



This material has been provided by Asbury Theological Seminary in good faith of following ethical procedures in its production and end use.

The Copyright law of the united States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyright material. Under certain condition specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to finish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.”* If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

**By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.**

### **Contact**

B.L. Fisher Library  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
204 N. Lexington Ave.  
Wilmore, KY 40390

**B.L. Fisher Library’s Digital Content**  
[place.asburyseminary.edu](http://place.asburyseminary.edu)



**Asbury Theological Seminary**  
205 North Lexington Avenue  
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

800.2ASBURY  
[asburyseminary.edu](http://asburyseminary.edu)

## ABSTRACT

# ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE: CULTIVATING THE CHRISTIAN HEART THROUGH DISPOSITIONAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION-IN-COMMON

by

John Chester Harp, Jr.

Culture today, emphasizes quantifiable metrics and a bigger-is-better mentality that infects many churches. This emphasis fosters behaviors and attitudes that result in attempts to control the religious experience and to encourage church growth rather than receiving, by grace, an experience from the Holy Spirit, which often results in the church's failure to root and ground a disciple's heart in transformational experiences of God's love. This failure cultivates spiritually immature disciples.

The solution sought in this study was to evaluate a researcher-designed discipleship process that catalyzes and cultivates a dispositional way of living that is receptive and responsive to grace, called *Becoming Rooted*. *Becoming Rooted* is a twelve-week formation-in-common experience that illuminated the four foundational dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment.

A pedagogy of consonance and receptivity cultivated by dispositional living proved responsive and sensitive to grace, combating the willfulness of the disciples. *Becoming Rooted* proved to be a culturally effective and relevant model of discipleship with promise for postmodern settings. Strong implications are discovered for the future development of curriculum for churches' core leadership and the cultivation of mature

transformative disciples. The cultivation of mature transformative disciples has implications for the future mission, health, and vitality of churches.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL.

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE:  
CULTIVATING THE CHRISTIAN HEART THROUGH  
DISPOSITIONAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION-IN-COMMON

presented by

John Chester Harp, Jr.

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

Asbury Theological Seminary



Mentor

February 20, 2014

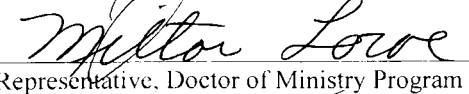
Date



Internal Reader

February 20, 2014

Date



Representative, Doctor of Ministry Program

February 20, 2014

Date



Dean of the Beeson Center

February 20, 2014

Date

ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE:  
CULTIVATING THE CHRISTIAN HEART  
THROUGH DISPOSITIONAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION-IN-COMMON

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

John Chester Harp, Jr.

May 2014

© 2014

John Chester Harp, Jr.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	x
CHAPTER 1 PROBLEM .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Purpose .....	13
Research Questions .....	14
Research Question #1 .....	14
Research Question #2 .....	14
Research Question #3 .....	14
Research Question #4 .....	14
Definition of Terms .....	14
Grace .....	15
Epiphanic Love .....	15
Consonance .....	16
Directive .....	16
Heart .....	17
Transformation .....	17
Spiritual Formation .....	18
Ministry Project .....	18
Context .....	19
Methodology .....	20

Participants.....	21
Instrumentation .....	22
Variables .....	23
Data Collection .....	24
Data Analysis .....	24
Generalizability.....	25
Theological Foundation .....	27
Overview.....	31
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE.....	33
Introduction.....	33
Transformation.....	34
Biblical Model for Being Rooted in Love .....	35
Love and God.....	41
Biblical Witness .....	42
Tradition and John Wesley’s Witness.....	44
Assurance.....	46
Grace, Love, and Life .....	47
Pieces of the Formation Puzzle.....	48
Spiritual Formation .....	49
Human Will.....	51
Liberty.....	54
Spiritual Disciplines.....	54
Means of Grace .....	58



Formation and Anthropology.....	60
Dispositional Heart Formation.....	71
Dispositions, Tempers, and Affections.....	73
Consonance and Appraisal in Formation.....	76
Four Foundational Dispositions.....	78
Awe.....	79
Humility.....	80
Abandonment.....	81
Gentleness.....	83
Spiritual Direction.....	83
Self-Direction.....	86
Private Direction.....	87
Formation-in-Common.....	87
Obstacles and Facilitating Conditions.....	88
Sin.....	88
Pride Form.....	89
Mind-Sets.....	89
Depreciative and Coercive Narratives.....	90
Introspection versus Transcendent Self-Presence.....	91
Measuring Transformation and Spiritual Maturity.....	92
Research Design.....	94
Summary.....	95
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	98

Problem and Purpose .....	98
Research Questions .....	99
Research Question #1 .....	99
Research Question #2 .....	101
Research Question #3 .....	101
Research Question #4 .....	102
Participants.....	103
Design of the Study.....	103
Instrumentation .....	104
Pilot Test .....	105
Variables .....	106
Reliability and Validity.....	108
Data Collection .....	110
Detailed Description of Procedures .....	110
Formation-in-Common Protocol.....	114
Data Analysis .....	116
Ethical Procedures .....	117
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS.....	119
Problem and Purpose .....	119
Participants.....	119
Research Question #1 .....	120
Research Question #2 .....	127
Research Question #3 .....	130

Research Question #4 .....	132
Summary of Major Findings.....	135
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	137
Major Findings.....	137
Cultural Effectiveness of <i>Becoming Rooted</i> .....	138
Experiences of Awe and Epiphanic Love Intermingle .....	140
Dispositions and Consonance .....	141
Communal Nature of Facilitating Conditions.....	143
Personal Nature of Obstacles.....	144
Personal and Communal Nature of Spiritual Formation.....	146
Outward Focus from Epiphanic Love.....	148
Length of Experience.....	150
Implications of the Findings .....	151
Limitations of the Study.....	153
Unexpected Observations .....	154
Recommendations.....	155
Postscript.....	157
APPENDIXES	
A. Covenant and Disclosure Statement .....	159
B. Sample Announcement/Invitation.....	162
C. Preliminary Meeting Agenda .....	163
D. Becoming Rooted Questionnaire .....	164
E. Pre-Becoming Rooted Interview .....	168

F. Post-Becoming Rooted Interview .....	170
G. Weekly Personal Accountability Form .....	173
H. <i>Becoming Rooted</i> Participant Workbook .....	174
I. Formation Field .....	244
J. The Human Life Form .....	245
K. Integrating Structures .....	246
L. Use of Copyright Materials Request .....	247
WORKS CITED .....	249
WORKS CONSULTED .....	263

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 4.1. Epiphanic Love.....	121
Table 4.2. Manifestations of Epiphanic Love.....	123
Table 4.3. Post- <i>Becoming Rooted</i> Facilitating Conditions.....	129
Table 4.4. Post- <i>Becoming Rooted</i> Obstacles.....	131
Table 4.5. Lifestyle Changes.....	133

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation may have my name attached to it, but it is really the product of the Holy Spirit working in my life through some very special persons and groups who have guided, sustained, and encouraged me through this process with its high and low points. My efforts are nothing without God's grace at work in my life. Paul writes, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (1 Cor. 3:6-7, NRSV). I acknowledge many of those who joined me in planting and watering and who deserve so much more credit than I do with great humility and a joyful heart. I am appreciative beyond words to the following people:

My family. June I am so glad you agreed to be my wife, for your love, patience, and encouragement through all the joys and challenges of doing ministry together. Benjamin, Jeremiah, and Michal, the three greatest kids in the world, thank you for loving and encouraging me and for feeding me the advice I gave to you, when you were in college, at those moments I found myself distracted by something more entertaining than this dissertation. To Kim and Paul, welcome to the family, you are wonderful additions to the family. To Chance, you already know God's grace and peace, I really did learn much from you when you walked this earth.

The churches who journeyed with me—Gashland United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Missouri, CrossRoads United Methodist Church in Belton, Missouri and the Bolivar UMC in Bolivar, Missouri. Thank you for providing time, space, and encouragement.

Dr. Susan Muto and the Epiphany Association in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Your teaching and the writing of Dr. Adrian van Kaam's and your insights and theories provided the mental latticework I needed to appreciate and begin to apprehend the richness of spiritual formation.

My reflection team. Dr. Steve Finzo, Lanel LeVere, Leonard Zanatta, Rev. Billie Russell, and Rev. Gray Nordan, thank you for your frank and insightful guidance, your help guiding me ever forward, your prayers, and your ever-present encouragement.

My dear friend, Dr. Henry Knight, III. Thank you for the hours we sat just talking about God and theology. You helped me keep the fire alive and provided me with clarity when I was confused, which occurred often.

Dr. Stephen Martyn. Dr. Martyn, you were my mentor and chief encourager but also provided, for me, a model of a person spiritually formed well.

Dr. Beverly Johnson-Miller. Dr. Johnson-Miller, you served as my reader and gave the blessed gift of clarity and excitement to me, which helped bring about this final document.

To the grace and love of Jesus my Christ.

## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The words to the 1974 folk song, *Cats in the Cradle*, are haunting. These words capture a fear of passing on to the next generation an empty and meaningless way of life. The song promotes the idea of something more to life than mere utilitarian concerns. The listeners are invited to reflect on what truth is, what their values are, and how they will end life. *Cats in the Cradle* is a cry for the transformation of empty lives into something important, uplifting, and eternal:

Well I've long since retired, my son's moved away,  
I called him up just the other day.  
I said, "I'd like to see you, if you don't mind."  
He said, "I'd love to, dad, if I could find the time.  
You see my new job's a hassle, and the kid's got the flu,  
But it's sure nice talking to you, dad,  
It's been sure nice talking to you."  
And as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me,  
He'd grown up just like me,  
My boy, was just like me. (Chapin)

At the end of the song, the son has grown up with the father's values, futility, and self-centeredness. Today churches struggle with a *just like me* syndrome with no transformation of disciples taking place.

Contemporary churches are suffering from growing up *just like me* with very little real connection to people outside the church (Rusaw and Swanson 11-15). The modern American church is self-centered and, according to Dallas Willard, "has not been imparting effectual answers to the vital questions of human existence" (*Renovation* 21) and has replaced obedience with "Christian consumerism" (*Great Omission* 52). The



contemporary church, in the West, is losing ground to population growth, losing power and influence, and, in general, seems to be dying (Winseman 3-5; Frost 5-7).

Some churches have become very efficient at posting outward numerical growth in statistics such as membership or attendance but have failed to transform the interior spiritual lives of their members. Currently developed models for church growth are pragmatic and utilitarian. Jim Belcher suggests pragmatists have adopted business, psychological, and marketing models to sustain growth (9-10). The pragmatic and utilitarian church is *just like me* instead of being like Jesus. Michael Frost calls this phenomenon the “Sunday Christian” lifestyle where church has little or no effect throughout the week (8). David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons (46) and George Barna (6) quote research that confirms very little observable differences exist between self-selected, born-again Christians and their unchurched neighbors. In recent research, the Barna Group reported in an article that lifestyle behaviors are statistically the same. Greg L. Hawkins, Cally Parkinson, and Eric Arnson’s research found that many people have become stuck in their spiritual lives because they are weighed down with unchurched behaviors such as addictions, inappropriate boundaries and relationships, and materialism (49).

Writers such as David E. Fitch, Belcher, and Dick Staub challenge the Western church’s accommodation to modernity and a culture of success, efficiency, superficiality, and entertainment. These writers are especially critical of the model of church derived from an uncritical acceptance of modern culture’s beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Christendom was the model for church that shaped Western Christianity from the fourth century and has left significant adaptations in the church (Guder 47-54). The twin

pillars of Christendom were the structures of church and state (Frost 4). Contemporary churches have been shaped by Christendom “into their current form and abandoned them to a world that is completely over it all” (4). Many churches want to continue to model a *just like me* spirituality.

Kinnaman and Lyons share the results from three years of research with people in the age range of 16-29. People they interviewed were mostly outside the church and Christian faith. They concluded that people in this age range have a very negative view of Christianity as it is practiced today (29-40). Kinnaman and Lyons warn of the church’s tendency toward “hijacking” or softening the view of Jesus in response (32-33). Today’s Christianity is, in essence, no longer in pure form (29). Put another way, Christianity has lost the vitality that is received by grace when the church is rooted and grounded in the love of God. Specifically, outsiders object to the church’s “swagger” and sense of “self-importance” (26) instead of seeing Christianity lived out awe-filled, humble, and gentle lifestyles.

The research of Martha Grace Reese suggests that the church is not always listening to even its newest members. In her book, Reese reports that new members do not want the church of *just like me* but instead want transformed lives (59-72).

Without a healthy spiritual model, the *just like me* church engages in accommodation. Fitch argues that this accommodation is typified in the Western church’s entanglement with the philosophy of the enlightenment and modernity. The entanglement has motivated the church to “individualize, commodify, and package Christianity” (13). As a result, the church defines success in quantifiable terms (27-46). In a similar argument, Belcher questions if ministry has become all about technique and strategy

instead of a deeper theology of transformation (37). Staub suggests accommodation flows from the interaction of the church with the superficial, soulless, and deluded beliefs, values, and behaviors of popular culture's version of faith, which Staub labels Christianity-lite.

Ultimately the *just like me* church has adopted cultural values of quantification, efficiency, shallowness, and powerlessness. The church is lacking true transformational methodology to help converts become disciples. The lack of practical theology informing the church's methodology combined with accommodation distorts the church's core understanding on issues of ministry, leadership, spiritual formation, and Christian maturity.

These issues are not limited to the United States. Howard A. Snyder suggests that globalization drives quantitateness in church. For Snyder globalization is not just a product of cultural pressures but a thought process symptomatic of an anthropology without God at the center. Snyder identifies three relevant descriptors about globalization. First, globalization is "[h]umanistic culture and religion" (141). This humanistic culture and religion is human effort trying to build a lasting monument or edifice to itself. Said another way globalization is a self-help and self-achievement mentality that focuses on function, management, and control, which I refer to as functionalism. In the church, functionalism is expressed when the church and leadership rely on fixed qualities, management, functional skills, and techniques rather than on the message of Scripture and the work of the Spirit to transform disciples.

Snyder's second descriptor of globalization is "egotism and hubris" (142). Egotism and hubris move beyond striving for excellence to striving to make a name for

oneself. This striving is centered in pride and arrogance. It is striving for recognition, for success defined by worldly standards of bigger is better.

Snyder's third globalization descriptor is "new technology" (142). New technology is not limited to such things as the computer, e-mail, and the Internet. New technology allows people to interact without the emotional fallout of their opinions and actions. In addition, new technology is the expectation of the quick fix, immediate results, and reductionism. New technology is seen in the expectation that things can be fixed or corrected by adding the right program, playing the right music, or hiring the right staff. It has developed into a mind-set that Christian A. Schwarz calls the "Technocratic Paradigm" (88).

According to Snyder, "commodification" (144) is the "tendency is to turn everything into monetary economics, undermining traditional community relationships built on trust, face-to-face intimacy, and experience shared over time" (145-46). What makes commodification so dangerous in the church is that it "combines three social dynamics that already are vigorous in all Western societies: technology, materialism, and individualism" (146). Commodification centers spirituality in the consumer rather than in God.

Alan Hirsch says, "Because of the competitive situation of the market, advertisers have become so insidious that they are now deliberately co-opting theological ideas and religious symbols in order to sell their products" (107). Commodification is so prevalent in church that many churches articulate discipleship and evangelism as a form of marketing. The marketing goal of increased attendance reduces discipleship to quantitative and commodified measurements.

The bottom line of business reduces the circumstances and situations in life to mere numbers, formulas, and programs. A business-minded goal is to make disciples quickly, efficiently, and in the greatest numbers. Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger raise important questions along these lines. They emphasize the importance for the church to engage in counting but Rainer and Geiger challenge the church about counting the right things in the right ways (120-23).

When success in ministry becomes defined by business models (Fitch), then ministry and discipleship have been reduced to quantifiable behaviors. The easy approach is to equate discipleship with church involvement without necessarily translating discipleship into the transformation of the heart or character (Hawkins, Parkinson, and Arnson). Demands for the church to be relevant are perceived and defined in marketing terms. Relevancy becomes defined as things a person needs to make life better. All these understandings of discipleship and relevancy differ from Jesus' concept of spiritual formation. For Jesus the goal is not the outer measurable and observable behaviors and performances but the inner condition of the heart (Matt. 5-7), which requires a transformation of the Christian heart not just relevancy. Transformation leaves leaving behind a self-oriented lifestyle for a new way of living a grace-directed life of being Christlike that culminates from trust and confidence in God.

The demand for relevancy has turned the church into what some have called the purveyor of religious goods and services. Unrestrained desire for relevancy has resulted in the commodifying of mystical experience, which ultimately ends in alienation, feelings of abandonment and anger, and depression (Snyder 146). Movements abound in the church that emphasize growth and a *bigger is better* philosophy (Fitch 27-46), but the

research of Schwarz reveals bigger is not always better (46). Barna suggests, “This is a call for us to stop playing church and start being the Church by demonstrating the transformation that has occurred within us as a result of an absolute, paramount commitment to Jesus Christ” (x). Transformation of the Christian heart is a primary goal of the church.

Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk describe the church environment as becoming more unfriendly where pressure is being placed on ministers to *succeed* at all costs, a sentiment with which Fitch agrees. This increasing pressure is coming from the congregation, from the church hierarchy, and from the ministers themselves. However, the functional and managerial paradigm of ministry holds an inherent degree of danger. The functional paradigm of building a spiritual tool chest of *plug-and-play* ministries is nothing more than human effort at control or turning the Spirit of God into a commodity. For Thomas Aquinas, according to Robert Barron, the ego’s desire is “marked by the desire to *grasp* God, to have God, to know God in a manipulative way. But the God who is known in this manner is an idol, a creation of the ego” (original emphasis; *Thomas Aquinas* 32). When human effort is directed toward managing and appropriating God and spirituality for self-serving, human exaltation or success, it is referred to as “functional transcendence” by Adrian van Kaam (*Formative Spirituality* 6: 215-24). Functional transcendence is the management of God and the religious experience for human purposes, thereby reducing the mystery of God to the domain of fallen humanity.

Today’s contemporary church is obsessed with leading and managing the kingdom of God.. Leadership has a tendency to become results oriented and susceptible to a bottom line of mere numbers. Leadership, by definition and nature, tends to focus on

quantifiable behavior and results. This penchant to ask only quantitative questions is a serious concern for the church. Hawkins, Parkinson, and Arnsong suggest that for years the only question that has been asked is, “‘How many?’ but ‘How many?’—*by itself*—doesn’t completely address what the church is called to do. That question is a good start, but it measures only what we see” (7). Patrick Springle writes about a new movement away from the traditional and quantifiable metrics of church size as a measurement of success. Springle writes that today’s younger leaders are trying to find ways to measure the intangibles such as obedience, love, and sacrifice.

George Gallup, Jr. defines ministry as “building a congregation of dedicated and energized members who are growing spiritually and, at the same time, are reaching out in concern and service to the world” (x). Stephen Seamands defines ministry with a trinitarian formula as “the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son, to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the church and the world” (9-10). While these definitions of ministry are widely divergent, they identify a key component that is pertinent to this discussion. Gallup and Seamands identify the goal of ministry not as a self-oriented concern but as an outward, directed ministry service and formation for the benefit of the church and the world. To accomplish this other-oriented ministry, the formation of transformed disciples must be a priority.

The contemporary church’s view of ministry has become self-referencing and now follows the path of least resistance to success. The church can often unwittingly become manipulative, controlling, deceptive, and dominating. Modern functional practices of leadership, discipleship, and spirituality foster the paradigm that the church simply needs to identify the correct methodology to get people involved in church. M.

Robert Mulholland, Jr. suggests this faulty methodology of the church works like a vending machine: “You do the right thing, put the money in the proper slot, push the right button and get the product you want at the bottom” (*Invitation* 22). Then when people do not get what they want, they “adopt some new spiritual technique” (22). In the adoption of this faulty methodology, a church devolves into a commercial/marketing enterprise.

In “Only God’s Love Counts,” James C. Wilhoit defines what van Kaam means by “functionalism” as a “narrow skill and task orientation” (176) and what happens when people “get trapped in their functional competency” (176). Functionalism simply means that people often become trapped into thinking, wanting, and living as if they themselves can and should control all aspects of life.

A theory of the human life form developed by van Kaam describes dimensions of human personality. Appendix J shows these dimensions and their relational dynamics. For this discussion, the relationship between the functional and transcendent dimensions is important. In *Formative Spirituality*, van Kaam describes the functional-transcendent crossover phase where human management and control have not given way to the transcendent dimension of the personality (6: 216). A condition exists where the Christian fails to cross over, or come under the primary influence of, the transcendent dimension. This condition is where pride becomes a controlling mind-set “to the point of self-sufficiency even in spiritual matters” (216), a functional-transcendence.

Functional-transcendence describes the *just like me* church’s underlying problem as attempting the management of God and spiritual experiences through strategies, techniques, and methodologies. In this paradigm, the church seeks to bring God into its



self-centered world, leaving the heart untouched. Disciples remain *just like me* and fail to mature in Christlikeness.

Therefore, functional-transcendence, with its control of spirituality, fosters a cookie-cutter mentality and is a serious threat to the transformation of spiritually diverse people. Functionally-transcendent models of ministry will not transform and sustain ministry in the real world. Institutional structures demand huge managerial efforts that tend to pull energy and resources away from disciple making and mission. The ubiquitous, rebellious, and self-centered nature of conflict in the *just like me* churches is evidence of failed or lacking transformative discipleship.

Transformative discipleship is a humble human process, of cooperation with the Holy Spirit, strongly committed to receiving from God the needed gifts of growth and maturity in Christlikeness. Discipleship should seek harmony with God's will and love by abandoning all control of the formation and discipleship process to God the creator. Christlikeness is understood to be a gift that is received. This posture of receiving is important. Disciples do not control, earn, or take gifts. Disciples humbly receive gifts, especially Christlikeness.

Transformative discipleship meshes well with Roxburgh and Romanuk's proposal of a new paradigm for leadership and mission in the church, which is needed to avoid the pitfalls of functional-transcendence and the self-sufficient fallacy control. The paradigm is a mission and leadership of cultivation model (30-35). Cultivation is a wonderful image for the divine-human dance of transformation. Cultivation is the art of facilitating growth and removing obstacles to growth. Jesus' parable of the farmer who sows seed and goes to bed and has no clue how or why the seed germinates or grows proves a good

biblical example of cultivation (Mark 4:26-29). The human role in cultivation can be proposed to be the sowing of seed, facilitating healthy growth, and removing obstacles while grace activates and catalyzes the transformation of the seed toward maturity. Grace, a catalyst, encourages and allows a reaction to occur that would not occur without the catalyst. Even human efforts are guided by grace rather than knowledge or any real control. Program and technology have a role in the church, but the paradigm of cultivation frees program and technology from human control and any expectation of one size fits all.

My training is in the sciences of biology and chemistry, and I am especially intrigued by the biological metaphors of the Bible. Jesus used parable to teach about the kingdom of God with the metaphors of seeds and soils (Mark 4:1-10). The growth of the seed is a mystery, but the lesson clearly is to become good soil through the removal of obstacles. For the biologist in me, I noticed that the seed cast upon the rocky soil did not die because of rocks, sun, heat, drought, or the lack of soil. The seed died because it had no root (Mark 4:6). In this passage, the root is the key to life, death, and fruitfulness. I believe the same is true when Paul prayed that the formational experiences of persons and the community would be “rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17).

Biologically the root is an interface between the plant and its environment. The plant will expend energy, allowing the root to reach toward water and other necessary nutrients. Normally, however, the process of receiving the water into the plant is completely passive, using osmosis. For this study and me, the root is a great metaphor for the interface between God and the human heart. The heart can only allow its roots to be drawn into God, and without being rooted, the heart will die.

Rootedness, cultivation, and transformation must also be understood as gifts catalyzed by divine grace received through a deep experiential epiphany of the love of God. Roxburgh and Romanuk stress the formation of “people in the habits and practices of Christian life” (34). Christopher S. Webb writes, “[E]ven the simplest spiritual disciplines, when integrated into an intentional pattern of daily living, can have an unexpectedly powerful transformative effect” (49). These spiritual disciplines and habits form structure and stability known as a *regula vitae*, or rule of life (49). A rule of life is a tool that grace may use in a disciple’s life to catalyze and cultivate transformation. All humans live by a rule of life, an organization of their lives that they may or may not consciously arrange.

Underpinning the rule of life are attitudes and habits called dispositions. Dispositions are really attitudinal and affective habits that have become a part of the fabric of the human heart. A dispositional life is described by Adrian van Kaam and Susan Muto as a life directed by incarnationally received dispositions (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 126-30). Transformation is cultivated fundamentally through dispositional living. Dispositional living is a habitual way of arranging human life to be attuned to, catalyzed by, and cultivated by an awareness and openness to God’s love, grace, and activity through foundational dispositions. As a result, dispositional living is directed by a heart deeply responsive to the Holy Spirit and to the grace operating in human life. The literature reveals, a number of foundational dispositions, but I want to focus on four of the primary ones that cultivate transformation through dispositional living. The dispositions I identify to catalyze and cultivate transformation are awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility.

