

Theology of
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Table of Contents

<i>Editorial: A Noteworthy Mile-Marker for Theory and Praxis: Schuringa</i>	3
<i>The Effects of Transformational Leadership and Management Experience of Pastors on Church Business Operations: Butler & Senses-Ozyurt</i>	5
<i>Pastoral Authenticity and the Duplex Cognito Dei: DiVietro</i>	24
<i>What Aren't Christian Leadership Outcomes? An Expansion of Bell's Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership: Cushman</i>	34
<i>Ministry Involvement of Church Staff and Volunteers: The Role of Organizational Commitment and Work Engagement: Dunaetz & Boccock</i>	51
<i>The Head Bowed Generation: An Ethical Perspective on Social Media, Culture, and Leadership: Simon</i>	68
<i>Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development: Is Intellectual and Spiritual Balance Possible for the Ecclesial Leader?: Mizzell & Henson</i>	83
<i>Book Review: A Postcolonial Leadership: Asian Immigrant Christian Leadership and its Challenges: Bekker</i>	98
<i>Book Review: The Golden Key for Life and Leaders: The Idea of Office: Spranger</i>	101

Abigail Boggan, a student at Toccoa Falls College, created the cover artwork. She explains that Christian leadership is learning to sit in the hurt and brokenness of our lives and to embrace the changing of the seasons. In doing so, we see new life blooming as we rejoice in the brokenness, knowing that the Father is at work in our lives. Christian leadership is learning to step into the process of mourning, reflecting, and growing over and over again so that we can lead others through the same process. She hopes we never forget that our role as a leader is one of loving others deeply as we seek out the new growth that comes from seasons of brokenness.

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SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: IS INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL BALANCE POSSIBLE FOR THE ECCLESIAL LEADER?

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ABSTRACT: Spiritual formation is a topic that humanity has struggled with since the beginning of time. Humankind has traditionally understood religious and spiritual development as an expression of the evolved nature, on the one hand, and nurture or socialization and social learning on the other. This article examines spiritual formation and leadership development within the context of the purpose and engagement of intellectual and spiritual acuity in the life of a Christian leader. To understand the full meaning and impact of intellect and spirit in the human experience, concepts such as philosophy, theology, ecclesiology, and religion appear throughout the document. This paper examines spiritual formation and leadership development from an anthropological, Christian, and secular perspective. It examines the spiritual nature of humankind as created in the image and likeness of God to establish a baseline for whether a balance can ever exist between the intellect and the spirit within the converted ecclesial leader and Christ-follower. It identifies a continuing need for the development and teaching of practical tools and techniques for experiential conversion so that God's Word, will, and way can genuinely be performed on earth as it is in heaven.

KEYWORDS: *Spirit; Soul; Intellect*

Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development: Is Intellectual and Spiritual Balance Possible for the Ecclesial Leader?

In a postmodern context, many people view spiritual formation and leadership development as separate and distinct topics. However, for the Christian who aspires to be a leader, both disciplines must converge to bring forth the servant-leader capable of effectively advocating for change that will bring glory to God the Father. It is not uncommon for leaders who are Christian to struggle with incorporating sound, spiritually-based faith principles in their lives because many people accept Jesus Christ as Savior but deny Him as Lord. While it is possible to confess Jesus as Savior, accepting His Lordship is a transformative process that occurs over time through spiritual formation (Rom 12:2). Historically, spiritual formation and leadership development have been conceptualized and defined in different ways by philosophers, psychologists, religious leaders, contemporary scholars, and other thought leaders. This paper uses scholarly research and doctrines of the Bible to compare the concepts of spirituality and intellect to determine the degree to which they may be balanced in the life of a Christian leader.

BACKGROUND

Philosophy has shaped Christian theology since its inception. According to Allen and Springsted (2007), the primary two sources of Christian doctrine emanate from the Bible and Hellenic culture, especially Greek philosophy. Exposure to philosophical thought creates a deep appreciation for every significant doctrinal formulation (Allen & Springsted, 2007). Theology, which is a statement or account about God, constitutes the discipline committed to the study of God (Longman, 2013). According to Stone and Duke (2013), theology is a general term used for the various areas of study relating to faith, church, and ministry. More broadly interpreted as faith seeking understanding, theology is the process of thinking about, developing, and stating in words and action an appreciation or apprehension of placing personal confidence in the Christian message of God (Stone & Duke, 2013).

