ち合いをし(プレゼンター／フォーカスパーソン)、残りのメンバー全員が同伴者の役割を担う。
  - ・ ファシリテーター(タイムキーパー)がいる。
  - ・ 特定のフォーマットに従う。
- 

5

#### One-to-One Direction

- The roles of director and directee are fixed.
- The director is trained.
- There is no specific format for how the session should proceed.

#### Group Direction

- Each member takes a turn sharing (presenter/focus person), and all remaining members assume the role of director.
- There is a facilitator (timekeeper).
- Follow a specific format.

## 霊的同伴の特徴

- ・ 目的
- ・ 傾聴と沈黙
- ・ 祈り
- ・ 対等な関係
- ・ 信頼
- ・ 安全な場
- ・ 観想的

（『魂をもてなす』より）

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6

Characteristics of Spiritual Direction<sup>16</sup>

- Purpose
- Listening and Silence
- Prayer
- Equal Relationship
- Trust
- Safe Place
- Contemplative

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<sup>16</sup> Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai*, 44–64.

- ・ 目的：問題解決や悩み相談、知識やスキルの習得などではなく、共に神を観て、神に聴くこと

「信仰の友や信仰共同体と一緒に旅をする目的は、各人が持つ神への願いに互いに耳を傾け、その願いを互いの中に育み、その願いと一致する生き方を模索することにおいて互いに支え合うことである。」

ルース・ヘイリー・バートン

7

Purpose: to see and listen to God together, not to solve problems, talk about concerns, or acquire knowledge or skills.

The purpose of journeying together in spiritual friendship and spiritual community (whether there are just two of you or whether you are in a small group) is to listen to one another's desire for God, to nurture that desire in each other and to support one another in seeking a way of life that is consistent with that desire.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 169.

- ・ 傾聴と沈黙 : Listening for God on behalf of others.

8

Listening and Silence: Listening for God on behalf of others.

- ・ 祈り : 神の臨在の中に入り、聖霊がその人のためにすでに祈っている祈りにJoinする. Holding space for God.

9

Prayer: Enter the presence of God and join in prayer with the prayer the Holy Spirit is already praying for the person. Holding space for God.



- ・ 対等な関係：皆が巡礼者

10

Equal relationship: Everyone is a pilgrim.

- ・ 信頼：聖霊はすでにその人の人生で働いておられる。自分で解決策や知恵などを探るのではなく、Let it happen. Let it emerge.

11

Trust: The Holy Spirit is already at work in the person's life. Don't search for solutions, wisdom, etc. on your own. Let it happen. Let it emerge.

- ・ 観想的 : Openness, Spaciousness, Receptivity, Reverence, Compassion
- 

12

Contemplative: Openness, Spaciousness, Receptivity, Reverence, Compassion

- ・ 安全な場 : 守秘義務、ジャッジしない、教えようとしな
- 

13

Safe Space: Confidentiality, Don't Judge, Don't Try to Teach

## グループに参加する上でのコミットメント

- ・ 各人がそれぞれに、神との間に正直な関係を持つよう心を定める。
  - ・ 祈りを込めた傾聴と応答によって、グループプロセスに心を込めて参加する。
  - ・ 自分の魂の旅路に対して、他者からもらうフィードバックやコメントに心を開く。
  - ・ グループ内で分かち合われたことについては守秘義務を遵守し、メンバー同士であっても、セッション外では分かち合われたことを話題に出さない。
  - ・ あらかじめ決められた期間内は、毎回のセッションに参加する。
- 

14

### Commitment in Participating in the Group

- Set each person's mind to have an honest relationship with God.
- Joining the group wholeheartedly by listening and responding prayerfully.
- Be open to the feedback and comments you receive from others on your soul's journey.
- Keep what is shared within the group confidential and not discuss what is shared outside of the session, even among members.
- Attend every session for a predetermined period of time.

## プレゼンターの心得

- ・ 問題解決や助言を求めるのではなく、自分の経験や内面で起こっていることを分かち合うことで、そこにある神の臨在や働きに注意を払い、神の招きに耳を傾け、応答することを求める。
  - ・ 自分に割り当てられた時間内で分かち合う。
  - ・ グループから差し出されるものは祈りをもって受け取る。それが神からのものではないと感じたら、受け流す自由も持つ。
- 

15

### Presenter Guidelines

- Share your own experiences and what is going on inside, rather than seeking solutions or advice. Pay attention to God's presence and work therein, and seek to listen and respond to God's invitation.
- Share within the time allotted to you.
- Prayerfully receive what is offered by the group. Be free to pass it on if you feel it is not from God.

## グループの心得

- プレゼンターが分かち合うとき、祈りと心を込めてその場に立ち会い (be present)、相手の現状、気持ち、考えを尊重する (meet them where they are)。
- 分かち合われたことは大切なものとして、畏敬の念をもって受けとめる。
- 助言しようとしたり、相手を正そうとしたり、評価を下したりすることなしに聴く。自分のエゴ (役に立ちたい、賢明だと思われたいなど) は手放す。
- プレゼンターが自分の魂の深みを探り、神に注意を払うことを助けるようなコメントや問いかけをする (時には言葉を差し出すより、沈黙のうちに相手を神の前にホールドすることもある)。

16

### Group Guidelines

- When presenters share, be present prayerfully and mindfully (be present) and be respectful of others' situations, feelings, and thoughts (meet them where they are at).
- Receive with awe what is shared as important.
- Listen without trying to give advice, correct or evaluate the other person. Let go of your own ego (e.g., wanting to be helpful, being perceived as wise, etc.).
- Make comments and questions that help the presenter search the depths of his or her soul and pay attention to God (sometimes holding the person before God in silence rather than offering words).

## ファシリテーターの役割

- グループの目的やルールをグループメンバーと随時確認し、タイムキーパーとして、決められた順序と時間配分に従ってセッションを進める。
- 誰かが場を独占したり、助言をしたり、教えようとしたり、雑談モードになるなど、その場のダイナミクスがグループの目的から逸れそうになったら、注意し、本来の流れに戻す。
- その際、必要に応じてグループを沈黙の時間に招き、心を神に向け、ともに聖霊の御声に注意を払えるよう励ます。

17

### Role of the Facilitator

- Review group objectives and rules with group members as needed, and act as timekeeper to keep the session moving along according to the established order and time allotment.
- If the dynamics of the moment seem to be diverting from the purpose of the group, such as someone monopolizing the space, giving advice, trying to teach, or going into chit-chat mode, warn them and return them to the original flow of the session.
- If necessary, invite the group to a time of silence, encouraging them to turn their hearts to God and together pay attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

## 第一段階

1. 沈黙と祈り
  2. チェックイン
  3. 沈黙 (2min)\*
  4. 分かち合い (10 min)\*
  5. 沈黙 (2min)
  6. グループプロセス
  7. セッション終了の祈り
- 

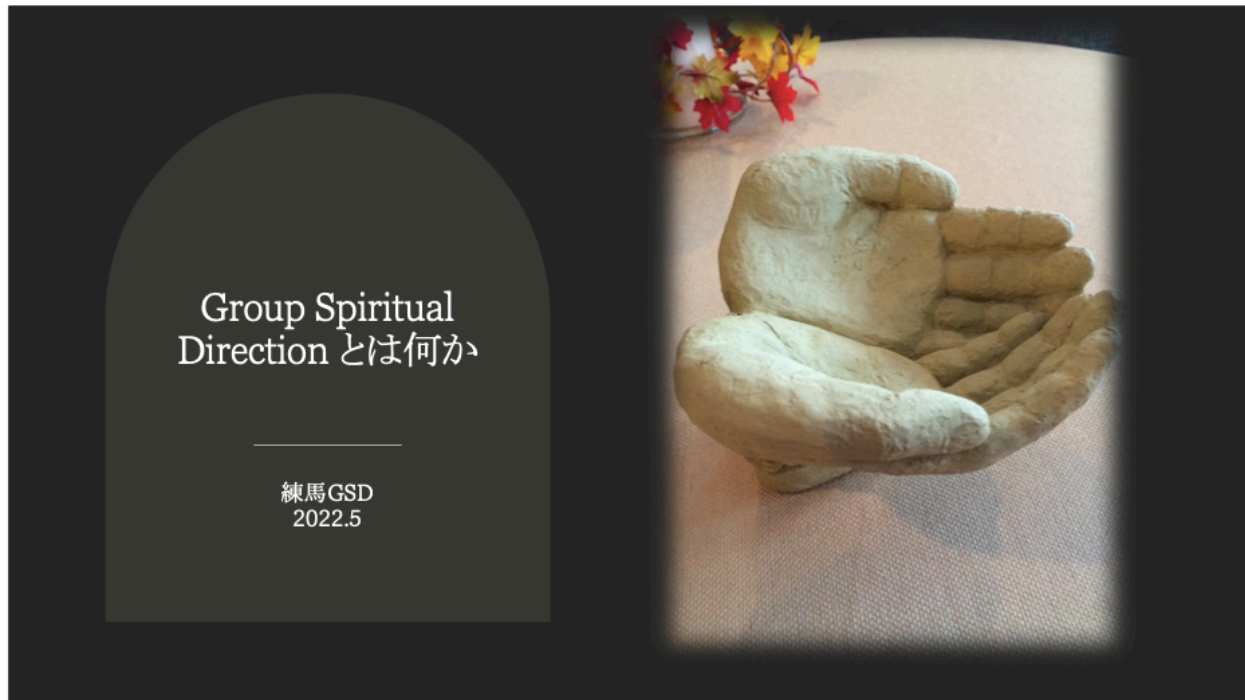
18

### *Step One*

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (10min) \*
5. Silence (2min)
6. Group Process
7. Prayer at the End of the Session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

**Explanation Part of Session Two**



What is Group Spiritual Direction?

Nerima Baptist Church Group Spiritual Direction, Session 2, Sachi Nakamura



聖なる方よ  
 私は多くの言葉を聞き、語ります  
 けれど、あなたのことばこそ、私に必要なことばです  
 今、お語りください  
 そして 私が耳を傾けられるよう助けてください  
 私が聴くものが沈黙ならば  
 その沈黙によって、  
 私を静めてください  
 かき乱してください  
 必要に触れてください  
 プライドを砕いてください  
 確信を減らしてください  
 驚嘆を押し広げてください

(テッド・ロダー 「恵みのゲリラ」より私訳 Ted Loder, from GUERRILLAS OF GRACE)

O Holy One,  
 I hear and say so many words,  
 yet yours is the Word I need.  
 Speak now,  
 and help me listen;  
 and if what I hear is silence,  
 let it quiet me,  
 let it disturb me,  
 let it touch my need,  
 let it break my pride,  
 let it shrink my certainties,  
 let it enlarge my wonder.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ted Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 31.

癒し人は、辛抱強く注意深く話を聞くもてなし役です。  
……癒し人としての私たちの最も重要な課題は、「何を  
言うべきか、何をすべきか」ではなく、「話を受け止める  
ことのできる十分な内的空間をどのように養うか」と  
いうことです。

ヘンリ・ナウエン

Healers are hosts who patiently and carefully listen to the story...Our most important question as healers is not, 'What to say or do?' but, 'How to develop enough inner space where another's story can be received?'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: A Special Edition of the Spiritual Classic Including Beyond the Mirror* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 64.

とりなしの祈りは、祈りをもって傾聴するために  
集まるグループの中核をなすもの。

リンドブルーム

Intercessory prayer is at the core of groups who meet for prayerful listening.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Lois A. Lindbloom, *Prayerful Listening: Cultivating Discernment in Community* (Northfield: Ashmore Ink, 2007), 7.

それは私たちの言葉、私たちの望み、そして「私たちの弱さ」の限界を超えるものです。そこでは、真理の御霊が私たちの心の奥底で働き、助け、探し、知り、とりなしています。これは、いつも私たちと一緒にいるその御霊に向かって、祈りをもって耳を傾けるようにという招きです。

リンドブルーム

The writer of Romans points to another, deeper place of prayer—beyond our words, our wants, and the limitations of “our weakness.” There the Spirit of Truth is at work in the depths of our hearts—helping, searching, knowing, and interceding. This is an invitation to bend a prayerful, listening ear toward that Spirit who is with us always.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Lindbloom, 8.

観想的な祈り  
Contemplative  
Prayer



多くの場合、私の中の何かが邪魔をして、祈る相手に対する神の願いを聞いたり、受け入れたりすることができません。私の息子たちに関して言えば、私自身の恐れが障害となっていました。ほかの感情や自分の信念が障害になることもあります。私の願望が邪魔をするのです。自分が何かをしたり、何かを言ったりすることのほうが、祈りの中で神の前にとどまることよりも重要だという信念があり、それが神に聴くことの邪魔をします。そこで他の人に代わって神に心を開くときに大切なのは、祈る上で障害となっているものが何であるかを認め、それを神に明け渡す意思があることです。（リンドブルーム）

Often something in me gets in the way of my hearing or embracing God's desire for the person for whom I pray. With my sons, my own fear was a barrier. Sometimes other feelings or beliefs are barriers. My own desires get in the way. My belief that it is more important for me to do something or say something than to remain in the presence of God in prayer gets in the way. Part of being open to God on behalf of another is a willingness to admit what the barrier is and then to surrender it to God.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lindbloom, 9.

-神よ、あなたはこの人のためにどう祈っておられますか？  
-私は何と祈るべきでしょうか？  
-この人のためのあなたの祈りに加わるために、私が手放すべきものはありますか？  
-あなたに代わって、私がすべきこと、この人に言うべきことはありますか？

---

God, what is your prayer for this person?

What do you want my prayer to be?

Is there anything I need to surrender in order to join your prayer for this person?

Is there anything you want me to do or to say to this person on your behalf?<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Lindbloom, 10.

そして、他の人に言うべきことを神が与えておられるかどうかを、祈りをこめた沈黙の中で待ちます。何かを言うように促されることもあれば、何も言わずに祈り続けるように言われることもあります。私自身にとっても、私が参加するグループにとっても、とりなしの祈りとは、自分の思いを超えて祈るように継続的に招かれることです。それは、「あなたのみこころになりますように」と祈るための招待状です。

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Then we wait in prayerful silence for a sense of whether or not we are given something to say to another. We may be nudged to say something or we may be called to continue in prayer without speaking.

For me personally and for the groups with whom I meet, intercessory prayer is a continual invitation to pray beyond the safety of our own agendas. It is an invitation to pray, "Thy will be done."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Lindbloom, 10.



グループのメンバーは、期待に満ちた沈黙の中で、共に待ち、聖霊の静かな小さな声に耳を傾けます。これは、私たちがそれぞれ神と二人きりでありながら、同時に愛に満ちた存在に共に抱かれているような沈黙です。詩篇の作者は、「私の魂は神のみを静かに待ち望む」（詩篇 62:1）と言っています。

これは、神から与えられたものを受け取るために用意された沈黙です。それは、「何も言いたくありません、あなたとつながりたくありません」というような、頑固さや拒絶による沈黙ではありません。次に自分が何を言うべきか必死に探す時間でもありません。それは、聞くこと、待つこと、気づくことを孕んだ沈黙です。それは、「神に属するもの("that of God")」はどこにあるのか、自分や他者や神の声に耳を傾けるときに何が私の心にやってくるのか、と問うための沈黙です。

Group members wait and listen together in a silence of anticipation, listening for the still small voice of the Spirit. This is a silence in which we are each alone with God, and yet we are together, held in the Loving Presence. The Psalmist said, "For God alone my soul waits in silence" (Psalm 62:1).

This is a silence made available to receive what is given from God. It is not a silence marked by willfulness or withholding as in "I refuse to reveal something or to connect with you." It is not a planning session, frantically searching for what to say when the opportunity is given. It is a silence marked by listening, waiting, noticing. It is a silence in which to ask, Where is "that of God" here? What comes to me as I listen to self, other, God?<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Lindbloom, 11.

## 同伴における傾聴

スキルとして習得するもの以上に、  
私たちと神様の関係、神様への信頼に根ざした明け渡しと、  
相手に対する愛とコンパッションにかかわるもの。

---

Listening in Spiritual Direction

More than a skill to be learned, it is about our relationship with God, a *surrender* rooted in trust in God and love and compassion for the other person.

同伴での傾聴は、言葉に耳を傾けるだけでなく、  
相手の表情、しぐさなどにも注意を払う。

ノンバーバル（non verbal）な部分から伝わってくる  
ものにも注意を払う。

---

Listening in spiritual direction involves not only listening to the words, but also paying attention to the facial expressions and gestures of the other person.

In other words, attention is also paid to what is conveyed through non-verbal aspects.

## 第二段階

1. 沈黙と祈り
2. チェックイン
3. 沈黙(2min)\*
4. 分かち合い (7~10min)\*
5. 沈黙のうちのリフレクション(4min)\*
6. 応答(5min)\*
7. 沈黙(1min)
8. グループプロセス(5min)
9. セッション終了の祈り

3～6を人数分繰り返す。

---

### Step Two

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (7~10min) \*
5. Reflection in Silence (4min) \*
6. Response (5min) \*
7. Silence (1min)
8. Group Process (5min)
9. Prayer at the End of the session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

## 応答前の沈黙

プレゼンターのために神の臨在にの内にとどまり、  
神に自分の考えを話したり、  
応答のときに自分はなんと言おうかと考える時間ではなく、  
プレゼンターに対する神様の願いや思いを聴くための沈黙。

---

Silence before response

Silence to remain in God's presence for the presenter and to hear God's wishes and thoughts for the presenter, not as a time to speak one's thoughts to God or to think about what one is going to say in response.

## 第二段階の応答のときに差し出すもの

- ・ 沈黙のうちに与えられたイメージや言葉など。（自分の解釈や説明は加えない。）

What to offer during the Step Two response.

Images, words, etc. given in the silence (do not add your own interpretation or explanation)

## 第二段階の応答のときに差し出すもの

・プレゼンターの分かち合いを聴きながら気づいたこと、感じたこと。

例：「あなたが～～の話をしているとき、あなたの表情が喜びに輝いているように感じました」

「あなたの～～の様子が特に私の心を打ちました」

「あなたが繰り返し～～という言葉を使っていたことが印象に残りました。」

＊特に差し出すべきことが与えられなければ、祈りのうちに沈黙を保つ。

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### What to offer during the Step Two Response

- What you noticed or felt while listening to the presenter's sharing  
e.g., "When you were talking about ..., your face seemed to glow with joy."  
"I was particularly struck by the way you..." "I was particularly struck by the way you..."  
I was impressed by your repeated use of the word..." "
- If you have nothing in particular to offer, remain silent in prayer.

## 第二段階

1. 沈黙と祈り
2. チェックイン
3. 沈黙(2min)\*
4. 分かち合い (7~10min)\*
5. 沈黙のうちのリフレクション(4min)\*
6. 応答(5min)\*
7. 沈黙(1min)
8. グループプロセス(5min)
9. セッション終了の祈り

3～6を人数分繰り返す。

---

### Step Two

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (7~10min) \*
5. Reflection in Silence (4min) \*
6. Response (5min) \*
7. Silence (1min)
8. Group Process (5min)
9. Prayer at the End of the session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.



## DETAILS OF GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PRACTICE PART

As a general rule, all content shared during the session should be kept strictly confidential, but with the permission of all members, a summary of session 8 is disclosed as a practical example.

**Description of Session 8** Date and Time: January 14, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Participants: spiritual director, church member A, pastor (me)

Session Content: No explanatory part, Practice of Step Three

Content of Step Three:

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (15min) \*
5. Questions to Confirm Points that were not Clear (1min) \*
6. Reflection in Silence (5min) \*
7. Response (15min) \*
8. Silence (1min)
9. Group Process (5min)
10. Prayer at the End of the Session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

### **Details of Group Spiritual Direction Step Three Practice** 1. Silence and Prayer

- At the appointed time, the three participants were together via ZOOM.
- The spiritual director lit the candle.
- A few minutes of silence began.

### 2. Check-in

- Everyone, including the facilitator, the spiritual director, shared for one minute how everyone was gathered here and now.
- The participants decided the order in which they would share.

### 3. Silence (2min) \*

- Silence was held to prepare for speaking and listening.

#### 4. Sharing (15min) \*

- After the number of participants was reduced from three to two, the time for sharing and response was lengthened.

### **Presenter**

I was in the middle of the final wrap-up of the project, so I shared what I felt while facing this project. As I was sharing, I talked about an academic retreat in Cannon Beach that I attended as part of my class that came to mind. I recalled praying through the scene where Peter let down his nets after saying "because you say so, I will." I told them that I had offered a little over a year ago as a prayer that I would work on something new in the church. I was happy to see it come to fruition in that way. I had prayed that my project would become God's project. I was thankful that God had blessed my passion for spiritual formation in the local church in Japan, that the spiritual director had offered her gifts, that the participants had offered their time and prayers, and that not only I but we could confess together that God's work was wonderful.

#### 5. Questions to Confirm Points that were not Clear (1min) \*

- No specific questions were raised.

#### 6. Reflection in Silence (5min) \*

- A timer was set for 5 minutes. Each participant prayed in silence.

#### 7. Response (15min) \*

### **Response 1: Sharing the Image**

I had an image of God's light shining on you. The light was more extensive than before. What had been a dim light became progressively stronger. I might even say that it became clearer. As the light shone on you, the area you could see in the light became wider. I could see that God was near. I could also begin to see the people around you. Some are smiling, some are slinking away, some are angry, some are cowering. You could see them so you could walk up to them. I was there, too, waving to you.

### **Response 2: Sharing the Image**

An image of a father and his son. The father was the CEO and the son seemed to be the successor to the business. The son was not forced to take over the business, but rather he was willing to take over the business.

### **Response 3: Question**

You did what you wanted to do. People around you agreed with it. Furthermore, it was in line with what God wanted to do. If you had to put this feeling into words, how would you describe it?

### **Presenter**

Going on a journey. I am not good at tackling new things, but it was important for me to go on a journey that God would show me. I have a personality that is more comfortable with less worry, but it was necessary for me to allow some anxiety to be a part of God's journey. I relied on God in my anxiety to start something new.

### **Response 4: Question**

What did you learn about God, or about yourself, or about your relationship with God?

### **Presenter**

I thought it was to be natural. Also, it was important for me now to keep the rhythm of sitting at the feet of Jesus and going on a journey.

### **Response 5: Sharing the Word**

I was reminded of Eugene Peterson's expression in Matthew 11:28-30 of *the unforced rhythms of grace*.

Returned to 3. Silence.

- Silence and space for the next presenter.

#### 4. Sharing (15min) \*

- Presenter: Family and work matters were shared.

#### 5. Questions to Confirm Points that were not Clear (1min) \*

- Question was asked about family structure.

#### 6. Reflection in Silence (5min) \*

- A timer was set for 5 minutes. Each participant prayed in silence.

#### 7. Response (15min) \*

### **Response 1: Sharing the Word**

The English prefix "Re" came to mind. It means "again." I felt you were going through a period of "again" about your family, about your work. Another word was honesty. You faced yourself honestly. You faced God honestly. The Lord gives and the Lord takes. It may have been a time when things

continued to disappear, but there was one thing that remained until the end. Beauty. The beauty of God was seen in your honesty.

### **Response 2: Sharing the Word**

Softness. I especially feel the land has been tilled and softened. The word authenticity came to mind. I could feel how you do not use different faces, and I got the image of authentic, holy, and precious.

### **Response 3: Question**

How has your relationship with God changed over the course of the group spiritual direction?

#### **Presenter**

God held me so I want to hold those around me.

### **Response 4: Question**

What view would you like to see in the future?

#### **Presenter**

I would like to see this grace spread to my family, to my relatives, to my friends, to my church, and to the whole world, and I deeply wanted to pray and act on what the Lord showed me.