The process of being rooted is about developing roots, which are drawn by grace, into the heart of God. As I have shown, this growing of roots occurs when disciples rearrange their personal and relational rule of life in order to live dispositionally. A graced-arranged life of dispositional living catalyzes the human heart's root to interface with the Holy Spirit. The rearrangement of life cultivates transformed disciples who live with a spiritual and relational vitality that is most challenging because "it results in a more faithful and effective expression of love for others" (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 17). However, one obstacle is a dearth of curriculum to achieve this type of discipleship (Willard, *Divine Conspiracy* 313; J. B. Smith, *Good and Beautiful God* 13).

In summary, the problem addressed through experiment with *Becoming Rooted* in this study is the failure of the church to root and ground the disciple's heart in transformational experiences of God's love. This problem is made worse by a cultural emphasis on quantifiable metrics and a *bigger is better* mentality that fosters an attitude of control of the religious experience called functional transcendence. The solution lies in a discipleship process that catalyzes and cultivates a dispositional way of living that is receptive and responsive to grace.

### **Purpose**

In order to find a solution to the stated problem I designed a spiritual formation experience that focused on illuminating the foundational dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a twelve-week, grace-driven transformational, spiritual formation experience called *Becoming Rooted* for members of the Bolivar United Methodist Church that cultivated

encounters with the love of God to allow participants, through God's grace, to arrange their lifestyles to be more Christlike.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions aided and guided implementation and evaluation for this study.

#### **Research Question #1**

In what ways did the *Becoming Rooted* discipleship experience, which illuminated the foundational formation dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility, enable participants to have a transformational experience (i.e., epiphany) of the love of God?

#### **Research Question #2**

What facilitating conditions did participants of *Becoming Rooted* discover that fostered their growth in Christlikeness?

#### **Research Question #3**

What obstacles did participants of *Becoming Rooted* discover that hindered their growth in Christlikeness?

#### **Research Question #4**

In what ways did participants of *Becoming Rooted* rearrange their lifestyles (i.e., *regula vitae*) to become more faithful followers of Christ?

### **Definition of Terms**

For this dissertation, I define a few terms that I used frequently and those that I have more technical meanings than their normal usage.

## **Grace**

A Wesleyan scholar wants to identify the particular facet of grace under discussion at any given moment. This identification of the facets of grace is not necessary, for this study, as Steve Harper indicates:

Grace is grace. You do not have one kind of grace for one situation and another kind for some other situation.... We define grace in different ways because of how we experience the grace on our end of the relationship.  
(40)

The essential issue is that grace is about a relationship with God, which is initiated by God.

For this study, I focus on the relationship of grace not as an object or status such as unmerited favor; rather, I define grace as the activity of God in human life. The activity of grace makes the love of God experiential and transformative. Holy love characterizes this divine-human intimacy through the restoration of a person's relational and personal image of God. This study focuses on God's activity in the everyday activities of life for the disciple that is "being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17). This study assumes that all expressions of grace, when acknowledged and accepted through faith, lead toward and through salvation, resulting ultimately in unification with God.

## **Epiphanic Love**

Love is central to this study, and I identify several expressions, sources, and objects of love. Adrian van Kaam uses the term "epiphanic love" to refer to the "love invoked in one's heart by the epiphany or 'experienced appearance' of the mystery of divine light in people, events, and things in one's everyday life" (Lough 37). More specifically, for this study, I refer to epiphanic love as the activating energy that drives

transformation when a person is manifestly aware of God's love, acceptance, and presence in everyday living. Epiphanic love, the awareness of God's love and presence in everyday living, functions as a necessary catalyst of grace that lessens the resistance of obstacles and facilitates the transformation of the heart into Christlikeness.

### **Consonance**

Consonance is the harmonious sounding together of two objects, ideas, persons, or activities. In this study, consonance is the "inner and outer harmony of both form and formation" (Lough 26). It takes into consideration that God is the source and object of spiritual formation. This definition limits consonance to the foci of a person's heart and the grace, character, and love of God. Consonance is about being in harmony with the forming and transforming grace of God. I understand this harmony to resonate in and through the whole person, seeking a harmonious sounding together of the person's personal and relational image received from God. Therefore, when I write of a consonant disposition, I am speaking about a habit that is harmonious with a person's God-given image, gifts, personality, and the holy and loving will of God.

### **Directive**

A directive is a guiding principle or influence that provides direction to human choices and behaviors. A range of thoughts, conditioned behaviors, habits, human interactions, emotions, or choices may become a directive for a person. A dynamic directionality to directives encourages movement from a person's current state to a future state or activity in consonance with God. In this study, directives are understood to flow from an experience of epiphanic love and function to impel a person to seek consonance through a graced transformation into greater Christlikeness.

## **Heart**

The word *heart* is used, in this study, symbolically as the character, emotions, and habits that make up the deepest truth or reality at the core of a person. For Jesus the heart is the morally responsible center of a person and the origin of human emotions, convictions, and behavior (Mark 7:17-23). The heart is also understood as the governing center or volition of a person (Beck and Demarest 133; Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word* 99). James R. Beck and Bruce Demarest write that the heart integrates all human capacities and functions (219) as well as a person's ability to be relational (313).

The most comprehensive work recently done in defining the heart is by van Kaam. In *Formative Spirituality* (1: 253-57) van Kaam equates the heart to the core form, Christian character, and enduring dispositions. The heart is the integrating center for human emotions, convictions, and dispositions. When the heart is transformed, new life flows forth (Mark 7:17-23; Prov. 4:23; John 7:38).

## **Transformation**

Transformation, in this study, is consistent with Barron's definition of the term. Barron, in his book *And Now I See: A Theology of Transformation*, defines transformation as a change at the "fundamental level of one's being" that transforms a person's way of knowing, perceiving, and grasping reality (5). It is a change that moves the disciple from a "mind of fear to a mind of trust" (268). This transformational change occurs in the human heart, character, and experience when a person responds to the saving work of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Thus transformation brings forth a way of living that is Christlike in character and lifestyle. Transformation begins with conversion (justifying grace) and continues with discipleship (sanctification) through the entirety of



life, culminating with glorification. To speak of spiritual transformation before conversion is unnecessary, although God's grace is still operational in a person's life through prevenient grace, the grace of God at work in the life of a person before conversion.

### **Spiritual Formation**

In many churches today, spiritual formation has devolved into technical processes designed to promote church growth and attendance. John Coe points out that such processes become nothing more than a form of moralism and legalism (54-78). In contrast to these technical processes, this study defines spiritual formation as the graced process of transformation of the heart through cultivating experientially the epiphanic love of God. Through consonant human-divine cooperation, a disciple humbly experiences a restoring of the image of God and, in turn, consonantly manifests the love for God and others.

### **Ministry Project**

The project of this study addressed the needs of Bolivar United Methodist Church, Bolivar, Missouri, (BUMC) for *intentional faith* and *accountable leadership* development. BUMC identified these needs when the church participated in a Missouri Conference program called The Healthy Church Initiative. The ministry project involved a series of accountable formation and directed formation-in-common experiences designed for key leaders and interested members of BUMC. The project laid a foundation for intentional faith and accountable leadership development through graced experiences of the transformative love of God.

Participants engaged in an in-depth spiritual formation experience called *Becoming Rooted*. For twelve weeks, I asked participants to practice daily spiritual disciplines using *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* edited by Rueben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck. In addition to daily disciplines, participants met for twelve weekly formation-in-common sessions that I designed to help nurture transformation, cultivate the epiphanic love of God, and develop true disciples and servant leaders. The formation-in-common sessions illuminated the four foundational dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility.

### **Context**

The context for this dissertation was the Bolivar United Methodist Church in Bolivar, Missouri. Bolivar is a small rural city of ten thousand people thirty minutes north of Springfield, Missouri, and is part of the Ozark North District of the Missouri Annual Conference. Bolivar is also home to Southwest Baptist University and is a one-hour drive from five different lakes for fishing and recreation.

The membership of BUMC is 583 and attendance is 173. The educational level of the church is high as a significant number of active and retired educators are part of the worshipping community. The pastoral leadership at Bolivar remained the same from 2000 to 2011 while attendance declined from a high of 260 to 173. Because of the decline in attendance, several things occurred in the spring of 2011. First, the church received a consultation from the Healthy Church Initiative (HCI) of the Missouri Annual Conference and engaged in the ministry audit that is a part of that program. HCI identified five strengths and five concerns along with five prescriptions and five

predetermined programs to address the concerns. On 2 May 2011, the church held a charge conference and voted to accept HCT's plan of action.

On 1 July 2011, I became the pastor of Bolivar UMC and began to address the needs identified by the ministry audit. The five areas of concern identified were (1) lack of mission, vision, and planning; (2) lack of intentional faith and accountable leadership development; (3) lack of community connection; (4) lack of young families and youth; and, (5) declining worship attendance.

I designed this study in response to the lack of intentional faith and accountable leadership development at Bolivar UMC. A program of formation-in-common sessions was created for key and potential leaders to cultivate intentionally experiences of the epiphanic love of God.

### **Methodology**

The design of this study was qualitative and was further classified as an observable case study (Wiersma and Jurs 210; Seawright and Gerring 295). Qualitative research is epistemologically consistent with the principles of spiritual formation, which run counter to quantitative analysis. Qualitative research allows for in-depth research that is wholistic, flexible, and able to incorporate the richness of the context meaningfully in the study (Wiersma and Jurs 201-02; Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 880; Baxter and Eyles 505). To enhance reliability and validity, the study also employed triangulation with multiple data collection procedures, including questionnaires, interviews, journals, observation, and weekly self-reporting (Wiersma and Jurs 256-67; Baxter and Eyles 506; Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 885).

The project involved the implementation of a twelve-week spiritual formation process called *Becoming Rooted*, which I designed to cultivate transformation and model healthy dispositions for spiritual growth. I asked participants each week to have accountable daily devotions using *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* edited by Job and Shawchuck.

At the weekly meeting, each participant turned in a weekly accountability form (see Appendix G). This form tracked their compliance in the spiritual discipline of daily devotion as well as collecting data about other behaviors, attitudes, and their experiences with directives gleaned from the previous week's formation-in-common session.

After the collection of the accountability form, the group moved to the Prayer Room for the weekly formation-in-common session. I compiled reading material for the formation-in-common session, which illuminated one of the foundational dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility. I compiled reflection and reading material from biblical, contemporary, and classical spiritual writers (see Appendix H).

### **Participants**

The study participants included twelve members of Bolivar United Methodist Church in Bolivar, Missouri. The selection of the sample for this study was accomplished by personal invitation and a self-selection response to a general invitation given to the church. I found it desirable to invite persons with small group leadership potential. The sample was limited to twelve to ensure intimacy and proper group dynamic for the formation-in-common experience.

The average age of the population was 58 with the oldest person being 72 and the youngest 24. The gender of the group was 7 females and 5 males. Five were college graduates or higher and for seven people high school was their highest education level.

### **Instrumentation**

I utilized three research instruments for this study forming a triangulation using multiple data collection methodology. Two of the instruments I used before and after the *Becoming Rooted* experience. One instrument, the Weekly Personal Accountability Form (see Appendix G), I used weekly during the twelve weeks.

The first instrument was a researcher-designed questionnaire on common attitudes and behaviors associated with spiritual maturity (see Appendix D). This instrument, employed before and after the *Becoming Rooted* experience, determined changes in participants' awareness of epiphanic love and spiritual maturity. Since spiritual transformation is not quantifiable, this questionnaire was deployed as a qualitative indicator. Changes in responses, positive or negative, were reviewed and discussed in the postintervention interview by asking participants what they thought was the meaning of the change they had indicated.

A second instrument employed both before and after the *Becoming Rooted* experience, was a structured interview process (see Appendixes E and F). I recorded the interview process and sought to discover changes in attitudes, behaviors, and awareness of dispositions and epiphanic love. The interview also sought to discover what each participant viewed as obstacles and facilitating conditions. Each participant met with me in a casual setting where we had a conversation guided by the interview protocol and discussed changes the pre- and postintervention questionnaire indicated as significant.

Lastly, at each weekly meeting participants filled out a weekly personal accountability form (see Appendix G) that tracked changes and incremental growth. Along with these instruments, I collected basic demographic information. Each week also offered opportunity for me to double-check my observations and participant's responses for accuracy and clarity.

### **Variables**

In this triangulation study, I considered many variables.

**Independent variables.** The independent variables for this study were the twelve weeks of formation-in-common sessions that made up the *Becoming Rooted* experience, which I led. The use of spiritual disciplines and small group accountability also served as independent variables.

**Dependent variables.** The dependent variables were spiritual growth and maturity, an awareness of the epiphanic love God, and awareness of the dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility. Other dependent variables were attitudes and consonant expressions of faith in the arrangement of life or participants' rule of life.

**Intervening variables.** Intervening or nuisance variables are always present when using tests and questionnaires to collect data. Two intervening variables that I identified were the educational or reading level and previous experience with spiritual language, spiritual literature, and personal spiritual experiences.

All areas of human learning and discussion tend to develop their own metalanguage. My previous experience with small groups, whom I had asked to read classic spiritual literature, indicated that participants experienced some frustration with either the metalanguage of spirituality or the genre of spiritual literature in general.

In twenty-first century America, the entertainment factor is also a variable. The ability to read, focus, and meditate without entertainment and distraction is noted as a variable as well as previous theological and spiritual experience of participants.

### **Data Collection**

The *Becoming Rooted* project included a commitment of fourteen weeks with twelve weeks of actual formational experiences. Weeks one and fourteen served as a time for introduction, closure, and data collection for this study.

At the preliminary session, I administered the questionnaires, stored them, and scored them at the end of the experience. In addition, I conducted personal interviews, analyzed participants' responses for themes, and cataloged the responses, which indicated spiritual attitudes and maturity consistent with the purpose of this study.

I collected data by observation during the formation-in-common sessions in the form of notes and descriptions of directives formulated by the group. I then stored the data and analyzed it at the conclusion of the twelve-week experience.

During the remaining weeks, two through thirteen, I administered the weekly personal accountability forms to participants. I reviewed these forms and cataloged the responses at the end of the study.

The length of the study required that I store personal information over several weeks. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, all information and study materials were kept stored in a locked file cabinet in my locked office.

### **Data Analysis**

I calculated the change to each question between the pre- and postintervention questionnaires to determine changes in responses. I explored changes identified through

use of this instrument in the postexperience interview. This questionnaire has the potential to be a quantitative instrument. However, spiritual transformation is best observed rather than quantified. The questionnaire helped to discover some spiritual characteristics where participants indicated they had experienced change. The participants supplied the meaning of any change, positive or negative.

An analysis of the semi-structured interviews determined patterns and other changes consistent with transformation. This analysis also provided another data collection source for spiritual maturity and growth, arrangement of lifestyle, obstacles, and facilitating conditions to transformation.

The weekly personal accountability forms were analyzed for indications of transformation, obstacles, facilitating conditions, and changes in participants' arrangement of their lives and their rule of life. These forms also helped determine the strength of a participant's response to the experience.

### **Generalizability**

Churches desire to replicate effectively their discipleship efforts in other contexts. This desire lends itself to the temptation to be successful by the outer perceptions of fruitfulness, which characterize functional-transcendence. This study will provide data to support my theory that transformation through the epiphanic love of God is possible and will help all churches cultivate transformation in their specific context. Carl Rogers writes, "What is most personal is most general" (26). Transformation of the heart of a disciple is most personal, and if Rogers is correct then transformation will be generalizable into other contexts.



For this qualitative study, I use the concept of transferability, instead of generalizability, as it is more helpful for qualitative studies (Baxter and Eyles 505-06). Tim Sensing writes that transferability can be a substitute for generalizability as long as it is shown that the findings apply to other settings (215). Jamie Baxter and John Eyles also suggest transferability “is analogous—in principle at least—to the more familiar notion of generalizability or external validity” (515). The formal structure of the interview process assisted in strengthening the transferability of the study (508). Detailed descriptions of the formation-in-common sessions, found in this study as well as in Susan Muto and Adrian van Kaam’s *An Epiphany Manual on the Art and Discipline of Formation-in-Common*, also make this study highly transferable with their systematic instructions.

This observational case study is limited to a sample of twelve people from Bolivar United Methodist Church in Bolivar, Missouri. The study is also limited by the willingness of participants to pursue spiritual formation.

This study analyzed the dispositions of awe, gentleness, humility, and abandonment as indicators of an experience of the epiphanic love of God. Operational definitions are important delimiters for this study as they provide clarity and boundaries that separate *Becoming Rooted* from other programs that are more easily hijacked into functional-transcendence.

In light of the recent research by Hawkins, Parkinson, and Arns, gender and age should not be a delimitation upon this study (33-34). Their research shows that spiritual growth and maturity are unique to individuals and not bound by gender or age.

### **Theological Foundation**

Wilhoit in *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered* writes, “Spiritual formation is the task of the church. Period” (15). The church is called forth by God to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching people to obey all things (Matt. 28:19-20). The church is also called to live out two great commandments of loving God and loving neighbor as self (Mark 12:29-30). Scot McKnight suggests that Jesus structured these two Old Testament commands into essentially a creed (8). Another command is to love one another (John 15:12). The way to know God and to be born of God is to love one another because God is love (1 John: 4-7). The love of God is essential to being born of God and for the transformation of the human heart.

The contemporary church has isolated and confused the concepts of justification, sanctification, and salvation, reducing them by means of what Roger E. Olson refers to as the “propositional nature of revelation and cognitive aspects of Christian discipleship” (67). This form of propositional theology has distracted the church from the transformational nature and purpose of the church and spiritual formation (Belcher 71-90; Olson 67-94; Fitch 47-70). Olson argues that the essence of Christianity is the transformation of a person through a relationship with Jesus Christ that is truly a new birth and not just the mere acceptance of information about Jesus. Justification and conversion are experiences of entering into a transformational relationship with Jesus Christ that is redemptive and ongoing. It is the first identifiable change in the heart on its journey to salvation.

Sanctification, for the church, is the grace-initiated and grace-guided processes by which the church and its various members nurture unbelievers in their faith in Jesus Christ and provide guidance for this journey toward salvation. Steve L. Porter writes, “The Protestant theological category of ‘sanctification’ has traditionally referred to the process of the believer being made holy, which is ‘to be conformed to the image of Christ’ (Rom. 8:29)” (129). While sanctification is divinely given and directed, discipleship is the methodology of the church to cooperate with God and to cultivate sanctification using beliefs, teachings, and behaviors that encourage and direct growth and maturity toward becoming Christlike.

Salvation, understood scripturally and through a Wesleyan lens, is the process of recovery or the restoration of the image of God (Wesley, “Image of God” 14; Knight, *Personal conversations*; Dongell). For salvation to be a graced process, it begins with prevenient grace and union with Christ. Therefore, salvation is concerned with a consonant expression of the heart rather than the performance of a person. Salvation is the sweeping movement of reconciliation and restoration of humanity, of human culture, and of all creation (Rom. 8:21) in this age and into eternity. The twentieth century’s tendency towards reductionism has reduced salvation to a polemical decision (Matthews 83-104; Olson 67) that allows one to lay a claim on the label Christian. Darrell L. Whiteman assesses the response of the church to these reduced concepts of conversion, sanctification, and salvation: “Evangelism that moves people to make a decision for Christ has been fine-tuned, but discipling converts into mature disciples of Christ has received little attention” (ix). Therefore, what is needed is a process for spiritual

formation that encompasses the germinating response to prevenient grace, the growth of discipleship, and the recovery of the disciple's identity in Christ.

A model needs to be developed that connects disciples first with who they are in Christ then to what they will do for Christ as a consequence of their union with him. Mulholland in *The Deeper Journey* describes this model as a cultivation of living out one's calling "to be in God for the world" (48).

Grace applied to the efforts of living and growing leads to transformation. Jesus clearly indicated his expectation of growth, maturity, and transformation. Paul implies growth and maturity when he suggests the Corinthian church were infants who were not ready for solid food (1 Cor. 3:1-2). The writer of Hebrews uses the same growth metaphor and takes it a step further, suggesting that maturity and growth come by training and practice (Heb. 5:12-14). According to D. Michael Henderson, the expectation for growth and transformation go together with the practical theology of Wesley (85) as the small class meetings were designed specifically to encourage graced "behavioral change" (93).

Because of God's great love and rich mercy, believers are made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:4-5). The goal of this new life is to grow into the full stature of Christ (Eph. 3:13) by putting away the former life and putting on the new life in Christ (Eph. 4:22-24).

The end of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 is a foundational Scripture for this study:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of

Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:14-19, NRSV)

Paul invites believers to live a life worthy of God's call on their lives through humility and gentleness (Eph. 4:1-3) in order to "live in love" (Eph. 5:2). Through the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ who dwells in believers, they are "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17). This process produces comprehension and knowledge of God's love and results in the transformed life, which is the supernatural work of the Spirit.

Being rooted in love is a theme throughout Scripture and seems to be an indication of God's grace, mercy, and promise for the transformed life. Of significance is Jesus' key parable into the secret of the kingdom life known as the parable of the soils (Mark 4:1-20). Mark's gospel also records two other important parables, one of the growing seed (Mark 4:26-29) and another of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32).

The fourth chapter of the gospel of Mark introduces the reader to the teaching of Jesus and his parables describing the kingdom of God. I identified, in the parable of the soils, what I believe to be four foundational dispositions that may be used by God to change bad soil into good soil. First, the disposition of awe perceives *wide-eyed wonder* in the everyday activities along the path that mark the people (soil) whose callousness and lack of amazement make them vulnerable to Satan (Mark 4:4, 15). Next the disposition of gentleness is recognized as creating space for the heart's roots in rocky, difficult, and painful moments of life described in the second soil (Mark 4:5-6, 16-17). Abandonment is the disposition that allows the heart to cope with human *overattachments* to people, places, and things that end up choking out life in the third soil (Mark 4:7, 18-19). Finally, the receptivity and openness of the disposition of humility defines the nature of the good soil (Mark 4: 8, 20).

Mark 4:10-12 illustrates that parables demonstrate that any teaching concerning the kingdom of God is not about personal cognitive ability but about hearing the words of Jesus in such a way that a change occurs in how one perceives the very foundations of life and this change in perception results in change of behavior. Being rooted is the very nature of receptivity and spiritual formation.

Growth in Mark 4 is not the result of human will although God calls humanity into cooperation in order to grow. The mystery of growth is tied to the nature of the seed (word) and the receptivity and responsiveness of the person.

For seeds to grow, they must become rooted in good soil (Mark 4:6, 17). Being rooted in good soil is at least a metaphor for how deeply humanity is to allow the mystery of the kingdom to become rooted in life through sustained and intensely intimate relationships. A rooted life in the kingdom is a gift of grace.

The illumination and cultivation of the foundational dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility may allow a disciple to become rooted in love entirely by grace. These foundational, scriptural, theological themes and theological principles helped guide this study.

### **Overview**

Chapter 2 reviews selected literature and lays out a theology of transformation and grace, demonstrating how the love of God is central to transformation of the human heart. The role of dispositions in the formation of the symbolic heart and the role of grace in relationship with humans are also discussed. Central to this discussion will be the anthropology and dispositional theories of Wesley and van Kaam.

Chapter 3 presents a detailed description of the project's design, the research methods, and the methods of data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Chapter 5 discusses the major findings of the study and the practical applications that flow out of the research. It also offers suggestions for further inquiry.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to build a bridge between the stated theology of being rooted and grounded in the love of God, which is the source of spiritual transformation and maturity, and the stated purpose and research questions. Transformation of the heart is the central focus of this literature review.

The church, through its work, forms and transforms disciples. Disciples do not have the task of merely filling church pews. Although this task is important, it should not precede, replace, or hinder disciple transformation. The transformation of disciples is necessary to ensure transformation of the church and the world. Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr identify a critical area of congregational transformation as “the interdependence among spiritual and relational vitality, the learning disciplines, and the change process.... Like a three-legged stool, failure to attend to any one of these three results in a fallen stool” (124). Embracing the love of God, as well as, spiritual and relational vitality and maturity are necessary as the goal of transformation and the final and ultimate cause of maturity.

The problem being explored in this study is the failure of the church to root and ground the disciple’s heart in transformational experiences of God’s love. This study also speaks to the need to replace the cultural drive of functionalism, commodification, and human control of the spiritual experience with a transformational process rooted and grounded in the epiphanic love of God.



The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a twelve-week, grace-driven transformational, spiritual formation experience called *Becoming Rooted* for members of the Bolivar United Methodist Church that cultivated encounters with the love of God to allow participants, through God's grace, to arrange their lifestyles to be more Christlike.

### **Transformation**

Transformation is change in the human heart, character, and experience that occurs when a person responds to the saving work of Christ through the Holy Spirit. This specifically Christian transformation brings forth a form of life that is Christlike in essence and lifestyle. Spiritual formation occurs throughout life, from birth through death. Humans cannot prevent formation from occurring as they are constantly being formed in good and bad ways. Transformation is a change at the "fundamental level of one's being" that affects a disciple's way of knowing, perceiving, and grasping reality (Barron, *And Now I See* 5). Therefore, transformation begins with conversion (justification) and continues throughout the entirety of life (sanctification).