Allen and Springsted (2007) postulated that while Christian spirituality is not usually considered doctrinal theology or theological inquiry, philosophy has influenced it greatly. For all theologians of the ancient church and many in the Medieval Period, the practice of spirituality was considered necessary for theological inquiry (Allen & Springsted, 2007). Stone and Duke (2013) further hypothesized that to be Christian is to be a theologian and that anyone practicing religion, living according to Christian faith and values, or taking the spiritual dimension of life seriously, inescapably thinks theologically. They further defined ecclesiology as the study of the history of the Christian Church, which customarily focuses on the distinctive identity, nature, and purpose of the community of faith (Stone & Duke, 2013).

According to Karkkainen (2002), ecclesiology did not gain an established standing in systematic theology until the time of the Reformation. Ecclesiology was not a separate locus in the early Church of the Middle Ages (Pannenberg, 1997). McDermott (1989) surmised that the church fathers resolved that the church was inseparably connected with the Holy Spirit by its confession of faith. Migne (1902) added that the conviction of the early church was so firm that the Church fathers declared that apart from the Holy Spirit, the church was null and void. However, while examining history through the lens of philosophy, theology, and ecclesiology, the human intellect

must be malleable to the oversight, counsel, and intervention of God and His revealed Word (Rom 1:18-28). Such actions illuminate the necessity of trusting God, not leaning on human understanding, and acknowledging God in every aspect of life (Prv 3:5-6).

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Many scholars and theologians have attempted to define spiritual formation. Christensen and Laird (2010) suggested that spiritual formation relates to the discovery of the leadings of the heart. Christenson (2001) defined it as sanctification or the renewal of the mind. Hawthorne et al. (1993) described it as walking in the Spirit. Tennan (2005) explained it as a type of character development. May (1992) identified it as all attempts, means, instruction, and disciplines intended to deepen faith and the furtherance of spiritual growth. Conn (1999) proposed that the topic of spiritual formation is precarious because it touches the delicate work of the Holy Spirit. Conn further concluded that many people misunderstand spiritual formation to mean an attempt to find a secret guarantee of salvation or an attempt to manipulate the ideology of others.

Granqvist and Nkara (2017) argued that religious and spiritual development have been understood traditionally as an expression of evolved nature on the one hand and nurture or socialization on the other. However, Granqvist and Nkara contended that rather than an either-or proposition, nature meets nurture in religious and spiritual development. More specifically, nurture expresses itself in and through religious and spiritual growth as it slowly but surely sculps nature over time (Granqvist & Nkara, 2017). Nature void of nurture is the picture of the self-willed stubborn mule that runs riot in the life of anyone lacking a personal spiritual experience.

According to Willard (2000), every human bears personal responsibility for the spiritual formation of the human spirit consistently with the teaching of Jesus Christ. From a philosophical perspective, Willard cited that the problem lies in people relying on preaching, instruction, and intellectual acuity to form faith and counting on faith to form the inner life and outward behavior. Subsequently, Christianity has ended up with those who may be ready to die but are not prepared to live (Willard, 2000). However, Geiger and Peck (2016) noted that the Christian life is not about trying daily but dying daily. Jesus declared that following Him requires self-denial and daily cross-bearing (Lk 9:23). Therefore, if Christ died that we might live in Him, it is acceptable to conclude that spiritual formation entails dying daily to Christ that He might live within us.

Spiritual formation is a topic with which humanity has struggled since the beginning of time. Hoekema (1962) likened the struggle within the converted soul to the infamous Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde novel in which a highly respected and competent physician by day committed despicable crimes by night. However, as much as we may not like admitting it; there is a kind of Jekyll-Hyde scenario continuously taking place within every Christian convert (Hoekema, (1962). The Bible confirms that a battle begins between the old and new man within every Christian convert from the moment Jesus Christ is received as personal Savior and Lord. According to Hoekema, while we may grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, there is no truce in this war, and there is no cessation of hostilities until we die. Perhaps this is why Paul stated that to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Php 1:21) and that his ongoing quest was to die daily (1 Cor 15:31).

According to Paul, the converted life is an inward love/hate relationship (Rom 7:15). Believers love God yet hate His law; they want to do good but cannot; they despise evil but commit it; and, they are a sinner and yet declared a saint (Hoekema, 1962). Finally, in desperation, the converted soul cries,

"Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? The only one who can offer relief is the Lord" (Rom 7:24-25, KJV). The Holy Spirit diagnoses the spiritual conundrum as the converted yet unyielded soul, still desiring the things of the world (Rom. 8:5).