8. Silence (1min)

- Silence was held, reflecting on the whole of today.

9. Group Process (5min)

- Each person reflected on the session.

### **Reflection 1**

It warmed my heart to see how God has guided this project. I was especially grateful that everyone responded to my passion and offered their gifts to each other, and that we were able to have a group spiritual direction, clearly seeing that we are doing God's ministry together.

### **Reflection 2:**

I could feel more deeply than ever that the Lord has accepted and loved me and everyone else. I was glad to meet people here who gently take me in the palm of their hands. Even when I went out and got hurt, even when people around me who were close to me disappeared from the world, I felt truly at peace because I felt that I had received the Lord's love.

### **Reflection 3**

This Nerima group was a unique group in a sense that it consisted of pastor and lay leader from the same church, but perhaps because of this structure, a relationship of trust was built up from the beginning. I thought it was very good that each participant was able to open their hearts and listen to God and each other. The combination of pastor and congregation from the same church could be difficult to keep "safe" in some cases, but I felt that this Nerima group was able to meet that challenge and enter a deeper trusting relationship. It was also impressive to see how each participant was open to the Holy Spirit working there. It was a joy and a blessing for me to see them trusting in the Holy Spirit who was there and gathering with joy and expectation each time. Openness and trust toward God and each other were the key words that came to mind when I look back on the Nerima Group.

#### 10. Prayer at the End of the Session

- The session ended with a prayer by one of the members.

### SUMMARY OF PRACTICE PHASE

- The schedule was discussed with all group members and ranges from 2 to 2.5 hours on the second Saturday of the month, starting at 9:00 a.m. Japan time. At the appointed time, all participants were together via ZOOM.
- Sessions included four people. Unfortunately, the number of participants decreased from Session 5 because one of the participants became mentally ill, making it difficult for the person to attend.
- The step-by-step contents were designed to make group spiritual direction as familiar as possible for participants who were new to the program. The first four sessions included an explanation part and a practice part to deepen understanding of group spiritual direction and begin with a simple practice.
- Throughout the eight sessions, all participants were able to open their hearts to God and others and experience a sense of love.

An overview of the group spiritual direction sessions was presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF THE GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION SESSIONS**

Number of Sessions	Dates	Times	Number of Participants (Including Facilitator)	Session Contents
1	April 9, 2022	9:00-11:00	4 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of Group Spiritual Direction (1)</li> <li>• Practice of Step One</li> </ul>

2	May 14, 2022	9:00-11:00	4 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of Group Spiritual Direction (2)</li> <li>• Practice of Step Two</li> </ul>
3	June 11, 2022	9:00-11:00	4 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of Group Spiritual Direction (3)</li> <li>• Practice of Step Two</li> </ul>
4	July 9, 2022	9:00-11:15	4 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of Group Spiritual Direction (4)</li> <li>• Practice of Step Three</li> </ul>
5	September 10, 2022	9:00-11:00	3 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice of Step Three</li> </ul>
6	October 8, 2022	9:00-11:00	3 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice of Step Three</li> </ul>
7	November 12, 2022	9:00-11:00	3 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice of Step Three</li> </ul>
8	January 14, 2023	9:00-10:40	3 persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice of Step Three</li> </ul>

## Feedback on Group Spiritual Direction Sessions

**FEEDBACK BY SACHI NAKAMURA, SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR** A one-on-one interview with Sachi Nakamura, Spiritual Director, was conducted regarding the group spiritual direction sessions. The main points of the feedback were summarized below:

### ***General impressions***

Openness and trust toward God and others were the key words that came to mind when I look back on the Nerima Group. The participants were more open than I had imagined. I expected some resistance from some of the participants, but they quickly opened themselves up to the dynamics of the group spiritual direction.

### ***Open Vulnerable Hearts and Minds***

A safe place must be kept to open oneself, to focus on others, to support and love each other. Confidentiality was maintained, no advice was given, and no judgments were made. These principles must be observed. However, providing a safe place did not guarantee that participants would open up. Sometimes it was necessary to wait until they were willing to open up. One participant was skeptical at first, but it turned out that she opened up more and more.

### ***Group Spiritual Direction in a Local Church***

It was significant that the participants were able to have a relationship where they felt comfortable even when working with their pastor. This group was a unique relationship. Normally it was common not to have a dual relationship, but as an experiment, we did it with three church leadership members. There was a power relationship, but it went in the right direction, not the wrong direction.

My concern was whether there was any influence outside the group, but I was assured that confidentiality was maintained. It was not easy for the church to ensure that confidentiality was upheld. The importance of confidentiality had to be well understood before it could be put into practice.

### ***Number of Participants***

One more person could have been there from the beginning. Excluding the facilitator, there should have been about 4 people. The quality and dynamics of the response time would have been different, although too many would have caused different problems.

It was unfortunate that one participant was unable to participate due to mental illness. I hoped the group spiritual direction would be supportive, it was difficult. This did not mean that the group was not functioning.

### ***Cultural Differences between the U.S. and Japan***

It was difficult to answer whether group spiritual direction fits into the context of evangelical churches in Japan. The main factor was not so much the difference between the U.S. and Japan, but whether or not the person was accustomed to being quiet.

Since I usually live in the United States and learned spiritual direction in English, I had a challenge using a language that Japanese people could understand. For example, if I used the English word "hold" in Japanese, the nuance I wanted to convey in English would be lost, so I had to be conscious of how to compensate for it.

### ***Possibilities for Future Development***

If it were to be expanded further in the church, it would have been desirable to have a form where those who wanted to do it could do it, rather than being forced to do it. If time permits, I could be involved as a facilitator in the future.

Another method was the sharing of the Word using the essence of group spiritual direction. In other words, a step-by-step approach could be applied in the contemplation of Scripture. This time, this group began personal sharing from the beginning, but it was easier to get used to silence and listening to God while keeping the theme of sharing the Word of God.

The group accompaniment was just one tool for the church community to journey together for each other. Listening to each other in a different way than usual would have been one way to help the church grow spiritually.

## **FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANT**

A one-on-one interview with a church member was conducted regarding the group spiritual direction sessions. The main points of the feedback were summarized below:

### ***Overall Impression***

I was blessed. Increasingly, the group spiritual direction was a big support. At first, I was uncomfortable with the differences from a typical 1-on-1 and the definition of spiritual formation, but gradually I was able to accept and appreciate it honestly. To be honest, I was full of doubts at first. I was skeptical. Reading books did not resolve my doubts, but when I actually tried the group spiritual direction, I understood the feeling of accepting both myself and others around me with God as the center. It's hard to understand until I experienced it.

### ***Importance of the Spiritual Director***

At all times the spiritual director kept the group spiritual direction in a safe place. The spiritual director as a facilitator was very stable and did not waver. In the first session, the facilitator was listening to me with a look of acceptance. I actually experienced a gentle acceptance of my story as if it held a fragile soap bubble. Thanks to that, the wall of anxiety disappeared.

### ***Group Spiritual Direction at a Local Church***

I was anxious at first to have a session with people who knew each other. However, after the first session, I felt at ease. On a scale of 1 to 5, I was very anxious at first, with a self-rating of 5, but after the first session it dropped to 2, and after the second session it was 1 and I was no longer anxious. The reason for this was that the participants were in a pastoral position, so they understood confidentiality and did not seem to lose faith in what I had to say. So far I have found it difficult with non-pastoralists.

If payments were to arise from the activities of the local church, I would no longer fit in with the culture of the Japanese church.

### ***Step by Step Process***

The step-by-step practice was effective. It was good to be able to focus and get used to looking and listening in silence to the relationship between myself, the people there, and the Lord. I think that if I had focused on asking questions from the beginning, I would not have been able to get a sense of the basics.

As the session progressed, I became still and felt closer in my relationship with God. I think I began to understand the feeling of gently supporting and accepting both myself and others as they are, "like holding a soap bubble" of existence. I felt like I was "softly wrapped" in existence itself.

The burden and anxiety of talking about myself decreased as I went through the sessions.

This was a time in my life when I needed to have my story heard. I talked, I was accepted, and I felt like God was working. If it had been a different time, the depth might have been different.

### ***Influence as a Church Leader***

Group spiritual direction affected my leadership style. I was able to experience the feeling of being still before the Lord. I was able to gradually experience, not just in my head, how to accept and love myself and others as they are. It became clear to me. I was given the desire to gently hold the hearts of church members before the



Lord. I wanted everyone to feel God's power to support us together, which was given to me. I humbled myself before God and thought about how I should talk to them and pray for them. Rather than pulling from above, I would lead as I served.

### ***Possibilities for Future Development***

I was blessed and it was important, but it was very difficult to start a group for church members right away. I wanted to continue in some form. There would have been the possibility to give testimonies and introduce them to interested people. However, it would have been difficult for me to be the facilitator since I had one year of experience. It was a relief to have a spiritual director join the group. I also wanted to remember that the commitment of the participants was also required.

## **MY SELF-ASSESSMENT AS A PARTICIPANT**

### ***Pastor's Openness***

When I discussed the idea of a group spiritual direction in the local church with the spiritual director, one of the first things he asked me was whether the pastor could be open in front of the church members. I felt that a change in me was needed to facilitate the spiritual formation of the local church, so I decided to start this group from my openness.

### ***Vulnerability Wrapped Up***

Several personality tests diagnosed me as being able to be open, but I still wasn't sure if I could speak honestly on some topics. Generally, I would start praying about what to share around the night before the group spiritual direction, but eventually I spoke about the topics I felt shown in the silence just before the sharing time. Some topics made me anxious about sharing, but I never forgot the sense of peace I felt after talking about them, as the people in the group gently wrapped their arms around my vulnerability and brokenness.

### ***Connection to Everyday Life***

The promise not to talk about the topic of group spiritual direction in everyday life was certainly kept. Attention should be paid to the danger of everyday relationships entering group spiritual direction. I almost made this mistake once in my response to a member of the pastoral team. I noticed that I tried to give advice. The temptation was to respond as I usually did when I was in closer distance from the presenter on a daily basis. It was essential, especially in group spiritual direction, to be silent before God and to be mindful of Godly responses, but this could become difficult when the relationship was close.

However, the group spiritual direction relationship naturally affected everyday relationships. When I spoke to one of the participants about my issues in a non-Group Spiritual Direction situation, I felt a warmth, as if I was being received in group spiritual direction. Every participant had to pay attention to the connection with the everyday, but the fact that grace flowed out into the everyday was also very fruitful.

### ***Importance of the Spiritual Director***

The participation of the spiritual director as facilitator increased safety within the session. Especially in the group spiritual direction, the way the interaction within the group worked was crucial. Although it did not happen in practice, it was significant to have a facilitator to keep the place safe when inappropriate responses occurred, such as telling one's own story. Having someone involved in the group as a facilitator helped to maintain fairness and safety.

### ***Leadership Direction***

The sharing of the leadership direction of the church with local church leaders through group spiritual direction for almost a year had a great impact. Experiencing together the solidity, strength and warmth of being silent and listening to Jesus would influence the future leadership of the church. This was already evident from participants' feedback. It was also encouraging to be assured that they were together, despite their imperfections. Leaders tend to be lonely, but the trial taught that Jesus-centered fellowship can be a safe place for leaders to be.

### **SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK**

- The first four sessions included an explanation portion of group spiritual direction by the spiritual director, and by starting with a simple practice, we were able to ease participants' anxiety.
- The certified spiritual director played a major role in ensuring the safety of the group spiritual direction with her precise explanations and presence.
- Through the group spiritual direction, participants were able to experience a deeper relationship of trust with God and others.
- The group spiritual direction gave a new change in the leadership direction of the leader who experienced acceptance with God and others.

## Assessment

The project was assessed against each of the six critical success indicators planned to be used to determine the success and quality of the project.

1. After a period of prayer and reading materials with basic knowledge about group spiritual direction and the intention of trying group spiritual direction with leaders of the local church, potential participants felt comfortable making the decision to participate or not as indicated by interviews about the reasons for the decision.

The dynamics do not work effectively when people are forced to participate due to the nature of group spiritual direction. It was important that the potential participants have the option to feel comfortable saying no, even if the pastor asked them to do so. In the context of the Japanese church in particular, it is often difficult to refuse a pastor's request, so it was critical to make a prayerful decision about participation. Three people were approached, 2 committed to participate, and 1 declined. There were three reasons for declining to participate. All three reasons made sense: lack of sufficient motivation, length and frequency of sessions, and a group of people they knew. These reasons would be an unavoidable challenge in a group within a church.

2. At least three participants signed up to participate in the group spiritual direction from April to January.

Although it was expected that some people would be hesitant to open their hearts and minds because they knew each other, three people committed to participate in the group spiritual direction: one from the pastoral team, one from the board of directors, and myself. The target number of people was met.

From April to July, the first half of the year, there were three participants, but after one person was unable to participate due to mental illness, there were two participants. In other words, the session consisted of three people, including the facilitator. Despite the reduced number of participants, the dynamics of the group spiritual direction did not weaken in the second half of the session. Rather, trust deepened as the session progressed. As noted in the feedback from the spiritual director, it would have been preferable to have had one more person from the start, as this contingency could have happened. Too many people would have resulted in shorter statements per person, and too few would have resulted in a lack of diversity in the responses. A group of about five people, including the facilitator, would have been desirable.

3. The trial of the group spiritual guidance was presented to the local church general assembly for approval.

The trial of group spiritual direction was approved as part of the pastor's basic policy for the current year at the April 2022 Nerima Baptist Church General Assembly. This was an opportunity for many church members to become interested in spiritual direction and group spiritual direction. Above all, it was significant for the church that this trial of group spiritual direction became a part of the

church's ministry rather than a separate ministry from the church, and that it can be the trial in the prayers of the church members.

4. A certified spiritual director who speaks Japanese participates as a facilitator to help the group spiritual direction proceed effectively through one-on-one interviews with participants.

There are few organizations in Japan that train spiritual directors, so this time the facilitator was asked to be a spiritual director who is certified in the U.S. and can speak Japanese. With her experience in leading group spiritual direction for the Japanese, she always facilitated the session to be a sacred time. The materials she prepared on group spiritual direction helped participants who were new to group spiritual direction deepen their understanding. The step-by-step practice also allowed them to begin by focusing on listening, which is the heart of group spiritual direction. Next, responses were added. Through the explanation and practice of response by the spiritual director, participants became increasingly familiar with what to offer as a response. Feedback from the participant indicated that the spiritual director's contribution was significant to the group spiritual direction.

5. The content of the sessions progressed in a step-by-step manner to help the smooth participation as indicated by self-evaluation of group members.

It was clear from the group members' self-evaluations that the step-by-step approach to the sessions was of great help to those who were anxious to participate or who were new to group spiritual direction. Step 1 allowed them to begin by focusing on silence and listening, which was the heart of group spiritual direction. After the first session, one participant who had been anxious rated the anxiety as mostly gone. Response was added from Step 2. Through the explanation and practice of responses by the spiritual director, participants became increasingly comfortable with what to offer as a response. Step 3 increased the dynamics within the group and deepened the relationships, due to the extended time for sharing and responding.

6. Participants felt spiritually secure in the sessions and had a sense of vulnerable hearts being held through the group interactions as indicated by the participant's own self-evaluation.

All participants, both spiritual directors and participants, provided feedback that they felt safe during the sessions and that their vulnerable hearts were warmed and receptive through the group interactions. In the feedback from the spiritual director, openness and trust in God were mentioned as characteristics of this group. These characteristics supported spiritual safety. One participant rated the session as supportive in her life and led to a change in her leadership style. Not only did they experience grace in the group spiritual direction, but the flow of God's grace from the session into their daily lives was very fruitful.

# Project Launch Plan

## Doctoral Project Description

My NPO statement is as follows:

The experience of being accepted by God and others through safe relationships finds the church in a relational culture of authentic relationships.

The group spiritual direction for leaders of Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan, facilitated by Sachi Nakamura, a spiritual director certified in the United States, was conducted through ZOOM once a month for eight sessions. It was essential for participants to commit to the group spiritual direction voluntarily, not compulsively, as having an open heart to God and others has a great impact on group dynamics. Even if there was some initial anxiety about revealing one's heart to the same church leader, it became clear that trust was indeed fostered through the actual experience of the sessions. Self-evaluations of participants indicated that all members felt the grace of having their vulnerable hearts gently accepted by group members who were willing to listen to God's voice.

## Audience

The primary audience for the first few years are the church board members. The goal of this phase is for the influence of leaders who are increasingly open to God and others through group spiritual direction to naturally spread through the church like yeast in the kingdom. Further audience are any church members who are willing to offer themselves to the dynamics of group spiritual direction.

## Development Plan

The development plan is for the continuation of the group spiritual direction for the leaders in the church that began with the Doctrinal Project and the spread of its influence within the church.

### Continuation of Group Spiritual Direction

The continuation plan of group spiritual direction within the church includes group spiritual direction 2.0 with new members, follow-up sessions for group spiritual direction 1.0, and searching for new spiritual directors.

#### **GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION 2.0 WITH NEW MEMBERS**

1. January 2023-Finding a Spiritual Director
2. February 2023- Revised Reference Material for Group Spiritual Direction Participants

The difference from the first year is that voices from those who experienced the first year will be added as a resource for participation in group spiritual direction.

3. February-March 2023- Finding Participants

4. April 2023- Receive Continued Approval at Nerima Baptist Church General Meeting

5. May 2023- February 2024- Group Spiritual Direction Sessions

- May 13, 2023- Session 1. Explanation Part 1 and Practice Step 1
- June 10, 2023- Session 2. Explanation Part 2 and Practice Part Step 2
- July 8, 2023- Session 3. Explanation Part 3 and Practice Step 2
- September 9, 2023- Session 4. Explanation Part 4 and Practice Step 3
- October 14, 2023- Session 5. Practical Step 3
- November 11, 2023- Session 6. Practical Step 3
- January 13, 2024- Session 7. Practical Step 3
- February 10, 2024- Session 8. Practical Step 3

Benchmarks for Group Spiritual Direction with New Members

- A certified Japanese-speaking spiritual director and four participants from leaders of the church join the group spiritual direction in 2023.
- Participants feel spiritually secure in the sessions and have a sense of vulnerable hearts being held through the group interactions as indicated by the participant's own self-evaluation.

### **FOLLOW-UP GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION 1.0 SESSION**

October 2023- Follow-up group spiritual direction session is the first session in six months with members of 2022-2023 group. It will serve as an opportunity to remind them of their group spiritual direction experience.

Benchmark for Follow-up Group Spiritual Direction 1.0 Session

- Follow-up session for participants from group spiritual direction 1.0 will offer an opportunity to reflect on their experience with group spiritual direction and its impact.

### **SEARCHING FOR NEW SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS**

May 2023- February 2024- Searching for a second or third Japanese spiritual director who is certified in Christian spiritual direction is essential to continue and develop group spiritual direction in the church.

Benchmark for Searching for New Spiritual Directors

- By February 2024 I will find a new certified Japanese-speaking Spiritual Director who will be willing to help with the project.

## Spread of Group Spiritual Direction to the Congregation and Beyond

The spreading plan of group spiritual direction to the congregation includes a workshop for the third year of the project and beyond and one-day retreat for congregations with the spiritual director.

### **DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR THIRD YEAR AND BEYOND**

November 2023- The workshop with participants of the group spiritual direction and the spiritual director and possible future participants to encourage future development of group spiritual direction within the church and beyond.

Benchmark for Development Workshop for Third Year and Beyond

- The workshop will allow the process of developing group spiritual direction with stakeholders to be discussed.

### **ONE-DAY RETREAT FOR CONGREGATIONS WITH THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

January 2024- The spiritual director will conduct a one-day retreat for the congregation. The retreat will provide an opportunity to explain and practice listening to God and silence for congregations interested in spiritual formation and group spiritual direction.

Benchmark for Retreat for congregations with the spiritual director

- The retreat with the spiritual director will provide an opportunity for explanation and practice of spiritual disciplines for the congregation.

## Development Process

The second year of the group spiritual direction ministry will invite different leaders from the church than the first year. By changing members from year to year, leaders of the church share the essence of group spiritual direction mindset. The advantage for the second-year group is that the feedback and experience of last year's group is utilized. In addition to the eight monthly group spiritual direction sessions, there will be follow-up sessions for last year's group and a workshop for the third year and beyond for development. The project will not concentrate solely on the group spiritual direction sessions themselves, but will gradually shift to a period of evaluating their impact on the church and considering ways to make them more influential. Also, I will continue my own study and practices with hope of one day being a certified spiritual director in tandem with pastoring.



# Appendix A– Milestone 1 The NPO Charter

## Personal Research Manifesto

My approach to researching the NPO is to have an openness, not to hide failure and to accept various opinions to find the Living Water in the Japanese Church.

## NPO Statement

Little research has been done on Christian spiritual formation that harnesses the traditions and characteristics of local churches in Japan.

## NPO Scope and Constraints

By the end of this doctorate program, a pilot program will be created to facilitate the Christian spiritual formation in which members of one local church in Tokyo, Japan, want to participate positively. This spiritual formation should include not only individual-level spiritual maturity but also community-level and mission-level in the future, but it is uncertain whether this program can handle everything. Presenting the process of creating a program that promotes spiritual transformation suitable for one local church will help to create a program suitable for another local church. At this point in the development process, it is difficult to make an estimate of the exact range and cost associated with the final product.

## NPO Context

My NPO ministry context is mainly a local church in Tokyo, Japan where I serve. It is an evangelical Baptist church started by an American missionary in 1950, and currently has about 110 members, which is relative large in size and is regarded as a traditional church in Japan. The church is confident in its history and does not particularly feel the urgent need for new changes. Therefore, it would be effective to respect the legacy of faith already in the church while integrating spiritual formation practices.

In Japan, the words and concepts of Christian spiritual formation have not yet taken root. The reason why it is not accepted is that there are many layers. Inflexible presentations that ignore the church's traditions are one of the reasons. Also, books on spiritual transformation are mainly translations, and very few are written by Japanese pastors.

## Root Causes

A significant root cause for my NPO is not the introduction method of Christian spiritual formation itself, but the purpose of helping the Japanese Church to create a space for God to work is not clear.

Since it is intended to be introduced, no proposal for spiritual formation has been made in consideration of the situation of the Japanese Church. As a result, first of all, the theological position is unclear. The Church feels confused because when a spiritual transformation is introduced, it is

simply presented as new. Few people presented the concept of spiritual formation as an extension of theology familiar to Japanese Church. Second, it only introduces fixed spiritual disciplines and do not arrange them into the traditions of the local churches. Therefore, only the impression of a suspicious atmosphere is conveyed. Finally, there are few attempts at spiritual disciplines that take advantage of Japanese spirituality like Zen. Because it is regarded as dangerous as a pagan custom in Japanese Church.

## Discovery Workshop Stakeholders

The stakeholders in my discovery session included a local church chairperson of the board/chairperson of social welfare corporation, local church member of the board, pastor/teacher of a seminary, pastor, and a missionary who is living in Canada.

## One-on-One Interviews

My one-on-one interviewees included a pastor/seminary teacher, spiritual director/author/translator, and a pastor/Vice-Chairperson of Japan Evangelical Association/Seminary teacher.

## 3-5 Key Biblical Texts

2Cor 3:17-18. The key of spiritual growth is the Holy Spirit, who guides the spiritual journey.

John 7:37-38. To all Japanese churches and me who would feel thirsty for the experience of living water flowing from the depths of my heart.

Act 15:10-11. The early church decided not to impose Jewish values on Gentiles. Think about ways to make the most of the uniqueness of the people. Based on the grace of Jesus, Christian spiritual formation also respects the uniqueness of the people.