F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage discuss the change that transformation implies (18-22). Implied changes center on functional life issues and coping. Transformation, however, is a second order of change that is systemic, formative, and alters the way a person reacts with their world (18). A change of the second order is more than gaining knowledge or adding another spiritual practice to one's tool belt but is about "qualitatively more complex ways of holding and being held in relation to others and the Other" (18). Transformation is about setting new life goals and may manifest suddenly or gradually (18-19).

Transformation, which is the goal of Christian faith (Howard 236), involves the whole person and is eschatological in essence (G. Smith 28). It stems from a longing for something different and more that requires deep reorganization (Benner, *Spirituality* 191). Said another way, transformation is the eternal kingdom of God taking root in the heart and life of the believer.

Often the church has equated transformation and conversion, but they are not the same thing (Howard 236; G. Smith 28). Transformation of the heart is the ongoing consequence of the process of salvation at work in the believer. Salvation, for Wesley, is the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring the image of God throughout one's entire life (Knight, *Personal conversations*). Therefore, the process of salvation brings forth transformation and the resulting Christlikeness.

Evan B. Howard highlights transformational changes in the life of a disciple that include a change in relationship with God, a change in form of life, a change in orientation of life with God, and a change that is both experiential and phenomenological (230-32). These holistic transformative changes characterize the differences between a convert and a disciple of Jesus Christ.

In essence, transformation is about intentional change in the human heart so profound that it manifests in the rearrangement of life's goals, priorities, values, and perceptions. This intentional rearrangement of lifestyle is actually a *regula vitae*, or rule of life.

### **Biblical Model for Being Rooted in Love**

Richard J. Foster in the Foreword to *Embracing the Love of God* writes, "At the heart of the universe is love, divine love, personal, intimate God—love for you and me"

(xiii). All transformation begins with the love of God at the center of the universe and life. Love is not a description about a trait of God; rather, love is a statement about the very nature of the personhood of God. God is not loving; God is love (1 John 4:16). Transformation begins with God because God loved all people first (1 John 4:10). Love is the very description of the relationship of a person with God. God's love is experienced and accessed through faith by which people are made alive (Eph. 2:4-8). Paul stresses the importance of love as the very center of the gospel. Legalism, technique, personality, performance, and worthiness do not matter; "the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6). Nothing is greater or more fulfilling in the human experience than the love of God at work in the human heart.

The God of love can be known and experienced. The essence of Paul's prayer for the church at Ephesus was that they might "know the love of Christ" (Eph. 3:19). At the center of the Christian life is the God of love, apprehended through faith and experienced through Christ. The experience of God as person is the experience of love. Watkin Williams believes that Bernard of Clairvaux insisted that an experience of love is, in essence, the Holy Spirit (76).

Daniel Day Williams summarizes Augustine's view of love as an experience of the Trinity (91). For Paul this experience of God is actualized by being "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17). The Triune God is known and fully assimilated in human experience through love.

Being rooted and grounded in love suggests an image of cultivation and growth. Jesus clearly indicated his expectation of growth, maturity, and transformation. Growth and maturity are also reoccurring themes for Paul as when he suggested to the Corinthian

church that they were infants who were not ready for solid food (1 Cor. 3:1-2). The writer of Hebrews demonstrates the same expectations for growth and further suggests that maturity and growth come by training and practice (Heb. 5:12-14). This view of growth and transformation goes together with the practical theology of John Wesley and his concept of perfectibility (Manskar 44-46; Henderson 85).

In his letter to Ephesus, Paul provides some clarity to the macro process of spiritual formation. Because of God's great love and rich mercy, believers are made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:4-5). People are saved by grace (Eph. 2:10) into this new life, a new state of being and a new way of relating to the universe and to God. The goal of this new life is to grow into the full stature of Christ (Eph. 3:13) by putting away the former life and putting on a new life in Christ (Eph. 4:22-24).

However, Richard F. Lovelace refers to a "sanctification gap" (229-37), the gap between how Christ followers live in this present age and who they are intended to be in Christ. Working on the sanctification gap challenges the believer's concept of grace. As Willard points out in *The Great Omission* and other writings, "[g]race is opposed to earning, not to effort" (34). Closing this "sanctification gap" is the work of the Holy Spirit, but it also takes human effort.

The role of pastor, leader, and spiritual director is likewise a graced role of cultivating what is divinely initiated and directed through love. Leaders till the soil (the spiritual heart) of disciples, but they do not initiate growth, maturity, or fruit (Mark 4:26-29). While leaders are privileged to be used by God in cultivating and encouraging disciples toward maturity, leaders also grow in their own discipleship through their mutual encounter with love.

Paul calls believers to live a life worthy of God's calling through humility and gentleness (Eph. 4:1-3) in order to "live in love" (Eph. 5:2). Paul's prayer demonstrates his concern for the Holy Spirit's work, which is the source of power, in strengthening the "inner being." The object of spiritual formation is the heart. Thus, the sanctification gap narrows as one is rooted and grounded in love. The Holy Spirit guides the process of becoming rooted and grounded in love as well as the comprehension and knowledge of God's love. Knowledge of God's love is not about mental or cognitive understanding but rather a relational and experiential awareness of what God is doing, a new consciousness. This new consciousness is an awakening very much like the awakening of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

Being rooted and grounded is not a concept unique to Paul's writings. The idea of roots or being rooted in God is a theme throughout Scripture. The image of rootedness is an indication of God's grace, mercy, and promise for the transformed life (e.g., Root of Jesse, Isa. 11:10; 27:6; vineyard as Israel, Ps. 80:8-9; the root of the righteous, Prov. 12:3, 12; the wise, Ps. 1; the parable of the fig tree, Luke 13:6-9).

The theme of being rooted, as a manifestation of the transformed life, is of significance in Jesus' parable about living in the kingdom of God, often referred to as the parable of the soils. The fourth chapter of the gospel of Mark introduces the teaching of Jesus through his parables about the kingdom of God. This chapter illustrates the teachings which were so important to Jesus that he was willing to be in conflict with the religious leaders and eventually to die. In Mark 4:10-12 the use of parables demonstrates clearly that the teaching of the kingdom of God is not about gaining or controlling knowledge but about hearing the words of Jesus in such a way that transformation of

attitudes and behavior are cultivated. Becoming rooted into the good soil of God's love is the very nature of receptivity and spiritual formation. The kingdom is received and allowed to grow through being rooted. The kingdom is not gained by human effort but by the very essence of the Word of God and the mystery of the kingdom.

Growth in the Gospel of Mark is beyond humanity's ability to control. The mystery concerning the seed's growth is tied to the nature of the seed or the Word of God (Mark 4:14) and the receptivity and responsiveness of the soil or the heart. A life rooted in the kingdom of God is a gift; however, Mark also emphasizes that receptivity and responsiveness to the Word through obedience allows the Word to take root in human life. Receptivity delimits life in the kingdom of God. A person does not *take* this life no more than a person *takes* Christmas presents. The rooted life is received as a gift.

The development of four foundational dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility cultivate the graced state of being rooted in love. I believe these fundamental dispositions are important in the theology of spiritual formation. Mark 4 and Ephesians 3 are key sources of inspiration for connecting the metaphor of rootedness with the dispositions selected for this study. *Awe* is a disposition that breaks up the hard and callous soil of the path of daily business through becoming aware of the mystery of God's love in every moment of life. *Humility* is an openness and receptivity to the Word and love of God that defines the nature of good soil. *Abandonment* prevents a multitude of inordinate and inappropriate attachments from choking out the transformed life in Christ. *Gentleness* creates a path through the rocks of suffering so that the heart might become deeply rooted and grounded in love in order to thrive.

In Mark, when the Word and love become rooted in the heart, then fruit and harvest, follow. Clearly, for Mark the harvest relates to becoming rooted in the new life of the kingdom. The harvest for Jesus is not membership and involvement in a church or an institution. The harvest is *the transformed life* that results from being rooted and grounded into a new way of *being* called love. The harvest is a people living out the eschatological kingdom of God in this present reality.

Finally, a biblical formational model would be one of becoming more like Christ (Phil. 2:4-8). The fullness of God's love is in the person of Jesus Christ. Paul's encouragement was to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). This passage emphasizes the nature of true humility. Paul stresses in verse six that Jesus was in the form of God (union) and then Jesus emptied (Greek *kenosis*), himself taking the form of a slave. The movement is important for the spiritual life of becoming like Christ. Union or being one with God precedes the pouring out or *kenosis* of ministry. This movement can be described as union precedes *kenosis*. Authors van Kaam and Muto describe this movement in another way: "This pristine sense of our being in God accounts for our awareness of form-reception as preceding form-donation. We can only give to others what we have first received ourselves" (*Christian Articulation* 160). In other words, van Kaam and Muto suggest that who people are in Christ (being) comes before what they do for Christ (doing). Mulholland also insists that disciples' relationship with Christ must incarnate their being that leads to their doing ("Spiritual Formation" 15). Essentially spiritual formation's first movement is to become open to receiving from Christ the image of God (i.e., who people are in Christ). Receiving the image of God

implies that such reception has a transformative effect on human life and is cultivated by being rooted and ground in love.

### **Love and God**

For Paul the thing of most importance is faith working through love (Gal. 5:6). The transformation of the human heart begins with God and God's love. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop writes, "Love is so central to Christian faith that to touch it is to find oneself entangled with every element of Christian doctrine and life" (31). C. S. Lewis proposes that spiritual health is exactly proportional to expression of love for God (3). Growth in maturity for D. Williams is about discovering "what and whom we love and how we respond to the love of others" (111). Love is having an identity (111) and being human (Bondi, *To Pray* 118). Jeffrey D. Imbach describes God's love as the "heartbeat of the universe" (49-53). For the transformed life love is as necessary as God.

To be rooted and grounded in love is to be rooted and grounded in God who is love (1 John 4:8). The centrality of God and love remains if one is *rooted and grounded into God* or *rooted and grounded into the practices, thoughts, and behaviors of God*. For James Bryan Smith, nothing is more important than loving God (*Good and Beautiful God* 9). God reveals and defines love rather than human desire and passion. God's love can only be comprehended by understanding love as revelation. To be able to love is not the hard part of human endeavor, but to "[k]now we are loved is" extremely hard (*Embracing the Love* 4). Divine love is an experiential gift from the lover of human souls. Without an understanding of love as revelation, society becomes confused about love's origin, love's ultimate goal, and the appropriate objects for love. Lori Gottlieb documents the obsession people have today trying to find what the world refers to as love: "[T]he new generation



of dating sites ... all have staked their success on the idea that long-term romantic compatibility can be predicted according to scientific principles—and that they can discover those principles and use them” (58). Finding and experiencing love is reduced to a search to “learn whether the psychological, anthropological, or sociological model works best” (70). This concept of love is an operative and practical obsession with a biologically limited view of love that is far from the biblical revelation of love.

### **Biblical Witness**

Leon Morris’ excellent work is an analytical and exegetical study of the Hebrew and Greek concepts of love in both the Old and New Testaments. Morris, realizing the importance and the centrality of God’s love to Christianity, comments about the dearth of major theologies focused on love (4-6). God’s love has a central and forming characteristic when God deals with human beings (6). Love is not peripheral but a basic fact about God’s being.

For Morris, a major contribution to a revealed understanding of love comes from the Old Testament and is summed up in Jeremiah 31:3: “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” The emphasis of the Old Testament is on this everlasting, faithful, and enduring love, which is neither fleeting nor fickle.

Lewis identifies four types of love: affection, friendship, eros, and charity. Lewis makes an emotive distinction between what he labels as “need-love” and “gift-love” (1). For Lewis gift-love equates to the love of God and is other focused in the activity of donating love and life.

Morris identifies five distinctive word categories for love from first-century Greek (114-28). “Storge” is natural or family love or what Lewis referred to as affection.

“Philia” is friendship love, and “epithymia” is strong desire or passion. The final two words, “eros” and “agape,” are of particular importance in the New Testament according to Morris. Morris defines eros as a longing. This concept of longing has led to the adaptation of the word *erotic*, but for Morris the sexual overtone is not that focused in the first century. Eros is a love for the object of love as worthy, as attractive, and as desirable. Eros, therefore, is a longing to possess the object of love. Morris is saying that eros is the love people seek to earn. It is love they attempt to evoke in others by being worthy, smart, good looking, or excellent at some skill or performance. This concept of earning love is what Lewis refers to as need-love.

The final word Morris discusses is “agape,” which he correctly identifies as the most important word. As a word for love, agape was rarely used before the New Testament (125). It was not necessarily a new word, but Christians used it to convey ideas that had fresh and deeper meanings of love (125-27). Agape is more about the New Testament concept of love and less about the word itself (125). Agape is “a love given quite irrespective of merit and is a love that seeks to give” (128) and is not about seeking worthiness like eros.

Morris is quick to clarify that love is not God, but God is a special type of love, a “love concerned with giving rather than with seeking worthiness” (137). To Morris the love of God means the cross; the cross and sacrifice are the measure for this type of love (271). It pays, is active, and is present or interactive. It demands (31) sinners to respond and perfects (160) sinners as they respond. The love of God is unmerited (27), giving (141), boundless (163), creative (165-69), and focused on unworthy sinners (132).

In summary the biblical witness and theological model give at least five descriptive categories of the love of God:

1. God's love is central and universal to Christianity and to personhood.
2. God's love is donative and creative. This love is given regardless of the worth of the object of love. God's giving and donative love defines grace.
3. God's love is transformative. Love creates more love (Morris 276-77), and love helps believers to love others, especially Christians (277).
4. God's love is faithful, constant, ever present, unchanging, and enduring.
5. God's love is holy, unitive, redemptive, and restorative. God's love is the love of the cross and opposed to evil (Morris 31; Collins, *Soul Care* 123).

#### **Tradition and John Wesley's Witness**

The very human ability to love flows from the love of God for humanity. Bernard of Clairvaux believes that "[b]y loving us, God makes us loveable" (qtd. in J. B. Smith, *Embracing the Love* 9) as well as making others loveable (Bernard, *Talks* 88) and love for others flows from the overflowing pool of God's love (Bernard, *Talks* 37).

Roberta C. Bondi in *To Love as God Loves* initiates a conversation with the early Church about God and God's love. In the early Church, love was understood to be a part of God's image, which makes loving natural and makes not loving unnatural (20). Human efforts such as spiritual disciplines, no matter how religious or reverent, were not to be seen as substitutes for love (21). Therefore, any form of self-righteousness is the opposite of love (22). When a person was delighted by love and in love, the delight was understood as a gift of God, and an example of God's love for the person (22).

Bondi goes on to explain that while love is a natural expression of humanity, loving God is very difficult. She illustrates this point with Gregory of Nyssa's three stages of love. Stage one is where people love God out of fear. Stage two is loving and serving God in order to receive some sort of reward. Finally, stage three is a love of friendship with God with only pure love for God (*To Love as God* 27).

Nyssa's trinity of stages demonstrates that the love of God is a transforming love that progresses from love of self (immature) to love of God and others (mature). Being able to love others (1 John 3:14) is the litmus test that one is born of God (transformation).

Richard J. Foster and Gayle D. Beebe analyze the role of loving God through what they call seven paths of devotion. In their discussion on Pseudo-Dionysius (239-48), who wrote in the late fifth and early sixth centuries AD, Foster and Beebe write that Pseudo-Dionysius' writings "provide one of the clearest expressions of how to begin, understand, and grow in our life with God" (239). Via a threefold path or threefold way, a person is transformed by the love of God. The threefold way involves purgation, illumination, and union (241).

Bernard of Clairvaux wrote his classic work "On Loving God" as a way of teaching the steps to loving God. The first step is recognizing that the "cause of loving God is God himself" (174). Bernard then proposes a progression of love, stating that the only true love is divine love (175). Bernard identifies four degrees or progressions of love: loving self for self's sake, loving God for self's good, loving God for God's sake, and loving self for the sake of God (192-97). Bernard's progression clearly demonstrates a transformation of the heart as one matures in love.

Wesley understands grace through his perception of the love of God. According to Henry H. Knight, III, an “emphasis on a heart filled with love is distinctly Wesleyan” (*Is There a Future* 21). Thus, Wesley describes spiritual maturation of the heart through love as well as a progression of grace. Kenneth J. Collins in *The Scripture Way of Salvation* delineates Wesley’s progression of grace as prevenient grace, convincing grace, justifying grace, sanctifying grace, and glorifying grace.

In *The Theology of John Wesley*, Collins emphasizes that Wesley’s theology of grace is one of love (20). Collins suggests that Wesley, in order to avoid superficiality and sentimentalism, spoke of divine love as “holy love” (20).

For tradition and Wesley, God is the source of love. However, God is also the final object of love. The beauty and richness of the orthodox and Wesleyan understanding of love is that God is the instrumentality of love “because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Love comes from God, through God, and flows to God.

### **Assurance**

God’s love and the experience of God’s love are foundational for all spiritual growth. Wesley expresses this truth in his essential doctrine of assurance. Assurance or being experientially aware that one is accepted and loved by God is the gift of a loving God.

Kenneth Cain Kinghorn comments on Wesley’s sermon *The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse 1* and suggests that the witness of the Spirit was not necessary for salvation but that “the assurance of salvation was important for Christian joy and spiritual growth”

(“Introduction” 170). The believer’s sense of assurance opens the door for spiritual growth.

Assurance effectively is the actualization of God’s grace, love, and life in the heart of the believer. This assuring love, according to J. B. Smith, is constant, ever present, and unchanging (*Embracing the Love* 14). With a humble acceptance of the reality that God loved and loves a person first will come the formation of the disposition of awe.

### **Grace, Love, and Life**

According to Joseph Dongell, abstract ideas often get reified, turned into nouns or things. Understanding reification is important, according to Dongell, because it can cause a believer’s thinking to go awry. Grace, love, life, perfection, and salvation are examples of some abstract ideas that often become reified.

When discussing aspects of the divine nature, Bondi suggests that people consider how they think about perfection. In discussing “perfect love,” Bondi laments that people think in terms of Western philosophical categories that are static and opposed to change (*To Love as God* 22). For Bondi perfect love is fluid, dynamic, and growing (23). Bondi suggests Gregory of Nyssa was correct in perceiving that a fundamental definition of being human is that humans change (23).

Wesley struggled with people who essentially reified his teaching about salvation into either a crisis or a process. Dongell suggests that for Wesley salvation does not ask if people are saved, yes or no, but if believers are recovering the image of God and if the grace of God is moving them forward.

Dynamic concepts such as love, grace, and life cannot be directly described. They can only be distinguished by observing and describing their source, the object upon which they act, their effects, and their affect. When love is understood not as a thing but as a fluid and dynamic way of relating, people can only describe phenomenologically the source of love, the object of love, the effects of love, and the affect of love.

Dongell summarizes his lecture on the relationship between love and life by describing the relationship as an economy at work: “To love is to give life and is self-denial and self-sacrifice.” I believe that Dongell is correct in saying that God is both love and life. Love and life then are more than mere biological processes and drives. A greater mystery is involved, the mystery of the Trinity. Human lives and identities are grounded in the God of love. Life is a primary theme of the Bible, according to Dan W. Dunn (1), and life is much more than mere physical existence. As Paul articulates the idea, believers’ lives are hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). By grace, humans are intended “to experience full, vibrant, vital life in relationship with God and one another” (Dunn 2). In addition, van Kaam and Muto write that human “essence precedes our existence” (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 14-15). Humanity’s essential nature is hidden in God and in the mystery of God’s love before humanity ever enters into physical existence.

### **Pieces of the Formation Puzzle**

Spiritual formation, as defined in this study, is about the formation of the human heart. The process of formation is like a puzzle unique to each human being. Although each puzzle is unique before God, some common pieces exist.

## Spiritual Formation

The object of spiritual formation is the heart rather than behaviors of moralism. Jesus directed his parables and teachings toward inner attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs that make up the heart (e.g., Mark 4; Matt. 5). Wesley perceived salvation as the process of restoring the image of God (Knight, Personal conversations), which culminates in Christian perfection (“Amazing Love” 8).

Spiritual formation as a grace-catalyzed activity is divinely initiated, divinely inspired, divinely infused, and divinely imparted. Spiritual formation is the effect of the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit in human life.

Spiritual formation is also humble cultivation. I like this phrase because it connects the believer with the richness of Scripture by calling to mind scriptural images and metaphors. The etymological roots of the word *humility* are important to van Kaam. The root word *humus* references the essence or ground of personhood (*Formative Spirituality* 3: 25) and mirrors the acknowledgement of human fallibility found in the Ash Wednesday pronouncement, “From dust you have come and to dust you shall return” (*United Methodist Book* 323). Jean Leclercq writes that for Bernard of Clairvaux humility is true knowledge of God, self, and others (39). First, spiritual formation is about a humility that gently removes obstacles for transformation.

Second spiritual formation is about the cultivation of an intimate relationship with God. Robert Louis Wilken describes the methodology of the spiritual master Origen as one who “could cultivate the soul of the disciple” as he cleared “the soil, turning it over, watering it, and using all his ‘skill and concern’ that the students might bring forth good fruit” (53). Cultivation is cooperation with the grace-catalyzed process of sanctification,



which occurs throughout life and is never complete. Also implied by cultivation is effort and that spiritual formation is not a passive activity. Willard in *The Great Omission* and elsewhere is fond of saying that grace is opposed to earning not to effort (34).

Cultivation, in Paul's theology, is the taking off of the old, putting on the new, and putting the new into practice (Howard 279).

Spiritual formation through humble cultivation lends itself to being more holistic than cognitive spiritualities, which tend to be reductionistic. No aspect of the human experience is left uncultivated by God. Howard delineates the breadth of humble cultivation as transforming the person affectively, intellectually, morally, religiously, psychologically, socially, and ecologically (259) into a completely new being in Christ.

Spiritual formation as humble cultivation is also gentler. Cooperating with the grace-catalyzed process of transformation, the disciple is prepared for the work of the Holy Spirit who gently facilitates transformation rather than rigidly instructing, informing, or indoctrinating.

The instrumentation of spiritual formation is the Holy Spirit. Formation is about knowing empirically (Greek *gnosko*) the love of God as the Holy Spirit is vivified in the human heart. This manner of knowing God's love is what van Kaam refers to as full and diffused awe (*Formative Spirituality* 2: 183).

Last, a dynamic progression in spiritual formation exists. Spiritual formation develops an intimate relationship with God. The holy love that is the foundation for this relationship is an extroverted love, a love that is always directed outward toward others. Some writers emphasize the love of other people as paramount, but this teaching turns people into the object of love. God is the only worthy object of love. To make others the

object of love is to engage in a form of idolatry, giving a physical being the love reserved for God (Col. 3:5). Bernard of Clairvaux emphasizes loving others because of Christ who lives in them (*Talks* 88), which means love is not self-referencing or humanitarian in nature.

This holy love of formation is cultivated and cultivates; becomes rooted; is received, heard, perceived, and comprehended; and, is responded to through the grace of God. In other words, disciples embrace the love of God, love God in return, and are then equipped to love others through God.

### **Human Will**

Human will (volition) is the ability to use freedom and creativity to originate goals (Willard, *Renovation* 33; Beck and Demarest 224). For Willard the will organizes human life (*Renovation* 35). Beck and Demarest suggest the will is part of the integrative heart and to exercise the will is to act upon a feeling or emotion (224-25). This affective nature of human will is an important characteristic. Randy L. Maddox concludes that Wesley's understanding of the will can be described as volitional holism where a person's will is driven by emotion and feeling but shaped by thought (41). The human will and humanity itself is shaped and formed by an affective will of longing or desiring (Foster and Beebe 11; Smith, J. K., *Desiring the Kingdom* 39-47).

Surprisingly spiritual formation involves an act of the will to interact and cooperate with divine grace and initiative. Willard accurately points out that formation involves a great deal of effort but not an attitude of earning (*Great Omission* 166). Augustine of Hippo, according to Foster and Beebe, taught, "All we can do is prepare for him by properly orienting one element of our earthly life: our will.... [W]e must create

habits that incline us to look for him” (27). Augustine is echoing Paul’s advice to Timothy to “rekindle the gift of God that is in you” (2 Tim. 1:6). Spiritual formation requires the willful action of opening the heart to God’s grace.

Some expressions of the will are in harmony with formation and some are not. Jamin Goggin uses the work of van Kaam to provide an understanding for various types of willing as the heart interacts with the world and with God. Goggin finds van Kaam’s distinctions of willessness, willfulness, and willingness helpful constructs in guiding disciples through the painful reality checks in the journey of becoming a Christlike disciple (68).

Wilhoit in “Only God’s Love Counts” highlights and then helps to define willingness, willfulness, and willessness and goes on to develop van Kaam’s theory more fully (178). Wilhoit explains van Kaam’s basic theory of two types of will: the orientation will (love will) and the implementation will (executive will). The implementation will is about doing, managing, and making things happen. Wilhoit warns “that many will-oriented spiritualities are too reliant on the executive will which can promote a self-oriented willfulness” (178). Willfulness “is living with clenched-fisted doggedness. It is living the illusion that I can be in control. It is the rule of life lived in the kingdom of self” (Benner, *Surrender* 58). Willfulness is relying heavily on managing, controlling, and fixing implementation will.

The orientation will is about being receptive to one’s personal and communal life call or the image of God. The orientation will is focused on being or becoming and is the source of authentic willing as opposed to the inauthentic willing found in willfulness or willessness (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 37).

Willingness is the receptivity and responsiveness of the orientation will. Said another way, willingness is a surrender or abandonment to the orientation will of God.