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL VIEW

Spiritual formation viewed from the lens of historical theology reveals an intricate, intriguing, and vitally important relationship (Hall & Peters, 2014). According to Hall and Peters (2014), historical theology studies and seeks to expound on the thoughts and practices that have emerged over time from the Christian mind, heart, and body individually and collectively. Hall and Peters argued that by its nature, spiritual formation is a historical enterprise. They concluded that the study of historical theology naturally and inherently entails the spiritual formation of its practitioners, for they are studying God's work in human history from an experiential perspective. They added that historical theology informs spiritual formation through the work of the church fathers and ancient texts, which reveal the movement of God's Holy Spirit throughout time. Historical theology also examines the work of God's Holy Spirit in the life of the church through the centuries and investigates humankind's response to the Holy Spirit's movement in time and place.

SCHOLASTICISM

According to Hoekema (1962), under the influence of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy, the medieval scholastic theologians watered down the significance and impact of the conflict within the converted to a struggle between reason and passions. We see this very clearly in Thomas Aquinas, the outstanding representative of high scholasticism (Hoekema, 1962). For Aquinas, the intellect is the highest power in the soul because it is the highest power in God (McDermott, 1989). Man's intellect is, therefore, the most god-like power in him (McDermott). Aquinas asserted that the moral struggle in the converted believer is that of reason versus passion (Hoekema). However, this concept does not come from Scripture but Greek philosophy. Both Plato and Aristotle declared that the intellect was a spark of divinity in man, and that man's intellect was supposed to rule over his passions (Hoekema).

JOHN CALVIN

The French theologian was a pastor and reformer in the 1500s during the Protestant Reformation. Historically, Calvin is one of the most notable Protestant theologians of all time. Hoekema (1962) asserted that contemporary believers can now appreciate more fully the reinterpretation of the moral dilemma in the converted man found in the Reformers. However, Calvin himself shared some of the ideologies of Greek philosophers, scholars, and theologians (Hoekema, 1962). For instance, Calvin, like the Scholastics, believed that the intellect is the guide and governor of the soul and that the directing part of man is the reason (Hoekema). Calvin's view of humanity's original state was also similar to Aquinas, especially as it pertains to God creating humans in His image.

When discussing the effect of the fall on the human race, Calvin gave broad consideration to scholastic anthropology (McDermott, 1989). Though reason still rules in humanity's fallen condition, it is so corrupted by sin that its government is misrule (Hoekema, 1962). Calvin vehemently opposed those who advocated that humans were corrupted only in our sensual part and not in our reason

(McDermott, 1989). Further, in his exposition of Romans 7:15, Calvin declared that the struggle is not merely between reason and passions but a much deeper conflict which only begins at conversion and one that cuts across all fragmentations of human nature (McDermott, 1989). In other words, this is a conflict between the whole nature as loving God and the whole nature as under the power of the evil one (Hoekema, 1962). In the end, one sees in Calvin, the emergence of a new understanding of the moral struggle of the converted man.

MARTIN LUTHER

According to Hoekema (1962), Martin Luther provided an even more insightful analysis of the internal struggle accompanying the conversion experience. Luther's psychological temperament enabled him to dig deeper into the despair of the sinner and the joy of the redeemed (Grossman, 1958). According to one of his interpreters, Luther wished to go beyond a mere psychological ego-concept to a theological ego-concept which sees humanity relationally to God rather than our psychological functions (Schott, 1928). According to another Luther scholar, the most fundamental concept in Luther's ethics was the antithesis between flesh and spirit (Stange, 1928). For Luther, however, this was not merely a battle between two different parts of man, but between two opposite dispositions of the whole man (Hoekema, 1962). Luther interpreted the Biblical concept of flesh as referring not just to the sensual or appetitive aspect of man's nature, but to the whole man (Stange, 1928). According to Luther, the flesh reveals itself in every area of our lives (Stange, 1928). Luther asserted that many of the works of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:19 are sins outside the body (Stange, 1928). Luther added that it is necessary to know these things because the flesh is so darkened in the kingdom of the Pope that they have taken the work of the flesh to be nothing more than accomplishing fleshly lust or the act of lechery; therefore, they could not understand Paul (Stange, 1928).