1John 2:7-8. I believe that Japanese churches have a considerable history of spiritual transformation. Therefore, I would like to work on my project with John's heart, which was rewritten as a new command while respecting the old.

## Academic Resources

Areas for further academic research include investigating the definition of Christian spiritual formation for a brief explanation to Japan in order to have a theological position, studying the corporate practice of spiritual formation in the United States, and identifying the resources available in Japan. Other areas of research include a survey of spiritual disciplines that fit the characteristics of the Japanese evangelical Church like reading the Bible. Possibility of unique spiritual discipline using Japanese spiritual tradition is also on my radar.

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## Appendix 1

### Discovery Statement

My discovery session was held on October 20, 2020, through Zoom, from 9am-12pm. By using Zoom, I was able to invite missionaries living in Canada and pastors of churches away from Tokyo to participate in the workshop. The following were in attendance:

- Local Church Chairperson of the Board/ Chairperson of Social Welfare Corporation
- Local Church Member of the Board
- Pastor/ Teacher of Seminary
- Pastor/ Life Coach
- Missionary who is living in Canada

The session followed the predetermined format as given in our DMIN 750/795 syllabus assignments. I documented the workshop using Google docs. The question stakeholders came ready to discuss was "How to introduce Spiritual Formation in Japan?"

The workshop spent most of its time on Activity 1 and revealed the variety of Japanese church reactions to the idea of spiritual formation. The time was over when I finished Activities 1 and 3. Regarding Activity 2 and Activity 4, I asked for feedback by email and finished the workshop.

### Discovery Statement

By intentionally gathering participants who have different understandings and knowledge of Christian spiritual formation, we were able to consider what kind of reaction would occur when introducing spiritual transformation in Japan. As a result, the workshop did not complete all of the designated activities in time, but I was still able to gather valuable information. All discussion pieces assembled to create the following Discovery Statement:

Considering Japanese local churches such as Nerima Baptist Church (audience),

we've discovered that the practice of Christian spiritual formation in Japanese local churches is rarely reported (NPO),

which is caused by misunderstanding that spiritual formation is for the maturity of personal faith (root cause).

If resolved, it would help local churches find ways of spiritual maturity that harness the traditions of the Global Church. (outcome).

### Critical Insights from Discovery Workshop

It became clear that the impression differs greatly depending on how it is presented. Spiritual formation is a little-known word and concept in Japan, so I tried to introduce it as a new one.

However, some responded strongly that the offer to introduce new things included a denial of past Church history and a lack of respect for the Church. This point was very suggestive and many of the participants agreed. No matter how useful spiritual transformation is, if the local church in Japan rejects it, it cannot be introduced. Therefore, it is meaningful to ponder how to present Christian spiritual formation to the local church in Japan.

The discovery of multiple layers of reasons for not accepting spiritual formation was an important point of view. The meaning of the word "spiritual" in Japanese refers to fortune-telling and connection with the universe, lack of knowledge about "spiritual formation", no need, suspicious atmosphere, Catholic atmosphere, few organizations deal with it, the refusal to face deeper parts of it, and the lack of a model. These range from superficial to very deep content.

Also, the insight into the possibility of Christian spiritual formation in the Japanese Church was very helpful.

When facilitating spiritual transformation in a local church,

- the balance between intelligence and heart will be improved.
- it will help a holistic understanding of faith.
- it will focus not only on the maturation of individual beliefs, but also on the maturity of spirituality in the community.
- the spiritual practices that have already taken place will change from duty to joy.
- the church will be freed from emphasizing only the number of people who have been baptized.

The discovery workshop revealed the benefits of spiritual transformation and the points to note when introducing it.

## One-on-One Interview Discoveries

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the three individual interviews conducted. All interviewees acknowledged that my project was significant to the Japanese Church. **A**, a pastor/seminary teacher, shared his experience facilitating Christian spiritual formation within the local church. He has translated three books on the path to spiritual growth into Japanese and studied with more than 100 members. He feels the congregation is changing over time. However, it is more effective to have a textbook for the Japanese Protestant congregation. Currently, such is only available for the Catholic congregation in Japan and for Protestant congregations abroad. Also, Japanese churches are interested in ABC (attendance, building, cash), not in Christian spiritual formation. **B**, a spiritual director/author/translator, advised me from her experience of introducing spiritual formation to Japan. Without the use of the word spiritual formation, the local church can facilitate spiritual transformation through a process that focuses on the shortcomings and thirst in the Church. It is important to create an atmosphere where the people of the church can honestly discuss what goes wrong. Considering the characteristics of Japanese evangelical

churches, it would be natural to start spiritual disciplines from the Bible. Just as there is a method of spiritual formation that suits one's personality, there will be a spiritual formation that suits each local church. The most important thing to note is that what a project can do is create a space for God to work, and a project cannot change people. C, a pastor/Vice-Chairman of Japan Evangelical Association/Seminary teacher, noted that there are many points to be organized before considering Christian spiritual formation in the local church. The concept of "spiritual formation" itself is not recognized in Japanese churches. Many recognize that spiritual growth is for the individual and feel that there is a distance to work within the community. When dealing with spiritual transformation in the local church, it will be necessary to discuss worship. Protestantism has been concerned with "verbalization", so it would be worth the effort to put the experience of Christian spiritual formation into words. Western churches pay attention to Zen in Japan, but the Japanese seek the origin of Christianity in the West.

## Synthesis

Through the discovery workshop and 1on1 interviews, the most important point in this project is not the introduction of Christian spiritual formation to Japan itself, but the support for the Japanese church to create a space where God works. For this, the concept and practice of spiritual transformation will be useful.

In Japan, Christian spiritual formation was not noticed until a few years ago, and it is still not fully accepted. The reason why it is not accepted is that there are many layers. For example, inflexible presentations that ignore the church's traditions. No matter how useful spiritual formation is, if the local church in Japan rejects it, it cannot be introduced.

It is necessary to find a way to introduce spiritual transformation that respects the culture of the local church in Japan. First, the theological position should be clarified. A clear theological position releases the anxiety of the church. Sanctification and the comprehensive gospel are likely to be hints. Second, a survey of spiritual disciplines that fit the characteristics of the Japanese evangelical Church is worthwhile. The study of spiritual disciplines using the Bible in the center of the Church deserves work. Finally, it may be useful to consider a Japanese spiritual discipline inspired by Japanese spirituality. Western churches may be interested in Zen, but Japanese churches are very wary of pagan customs like Zen, and this attempt will be controversial.

## Next Steps

Areas for further academic research include exploring the definition of spiritual formation, practicing in local churches, and exploring resources available in Japan. First, the investigation of the definition of spiritual formation is the exploration of comprehensive spiritual formation, including at the individual, community, and missionary levels. Also, it is noteworthy that the lack of spiritual formation practices missing at the individual level and at the community level is rarely addressed in Japan. Second, it is essential to investigate the practice of Christian spiritual formation in the local church of a variety of denominations in order to understand the diversity of spiritual disciplines according to the unique characteristics and culture of each faith tradition. Finally, there is a study of spiritual transformation resources according to the characteristics of Japanese Church.



A survey of the writings of Catholic priests in Japan and the writings of Protestant ministers in the United States will help.

## Discovery Workshop Documentation

On October 20, 2020, I met with five individuals through Zoom, from 9am-12pm. The question they came ready to discuss was

*"How to introduce Spiritual Formation in Japan?"*

This is the initial question surrounding my Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) for my DMin project at Portland Seminary. During our workshop we examined the audience, NPO, root cause, and outcome to develop a more concise NPO statement.

### *Activity One: NPO Definition and Audience*

1) What is the key issue you are trying to address and why is it important?

- 大前提に疑問がある。信仰のあり方を今までと同じことを言っているだけでは。今更、新しく言われることに対する違和感。
- 霊的形成がわからないから、次に進めない。
- 霊的形成の内容は当たり前のことのように聞こえる。
- 聖霊の働き、聖霊に造り変えられるのも理解できた。
- 教団教派の違いによって、受け取り方が変わる。
- 静まって聞く、自分が主の声を聞くというのが新鮮。
- キリストの姿を目指すという基礎的なもの。偏らずに聖書的に理解できる。
- 霊的形成をやれば結果が出るというような、to do list ではない。
- 霊的形成はクリスチャンとして当たり前の基礎的なこと。習慣。霊的な筋力をつける。
- 「当たり前」だと思っていたけど、当たり前をノウハウ化していくことなのか。
- 知的であり、霊的、社会的な存在だとホーリスティックな存在だとしたら、信仰に関してもホーリスティックな捉え方が必要。今までの福音派、社会そのものも、知的が強調されていて、心の中の洞察が弱かったのではないか。社会できちんと生きていても霊的な部分で満足ができなかった。
- 戦後のキリスト教は二階建ての信仰（日曜日、二階で教会にいき、平日は一階で普通の生活をしている。）一階と二階が分かれている。分裂。渇きが起こる。どこでも充実した自分でありたい。この部分が弱くなっているのではないか。
- 時代の影響があるのではないか。

- 靈的形成の導入は、ネガティブな教会の現状に対する対応なのか。
- 練馬の足りないことはあると思う。交わり・祈りが難しいこともある。個人的には祈り合うことを避けてきた。最近は聖歌隊では祈り合う様子がある。伝道は、まず家族をという感じで、外に向かっていく雰囲気は欠けている。
- 泉田昭牧師は、信仰と社会のニーズの両面に答えていた。
- 教会が神様の言葉を、受け止めていない。
- 方法論は唯一絶対ではない。多様なことを受け入れる余地は必要。
- 靈的形成を包括した形でやることのできる概念
- 心に留めてほしい本質と言えるかもしれない。
- 靈的形成を方法論として捉えると浸透していかない。
- 「今までと何が違うの」という疑問に応える必要がある。
- 靈的形成は「方法論」なのか。
- なぜ靈的な飢え渇きのような求めがあるのか。
- 日本の文脈の分析や他の文脈との比較も必要。
- クリスマスが少ない日本は結果を出さないといけないというプレッシャー。ゴールは何人、救われたかが気になる。救いがゴール。救われて 3 年以内に教会を去る人が多い。日本の教会に必要な、不足している部分としての「聖化」の部分に注目が集まっている。失敗したとしても、造り変えられるプロセスの中にいられるという視点は失敗を嫌う日本に必要なかもしれない。
- 靈的形成が伝道、宣教の視野が広がる。
- 聖化の概念と言われるとわかりやすい。
- 「霊に燃え、主に仕える」というのが一つの今までの教会のイメージ。
- 新しいものを導入したいのか、すでにあったものを統合するイメージか

2) 誰にとって、この NPO はインパクトがありますか。誰に焦点を絞ればいいでしょう。

Who is impacted by this NPO and who should I focus on?

- 牧師や家族（燃え尽きて牧会から離れる牧師が多いため、牧会塾という牧師・牧師夫人のための霊性を養うグループがあった）
- 教会全体に広げたい
- 練馬バプテスト教会（地域教会から始める）、あまり知らない情報は表面的に終わる。教会の歴史を学びつつ。先人の歴史を学びつつ。
- 日本全体から、練馬教会へ具体化という方向なのか。

- 一人ひとりの信徒、牧会者のために
- 誰かと限定する必要があるか。クリスチャンみんなでもいいのではないか。
- クリスチャンに限らず、すべての人。
- 霊的形成はクリスチャンになってから始まるのか、意識的に神に出会う前から霊的形成は始まっている
- 役職やタイトルではなく、誰もがフォーカスになり得る。
- 神学生という選択肢もある。
- KGK のインテグレーションプログラム。インフルエンサーを選ぶ。
- 異文化である日本を理解できるように書く。それをさらに、日本に伝わるように。
- 練馬の中で、特に、理解してほしい人のタイプを考える。
- 日本全体の中での練馬の位置付けの特異性。都会的教会のパターン。練馬の実践は普遍になるかどうかは今後の検討要素。
- 日本の教会の他のところと比較する。どんな状況でも、本質的に通じるということを書くことまで視野に入れるのか。
- スコープを明確に。本質を引き出すか、一つの地域教会の実例に留めるか。

### 3) What social/cultural factors shape this NPO?

日本の教会で霊的形成が広がっていない要因は何か。この NPO を形成している社会的・文化的な要因は何でしょうか

- 情報が少ない。
- カトリックに対する福音派の拒否感が残っている
- 体験者が少ない
- 体験できる場所が少ない
- 「聖書のみ」が強調されてきたため、聖書以外の方法で神を知るのには抵抗がある
- トップダウンで教えられているから、自分で読めない人が多い。「なぜ」と質問された時、答えるのが苦手。to do list になる。
- 霊的形成は信仰を深めること。
- キリストの似姿は型どおりではない。個性が生かされる必要がある。
- 教会は忙しい。日本が難しい。静まる時間がない。
- 「スピリチュアル」の日本語が、宇宙と繋がるとか、占いの印象。ペンテコステ派の異言のイメージもある。

- 「聖霊に満たされて」と言えいいのではないか。
- 学校教育が徐々に変わりつつあるが、正解を教えられて覚えることが大事という価値観が根強い。
- 恵みを受けて感謝して、そのさきの自分の生活へ落とし込むことに話題がいかない。
- 広がっていないと見て要因を探る方法と、根底にはあると見てそこにある鍵のようなものを探る方法もありそうですね
- 時間を効率的にという価値観が広まっている。
- 表層的、見えるところでの評価する傾向が日本にある。
- 欧米から見ると、一応、日本は ZEN マインドで、マインドフルネスの元祖みたいなことにもなっている。
- ペンテコステの伝統としては、「静まる」に抵抗感がある。
- 「絵」を見ながら聖霊の語りかけを受けましょう」という実践をアメリカで体験したが、抵抗感があつた。まだ、自然なら OK だった。アイコンは偶像礼拝に見えるかなとか。仏教の道具を使う場合も日本人には違和感に感じる。
- 共同体意識の問題。周りにどう見られるかが、個人に影響を与える。
- 信仰を持つことが、他者にどう見られるかが影響して、信仰を持ちにくい。
- 個人の違いも大きい。
- 「霊的形成」の言葉、もう色がついているか？ムーブメントになりすぎている。昔からあって、幅の広いもの。日本ではある一定の人たちに色がつきすぎていると感じる。
- 「霊的形成」は一般信徒としては、あまり聞いたことはない。

#### Restate the NPO

シンプルで覚えやすい NPO に！

(聴衆) 地域教会に練馬バプテスト教会、すべての人 を考えると、  
(NPO) 霊的形成が理解・受容されていないこと を発見しました。

#### Activity Two: Understanding Those Impacted by the NPO - Empathy Map

SAYS(何を言うでしょうか)	THINKS(何を考えるでしょうか)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 主を第一としよう！</li> <li>• 主との交わり</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• すべての人が愛されている、それをどうわかちあい、どう伝えるか。</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・主にある交わりに感謝</li> <li>・キリスト者として、この地上での目指すべき生き方だ。</li> <li>・「神さまが私のために...」</li> <li>・「今までの私は...」</li> <li>・「神さまはあなたのために...」</li> <li>・「私が神さまから与えられたものは...」</li> <li>・「自分にとっての罫、落とし穴は...」</li> <li>・生き生きとしたクリスチャン生活、教会生活を送ることができる</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・主の恵みと愛を主を知らない人に証しし、伝えるにはどうしたらいいか？</li> <li>・主の恵みをどのように教会や社会に還元していくべきか？</li> <li>・自分にできるだろうか</li> <li>・目標ではあるが現実には難しい</li> <li>・いろいろと取り組んでみたがなかなか上手くいかない。なぜだろうか。</li> <li>・職場ではどのようにすればいいのか。</li> <li>・私の本当の歩みはどのようなものか</li> <li>・神は私にとってどのようなお方か</li> <li>・私のまわりの人のために私は何ができるだろうか</li> <li>・神がこの世において何をなさっているのだろうか</li> <li>・神さまはこの人のためにどのような計画を用意しておられるだろうか</li> <li>・「宗教」でなく「神のかたち」としてのクリスチャン生活への喜び</li> <li>・積極的に福音を伝え、多くのひとたちにキリストと生きる人生を生きてほしい</li> <li>・神の家族、教会へ多くの人たちに加わってほしい</li> </ul>
<p>DOES(何をするでしょうか)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・生活をもって証する</li> <li>・主の愛を伝える</li> <li>・社会に奉仕する</li> </ul>	<p>FEELS(何を感じるでしょうか)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・主との深い交わり</li> <li>・主にある交わりの豊かさ</li> <li>・社会で仕えることの喜び</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・ 祈る</li> <li>・ 聖書を読む</li> <li>・ 他のキリスト者の話を聞く</li> <li>・ 信仰的な本を読む</li> <li>・ 教会内外の奉仕をする</li> <li>・ 職場での証を試みる</li> <li>・ 自分と神との関係を深めることの習慣化</li> <li>・ 親しい人との定期的な時間</li> <li>・ 個への対応</li> <li>・ 賜物を意識した奉仕、宣教</li> <li>・ 家庭、職場での責任</li> <li>・ 主との交わりを第一とする</li> <li>・ 罪の習慣→霊的習慣へ</li> <li>・ 福音を喜びをもって伝える</li> <li>・ 神の家族との心からの交わり</li> <li>・ 奉仕を今までとは異なるイメージで喜びをもってする</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・ 教会の兄弟姉妹への信頼・愛情</li> <li>・ 自分の無力さ</li> <li>・ 神様の不思議な介入・働き</li> <li>・ 取り組む中での挫折感と恵み</li> <li>・ 自己充足感</li> <li>・ 深い喜び</li> <li>・ 自己確信</li> <li>・ sound vulnerability</li> <li>・ 共同体の絆</li> <li>・ 使命感</li> <li>・ キリストと生きる喜び</li> <li>・ 神のかたち、三位一体の神との交わりと霊的形成の喜び</li> </ul>
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What themes were repeated in all the quadrants?

- 社会での証
- 生活全般を通した証の生活

Activity Three: Finding the Root Cause - 5 Whys

参加者	1st Why	2nd Why	3rd Why	4th Why	5th Why

Aさん	怪しいと思っている	異教のもの（元々日本にあるもの）は排除したい	御言葉を研究すること＝主と出会う前提	自分が教会を守らないといけないと思う	神と自分の関係の可能性に自分で境界線を引いてしまう
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抵抗感、今までの教会を守らなくてはいけない使命感、ピュアな信仰を守る＝聖書研究という固定概念

参加者	1st Why	2nd Why	3rd Why	4th Why	5th Why
Bさん	流行りの（新しい）学びの一つに思われる	テーマ（科目）の一つのイメージがある	過去に色々なムーブメント（方法）を導入した日本のクリスト教会にある失敗（分裂など）から来る抵抗感	ムーブメントではない理由が分からない（新しい用語やカトリック用語が出てくる）	学びの機会がない、正しく包括的に Spiritual Formation を学ぶ機会がない

学びの機会の正しい提供、文脈化の必要、すでにあるものも含まれ、足りない部分を補う

参加者	1st Why	2nd Why	3rd Why	4th Why	5th Why
Cさん  自分のことで考えてみた	必要を感じない  やっている人は自分と違う側の人	感じていても、深入りすると、あちらがわの人になってしまう気がする	自分の中にあるプライド、まあまああの信仰生活に甘んじる思い	本当の危機に直面することがない、本物を経験することが乏しい	自分自身のもつ偏った人格、それをそのままにしようとするところ、そういう意味で一番必要としているはず

組織というより個人の感覚として。

自分の扱いたくない部分を扱うことを避ける。弱さ、欠けの自覚はしているけど、諦めもある。違う自分になる恐れ。

参加者	1st Why	2nd Why	3rd Why	4th Why	5th Why

Dさん	必要性を感じない	いま行っている事に満足している。新たなことにチャレンジする必要を感じない	新たなことを行うのはめんどくさい	めんど臭くてもそれに取り組むメリットを感じない	生き方や人柄が豊かにされ、変化が起きた人（モデルになるような人）が少ない
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深堀りすると、めんどくさくなりそう。他の人に触れてもらいたくない。赤裸々、辛い。メリットがない。モデルが少ない。生き方が変わったというモデルが少ない。

参加者	1st Why	2nd Why	3rd Why	4th Why	5th Why
Eさん	知らない	説明が不十分	過去の否定は違和感と抵抗感	新しいものより連続性の中で提示された方が受け取りやすい	ノウハウになることを避ける。信仰に根付く方向に持っていく。

ニーズに気づく必要。心が柔らかい必要がある。届く言い方、届け方。開かれやすい伝え方。弱い人に寄り添っていく姿勢。

それぞれの人の 5WHYS の説明

グループの決定

Participant	1st Why	2nd Why	3rd Why	4th Why	5th Why
Group decision	必要を感じない	ある程度現状に満足しているから	困っていないから	わざわざ深い部分を見たくない	モデルがいらない

#### Activity Four: Putting it together - NPO Statement

これまでの活動 1-3 をまとめると

→

（聴衆）練馬バプテスト教会をはじめとした地域教会は  
（課題）霊的形成を土台とした教会形成という選択肢が簡単に手の届かない範囲にある  
（原因）霊的形成が受け入れられない理由が何層にも重なっている  
（結果）もし課題が解決されたら、教会内外でキリストの心が映し出されることを求める教会が増える。



# 1) Discuss any points of friction/tention, clarification, or questions that arise as a group.

## 整合性が取れていない Friction:

- 「霊的形成を土台とした教会形成という選択肢が簡単に手の届かない範囲にある」と書いていますが、現状認識としての「霊的形成はすでに
  - 1 信徒の信仰の成長のために用いられています
  - 2 牧師の燃え尽きからの回復やその予防のために用いられています
 ということと整合性がとれていないと思います。
- 「既に手には届いているが、広がり・深まりが十分とは言えない。全員が明確に意識し、それを日常の信仰生活の土台としてしっかり据えられていない。
- “霊的形成”のための“方法論”について、日本の地域教会が明確に意識したり、さまざまな方法論があることに十分に情報共有もされていない」とか？
- 霊的形成を土台とした教会形成は選択肢のひとつでしかないのか？ 選択肢が手の届かない範囲にある、という表現が、本当に実情を表しているのか。解決されたら、容易に選択、採用することができる、という結果なのかなと。それがさらなる結果まで生み出すかどうかは、また別問題。
- 「簡単に手の届かない範囲にある」との表現が分からない

## 明確にした方がいい Clarification:

- 霊的形成、教会、教会形成、という言葉の意味
- 「霊的」の意味の明確な定義
- 練馬バプテスト教会の特質、どこが一般的で、どこが特徴的なのか
- 地域教会の範囲、福音的な教会の範囲？あるいは全教会？
- 何層にも、はどのような層なのか
- 映し出す教会が増えるのではなく、映し出される(受動態)ことを求める(結果でなく願い)教会が増えるとしたのは意識的か
- 「霊的形成」を望先生がどのようにとらえているのか？

## 質問 Questions:

- “霊的形成”を教会形成の土台に据える、とはどういう状態を目指しているのか？何をすればそうなっている、と言えるのか？どのようにしたら、「土台に据える」という“行為”が成立するのか。
- そもそも霊的形成とは？一個人の主との関係性のこと？もしかして、単に、“主を心に受け入れ、常に共にいる。主の言葉に常に耳を傾け、従おうとする。”ということ？

- ここで言う、教会形成、とは？ そもそも、ここで言う「教会」とは？
- もしかして主を信じる個人の集合体、ということ？

最後の修正を終えた NPO

## 2) Revised NPO Statement

Considering Japanese local churches such as Nerima Baptist Church (audience), we've discovered that the option of church formation based on spiritual formation is not easily accessible (NPO), which is caused by multiple layers of reasons why spiritual formation is unacceptable (root cause).