Willelessness is the absence of any connection to the image of God. Goggin defines willelessness in terms of despair (68) that any change in life's reality is possible. With willelessness any act of the will to shape or form the disciple's relationship with God is absent.

Both the orientation and the implementation will are part of a well-formed disciple. As Wilhoit points out, surrender to Christ "takes place chiefly with the orientation will; one shifts an orientation from self-preservation to Christ-serving and commits to using the executive will properly" ("Only God's Love" 178). Abandonment to live by the orientation will is the foundational formation decision for van Kaam (*Formative Spirituality* 1: 227). This formation decision is also called appreciative abandonment. Appreciative abandonment is the act of willingly surrendering the control of life to God who forms disciples in love and through grace gives meaning to life.

In essence, spiritual formation is about the reception of a way of life by choosing to orient the will through authentic willing and receiving from God one's personal and communal life call. A personal and communal life call is both private and relational. Authentic willing occurs when a disciple chooses to become appreciatively abandoned to God's orientation will before implementing the divine directives they have received. This preferred directionality of formation is summarized by van Kaam and Muto to be "form-reception as preceding form-donation" (*Christian Articulation* 160).

## **Liberty**

Wesley in his sermon “God’s Love to Fallen Man” argues that people have been given liberty so they may choose to be more holy and happy on earth and in heaven (477). Liberty, to Wesley, is the part of the fallen human will restored by prevenient grace. Grace, effort, and liberty combine in transforming the heart. In other words, transformation begins with God’s love, grace-enabled human liberty, and will to choose. Collins emphasizes that Wesley’s concept of liberty is a gift of grace from God (“John Wesley’s Topography” 172-73). Restored liberty allows the will to awaken the affections and to choose holiness.

Bernard of Clairvaux in his *Talks on the Song of Songs* describes an expression of love and will that liberty facilitates:

Loving with your whole heart means not letting other loves turn your head. Loving with the completeness of your soul makes you invulnerable to misdirection. Loving with all your strength keeps you from being frightened away by high personal cost. (42)

The dimensions of love prevent disciples from being distracted into a false love and allow formation to occur by grace.

In summary, formation results from the Holy Spirit regenerating the image of God through restored liberty, which awakens holy tempers and affections. Holy tempers and affections cultivate a new heart with new dispositions and new tempers. This movement is repeated endlessly as the heart is transformed. Historical expressions of actualizing dispositions are the spiritual disciplines and the means of grace.

## **Spiritual Disciplines**

An important goal of spiritual formation is to avoid the mind-set of modern culture that reduces the spiritual disciplines into the functionalism of techniques,

mechanisms, or commodities. Webb writes the spiritual discipline of *regula* is “designed to liberate us to live the Jesus way well” (49). Disciplines cultivate a freedom to live in a way that is impossible without the spiritual disciplines, in effect eliminating any delimiting horizon. Techniques, which are essentially about controlling a small aspect of life, limit change to what can be controlled. Foster emphasizes in *Celebration of Discipline* the inner spiritual nature: “[T]he inner attitude of the heart is more crucial than the mechanics for coming into the reality of the spiritual life” (3). The attitude of the disciple is more important than the mechanics or techniques.

Spiritual disciplines help integrate the heart of disciples so they may live out their personal and communal calling in Christ. To assist in this integration spiritual disciplines create a rhythm in life. For van Kaam this rhythm of life is a “rhythm of detachment and involvement” (*On Being Involved* 70). The disciple must learn this art of detachment and involvement to avoid functionalizing spiritual disciplines. This rhythm of life involves both involvement and detachment in a sort of dance, illustrated by van Kaam: “No involvement is possible without detachment; no detachment is meaningful without a deepening of involvement” (70). Rhythm creates a freedom that allows the consonant integration of the disciple’s person with his or her personal and communal calling (51). Consonance of formation is achieved when the disciple is able to infuse this rhythm of involvement and detachment into the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Involvement flows naturally from the incarnational nature of life. Humanity experiences Christ in people, creation, and activities. For van Kaam involvement is being totally engaged, being totally in the moment of life in which a person is living. Involvement is further illustrated by van Kaam when he writes, “[T]o be there means that

I gather together all my thoughts, feelings, and memories. I am wholly with what I am doing, creating, perceiving” (*On Being Involved* 14). Involvement in life fosters spiritual growth (13). While involvement fosters spiritual growth, it also requires detachment be operational in the life of the disciple.

Detachment is “separation from feelings, thoughts, images, and dispositions” which interferes with a disciple’s personal and communal calling (Lough 31). Without detachment, involvement that fosters spiritual growth is not possible. Describing the instrumentation of detachment, van Kaam writes, “Detachment calls forth a relaxed and flexible attitude of self-discipline, in which all impulses, compulsions, and passions become the ‘disciples’ of my call of life” (*On Being Involved* 51). The gentle, relaxed, and flexible nature of detachment cultivates rather than dictates the disciple’s spiritual formation.

Some other important observations regarding spiritual disciplines should be noted. First, spiritual disciplines are activities in which human beings choose to engage (Willard, *Great Omission* 52; Foster, *Celebration* 6; Funk 1).

Second, spiritual disciplines cultivate freedom received from the integration of a disciple’s life through involvement and detachment to foster transition. Willard writes that spiritual disciplines transition the heart and will of persons into a new relationship of cooperation with God and God’s kingdom (*Spirit* 156). The disciplines also usher a disciple into what Foster describes as the very presence of God (*Celebration* 6) and positions disciples so they receive what J. B. Smith calls a new narrative for life (*Good and Beautiful God* 26-27). One way spiritual disciplines transition the heart is by developing “habits or dispositions to respond automatically in certain situations and

environments” (J. K. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* 60). The automatically responding heart is attuned to the Spirit of God.

Third, the spiritual disciplines cultivate transformation. Mary Margaret Funk describes spiritual disciplines as simple tools that are utilized to cultivate the garden of the heart (1). As a consequence, spiritual disciplines free believers to create space and openness whereby they are able to be receptive to the awe evoking grace of God (Foster, *Celebration* 6; Willard, *Spirit* 156) who does for them what they cannot do for themselves (Willard *Great Omission* 52) in growing the new person in Christ (Funk 1).

The power of spiritual disciplines is in their gentle but habitual use while humbly being surrendered to become more Christlike. The disposition of firmness is needed to use these tools faithfully, and the disposition of gentleness is necessary to avoid legalism and cruelty to self and others (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program, Course III* 68). Balance, between gentleness and firmness can be achieved through the disposition of consonance received by grace.

Spiritual disciplines include all behavior except that which separates the believer from God. If an inner attitude of humility and abandonment is present, God may use believers’ behaviors in a disciplined way to create more Christlikeness. Funk’s book is a good introduction to some lesser-used disciplines. Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline* provides a list, description, and classification of inner, outer, and corporate disciplines. Inward disciplines are meditation, prayer, fasting, and study. Outward disciplines are simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. The corporate disciplines are confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.



Willard in *The Spirit of the Disciplines* catalogs the spiritual disciplines into groups of abstinence or engagement. The disciplines for abstinence are solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice. The disciplines for engagement are study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission (158).

### **Means of Grace**

The means of grace are another understanding of spiritual disciplines and their relationship to grace. If any distinction exists between spiritual disciplines and the means of grace, it is in attitude and receptivity only. I like to think of the means of grace as a focused collection of spiritual disciplines.

Wesley defined *means of grace* as experiential signs, words, or behaviors that God in some way designated “to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace” (“Means of Grace” 160). Wesley takes great care to emphasize that no merit is derived from these behaviors but that one should cultivate a “lively sense that God is above all means” (170). Harper describes what he calls the Wesleyan equation as “grace plus response equals growth” (75). The means of grace describe divine-human cooperation as completely dependent upon grace.

Dongell contrasts Wesley’s conception of the means of grace with the practice of magic in the pagan worldview. In the pagan world of magic, a monist worldview, a “causal continuity” exists where everything is connected, everything can be manipulated, and everything can be influenced by everything else. In the biblical dialectical worldview, Dongell refers to “causal humility.” Wesley approaches the means of grace with this “causal humility” where disciples act, believe, and respond to God with humble

obedience but acknowledge any spiritual growth is a result of grace and only grace received through faith.

Knight suggests that the means of grace are activities in which disciples participate to position themselves to receive and respond to grace (Personal conversations). God through Jesus Christ may stir the affections when disciples participate in the *means of grace*. Thus, disciples' humble responses may allow God's grace to transform them. The stirred affections, over time, may become enduring tempers that transform the heart. An enduring temper is also defined as a disposition. When a disposition is stirred up by an activity of the Holy Spirit, it can be described as a consonant disposition.

While Wesley made no exhaustive list of the means of grace, they are often classified as either works of mercy or works of piety (Knight and Powe 49). Any activity performed humbly may function as an ordinary means of grace. Harper collates Wesley's instituted means of grace and prudential means of grace (75-86). God ordains the instituted means. The five instituted means are first prayer, because of the relational nature of Christianity, then searching the Scriptures, the Lord's Supper, fasting, and Christian conferencing practiced in the bands, classes, and societies (79). The prudential means of grace are ordained by the church, and Harper identifies the primary prudential means as doing no harm, doing good, and attending to the private and public worship of God (79).

Wesley defines the means of grace as behaviors that convey preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace ("Means of Grace" 160). Because of Wesley's definition,

Knight describes the means of grace as lifelong practices in which a person can engage even before becoming a Christian (*Eight Life-Enriching Practices* 29).

Wesley's definition also reflects the classic threefold path of formation: purgation (preventing grace), illumination (justifying grace), and union (sanctifying grace). In the sermon "The Means of Grace," Wesley argues that the *means of grace* assist, always by grace, in helping a disciple move from anger, pride, and evil desire through the commandments, outward religion, and justifying grace to sanctification in love. Phrased this way the similarity to van Kaam and Muto's restatement of the threefold way of formation as purifying formation (moving from), illuminating reformation (moving through), and unifying transformation (moving to) is apparent (*Epiphany Certification Program, Course II* 101).

### **Formation and Anthropology**

James K. A. Smith writes about the nature of education as being primarily about formation rather than information (*Desiring the Kingdom* 26). Central to his writing is his axiom that supporting "every pedagogy is a philosophical anthropology" (37). He goes on to articulate "a philosophical anthropology that understands human persons as defined by love" that is consistent with an Augustinian anthropology (37). Smith is correct that humans are defined by love. This approach to anthropology is correlative with the literature being discussed that demonstrates essentially a pedagogy of formation consonant with the revelation of God's love in and through the person of Jesus. Thus, anthropology illuminates the spiritual formation process. A consonant anthropology is important for this study to avoid surrendering to delimiting functionalism with its controlling, informative, and cognitive formation model.

Willard in *Renovation of the Heart* also establishes a need for a clear understanding of anthropology (27-44). Toward that understanding, Willard lists six basic aspects of human life: thought, feeling, choice, body, social context, and soul (30). J. B. Smith articulates a simpler anthropology in *The Good and Beautiful God*. Smith's focus is on the will, which is influenced by the mind, the body, and the social context (22). Beck and Demarest attempt an evangelical and biblical anthropology. Although their book, which seeks to create an amicable understanding of personhood between the competing ideologies of theology and psychology, is very insightful, adaptation is required to apply their conclusions to other writings and theories of personhood.

Wesley discusses anthropology in terms of the image of God. In his sermon "The Image of God," Wesley writes about the natural image with its understanding, will, and liberty (14-21). However, Wesley's anthropology is more complex as Collins shows in his book *The Scripture Way of Salvation*. Collins develops the full picture of Wesley's image of God as the natural image, the political image, and the moral image (22-26).

Each of these theories of personhood serves a purpose within its own individual school of thought. When a reader seeks to synthesize the various theories, the whole enterprise becomes confusing.

A consistent theory and language that allows the integration of various anthropologies and observations is missing from the literature on spiritual formation. This theory and language is the goal of the life work of van Kaam. Wilhoit writes in "Only God's Love Counts" that van Kaam's work is "a comprehensive, orthodox, and conceptually rich understanding of spiritual formation" (181). The work of van Kaam is

also important as I use his “comprehensive theory and a tradition of neutral language” (181) in synthesizing various approaches to spiritual formation.

According to van Kaam’s understanding of the human person, several anthropological principles are important in formative spirituality. The principles of “formability” and the “formation field” (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 49) are of importance in this study.

**Formability.** In essence, the principle of formability means that humans have great potential to give and receive form. *Form* is defined by R. Keith Lough as “condensation of creative or epiphanic formation energy into a solid, enduring appearance in our field of life” (43). Thus, *formability* is the potentiality human beings have to use their God-given creative energy to change, create, and re-create themselves and their experiential world. *Formation* is the process or manner by which human beings give and receive form to themselves and the world.

In “Only God’s Love Counts,” Wilhoit emphasizes the importance of formability in van Kaam’s thought. For Wilhoit a particular emphasis is “van Kaam’s assertion that ‘essence precedes existence’” (171). Wilhoit explores van Kaam’s position in this way:

He sees this as the Thomist position in contrast to Sartre who asserts that “existence precedes our essence.” Meaning that humanity has no intrinsic nature. We are thrown into this world, not of our own making, and must determine what [w]e will be. We exist first and determine our essence by means of our choice. This is how the twentieth century existentialists would understand formation; van Kaam insists that our “essence” both in term[s] of general human nature (sinful, awe-oriented, social) and our specific gifts, abilities and social location precedes our choices and daily life. (171)

If human essence is in God first, before humans exist, then who they are in Christ should determine what they do for Christ.

Formability, I believe, is what Wesley means when he writes about the role of liberty in the recovery of the image of God. In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Wesley refers to “the image of God fresh stamped on our hearts” (28). Humans use graced-restored liberty (will) to choose, discover, and live out the image of God (essence). The potentiality of liberty to change one’s life is formability. Wesley’s use of the term *recovery* also suggests the preexistence of the image of God.

For spiritual formation, the impact of the principle of formability is profound. First, formability is a graced attribute of humanity. While effort is expended as the will is expressed, grace is still the engine that drives formation. This grace engine is what van Kaam refers to as the transcendent dynamic, a graced dynamic that always pulls humans to the “more than” of life (*Formative Spirituality* 6: 3-4).

Second, this essential formability is holistic and healing. Many models of discipleship focus on the mastering of knowledge about God to guide the will or to gain a religious experience. Instead, the principle of formability focuses on cultivation over religious experience. This formation is receptive, gentle, and healing. Formability, in the Christian context, is about the potentiality of salvation in Jesus Christ where believers are healed (Isa. 53:5; 2 Pet. 2:24) and reconciled (2 Cor. 5:19). In “Only God’s Love Counts,” Wilhoit makes the same point when he writes, “[F]ormation programs exist where the emphasis is placed on spiritual experiences or knowledge rather than on the healing and formation of persons” (171). When the emphasis of formation programs is on experience or knowledge only, things that a disciple can manage, instead of healing and formation, experiences and events managed by the Holy Spirit, then spiritual formation is reduced to mere functionalism without the vivifying effects of transforming grace.

**Formability—Christ form and pride form.** Formability suggests human beings are constantly being formed either positively or negatively. Echoing Paul’s concept of the old self and the new self (Col. 3:9), van Kaam, according to Wilhoit, refers to this new self as the emerging Christ form or the founding life form (“Only God’s Love” 176). Thus, van Kaam’s emerging Christ form is consistent with Wesley’s view of salvation as the recovering the image of God.

Wilhoit goes on to explain that the old self, or false self, is for van Kaam a counterfeit form of life (“Only God’s Love” 176) and is, therefore, a finite form as opposed to the infinite founding life form. Salvation in Christ addresses this pride form of willfulness. David Desilva describes the old self as “the part of us that is born into sin and misshaped by broken people and sick systems” (87). Desilva writes further about the old self:

The old self is not a pretty sight. It seeks its own gratification at the cost of others’ dignity, fulfillment, and growth. It thinks highly of itself and meanly of others. It acts viciously to protect its own interests. It turns people to painkillers like compulsive eating, needless spending, or sexual addictions rather than helping them deal with the underlying issues. It poisons relationships. It is a gravity well that threatens to suck down our own souls into itself. (88)

The pride form seeks to become the substitute for the emerging Christ form. As a substitute the pride form will attempt to lead people astray, according to Wilhoit (“Only God’s Love” 176). The pride form is expressed in each person as “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). No person is exempt from the pride form.

**Formability—integrating life forms.** When van Kaam writes about the nature of a person, he often does so in reference to five “integrating life forms” (*Formative Spirituality* 1: 250). These integrating life forms are founding, core, apparent, current,

and actual life forms (250). Integrating forms are expressions of personhood as integrations of all humans think, feel, believe, and experience as Appendix K illustrates.

As already discussed, the essence of a person is in God and is the founding form. The founding form or unique-communal life call cannot be fully known or understood. The spiritual life humanity is able to perceive is received and cultivated through a harmonious relationship with God that is true to the image of God in people. The experiential articulation of what people can cultivate and recover of the founding form is what van Kaam refers to as the core form or the heart. The core form is a person's closet experience of his or her founding form. In other words, the heart, formed by God, is a consonant and finite expression of the infinite human essence God intended (*Formative Spirituality 2*: 165-76).

For van Kaam, however, personhood is more complex. Paul expresses a sense of this complexity of life when he writes about not being able to do what he wants to do because sin prevents him (Rom. 7:20). A person's actual form of life as expressed through a sinful nature may or may not be apparent to another person. A person objectively observing Paul might be confused about the sin of which Paul is talking. Paul's actual sinfulness may not be apparent to an objective observer because Paul's efforts to lead a holy life might create an appearance of sinlessness. The observable and finite expression of human life is what van Kaam refers to as the "apparent form" (*Formative Spirituality 1*: 255-56). Thus what Paul describes as sinful is his current reality of his relationship with God. This current reality van Kaam calls our "current form" (255-56).



**Formation field of the person.** The concept of personhood is what van Kaam and Muto describe as the “formation field (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I 6*; see Appendix I). The formation field is dynamic and interactive. I like to think in comparison to the dynamic properties of a magnetic field or a gravitational field. The important thing to remember is that all parts of the field are interrelated, interdependent, and in a constant state of flux. This holistic concept of the formation field allows for a discussion of recognizable areas of human endeavor, encounter, and formation, which van Kaam and Muto called “spheres” (6). Each sphere is discernable and able to be studied and described. However, a sphere cannot be separated from its relationship to the formation field as a whole. In other words, humans are integrated wholes making spiritual formation not just an act of the inner life but of the entire formation field (24) or person.

At the center of the van Kaamian formation field is God identified as the Divine Forming Mystery (see Appendix I). For van Kaam and Muto, the essential thing is for the dynamic forming Mystery (God) to be properly recognized since each sphere flows in and out of the Divine Forming Mystery (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I 6*). The other four spheres of formation in the field are intraformation, interformation, outer immediate situational formation, and outer mediated world. As a whole, the formation field represents the dynamic nature of a whole person.

The intra (i.e., inner) sphere is the internal life of the person. The intrasphere is where a person remembers, imagines, knows, feels, decides, and wills. For many people this sphere is where spirituality occurs, but for van Kaam the spiritual life is not just

about a mystical inner life but about full field expression through a person's relationships, context, and the larger mediated world (Muto, "Spiritual Direction").

The intersphere represents relationships with family, church, coworkers, and friends. This sphere is primarily about interrelationships (Muto, "Spiritual Direction").

The immediate situational sphere is a person's life at home, at work, or in the concrete reality of his or her situational context. This sphere is about the everyday and mundane events and activities of life, suggesting all of life is spiritual (Muto, "Spiritual Direction").

Last is the outer-mediated world sphere where mission and spirituality come together as growing competency and responsibility interact by giving and receiving form through dialogue with not only the world but also the universe. For Muto, neither giving nor receiving can occur without the other ("Living Contemplatively and Serving" 83). This formation sphere acknowledges that everything matters and a person's response to God, neighbors, and friends has an effect upon the cosmos ("Spiritual Direction").

**Dimensions of the human life form.** The human formation field is the big-picture anthropology of van Kaam while the dimensions of the human life form summarize his psychology (Muto, "Spiritual Direction"; Appendix J). The dimensions are sociohistorical, vital, functional, transcendent, and, for the Christian, pneumatic-ecclesial. For van Kaam and Muto, the dimensions of everyday life are "distinct channels through which we receive directives" (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 6) and are also dynamic.

The first dimension is sociohistorical and correlates to the reality that "we are born into a culture and situation, in a family, with a particular tradition, at a certain

moment in time” (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I 27*).

The sociohistorical dimension finds expression in and through the experienced pressures of life (27).

The second is the vital dimension, and van Kaam and Muto stress that the dynamics of the vital dimension relate to human biological needs, limitations, temperament, and the physical interaction with the world (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I 27*). The vital dimension finds expression as impulses.

The functional dimension refers to the “beginning of an independent mind and will” (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I 27-28*) and serves as the management, control, and executive function of the person. The functional dimension finds expression in projects.

The transcendent dimension is expressed as ideals and “helps us to know ultimately what to accomplish and where to go; it provides the deepest direction we need to grow in Christ” (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I 28*). The transcendent dimension describes the *more than* of life and is the dimension that distinguishes humanity.

The transcendent dimension has two crossover dimensions. The first is the crossover dimension of the functional-transcendent, “which tends to make the transcendent a servant of the functional” (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I 28*). The second crossover dimension is the transcendent-functional, “which properly orders all subordinate dimensions” (28). Danger, in spiritual formation, occurs when a disciple becomes stuck in the functional-transcendent crossover dimension.

The pneumatic or pneumatic-ecclesial dimension is the ultimate dimension for the Christian. It incorporates Wesley's understanding of assurance but goes further into listening, hearing, and following moment-by-moment directives of the Holy Spirit. These gentle directives find expressions as invitations to the holy life.

The three sociohistorical, vital, and functional dimensions may also be referenced as a group as the pretranscendent dimensions. They are finite expressions of life.

**Phasic development.** An important clarification that helps illustrate and apprehend the depth and dynamism of van Kaam's formation field and life form dimensions is that of phasic development. Phasic development describes a disciple's "necessity to progress through various discontinuous phases of formation" (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I 47*). Each sphere of formation in the formation field develops in phases relating to each dimension of the formation field.

Phasic development is not rigidly but loosely hierarchical as it is developmental, orderly, and, to a degree, predictable while at the same time discontinuous. Each dimension and sphere, stress van Kaam and Muto, is "equally and simultaneously present in any human life form from the beginning, either potentially or actually" (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I 6*). Dimensional phases of life are not left behind or cease to be a part of who they are. Rather, van Kaam sees a holistic and balanced understanding of life (*Formative Spirituality 1*: 263-64). If a distinction exists between common stage theory of development and van Kaam's phasic formation theory, it would be the discontinuous nature and dynamism of van Kaam's theory.

Phasic development is important because it explains and emphasizes why one disciple is not able to manifest the same transformative expressions from an experience

of epiphanic love as another disciple. The manifestation of transformation will be consonant with the disciples' phasic expression of their personal and communal call. A spiritual director considering phasic development as part of the spiritual direction and formation process avoids reducing the formative process to one experience fits all and is able to remain open to the mystery of epiphanic love. Phasic development, driven by grace, can be described but not quantified.

**Formation choices and transcendent crises.** As people grow in phasic development, they respond to the promptings of life. At some point in life, they face a crisis when a failure of their current way of living and doing things occurs. At the point of failure, the disciple faces a choice. This formative choice, according to van Kaam, is to choose depreciative abandonment or appreciative abandonment. Appreciative abandonment is abiding in awed attention to the unfolding of one's unique-communal call. It is trusting that Christ is at work in a disciple's life in every event and activity through purifying formation, illuminating reformation, and unitive transformation. This choice is an act of authentic willing to respond in "formative receptivity" (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 59). Appreciative abandonment moves a person from a form of life that is sinful and broken through the activities of grace and the Holy Spirit to a new and more sanctified form of life. The crisis that fosters this choice is called a transcendent crisis. The formative movement of "from-through-to" is referred to by van Kaam and Muto as purifying formation, illuminating reformation, and unitive transformation (59).

The choice of appreciative abandonment is pertinent to this study because it highlights the underlying act of the will that cultivates dispositional heart formation.

When disciples abandon themselves to God, they release control of their lives and approach spiritual formation and life with a mind-set of receiving. The release of control and attitude of receptivity avoid spiritual functionalism and cultivate spiritual growth.

### **Dispositional Heart Formation**

The heart, for this study, is the affective volition or governing center and the center of integration of the person. Formation of the heart results from the use of the formational and functional will and strivings in consonance with the invitations and initiatives of a loving God. This formation of the heart is cultivated through the formation of dispositions, “our precognitive tendencies to act in certain ways and toward certain ends” (J. K. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* 55). These heart dispositions become a sort of “second nature” (56) guiding a receptive and habitual response to grace.

Wesley’s formation principles build upon what Henderson calls Wesley’s firm belief in “the perfectibility of humanity” (85). The class meeting focused upon experiential (93) and personal growth (96), making disciples accountable for their behavior or acts of the will (93-112). Wesley based accountability upon a realistic view of human nature (103) and was, therefore, both gentle and firm. As class leaders modeled responses to questions and as they naturally discovered directives for living faithfully in the give and take of dialogue, the leaders were coaching and created accountability. The Methodist society focused on the mind, head, or cognitive part of the person; the classes focused on the will, hands, or behavior; and, the bands focused on the heart or affective aspects of the person (Albin 44; Henderson 112). The classes and bands appear essential in helping believers come to desire epiphanic love and to develop important dispositions, which further assist a believer’s graced response to epiphanic love.