On the other hand, contrary to the views of the scholastics and Calvin, Luther interpreted the spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:17 to mean the whole person transformed by God and turned toward God (Stange, 1928). Therefore, Luther proclaimed that whether flesh or spirit, they each pertain to the whole person. The whole person is spiritual, or the whole person is fleshly, depending on whether devotion is to God or if one's ego has the supremacy (Grossman, 1958). Fleshliness does not only reveal itself in sensuality, but every action, even in moral striving if the striving is for the sake of one's honor (Grossman, 1958). Luther went so far as to distinguish between two kinds of fleshly people: those who show fleshliness in yielding to their passions and lusts, and those who reveal their fleshliness by subduing their lusts and practicing virtue (Grossman, 1958). Luther attested that the second type is the worse because it describes someone outwardly leading a respectable life while thoroughly fleshly in their inner motivation (Grossman, 1958). Hoekema (1962) suggested that Luther had Roman Catholic monks in mind or Jesus denunciations of Pharisees, who were diabolically evil because they thought themselves to be righteous.

Unfortunately, the Pharisees were like many contemporary believers who have an intellectual relationship with the Bible, and even with the church, but fall short of experiencing a spiritual awakening, which leads to conversion. Jesus told the Jewish community to search the scriptures because they believed eternal life was through them, but they testified of Him, yet the same Jewish community refused to come to Him to experience true life (Jn 5:39). It is astonishing how many contemporary believers worship the Word of God, the institution of the church, and even pastors; however, they never experience true conversion because they refuse to come to Jesus. When grace transforms, it creates a new nature called spirit (Hoekema, 1962). This does not result in the eradication or removal of the old nature; however, the two natures struggle for control of the soul

within the converted throughout the remainder of their life (Hoekema, 1962). For Luther, and for every converted believer, the real struggle is the war between two whole men on the inside: the new spiritual man and the old earthly man (Rom 8:7). For Luther, however, this was not to be conceived of as a struggle between two different parts of man, but between two opposite dispositions of the whole man. Luther interpreted the Biblical concept of flesh as referring not just to the sensual or appetitive aspect of man's nature, but to the whole man.

This section has reviewed history to acknowledge and examine what some of the greatest minds have contributed to the question of spiritual formation. However, it is impossible for intellect alone, whether approached from a philosophical, psychological, or anthropological point of view, to dissect and understand that which falls outside of its realm. Understanding spiritual matters requires consultation with the Holy Spirit with the right motive and attitude.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND THE CHURCH

Carmon (2017) contended that the Christian Church needs spiritually-mature and spiritually-minded believers. Ciangio et al. (2017) found that while many members attended Church school as children, most do not continue any formal study of the Bible. The Great Commission, as well as the work of the ministry, requires more than a cursory introduction to Christianity. It requires that members engage in life-long Christian principles and practices which promote spiritual growth (Carmon, 2017). Subsequently, Carmon developed a project that addresses the shortcomings through a spiritual-formation process intended to deepen and nurture spiritual growth in every follower of Christ. The project's goal was to employ Christian practices to nurture spiritual growth and facilitate spiritual transformation in the next generation (Carmon, 2017). Facing a similar situation in the Korean Church, Seol (2017) found that reinstating the spiritual discipline of confession and the spirit of the revival of 1907 restored healthy spirituality in the church.

Roehlkepartain et al. (2006) developed a handbook that specifically addresses spiritual formation during childhood and adolescence. The handbook covers the stages of faith from infancy through adolescence, intersections, and divergences with religious development, philosophical issues in spiritual education and development, and descriptive approaches to spiritual formation (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006). Interestingly, the Bible does not equate spiritual formation with biological age; however, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 suggests that Christian converts are initially fed milk because they are incapable of digesting the meat of God's Word until they have matured spiritually.

Benjamin and Mark (2013) proposed that the Apostle Paul's letter to the Church in Rome identifies processes involved in offering a spiritual formation education from a distance. According to Benjamin and Mark, Paul had never visited Rome when he wrote the letter to the church. Benjamin and Mark argued that Paul modeled how to offer a spiritually formative relationship by emphasizing the gospel message, grounding his scriptural authority, personalizing his message, anticipating questions, enlisting the community, encouraging the recipients, praying for needs, and explaining the marks of true Christianity. Lowe and Lowe (2010) further posited a model of student spiritual formation in Christian distance education, which integrates the biblical concept of spiritual formation that takes place within the spiritual ecology of the church as the body of the Christ.