If resolved, it would mean that the Japanese church would be freed from worrying about the number of baptized, the number of worship attendees, and the amount of donations (outcome).

## 3) 最後のリフレクション Final reflections

今後、何を必ず調査すべきか As I continue researching this NPO, what should I be sure to examine? (まだ課題が私の中で腑に落ちていないので、自分勝手な推測での案です)

- 教会員の“霊的”状態—主の臨在をどう感じているか、具体的に感じたことは、とか？
- 社会に生きるキリスト者としての日々の証
- 伝道のために何をしているか、自分がどうすべきと思っているか
- どのように祈っているか
- 教会員同士が互いに霊的に成長するために、何をしているか
- 何をすべきと思うか
- まず、スピリチュアル・フォーメーション (SF)に関する理解 (望先生自身、そして日本全体)
- 「日本の教会」を SF に関してまとめるのであれば、教団教派、教会の歴史の中での SF 理解の違い (聖霊の働きの受容や範囲も含め)

As I continue researching this NPO, what are potential blind spots that I best explore?

- 「霊的形成」への“盲信”。主を第一に！
- SF は新しい教科や分野ではなく、すでに宗教改革前、実際は初代教会の時代から存在していること
- 教職者と信徒での SF への受け止め方の違い
- 教会や教団教派により、福音宣教と社会的責任の2つの宣教の柱の重点バランスが異なること

As I continue researching this NPO, what are potential pitfalls that I best avoid?

- ことばの定義があいまいなまま使う。

- 状況把握を先入観にとらわれて行う。
- 否定的にとらえすぎて、教会や教会員のなかの主の恵み・主の臨在に目が閉ざされる
- まとめるために、論点や問題点を単純化しすぎる。
- SF が日本の宣教や教会成長のすべてを解決していくというような、方法論的なとらえ方
- SF はすでに世界や日本の神学や教会形成にあるレベルで存在してきたこと

#### Final comments

- 主を第一とし、人を愛し、認め、ともに歩む、謙虚な気持ちで考え、答えを求め、論文をまとめていってくださると、とてもすばらしいと思います。
- 「靈的形成」という言葉から思い浮かべるのは、キリスト者が良い意味で靈的な渴きを持っているかということです。自分はちゃんと聖書を読み祈り教会生活を守っているからキリスト者として問題が無い。あるいは問題は多少感じるが大きな問題ではない、と思っている人がいます。また、今まで受けてきた教えや歩みで十分足りていると思っている人。そのような人の多くは自分の内面の深い所に向き合わない、向き合えない、向き合う必要がないと思っているのではないかと。全く逆で、自分は何か足りない、不完全な存在であり、信仰が足りないダメな人間だと感じている人。このような人の多くも単なる自己憐憫や自己保身に陥って、自分自身を受け止めていない、受け止め切れていないのではないかと感じます。更には、社会学的に言うと、自己存在の根本を教会や社会が求める姿に無意識的に合わせることで安心して、敢えて自己の深い所と向き合うことを避けるということもあろうかと思えます。その意味で靈的形成の一面は、自分自身の深い所と向き合い、神様との関係の中で靈的な確信を得ることから始まるのではないかと思います。一方、靈的形成があまりにも自分、自分と、自己の存在に関心が行くと、結局は自分のため、自分が安心できる自己認識は何かという内向き、内向的なことに留まりやすい危険性があるとも感じます。自分の心の安らぎ（キリスト者的に言うと信仰的な心の平安？）が最優先、且つ最大の関心事ですね。自己の内面的なことにとどまっていると社会そのものを変えるという発想は出にくくなります。ですので、内面的なことと対外的（教会でのあり方を含めた社会的）な両面を意識した「靈的形成」を論じていただけると幸いです。また、健全な靈的な渴きを覚えて自己の深い所と向き合い、自己存在を靈的にも受け止め、且つ他者への接し方や教会や社会に対しての働きかけが足りないという痛みも覚えつつ歩み続ける継続的なものが靈的形成であると感じています。靈的形成に取り組めば何かが完成する、というのではなく継続的な取り組み・プロセスなのだろうと思います。ちょうど、天路歷程の様な一生の歩みのプロセスという面も意識して論じていただければ幸いです。
- 「靈的形成」は導入する、しない、のものではないと思います。正しく理解し、その内容をクリスチャン生活、牧会、教会形成の中にしっかり取り入れていく必要が必ずあるものだと思います。例えば、祈りやデボーション、断食、などすでに行っている要素は「靈的訓練・習慣」としてすでに多くのクリスチャンがしていることです。これらを「しなければいけないもの」「義務」から喜んでキリストの姿に内側が変えられる中で、大切なものとしてとらえるか、だと思います。

- 改めて自分の教会を見つめる時、何かシステムとしてではなく、教会・牧会全体に SF の内容を含むようにしていると思います。メッセージや学び会、個人のバイブルスタディー、年度方針などに、SF を基礎的なこととして含めています。例えばユースの仕えるリーダー（サーバントリーダー）たちとの学び会のテキスト、教会の聖書の学び会やメッセージシリーズで、SF の内容を取り上げることがありますし、毎週のメッセージの適用などにも含まれると思います。ですので「霊的形成という選択肢」「受け入れられない理由が何層も」という活動 4 の部分には正直個人的に違和感を感じました。
- 私自身の神学校時代の指導教官だったゲーリー・マッキントッシュ先生によると、教会が年間に变化できる行事や内容は 5 - 10 % がよいとのことでした。それ以上ですと教会内で混乱したり反発が起こりやすくなります。また何も変化がないことも、時代や人々の変化に対応できない部分もあります。どう SF を牧会などに取り入れるか、も個人的には「すごいシステム導入」でなく、じっくり、でいいのでは。と思います。
- 分野としての SF を考える時に、一つの弱点は「孤独の時の重視のし過ぎ」「過度の宗教改革以前やカトリックの要素の強調」はあると思います。正しく聖化の道を歩む時、孤独、静止の時だけではなく、礼拝、宣教、交わりが正しく、バランスよく起こされていくと思います。まさに福音書でのキリストの姿が私たちが目指す姿と思います。イエス様は寂しい場所で祈られましたが、群衆にも語られ、弱い者に寄り添い、癒し、共に食事をし、弟子を育てられましたので。

## One-Page Post-Workshop Message to Stakeholders

To all the participants of the workshop,

Thank you for participating in the discovery workshop yesterday. I was worried because the activity did not end due to the lively opinions. However, I remembered that my teacher advised me that I should be as confused and messed up as possible in the first year, and I regained my energy.

Thanks to everyone's candid opinions, my NPO became clear.

1) the NPO and discovery statement findings

**Considering** Japanese local churches such as Nerima Baptist Church (audience)

**we've discovered** the option of church formation based on spiritual formation is not easily accessible (NPO),

**which is caused by** multiple layers of reasons why spiritual formation is unacceptable (root cause).

If resolved, it would mean that the Japanese church would be freed from worrying about the number of baptized, the number of worship attendees, and the amount of donations. (outcome)

A particularly important finding was the realization of multiple layers of reasons for not accepting spiritual formation. The meaning of the word "spiritual" in Japanese refers to fortune-telling and connection with the universe, lack of knowledge about spiritual formation, no need, suspicious

atmosphere, Catholic atmosphere, spiritual formation Several reasons were revealed, including the fact that few organizations deal with it, the refusal to face deeper parts of it, and the lack of a model. These range from superficial to very deep content.

2) I have a request here.

If you have any questions or comments, please let us know by email. Thank you to those who have already received it individually.

3) Thanks to everyone's participation, it became clear what I should be aware of when working on the project. Thank you for spending your precious 3 hours together.

God's blessing

## One-on-One Interview Documentation

My first interview was with a woman running an organization that does trauma counseling training for Kenyans. It was a little frustrating at first, as she had not read through all that I sent her, so she

Interviewee A- pastor, seminary teacher

- I agree with the hope that spiritual formation will take place in the context of the church.
- Spiritual formation is not a new beginning, but in the old words, an event in the field of "growth through sanctification and grace."
- Too much attention to things found in ABC (Attendance, Building, Cash)
- I think it might have been less valuable to be like Christ in the church.
- You will be asked that spiritual formation leads to the growth of the church (number of people, donations). Because mission / evangelism and spirituality cannot be regarded as one.
- There are no suitable resources, materials or texts in the Japanese church to introduce spiritual formation in the church.
- There is less of an atmosphere of talking about Catholicism and Protestantism than before, but it still exists.
- A large number of people worked on spiritual formation exercises all at once, but in a hurry. It is more effective from a long-term perspective to spend time carefully with a small number of people.
- It is good to be aware of the presentation method and wording that are easy to convey to Protestant people.
- Suggested books: A book that guides prayer written by a Catholic priest

Interviewee B- Spiritual director, author, translator

- Spiritual formation is not limited to Christians.
- When I introduced spiritual formation as "new," the Japanese church had the experience of receiving it as a denial of church tradition.
- When I now facilitate spiritual formation to the church, I would not dare to use the word "spiritual formation". The church itself seeks out the needs, gaps and thirst of the church, and I use spiritual formation in a natural way to help them.
- What a project can do is create a space for God to work, and the project cannot change people.
- A pastor who studied spiritual formation at DMin was assigned to my church as a pastor in charge of spiritual formation, but resigned after a few years. There were many factors, but facilitation of spiritual formation will never be an easy process.
- It is important to create an atmosphere where the people of the church can honestly discuss what goes wrong.
- The definition of spiritual formation is ambiguous, so the definition should be clarified.
- It is more effective to start with a small group such as a leadership group than to start with a large number of people.
- Just as there is appropriate spiritual practice according to the personality of the individual, there is an appropriate introduction method that takes into account the culture and traditions of the church.
- The Bible is so important in Japanese evangelical churches that it is a good idea to start with the Bible as a starting point for spiritual formation.

Interviewee C- Pastor, Vice-Chairman of Japan Evangelical Association, Seminary teacher

- In the first place, neither the word nor the concept of spiritual formation is recognized in the Japanese church.
- There seems to be much to be done about spirituality in the context of the Japanese church before doing spiritual formation in the local church.
- Positioning of Catholic and Eastern theology to supplement the tendency of Protestant theology to emphasize reason
- Japan's post-WWII evangelical church had a strong spiritual interest, but has been spoken in the context of personal sanctification.
- Western churches pay attention to Zen in Japan, but the Japanese seek the origin of Christianity in the West.
- Clarification of commonalities and differences between spiritual formation common to all and Christian spiritual formation
- Trinity spiritual formation approach.

- Humans can never manipulate the work of the Holy Spirit. Avoid the mistake of trying to control the Holy Spirit.
- It will be generally recognized that the distance between the community and spiritual formation is large.
- "Internal concentration for external service" Bonhoeffer
- Even among local churches in Japan, there is a big difference in spiritual formation due to denomination.
- How to overcome the rejection of experientialism in the evangelical church. How do you explain "spiritual" in words?
- A sense of caution about theology that has already been packaged.
- If we talk about spiritual formation in the local church, we need to talk about spiritual formation in worship.
- It is easy to accept in Japan the way of presenting that if we take one step further about what we are already working on

## Appendix B– Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay



## Section 1: Biblical and Theological Foundations

### **Spiritual Formation, Contextualization, and a Mind of Love in the Biblical World**

Since spiritual formation is an unknown term in most Japanese churches, starting with a connection with known theology will encourage acceptance of spiritual formation. What is being discussed under the heading of "spiritual formation" (at least within evangelical Protestantism) is none other than views regarding the nature and dynamics of growth in Christian holiness.<sup>26</sup> In America, many people may anticipate the term Christian spiritual formation to mean deepening their personal relationship with God. Spiritual formation has focused primarily on the spiritual development of the individual,<sup>27</sup> however, a more comprehensive understanding of spiritual formation based on the Bible is being proposed.

Also, Tang, who worked on spiritual formation in a Malaysian church, insisted that "though the nature and process of Christian spiritual formation remain constant, the means will vary for different believers and Christian faith communities. The means, for example, will be different in North America, South America, Africa, Australia, and Asia."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to search for a method of spiritual growth that suits Japan while referring to the method of spiritual formation in the United States. This is related to the contextualization of the gospel. The book of Acts describes the challenges and biblical solutions that arose when the Gospel was passed on to different cultures. Focusing on the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 helps to deepen the understanding of contextualization.

Moreover, the author's love shown in 1John is noteworthy. Even if there is a conflict in the church, John's attitude of staying in touch with God's love, which is consistent with the Old and New Testaments, is perfect for the whole project. This is because there can be more or less friction when introducing the new concept of spiritual formation into Japan. Therefore, John's love, which reflects the love of Jesus, will be the key to the project.

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<sup>26</sup> Steven L. Porter, "Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 2 (2008): 130.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph H. Hellerman, *Why We Need the Church to Become More Like Jesus: Reflections about Community, Spiritual Formation, and the Story of Scripture* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), ix.

<sup>28</sup> Alex Tang, *Till We Are Fully Formed: Christian Spiritual Formation Paradigms in the English-Speaking Presbyterian Churches in Malaysia* (Bukit Merah Central, Singapore: Armour Publishers, 2014), 23.

## Textual Discussions

### CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN TRINITY

Everything regarding spiritual formation must flow from who God is. God is distinguished by God's emphasis on divine three-in-oneness, that is, the eternal coexistence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the inner personal life of the Godhead.<sup>29</sup> From eternity past to eternity future, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relate to one another with grace, love, mutual submission, and unity of heart and by honoring their roles practicing functional submission—the Holy Spirit to the Son and the Father, and the Son to the Father.<sup>30</sup> The persons of the Trinity open their fellowship to all humankind to participate in their divine fellowship.<sup>31</sup>

The view that the spiritual formation originates with the Triune God is proposed. It is appropriate for Averbeck to argue that "both Romans 8:29 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 focus on our need for conformity to Christ. The former identifies this as the plan of God the Father, and the latter relates it specifically to the work of the Holy Spirit—the third person of the Trinity."<sup>32</sup>

The Trinitarian pattern is evident in Romans 8:27-29<sup>33</sup> wherein Paul notes that "The *Spirit* intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.... For those *God* foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his *Son*." The Holy Spirit is at work to regenerate us and to progressively conform us to the image of Jesus Christ—reflecting purity, passion, and sacrifice and empowering us to live as salt and light in the world (see Romans 8:29).<sup>34</sup> Spiritual formation is not the end itself but is always pursued through and focused on the advancement of Christ's kingdom.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, "Trinity," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 939.

<sup>30</sup> Bruce Demarest, "The Trinity as Foundation for Spiritual Formation," in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 232.

<sup>31</sup> Tang, *Till We Are Fully Formed*, 115.

<sup>32</sup> Richard E. Averbeck, "Spirit, Community, and Mission: A Biblical Theology for Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 1 (2008): 29.

<sup>33</sup> Averbeck, 29.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Glerup, "The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Formation," in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 260.

<sup>35</sup> Paula Fuller, "Participating in God's Mission," in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 202.

Theologian Darrell Bock in *New Testament Community and Spiritual Formation* comments that “the closest single term to this idea [concept of spiritual formation] in the New Testament is found in 2 Corinthians 3:18, where Paul says we as believers are being “transformed” (*metamorphoumetha*) into the image of God and from one glory to another by God’s Spirit... In this 2 Corinthians text, this change takes place inwardly and is visible outwardly in a changed life.”<sup>36</sup> It is Paul’s intention to emphasize that (1) in spiritual transformation Christians (individuals and the Christian faith community) will be transformed into a likeness of Christ, (2) this transformation is an ongoing process, (3) it is Trinitarian, (4) the Holy Spirit is involved in this transformation, and (5) God’s glory is thereby restored.<sup>37</sup> Biblically speaking, therefore, spiritual formation consists of the Trinitarian work of God in the lives of genuine believers in Christ through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup>

### THE MODEL FOR CONTEXTUALIZATION IN ACTS 15

“The gospel content was inviolate, but the form that it took in Gentile circles varied. This often caused problems, exemplified in the Jerusalem decree of Acts 15,” argues Grant Osborne.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Acts 15 must have implications for the contextualization of spiritual formation into Japanese culture.

Dean Flemming further notes that

it is clearly a process in which a whole array of elements come into play: the leading of the Spirit, the witness of Scripture and the words of Jesus, the audience-sensitive proclamation of the word, the church’s experience of God and the stories that testify to what God is doing, the corporate insight of the community and its leadership, respect for traditional ways and a willingness to compromise on nonessentials for the sake of Christian unity, and a firm commitment to the truth of the gospel.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, Jewish believers, such as those in Jerusalem, would continue their practices like circumcision, but Gentile believers were not to be forced to live like Jews. There was to be unity on the essential

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<sup>36</sup> Darrell L. Bock, “New Testament community and spiritual formation,” in *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 105.

<sup>37</sup> Tang, *Till We Are Fully Formed*, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Richard E. Averbeck, “The Bible in Spiritual Formation,” in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 293.

<sup>39</sup> Grant R. Osborne, “Hermeneutics/Interpreting Paul,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 396.

<sup>40</sup> Dean E. Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 54.

centrality of Jesus, God's grace, and on the uniqueness of salvation in that grace by faith alone.<sup>41</sup> As shown in Act 15, contextualization is the process of cross-cultural communication, determining the significance of a biblical text for a group distanced from the cultures behind the Bible.<sup>42</sup>

### **THE MIND OF LOVE TO THE CONGREGATION IN 1JOHN2:7-8**

For John, as for Paul, and above all as for Jesus, the commandments are all summed up in one word: Love.<sup>43</sup> Even though the community was splitting and harsh words were being exchanged,<sup>44</sup> John who knew and identified himself as the one Jesus loved, in turn treated the congregation with love, even calling his readers "Beloved" (1John 2:7 ESV). John's use of "beloved" connotes both heartfelt human closeness and grateful acknowledgment of the corporate experience of undeserved divine favor.<sup>45</sup>

John also writes that "I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command" (1John 2:7-8). John's teaching is nothing new or novel, but is rather the culmination of, and consistent with, what God has been saying all along.<sup>46</sup> According to Yarbrough, he thus avoids either "a hidebound appeal to tradition alone or a neophyte's breathless fascination with late-breaking news exclusively."<sup>47</sup> Moreover, he is saying that a distinctively new dimension of love was demonstrated in the life of Jesus, the Son of God, and thus made possible in the lives of his followers,<sup>48</sup> which is all about spiritual formation.

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<sup>41</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 514.

<sup>42</sup> Osborne, "Hermeneutics/Interpreting Paul," 396.

<sup>43</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Early Christian Letters for Everyone*, New Testament for Everyone (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 141.

<sup>44</sup> Gary M. Burge, "John, Letters Of," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 589.

<sup>45</sup> Robert W. Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 97.

<sup>46</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 95.

<sup>47</sup> Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 95.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Vol. 51, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 57.

## SYNTHESIS OF THEMES, VALUES, AND COMMITMENTS

Everything regarding spiritual formation must flow from who God is. From the exegesis of both Romans 8:27-29 and 2 Corinthians 3:18, Christian spiritual transformation is a Trinitarian project. "Spiritual formation" refers to the entire formative work of the Holy Spirit, which is done according to the will of our Heavenly Father in order to make us conform to the image of Christ. Also, the Jerusalem Council theologically expressed its understanding of missions to different cultures. While Jewish believers would continue their own customs, Gentile believers were not forced to live like Jews. In that practice, it was important to create a church that was not monochromatic. In other words, Japanese churches should consider forming a Japanese-style church rather than imitating American churches. Contextualization is the process of cross-cultural communication and determination of the meaning of the biblical text, as described in Acts 15. Finally, for John, and above all as for Jesus, the commandments are all summed up in one word: Love. Even though the community was splitting, he is saying that self-sacrificing love was demonstrated in the life of Jesus, and thus made possible in the lives of his disciples.

The insight provided by these Bible studies would be of great help in introducing spiritual formation to the local churches in Japan. Much current scholarship on contemporary Christian spiritual formation focuses largely on individuals. However, it is clear that the Trinitarian spiritual transformation is for the person, for the community and for the world, which allows for the collective mindset of Asian Christians. Furthermore, in order to introduce the Trinitarian spiritual formation to Japan, Flemming's perspective of contextualization is essential:

the leading of the Spirit, the witness of Scripture and the words of Jesus, the audience-sensitive proclamation of the word, the church's experience of God and the stories that testify to what God is doing, the corporate insight of the community and its leadership, respect for traditional ways and a willingness to compromise on nonessentials for the sake of Christian unity, and a firm commitment to the truth of the gospel.<sup>49</sup>

Further, through this project, the attitude of facing the congregation with the heart of God's love, which is presented in 1 John, is always an exemplary mindset.

## Section 2: Topic History and Key Voices

### A Brief History of Evangelical Spiritual Formation

The short history of the term "spiritual formation" dates back to Roman Catholicism. James Houston, who is an emeritus professor of spiritual theology at Regent College, explains the brief history of the spiritual formation movement:

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<sup>49</sup> Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*, 54.

I think the short history is that after Vatican two there was a real concern on the part of the reformers within the Roman Church that their priests should have a priestly formation that was appropriate to Vatican II and it was I think from that background that, certainly in America the ATS, the Association of Theological Schools, adopted it for spiritual formation in the Seminary but because they were still viewing it for seminarians the whole purpose was still that Gregorian tradition. So, I think it's more innovative what has happened since then is that we now think of spiritual formation for the priesthood of all believers that all Christians should have some form of spiritual formation.<sup>50</sup>

Teo gives a similar analysis, "The history of this word is traced to Roman Catholicism, and yet it has a different meaning within the Christian evangelical world."<sup>51</sup> While Christian spiritual formation includes Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox practices, this study focuses on the history of spiritual formation within evangelicalism.

### THE ORIGINS OF THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION MOVEMENT

One of the sources of the spiritual formation movement within the evangelical church is the openness to traditional Christian spirituality. Kourie and Ruthenberg noted, "Contemporary Christian spirituality has emerged as a renascent phenomenon in the years following Vatican II (1962-1965)."<sup>52</sup> Writes Chris Armstrong, "1960 saw the election of America's first Roman Catholic president. Vatican II opened the windows of ecumenical dialogue. Henri Nouwen came into the consciousness of lay evangelicals, opening up the desert tradition to them. The charismatic movement crossed confessional boundaries too."<sup>53</sup> There is no denying that by the time Foster's *Celebration* hit bookstores in 1978, the conciliatory, culture-engaging "new evangelicals" (represented by the National Association of Evangelicals [NAE], *Christianity Today*, Fuller Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell had already begun to initiate themselves into the world of traditional Christian spirituality.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> James Houston, "The History of Spiritual Formation - James Houston and Bruce Hindmarsh," Biola University Center for Christian Thought / The Table, November 25, 2013, <https://cct.biola.edu/the-history-of-spiritual-formation-james-houston-and-bruce-hindmarsh/>.

<sup>51</sup> Wilson Teo, "Christian Spiritual Formation," *Emerging Leadership Journeys* 10, no. 1 (2017): 138.

<sup>52</sup> C. Kourie and Trevor Ruthenberg, "Contemporary Christian Spirituality: A Worldly Embodiment," *Koers - Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 73 (2008): 304.

<sup>53</sup> Chris Armstrong, "The Rise, Frustration, and Revival of Evangelical Spiritual Ressourcement," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 2, no. 1 (2009): 118.

<sup>54</sup> Chris Armstrong, "The Rise, Frustration, and Revival of Evangelical Spiritual Ressourcement," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 2, no. 1 (2009): 113.