In the Wesleyan process of accountability, significant dispositional heart formation occurs. The essential disposition for heart formation for Wesley was meekness or humility (“Upon Our Lord’s Sermon,” 194). As individuals progressed through the Wesleyan small group structure, they would practice meekness when they responded to the request to make an account of their lives and their choices related to God’s love and to a Wesleyan concept of grace. Essentially the disciples were accountable for what I identify as receptivity and responsiveness of formative directives. For example in the trial band, a disciple “explored and experienced prevenient grace.... The class meeting was for convincing grace” (Albin 43). Each disciple received coaching, guidance, support, and nurture in the reception of grace and response. For Steven W. Manskar, Wesley’s class meetings provided an atmosphere where the trust, love, and vulnerability needed for true growth might occur (93) as a human response to the covenant of love (19). Although the dynamics of the class were supportive, nonjudgmental, and guided by a spirit of love (103), an expectation existed for each Methodist disciple to develop and mature as a disciple for Jesus Christ (44-46). The ebb and flow of encouragement and expectation essentially cultivated a receptivity to grace and allowed each disciple to progress gently in formation as a complete person in body, mind, and heart.

Embracing Wesley’s understanding of salvation prevents dispositional heart formation from degenerating into functionalism. For Wesley salvation is a formative and grace-coordinated process of recovering a relationship with God and restoring the image of God (Knight, Personal conversations). In the sermon “The Image of God,” Wesley writes about the human image being renewed (14). The first step in formation is “humility, knowledge of ourselves” (19). Wesley describes *understanding* as something

that “directs us to reform our will by charity” (19). In the words of this study, epiphanic love initiates humility and transforms the heart. Thus, the process is entirely divinely initiated, cultivated, and received through willing and accepting hearts seeking to recover what God has previously provided. This process is not driven by human functionalism but rather responsiveness to the formational directives received by grace.

Christians do not make themselves into new creatures through a doctrine of holiness and a holy life. Instead, they are transformed into new creatures through the loving work of the Holy Spirit. Disciples are utterly transformed by surrendering or formatively abandoning themselves to the God of love. The gifts of formative abandonment and transformation are often received through using the means of grace, traditional spiritual disciplines, and a rule of life that is in consonance with the character of the God of love.

### **Dispositions, Tempers, and Affections**

Collins in his article titled “John Wesley’s Topography of the Heart” provides a clear and articulate picture of how Wesley understood formation as a complete transformation of life and heart (169). Collins points out that the disposition of the heart toward God is the essence of saving faith for Wesley (163).

For Collins dispositions are habituated conditions of the heart (“John Wesley’s Topography” 171) and have a two-sidedness to them in orientation and realized consequence (163). For example when the disposition of love is habituated through repetitive cultivation, people become oriented to love others. The development of key dispositions, or what Wesley calls holy tempers (169) is the goal of sanctification and makes believers real Christians. Wesley in his sermon “On Zeal” develops a list of what



he considers the holy tempers: long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, and fidelity. Collins identifies other dispositions such as love, lowliness, and gentleness (164) as the substance of holiness and sanctification for Wesley. Dispositions and tempers, for Wesley, are a “fixed posture of the soul” (“John Wesley’s Topography” 171) and represent the condition of the heart.

Affections are part of Wesley’s understanding of the heart highlighted by Collins. Unlike tempers and dispositions, the affections are more fleeting (“John Wesley’s Topography” 171) and are emotional expressions of the will (171). The difference is that the tempers and dispositions are habituated. For Wesley liberty directs the affections so that the affections may relate to their object (“End of Christ’s Coming” 444).

Like Collins, van Kaam defines dispositions as distinctive and lasting behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, or ways of living life (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 71). As such, dispositions will be obstacles to a life in harmony with God or they will facilitate a consonant life with God. Awe is the primary disposition for consonance with the God of love (van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality 2*: 77).

For van Kaam and Muto, dispositions may be cataloged by the nature of their source and development. The dispositions are discussed in terms of preformed dispositions, acquired dispositions, or infused dispositions (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 71).

**Preformed dispositions.** The preformed dispositions (i.e., foundational dispositions) are part of foundational form or the image of God and relate to one or more dimensions of the human life form. The preformed disposition of awe is primary to spiritual formation (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 71).

Preformed dispositions are a part of all people. Augustine describes a preformed disposition of longing for God when he writes that the human heart is restless until the heart finds rest in God (4).

**Acquired dispositions.** Acquired dispositions become a part of the disciples' life of grace as they diligently seek to live out their calling in Christ (Eph. 4:1). The terminology can be confusing. Acquired dispositions refer to the effort of creating habits that serve as springboards toward dispositions, but acquired dispositions are ultimately received by grace and free of human functionalism. For example, as a child and youth, I practiced to be a musician for a number of years, diligently playing the piano and trombone every day. Because of that practice, I habituated some skills at making appealing sounds, but without grace, my heart never acquired the disposition of being a musician, and I remain just a person who plays music by notes.

Some key acquired dispositions are abandonment and gentleness. Acquired dispositions' origin is in human decision making by the means of graced liberty, memory, imagination, and anticipation. In other words, through grace, people are able to say yes to the invitations of the Holy Spirit. As they repeatedly and habitually say yes to the Holy Spirit they may acquire dispositions through this loving and graced relationship with the Holy Spirit (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 71).

**Infused dispositions.** Infused dispositions are received when disciples live in the presence of Christ and are open to the direction of the Holy Spirit, which is received through the pneumatic dimension. The infused dispositions begin "with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and

temperance” (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 71). They are wholly gifts from God.

### **Consonance and Appraisal in Formation**

A theme surfacing throughout this literature review is that of receptivity. A spiritually formed disciple is receptive to the formation of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace and also to the Scripture “that mediates our understanding of the world but also as the Story that narrates our role in it” (J. K. Smith, *Whose Afraid of Postmodernism* 76). The dispositions of consonance and appraisal promote this receptivity to grace-catalyzed transformation.

Spiritual formation is conforming to the image of Christ accomplished through a consonant and congenial relationship with the God of love. Humanity desires the *more than* in life, the transcendent, and this desire is what makes people distinctively human. This desire, van Kaam calls the “transcendent dynamic” (*Formative Spirituality* 6: 3). The transcendent dynamic invites human beings into an ever-deepening, harmonious relationship of greater consonance with God. Believers’ hearts integrate their unique communal call through consonant dispositions.

For van Kaam the primordial disposition for spiritual formation is awe (*Formative Spirituality* 2: 177). However, another disposition serves as a bridge between awe and the heart. This bridging disposition is called consonance (3: 1). For van Kaam, consonance allows humanity to hear the voice of God (4). Consonance functions very much like “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105). As people respond obediently to the transcendent dynamic expressed in their unique-communal life call, consonance may lead them into expressing their emerging Christ-form.

In *Formative Spirituality* van Kaam defines and describes the importance of consonance in spiritual formation. The manifestation of consonance occurs when all the spheres of life resonate together, cultivating a sense of overall harmony in one's life, in one's heart, and with God (3: 2).

Muto and van Kaam emphasize the disposition of consonance and its constellation of dispositions that are cultivated by the grace-directed practice of spiritual disciplines. The constellation of dispositions plays a key role in Muto and van Kaam's articulation of formation-in-common used in this study. They stress the value of this constellation of dispositions surrounding consonance in this way: "Highly revered in formation sessions-in-common are the dynamics or the so-called "C's" of consonance upon which we base the appraisal process in formative spirituality. These are: congeniality, compatibility, compassion, courage, candor, and competence" (*Epiphany Manual* 20). The appraisal process ensures a gentle and proper listening to the directives we receive as being truly from the Holy Spirit. Congeniality is being "in tune with one's genus, kind, or nature" (13). Compassion is the disposition of the interformation sphere and suggests a suffering with others. Compassion is being with and suffering with those in a person's family, church, and social circles. Compatibility is the ability to identify with another, to empathize (14), to see the shared humanity with those in a person's immediate situational context. Competency is the disposition of the outer-mediated world and is a spiritually formed person living as a competent disciple in the world. Collectively, the Cs of consonance guide spiritual formation toward transformation.

The Cs of consonance function like an airport search light on a dark night. These somewhat affective dispositions illuminate the subtle directives and inspirations of the

Holy Spirit so they may be discerned and appraised appreciatively. The entire process of appraisal is conducted with the guiding disposition of consonance.

A description of the fluid and dynamic steps of appraisal is given by van Kaam and Muto (*Epiphany Certification Program, Course IV* 7-13). The appraisal process begins as a disciple abides in the disposition of awe. Second, attention to a directive develops that leads to meditation and reflection. The disciple then begins to apprehend, to become rightly focally aware of new directives from the Holy Spirit. Next comes appreciative abandonment “with no guarantee of outcomes, but trusting deeply in God’s care, we abandon ourselves to the Mystery” (13). The disciple then acknowledges obstacles and dissonance and then affirms the formative decision and direction the process is taking. Last is the step of application where the disciple will apply the new insights and directives to his or her personal and corporate lives. For the mature disciple, the entire process of appraisal may take place in the blink of the eye.

In summary, consonance and appraisal are the dispositions and processes that a disciple uses to cultivate rootedness and groundedness in love. Together consonance and appraisal are expressions of being receptive to the forming influence of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Four Foundational Dispositions**

Dispositions are central for consonant development of the human heart. Dispositions that believers manifest give either a consonant or a dissonant form to their hearts and character. While many dispositions integrate the development of the consonant life, the pertinent dispositions for this study are the dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment. Without the dispositions of appreciation, openness, and detachment, with which awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment are intertwined, “it

would be impossible to know what in fact is congenial, compatible, and compassionate for us in our unique formation field” (van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality* 3: 22). Thus, these four dispositions are key to the forming of the consonant life.

### **Awe**

The disposition of awe is transcendent and necessary to the formation of the human heart in consonance with God (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program, Course III* 18). Awe is much like flint and steel, without awe the spiritual life has no spark of warmth or fire. Awe plows and breaks up the hard and callous soil of the heart. Other words may capture the normative use of the word *awe*. Words such as wonder, amazement, marvel, or reverence convey the idea of encountering something extraordinary. However, van Kaam chooses the word *awe* to describe the unique experience of something *more than* in relationship to God (*Formative Spirituality* 2: 177). Only the disposition of awe is able to spark a sense of reverence for God because of its transcendent nature. Other adjectives may describe a response to the pretranscendent dimensions of personhood as well as a response to creation. By contrast, awe, as a transcendent disposition, descends into human hearts as it responds responsibly to the invitations and inspirations of God (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program, Course III* 11). Awe is primordial, part of human preformation, and must precede and pervade all other dispositions for consonant formation. Awe is the opening of the heart to God, to the deep things of God, and to the love of God. Awe is the consonant response to any epiphany or manifestation of divine love.

The dissonant or opposite response of awe is that of arrogance (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program, Course III* 19). Arrogance is an expression of the

pride-form, of the pretranscendent self, and the manifestation of dispositions that promote self and diminish people, things, and events.

## **Humility**

Humility is the essence of openness to God. It is the fertile ground in which the seeds of life are sown and spring forth. According to van Kaam, in order to live the consonant life, the disposition of openness must be present. Openness in the Christian formation tradition is equated with humility (*Formative Spirituality* 3: 24). The disposition of humility is openness to all disclosures from God in things, people, and events. According to Teresa of Avila, to be humble one must accept the truth about oneself (165). Bernard of Clairvaux in “On the Steps of Humility and Pride” defines humility in terms of a sense of unworthiness that comes from self-knowledge (103). Leclercq gives Bernard’s definition some clarity:

Humility is the knowledge or, more exactly, the active recognition, the acknowledgement, of the truth about three realities: first, about ourselves and our finiteness; second about others: Since the misfortune of the human condition is common to all people we have no right to judge or feel superior to anyone else; third, about God, who, in his Son Jesus Christ, has shown us the way to return to the truth and the fullness of life, which is beyond our limitations. (39)

Humility, then, is simply graced knowledge of God, self, and others.

Muto writes in *John of the Cross for Today: The Dark Night* that self-knowledge is like a wellspring of blessing (126), but clearly this self-knowledge is not limited to knowing one’s strengths, personality style, and weaknesses. This limited self-knowledge is important, but superficial. Self-knowledge, as John of the Cross, Bernard of Clairvaux, and other spiritual masters use the term, has to do with understanding basic human nature, human essence, the ground from which they come. Self-knowledge is the key.

Humans are the creation and not the creator. Life is given to them and not created by them; they are totally and completely dependent on God who loves them and calls them to himself. Humility fosters a *wide-eyed-wonder* at life and human relationships with God and clearly implies a way of living in relationship that understands human brokenness and the fact that humanity is the object of God's love.

The apostle Paul clarifies humility in his Christological hymn:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:5-8)

Paul connects humility with obedience to one's unique communal life call. The disposition of humility manifests as an openness to God and to one's unique life call. However, humility is more than just recognizing the will of God and responding obediently to divine urgings. Humility is seeing human brokenness while also seeing the emerging Christ-form in persons. Humility is loving God, self, and others.

### **Abandonment**

Through abandonment to God, disciples are able to detach from worries and attach appropriately with things, people, and events in their lives. The disposition of abandonment captures the teachings of Jesus:

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:58-62)



Abandonment means living in complete trust and surrender to the mystery that is God. Disciples can abandon themselves because Jesus healed their past on the cross. Their future is also ensured by God's provision. God has healed their brokenness related to that from whence they came and where they are going; they are enabled to live in the present moment appreciatively abandoned to God's providential care.

Abandonment must also be complemented by other dispositions that facilitate abandonment's dynamic potency at work in moving the heart towards consonance with God. In *Formative Spirituality* van Kaam suggests that for abandonment to avoid any accretion (3: 22), that is, being bound in time or context and no longer formational (Lough 11), abandonment must be expressed appreciatively (van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality* 3: 22), and it must also be complemented by the satellite disposition of detachment (27) from the cares of the world. Overattachment to the cares of the world will choke spiritual lives (Mark 4:19).

Abandonment manifests primarily in the intrasphere and is indispensable when people are faced with a transcendent crisis that threatens their social presence and ministry with depletion or inner withdrawal and the lack of engagement (van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality* 3: 333). By appreciatively detaching from the cares of the world, the possibility of attaching and abandoning themselves to God through faith, hope, and love arises.

Abandonment is gentle and humble obedience in contrast to moralistic obedience that is deformative. In other words, all abandonment is obedience, but not everything called obedience is abandonment.

## **Gentleness**

Gentleness is a disposition that does not manifest itself in isolation. It is always manifested through balancing and being balanced by the disposition of firmness. Gentleness helps prevent firmness from becoming a performance taskmaster. Therefore, gentleness is a way of treating things that are beautiful, unique, and fragile (van Kaam, *Spirituality* 16). For van Kaam gentleness brings humanness and flexibility to firmness, which in isolation can deteriorate into severity (*Formative Spirituality* 3: 83).

*Formative Spirituality* further describes the disposition of gentleness as one of the main conditions for consonance (3: 98), and van Kaam suggests that gentleness is evoked by people, events, and things that are valuable, vulnerable, precious (84), and in *Spirituality and the Gentle Life* as beautiful and display the deeper unique qualities (16-17). Gentleness is evoked when people humbly and openly respond to the Christ-form in others and in themselves. They are allowed to respond with awe to God who is at work all around and in them. Gentleness allows people to treat themselves as the broken children of God who are also the objects of the love of God and who are also coheirs with Jesus.

## **Spiritual Direction**

Spiritual direction is a very fluid and dynamic art, changing as the circumstances, knowledge, experience, and maturity of the directee and his or her relationship with the spiritual director changes. For van Kaam and Muto direction is about “the discovery and unfolding of our life call in Christ as revealed by the Spirit” (*Dynamics* 319). Spiritual direction involves identifying facilitating factors as well as obstacles that aid personal and community formation.

In the process of spiritual direction, one must also be aware of passions. Bondi in *To Love as God Loves* reflects that passions “blind us in our dealings with ourselves, each other, and the world, and so pervert perfectly good and useful impulses which take away our freedom to love” (57). Bondi also states that love is not a passion; rather, the role of love is to multiply love and to draw upon the reason (58-60). Discussing the relationship between love and reason Bondi writes, “Love draws reason to the good, to God” (60). Passions are connected to thoughts, and thoughts are connected to willingness. Funk explains the role of thoughts:

Thoughts come again and again. But if a thought is not “thought about” or accompanied by another thought the thought will go away. If another thought, sustained with attention, accompanies the first thought, then the thought thickens and forms into feelings or emotions. If those feelings and emotions coalesce into desires, they become dense and evolve into passions. Passions (still passive) rise strong, hard, and fast. They quicken the mind and pose a question: to consent or not to consent? To consent to good thoughts or desires or passions becomes a virtue, or the habit of doing good. To consent to bad thoughts or desires or passions becomes a vice or a sin, a habit of doing wrong. (6)

In other words, finding direction for thoughts will help form the heart and will.

Spiritual direction often deals with the fallacy of perfectionism. Bondi states, “The term ‘perfect’ suggests, to us modern people, a state of being which allows for no improvement” (*To Love as God* 22). Bondi goes on to say, “When we give the term ‘perfection’ this meaning, opposing it to change, we are using it as the pagan philosophers did” (22). In contrast, the terms *perfect love* and *perfect disciple* speak about surrendering completely to the God of love and to allowing transformation to occur.

Bruce Demarest and van Kaam and Muto delineate three modes of spiritual direction. The three basic types of spiritual direction are self-direction, private direction (one-on-one), and direction-in-common. Spiritual direction is one of several processes

that cultivate and encourage formation (Demarest 188-94; van Kaam and Muto, *Dynamics* 21-27).

Classically a spiritual director is to be wise, learned, and experienced (Muto, "Spiritual Direction"). The true spiritual director in Christian formation is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads through a wise, learned, and experienced disciple in private direction or the Holy Spirit leads directly in self-direction. In direction-in-common, the Holy Spirit leads through the leadership of the human director and the "common sharing" of participants.

Loving detachment is an important disposition for a spiritual director to develop. A director must be obedient to his or her own unique communal call as well as that of the directee. When overly attached, a director may become distracted by many obstructive thoughts and behaviors, resulting in failure to be open to the Holy Spirit. Through loving detachment, a director is able to be completely present with the directee, providing wise, learned, and experienced direction. By modeling detachment, the director invites the directee into a way of being in the world that cultivates growth, integration, and formation through learning to be deeply involved.

Active listening is a second key disposition for the director. The director listens and asks gently probing questions: What are obstacles? What is helping? What other things have you tried that have facilitated growth? What is motivating you one way or another? Active listening involves humility and love. Humility along with prudence is essential to being a wise, learned, and experienced spiritual director (Muto, "Spiritual Direction").

A third disposition for a director is gentle encouragement and acceptance that flow out of God's grace and should be part of the foundational reception a person receives. Gentle encouragement flows not only from a sense of awe and mystery but also from an understanding the preciousness, fragility, and vulnerability of each person (van Kaam, *Spirituality* 16). Gentle encouragement and acceptance prevent spiritual abuse from occurring.

A fourth disposition to convey in direction is the reality of the steadfast love of God. The director may convey the steadfast love of God through his or her presence, bearing, confidence, imagination, language, memories, exercises, and use of Scripture to convey respect, nonjudgmental acceptance, and courteous encouragement. Bondi describes the steadfast love of God in this way:

Because God is without passions, God loves us steadfastly. God is faithful, and we can count on this faithfulness because God is not at one time angry with us, at another time in a good mood. God is never arbitrary, never acts on a whim. This does not mean that God is, therefore, predictable to us in the way a predictable human being might seem to be, because we never know in what form we will meet God's steadfast love. God cannot be manipulated. What we can know of God, however, says Gregory of Nyssa, while we question everything else is this: God comes to the help of those in need. (*To Love as God Loves* 106)

The experience of steadfast love will mean that the lessons of direction will be consistently available as the person moves into greater consonance with his or her unique-communal call.

### **Self-Direction**

Self-direction is a sub-mode of each form of direction. Spiritual self-direction occurs as the person cultivates basic dispositions of the heart. Even the cultivation of dispositions is directed by the Holy Spirit through the use of spiritual disciplines, the

means of grace, and contemplation. Self-direction seeks the desert experience in addressing the interior life. Muto identifies two starting dispositions of desperation and delight in *Pathways of Spiritual Living* (43). These starting dispositions are a “running away from” the world and a “running to” God. They merge into a desert experience with God (43). Anselm Gruen writes, “The desert fathers teach us a spirituality from below. They show us that we have to begin with our passions and ourselves. The way to God, for the desert fathers, always passes through self-knowledge” (18). Self-direction focuses on intentional time alone with God.

### **Private Direction**

According to van Kaam and Muto, private direction occurs when individuals seek out directors for guidance and assistance to work “through obstacles that diminish their ability to listen to the invitations of the Spirit” (*Dynamics* 333). Private direction is really about helping directees process, mentally, emotionally, and especially spiritually, a formation event, personal crises, or transcendence crises in order to hear God’s unique, communal call. Usually private direction is of short-term duration and focuses upon a single formative event.

### **Formation-in-Common**

Formation-in-common uses the dispositions and attitudes described in self-direction and private direction to direct the formation of a group of people toward Christ. *Epiphany Manual* describes, at length, the model for formation-in-common developed by Muto and van Kaam and utilized this study. This manual provides the rational, systematic explanations of the process, addresses obstacles, and provides some suggested texts for beginning formation-in-common sessions.

### **Obstacles and Facilitating Conditions**

Obstacles are conditions, attitudes, and behaviors that exist or occur within a person that hinder spiritual formation and transformation. Facilitating conditions are the events and activities that aid in cultivating transformation. The following are major obstacles and facilitating conditions pertinent to this study.

#### **Sin**

Sin is the most obvious obstacle. Many definitions of sin are available, but this study requires a definition related to the cultivation of formation. David G. Benner references St. Ignatius of Loyola in defining sin as an “unwillingness to trust that what God wants is our deepest happiness” (*Surrender* 66-67). People in the process of spiritual formation may perceive themselves as having moved beyond justification, and they may trivialize the consequences of sin in their lives and “will do everything [they] can do to keep [their] hands on the controls of [their] lives” (67). My intent is not to do a categorical analysis of sin but to recognize that unrepentant sin, unrecognized sin, and an ongoing fallen nature work against the transformation of a disciple’s heart by Christ. In ongoing faith development, the important thing to remember is that death is in sin and life is in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:1-10). The life of the flesh and sin are diametrically opposed to the spiritual life (Gal. 5:17). Sin separates and blinds disciples to what God is doing in their lives in restoring to them their unique-communal call (2 Cor. 5:19). In one sense all obstacles are a function and expression of sin. When sin is prevalent, God’s love and acceptance is impossible to experience.

### **Pride Form**

The pride form, false self, or old self (Col. 3.9) is an obstacle and counterfeit form that derails formation and must always be watched for and guarded against. The forming or emerging Christ form is a facilitating condition for formation in Christ's image. Formation is becoming aware of the Christ form through seeking consonance with God.

### **Mind-Sets**

Spiritual formation is about change and transformation, which God provides through spiritual disciplines and in the means of grace. Carol S. Dweck has done research for over twenty years studying confidence and motivation ("Mindsets" 55) especially in reference to a person's willingness to change. Dweck discovered two mind-sets related to a person's ability to change. The "fixed mindset creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over" (*Mindset* 6). The "growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts" (7). Together these mind-sets offer a revealing look at attitudes and spiritual formation.

**Fixed mind-set.** The fixed mind-set is an obstacle to spiritual formation. According to Dweck in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* the fixed mind-set is characterized by a belief that a person's abilities and qualities are fixed. The fixed mind-set believes in instant accomplishment, in getting things right the first time. As a result of the fixed mind-set, a perpetual defensiveness and urgency to succeed develops, driven by pride and superiority. For those with the fixed mind-set, everything is about outcome.

Dweck in an article "Mindsets: How Praise is Harming Youth and What Can Be Done about It" describes students with the fixed mind-set as caring about looking smarter



(56). Students worried about mistakes and viewed mistakes and effort as a sign of a person with low ability (56). These students also tended to lose heart when confronted with setbacks (56).

Fostering a fixed mind-set is a denial of formability. A person with a fixed mind-set may speak of spiritual growth but behave as if spiritual maturity is an instant act of the Holy Spirit.

**Growth mind-set.** The growth mind-set is a facilitating condition for spiritual growth and is the mind-set of cultivation. Dweck writes that people with the growth mind-set are people in the process of becoming, who love a challenge, and who believe in effort (*Mindset* 245).

Dweck describes those with the growth mind-set as caring about openness and learning. These students saw mistakes and effort as a critical part of the process. When faced with setbacks, these students responded with renewed effort and learning (“Mindsets” 56). The growth mind-set embraces formability and cultivates transcendent self-presence over introspection.