Hicks and Tran-Parsons (2013) found that skills gained and developed through spiritual growth equips students to examine solutions to complex problems in a diverse, global society. Hicks and Tran-Parsons further explored intentional multicultural initiatives that were designed to foster

spiritual development and interfaith engagement to navigate differences and social good. According to Naidoo (2011), spiritual formation is a core competency of the educational mandate of a theological institution that is consecrated to prepare students for ecclesial leadership. Naidoo conducted a comprehensive research project to determine whether spiritual formation is intentionally pursued and to measure the emphasis placed on spiritual formation at theological institutions. Naidoo concluded that schools of theology must be committed to teaching students how to reflect on the spiritual life, how to deepen their spiritual journeys, and how to mature spiritually.

Porter (2014) offered a reflective appraisal on the field of spiritual formation to determine the state of affairs in the academic world and the church. Porter gathered leading figures within the evangelical discussion of spiritual formation to discuss the state of the union of spiritual formation within the academy and the local church. Porter noted that the field of spiritual formation is not an academic discipline in and of itself but a domain of study and that there is a need to assess its relationship with other pertinent disciplines with which it interacts. Porter further asserted that the field of spiritual formation is not a theoretical end in itself but is meant to inform practical ways of ushering followers of Christ into greater conformity to His image and that a need exists to discuss the role of the local church within the context of spiritual formation.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND THE MARKETPLACE

Watts (2011) contended that spiritual formation is an intellectual disability where an inner spiritual state, which some call the soul, is relegated to a child-like openness and mindset, and the influence of close personal relationships results in spiritual awareness, spiritual stimulation, and spiritual development. Rupčić (2017) further postulated that spiritual development, whether through meditative practices or the implementation of core beliefs of religious indoctrination, is powerful and can be leveraged to yield significant results when developing learning organizations. Rupčić concluded that the spiritual development of individuals could be the missing link or the holy grail, which could make learning organizations not just desirable but attainable.

Spirituality in the workplace has become increasingly popular in major business organizations. According to Weinberg and Locander (2014), little information exists on how leaders can deploy workplace spirituality to the individual level and sustain it through dyadic mentorship. Subsequently, Weinberg and Locander proposed a concept of spiritual mentoring, which takes an authentic self-perspective to spirituality while approaching spiritual development as best served through a co-created dyadic process. Subsequently, Weinberg and Locander recommended three categories for spiritual mentoring: inner life, meaningful work, and context/connectedness.

According to Shah (2009), corporate organizations have recently begun investing resources on the spiritual development of their leaders. Shah asserted that while organizations traditionally devoted time and money grooming leaders, the spiritual aspects of leadership development were ignored or not considered relevant. Shah suggested that spiritual leadership development plays a critical and decisive role in grooming effective leaders within contemporary organizations. Fry and Kriger (2009) further proposed a theory of leadership that utilizes five levels of leadership effectiveness, which included the physical world, the world of images and imagination, the level of the soul, the level of the spirit, and the non-dual level.

CREATED IN HIS IMAGE

Engstrom (1976) declared that God is the origin of all truth, without exception. Since the beginning of time, God has revealed Himself to be a Spirit (Gen 1:2), and John 4:24 confirms that anyone seeking to worship God must do so in spirit and truth. The reason this is important is that God created humans in His image and according to His likeness (Gen 1:26). Therefore, if God is a Spirit who created humans in His image and likeness, then by design, humans are intended to be spirit-beings capable of representing God in the three-dimensional earthly realm. Genesis 2:7 further confirms that God, who is a Spirit-being, breathed into the nostrils of the man and man was formed of the earth, thus giving him three-dimensional existence as a human being.

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as the substance that gives its user assurance and conviction that the things they hope for will materialize. Hebrews 11:6 establishes that belief in God is a prerequisite to pleasing Him and that God faithfully rewards such efforts with increasing insight into His plan and purpose, inclusive of the past, present, and the future. Romans 12:3 confirms that God's standard for Spirit-to-spirit communication disqualifies human intellect from controlling the relationship or dialog with Him; because it reveals faith as a grace God measures to every human being and not intellectually manufactured by man's reason. God's established guidelines for interaction require that we trust in Him with all our heart, refrain from leaning to our understanding, acknowledge Him in all our ways, and then He shall direct our paths (Prv. 3:5-6). According to Williams (1996), these pre-requisites or terms and conditions are non-negotiable because that is the way God created, made, and established His communications plan for human beings to follow.