According to Armstrong, another flow of spiritual formation movement came with the reaction to the fundamentalist movement:

The fundamentalist movement of the 1920s-1950s had dedicated itself to defending important doctrines such as the divinity and personal return of Christ against liberal modifications. In so doing, it had come to identify the Christian life with cognitive belief. What that meant, says Willard, is that "if you believe the right things, you go to heaven when you die—and in the meantime, there's not much to do." Discipleship, or growth in spiritual things, took a back seat.<sup>55</sup>

As a reaction to this fundamentalist trend, spiritual growth has come to be emphasized. In this way, it overlaps not only with the flow from Catholicism but also with the history of the evangelical church.

### THE SPREAD OF THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION MOVEMENT

Many admit that *Celebration of Discipline*,<sup>56</sup> the book written in 1978 by Richard J. Foster, had a great influence on the spiritual formation of the evangelical church. Hellerman says, "Richard J. Foster planted the seeds for current interest in spiritual formation when he penned *Celebration of Discipline* back in 1978. The spiritual formation movement has since generated countless books and articles and has established itself as a familiar component of theological education in Christian colleges and seminaries across America."<sup>57</sup>

Several leaders have emerged that have revived interest in the need to be transformed into the image of Christ. James Houston, one of the movement's forerunners, grew up Plymouth Brethren in England, taught for years at Oxford University, led in Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, and then in 1970 was called to Vancouver, British Columbia to become the founding principal of a new evangelical graduate school: Regent College.<sup>58</sup> Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, Roberta Hestenes, Henri Nouwen, Larry Crabb, Eugene Peterson are also said to be leaders associated with the movement.<sup>59</sup> Also, spiritual formation has begun to spread in seminary programs as reported by Angela Reed:

Surging interest in spiritual formation and spiritual guidance has caught the attention of numerous theological educators in recent years... Numerous

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<sup>55</sup> Armstrong, 114.

<sup>56</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

<sup>57</sup> Hellerman, *Why We Need the Church to Become More Like Jesus*, ix.

<sup>58</sup> Armstrong, "The Rise, Frustration, and Revival of Evangelical Spiritual Ressourcement," 113-14.

<sup>59</sup> Steven L. Porter, "Is the Spiritual Formation Movement Dead?," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 8, no. 1 (2015): 3.

theological schools have developed Master of Arts degrees in spirituality and spiritual formation, or Master of Divinity degrees with concentrations in spirituality. Programs like these were rare only a few decades ago.”<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, spiritual formation has been open to all believers. The growing number of spiritual formation lay-training institutes have also been established. (e.g., the Apprentice Institute, Renovaré Institute, Transforming Community, Emmaus, Selah, VantagePoint, Soul Shepherding Institute, etc.)<sup>61</sup> In this way, all believers, not just pastors, have access to the ancient practices for both corporate and private devotion of centering silence, solitude, prayer and spiritual growth.

## **ANXIETIES OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION MOVEMENT**

The spiritual formation movement is spreading, but a number of criticisms and anxieties have been presented to some aspects of the spiritual formation movement. As a word of warning to those who intend to promote the spiritual formation, Porter analyzes that evangelicals have the following anxieties about spiritual formation:

1. Spiritual formation is just a fad.
2. Spiritual formation is Catholic.
3. Spiritual formation is New Age.
4. Spiritual formation is contrary to the sufficiency of Scripture.
5. Whatever happened to old-fashioned obedience?
6. Spiritual formation encourages works-righteousness.
7. Spiritual formation is overly experiential.
8. Spiritual formation neglects mission/evangelism.<sup>62</sup>

It is necessary to listen to such anxiety and take an attitude to correct the way it should be. If attention is paid, criticism will also arise. Therefore, continuing dialogue will lead to winning the trust of spiritual formation.

Others, such as Hellerman, have pointed out that the leaders of the spiritual formation movement so far have erred in overemphasizing the personal side or private disciplines, at the cost of the community. Hellerman claims:

Community has not received the attention in the SF[spiritual formation] movement that it does, for example, in the Scriptures. Foster’s seminal contribution is

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<sup>60</sup> Angela H. Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community: Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 21.

<sup>61</sup> Steven L. Porter, “The Future of the Spiritual Formation Movement,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 12, no. 2 (2019): 173.

<sup>62</sup> Porter, “Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation,” 143–44.



representative. Some fifty pages of *Celebration of Discipline* survey what Foster identifies as the corporate disciplines: confession, worship, guidance, and celebration. Well over 120 pages treat individual disciplines such as meditation, prayer, simplicity, and solitude. Dallas Willard's classic, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, similarly emphasizes personal practices like "fasting," "frugality," and "sacrifice." Willard gives significantly less attention to the communal aspects of the Christian life.<sup>63</sup>

It is natural that the emphasis shifts from the beginning of the spiritual formation movement. Recently, spiritual growth has been more holistically understood and the role of the community has been reassessed. Hellerman says, "Preoccupation with individual spiritual formation divorced from the context of community and mission, however, is a dead-end street. We grow in Christ to the degree that we are relationally grounded in a healthy Christian community that is sold out to the ministry of the gospel."<sup>64</sup>

In short, Western evangelicals have gone through this history to spread the spiritual formation movement, lower anxiety, and seek a more comprehensive understanding. Considering that Japanese evangelical churches are influenced by the United States, it is said that a review of the value of spiritual growth is necessary in Japan as well. In addition, since voices of anxiety about spiritual formation can be heard in Japan as well, it is necessary to continue polite dialogue and find ways to grow spiritually according to the characteristics of Japan.

## Practice of Spiritual Formation in the Local Church

The position of this researcher is that Spiritual formation is naturally central to the work of the local church because of its focus on the rhythm and practices Jesus followed in knowing the will of God and fulfilling his mission on earth. Next, the voices of practitioners in the local church are introduced.

### THE NEED IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Although Dallas Willard wrote about spiritual formation in the local congregation in which he emphasized that Christlikeness should be the exclusive primary goal of the local congregation,<sup>65</sup> data seems to suggest that during its seminal stages in evangelicalism, spiritual formation in the local church did not receive much attention. However, the importance of the community and the development of spiritual growth has picked up momentum and is now drawing attention from Church scholars.

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<sup>63</sup> Hellerman, *Why We Need the Church to Become More Like Jesus*, ix.

<sup>64</sup> Hellerman, 95.

<sup>65</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 233-52.

James C. Wilhoit, for example, in *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*, declares in his opening statement that "Spiritual formation is the task of the church. Period."<sup>66</sup> Wilhoit's emphasis is on giving high priority to community in encouraging spiritual growth. Similar proposals and views are increasing. Siang Yang Tan believes that the role of the local church in spiritual formation in Christ should be the primary or major role or goal of every local church.<sup>67</sup> According to Hellerman, "Recent treatments of spiritual life and growth have thankfully become more holistic and interdisciplinary, increasingly acknowledging the role of community in the sanctification process."<sup>68</sup>

Church scholars in review propose a more holistic spiritual formation, which not only deepens one's personal relationship with God, but also benefits a healthy community and participates in God's mission. Andrews and Morton wrote in the epilogue of *The Kingdom Life* that "Guiding Principle 1: Spiritual formation occurs in believers as they engage in intentional personal formation, community formation, and missional formation. These three dimensions of spiritual development must not be compartmentalized or separated but organically connected."<sup>69</sup> It is worth noting that, among the many important guidelines for spiritual formation for the local church, they mentioned the organic connection of the three dimensions at the beginning of the guidelines. They also stated in the introduction of the book that "spiritual formation is an outcome of three vital factors: sound personal spiritual growth, healthy formation of community, and participation in strong mission."<sup>70</sup> In other words, it would be said that the *interaction* of the three elements forms the basis of Christian spiritual formation. Reed expressed a similar perception, based on Maltmann's theory of the Trinity, as shown in Figure 1.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Jim Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 15.

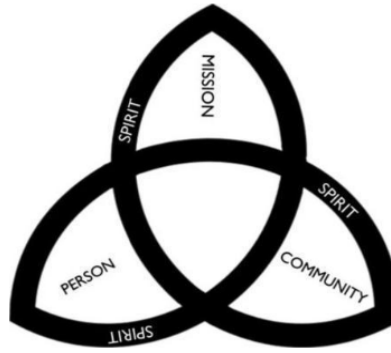
<sup>67</sup> Ruth Barton et al., "Spiritual Formation in the Church," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 7 (2014): 294.

<sup>68</sup> Hellerman, *Why We Need the Church to Become More Like Jesus*, x.

<sup>69</sup> Alan Andrews and Christopher Morton, "Epilogue," in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 317.

<sup>70</sup> Alan Andrews and Christopher Morton, "Introduction," in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 11.

<sup>71</sup> Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community*, 116.



**FIGURE 1: FORMATIVE STRANDS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

Reed explains Figure 1 as follows:

The triad of person, community and mission evident in Moltmann's own life is a central foundation for this dissertation. Diagram 1 offers one way to visualize the relationship between the three. While person, community and mission represent individual points on the diagram, all three are essentially inter-related. We can never completely separate one from relationship to the others. Yet this triad cannot function alone. The three are joined together through the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup>

Further, Tang summarized the elements Intrinsic to Christian spiritual formation:

- Person-in-formation to Christ-likeness
- Persons-in-community formation to become a people of God
- Persons-in-mission formation in the kingdom of God and the healing of creation.<sup>73</sup>

Averbeck pays attention to three dimensions of the spiritually forming work of the Holy Spirit:

First, the Holy Spirit works dynamically in the human spirit of those who know Christ in order to transform them into the image of Christ. Second, the Holy Spirit inhabits Christians individually and corporately as his holy temple in order to manifest his presence and exert his influence among us. Third, the Holy Spirit works through those who are in Christ to reach prophetically into this lost and dying world.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Reed, 115.

<sup>73</sup> Tang, *Till We Are Fully Formed*, 98.

<sup>74</sup> Averbeck, "Spirit, Community, and Mission," 30.

Richard Osmer emphasizes that spiritual practices and friendships seek to deepen the ties of individuals to a larger community and, through this community, to the world.<sup>75</sup>

In summary, if spiritual formation is intended to deepen a personal relationship with God, it may be directed only to the inside of Christians and churches, but the comprehensive spiritual transformation that organically connects the three dimensions will help the realization of God's mission through the local church.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH**

There is no formula for developing a spiritual-formation oriented church. Because every church has its own history, culture and DNA, there is never the same local church. According to Andrews and Morton, "we were not going to come up with a formula for developing a spiritual-formation church. What was necessary were guiding principles that set the direction and then a process of implementation that would develop by trial and error over a considerable period of time."<sup>76</sup>

Andrews and Morton state, "It is one thing to talk about elements of spiritual formation, but bringing it all down to practical reality in a local church is quite another matter."<sup>77</sup> However, it is expected that pastors who recognize the importance of spiritual formation in the local church will be asked how to get started in order to actually work on spiritual formation. TACT, the Theological and Cultural Thinkers, provided Guiding Principles wherein they laid out a basic direction in hopes that leaders would gain some practical benefit:

1. Spiritual formation occurs in believers as they engage in intentional personal formation, community formation, and missional formation. These three dimensions of spiritual development must not be compartmentalized or separated but organically connected.
2. The center of the spiritual-formation church is Jesus and His kingdom. The Bible is a Christocentric book. Jesus' primary message was about the immediate nearness and availability of His kingdom to us.
3. Every spiritual-formation church must be firmly rooted in the soil of the lost, the vulnerable, and the least.

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<sup>75</sup> Richard Osmer, "Foreword," in *Quest for Spiritual Community: Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), ix-x.

<sup>76</sup> Alan Andrews and Christopher Morton, "Epilogue," in *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*, ed. Alan Andrews (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2010), 317.

<sup>77</sup> Andrews and Morton, "Epilogue," 316.

4. The spiritual-formation church should seek to create an environment of grace that welcomes everyone who will come to the “rivers of living water” (John 7:38, NASB) that reside in the culture of God’s kingdom.
5. The spiritual-formation church must seek to preach, teach, and practically engage the people in spiritual formation. This means that intentional spiritual formation must be a central passion of the church.
6. Equipping people for ministry is critical to the health of the spiritual-formation church.
7. The spiritual-formation church develops new kingdom leaders for the advancement of the gospel and the spiritual formation of the people of God.
8. The Bible uses multiple metaphors to describe the people of God, but the primary descriptors are organic—for example, body and family.<sup>78</sup>

Based on these guidelines, each church will take a journey of spiritual formation that makes the best use of the unique characteristics of the church, while trying and making errors over a considerable period of time. In addition, practitioners of spiritual formation in the local church should keep in mind Andrew and Merton's points: Spiritual formation is not a program or technique but a careful and painful process that is unique to each community of believers.<sup>79</sup>

## **PRACTICES IN LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES AND MALAYSIA**

Knowing practical examples in the local church helps the efforts of other churches, even if no one is the same. Kent Carlsson and Mike Lucen of Oak Hills Church of Folsom, California recorded the struggle to change the model of the church to a more spiritually formation-oriented model in *Renovation of the Church*:

When we unplugged from the high-octane, entrepreneurial, pragmatic, success-driven, attractional model of church growth, our church was plunged into a decade-long roller-coaster ride of excessive (at times) introspection, organizational upheaval, uncertainty, plummeting attendance and fractured relationships... In good times and bad, through seasons of confusion and clarity, hundreds of people have refused to give up and have demonstrated in countless ways their support, trust and belief that God was and is up to something... They have pushed back at the cultural norm of viewing the church as consumers, a place to get their spiritual needs met.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Andrews and Morton, 317–25.

<sup>79</sup> Andrews and Morton, 317.

<sup>80</sup> Kent Carlson and Mike Lueken, *Renovation of the Church: What Happens When a Seeker Church Discovers Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 16.

Thus, the Oak Hill Church aimed to be a spiritual formation church to move away from the influence of American consumer culture. In addition, Oak Hill Church, with the support of Richard Foster and Dallas Willard, has attempted a spiritual formation-oriented church. Being able to get the help of an expert in this area would help the church in a clear direction, but finding such an expert would be difficult.

In contrast, looking at Asian practices, Tan examines on-going spiritual formation efforts in the English-speaking Presbyterian Church in Malaysia. His work is still a conceptual spiritual formation approach and has not been field tested. However, it is very valuable as an example of the contextualization of spiritual formation into Asia. Tang focuses on the community and elements in his proposal to modify the ESPC to become a spiritual formation church. His modifications to the spiritual formation church community may include the following:

- Revisiting the centrality of Scripture emphasis
- Revisiting the Malaysian Presbyterianism system
- Engaging spiritual formation influences
- Becoming crucibles for spiritual formation elements
- Group dynamics and community ethos<sup>81</sup>

Also, the following are included as spiritual forming elements:

- Growing into Christ-likeness
- Building relationships
- Spiritual learning
- Developing community
- Being missional<sup>82</sup>

In short, just as Oak Hill Church aimed at the Spiritual Formation Church to move away from consumer culture, it is effective to explain to the local churches in Japan that the Spiritual Formation Church will help to improve the status quo of the church. The above list revealed in the study in Malaysia must be of great help in the contextualization of spiritual formation in the local church of Japan.

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<sup>81</sup> Tang, *Till We Are Fully Formed*, 271-84.

<sup>82</sup> Tang, 284-316

## PRACTICE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH IN JAPAN

One local church in Japan in particular that works on spiritual formation throughout the church, is Koza Church, which belongs to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.<sup>83</sup> The report of Koza Church is significant because few reports on the practice of spiritual formation have been published in Japan. In fact, while spiritual formation as a term has not yet taken root in Japan, Koza Church is making a pioneering effort in this field. It was featured in the April 2017 issue of the Christian journal, *Fune no migi gawa* [The Right Side of the Boat].<sup>84</sup>

Senior Pastor Matsumoto first encountered the concept of spiritual formation in 2010 and was shocked by Dallas Willard's words, "Church growth is like idolatry." Around that time, he was impressed by reading James Bryan Smith's book *The Good and Beautiful God*<sup>85</sup> in English. His experience at the Catholic meditation house also helped him avoid burnout. His personal experience inspired him to incorporate spiritual formation throughout the church in 2015. Koza Church uses the Japanese version of the works of spiritual growth by James Bryan Smith as the text.<sup>86</sup> It will take some time for the deepening of spiritual growth to come to the fore, but the senior pastor sees that the perspective based on spiritual formation is gradually spreading in the church.

Matsumoto strongly affirmed the need to promote spiritual formation in the local church and gave four areas of advice: 1) the link between church growth and spiritual growth, 2) the need for resources, 3) the translation into familiar words, 4) not in a hurry.<sup>87</sup> First, Japanese churches tend to pay too much attention to the visible growth of churches like ABC (Attendance, Building, Cash). Within his church, there were voices asking how spiritual formation was associated with the numerical growth of the church. It shows the tendency of the church to underestimate the value of being like Christ. Second, the overwhelming lack of resources is a problem. Although Koza Church uses Smith's books, the congregation is unfamiliar with the American examples and causes unnecessary confusion. The translated book is valuable, but the book written for Japan by an author who understands the situation in Japan is second to none. The development of resources for Japanese evangelical local churches to begin spiritual formation is essential. Third, it is important

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<sup>83</sup> Koza Church is located in Yamato City, Kanagawa Prefecture, and has about 1350 members and an average of 470 people a week for worship. Since the average number of members of a Japanese church is 39, it is considered to be a very large and grown church in Japan.

<sup>84</sup> Kazuichiro Taniguchi, "Practice of Spiritual Formation," *Fune no migi gawa* 40 (2017): 8-13.

<sup>85</sup> James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love With the God Jesus Knows* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

<sup>86</sup> There were 160 registrants in the first year and 140 people registered in the second year. A learning session is held once a month. First, the contents of the text is explained to all the participants for about 30 minutes, and then shared with a small group of 4-6 people for about 1 hour.

<sup>87</sup> Masahiro Matsumoto, interview by author, Tokyo, Japan, October 25, 2020.

to make efforts to translate it into familiar words. There are useful books on spiritual formation written by Catholic priests and several Catholic retreat centers in Japan, but bringing Catholic culture and terminology into evangelical churches could cause unwanted reactions. Finally, attention should be paid to accepting that spiritual growth takes time. Matsumoto recalls that he rushed to introduce spiritual transformation at Koza Church. It was better to prioritize the church leaders to experience the transformation first. However, he hurried because he wanted to quickly convey the charm of spiritual growth to the entire church.

In summary, the report of Koza Church is valuable and suggestive for churches that are about to begin spiritual formation in Japanese local evangelical churches. A more comprehensive theological understanding should be reviewed in the Japanese church. It is important to convey information according to the Japanese and evangelical styles. Above all, hurry is the opposite of spiritual formation.

## Section 3: Synthesis and Conclusion

### Synthesis

#### **AREAS OF AGREEMENT/CONSENSUS**

Much has been revealed for an approach to spiritual formation that utilizes the faith and traditions of Japanese local churches. First, the biblical and theological foundations of spiritual formation are based on the Trinity, with a comprehensive understanding of spiritual formation from sanctification and holiness to ministry. With such a biblical foundation, presenting spiritual formation as an extension of already familiar biblical knowledge, rather than suddenly using unfamiliar words in Japanese churches, helps avoid unnecessary rejections. Second, the history of the spiritual formation movement shows the origin, character, influence and anxiety of this movement. It started with the Catholic Church, spread to pastors, to all believers in North America, and its influence is gradually reaching Japan. Third, the opinions of those who propose to emphasize the community of spiritual formation against the excessive emphasis on individualism are valuable. This opinion encourages the practice of spiritual growth in the local church. Fourth, however, thinking about the elements of spiritual formation and emphasizing the community is completely different from actually practicing in the local church. There is no formula for the spiritual formation church, and different methods are needed depending on the DNA of the church. Finally, the practice of a local church in Japan is a great help. It presents what works, what fails, and what the pitfalls are in Japan.

Missions in Japan are not easy, but it is the love of Christ shown in John's letter that covers everything. Even if the path of this project is uncertain, God's never-changing love will lead this project.

#### **ONGOING TENSIONS, DISAGREEMENTS, AND PRESSURE POINTS**

A number of consensus deficiencies are found in beginning spiritual formation in Japanese local churches. First, the understanding of spiritual formation has not yet reached consensus. It is unclear



among scholars and practitioners what "spiritual formation" refers to. The idea of encouraging spiritual formation within the local church as discussed in this paper has not permeated the mindset of the local church. Second, as evidenced by historical research, a number of anxieties about spiritual formation are pointed out. Since the spiritual formation movement reaches Japan including uneasy elements, some people in the church doubt spiritual formation itself. For example, emphasizing the legacy of past beliefs without revealing the biblical foundation of spiritual formation seems to make evangelical churches uneasy. Evangelical Christians can also ignore contextualization and adopt Americanized methods of spiritual growth or Catholic spiritual discipline as they are, causing rejections that do not fit their traditions. Therefore, in order to reach the Japanese people, it is important to understand the background and culture of the Japanese church before choosing the wording. Third, the connection between the local church and spiritual transformation is still very weak. Due to the small number of Christians in Japan, the church wants to increase the number of Christians as soon as possible, so it is easy to lose the time to spend on spiritual growth. Finally, it is very difficult to find practical examples in the church. The proposal for spiritual formation in Malaysia is noteworthy as an attempt at contextualization in Asian churches, but it is only a theoretical proposal, not a practical report. Knowing a certain number of examples leads to creating an image of the spiritual formation church, but the number of practical examples is insufficient.

### **GAPS, MISSTEPS, SCHOLARSHIP PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS**

Much effort has been made to root the gospel in the Japanese soil, but it is still struggling. The Japanese contextualization of the Gospel is too big a subject to deal with in this paper, but it is probably the biggest gap. There are many gaps in starting spiritual formation in the local church in Japan. Little is known about the spiritual formation movement. There is little awareness of working on spiritual formation in the local church. Practical examples in Japan are limited. Japanese resources are overwhelmingly scarce. As a result of investigating Japanese precedents, it is helpful to translate books written for Americans and use them in Japanese churches, but there are limits. Attention should also be paid to the gap in church consciousness. Since the size of Japanese churches is small, every church is eager to grow, but it is necessary to keep in mind that spiritual maturity will take time. Just as Oak Hill Church proposed to move away from consumer culture, presenting spiritual formation as a proposal to improve the reality of the Japanese church would be a clue to fill the gap.

### **Conclusion**

Efforts for spiritual formation according to the DNA of Japanese local churches are still underdeveloped. First, for Japan, where the concept of spiritual formation has not been established, it is expected to start by explaining spiritual transformation based on the Bible and linking it with familiar theological ideas. The spiritual formation here is based on the Trinity and is personal, communal, and missionary spirituality. Second, it shows the value of focusing on spiritual formation in the local church. Spiritual formation helps the local church to be transformed into the image of Christ. Practical examples in such a local church are important. Examples of local churches aiming for spiritual formation have been found in the English-speaking world, and guidelines have

been created. Third, the challenge is to apply it to Japan, despite the linguistic and cultural barriers. It is said that resources for Japan are overwhelmingly scarce. Resources for local churches have not yet been developed by those who understand the reality of Japanese evangelical churches. Finally, these efforts are not to make the spiritual formation movement famous, but for the local church to reflect the love of Christ.

# Appendix C—Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report

## NPO Statement

Church leaders and pastors have the opportunity to begin an intentional spiritual journey together toward Christlikeness through the experience of being accepted by God.

## NPO Scope and Constraints

It is expected that a feasible approach to spiritual formation will be examined in the local church in Tokyo, Japan, which is not very familiar with spiritual formation. It is important to start small and sure with those who are prepared for spiritual maturity, while avoiding unnecessary conflicts by paying attention to church traditions and culture. Since spiritual growth is a long process that takes place throughout one's life, this project will focus on starting an intentional spiritual journey with a small group of church members in a local church.