### **Depreciative and Coercive Narratives**

J. B. Smith writes about narratives and the role of narrative in spiritual formation in his book *The Good and Beautiful God* (24-26). Smith’s point is that as the formative events of Christians’ lives are translated into stories and narratives they become formed by their stories. If the resulting story harmonizes with the narrative of Jesus, then these personal narratives will facilitate spiritual growth. However, personal formative narratives are often distorted and deformative and, therefore, are also coercive obstacles. Smith’s approach is to identify deformative narratives, compare them to the narratives of

Jesus, and adopt the Jesus narratives as one's own. This dialogical process can be complex and requires time, effort, and its own praxis pedagogy to negotiate the rewriting of these narratives. Depreciative and coercive narratives are identified here as obstacles, but the addressing of these narratives can be its own transformative experience of formation into Christlikeness.

### **Introspection versus Transcendent Self-Presence**

Human beings naturally reflect upon the world and their interaction with the world through seeking to learn from mistakes and successes by asking questions about motives. The way people reflect upon their lives can be an obstacle or an aid to formation. In his insightful book *In Search of Spiritual Identity*, van Kaam identifies two distinct ways that humans reflect upon their world and lives. These ways of reflecting are introspection and transcendent self-presence (172-96).

Christian self-presence is a necessary condition for spiritual growth and transformation (van Kaam, *In Search* 176). Self-presence is relaxed, peaceful, integrative, and holistic. It approaches life remembering that life is lived in the presence of God who is at work in life through his preventing, justifying, and sanctifying grace. Christian self-presence is a deep and gentle reflection by a disciple that helps the disciple move beyond the attitudes of "What-is-in-it-for me?" or "How-can-I-use it?" or "What-can-I-do-with-it?" (178). Self-presence is about placing oneself before the "Divine Majesty with my sadness, guilt, shame, anger, and failure" (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program, Course VI* 47). Christian self-presence integrates daily life with the richness of eternity and becomes formative and appreciative (47). This integration creates a gentle and relaxed spirit that is open and receptive to the things of God. In this fertile soil, the

root of the heart may take hold and thrive; trust, space, and desire for intimacy with God and willingness for God's will are present. Christian self-presence is the foundational condition of the heart that makes abandonment to God possible.

Introspection may become an obstacle to spiritual formation. As a type of necessary reflection, introspection is identified as aggressive, analytical, fragmenting, and isolated (van Kaam, *In Search* 172-96). Introspection is helpful for precision and solving problems, but because introspection breaks things down into isolated parts, the whole is often lost. Introspection is "looking anxiously into myself in a coercive attempt to figure everything out" (van Kaam and Muto, *Epiphany Certification Program, Course VI* 47). The greatest danger of introspection is the way in which it focuses almost exclusively on the inner spiritual life to the exclusion of the person as a whole. Such reduction of the person is bound to result in a depreciative attitude. Introspection hungers for the extraordinary, is deformative, and depreciative (47). Introspective reflection, while valuable and necessary for life, often distracts with analysis from being with God.

### **Measuring Transformation and Spiritual Maturity**

Proverbs 9:6 says to "lay aside immaturity and live and walk in the ways of insight." This walk (relationship) is where confidence and competence reside and from whence life is received (1 Cor. 3:4-6). Without a clear understanding of spiritual maturity, a door is open for spiritual immaturity to become the norm in disciples' lives. Identifying and defining spiritual maturity must be done in terms of a relationship with Jesus Christ: "Spiritual maturity is inseparable from issues such as the relationship of grace and nature, growth in prayer, contemplation, and action, the role of spiritual darkness.... It is also inseparable from attention to theology, psychology, and history"

(Conn 360). Harper writes about Wesley's desire to have "more than bare converts or spiritual infants. He wanted people who were able to live the Christian life day by day and who could in turn bring others to faith" (75). Spiritual maturity is first an inward maturity that bursts forth into external realities.

Maturity implies "a state of being ripe, of full growth and development, a state of completion" (Buscaglia 41). In Scripture the Greek root word for maturity is *teleios*, which "signifies having reached its end, finished, complete, perfect" (Vine 173-74). Derivatives of the word *teleios* are translated as *mature* in reference to humans (Heb. 5:14) and as *perfection* in reference to condition (Heb. 6:1). For Bondi, spiritual maturity and perfect love go together as fluid and dynamic concepts. Perfect love is a growing love (*To Love as God Loves* 23).

Harper writes about Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection. It is not spiritual infallibility (92). Christian perfection does not make one a superior Christian, nor does it mean immunity from life's problems (93). It can be experienced in one moment but cannot be separated from the work of God's grace before and after. Wesley encourages those who have experienced a moment of Christian perfection to "go on to perfection" (qtd. in Harper 94).

Harper also delineates Christian perfection as singleness of intention, power over sin, radical dependence on Christ, equipment for ministry, and an experience of growth (94-99). Spiritual maturity as transformation is another way to understand *holiness* as both abstaining from sin and living with the renewed presence of God (Fee 109).

Spiritual maturity is not age related or performance based. When the intent of the heart is consonance with God, then a person's Christ form matures and becomes more

consistent, outward oriented, and observable. Willard's important warning that "externalism" or a spirituality that is strictly performance manifested will always end in defeat (*Renovation* 23) should be remembered for its healthy tension between the inner and outer life. For Willard, spirituality concerns who disciples are in their inner lives and that concern is of central importance in formation (24). True maturity and transformation will always have an external expression, but not all external expressions may reflect true mature, inner motivations and attitudes.

### **Research Design**

Several ways of addressing the need for spiritual maturity and epiphanic love in the church today are possible. The design of this study is qualitative. More specifically its design is further classified as an observable case study (Wiersma and Jurs 210; Scawright and Gerring 295). Qualitative research is epistemologically consistent with the principles of spiritual formation described previously in this chapter. These principles of spiritual formation are holistic and dynamic and as such must be explored holistically and in context. Spiritual formation cannot be properly understood using the reductionistic, dichotomous, and functional data analysis of quantitative study. Qualitative research has the ability to do in-depth research that is holistic, flexible, and able to capture the richness of the context (Wiersma and Jurs 201-02; Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 880; Baxter and Eyles 505).

To enhance reliability and validity, the study also employed triangulation with multiple data collection methods (Wiersma and Jurs 256-57; Baxter and Eyles 506; Ambert, Adler, Adler and Detzner 885; Sensing 72). Triangulation is a multimethod approach to data collection for crosschecking data, individual accounts, experiences, and

phenomena providing different perspectives for the study (Bell 118; Sensing 72-74). Six types of triangulation are found in the literature: theory, data, method, investigator, multiple data collection methods, and analysis (Halcomb and Andrew 74-78). Sensing points out that triangulation allows for a complex and detailed description of the project and helps improve the quality of analysis (72). This study employed methodological triangulation that included an analysis of interviews, observations, questionnaires, and self-reporting using journals and accountability forms.

### Summary

This literature review indicates that

- Experiences of God's epiphanic love lead, by grace, to being rooted and grounded in love and are essential to transformation.
- God's epiphanic love is experiential, transformational, and qualitative.
- Experiences of epiphanic love may be cultivated and illuminated by living out four foundational dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment.
- The cultivation of consonant dispositions lays the foundation for transformation by grace.
- Authentic human willing, such as receptivity and willingness, may be cultivated using the means of grace and other spiritual disciplines.
- A growth mind-set and a healthy Christian self-presence are essential to being receptive to the directives for formation from everyday life experiences.
- Salvation as the recovery of the image of God is a process of transformation, by grace, occurring personally and socially with accountability for receptivity and responsiveness to formational directives.

- Formation-in-common, as described by Muto and van Kaam, is an excellent process to facilitate an experience of the epiphanic love of God.

These insights provide the rationale and guide the research intervention process in the following ways:

- An intentional focus on the means of grace is primary.
- The illumination of the four foundational dispositions of awe, gentleness, humility, and abandonment is essential.
- Making use of the personal and social nature of formation for a holistic approach to formation is necessary.
- The method of illumination must provide a breadth and depth to honor the uniqueness of each participant.
- These insights are incorporated into the research design in these ways:
  - The selection of a qualitative research design is consonant with spiritual formation.
  - Formation-in-common is an effective way to facilitate an experience of epiphanic love and to illuminate the four foundational dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment as well as providing communal accountability.
  - Daily spiritual disciplines such as prayer, study, contemplation, Bible reading, and journaling are a part of the design of the Becoming Rooted experience.
  - To generate personal accountability, for receptivity and responsiveness to formation directives, each participant was asked to self-report through journaling and completing a Weekly Accountability Form (see Appendix G).

- I used of the Bible, classic spiritual masters, and contemporary spiritual writers in the formation-in-common experiences to provide breadth and depth to the Becoming Rooted experience.
- I used repetition to encourage the development of affections, tempers, and dispositions that cultivate willing receptiveness and responsiveness to grace and epiphanic love.
- The use of repetition also determined the length of study so that there were three formation-in-common experiences for each of the four dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment. This repetition of focused experiences created an experience lasting twelve weeks.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Problem and Purpose

The impact of a functionally transcendent congregation results in the lack of transformation through the discipleship process. The danger is the underlying assumptions that dictate a shift from a predominately qualitative, formational, experiential, relational, and character-centered ethic to a quantitative, informational, technocratic, and personality-centered ethic (Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word* 49-63; van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality I*:42-49; Schwarz 88; Dweck, *Mindset* 15-55; Fitch 27-46; Belcher 9-15). This paradigm shift results in a new culture that some writers describe as superficial, reductionistic, and focused on results and outcome (c.g., Dweck, *Mindset* 15-55; Fitch 27-46; Belcher 9-15). Some church leaders find it easy to get lost in the functional culture where churches behave as if they exist only for themselves and act as if the individual or the church is able to manage God and God's grace. This behavior, according to Mulholland, becomes nothing more than a "vending machine" approach (*Invitation* 22) in human relationships with God. The contemporary emphasis on efficiency and personality comes at the expense of effective transformational discipleship. Many of today's churches foster a common question: What is in this experience for me? In contrast, the mission of the church is the transformation of persons into receptive disciples of Jesus who live in loving obedient community and love God through loving service to the world so that the kingdom of God is cultivated.

In summary, the problem addressed through experiment with *Becoming Rooted* in this study is the failure of the church to root and ground the disciple's heart in

transformational experiences of God's love. This problem is made worse by a cultural emphasis on quantifiable metrics and *bigger is better* mentality that fosters an attitude of control of the religious experience called functional transcendence. The solution lies in a discipleship process that catalyzes and cultivates a dispositional way of living that is receptive and responsive to grace.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a twelve-week, grace-driven transformational, spiritual formation experience called *Becoming Rooted* for members of the Bolivar United Methodist Church that cultivated encounters with the love of God to allow participants, through God's grace, to arrange their lifestyles to be more Christlike.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions guided the implementation of this study.

#### **Research Question #1**

In what ways did the *Becoming Rooted* discipleship experience, which illuminated the foundational formation dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility, enable participants to have a transformational experience (i.e., epiphany) of the love of God?

This research question focused on discovering the following research issues: (1) assessed effectiveness of a grace-driven transformational spiritual formation experience; (2) illuminated the dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment; and, (3) allowed a participant to encounter the love of God.

This first research question asked about a transformative experience of God's love. The question, on the surface, seems to have three parts. The first part determined if

an experience of God's love occurred. Second, the question seems to ask if the experience of God's love was transformative or just an expression of sentimentality. Epiphanic love, by definition, is present in life in everyday events. An experience of epiphanic love occurs when people become aware of, engage in, and open themselves to this ever-present love. An experience of the epiphanic love of God may be, by God's grace, transformational. Transformation comes only from experiences of epiphanic love and the grace of God. Third, the question asks in what ways participants were enabled to manifest a transformational experience.

I designed the questionnaire administered at the beginning and again at the end of the study specifically to measure spiritual awareness that is consonant with an experience of epiphanic love. By administering this questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the study it became possible to determine if transformation consistent with an experience of the epiphanic love of God occurred (see Appendix D).

The weekly personal accountability form contained a miniexamination of conscience section and tracked changes in awareness of the four key dispositions for this study. A change in these four dispositions was also an indicator of transformation resulting from an experience of the epiphanic love of God (see Appendix G).

The interview process compared the responses of the two interviews. I compared questions eight through fifteen from the preintervention interview I to questions two, three, and twelve through seventeen from the postintervention interview, which addressed an awareness of epiphanic love and transformation (see Appendixes E and F). The interview process helped determine the ways participants were enabled to manifest their experiences of epiphanic love.

**Research Question #2**

What facilitating conditions did participants of *Becoming Rooted* discover that fostered their growth in Christlikeness?

This research question focused on discovering the following research issue: The identification of daily practices that facilitated their transformation so that each participant may become more Christlike. Identifying facilitating conditions sets the stage for formation.

The weekly personal accountability form has a question in the last section that helped participants review their experience. I asked participants to reflect upon what was helpful to them in becoming more Christlike (see Appendix G). In the postintervention interview, questions five and seven probed for facilitating conditions (see Appendix F).

**Research Question #3**

What obstacles did participants of *Becoming Rooted* discover that hindered their growth in Christlikeness?

This research question focused on discovering the following research issue: What activities allowed participants to discover daily practices that hindered their transformation so that each participant may become more Christlike. Identifying obstacles sets the stage for transformation.

The weekly personal accountability form has a question in the last section that asked participants to review their experiences by reflecting upon what hindered them in becoming more Christlike (see Appendix G). Participant reflections aided in the identification of personal obstacles to formation.

In the postintervention interview, questions addressed this research question. Interview questions six and eight probed for obstacles to spiritual formation (see Appendix F).

#### **Research Question #4**

In what ways did participants of *Becoming Rooted* rearrange their lifestyles (*regula vitae*) to become more faithful followers of Christ?

This research question focused on discovering and addressing the following research issues: (1) identifying a grace-driven, transformational spiritual formation experience, and (2) allowing participants, through God's grace, to change their lifestyle to be more Christlike. The ultimate purpose was to discover if any transformation took place.

The first five questions of the weekly personal accountability form addressed the issues of change in lifestyle. The first question indicated, over time, changes in the ability of participants to keep their daily devotions. The next four questions asked participants to reflect upon their experiences with various means of grace, which, over time, indicate changes in lifestyle to a more Christlike way of being.

Question seven of the preintervention interview addressed research question four. This question asked about the devotional habits of participants and served as a baseline for the other instruments (see Appendix E).

The postintervention interview had four questions that applied to this research question. Question four and questions nine through eleven discussed specific changes in lifestyle, both actual changes and changes participants desired to make (see Appendix F).

### **Participants**

The population for this study was from the Bolivar United Methodist Church. BUMC is a 583-member church in Bolivar, Missouri. I identified some participants by their stated interest in accountability or by their potential as leaders and personally invited them. The rest of the sample responded to invitations to participate given through pulpit announcements, newsletter articles, and printed invitations. Each person who attended BUMC received an invitation and had an opportunity to respond. The selection process informed participants of expectations to ensure motivated participants. I kept the sample to twelve to ensure intimacy and proper group dynamic of the formation-in-common experience. Participation consisted of twelve people. Five men and seven women made up the sample and were all Caucasian.

The average age of the population was 58 with the oldest person being 72 and the youngest 24. Five held college degrees or higher, and for seven people high school was their highest educational level completed.

The majority (seven) was or had been hourly employees or farmers. The remaining five were or had been employed in a professional capacity. Only five have been a part of the church less than five years while seven have been at BUMC longer than ten years.

### **Design of the Study**

The research design for this study was a qualitative triangulation design with multiple data collection sources. More specifically, the methodological triangulation is a “between-methods” triangulation design (Halcomb and Andrew 75). The triangular nature of the study was achieved through the use of pre- and postintervention interviews

and questionnaires and other self-reported data collected during the *Becoming Rooted* experience in the form of journals and accountability forms.

### **Instrumentation**

I used three instruments in this study to form a triangulation implementing multiple data collection methodology. The instruments for the study were all researcher designed, including the pre- and postintervention questionnaire (see Appendix D), the weekly personal accountability form (see Appendix G), and the pre- and postintervention semi-structured interviews (see Appendixes E and F).

The nature of this case study makes little use of demographics. However, they are inescapable in research; therefore, the first several questions of the preintervention interview consisted of basic demographic information. This protocol served two purposes: first to break the ice and get participants acclimatized to the interview process and second to acquire the needed demography (see Appendix E).

The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions related to transcendent self-presence and spiritual maturity. To be consonant with the principles of spiritual formation identified in Chapter 2, I designed the twenty questions to be respectful, gentle, holistic, experiential, and open-ended. The questions measured spiritual patterns and attitudes based upon the work of van Kaam as discussed in the literature review. The questionnaire used a ten-point Likert scale to make it suitable for descriptive and qualitative purposes. I employed the questionnaire at the beginning and the end of the *Becoming Rooted* experience.

Each week participants filled out the researcher-designed weekly personal accountability form for the twelve weeks of the actual *Becoming Rooted* experience. This

form consisted of twelve questions. The accountability form tracked participants' faithfulness in their daily devotions, their progress with the formation-in-common directives, and their awareness of the key dispositions. The accountability form assisted participants in reflecting weekly about obstacles and facilitating conditions. The weekly personal accountability form also tracked changes in attitudes of service and community (see Appendix G).

I conducted pre- and postintervention interviews using researcher-designed, semi-structured protocols in order to be able to do content analysis of themes and characteristics of participants' experience of epiphanic love. The preintervention interview consisted of a total of twenty-four questions inclusive of demographic material, and the postintervention interview consisted of a total of seventeen questions (see Appendixes E and F). The postintervention interview also consisted of a review of the questionnaire.

These instruments are not predictive in nature and illustrate nothing about a person's potential for spiritual growth and maturity. Extrapolating from these instruments any psychological keys for growth is not desirable, as Chapter 2 indicates; spirituality is ephemeral and nonquantitative.

### **Pilot Test**

The project hearing committee at Asbury Theological Seminary met with me on 18 January 2013 to review the researcher-designed instruments for reliability. I incorporated all agreed upon suggestions.

To further the reliability of the researcher-designed instruments, I met with Dr. Shelley D. Kilpatrick, Associate Professor of Psychology at Southwest Baptist University



in Bolivar, Missouri. I incorporated all applicable suggestions and comments made by Kilpatrick.

### **Variables**

In this triangulation study, the presence of various data sources makes clarifying variables important. I consider a few variables here.

**Independent variables.** The twelve weeks of Formation-in-Common sessions, which made up the *Becoming Rooted* experience are independent variables. Other independent variables, in this study, were spiritual disciplines and small group accountability.

**Dependent variables.** Participants' awareness of the epiphanic love of God and their awareness of the dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility were dependent variables. Spiritual growth, attitudes, and maturity were also dependent variables. The way participants' arranged their life (i.e., rule of life) and other consonant expressions of faith functioned as dependent variables.

**Intervening variables.** Two variables that I considered in the design of this study were education as it relates to reading level and previous experience with spiritual language, spiritual literature, and personal spiritual experiences. I considered education and reading level very seriously. Much of the design of this study required participants to read and reflect upon what they were reading and apply it to their lives. Therefore, consideration of the educational level of expected participants went into the design and selection of written materials. I tried to use material that was easy to read and comprehend and was proximate to the participants' experience. This consideration not

only lowered the potential of education being a nuisance factor but also helped eliminate any lack of experience with the spiritual literature and spiritual language.

Every area of human endeavor tends to develop its own metalanguage. Previous experience with small groups reading classic spiritual literature indicated a high degree of frustration with the metalanguage of spirituality. Again, a careful selection process with an understanding of participants allowed for neutralization of much of the metalanguage.

In the twenty-first century in America, the entertainment factor is also a variable. The ability to read, focus, and meditate without need for entertainment and distraction is noted as a variable.

Lastly, I considered the theological and spiritual experience of participants. Participants had a high degree of interaction with evangelical foundationalism due to the religious makeup of Bolivar. In the introduction to the preliminary meeting and in the formation-in-common material, I used considerable care to highlight the importance of a wide variety of writers and traditions, ensuring all were consistent with the church's Wesleyan roots.

**Controls.** In order to limit the intervening variables of reading level, I carefully read and selected texts to be of an acceptable reading level. I chose a high school reading level because of the many educators at BUMC.

To teach as well as facilitate the formation-in-common *Becoming Rooted* experience was important. Each time I used a possible new word, I gave a definition and an example. I took great care to make participants aware that new concepts and new vocabulary are just part of living.

## **Reliability and Validity**

Qualitative research, by its very nature, should address issues of reliability and validity in a quantitative-oriented society. Standards are not the same for qualitative research, and reliability and validity are often achieved through the design of the study (Baxter and Eyles 505-06; Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 880).

A standard for evaluation must be applied to qualitative research to achieve desired reliability and validity. I have chosen to implement the criteria set out by Baxter and Eyles. They describe four criteria to establish rigor, by which they mean “the satisfaction of the conventional criteria of validity, reliability, and objectivity within quantitative research” (506). The criteria for enhancing rigor and thus reliability and validity are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (511-18).

**Credibility.** Credibility is the authentic representation of the experience (Baxter and Eyles 512). Credibility is enhanced by the researcher being immersed in the context of the study for a long period of time (509) and through triangulation (506; Wiersma and Jurs 256; Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 885; Halcomb and Andrew 80).

Credibility is achieved in *Becoming Rooted* because I lived and worshiped with participants of the study and interacted with them on a regular basis. The triangulation through data collection also strengthened credibility. Because I was able to check with participants to clarify any questions I had in their reporting, I strengthened credibility further. Along the same line, the process used for formation-in-common had its own internal member check for accuracy by providing a forum to discuss impressions and understandings.

**Transferability.** Transferability proposes that findings from the study will transfer outside the study. Baxter and Eyles suggest, “It is analogous—in principle at least—to the more familiar notion of generalizability or external validity” (515). This transferability is also important for further development of the *Becoming Rooted* experience.

The semi-structured design of the interview process assisted in strengthening the transferability of the study through use of consonant and open-ended questions that provide clarity for interpretation. Detailed descriptions of the formation-in-common experience also accentuate transferability.

**Dependability.** Baxter and Eyles write, “Dependability is the degree to which it is possible to deal with instability/idiosyncrasy and design induced change” (516). Dependability requires the researcher to understand carefully and translate consistently everyone’s experiences during the study (516).

*Becoming Rooted* met the dependability criteria because it was an observable case study and I was a participant-researcher. Consistent reporting with the weekly personal accountability form enhanced dependability. This form allowed for double-checking participant responses. The multiple data collection triangulation design also strengthened dependability by providing data collected at various times, from various settings, and with various instruments that provided broader descriptions with more depth.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability concerns the ability of the researcher not to interject bias into the research findings (Baxter and Eyles 517). Consistency throughout the study is necessary to achieve confirmability. To provide consistency of experience, I used previously written materials and the semi-structured interview process. In addition, I

kept a personal research journal during the study where I reflected upon any bias that I might have conveyed to participants.

The sample size was a threat to confirmability for the case study. The sample was not entirely random. However, Jason Seawright and John Gerring indicate that nonrandom case selection is appropriate when exploring events such as transformation (299).

Another threat was a very functional attitude that saw the daily exercises as something to check off at the end of the week. The covenant requested daily self-presence, weekly accountability, and weekly direction-in-common, all of which worked to minimize this functional behavior.

The use of a covenant served as a method of controlling mortality in the sample through dropout, but it also functioned as a sort of rule of life for the twelve weeks of the study. The covenant established the expectations for the study.

### **Data Collection**

This important and necessary section on data collection is divided further into two parts. First is a detailed description of procedures for the whole study. The second is a detailed description of the formation-in-common experience.

#### **Detailed Description of Procedures**

I gave invitations to participate in the study to the general population by means of the weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter, pulpit announcements, and personal invitations over the course of four weeks (see Appendix B). Persons who had previously shown interest or potential as future leaders in BUMC received a personal invitation and

encouragement from me. Participation was limited to twelve in order to provide the optimal interaction in the formation-in-common experience (Muto, "Spiritual Direction").

**Preliminary meeting.** My choice for the location of the preliminary meeting was to be BUMC's conference room. This location was acceptable because of the needed space for all the study materials, the access to a white board, and room to allow each person to spread out and complete the preintervention questionnaires. I provided beverage and snacks to create a warm and inviting welcome (see Appendix C for agenda). I opened the meeting with a reflective prayer to model the reflective and deliberate nature of discipleship. I invited participants to introduce themselves briefly as a way to begin community building immediately. An overview of the *Becoming Rooted* experience followed the introductions as well as an explanation of the purpose of study. Each person then received Job and Shawchuck's book, a composition notebook to use as a journal, and a three-ring binder. The binder contained two copies of the *Becoming Rooted* covenant, the preintervention questionnaire, twelve copies of the weekly personal accountability form, and the *Becoming Rooted* participants workbook.

I asked that participants use care in reviewing the covenant and disclosure statement and allowed time for each person to read, digest, and ask questions about the them (see Appendix A). The covenant consisted of a commitment to participate fully in the pre- and postintervention testing, to have a daily devotional time using *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* (Job and Shawchuck), to attend worship every week, and to attend the twelve weekly formation-in-common experiences.

Each person signed and turned in one of the copies of the covenant and at the same time selected a letter to be their participant identifier. I explained the use of each of

the materials in their binder. I then asked them to take the preintervention questionnaire using their participant identifiers instead of their names.