Hebrews 4:12 denotes that the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Williams (1996), contended that the writer in this verse divided the non-corporal elements of humankind into two parts, soul and spirit. The corporal part includes the joints and marrow, which are the organs of motion and sensation (Williams). Nee (1977) explained that the Old Testament law required the priests to dissect and completely separate the sacrifice down to the joints and the marrow. In like manner, the Lord Jesus uses the Word of God to thoroughly pierce and separate to the division of the spirit, the soul, and the flesh (Nee, 1977). Therefore, since the spirit and soul are divided by the Lord using the Word of God, they must have different natures (Nee, 1977).

According to Nee (1977), when the breath of life came into contact with the body that God formed from the dust of the ground, the human soul was born. Therefore, the soul is a bi-product of God's blending of the spirit and the body (Williams, 1996). The breath of life breathed by God became the human spirit, which is the foundation of life that makes a relationship with God possible. In John 6:63, Jesus explained that it is the spirit that comes to life; the flesh gains no benefit at all. While this breath of life comes from the Lord of creation, Nee cautioned against confusing the human spirit with 'God's Holy Spirit because they are not the same. Nee clarified that when the breath of God entered the body, it became the human spirit; however, when the human spirit reacted with the body, the soul was generated.

Additionally, Williams (1996) contended that the statement "man became a living soul" does not merely express that the combination of the human spirit and the body produced the soul, but that the soul and the body combined with the human spirit, and the human spirit and the body merged in the soul. There was a methodical, meticulous, and complete blending of three natures into

one, and the soul as the uniting medium became the cause of man's individuality and his existence as a distinct being (Pember, 1921). Most important is the fact that Adam, in his unfallen state, knew nothing of the never-ending strivings of spirit, soul, and flesh which converted believers contend with daily (Rom 7:14-25).

Comparing and contrasting spirituality and intellect requires a clear understanding and appreciation for the distinct components, characteristics, and operations of spirit, soul, and body, which causes man to be a living creation formed and fashioned in the image of God to reflect His likeness. Each of the three parts has unique and specific functions that work in concert and produce the ability to operate in the three-dimensional corporal realm in which we live. Removal of any of the parts results in the inability to live and function according to God's purpose and plan.

THE SOUL LIFE

The soul is responsible for the distinctive attributes found in every human being. According to Erickson (1979), personality and individuality represent the soul. The soul is also the organ of free will (Williams, 1996). Within the context of a relationship with God, if a person, through intellect, chooses to be obedient, they will comply with the regenerated human spirit working in partnership with God's Holy Spirit to rule as ordered by God (Rom 8:1). However, if they choose not to comply, it will suppress the regenerated human spirit and take some other delight as Lord (Erickson, 1979). According to Nee (1977), the soul houses both the intellect and emotions. Nee further concluded that the soul stands between and exercises its power to discern and decide whether the spiritual or the natural world should reign. Williams (1966) added that the soul also possesses the ability to take control over the person through its intellect and create ideas or mental images of an ideational world which rules and reigns.

Erickson (1979) asserted that the regenerated human spirit is only able to govern and manage the whole person when the soul is willing to assume a humble position. However, Nee (1977) further clarified that this decision is totally up to the soul because therein resides the personality of the individual. If the soul is unwilling or rebels against submitting itself, the regenerated human spirit is powerless to rule (Williams, 1996). In other words, the soul is the pivot point of the entire person because within it resides volition (Nee, 1977). In essence, this is the meaning of free-will. No human is a robot automatically programmed to respond by God's will. Williams (1996) declared that humans have the full sovereign power to choose to either follow God's will or resist and follow Satan's will. It is the will that determines whether the human spirit, the body, or even itself is to rule (Williams, 1996).

BALANCING INTELLECT AND SPIRIT

Intellect is a faculty of the soul along with personality, will, emotions, and volition. The human spirit, on the other hand, refers to that part of God breathed into humanity when God created and made us (Williams, 1996). God's breathe, in concert with the body He formed from dust, generated the living soul (Gen 2:7). According to Williams (1996), the human spirit is the only part that is capable of communing with God because that is the only part that came directly from God. According to Genesis 3, the human spirit was separated or disconnected from God, and the man and woman were expelled from God's presence when they sinned by disobeying God's instructions in the garden of Eden. From that point forward, according to Psalm 51:5, all humans are born in sin and shaped in iniquity. However, because of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, every

human has the opportunity to be reconnected or reconciled to God through His gift of salvation. Salvation entails receiving Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. According to Romans 10:9, if one confesses the Lord Jesus with their mouth and believes in their heart that God has raised Him from the dead, they shall be saved. Second Corinthians 5:17 further denotes that “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things pass away; behold all things become new” (KJV).