## NPO Context

The context of my NPO is the local church I serve, Nerima Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan, which was founded in 1950 and currently has about 110 members and is considered a large church in Japan. The church is confident in its own history and does not feel the urgent need for new changes. Therefore, it is important to start a spiritual formation project while paying respect to the church's heritage of faith.

Although the concept of spiritual formation is not well known in Japan, my colleagues and I have been given great interest and have begun to learn about it. Since I started my ministry in the church, I have been introducing spiritual formation in a natural way little by little. I have provided opportunities for them to get a taste of the spiritual transformation through sermons and hands-on spiritual retreats that are held twice a year. However, the opportunity to begin an intentional spiritual journey together has not been provided.

## Root Causes

In the current situation of Japanese churches where spiritual formation is not widely known, the Lord's leading of both the pastor and the pastoral care taker to take an interest in spiritual formation is a great encouragement to start this NPO. As a result of gradually introducing spiritual formation to the church in a natural way, some of the church members' understanding of their life has been changing.

Therefore, the time appears appropriate to provide opportunities to begin intentional spiritual journeys together with those who are willing to grow spiritually. Since the church has generally believed that faith is a relationship between the individual and God, it is desirable to nurture the experience of spiritual journey within community. However, it should be noted that the Japanese culture of avoiding talking about honest thoughts will have an impact within the church. Providing

a safe and secure place where people can confide their true feelings will encourage people to experience and share grace with God.

## Three Big Ideas

To begin group spiritual direction in the church by a spiritual director.

To conduct meetings for spiritual formation once a month in the church.

To work on spiritual exercises in small groups in the church.

## Definition of 'Done'

Begin a scheduled practice in the church for spiritual formation with people who are ready and willing for spiritual growth.

## 3 Concept Pitches

### 1. Monthly Small Group Spiritual Direction in the Church

Big Idea: The big idea is to have small group spiritual direction by a spiritual director in the local church for the leaders.

- Audience: About four leaders, including a pastor and pastoral care taker, who may initiate group spiritual direction within the local church.
- NPO: Through small group spiritual direction, the leaders will have the opportunity to encounter Christ and experience being led by Him.
- Benefit: Participants can experience being led by Christ and share the experience with other leaders, which allows leaders to be sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Approach: Sessions with a spiritual director provides an opportunity for leaders to deepen their own spiritual journey and share it as a group.
- Risks: Participants may feel uncomfortable speaking openly in spiritual direction. Also, it is not common in Japanese churches to charge a fee for spiritual direction.
- Assumptions/hypotheses to test: Doing spiritual direction as a group would help leaders to focus more on seeking God's will.
- Benchmarks of success: Can I find about four leaders who are willing to take spiritual direction and implement it in a group spiritual direction for a set period of time, such as six months?
- Other Approaches: In the United States, there are reports of the practice of spiritual direction in local churches, but there are none in evangelical churches in Japan.

## 2. Monthly Spiritual Formation Course in the Local Church

Big Idea: Big Idea is to start a monthly spiritual formation course in the local church for those who wish to be in the congregation.

- Audience: Church members who desire spiritual maturity who can participate in the program for a set period of time (six months or one year).
- NPO: Church members who wish to participate will have the opportunity to experience God and find others to walk with them on their spiritual journey.
- Benefit: Participants will have the opportunity to take a step toward spiritual maturity and find others to accompany them on their spiritual journey.
- Approach: Meetings focused on spiritual formation will be held once a month by pastors, pastoral care takers and guests.
- Risks: Many church members who wish to participate are busy and may have difficulty committing for each meeting. It takes time to prepare for the meeting.
- Assumptions/hypotheses to test: It may be possible to create relationships that are not superficial engagements, but rather the first step in a long spiritual journey toward spiritual maturity rooted in daily life.
- Benchmarks of success: Have participants deepened their relationship with God and with others through the practice of examen?
- Other Approaches: Varying the frequency of the program, such as once a week or once a season instead of once a month, is expected to change the ease of participation and the impact on the participants.<sup>3</sup>

## To Work on Spiritual Exercises in Small Groups

Big Idea: Big Idea is to spend a year doing Ignatius Loyola's spiritual exercises with people who are ready for spiritual maturity.

- Audience: Church members who desire spiritual maturity who can participate in the program for a set period of time (about one year).
- NPO: An opportunity to work together in small groups to experience encountering God and being transformed into Christ's likeness through Ignatius Loyola's spiritual exercises.
- Benefit: Participants will have the opportunity to take a step toward spiritual maturity and find others to accompany them on their spiritual journey.
- Approach: Daily spiritual exercises for each person, with weekly meetings for advice and sharing.
- Risks: A commitment to do the daily spiritual exercises is required. It is not clear if participants will be able to speak openly during the sharing.

- Assumptions/hypotheses to test: Through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, participants will experience God and deepen their fellowship with others who are on the spiritual journey with them.
- Benchmarks of success: Have participants deepened their relationship with God and with others through the program?
- Other Approaches: There are several books in Japan that deal with spiritual exercises, and I can find several books in Japanese that promote spiritual formation, so the question is which book to choose.

## Design Workshop Stakeholders

- Chair of the Local Church Board
- Member of the Local Church Board
- Pastoral Care Taker of the Local Church
- Hospital Chaplain/ Previously Missionary in Japan
- Spiritual Director/ Missionary who Living in Canada

## One-on-One Interviews

- Interviewee A- Spiritual Director, Author, Translator
- Interviewee B- Principal of Seminary in Japan/ Pastor
- Interviewee C- Spiritual Director, Translator

## Annotated Bibliography

Reed, Angela H. *Quest for Spiritual Community: Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations*. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2011.

Reed draws attention from practical theology to the importance of spiritual direction in the local church. A pastor and spiritual director herself, Reed argues that the local congregation, rather than a retreat center or personal spiritual direction, is the ideal place for the practice of spiritual direction. Reed also offers practical suggestions on how to make spiritual guidance happen in the local church, including spiritual friendships and small group spiritual direction. It is worth noting that her contribution on this subject, which is mostly written by Roman Catholics from a predominantly Ignatian perspective, is also to add a Protestant voice.

Kang, Joshua Choonmin. *Deep-Rooted in Christ: The Way of Transformation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007.

Kang, a Korean-American pastor and author of many books, presents 52 reflections on spiritual growth in this book. With both Asian and American roots, Kang speaks with an emphasis on balance and harmony, weaving together Eastern spirituality and biblical evangelicalism. Themes from both the Old and New Testaments include silence, solitude, waiting, wilderness, fruitfulness and self-sacrifice. His approach may be helpful for meetings focused on spiritual formation in evangelical churches in Japan, where the emphasis is on the Bible. Richard Foster describes this book as a Korean version of *Celebration of Discipline*. It would be essential to present spiritual disciplines such as solitude, simplicity, service, meditation, and prayer as means of God's grace for the transformation of human personality according to each country.

O'Brien, Kevin F. *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in Daily Life*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011.

I am currently reading this book with my Journey Partner (one of my classmates) in one of the DMin708 class assignments, sharing once a week. O'Brien presents the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola as a program that allows for a 32-week retreat in daily life. The book, like the text of *Spiritual Exercises*, is meant to be experienced, not read. It is a handy guide that invites the praying person to encounter the living God active in his or her life and in the wider world. Using this book to begin a group spiritual journey with those who wish to grow spiritually is one concrete idea to start spiritual formation in the local church. The challenge is that the book has not yet been published in Japanese, but since there is not a great deal of content to guide the weekly prayers, it may be understandable in English.



# Appendices

## Design Workshop Description

My design workshop was held on November 13, 2021 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. through ZOOM, which allowed people who are helping with spiritual formation in the United States and Canada to attend. The following were in attendance:

- Local Church Chairman of the Board
- Local Church Member of the Board
- Local Church Pastoral Care Taker
- Hospital Chaplain/ Previously a Missionary in Japan
- Spiritual Director/ Missionary who Living in Canada

The session followed the predetermined format as given in our DMIN 850/895 syllabus assignments. The agenda was as follows:

- Opening Activities
- Introductions and Goals
- Revisiting the NPO: Brainstorming
- Break
- Explore Activities: (1) Brainstorming, (2) Cover Story
- Closing Activities: Dot Voting
- Napkin Pitch
- Debrief

The majority of the workshop time was spent revisiting NPO and brainstorming concrete ideas for initiatives. Since the starting point for the revisiting NPO was the church's slogan, the discussion was more in line with the church's reality. In discussing specific ideas, creating a place where people can feel safe and an opportunity to express their playfulness were mentioned. Also shared were the importance and insights of implementing this project, such as starting small and presenting a holistic view of spiritual formation.

1-5 Likert Scale assessment is 4. The expected workshop time was too long, so it was reduced to a feasible time. By including people with diverse opinions as stakeholders, the range of opinions was broadened. It was especially impressive that people who were negative about the project last year changed to show understanding after a year. The best thing that came out of the meeting was the creation of a positive atmosphere for spiritual formation in the church.

## Design Workshop Documentation

### 1. Opening Activities: Self-introduction and ice breaking 自己紹介とアイスブレイク

- 人々があなたのところに助けを求めに来るとき、彼らは通常何について助けを求めているのでしょうか？
- あなたの時間を奪っているものは何ですか？
- あなたの一日をより良くするための小さな工夫は何ですか？

### 2. Introductions and Goals

General overview of the project (shared via Zoom) and the goals and flow of the workshop

### 3. Revisiting the NPO: NPO (Needs, Problem, Opportunity)プロジェクトの課題の再検討

去年の時点では、「日本の地域教会でその教会の特徴や伝統を生かした霊的形成の可能性はある」というような NPO にしました。

The starting point is the church's vision for 2030, "Bumpy is Good." God's grace is essential for us to experience "bumpy is good." Helping people find God's grace is the approach of spiritual formation. I want to think of ways to get closer to "bumpy is good."

練馬バプテスト教会のビジョン 2030 の合言葉「でこぼこがいい」を出発点にしたいと思います。「でこぼこがいい」を体験するためには神様の恵みが不可欠です。神様の恵みをどのように見つけることができるのかが、まさに霊的形成が起こる可能性のあるところです。「でこぼこがいい」の実現に近づける方法を一緒に考えることができたと思っています。

「でこぼこがいい」の実現に向けて

Q1. 「でこぼこがいい」から、どんなイメージを連想するか。「でこぼこがいい」を実現すると、練馬バプテスト教会はどういう教会になるんだろうか？

一般的なもの

- 個人の弱さ
- 個性豊か、バラバラ感を認める、社会
- でこぼこのままではなくて、標準的なものを目指さなければいけないという感覚で育った
- 社会の中の価値観を浴びるように生きているので、その影響を考慮しつつ、教会のメッセージを考えたい
- でこぼこに対して、肯定的に受け止めることをしたいけど、その前にでこぼこは悪いというイメージがある

- 「でこぼこ」のポジティブなイメージか、ネガティブに受け止めるか。
- クリスマスにとっては祝福とを感じるかもしれないけど、ノンクリスマスにとってはどう響くか。
- 「でこぼこがいい」と表現する際の「いい」は、人間は何もしなくていいのか、という部分にも気にしない。神様からの働きかけに対して、人の側にどういう責任があるのか。
- 「でこぼこがいい」と言えるシチュエーションは？人の心に空洞があって、当たるといい音がする。空洞の大きさによって、色々な音程があるから、ハーモニーが生まれる。
- 「でこぼこだから、いい」のイメージ、パイプオルガンみたいに色々な音に出る。自分の奏でる音をちゃんと出せるような訓練も大事。これが霊的形成のイメージみたいなものを持つことができる。
- ステンドグラスもいい。何もないと透明。色がついていると綺麗。
- 霊的成長はイエスの姿に似ていく。具体的にどういう形なのか。
- みんな違って、みんないいを連想する 比較的、多民族ではない日本でのアンチテーゼ。
- レーダーチャートみたいに、自分の性格の歪み。自分のいいところを伸ばしていく。
- 「でこぼこがいい」、パッと聞くと、みんな、そのままでいい。
- LGBTQ とか、社会的には認めていく。いいところを伸ばそうという流れ。
- お互いのポジションを認めることはいいけど、一つの力にまとまって行かない現状を改善したい。
- 「でこぼこがいい」の次のステップ（ただの受容だけでなく、次のステップへ）、宣教に向かっていく熱さ
- 神様の目的と、人の応える責任。「でこぼこのままでいい」という視点（神様からの語りかけ）
- ありのままの自分を受け入れていく。次に、どのように自分は変わっていくのかに敏感になっていきたい。ファンクション、機能していくことができるか。
- 神の招きに、人として答えていく。楽しむ。味わう。変えられていく。
- ただの、そのままでいい。から、神の願う姿に変えられていく。一人一人もそうだし、共同体としてもいい。
- 全世界の教会の問題でもあるよね
- 注意を払っているのは、自分を変えられるという言い方を使わないようにしている。自分を取り戻すという言い方をしている。粉々に器が壊れた時に、一つ一つのカケ

ラをイエス様に取り戻してくれる。神様が作った一番いい音を奏でるあなたを取り戻すため。

- イマゴデイへの回復
- 自分が変えられなければいけないが bad news にことがある。
- 救われた時、自分が変わることには抵抗があった。古い自分を捨てて、新しい自分になる、というプロセスに自分の中で抵抗があった。最終的には手放すことができたけど、変えられなくてはいけないというのが、修行、努力、辛い道。
- 社会から、人からの評価によって偽りの自分が育ってきた。自分を作り上げてきた言葉を捨てて、剥がしていくプロセスによって神のかたちにならっていく。本当の私に出会うまで、長いプロセスを通った。
- 提示する言葉に関する配慮。
- 大学生の感覚、ありのままの自分から変わらないと言われると、圧迫感を感じる
- 個人が気づいていくために、それを助ける手段・学び。
- 共同体として、全体として進んでいく。
- 若者の特徴として、あんまり深い悩みは触れない。深刻なことは分かち合わない。
- 人とガッツリ関わるタイプの若者もいる。決まりきった物の言い方をされることはいやだ。
- 当たり前に使っている、いかにも、神様について語っているような言葉は響かない。
- 言葉遣い。型にはめられることは嫌い。
- 横の繋がりが深くなると、奉仕者の数も増える
- 2023 年 3 月は到達点が短い
- お互いのことを知っていくことを増やす、エネルギーが増し加わってくる、宣教にもつながる。
- お互いを知りましょうと言われても、そんなことは求めていませんという反応もある。
- 学びをしましょう。と言われると、あなたには学びの必要がありますというメッセージが含まれることがある。このままの私はだめだから、変わらなさいというメッセージが伝わることもある。
- 本人が喜んで、強いられてではなく、参加したくなるようなものにしていく工夫。
- バラバラ感がある。
- 押し付け感があると、実りは少ない。「本当のクリスマスを教会で」みたいな文章の上から目線。

- 小グループはあるけど、バラバラ。リングで束ねられるようなもの
- スモールグループの位置付け（楽しい方向と 人生の悩みを話す方向）
- 大宣教命令に向かっていく力がない
- 教会がバラけた感じになるときは、人間関係の固定化。秘密的な、クローズされた空間で問題が起きがち。
- 流動的な集まりも必要。
- 安心できる場所（深める）と全体的に知り合っていく（広く知る）
- タスクを与えて、一緒にいることを楽しむ
- お互いを知ることを知ることと、自分のことを知ること大事
- 自分を知るための質問に取り組む、自分を見つめる（反省という悪い点を探す感じになるけど、優しい目で見つめる）
- お互いのいいところを見つける。伝える。他者からいってもらえる機会ってないかも。

#### まとめ

霊的形成として、受け入れられるプロセスだけでなく取り戻すプロセスを提示することが必要である。また、個人だけでなく、共同体への投げかけも大切である。

#### Revising NPO

*Using the church slogan as a starting point, the church begins its spiritual journey from an experience of being accepted by God to Christlikeness.*

#### 4. Explore Activities

##### (1) Brainstorming

After the practitioners give their opinions on what spiritual formation practices are possible for the NPO, we will have a question and answer session and extensive brainstorming.

霊的形成の実践に関して、いくつか具体的な意見を聞いた上で、自由に質疑応答をしつつ、どのような可能性があるのか自由に話し合えたらと思っています。

- キーワード、取り戻す、バラバラ、両輪、個人と全体
- 具体的なプロジェクトをする。堅苦しくない。壁塗るとか、楽しそうな・今までやったことのないプロジェクトを一つやる。しょうもないプロジェクト。遊び心。プロジェクトを通して、お互いを知ったり、スキルを出し合ったりする。内向きに見えて、外向きになるような。体も使うようなもの。楽しくやる。後で笑える。映画1本作るとか。

- セーフスペース。打ち明けられる場所。霊的同伴。きちんと設ける。システムを作る。セカンドレベルと提携する。
- 学びのようで学びでない。学びのテキストを作る。自分も学ばなければいけない。
- クリスマスデコレーションをやる。外の窓。
- 霊的形成とは何か。自分を、相手を、神様を、よりよく知る。温かく迎え入れる。それができたら、（それに向かって努力すると）神様が私たちを変えてくださる。
- 自分を知る、相手を知る、神様を知る。温かく welcome する。その中で、毎月、質問・タスクを決めて、表面的なレベルで関わることもできるし、深いレベルでも関わるができる。相手とは、家族かもしれないし、職場の同僚かもしれないし、社会かもしれない。
- 例えば、自分を知るために、霊操を簡単にしたもの。相手を知るために、温かく迎える。でこぼこは厄介かもしれない。理由、意志を理解するように努める。全部はわからないけど、最善を尽くす。
- トラウマ、背後にある課題。安全にいられる場所を作る。
- くじ引きして、その人を祝福する手紙を出す。
- ペアを作って、祈り合う。共通点はなくても。
- 神様を知る：鏡、神様に打ち明けていない部分を分かち合う。受け入れてもらう体験
- 牧師とゆっくり話せる場所。
- 教会が安心できる場所になるために、社会に伝える。
- キャロリング、トラクト配る、伝道のイベント化。定例化するといひ。
- しょうもないプロジェクト
- 教会紹介ムービー
- 自分と親しくなる、自分のでこぼこを受け入れる。自分が自分を迎え入れるために、安全な場所は神様のところ。その時間と機会の提供。「静まりの集い」を月 1 回。神様と自分で静かに過ごす機会。神様に受け入れられている。
- 互いに知り合う。祈りのパートナー/ペアを決める。息詰まらない工夫（タスク）
- 全体、社会・地域と親しくなる。共同作業をやる。
- クリスマス、プロジェクションマッピング、イルミネーション
- 四季折々の飾り
- 無理して、毎年、続けなくていいかな。続けるのを目的にしない。イベントごとは継続を目的にしない。

- 手紙を書き合う（年賀状）
- 霊的形成のヒントの情報発信（不定期で ok）
- 私が見るから、見たいからどうぞ。誰も来なくても、自分にとって大事なことを一緒に共有する。

#### 4. Closing Activities: Dot Voting

まとめ：3つの可能性を感じるある取り組み（Three Big Ideas）を決める

##### A. Create a safe place to be

- Make time for one-on-one conversations with the pastor/pastoral care taker
- Pastor-led small groups for spiritual formation
- Hold regular meetings focused on spiritual formation.
- Introduce spiritual direction (find people and organizations to partner with)
- Spiritual direction for pastors and pastoral care taker

##### B. Work on fun projects within the church

Start a project in the church that could be done together that is playful, fun, funny, and would be great if we could get to know each other through the project, bring our gifts, actually move our bodies, and also benefit the community.

#### 5. 完了を定義する。goal/end/objective/or intended outcome

- 教会員で話することができる人が増えた。広がりまたは、深まり。
- 教会員から、しょうもないけどやってみたいという声上がる。遊び心。投げかけられるような空気感。やりたいて言える場所。それは安全が保障されている。セーフプレイス。お互いを信頼している形。
- アンケートを前後でとる。自分/相手/神様を知る(愛する)がよりできるようになったか。
- 今までの人に加えて、新しい方も加わるような雰囲気。
- 達成したいことを正面から取り組むこともできるし、別のことをすることで達成したいことを成し遂げることもできる。

## One-Page Post-Workshop Message to Stakeholders

To all the participants of the workshop,

I prepared for the workshop with a prayer that I would not become so nervous that I would be insensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit. With your warm cooperation, we were able to hold the workshop in the grace of the Lord.

The following is a summary of our discussion. Please let me know if you have any additional comments or feedback.

### 1. Revising NPO

Using the church slogan as a starting point, the church begins its spiritual journey from an experience of being accepted by God to Christlikeness.

### 2. Three Bid Ideas

#### A. Create a safe place to be

- Make time for one-on-one conversations with the pastor/pastoral care taker
- Pastor-led small groups for spiritual formation
- Hold regular meetings focused on spiritual formation.
- Introduce spiritual direction (find people and organizations to partner with)
- Spiritual direction for pastors and pastoral care taker

#### B. Work on fun projects within the church

Start a project in the church that could be done together that is playful, fun, funny, and would be great if we could get to know each other through the project, bring our gifts, actually move our bodies, and also benefit the community.

### 3. Key Insight

- Start small.
- Recognize that the short deadline for this project is the first step in a long journey of spiritual formation.
- The need to present the whole picture of spiritual formation so that we do not become Christians who only seek love from God.
- Create an atmosphere where more "trivial things" (playfulness) are valued.

God's blessing,

Nozomu Makita



## One-on-One Interviews Documentation

Interviewee A- Spiritual Director, Author, Translator

- There is no need to require that all members of the Church participate in one program for spiritual formation.
- Spiritual formation is not mass-produced, but handmade by God.
- One indicator will be whether the project has turned the participants' hearts to God.
- The church can consider the possibility of engaging in Celebration as a spiritual discipline as a community.
- A paper by DMin in the United States discusses the practice of group spiritual direction for pastors of local churches living in the countryside.
- The church could consider the possibility of engaging in group spiritual direction within the church.
- A book on spiritual direction will be published in November in Japanese, which may be helpful.
- An introduction to an initiative that focuses on the different ways of worshiping God according to personality.

Interviewee B- Principal of Seminary in Japan/ Pastor

- In Japan, some people are uncomfortable with the term spiritual formation, so it would be less confusing to use a phrase like becoming more like Christ.
- It will be of great help as the Lord has equipped you with colleagues in your church who recognize the importance of spiritual formation and are looking in the same direction. Teamwork among pastors is essential.
- It is important to have the space to listen to the feedback from the workshop. Because if you are thinking alone, there is a danger of narrowing your vision.
- When starting something new in the church, it is also important to wait until the church members speak up, rather than the pastor speaking up.
- It will be important in Japanese churches to follow up with those who are not willing to take on spiritual formation projects. You should take care of those who are prone to frustration and anxiety.
- Make sure that the DMin study is not for the benefit of the pastor personally, but for the benefit of the church. Learn in such a way that you are sent by the church to learn and give the results back to the church.

Interviewee C- Spiritual Director, Translator

- It is essential for spiritual formation in the church that the leaders themselves experience being transformed.
- You should be careful how you use the word "bumpy is good" because it sounds strange when we hear it in English.
- "Bumpy is good" is a good starting point for spiritual formation, but not a good goal. Some people may think that if "bumpy is good," then there is no need to change.
- Japanese society tends to start with form. Churches are similar, so people tend to pay attention to what "looks Christian". God wants to hear people's true feelings rather than just the pretty words on the top. It is expected to be difficult in the Japanese culture, but it is important to have a place where people can say what they really feel.
- It would be good if more value were placed on playfulness in the church.
- When God's purpose becomes clear through spiritual formation, things that church members want to do will emerge, and work that serves the community will begin. It is safe to trust in this process.
- When meeting with the pastor and church members, be careful that the congregation does not expect the pastor to solve their problems.
- Just as the spiritual director receives a superposition, the pastor needs the same opportunity.