**Daily expectations.** Each participant received a copy of *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* (Job and Shawchuck) and a blank journal. I gave instructions and a demonstration in the use of the prayer guide and shared the expectation that each person would use *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* for daily reading, prayer, reflection, and journaling.

**Weekly expectations.** I challenged participants to attend worship each week. If they were not able to be in worship at BUMC, then I asked them to attend worship somewhere. I allowed participants to attend the service and time of their choice. Worship at BUMC followed the lectionary and did not intentionally correlate with the study.

I asked participants to attend the weekly formation-in-common experience and participate actively. The attendance policy explained that they should pre-read the assigned material before each formation-in-common session. I designed the formation-in-common readings to explore the disposition of the week and included biblical, contemporary, and classical readings on spiritual life (see Appendix H).

At the end of each formation-in-common experience, a list of directives was compiled from the group discussion during the conversation stage. The step of closure in the formation-in-common experience instructed the group to limit the list of directives to no more than three for implementation during the upcoming week. The list of directives became part of the spiritual disciplines I expected participants to follow faithfully and report about on the next weekly accountability form (see Appendix G).

The experience itself lasted twelve weeks with a preliminary meeting and a meeting for follow-up and closure one week after the twelfth formation-in-common experience. With the preliminary meeting and follow-up meeting, a total of fourteen weeks comprised the study commitment.

**Weekly themes.** Each week the *Becoming Rooted* participant's workbook provided the readings that served as the basis of the weekly formation-in-common experience. The weekly reading theme illuminated one of the four dispositions of awe, gentleness, humility, or abandonment. I used each disposition three times over the course of *Becoming Rooted*—once by use of biblical sources, once by use of classical spiritual masters' writings, and once by use of contemporary spiritual writers (see Appendix H).

**Structure of weekly meetings.** The weekly meetings convened in the conference room at BUMC. I extended hospitality in the form of welcome and healthy snacks, which were provided upon arrival. I asked participants about their devotional experience over the last week, the obstacles and facilitating conditions for them, and each person was given time to respond.

I collected the weekly personal accountability forms. The accountability form emphasized reflection on participants' daily devotional life (see Appendix G). The accountability forms served to prevent participants from falling into a common tendency to view readings as class assignments and take one day of the week to *make up* their readings instead of practicing the readings as a spiritual disciplines and the daily cultivation of the disposition of faithfulness. The accountability form also tracked faithfulness to the directives that emerged from each formation-in-common experience. Anecdotal reporting of each person's experience during the week allowed for a week-by-



week tracking of attitudinal changes and awareness. I tracked the dispositions of awe, abandonment, humility, and gentleness on the weekly personal accountability form through a short examination of conscience. The form included questions to identify facilitating conditions and obstacles to participants' spiritual formation experience.

At the end of the opening process, everyone moved to the prayer room at BUMC. I followed a strict timetable so that the introductory and accountability phase of the weekly meeting did not last longer than twenty minutes. This punctuality allowed for one hour of formation-in-common and for the entire meeting to be less than 1 1/2 hours.

**Closure meeting.** Participants met for a closure meeting one week after the twelfth formation-in-common experience. Accountability forms were again collected, making twelve forms in total, one form for each of the formation-in-common sessions. Following the scheduling of the postexperience interviews, I administered the postintervention questionnaire. When participants finished the questionnaire, I allowed them to socialize until all finished. I then shared the sacrament of communion and a meal with participants as a way of affirming our shared formation experiences.

### **Formation-in-Common Protocol**

The formation-in-common experience followed the model developed through research and experimentation by the Epiphany Association and published in Muto and van Kaam's book *Epiphany Manual* (23-28) as I discussed in the literature review. Six phases or components made up each week's formation-in-common experience: contemplation, conference, conversation, communion, closure, and commitment (28). The entire experience lasted about one hour.

I selected the prayer room for the formation-in common experiences because of its simplicity, and it was ascetically pleasing but not distracting. Appropriate symbols were present, such as candles and a focal center for each week, providing a reverent atmosphere (see Appendix H).

The first step was that of contemplation. When all participants found comfortable seats in the BUMC prayer room, the formation-in-common experience began by lighting a Christ candle and listening to music that one participant offered to share. The goal was to quiet the mind and the heart and to begin to recapture an awareness of awe, wonder, and a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Immediately the group entered into the step of conferencing. This step consisted of conferring the text for each particular session. I presented the topic of the week and lifted up any themes the community held in common and conferred (presented) to the group the reading selections for conversation. Conferencing focused the group on the material and reminded them of the goals of formation-in-common. The step of conferencing lasted five to ten minutes.

Conversation was the longest step of the formation-in-common experience. Participants shared how the Holy Spirit had spoken to them through the text. Conversation centered on the text, and my task was to keep the focus centered on uncovering directives that were common to all and not personal to one. The conversation step lasted thirty minutes.

After the thirty minutes of conversation, I led the group into the fourth step called communion. Communion is a transitional step involving formational time with the designated text and does not refer to the sacrament of Holy Communion. During this

communion step, I invited participants to reflect quietly and to correct me as I shared the directives that we had discovered in common from the Holy Spirit during conversation (the previous step). The step of communion lasted about five minutes.

The step of closure is the concrete application step in the formation-in-common experience. Here I invited all to help select no more than three directives of those that I had identified in the previous step. These directives were the ones to which we as a group held ourselves accountable for the coming week. These directives and actions became part of the accountability form for the next week (see Appendix G). The step of closure lasted for about five minutes.

The final step of the formation-in-common experience was commitment. With directives firmly planted in our minds as flowing from the Holy Spirit through the text and our common experience, we made a commitment to one another to act faithfully upon what we had shared. We then made a recommitment through prayer, poem, Scripture, creed, song, or a combination of acts. The step of commitment lasted about five minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

I administered the questionnaire at the beginning and again at the end of the study. I then calculated the delta (i.e., change) in each question by subtracting the preintervention answer from the postintervention answer, which provided me with a positive or negative number. I then totaled the delta for the questionnaire as a whole for each participant. During the postexperience interview, each participant was asked about any delta that was greater than a plus or minus one (see Appendix F).

I performed content analysis on my researcher's notes, the weekly written self-accountability reports, journals, and answers provided by participants during the pre- and postintervention interviews for themes and indicators of spiritual formation. Next, I analyzed the interview data for descriptions in order to identify further the indicators of transformation identified as facilitating conditions, for descriptions of obstacles, and for descriptions of intentional change in the way participants order their lives. In addition, I analyzed all materials for indications of transformation and experiences of epiphanic love. This analysis included a comparison of personal and group data.

I first compared and analyzed the responses to the pre- and postintervention interviews for indications of transformation and experiences of epiphanic love. These results I then crosschecked with the analysis of the weekly personal accountability forms and the pre- and postintervention questionnaires, forming a triangulation of data.

I analyzed the combined descriptive data from all instruments as a whole for patterns. This analysis was also done in two parts, individually and collectively.

### **Ethical Procedures**

When dealing with the spirit and heart of a person, researchers are dealing with the very core of that person. To ensure no spiritual abuse takes place, researchers must use care as they invite people to be vulnerable with others, with themselves, and with God. Practicing the disposition of gentleness in the study itself was of infinite importance. Modeling respectful and gentle leadership was vital. A gentle, cultivating leadership is an attitude and behavior that recognizes the innate beauty of the Christ form of each person, the fragility of that form, and its eternal uniqueness. Thus, consonance

was necessary to avoid attempts at fixing people while allowing the Holy Spirit to be the true spiritual guide.

I kept the identities of participants confidential except with respect to the group, and for all written material, participants used the alphabetic personal identifier they had previously selected. I did not collect or keep any personal identifiers and took great care to assure privacy. I did not use the names of any participants in the data analysis. The covenant agreement spelled out in advance that an analysis would be part of a dissertation project and that I kept all data in a locked file cabinet.

Every week, through verbal and written instructions, through verbal and written expectations, and through a verbal and written covenant, I reminded participants of the importance of community, confidentiality, and gentleness. I gave verbal reminders at the end of each formation-in-common experience, telling participants that every personal story was private and that they could only share what this experience meant to them or what they gained from the experience (see Appendix A).

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### **Problem and Purpose**

The problem I address through experiment with *Becoming Rooted* is the failure of the church to root and ground the disciple's heart in transformational experiences of God's love. This problem is made worse by a cultural emphasis on quantifiable metrics and *bigger is better* mentality that fosters an attitude of control of the religious experience called functional transcendence. The solution lies in a discipleship process that catalyzes and cultivates a dispositional way of living that is receptive and responsive to grace.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a twelve-week, grace-driven transformational, spiritual formation experience called *Becoming Rooted* for members of the Bolivar United Methodist Church that cultivated encounters with the love of God to allow participants, through God's grace, to arrange their lifestyles to be more Christlike.

#### **Participants**

Participants for this study were regular attenders or members of the Bolivar United Methodist Church in Bolivar, Missouri. Five men and seven women who were all Caucasian made up the twelve-person sample.

The oldest person was 72 and the youngest person 24 with the average age being 58. The highest educational level for seven participants was the completion of high school. However, five held college degrees or higher.

Five people were or had been professionals while seven had been farmers or hourly employees. Seven of the participants had been a part of BUMC longer than ten

years. At the start of the study, eight were members of BUMC and five had been at the church less than five years.

### **Research Question #1**

In what ways did the *Becoming Rooted* discipleship experience, which illuminated the foundational formation dispositions of awe, gentleness, abandonment, and humility, enable participants to manifest a transformational experience (i.e., epiphany) of the love of God?

Research question one attempted to verify that *Becoming Rooted* remedied the problem of not rooting and grounding disciples in the grace and love of God. The data revealed that not only did the illumination of the foundational formation dispositions enable participants of *Becoming Rooted* to have a transformation experience (i.e., epiphany) of the love of God, but each of these foundational dispositions was effective in being a catalyst for manifesting this epiphany.

Table 4.1 shows that eleven participants reported that *Becoming Rooted* catalyzed an epiphanic experience. The table also indicates that I was also able to verify, through the additional instrumentation of journals, observation, and weekly accountability forms, that all twelve participants actually described an epiphanic experience. Finally, the table also indicates how strongly participants responded when asked about their epiphany of God's love. Each participant's response was assigned a number from one to three based upon the strength of their response, I call this number a *strength of response* (SR) score. I assigned an SR of three where a strong, emotional, or repeated response was demonstrated, a number of two was assigned for responses that indicated some surprise

or meditation on the part of a participant; and an SR of one for responses that indicated a matter-of-fact awareness or attitude. I then averaged the SR scores.

**Table 4.1. Epiphanic Love (N=12)**

EXPERIENCE	<i>f</i>	VERIFIED	SR Avg.
Epiphanic love	11	12	2.7

SR Avg. = the average strength of response where 3 = strong, emotional, or repeated response, 2 = responses that indicate some surprise or meditation, 1 = responses that indicated a matter-of-fact awareness.

Sally<sup>1</sup> did not report, when questioned, that she had an experience of epiphanic love; however, she did describe such an experience in her journal. Whether or not the journal entry described an experience related to *Becoming Rooted* was unclear. Conversation and observation indicated that Sally was very analytical in her approach to the pre- and postintervention interviews, repeatedly saying she did “not want to over think this.”

When I asked participants in the postintervention interview if they had grown spiritually, all twelve participants indicated that they had grown spiritually and in Christlikeness during the twelve-week experience. In addition, all twelve believed that the *Becoming Rooted* process was the catalyst for that growth. Mary stated, “I have changed during this [experience]. There has been some growth in my head around this and scuba [diving] is a perfect analogy for me.” For Mary the analogy of learning scuba diving and the process of becoming comfortable breathing in a hostile environment became, for her, an illustration of her growing embracement of the foundational

<sup>1</sup> All references to participants are pseudonyms.



dispositions as a way of living her Christlikeness in a hostile world. Roberto said, “*Becoming Rooted* opened up windows to look through that I’ve been too slow to pick up on.” As the SR average in Table 4.1 indicates, participants responded enthusiastically to questioning about their spiritual growth and experiences of epiphanic love.

The question of how experiences of epiphanic love were manifested still remains. Table 4.2 contains a summary listing of the most prevalent manifestations participants identified through the instrumentation or that I observed. In the remaining columns are the four foundational dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment. These four columns show the frequency at which participants stated their belief that the identified expression flowed from an experience with an illuminated disposition.

After reviewing the pre- and postintervention interviews, the weekly accountability forms, the participants’ analysis regarding their pre- and postintervention questionnaires, and my observation notes; I was able to identify several classifications of manifestations. These manifested expressions of epiphanic love appeared varied, personal in nature, and not related to any demographic. As expected, Table 4.2 indicates both personal and communal manifestations resulting from the experience of *Becoming Rooted*.

One of the most significant expressions of epiphanic love flowing from *Becoming Rooted* is what I labeled Christian assurance. While I think that several participants experienced new awareness of forgiveness, acceptance, and belonging to God, I was only able to document four participants who reported or demonstrated a new or renewed sense of Christian assurance.

**Table 4.2. Manifestations of Epiphanic Love (N=12)**

MANIFESTATIONS	<i>f</i>	Awe	Humility	Gentleness	Abandonment
Assurance (Christian)	4				
Awe (more awareness and experiences of)	12	12			
Change of job or willingness to change	2				1
Change time priorities	4				
Church/commitment/involvement Increased (3 joined the church)	8				
Community care/involvement/service	6				
Desire for God's will increased	5		1		1
Expression of faith	3				
Gentleness with others and self	6		1	3	
Humility	2		1	1	
Increased awareness of God, self, and epiphanic love	6	3			2
Increased focus on spiritual disciplines	3				1
Less shallow and more rooted	2				1
More able to read Scriptures effectively	2				
More open to God and God's will	5				1
Praying more	3				
Reconnect to God	1				
See Christ in others (improved relationships)	5			1	
Slowing life down	2				
Spiritual growth (generic)	12	4	4	2	2
Tolerance	3				
Trust	5				4

In his preintervention interview, Wylie described his conversion experience; “I was eight or nine, Baptist, and it was just something you just did. What I thought you were supposed to do.” Wylie went on to equate church membership with being a good

person. In the postintervention interview, Wylie was much more articulate about his faith and discussed talking about his faith with other men at work. In discussing Wylie's responses to questionnaire question numbers twelve and fifteen (see Appendix D), which ask about appreciating one's own uniqueness and God's love and acceptance, Wylie indicated that he had a greater sense of "accepting and being accepted" that made him "more tolerant and wanting to help." Wylie said he was committed to letting God tell him the plans God had for him.

Laverne reported being a Christian for fifty years. During a formation-in-common experience discussing abandonment, Laverne stated that she had an epiphany of assurance. The discussion focused on learning to float in the river of God's love. Laverne stated she just realized, after years of struggle, that she is in the river. Laverne said, "I don't know if I'm floating or not but at least I'm in the river." I observed that this sense of assurance appeared to have a healing and freeing effect on Laverne.

Matt described a cognitive faith in the preintervention interview when he said, "I don't think I should bother the Big Guy." However, Matt attributed to *Becoming Rooted* the role of reconnecting him to God and "God's emotion." Matt discussed that assurance allowed him to begin to pray about his own personal life. As Matt and I reviewed question 20 on the questionnaire (see Appendix D), which asks about confidence in God, Matt described the courage he found necessary for him to confront his boss, a confrontation that resulted in Matt quitting his job.

Matt was not the only one for whom *Becoming Rooted* affected a job. Wylie also reported deep worry about his job in the preintervention interview. A week after one of the formation-in-common sessions on abandonment, Wylie shared his experience of

abandonment: “I just gave it over to God and applied for a job with Wal-Mart. I have had peace since.” Matt and Wylie attempted follow the directives on abandonment when it came to jobs.

Involvement in church and service to church and community also increased as a result of *Becoming Rooted* as Thelma, Wylie, and Matt decided to join Bolivar UMC at their initiation. Ernest also began to think of and discuss ways to make a difference in Bolivar UMC and in the community. After a formation-in-common session, Ernest formed an ad hoc committee to attempt to identify and address important issues in the community through the church. Matt, Jennifer, Thelma, Wylie, Alfred, and Mary also appeared to increase their involvement in serving others.

Another change I observed during the study I labeled as *desire for God's will*, was a change in attitude exhibited by the participants' prayer requests. I noticed that Roberto, Wylie, Barbara, Ernest, Laverne, and Shirley's prayer requests became focused on knowing and experiencing God's will. Barbara's prayer is an example of the type of prayer requests these folk were making. Barbara requested, “God help me discern opportunities to share and for the Holy Spirit to give me the right things to say.” In responding to question eleven of the questionnaire (see Appendix D) Laverne said, “I try to approach things Christlike with gentleness and humility instead of I'm right and you're wrong.” In regards to question nineteen, about organizing the participant's life, Laverne stated, “I want to do what God wants me to do and then just relax.” Wylie also discussed question eleven about resetting priorities by saying, “I catch myself, [and ask] why do I want to [do something], [I] evaluate what I am doing and thinking, is it what God wants?” The desire for God's will was consistent throughout the group.

Some participants reported struggling with the disposition of abandonment. I observed during the formation-in-common experience that some commented about their trust and control issues. In their postintervention interview, Thelma, Jennifer, Shirley, Mary, and Wylie reported control issues that making the practice of appreciative abandonment to God difficult. Thelma, during the postintervention interview, declared she did not like the word abandonment, since she was abandoned by her mother and was raised by her grandparents. Now when Thelma reads or hears the word abandonment, she thinks about her mother's abandonment of her. In Thelma's discussion of question ten from the questionnaire that reads, "God has called me to live so my deepest self is becoming a part of the new kingdom of God," she reported her perceived change. Thelma stated the change "rolls back into my awareness of abandonment, a sense of the love of God." Thelma also stated during the postintervention interview that she had experienced some healing around her feelings about being abandoned.

Another observation from the postintervention interviews was that participants did not always distinguish between awe and epiphanic love; for them the two experiences are essentially interchangeable. Roberto recorded in his journal and shared with all participants his experience of awe. A farmer, Roberto described stepping out of his truck, seeing the sunrise, thinking about God's love, and being overwhelmed with a sense he was loved completely. He went on to describe a sense of connection to God and feeling as if time stopped. Roberto said, "I have no idea how long I stood there." Roberto referred to the experience as an experience of love one time and of awe the next time he told the story.

In his postintervention interview, Alfred talked often and mostly about awe and living with awe in every moment. Then as he summed up his *Becoming Rooted* experience, Alfred noted what he called his “big learning. God is in every moment.” It was a wonderful expression of epiphanic love.

### **Research Question #2**

What facilitating conditions did participants of *Becoming Rooted* discover that fostered their growth in Christlikeness?

Facilitating conditions were identified from a review of the participants’ journals, the postintervention interview, and the weekly accountability forms. I discovered during data analysis, that some of the identified facilitating conditions played a stronger facilitating role, so I applied the strength of response score used in Research Question 1. I then averaged the individual SR scores for Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 shows the classifications resulting from data analysis for facilitating conditions. The table contains the facilitating conditions mentioned by participants where two or more participants identified the same facilitating condition.

In Table 4.3, participants identified as facilitating conditions accountable discipleship, *Becoming Rooted* (as a whole), and formation-in-common the most frequently. All twelve participants stated that *Becoming Rooted* helped them to grow spiritually, when asked in the postintervention interview, but only eight went a step further and identified the *Becoming Rooted* experience, in its entirety, as a facilitating condition.

The identification of *Becoming Rooted*, community, and formation-in-common as facilitating conditions demonstrated the communal role in formation. By communal I

refer to the community's impact on participants in cultivating experiences of love, acceptance, acknowledgment, attachment, and other expressions of belonging to a community. Alfred and Mary stated the formation-in-common group became a community that they needed and upon which they depended. Jennifer felt accepted within the formation-in-common group and referred to them as her surrogate family. Matt, Wylie, Shirley, and Thelma each grew in feeling accepted and belonging in this diverse community even after confessing feelings to me of not fitting in after week one. As a whole, the formation-in-common group attached deeply to one another, creating unlikely friendships that may not have occurred without the *Becoming Rooted* experience. The actual formation-in-common sessions were notable for the lack of people talking at the same time. Collectively participants appeared to listen deeply to one another and to give intentional space to each other to be themselves. These particular facilitating conditions are communal in nature and were identified twenty-seven times with a collective SR average of 2.8 on a scale of 3. This SR average appears to be an important indicator of the communal process in forming Christlikeness.

The formation-in-common experience itself did not appear, on the weekly accountability forms, as a facilitating condition until the last four weeks. This awareness corresponds with increased awareness of God, self, and epiphanic love as indicated in Table 4.2 (p. 123). I also noted in my observations a change in the formation-in-common experience after week eight. I observed that the discussion about the four foundational dispositions became much more intimate, revealing, and personally challenging. In the last four weeks, participants appeared more eager and willing to share their struggles, their successes, and their learnings regarding the dispositions.

Mary, Thelma, Laverne, and Shirley resisted, at various times, sharing in the formation-in-common experiences claiming to have nothing to share, being intimidated by those more educated, and being introverted. I encouraged them to share, in spite of their discomfort, for the common good. Interestingly, in the postintervention instrumentation, each identified the formation-in-common experiences and the communal nature of *Becoming Rooted* as a facilitating condition rather than an obstacle.

**Table 4.3. Post-*Becoming Rooted* Facilitating Conditions (N=12)**

FACILITATING CONDITIONS	<i>f</i>	SR Avg.
Accountable devotions (Scripture reading, formative reading, prayer, small group)	11	3.0
<i>Becoming Rooted</i> (the experience as a whole)	8	2.9
Christian music	3	3.0
Community	9	2.6
Contemplation	4	2.0
Formation-in-common experiences	10	2.9
Mentorship	2	1.0
Prayer	3	2.3
Slowing life down	5	2.0
Time invested	6	3.0
Worship	5	2.0

SR Avg. = the average of strength of response where 3 = strong, emotional, or repeated response, 2 = responses that indicate some surprise or thought, 1 = responses that indicated a matter of fact awareness.

In week eight of *Becoming Rooted*, the differentiation of the dispositions also changed. I noted, “The group has begun to speak about the overlap of the dispositions and how ‘they flow in and out of each other.’” At week eight, the participants had



difficulty in focusing and discussing only one disposition at a time. They began to notice and describe a harmony existing among the dispositions.

### **Research Question #3**

What obstacles did participants of *Becoming Rooted* discover that hindered their growth in Christlikeness?

I was able to identify obstacles to Christlikeness from a review of the participant's journals, the postintervention interview, and the weekly accountability forms. During data analysis, some of the obstacles participants identified played a stronger role of obstruction, so I applied the strength of response score and methodology that I used for Research Question 1. I then averaged the individual SR scores for Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 shows the resulting classifications I applied to the obstacles to Christlikeness that emerged from data analysis. The table contains the obstacles mentioned by participants where two or more participants identified the same obstacle.

The SR averages of obstacles appear to be higher than the SR averages for facilitating conditions. This higher SR average suggests either a stronger identification or a stronger emotional response to the obstacles.

The obstacle of life was the only obstacle selected by all twelve participants. This classification includes the issues of living life. I lumped together obstacles such as work, coping with culture, the world's values, lifestyle choices, and consumerism because for participants these appeared to be related obstacles. Participants seemed to believe that the obstructions, classified as life, were beyond or not directly under their control.

In addition to life, the obstacles of health, interpersonal relationships, and time are obstacles, which can be said to exist outside of the participants' symbolic heart. Though they are outside of the heart, they are still expressions of the heart.

**Table 4.4. Post-Becoming Rooted Obstacles (N=12)**

OBSTACLES	<i>f</i>	SR Avg.
Attitude of negativity	3	2.3
Attitudes (bad)	3	2.3
Control (through knowledge)	2	2.5
Control (refusal of abandonment)	6	2.7
Discipline, lack of	4	2.3
Distractions (generic)	5	2.4
Emotional (anxiety, stress, inadequacy)	3	2.3
Health	2	1.5
Impatience	3	3.0
Interpersonal relationships	7	2.3
Life (world, culture, work, lifestyle choices)	12	2.6
Self (pride, selfishness, intolerance, judgmentalism)	7	2.7
Time (hard to find)	6	2.0

SR Avg. = the average of the strength of response where 3 = strong, emotional, or repeated response, 2 = responses that indicate some surprise or meditation, 1 = responses that indicated a matter of fact awareness.

The remaining majority of obstacles (nine) are intrapersonal in nature, that is, they are part of the participants' symbolic and integrative heart. Obstacles manifested in participants' lives in a variety of ways. Matt, Wylie, and Roberto expressed frustration, impatience, and even intolerance with people. Jennifer, Sally, and Mary demonstrated

concern for loss of acceptance, loneliness, and isolation. Sally expressed fears of being betrayed and abandoned by friends. Sally, Jennifer, Laverne, Shirley, Ernest, Thelma, and Roberto struggled with issues of control in their personal lives but also control issues affecting how others experienced them. Sally took control a step further by attempting to gain control of her life experience by seeking knowledge and understanding. The majority of obstacles were participants' discovery of personal expressions of willfulness or examples of introspection with their attempts at Christlikeness.

#### **Research Question #4**

In what ways did participants of *Becoming Rooted* rearrange their lifestyles (*regula vitae*) to become more faithful followers of Christ?