According to Ephesians 2:1-6, when a person has received Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, they are said to be converted or regenerated (Porter, 2014). Notwithstanding the work that God does in the life of every converted soul, the Word of God and Christian experience testify that spiritual formation in Christ is a lifelong process (Porter, 2014). The new creature status produced at conversion is a continual becoming through the transformational work of the Word of God and God's Holy Spirit. Perhaps this is why Paul contended that he was crucified with Christ and that Christ now lived in him (Gal 2:20). While Paul considered himself crucified with Christ, he was not silent about the daily struggles he experienced in his converted status

According to Porter (2014), the world, the flesh, and the devil are understood as three distinct manifestations of sin, each of which functions as a barrier to spiritual progress, are the obstacles to the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in man. The world entails institutions, societal structures, values, and beliefs of our fallen human nature that distract, distort, and discourage spiritual transformation (Porter, 2014). Finally, the flesh is the human disposition to sin (Porter, 2014). Porter clarified that flesh here does not mean that the physical body is inherently sinful, but that the ingrained tendencies of sin remain after conversion.

When it comes to exploring the possibility of balancing intellect and spirit in the life of a Christian leader, the soul, the world, the flesh, and the demonic are critical in providing a more in-depth analysis of the struggle and challenges followers of Christ face in spiritual formation. According to Romans 8:5-11, the life of a converted Christian can only go in one of two directions: carnal or spiritual. Porter (2014) asserted that the engrained inclination of the flesh to resist the Spirit of God does not go away after conversion. Unfortunately, Christ-followers bring habitual idolatrous proclivities of their pre-and post-conversion lifestyle into salvation (Porter, 2014). Williams (1996) assessed that the soul has submitted and surrendered itself to the world, the flesh, and the devil for so long before conversion that it doesn't know any other way. Romans 12:1 further suggests that the intellect must humbly surrender and submit to the power and authority of God's Holy Spirit to experience sanctification of the soul. Therefore, true equality or balance between intellect and spirit can never exist in the life of a Christian leader.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Barton et al. (2014) addressed the practical implications of spiritual formation by examining a series of critical questions concerning the matter. Barton et al. (2014) asked five thought leaders in the field of spiritual formation a series of questions on the subject of spiritual formation in the church. There is value in treating each item rhetorically to identify practical applications for ecclesial leaders in the church and those functioning in the capacity of leadership in the secular world.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH?

According to Barton et al. (2014), the primary reason the church exists is to support the spiritual formation, growth, and development of each member. The most important way that the church supports spiritual formation is through evangelism and discipleship. Evangelism relates explicitly to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the same time, discipleship is the ongoing teaching of the Word of God that galvanizes the Christian community and produces disciples capable of living honorably in the sight of God. When anyone first receives Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, they are weak, needy and are comparable to a helpless baby in need of the nurture and support of others (Barton et al., 2014). The church fulfills its mission through nurturing and developing Christ-followers throughout their journey as disciples called to be in the world but not of it (Jn 17:16).

According to 2 Timothy 3:16, all scripture is by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in right living. Jesus declared the gates of hell would never prevail against the church He established because it thrives on the principle of revelation received from God (Mt 16:17-18). According to John 4:24, God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. The church is the institution earmarked by God to train and develop spiritual leaders capable of hearing the voice of God and communicate His message to the entire world (Geiger & Peck, 2016). Spiritual formation is the process of being conformed into the likeness of Christ, and the developmental, relational, and missional aspects of the process rest solely upon the shoulders of the church.

HOW AND WHY SHOULD THE LOCAL CHURCH BE FOCUSED ON THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF ITS MEMBERS?

Spiritual formation is the whole duty of the church. According to the Great Commission bestowed on the disciples by Jesus Christ, the mandate for spiritual formation entails making, multiplying, and mass-producing disciples through baptizing and teaching them to obey the Word of God (Mt 28:19-20). According to Barton et al. (2014), the spiritual formation of its members should be the impetus for the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the church. Who God is and what he created humans to be and do in the earth codifies the reason spiritual formation must be the main focus of the church (Barton et al., 2014). When Jesus ascended, He gave gifts to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry, to edify of the body of Christ, until we all come into the unity of faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man and the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph 4:10-14). Spiritual formation is essential to the health and wealth of the church.