## Appendix D—Milestone 4 Design Research Report

## Introduction

For the evangelical church in Japan, which places great value on the Bible, there is no doubt that the spiritual practice using the Bible is a smooth way to introduce spiritual formation, but rather than smoothness, I would start with the practice of listening to God, which for me is the first step in spiritual formation. Some of the ideas that were raised last semester I have already begun to work on in my church. One is that I am beginning an experiential Bible study based on St. Ignatius Loyola's spiritual exercises in our weekly prayer meetings. Church members feel no particular discomfort and deepen their prayer. Also, last month the church I serve had a retreat with a spiritual director and 25 church members attended. It has already been decided that monthly classes focusing on spiritual formation will begin regularly in April. Therefore, the prototype is being worked on for group spiritual direction for church leaders, which is expected to take the most time to realize.

## Prototype Summary and Findings

### Prototype 1: Invitation to Group Spiritual Direction for Core Leaders

#### PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION

In the evangelical church in Japan, spiritual direction itself is still largely unknown and the number of qualified spiritual directors is very small. Thankfully, I was able to get acquainted during the process of this project with a qualified spiritual director in the U.S. who speaks Japanese. Furthermore, in praying with her, the idea of working on group spiritual direction in the church came up. I would like to have the core leaders of the church, including myself, participate in group spiritual direction together so that church leaders can have an experience of deeper attention to God's work.

To begin the group spiritual direction, I need to explain what spiritual direction or group spiritual direction is, and then have the candidates pray and state whether or not they would like to participate. This prototyping is to create this explanatory material and ask them to make time to pray about their participation. The explanatory material should also describe the commitment.

#### NPO STATEMENT

The experience of being accepted by God and others through safe relationships finds the church in a relational culture of authentic relationships.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

Does it help church leaders understand group spiritual direction and consider joining a group?

### **ASSESSMENT BENCHMARK(S)**

The church leaders feel comfortable and appropriately decide whether or not to participate in the program through the explanatory materials and prayer time.

### **PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION**

I invite my colleague, a pastoral care taker, and a board representative and general manager to join the group, men and women in their fifties.

### **LEARNING SUMMARY**

What went well was that everyone I invited to participate tried to understand the group spiritual direction, prayed for their participation, and then responded about their participation. As a result, two out of three people responded that they would participate. I received concerns and questions back from those who indicated their participation and honest reasons from those who indicated their non-participation. Personally, it is a miracle that someone who had been involved in this project since the first year and had a negative reaction has developed an understanding of spiritual formation over the past two years and expressed participation in this group.

What could be improved is to make it a little less burdensome for the participants. This time we proposed a program of nine sessions over the course of a year, each lasting from two to two and a half hours. Also, since it is a mixed group of men and women who are church members and already know each other, some difficulty in being honest might have been expected.

What matters to each participant is different. A person who knows the value of the opportunity to receive spiritual direction rejoices in the opportunity. Another who feels uncomfortable with honesty is concerned about the group.

### **MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY**

The most important finding is that group spiritual direction within a local church breaks the rule against dual relationships in spiritual direction, so how to ensure confidentiality and create a relationship where people feel safe to talk is crucial.

## **Prototype 2: Invitation to Spiritual Exercises Program**

### **PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION**

In Japanese evangelical churches, devotions are usually Bible study programs, but programs on spiritual exercises are less common. The term "spiritual exercise" itself may be alarming to some. In the English-speaking world, there is already a book that rewrites Ignatius Loyola's spiritual exercises for people in Protestant churches, but this has not yet been done in Japan. Therefore, this effort is to see if I can effectively help the members of my church in Tokyo deepen their spirituality by leading them through spiritual exercises while referring to my book on spiritual exercises for Protestant churches. I will provide opportunities to work on the spiritual exercises through the weekly prayer meeting message and prayer time at my church.

## **NPO STATEMENT**

Ignatius Loyola's spiritual exercises, adapted for the Protestant Church, are one way to help the Japanese church mature through spiritual formation.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

What efforts are needed to adapt Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises for the Protestant Church?

## **ASSESSMENT BENCHMARK(S)**

Participants candidly provide feedback on the study and whether their prayers are deepened.

## **PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION**

Participants are regular prayer meeting attendees, many of them active Christians who have been involved in the church for a long time

## **LEARNING SUMMARY**

I have incorporated introductions to spiritual disciplines in my church's prayer meetings in the past, so most of the participants were unfamiliar with Ignatius Loyola, but they were able to enter into prayer in a natural way.

Especially, by continuing the style of praying through the Bible, each prayer seemed to be deepened smoothly and without any great sense of discomfort. Through Spiritual Exercises, they began to pray by relating the Bible to their lives and hearts, rather than cramming their knowledge of the Bible into their heads. Some of them were seeking knowledge, so I continued to suggest ways to pray that would be connected to their lives while also conveying knowledgeable information. In addition, after individual prayer, we made time to break into groups, which led to sharing the grace with each other. Many of the people in Japan are not the type who are comfortable talking about themselves, but they seem to be getting used to it as the sessions gradually become more frequent.

## **MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY**

While the study departing from the Bible was received smoothly, they could not concentrate on the exercises because they were more confused about the style of learning than those who are used to the old style if they do not start from the Bible.

# Background Research Essay on the Emerging Solutions

## **Introduction**

As the project to begin spiritual formation in evangelical churches in Japan progresses, the specific activity of experiencing group spiritual direction with core church leaders emerges in the process.

"Every pastoral leader and community of faith has a unique character and quality I seriously doubt that God would desire a cookie-cutter answer for each context."<sup>88</sup> As Reed points out, spiritual direction is not the only way to help local churches grow spiritually, but in the context of the evangelical church in Japan, where spiritual direction is not well known, God has mysteriously set things in place. Church leaders who participate in group spiritual direction are gathered and a Japanese-speaking spiritual director is sent to support the group.

A brief overview of spiritual direction, group spiritual direction, and responses to participants' concerns are noted in this essay.

## 1. Spiritual Direction as One Way

Christian spiritual formation is simply expressed as the process by which a Christian becomes like Jesus Christ. According to Jeffrey Greenman's definition of spiritual formation, "spiritual formation is our continuing response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world."<sup>89</sup> Spiritual direction is one means of helping us to focus our attention on the reality of God. William Barry and William Connolly classically define spiritual direction "helps given by one believer to another that enables the latter to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship."<sup>90</sup> Also, according to Angela Reed, "spiritual guidance is a ministry of companionship in which Christians support one another in their Christian formation by helping each other to notice God's presence and activity in their lives."<sup>91</sup> It is clear from both definitions that spiritual direction is a ministry that helps people to turn their attention to God's activity.

This ministry has several names: spiritual direction and spiritual guidance. The term spiritual direction has long been used in church history to place value on the fact that this art of listening is tied to historical practice. Fryling explains:

It's a practice that began in the early years of Christianity when people followed the desert mothers and fathers out to the wilderness to ask them how to know God. Over the years, spiritual direction has appeared in many faith traditions. It was kept alive in the Christian faith mainly through the Roman Catholic Church, but today the Protestant church is rediscovering it. People throughout the Christian church, including those of an evangelical orientation, are experiencing again the gifts that

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<sup>88</sup> Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community*, 151.

<sup>89</sup> Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010), 24.

<sup>90</sup> Barry and Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community*, 8.

God gives to his people through the loving listening and the gentle guidance of spiritual directors.<sup>92</sup>

It is sometimes called spiritual guidance because the impression of the term spiritual direction can mislead people today about the ministry. Reed further explains:

The term 'spiritual direction' is something of a misnomer because it implies a kind of heavy-handed practice in which a person in authority tells another person exactly what to do in the spiritual life. This kind of approach would be particularly grating to a culture suspicious of externally imposed structures and practices.<sup>93</sup>

In my context, Japanese, it is often called spiritual accompaniment, but spiritual direction is also sometimes used. Whichever term is used, the heart of spiritual direction is the same. Phillips says, "Although spiritual directors are called into particular roles with directees, they are not on a higher spiritual plane. Together we bow down and look up to God."<sup>94</sup> This attitude of bowing down before God together is expected to lead to the kind of experience Fryling describes through spiritual direction. "Over the years, my conversations in spiritual direction have continually reminded me that God is always waiting to extend grace and love to me in order for me to extend grace and love to others."<sup>95</sup> I would like to invite the core leaders of our church to this experience.

## 2. Group Spiritual Direction

Many admit that *Celebration of Discipline*, the book written in 1978 by Richard J. Foster, had a great influence on the spiritual formation of the evangelical church. Many ways of becoming more like Jesus Christ have been considered in the Christian tradition. In the book, Foster introduces spiritual practices that promote spiritual formation: inward disciplines include meditation, prayer, fasting, and study; outward disciplines include simplicity, solitude, submission, and service; corporate disciplines include confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.<sup>96</sup> Group spiritual direction of this project includes one of the corporate disciplines.

David E. MacDonald, a practitioner of group spiritual direction for college students, describes the practice of group spiritual direction as follows:

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<sup>92</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 11.

<sup>93</sup> Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community*, 8.

<sup>94</sup> Susan S. Phillips, *The Cultivated Life: From Ceaseless Striving to Receiving Joy* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 161.

<sup>95</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 14.

<sup>96</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).



Given the long history of literature on spiritual direction, and the recent innovations in group spiritual direction practices, it is now reasonable for writers and teachers of spiritual direction to begin exploring new ways to utilize this tool for spiritual formation in a variety of settings.<sup>97</sup>

Regarding group spiritual direction, Rose Mary Dougherty states, "in small group spiritual direction, people often become aware of God's ways in their hearts as they hear how God seems to be present for others and as they become conscious of God's presence with them as a group."<sup>98</sup> Fryling writes, "the purpose of group spiritual direction is to provide a place where individuals can experience what it means to be listened to and loved by others, so that they can learn to listen more attentively to God in their daily lives and be used by God to spread God's grace and love throughout the world."<sup>99</sup> In other words, whereas spiritual direction focuses attention on God in a one-on-one relationship between a trained director and directee, group spiritual direction finds God at work in a relationship between members of a group. Therefore, the attitude of the members participating in the group, especially silence and openness, becomes more important. Bakke states, "We have discovered that the shared silence gives us the opportunity to notice what has been occupying our energy and attention. The quality of our presence together (our openness to the Spirit and each other) is enhanced by shared silence."<sup>100</sup> Dougherty writes, "the listening required in group spiritual direction implies the willingness to listen to God's Spirit in ourselves, in others, in the holy sources of our faith, in the events of our lives and our world, in all creation."<sup>101</sup> In this way, group spiritual direction is effective when attentive silence and listening take place in the group before the Lord. Small group spiritual direction is a place where participants can become vulnerable, compassionate and empathetic in order to focus their attention on God and one another so that trust in spiritual companionship can begin again.<sup>102</sup>

In addition, several dynamics are essential for group spiritual direction: absolute confidentiality, regular attendance and brief times of evaluation.<sup>103</sup> Absolute confidentiality allows vulnerable souls

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<sup>97</sup> David E. MacDonald, "Merge: Group Spiritual Direction and Faith Maturity Among Emerging Adults" (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2014), 24-25.

<sup>98</sup> Dougherty, *Group Spiritual Direction*, 35-36.

<sup>99</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 8.

<sup>100</sup> Jeannette A. Bakke, *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 23.

<sup>101</sup> Dougherty, *Group Spiritual Direction*, 78-79.

<sup>102</sup> Cynthia Frances Johnson Hooton, "An Experience in Small Group Spiritual Direction at McGuire United Methodist Church" (Evanston, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2019), 37.

<sup>103</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 29.

in the group to come out into the open. Commitment to regular attendance is another element that creates a safe environment. A brief time to evaluate the group gives the group a chance to see how it is functioning.

### 3. Concerns about Group Spiritual Direction

Before starting a group spiritual direction in a church, persons who wish to participate in the group present two concerns: inward prompting and multiple relationships. Joseph Hellerman gives warning regarding one of the spiritual formation practices of Spiritual Direction urging detachment from the church and mission. "My concerns about spiritual formation relate primarily to the movement's potential to distance itself from the church and its mission. The practice of spiritual direction is a case in point."<sup>104</sup> Reed acknowledges a similarly dangerous possibility:

Spiritual guidance practices may inadvertently reinforce Christian faith and practice that focuses on self rather than communal formation, interiority rather than an outward missional focus, and a de-traditionalized eclecticism rather than a firm theological grounding.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, Reed suggests spiritual guidance that contributes to character, community, and mission.

Spiritual guidance supports the interior work of accepting the loving presence of God in the life of the individual. However, this presence also guides participants beyond the interior journey to a journey outward - to seeing God's presence and activity in the world and to an invitation to participate in God's activity.<sup>106</sup>

Fryling also states that group spiritual direction contributes to the individual, the community and the mission. "Group spiritual direction helps individuals grow in their faith, love others more fully and participate in the mission of the church more effectively."<sup>107</sup> These suggestions would not only correct the inward-looking tendencies of spiritual direction, but would also make it clear that spiritual formation is a journey toward the realization of the Kingdom of God in this world.

In group spiritual direction, as in spiritual direction, it is desirable to avoid multiple relationships. For example, Lindbloom says that "It is usually helpful to be with people whose lives are not too intertwined in other settings. One's freedom to talk may be limited if the group were to include one's work supervisor, for instance."<sup>108</sup> However, the possibility of a positive position on the

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<sup>104</sup> Hellerman, *Why We Need the Church to Become More Like Jesus*, 91.

<sup>105</sup> Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community*, 9-10.

<sup>106</sup> Reed, 38.

<sup>107</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 27.

<sup>108</sup> Lindbloom, *Prayerful Listening*, 15.

practice of group spiritual direction within the church is acknowledged. Fryling cites church groups as the primary model for group spiritual direction.<sup>109</sup> Reed spends a chapter examining congregation-based models in local churches.<sup>110</sup> Grizzle offers specific suggestions for provision in church communities.<sup>111</sup> Hooton reports on the practice of group spiritual direction in the Methodist Church in the United States.<sup>112</sup> According to Robinson, spiritual guidance itself was already practiced in 6th century monasteries, faith communities. "Though the term "spiritual direction" does not appear in the *Rule*, the principles and daily practice of what has become known as spiritual direction can easily be gleaned from this guidebook."<sup>113</sup> In other words, spiritual direction has been practiced in church communities for centuries. As Bolsinger says, "leading a Christian organization that is faithful to both mission and family, is indeed the challenge for most of us. This means that Christian leaders function almost constantly in dual relationships."<sup>114</sup> Thus, church leaders have made it work in dual relationships for many years, even though it is never easy.

## MVP (Most Viable Prototype)

Considering the prototype and background research, the most viable prototype is a monthly group spiritual direction for core leaders of a local church. In introducing spiritual formation to evangelical churches in Japan, I believe that while biblical spiritual practices are easy to begin, it would be of great significance for the church as a whole to experience with core leaders an attitude of faith that always begins with listening to Christ as the culture of the local church. People who receive counseling are still in the minority, are not familiar with spiritual direction, and in Japan, which is known as a culture of shame, it is never easy to start spiritual direction as a group. Even so, this attempt must help illustrate that it is very important for leaders to spend time becoming mature in listening to Christ if the Church seeks to follow His leadership.

I have not heard of any Protestant churches in Japan that have adopted group spiritual direction for their leaders, and the number of spiritual directors who speak Japanese is very small. As a result, there is not always an understanding among church leaders, but the conditions are met to

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<sup>109</sup> Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 29.

<sup>110</sup> Reed, *Quest for Spiritual Community*, 149-78.

<sup>111</sup> Anne Fletcher Grizzle, "Group Spiritual Direction: Offering Spiritual Depth and Community Building in Diverse Settings," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 11, no. 2 (2018): 221-23.

<sup>112</sup> Hooton, "An Experience in Small Group Spiritual Direction at McGuire United Methodist Church."

<sup>113</sup> David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2010), 67.

<sup>114</sup> Tod E. Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 221.

challenge this attempt. A Japanese-speaking director who is certified as a spiritual director in the United States has offered to gladly support this project. Three core church leaders, including myself, agree to join this group nine times for one year. I can pay the necessary expenses from the budget available to me for pastoral care. The church's General Assembly is expected to approve this trial. Therefore, I consider a year-long spiritual direction in a group at a local church in Japan to be the Most Viable Prototype.

# Appendix E—Project Appendix Documentation

# Appendix 1: The Table of Contents of *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai* [Being Hospitable to the Souls of Others: An Invitation to Spiritual Direction]

## Introduction

### Part I Understanding Spiritual Direction

#### Chapter 1: What is Spiritual Direction?

Fad or Holy Spirit Directing?

What is Spirituality?

What is Spiritual Formation?

Spirituality as a Journey

Definition of Spiritual Direction

What is at the Heart of Spiritual Direction

Various Metaphors for Spiritual Direction

History of Spiritual Direction

Spreading Across Denominations

Spreading within Evangelicals

Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Friendship

Spiritual Direction

Multiple Relationships

#### Chapter 2: What Characterizes Spiritual Direction

Characteristic 1: Purpose of Direction

Characteristic 2: Listening and Silence

Characteristic 3: Equal Relationships

Characteristic 4: Prayer

Characteristic 5: Trust

Characteristic 6: Safe Place

Characteristic 7: Contemplative Spirituality

### Chapter 3: Contemplative Spirituality

God's Purpose Not Reached by the Shortest Distance

What is Contemplation?

Contemplation in the Bible

The Contemplative Life

Impulsive and Reflexive Reactions

Seeing and Receiving Things as They Are

Busy People Today

Burning Bush Here and There

From Impulsive to Contemplative Way of Life

Contemplation and Activity

An Invitation to Contemplative Living

Unlearning

### Part II: Being Prepared for the Work of Spiritual Direction

#### Chapter 4: Qualities of the Spiritual Director

Who does the Spiritual Direction?

Qualities of a Spiritual Director

Identifying the Calling to Spiritual Direction

Calling or Training

Is a Spiritual Director a Profession?

The Need to Be Prepared

#### Chapter 5: Spiritual Direction and Ethics

Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of SDI

Spiritual Direction and Accountability

Directees and Accountability

Supervision

Two Types of Supervision and Consultation

## Chapter 6: Useful Lessons for Spiritual Directors

Various Spiritual Streams

Two Dark Nights

Spiritual Discernment

Personality Typology

Stage Models of Spiritual Growth

## Part III: Practice of Spiritual Direction

### Chapter 7: Spiritual Direction Sessions

Who Receives Spiritual Direction?

Non-Christians and Spiritual Direction

Conversation Topics in Direction

Talking about Your Inner Self

What the Director Offers

What Directors Should Not Do

Transference and Countertransference

Beginning, Continuation and End of Spiritual Direction

Sessions Using Video Calls

Meet Them Where They Are At

Spiritual Direction and Candles

### Chapter 8: Group Spiritual Direction



What is Group Spiritual Direction?

Basic Rules for Spiritual Direction Groups

Role of Listening

Listening with a Contemplative Attitude

Helping to Descend into the Depths of the Soul

Number of People in the Group, Length of Sessions, Frequency, etc.

Basic Procedures" and How to Proceed

Before Starting a Full-Scale Direction Group: Practice Step 1

Practicing Step 2

Practice Step 3

Conclusion

Acknowledgements

Appendix: ESDA Code of Ethics<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai*, 3-6.

## Appendix 2: Guidelines for Spiritual Direction Groups

The guidelines were prepared in Japanese by the facilitator, Sachi Nakamura.

- Set each person's mind to have an honest relationship with God.
- Joining the group wholeheartedly by listening and responding prayerfully.
- Be open to the feedback and comments you receive from others on your soul's journey.
- Keep what is shared within the group confidential and not discuss what is shared outside of the session, even among members.
- Attend every session for a predetermined period of time

### *Presenter Guidelines*

- Share your own experiences and what is going on inside, rather than seeking solutions or advice. Pay attention to God's presence and work therein, and seek to listen and respond to God's invitation.
- Share within the time allotted to you.
- Prayerfully receive what is offered by the group. Be free to pass it on if you feel it is not from God.

### *Group Guidelines*

- When presenters share, be present prayerfully and mindfully (be present) and be respectful of others' situations, feelings, and thoughts (meet them where they are at).
- Receive with awe what is shared as important.
- Listen without trying to give advice, correct or evaluate the other person. Let go of your own ego (e.g., wanting to be helpful, being perceived as wise, etc.).
- Make comments and questions that help the presenter search the depths of his or her soul and pay attention to God (sometimes holding the person before God in silence rather than offering words).

### *Role of the Facilitator*

- Review group objectives and rules with group members as needed, and act as timekeeper to keep the session moving along according to the established order and time allotment.
- If the dynamics of the moment seem to be diverting from the purpose of the group, such as someone monopolizing the space, giving advice, trying to teach, or going into chit-chat mode, warn them and return them to the original flow of the session.

- If necessary, invite the group to a time of silence, encouraging them to turn their hearts to God and together pay attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

## 霊的同伴グループのためのガイドライン

### グループに参加する上でのコミットメント

- 各人がそれぞれに、神との間に正直な関係を持つよう心を定める。
- 祈りを込めた傾聴と応答によって、グループプロセスに心を込めて参加する。
- 自分の魂の旅路に対して、他者からもらうフィードバックやコメントに心を開く。
- グループ内で分かち合われたことについては守秘義務を遵守し、メンバー同士であっても、セッション外では分かち合われたことを話題に出さない。
- あらかじめ決められた期間内は、毎回のセッションに参加する。

### プレゼンターの心得

- 問題解決や助言を求めるのではなく、自分の経験や内面で起こっていることを分かち合うことで、そこにある神の臨在や働きに注意を払い、神の招きに耳を傾け、応答することを求める。
- 自分に割り当てられた時間内で分かち合う。
- グループから差し出されるものは祈りをもって受け取る。それが神からのものではないと感じたら、受け流す自由も持つ。

### グループの心得

- プレゼンターが分かち合うとき、祈りと心を込めてその場に立ち会い（be present）、相手の現状、気持ち、考えを尊重する（meet them where they are at）。
- 分かち合われたことは大切なものとして、畏敬の念をもって受けとめる。
- 助言しようとしたり、相手を正そうとしたり、評価を下したりすることなしに聴く。自分のエゴ（役に立ちたい、賢明だと思われたいなど）は手放す。
- プレゼンターが自分の魂の深みを探り、神に注意を払うことを助けるようなコメントや問いかけをする（時には言葉を差し出すより、沈黙のうちに相手を神の前にホールドすることもある）。

### ファシリテーターの役割

- グループの目的やルールをグループメンバーと随時確認し、タイムキーパーとして、決められた順序と時間配分に従ってセッションを進める。
- 誰かが場を独占したり、助言をしたり、教えようとしたり、雑談モードになるなど、その場のダイナミクスがグループの目的から逸れそうになったら、注意し、本来の流れに戻す。
- その際、必要に応じてグループを沈黙の時間に招き、心を神に向け、ともに聖霊の御声に注意を払えるよう励ます。

## Appendix 3: Explanation Part of Group Spiritual Direction Session Three and Four

Materials for the explanation part were prepared in Japanese by the facilitator, Sachi Nakamura. The presentation was given in Japanese. The Japanese slides were included below, and following each slide was its English translation.

### Explanation Part of Session Three



1

What is Group Spiritual Direction?

Nerima Baptist Church Group Spiritual Direction, Session 3, Sachi Nakamura

## 識別 (Discernment)

何が神から出ているもので、何がそうでないのか  
What is of God and what is not.