HOW IS THE LOCAL CHURCH DOING FACILITATING SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

While spiritual formation described the central mission of the church, it has not been the priority of the church in the North American continent (Barton et al., 2014). The church struggles to breathe amid internal spiritual decline, as well as the cultural mandates of alternative lifestyles, politics, economics, global pandemics, and systemic racism. According to Barton et al. (2014), the church in the U. S. has lost her spiritual moorings and has swallowed the lie that numbers, size of budget, baptisms, and buildings tell the whole story. They further cite that the evangelical church has leaned upon understanding the text of God's word intellectually, creating a gap between what is known intellectually and experienced in the spirit.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

Secular relativism and preoccupation with secondary concerns are the biggest obstacles to spiritual formation in local churches in North America. Far too many local churches are preoccupied with looking and feeling more like the world than the church. Preaching, teaching, worship, and fellowship have given way to pomp and circumstance, which take so much time, effort, and resources that the local church struggles to meet its God-ordained mission. According to Barton et al. (2014), there are many obstacles to spiritual formation in the local church. They include a naturalistic assumption that the church should accept whatever is currently going on in the world as normative and not face the reality of how what is happening interfaces with the lack of relationship with God and others (Barton et al., 2014).

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENTING SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

Practical guidelines for implementing spiritual formation at the local church level include cultivating a mutual understanding of spiritual formation, cultivating an understanding of the responsibilities of the church for spiritual formation, practicing spiritual formation as a community, and praying and asking God for the wisdom and prudence to be a part of the solution and not merely a part of the problem (Barton et al., 2014). The Bible clarifies that spiritual formation begins at salvation and continues in the life of the church as the members individually and collectively present themselves—spirit, soul, and body—"to God as living sacrifices who choose not to be conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of their minds" (Rom 12:1-2, KJV). There must also be a concerted effort on the part of the church and its members to rightly proclaiming the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV). "The word of God is quick, powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword that is capable of piercing and dividing the soul, spirit, joints, and marrow" (Heb 4:12, KJV).

IF A LEADER COULD DO ONLY ONE THING...?

According to Barton et al. (2014), the most practical steps a leader can take is to place spiritual formation or discipleship training as the number one priority of the church and do so by first modeling the change they desire to see in others. All change begins with a shift in priorities and values. For spiritual formation to become part a vital part of local church ministry, it must become the priority of Christian leaders.

CONCLUSION

Christian conversion is one of the greatest experiences life offers. However, far too few converts understand spiritual formation. The truth for the converted is that the new man, which is created in Christ Jesus, must conquer the territory of the old man, which is the Adamic nature, by the spiritual renewal of the mind through the power of God's Holy Spirit (Eph 4:17-25). As the Lord wins each victory, the soul must surrender and submit to the full authority of Jesus Christ. It is spiritual warfare at its finest. Therefore, equality or balance can never exist between the intellect and the spirit in the life of the converted (Rom 8:5-11). Subsequently, while Christ has ultimate power and authority, there is a never-ending struggle within the converted because the Adamic nature does not readily concede to the rule of Jesus Christ. In the Millennial Age, it is no longer acceptable to be peripherally aware of salvation, redemption, and conversion, and how they work in the lives of contemporary disciples of Christ. Spiritual formation and leadership development offer hope that

humanity can overcome the chaos, calamity, confusion, and conflict that plagues the world today, but reconciliation of these foundational truths must first take place in the lives of the converted. This paper offers insight into how philosophy shaped Christian theology and how philosophers, theologians, scholars, and pastors contributed to the body of knowledge on spiritual formation and leadership development. We now know that spiritual formation is an intellectual disability, that the will, intellect, volition, and emotions exist within the soul and that the soul of the converted has free will and full sovereign power to choose to follow God's will or resist and follow Satan's will. We also know that a saved person elects to be carnal or spiritual. The need exists now more than ever to develop and teach practical tools and techniques for experiential conversion so that God's will can be done on earth as it is in heaven. In the same way that Peter was challenged by Jesus to strengthen others after he experienced conversion, each of us must allow transformation to challenge us to make a difference in the world today (Luk. 22:32).

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