---

霊的同伴では、私たちの目標は特定の問題を解決することではありません。私たちの目標は、識別することです。  
同伴者としての私の役割は、祈りながら注意深く耳を傾け、聖霊の導きを求める人が神の存在にもっと気づき、反応できるような受け入れ態勢を作ることです。

リンドブルーム

4

In spiritual direction, our goal is not to resolve particular issues. Our goal is discernment. My part is to be prayerful, to listen carefully, and to create an accepting atmosphere in which the person seeking the Spirit's direction can become more aware of and responsive to God's presence.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Lois A. Lindbloom, *Is That You, God?: Cultivating Discernment as a Way of Life* (Northfield: Ashmore Ink, 2004), 4.

靈的同伴は、岐路（道の分かれ目）に立つことを尊ぶ靈的实践の一つです。……（靈的同伴）グループの参加者は一緒に、その人の人生のこの部分のどこに神はいるのだろうか、と問います。そのことについて祈るとき、何が起こりますか？ 神と二人きりになるその深い場所で、何が浮かんできますか？ 神のやり方を教え、思い出させてくれる御霊からは、何がやって来るように感じますか？ それ以外のもの、たとえば家族の声や文化的な期待、子供の頃のパターン、自分の意志などからきていると思われるものは何ですか？

リンドブルーム

5

The discipline of spiritual direction is one spiritual practice that honors standing at the crossroads... Together they ask, where is God in this part of life? What happens when you pray about it? What comes to you in that deep place where you are alone with God? What seems to come from the Spirit of God who teaches and reminds you of God's way? What seems to come from some other source—family messages, cultural expectations, childhood patterns, personal willfulness?<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Lindbloom, 7.



識別とは、単にAかBかを選ぶということ以上に、  
そこにある神様の願いや自分自身の霊的変容の可能性に心を開き、  
そこに神様をお招きすることでもある。

---

6

Discernment is more than simply choosing A or B. It is also opening our hearts to God's desire and the possibility of our own spiritual transformation and inviting God into it.

岐路に立って、自分の前にある選択肢や、それに対する自分の気持ちや態度、願い、期待、不安、そういったいろいろなことに思いを巡らす中で、より自分を知り、またその自分に対する神様の愛と受容を知ることになる。

---

7

At the crossroads, as we reflect on the choices before us, our feelings, attitudes, desires, expectations, anxieties, and so on, we come to know ourselves better and to know God's love and acceptance of us.

大きな選択や決断のときだけではなく、日々の生活の出来事の中で、  
自分はどのような霊の動きを体験していたかにも注意を払う。  
より神に近づいていたか。それとも、より神から遠ざかっていたか、など。

---

8

Pay attention to what kind of spiritual movement you were experiencing, not only in major choices and decisions, but also in the events of your daily life. Was I moving closer to God? Or, was I moving away from God?

## 例 1 :

- ・「あなたにとっての良い帰省とは、どういうものですか？」
  - ・「では、それを実現させるにあたり、あなたはどこに困難や課題を覚えますか？」
  - ・「その困難を乗り越えるために、神様にどう助けてほしいですか？」
  - ・「あなたが帰省するとき、神様はどこにおられると思いますか？」など
- 

9

Example 1:

- What does a good homecoming look like for you?
- Then, what difficulties or challenges do you see in making it happen?
- How would you like God to help you overcome these difficulties?
- Where do you think God will be when you return home? etc.

## 例 2 :

- ・「もしあなたがそのオファーに対してイエスと言うなら、何に対してノーと言うことになりますか？」
  - ・「あなたがその仕事にイエスということは、他のどんなことに対してもイエスと言うことになりそうですか？」
  - ・「あなたがイエスと言おうとしていることは、あなたの召命（コーリング）と一致していますか？ あなたが自分の人生、生活の中で優先させたい、大切にしたいと思っていることと、どう関連してきますか？」等
- 

10

Example 2:

- If you say yes to the offer, what would you be saying no to?
- If you say yes to the job, are you going to say yes to anything else?
- Is what you are saying yes to consistent with your calling? How does it relate to what you want to prioritize and value in your life? etc.

霊的同伴での問いかけは、問題解決のためではなく、  
その人の目が神様へと向かい、祈りを促すためのもの。  
その人が、その状況で自分が何を感じ、何を願っているのかに気づくのを  
助け、またその中に神様を見る、あるいはそこから神様を見るのを促すた  
め。

究極的な焦点は、いつでも「その人と神様との関係」

---

11

The questions asked in a spiritual direction are not intended to solve problems, but to direct the person's eyes to God and encourage prayer. We ask questions to help the person become aware of what he or she is feeling and hoping for in the situation, and to encourage him or her to see God in it or from it.

The ultimate focus is always "the person's relationship with God."

## 第二段階

1. 沈黙と祈り
2. チェックイン
3. 沈黙(2min)\*
4. 分かち合い (7~10min)\*
5. 沈黙のうちのリフレクション(4min)\*
6. 応答(5min)\*
7. 沈黙(1min)
8. グループプロセス(5min)
9. セッション終了の祈り

3～6を人数分繰り返す。

---

### Step Two

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. Sharing (7~10min) \*
5. Reflection in Silence (4min) \*
6. Response (5min) \*
7. Silence (1min)
8. Group Process (5min)
9. Prayer at the End of the session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

おまけ：

霊的同伴のセッションでは、同伴者は私に、私の神聖な物語の中で最も心に残っている部分を話すようにと促します。同伴者は、心の耳で私の話にじっくりと耳を傾けてくれます。彼女は問題を解決しようとするのではなく、私が自分自身の葛藤を聴くのを助けてくれるのです。彼女は私の痛みや喜びを聴き、（その中に神を見出すために）私がそこに留まるのを助けてくれます。彼女は祈りをもって私に問いかけます。私はそれに答える必要はありませんが、その問いかけを考えることにより、往々にして、私の中ではんやりしていたものがはっきりしてきます。私は、霊的同伴のセッションが私の時間であり、私の神の物語であることをいつも意識していますが、同伴者は私がそれをより深く聴くのを助けてくれるのです。

<https://stillpointca.org/blog/2022-02-newsletter> 『Agency』より

13

TIPS:

When I sit with my director, she asks me to tell her the portion of my sacred story that is most on my heart. As I share, she listens with me with the ear of her own heart. She doesn't try to solve problems, but helps me hear my struggle for myself. She hears my pain and my rejoicing, and helps me linger here. Her questions come prayerfully and require no answer, but often help to clarify. I am always aware that this is my time and my God-story, and she helps me hear it more deeply.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Elizabeth Rechter, "Agency," Stillpoint, February 27, 2022, <https://stillpointca.org/blog/2022-02-newsletter>.



## Explanation Part of Session Four

Group Spiritual  
Direction とは何か

練馬GSD  
第4回め



1

What is Group Spiritual Direction?

Nerima Baptist Church Group Spiritual Direction, Session 4, Sachi Nakamura

私たちのための神よ あなたを父と呼びます  
 私たちの隣におられる神よ あなたをイエスと呼びます  
 私たちの内におられる神よ あなたを聖霊と呼びます  
 三つにひとつ、あなたは永遠の奥義  
 すべてのものを可能にし、包み、いのちを与える  
 私たちのことさえも、私のことさえも

あなたの善と偉大さの前には どんな名もおよびません  
 あるがままの中にしか、あなたがどなたであるかを見ることはできません  
 ですから、はっきりと見ることのできる視力をください  
 昔いまし、今もいまし、永遠におられる、そのお方を  
 アーメン

リチャード・ローア(Richard Rohr)

2

God for us, we call you Father.  
 God alongside us, we call you Jesus.  
 God within us, we call you Holy Spirit.  
 You are the eternal mystery that enables, enfolds, and enlivens all things,  
 Even us and even me.  
 Every name falls short of your goodness and greatness.  
 We can only see who you are in what is.  
 We ask for such perfect seeing— As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.  
 Amen.

Richard Rohr<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Richard Rohr, *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2016), 144.

- ・ 1. 沈黙と祈り
- ・ 2. チェックイン
- ・ 3. 沈黙 (約2min)\* 次のプレゼンターが沈黙を破る。
- ・ 4. プレゼンターによる分かち合い(10min以内)\*
- ・ 5. わかりにくかった点を確認するための質問 (1min)\*
- ・ 6. 沈黙のうちのリフレクション (4min)\*
- ・ 7. 応答 (10~12min)\*
- ・ 8. 沈黙 (1min)

\*の部分プレゼンターの人数分、繰り返す。

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### 3

#### Step Three

1. Silence and Prayer
2. Check-in
3. Silence (2min) \*
4. *Sharing (10min) \**
5. Questions to Confirm Points that were not Clear (1min) \*
6. Reflection in Silence (4min) \*
7. *Response (10-12min) \**
8. Silence (1min)
9. Group Process (5min)
10. Prayer at the End of the Session

The content marked with \* was repeated for each presenter.

### 第1、第2段階との違い

- (1) わかりにくかった点を確認するための質問の時間が入る。  
すぐにYes/Noや一言で答えられるような、事実確認のための質問
  - (2) プレゼンターによる分かち合いの時間が少し長くなる。  
今回は最長10分まで。
  - (3) 応答の時間も長くなる。(今回は10～15分ほど)  
プレゼンターが思い巡らしを深めるのを助けるための時間
- 

4

#### Differences from Steps One and Two

- There was time for questions to confirm points that were difficult to understand. Fact-checking questions that can be answered immediately with a Yes/No or one-word answer.
- A little longer time for presenters to share. This time was up to 10 minutes.
- Response time was also longer. (10-15 minutes this time) More time to help presenters deepen their contemplation.

## 応答のときの心がけ

プレゼンター：

- (1) 差し出されたものを、オープンマインドで受け取る。
- (2) 差し出されたものを、権威あるものであるかのように受け止めない。

開いた自分の手のひらにそっと乗せるようなイメージで受け取る。

---

5

Things to keep in mind when responding

Presenter:

- Accept what is offered with an open mind.
- Do not accept what is offered as if it were authoritative.

Receive it as if you are gently holding it in the palm of your open hand.

## 応答のときの心がけ

グループ：

- (1) It's not about you! 自分のことに話を持っていかない。
  - (2) 沈黙することを恐れない。
  - (3) 自分の解釈や意見、アドバイスは控える。
- 

6

Things to keep in mind when responding

Group:

- It's not about you! Don't bring it up about yourself.
- Don't be afraid to be silent.
- Refrain from giving your own interpretations, opinions, or advice.

応答のとき、グループがプレゼンターに差し出すもの（拙著 pp.152-3）

1. プレゼンターの話聞きながら、また沈黙していたときに、浮かんできたイメージや言葉や感情など。
2. プレゼンターの話や仕草などから気づいたこと。
3. 問いかけ
4. 沈黙による受容と執りなし

\*差し出すものは、プレゼンターが自分の内面を見、また神様を見るために助けになるようなもの。

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7

What the group offers to the presenter during the response

- any images, words or feelings that come to mind while listening to the presenter's talk or in silence words, feelings, etc.
- things I noticed from the presenter's talk, gestures, etc.
- questions
- acceptance and intercession through silence<sup>120</sup>

\*The offering was something that helps the presenter to look within and to see God.

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<sup>120</sup> Nakamura, *Tamashii o motenasu: Reiteki douhan eno shoutai*, 152-53.

## Appendix 4: Feedback on Group Spiritual Direction Sessions

I had a one-on-one interview with Sachi Nakamura, spiritual director, and one church member for one hour each in Japanese about the group spiritual direction session. Below is a rough translation.

### Feedback from Spiritual Director

A one-on-one interview with Sachi Nakamura, Spiritual Director, was conducted regarding the group spiritual direction sessions.

#### 1. What are your general impressions?

- The participants are more open than I expected. It has been a joy and a blessing. I expected some resistance, but they surrendered to the dynamics of the group spiritual direction
- It is easier to join a group when one is working with people who are interested. Not everyone is open to it.
- It is unfortunate that someone had to leave due to personal mental problems. I wanted this place to be a place for personal support, but it seemed to be difficult.
- It is not that the group was not functioning.

#### 2. As a facilitator, what do you hope will happen in this group?

- I pray that the GSD will be a safe place. Specifically, I hope that opening ourselves, focusing on others, supporting each other, and loving each other will be realized.
- If it is not a safe place, those who share will stop at the surface. They talk about events, external things, not their own hearts. They talk only about model solutions. They are not specific. This happens when participants do not feel this is a safe place.
- An open mind is a major key. The following principles need to be observed for this to happen. For there to be a safe place, confidentiality must be maintained, no advice given, no assumptions made.
- It is also tough if there is no inner relationship between the participants and God.
- If someone is not opening up, we cannot force him/her to open up. We make it as safe as possible, but if that person doesn't want to come in, we need to wait.
- It was nice to be able to express that when one of the participants was diagnosed with a mental illness, she was able to say that she could no longer participate in the group.



3. What are the characteristics of this group compared to other GSDs? Are there any topics or expressions that should be avoided while leading the session?

- This was an experimental effort where we dared to do it with three church leaders, a pastor, a pastoral care taker, and a board chairperson. There was a power relationship, but it went in the right direction, not the wrong direction.
- As for anxiety, I wonder what kind of changes were made outside of the group; I am relieved to report that the principle of not talking about GSD elsewhere was followed, and that there were no negative changes.

4. What are some of the positive aspects throughout the sessions so far?

- It is nice to see that people who were initially anxious about participating have opened up.
- As I answered in 3, it is significant that we were able to create a relationship where the participants felt comfortable doing the sessions with their pastor.

5. What are the negatives throughout the session so far?

- One unfortunate thing was that one person was unable to continue due to a mental illness.

6. What are some improvements you would like to make for the future?

- One more person could have been there from the beginning. Excluding the facilitator, there should be about 4 people. The quality in the response time would be different with one more person. Dynamics would be greater. If there are too many, it is difficult to go deeper; it would be better to start with four participants. If one person misses for some reason, it is less likely to be a problem.

7. Do you think this activity has potential to grow? If so, what are the possibilities?

- I feel that this time is special. It worked well because the participants were spiritually mature. It may not necessarily work the same way as this group.
- If we expand it in the church, it is not mandatory participation. Those who want to do it should try it.
- This time I decided on a group direction that included participants sharing their own experiences, but activities that involve sharing the Word (lectio divina, etc.) and holding each other up are less risky. Some may talk too much, some may not. Even if we don't deal directly with private matters, we can encourage each other to listen and receive, even if we start by sharing through the words of the Bible.

- The experience of accompanying each other in silence is essential to group spiritual direction. It is important to begin gradually and in stages so that we can become accustomed to the stillness.
- It is not easy for the church to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. This time it was done thoroughly, but it is really important to make sure that people are familiar with the observance of confidentiality before putting it into practice.
- Another possibility is that it is easier to practice group spiritual direction outside the church rather than inside the church.
- The key is to be silent and listen to God. Return what you heard to God for the person.
- It is easier to join a group if you are already accustomed to personal silence.
- Group spiritual direction is one of the tools. It is for the church community to journey together for each other. It is good to cultivate a church culture of listening for each other.
- It also helps to use the GSD format in sharing when we experience stillness at retreats.
- Usually I listen to what is being said and immediately return at the usual pace. We must be conscious of trying to listen to what God is saying.
- It is smoother to start with the thought of the Word of God. In the case of sharing personal experiences, it can be too heavy for the listener.

8. Would you like to see continued involvement in group spiritual accompaniment efforts within the church? Please give your reasons.

- If the time is right, we can get involved. In the case of personal spiritual direction, I do it with a commitment to continue as long as I can with most people.

#### *Cultural differences between the U.S. and Japan*

9. Do you think group spiritual direction fits into the context of the evangelical church in Japan? How do you think groups are different in Japan than in the U.S.?

- It is hard to say. Those who are used to being in stillness are willing to accept it. For those who don't, it can be difficult. It's not so much that they can't do it, but that they are not familiar with it. The situation seems to be the same for American and Japanese evangelicals. Rather, in Japan, there is a Zen culture and it may be easier to be familiar with it.

- The difference is not so much Japanese or American, but rather the difference in understanding the silence and listening of spiritual direction.

10. Regarding language, are there words that should be used in Japan, or words that should not be used?

- It is important to use words that Japanese people can understand. Direct translation of English expressions into Japanese can be difficult to convey, especially to the elderly.

11. Please give any feedback about this project.

- I think that being close to the person's spiritual journey is what we are doing in the group spiritual direction. I want to make this a place where directees feel like they can come here and just be listened to, without being judged. It would be nice to be told thank you for being present on my spiritual journey.
- I feel that things like benchmarking can narrow the work of the Holy Spirit with people's expectations. I focus on creating a safe place for the other person by the Holy Spirit. I believe that as we mature, we stop thinking about what effect group spiritual direction has.

## Feedback From Participant

A one-on-one interview with a church member was conducted regarding the group spiritual direction sessions.

1. What is your general impression of the program?

- I am blessed. Before we started, I was uncomfortable with the difference from a typical 1-on-1 and the definition of group spiritual direction, but after we started, we were able to accept and appreciate each other honestly without being confused.
- At first, I was full of doubts. I was skeptical. Even though I had read a book about spiritual direction, I didn't understand the clear explanation. When I tried it, I realized that I and the people around me accept God with God as the center. It's hard to understand unless you experience it.
- Having this every month is supportive to me. The spiritual director makes me feel spiritually connected. Facilitators are important. If you just follow the facilitator's example and don't have a facilitator, it probably won't work. The spiritual director is stable, so the whole group does not shake. It is amazing to have a person who is properly connected to God and trained.
- I think this is the best way to do it, but that doesn't mean you can always find someone like that. I also find it difficult to be combined with people I don't know.

This time it seemed okay because I was in a group with a pastor. With people I don't know, I don't think I can talk that much.

2. How does starting a group spiritual direction lessen the resistance of those who are a bit confused?

- It would be easier to accept if there is an emphasis on keeping God at the center and asking Him anyway what He wants you and the others to do. I find it powerful to listen to each other and to speak on that basis.
- However, I think some people would argue that that's what it's like to have a regular fellowship or talk with a pastor. But when you do it with a trained spiritual director, it's different.

3. Why are you able to overcome your initial resistance to group spiritual direction?

- I felt it was my mission as board chair to participate. Without such a mission, it was difficult for me to get started. Until I started this, there were no major problems in my life. I wanted to support my pastor.
- Within the first session, I felt like this was a secure and safe place. I was impressed that the spiritual director was listening to me with a look that said he was going to take it exactly right. I could feel the image of our fragile, soap bubble-like hearts gently holding each other. I felt like the wall of anxiety had vanished.
- At first, I was still concerned about how much complete confidentiality would be kept, but the promises were indeed kept, and we were in a safe place.

4. As the session progresses, what do you notice in your relationship with God, with yourself, and with others?

- My relationship with God felt closer as I became still.
- I think I have come to realize that both myself and others gently support existence "like holding a soap bubble" and accept it as it is.
- I can accept myself as I am. I knew theoretically that other people are also loved by others, but gradually I was able to experience it not only in my head but also in my body. It became clear to me that others are also loved. I forget sometimes, but I can now feel what it feels like to be this way. My relationship with God deepened and expanded.
- In specific situations, when I think of praying for someone, I feel like I am praying for that person with God at the center. When I have relationship problems at work, I think, oh, God loves this person too.

5. Is it difficult to have a session with someone who knows each other?

- At first I was a little anxious, but after the first session, I felt at ease. I think the reason for this was that both of them were in pastoral positions this time, so they understood confidentiality, and I felt that there would be no "stumbling blocks" in anything I said. However, it seems difficult with someone other than pastoral care providers.
- Even doing group spiritual direction with people I don't know is a hurdle for me personally.
- I also wonder if I can afford the cost of 6,000 yen per meeting. In the church culture, there is resistance to paying to have something done.
- It would be really difficult to allocate this time to continue to do it. I think the hurdles are high. I think this group spiritual direction time once a month supports my daily life, but I am not confident that I would be able to continue the commitment if asked if I would do it with the same frequency next year.

6. Does the burden and anxiety of talking about yourself decrease with frequency?

- Yes, the burden and anxiety have decreased.
- If I would rate my high anxiety as 5 and my low anxiety as 1, it was 5 before we started. I can say that before the second session it drops to 2 and after the third session it is 1, no anxiety.
- It was a time in my life that I wanted to talk about here, even before I was prompted to talk about myself. A lot has happened during this period. Mother, work, family. It was a time when I had a need to be listened to. I talk, I get accepted, and I feel like God is at work. If it had been a different time, the depth might have been different.

7. How effective is the step-by-step approach? How does it help or not?

- First of all, it was good to be able to focus and get used to looking and listening in silence to the relationship between myself, the people there, and the Lord. I think that if I had focused on asking questions from the beginning, I would not have been able to get a sense of the basic part of listening in silence.
- If I had to ask questions or give my impressions from the beginning, I would put too much emphasis on thinking about it. I am glad that I was able to focus on the most important thing, "listening to each other," and build a base before moving on to the next step.
- Even in 1-on-1, I would say, "If it were me, I would say this." How we react to the audience is an issue that has been raised in many seminars.

8. Do you feel like your vulnerable heart is being held by God's hand? Can you describe what it feels like?

- Not always, but I think I am now able to evoke the feeling I experienced in the spiritual accompaniment to some extent in my daily life.
- I feel that I am surrounded, that we are all holding together. I sometimes return to this feeling that I almost forget in my daily life.
- I feel like I am "softly wrapped" in existence itself. Supported. A feeling of enveloping each other. A warm light shining through. I can rate myself on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning the relationship is weakly trusting and 5 meaning it is strong. The group's relationship with each other started out as 2 and gradually became more like 4.

9. Did you have any perplexing experiences during the session?

- I was once perplexed by the participants' attitude toward sharing. It's just a place to leave it up to God and how He wants to work.
- The reassurance of having a facilitator when you "feel like giving advice."

10. Does this group have any impact on you as a church leader?

- I think it has an impact. I am able to experience a real sense of stillness before the Lord.
- I am given the desire to gently hold the hearts of the church members before the Lord.
- I feel like I want everyone to feel the feeling of being supported together that I have been given by God. For this purpose, I think about how I should talk to them and pray for them, and feel humbled before God. Rather than pulling from above, I lead as I serve.

11. Would you like to participate in such an initiative in the future?

(1: I don't want to 2: Not very much 3: Neither 4: Fairly much 5: I want to)

- 4: Depends on the partner, cost, etc.
- Time, commitment is also a big factor. Blessed but not able to continue.
- Hardly a requirement to be a chairperson.
- As a result, it is helpful, but mandatory participation is not desirable.

- If I were a board member, I might at least participate occasionally.

12. Do you think this activity has potential to grow? If so, what are the possibilities?

- I think it would be good if we could incorporate some of this. But as a leader, I cannot responsibly recommend group direction among church members.
- I might recommend and create opportunities to have " Silence Time" in the church on a regular basis. Maybe a participant in the group direction could give a testimony and introduce a group spiritual direction to those who are interested.
- I am blessed and it is important, but it is very difficult to find a group of fellow church members. I can't recommend them with confidence. I can't guarantee that we will make a group.
- Start with what you can do personally. Provide opportunities from time to time.
- Usual busyness, human weakness, people, opportunities and timing.
- We may be able to form some kind of shape, but it is difficult to do so with confidence.
- Facilitators may need to be called in a sense.
- Without 100% confidence, it may be difficult to wave the flag as a church.
- I would recommend it to people who are tired of working hard and have a maltese atmosphere.
- I would like to examine in what way the central point of being held by God can be shared in the church.

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