During the postintervention interview, I asked participants to identify in what ways they had changed. Further analysis of the weekly accountability forms, journals, and observational notes provided for a strong understanding of their effective lifestyle changes. The reporting of these changes is seen in Table 4.5.

The most frequent reporting of change by participants centered on accountable discipleship. Not only did participants report they had grown because of their experience of accountable discipleship, but six months after the study all twelve were still engaged in a weekly accountable discipleship group similar to the structure of *Becoming Rooted*, except without the formation-in-common experiences.

Ernest illustrated well the significance of the change, catalyzed by *Becoming Rooted*. Before his experience of accountable discipleship Ernest was not able to read the Bible and derive any benefit. After *Becoming Rooted*, Ernest reported, that he was now “able to actually read the Bible and get something out of it.” For Ernest, this change was

because of *Becoming Rooted*, the assigned readings, the accountability, and the community's discussion in the formation-in-common sessions. Six months after the study, Ernest shared that he was also engaged in the formative reading of Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*.

**Table 4.5. Lifestyle Changes (N=12)**

Lifestyle Change	<i>f</i>
Accountable discipleship	12
Bible reading	2
Formative reading	2
Increase in time spent devotionally	9
Living of a slower/gentler lifestyle	9
New awareness/engagement with dispositions	2
Personal schedule modified for spiritual disciplines	6
Practicing abandonment	5
Practicing awe awareness	4
Practicing gentleness	7
Practicing humility	2
Seeking greater community	4
Service to others	4
Sharing their personal faith with others	4

All twelve participants declared the importance of their daily devotional time; however, only nine noticeably increased the amount of time they actually spent daily and weekly in devotion. The other three participants appeared to maintain their preintervention devotional routines.

At least six participants reported modifying their personal schedule to practice spiritual disciplines. I grouped the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, formative reading, and meditation into this classification about spiritual discipline. Matt was clearest about his change, saying that he gave up his early morning routine of watching television to spend time reading and praying.

*Becoming Rooted* illuminated four foundational dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment, and participants reported these dispositions as being areas for lifestyle change. Participants reported practicing gentleness nine times, which seems to be noteworthy. Jennifer reported overcoming her shyness to open up to new people because of her attempts at practicing gentleness. Barbara combined her practice of abandonment and gentleness and stated it made her “less judgmental and more sensitive to what God has for me.” Wylie, who reported before the *Becoming Rooted* experience that he often did not have much patience with people, declared in the postintervention interview that the practice of gentleness had made him “more tolerant of people.” Mary discussed taking time “consciously [to] note moments of gentleness and abandonment.” Gentleness was a frequent topic of conversation outside of the formation-in-common group.

From my point of view as pastor, I can say that these twelve participants increased their time and efforts in being of service to others in the church. However, only four participants identified and linked their *Becoming Rooted* experience to their personal efforts at serving others.

### Summary of Major Findings

The *Becoming Rooted* experience and the study's assessment of effectiveness produced some important findings:

1. *Becoming Rooted* and formation-in-common are effective in catalyzing experiences of epiphanic love and kindling transformation. *Becoming Rooted's* focus on the truth of heart formation rather than the outer life prevented the age and cultural diversity of the sample group from limiting the effectiveness of *Becoming Rooted*.

2. Participants of *Becoming Rooted* referred to experiences of awe and of epiphanic love interchangeably. This intermingling is separate from the disposition of awe.

3. The foundational dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment work in harmony with each other to catalyze personal and communal spiritual growth. Participants identified how learning one disposition informed them about the other dispositions.

4. The communal nature of Christlikeness seems to foster facilitating conditions. Participants readily identified the importance of community in their spiritual growth.

5. Obstacles appear to be expressions of willfulness or introspection in a personal struggle toward Christlikeness. The majority of identified obstacles to spiritual growth were personal in their operation.

6. Spiritual growth and transformation took place through the personal and communal nature of *Becoming Rooted*. The design of *Becoming Rooted* assisted in the spiritual formation of the whole person as participants discovered personal directives with the help of the community.

7. Personal experiences of epiphanic love lead to a sense of assurance and a desire for community, sharing of faith, and service. Participants became more *other* focused, as the experience progressed and sought to be of greater service to the church.

8. Formation-in-common and *Becoming Rooted* required a minimum of twelve weeks to cultivate effectively the level of sharing, directive compliance, and awareness of foundational dispositions desired for further transformation. More than twelve weeks would be desirable since participants were still learning to think dispositionally at the end of the *Becoming Rooted* experience.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### Major Findings

This research project began with a desire for the transformation of people into healthy and mature disciples of Jesus Christ. In Chapter 1 I opened with the song *Cats in the Cradle* and a discussion about a *just like me* syndrome of cultural accommodation where the church is becoming *just like me* instead of becoming like Christ and becoming the transforming instrument of God the church was meant to be. For many churches today, a disciple is nothing more than a person who attends church. More emphasis is placed on the material nature of the church than on its spiritual nature. This misguided emphasis creates pressure on pastors to produce growing churches as if discipleship was all about the program, technique, function, and management of the discipleship process.

The literature review highlights a part of the church's role in disciple making as teaching disciples how to follow the Augustinian methodology of cultivating dispositions and habits that incline them to look for God (Foster and Beebe 27). These habits involve the use of spiritual disciplines, a rule of life, and the four foundational dispositions that foster a receptive attitude, posture, and spirit. The design of *Becoming Rooted* consonantly utilized classical methods for spiritual formation such as spiritual disciplines, accountable discipleship, and formation-in-common. The findings in Chapter 4 indicate that *Becoming Rooted* is effective in catalyzing and cultivating a consonant and graced process of awareness and reception of epiphanic love and transformation.



### **Cultural Effectiveness of *Becoming Rooted***

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matt. 5:6). At least on one level this beatitude explains the effectiveness of *Becoming Rooted*. Participants were all hungry and thirsty for something more in their spiritual lives. Thus, participants were receptive and eager to make the personal investment in time, energy, and discipline required of them. The level of accountable discipleship encouraged in *Becoming Rooted* was new to all participants, but all made valiant efforts to engage fully in the study and to receive and apply their learnings to their lives.

However, participants manifested great diversity in their hunger and thirst for God. Participants revealed they became part of the *Becoming Rooted* experience to help the study, to be socially included, to satisfy their curiosity, and to grow closer to Jesus. Participants demonstrated diversity that resulted from different social strata, educational levels, geographic locations, and experience. The demographic section of the preintervention interview did not ask about any political, social, or theological views, but participants revealed their diversity in these areas, over time, during the study. Moments of personal contention, that resulted in gentle and humble discussion were due to this diversity.

The cultural significance of this gentle and humble response to each other’s differences intrigued me. It suggests that *Becoming Rooted* has potential to be effective in a postmodern culture. In postmodern culture, according to J. K. Smith, “incredulity toward metanarratives” exists (*Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism* 64). Thus, a church must recognize it does not own the Truth. Even the Bible, while true, is not the Truth.

However, the groundwork for postmodern formation comes with the consideration of some biblical truths. Jesus is truth (John 14:6).

During the *Becoming Rooted* experience, participants searched for heart-forming truth together from sources that pointed to the Truth, thus, they acted as a searching community. The use of classical and ancient methods of formation challenged participants but also allowed them to perceive foundational dispositions as important for consonant formation. This communal focus on the formation of the heart by Truth for the common good channeled the vast diversity of the group in consonant ways and avoided the possible dissonance often generated by diversity. The communal search for Truth by participants and the interpreting of their experiences in the formation-in-common sessions are quite harmonious with values of postmodernism. J. K. Smith highlights the importance that postmodern culture places on a communal approach to the study and interpretation of Scripture (*Who's Afraid of Postmodernism* 23). I believe Smith is correct when he writes that postmodernism "can be an ally of our ancient heritage" (23). As part of *Becoming Rooted*, participants become a community that met together and focused on a sacred text, interpreted the text together, and developed a dispositional formation strategy shaped by the text. A key activity was the sharing of the participant's narratives of personal encounter with the text and with Jesus during the formation-in-common process of *Becoming Rooted*.

This finding suggests that *Becoming Rooted* is not only culturally effective but has potential as a good methodology for formation in a postmodern culture. The consonant use of the four foundational dispositions and the practice of receptivity

discussed in the literature review suggest that implementation of *Becoming Rooted* with any group of disciples who hunger and thirst for something more is possible.

### **Experiences of Awe and Epiphanic Love Intermingle**

I designed *Becoming Rooted* to illuminate the disposition of awe with the anticipation that mastering the disposition of awe would allow participants to become aware of epiphanic love. Practicing dispositional awe is like putting on filtering eyewear that removes the distortions of life and allows the disciple to be able to perceive epiphanic love, by grace, always present in their lives. An experience of epiphanic love is the genesis of an experience of awe. Said another way the dispositional practice of awe opens the heart to the possibility of experiencing epiphanic love, which, in turn, generates an experience of awe.

This intermingling of the experience of awe and epiphanic love in the minds of participants is not surprising. In truth, an experience of epiphanic love is an experience of awe. The disposition of awe, or the habit of putting on the special eyewear and looking for what grace is revealing to the disciple of epiphanic love, is something different.

The difference between what I call dispositional awe and an experience of epiphanic love or awe is important for the spiritual director to understand. The spiritual director may use this knowledge to help guide a disciple who becomes stuck or preoccupied with experiencing awe. However, for most disciples to distinguish between the experiences of epiphanic love and awe is not necessary for the deriving of spiritual benefits from these grace-governed experiences.

For participants, as with the psalmist, creation is often the stimulus for experiencing awe. The mystery of epiphanic love revealed in creation can hold some insight for worship. The psalmist writes about the mystery and awe of creation:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. (Ps. 8:3-5)

Capturing this mystery through the practice of corporate dispositional awe is vital for worship. Ultimately, one of the goals of worship is to experience epiphanic love while worshipping God. Learning and teaching how to practice dispositional awe in corporate worship will help prevent worship from deteriorating into a superficial focus on shallow sentimentalism.

### **Dispositions and Consonance**

The design of *Becoming Rooted* focused on illuminating the dispositions of awe, gentleness, humility, and abandonment through the formation-in-common experience. In the literature review, I identified these four dispositions as foundational habits for spiritual formation. Participants found, as the study moved into the last four weeks, that these dispositions complemented each other and built upon the foundation laid by each disposition separately. This complementary trait demonstrates an ebb and flow among the dispositions.

These illuminated and foundational dispositions are not the ultimate focus of *Becoming Rooted*, which is spiritual transformation. The dispositions function as catalysts in transformation by grace. Participant after participant commented on the effects of learning the dispositions in their lives. Roberto commented that gentleness

meant he had to be nice to people. Wylie, a truck driver, commented that other drivers noticed a change in him. Wylie also reported less irritation with other drivers: “I don’t want to run over as many now.” Laverne expressed assurance of God’s love and a better understanding of what God wanted from her. Therefore, illuminating the healthy use of these dispositions was vital. Participants knew they were supposed to be humble and surrender everything to God. However, as the dispositions were illuminated, discussed in formation-in-common, and directives sought, participants engaged the dispositions in new ways. Together they identified what achievable first steps should be and found acceptance and grace from each other when they failed. The illumination and practice of the disposition wedged open participants’ hearts to grace and epiphanic love.

Instrumental for the establishment of healthy dispositions is the consonant or harmonious state of flux suggested by this finding. Consonance was part of *Becoming Rooted’s* design, however; consonance was not illuminated as a disposition itself.

Consonance suggests a harmonious and synergistic relationship among the dispositions, but it also suggests a relationship among the disciple, the dispositions, and the disciple’s personal and communal image of God. Consonance implies the necessity to balance or harmonize dispositions and not monolithically focus on one disposition to the exclusion of others. The constellations of dispositions and their interaction in opening the disciple’s heart to graced transformation are vital. For example, awe allows the disciple’s heart, calcified and hardened by life, to perceive Christ in others and to develop gentleness. Awe and gentleness together create space to practice humility. Awe, gentleness, and humility allow the practice of appreciative abandonment to God to be possible. In conversations about abandonment, participants commented on the difficulty

of the disposition of abandonment. This difficulty was especially true for Jennifer, Laverne, Shirley, Thelma, and Matt. They also discussed how the other dispositions of awe, humility, and gentleness were helpful in understanding and practicing the disposition of abandonment.

The pastor or spiritual director must be aware of the ebb and flow among consonant dispositions. When a disciple is struggling with control issues, or struggling to be gentle with someone that has hurt them in the past, then the spiritual director may gently illuminate and encourage consonance. Thus, the disciple may become receptive to grace and anticipate becoming alert to transforming epiphanic love.

Focusing on consonant dispositional formation instead of church growth or even spiritual maturity allows for the formation of the disciple's heart by God's will and grace and not by human willfulness. The results of consonant formation are awe-filled, humble, abandoned, and gentle disciples. In essence, consonant dispositional formation attunes the disciple's heart to the frequency of God's heart so the invitations of the Holy Spirit and the anticipation of transformation are received.

### **Communal Nature of Facilitating Conditions**

The literature review identified one of the key components to spiritual growth as its communal nature. Wesley in his sermon "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount Discourse IV" posits that meekness or humility is essential for the spiritual life and may exist in isolation, but gentleness and longsuffering are equally essential and require a communal setting (196).

The findings showed that even individualistic appearing participants identified the communal aspects of *Becoming Rooted* as facilitating conditions. A review of Table 4.3

shows that five of the eleven identified facilitating conditions were clearly communal (p. 129). Further, five of the six most identified were communal in nature.

Facilitating conditions help disciples grow in their Christlikeness. Wesley warns against spending an inordinate amount of time in pious solitude and neglecting the communal nature of Christlikeness saying such action would “destroy, not advance, true religion” (Upon Our Lord’s” 196). The challenges and encouragement that come from “living and conversing with other men” are the instruments by which true religion and Christlikeness is facilitated (196). With the foundational dispositions a part of the spiritual makeup of participants of *Becoming Rooted*, many opportunities for communal relatedness are primed. Participants commented on how the dispositions and the formation-in-common experiences changed their relationships with each other and others at BUMC. Mary found the community of *Becoming Rooted* “very meaningful.” Mary thought the diversity of the group and the communal discussions helped her change some negative reactions toward others. I observed how all participants appeared to greet each other and others more warmly. The greeting ritual was so noticeable that members of BUMC, who were not participants of *Becoming Rooted*, questioned me about what was going on with some participants as members experienced participants as being much friendlier and warmer.

### **Personal Nature of Obstacles**

Table 4.4 lists interpersonal relationships as the one communal obstacle that participants identified as the most often (p. 131). However, while the classification *interpersonal relationships* sounds communal the classification is not about communal dynamics but rather is about intrapersonal coping. For example, one participant struggled

with her inner attitude toward a coworker she found irritating. This classification is not about communal dynamics but an interior struggle.

Obstacles appear to be internal responses to the outer environment of life. The obstruction is not in an event or circumstance but in the person's perception and response. Thus, obstacles are an expression of the person's willfulness, closed mind-set, pride form, sin, or introspection. By identifying obstacles to Christlikeness and addressing them with the foundational dispositions obstacles may, by grace, open the door on a new level of humility and abandonment to God. Bringing the obstacles into consonance will allow disciples to grow in Christlikeness. For instance, Lavern commented about practicing the dispositions of humility and gentleness in her personal relationships: "I'm trying to be Christlike instead of saying I'm right and you're wrong" when she was dealing with a difficult person in her workplace.

Addressing personal obstacles necessitates caution. The arena of personal obstacles is where formation can lose out to a subtle form of functionalism, human perfectionism, or even rabid introspection. *Becoming Rooted*, consonance, and the foundational dispositions center disciples on becoming receptive to who they are and the image of God that is being recovered, by grace, on their way to Christlikeness. Benner, in the preface to *Spirituality and the Awakening Self: The Sacred Journey of Transformation*, writes about the dissonance between being and doing:

Being and becoming are both routinely sacrificed on the altar of doing. The gentle but persistent heartbeat of our deep longings to find our true place in God is gradually drowned out by the cacophony of superficial desires, and we are left with a small ego-self rather than an awakening self that is ever becoming in the Spirit. (x)



For Benner being and doing are consonant expressions of personhood and doing can become a form of functionalism. Some disciples struggle with issues of control, trust, and vulnerability and may not do well in *Becoming Rooted*. These disciples may need one-on-one discipleship before they can be fully engaged in the formation-in-common experience and self-direction.

### **Personal and Communal Nature of Spiritual Formation**

Highlighted by the literature review and my study is the necessity that spiritual formation be both personal as well as communal. This finding suggests that the formation pedagogy used in *Becoming Rooted* was both personal and communal and further suggests the effectiveness of *Becoming Rooted* to affect the whole person. For example, when discussing writings of Augustin and Julian of Norwich, during a formation-in-common experience illuminating awe, the group struggled with the readings. Not used to the style of these writers, participants were struggling when Alfred said that he needed the group to get more out of the reading. At this point, participants began to share their insights, began to discover learning from each other, and eventually developed an effective list of directives to follow for the week ahead. Participants discovered that in order to grow personally and effectively they needed their communal relationship

This finding is necessitated if *Becoming Rooted* is truly an effective model for spiritual formation. Transformation must address the whole person both personally and communally. The *Becoming Rooted* process invited participants to bring their personal insights from their personal devotions to the communal formation-in-common experience. The community then provided directives for personal implementation, and then they shared their experiences, with those personal directives, communally the next

week. I found this weaving together of personal and communal formation to be effective in *Becoming Rooted*. For example, Alfred confessed to having always had an intellectual faith. Alfred believed the fellowship and social relationships of *Becoming Rooted* were important experiences to broaden his faith.

Participants mirrored the weaving together of personal and communal growth through their use of the dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment. A weaving and intermingling of the dispositions occurred, as previously discussed, and this weaving and intermingling of the dispositions was expressed personally and communally. For example, a participant would practice personal awe and gentleness alone. Then the participant would practice awe and gentleness communally, seeing God's purpose, beauty, and grace in the group, the church, and with humanity.

This personal and communal nature of formation, as used in *Becoming Rooted*, has an ever-expanding importance. Dunn writes, "[A] full life in Christ cannot be experienced, expressed, or shared outside the scope of relationships, nor at the expense of other persons" (10). This full life in Christ emphasizes the importance of the personal and communal nature of spiritual formation and evangelism. Dunn's statement suggests a consonance with the foundational dispositions illuminated in *Becoming Rooted*. This suggests that *Becoming Rooted* might serve as a good foundation, not only for leaders but also for a theology and practice of evangelism.

Transformation is a snapshot of a fluid dynamic process as are the dispositions. Participants must to continue to practice the spiritual disciplines, means of grace, and dispositions to avoid becoming static. If spiritual disciplines and dispositions are anticipatory to transformation then the absence of the spiritual disciplines and

dispositions will either obstruct or diminish the anticipation of transformation. These participants appear well on their way to becoming disciples who have learned to take accountability for their own and other s' spiritual growth and formation. Laverne demonstrated her readiness when she reported *Becoming Rooted* helped her experience assurance and affirmation and gain confidence that she was on the right path. Laverne was expressing that she understood what she needed to do to ensure her openness to God's epiphanic love.

### **Outward Focus from Epiphanic Love**

The epiphanic love of God is not only transformative but also sacrificial and has an outward focus toward others. For *Becoming Rooted* to be an effective catalyst of transformative discipleship, it must demonstrate an outer focus.

A basic premise in the design of *Becoming Rooted* is the belief that as a disciple experiences the epiphanic love of God a graced transformation occurs. The transformed disciple is outwardly focused. Without first experiencing epiphanic love, the disciple remains untransformed even though they may engage in moralistic behavior. Experiencing epiphanic love is what Mulholland describes as "breathing in" and the outward focus of service is what Mulholland calls "breathing out." Mulholland writes, "[T]here can be a breathing in without a breathing out but it is impossible for there to be a breathing out without a prior breathing in" ("Spiritual Formation" 11). By design, *Becoming Rooted* successfully cultivates foundational breathing in on the part of participants in faith and hope of a graced breathing out.

The language of this study focuses on developing a receptive disposition through the illumination of the foundational dispositions of the study. The reason for this focus on

language is that an attitude of receptivity excludes willfulness and relies on grace. Muto writes, “There is no receiving without giving and no giving without receiving” (“Living Contemplatively” 83). Graced receiving is Christian spirituality while giving and outward focus is Christian mission. For Muto, “Christian spirituality and Christian mission are two sides of the same coin” (82). Thus, *Becoming Rooted* is outwardly focused to the extent that it first cultivates graced transformation through the experiencing of epiphanic love.

Since *Becoming Rooted* is based upon graced receiving of epiphanic love that transforms a person’s life into the life of God’s purposes, *Becoming Rooted* provides real hope for reclaiming true healthy evangelism. Evangelism should be centered in graced and transformative epiphanic love. Evangelism also flows from epiphanic love and the grace of God. An effective witness, for evangelism, is the transformed life of a disciple abandoned to Jesus Christ.

*Becoming Rooted* demonstrated, in this finding, that it cultivates the receiving-giving, the breathing in-breathing out dynamic. Several participants displayed a greater focus in worship. Sally, Wylic, Ernest, Matt, Jennifer, Thelma, and Mary all began to comment or ask questions about sermon content or illustrations. They also express renewed appreciation for music and especially the lyrics of the hymns. They show curiosity about and discussed the importance of the Christian year. This deeper engagement of participants in worship and their self-initiation of acts of service are further indicators that *Becoming Rooted* is an effective discipleship methodology.

### **Length of Experience**

I designed this experience to aid in the creation of good habits. The findings indicated four weeks were needed for participants to become comfortable with the formation-in-common procedures. During this time, participants developed trust, gained skill at reflecting on their lives, found acceptance, adapted to a new type of reading material, and a new way of reading formationally. Significant change occurred in group dynamics, as noted in the findings, after week eight.

Disposition formation takes time. After twelve weeks, participants were still learning how to live dispositionally. Spiritual maturity in Christ is a lifelong process. The writer of Hebrews suggests the disciple “lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1). I believe the word *perseverance* suggests sticking dispositionally with the race, as in a marathon. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 about competing in such a way as not to be disqualified but to finish.

Transformation took time for the early Methodists, also. Tom Albin studied the class meetings and bands of early Methodists. Albin reports that often after two years of participation in classes or bands that people discovered they were experiencing salvation (43).

The nature of dispositional formation and the lifelong nature of spiritual formation suggest the necessity of having an accountable discipleship process for participants of future *Becoming Rooted* participants to step into at the end of the experience. Any accountable discipleship group in which *Becoming Rooted* graduates

participate should continue with the language of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment and encourage listening for directives from the Holy Spirit.

### **Implications of the Findings**

This evaluation of *Becoming Rooted* as a transformational spiritual formation experience has shown its value. I designed *Becoming Rooted* to assist in consonant dispositional spiritual formation. This study highlighted *Becoming Rooted's* strengths.

A key implication of this study is the challenge it poses on those who insist on the mission of a church as, directly or indirectly, being the growth of a bigger church. The growth of a bigger church is not a bad thing except when it is the mission. Therefore, this study implies that the mission, health, and vitality of a church are at risk when a church fails to focus on spiritual formation through focusing on consonant dispositions. Focusing on consonant dispositions allows God's grace and epiphanic love to guide and ultimately determine the future of a church without the blindness and distractions of human willfulness and functionalism. The church must have a pedagogy of receptivity to God's grace and epiphanic love.

A further implication from this study is that a church must identify the right goal for formation and the right process. The study shows that spiritual formation must be grace infused, beginning with a process that depends and trusts in the grace and epiphanic love of God. A correct reading of John 15 recognizes that the goal of Christian living and formation is abiding in the vine named Jesus. Abiding is another word for consonant dispositional formation. When abiding in Christ (spiritual maturity) is the goal of the Christian life, the fruit of abiding is transformational living. Transformational living implies that disciples will live sacrificially for the kingdom of God by loving God with

all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving their neighbor as themselves (Mark 12:30-32). Abiding in Christ and transformational living should not quash or diminish a church's evangelical zeal to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in grafting people onto the vine. To the contrary, this study implies that when a church fails to develop spiritual formation practices that are consonantly dispositional the resulting formational practices are often versions of functionalism. Functionalism in spiritual formation, this study suggests, will create a process for disciple making that leads to, I believe, guilt, spiritual abuse, and eventually to a shallow, simplistic, and sentimental Christianity. The disciples of spiritual formation functionalism are susceptible to the prevailing winds of culture. Functional churches form fair-weather members who are not rooted and grounded in the transforming epiphanic love of God.

Another vital implication of this study speaks to the life of the pastor. Pastors fall easily prey to pressures to be successful with quantifiable metrics placed on them by churches and denominational structures and become an entirely functional, doing, and controlling person. Pastors face a real temptation to seek out a *program that works* and grow the church. Consonant dispositional spiritual formation reminds the pastor that his or her role is not to grow the church, which is the role of the Holy Spirit. The role of the pastor is to practice consonant dispositional spiritual formation in his or her life and to help others learn abiding in Christ that roots and grounds lives in the epiphanic love of God that transforms people. The pastor will experience real joy being a part of God's plan in the transformation of human lives.

The core leadership of a church must embrace the importance of the spiritual formation of transformative disciples as the mission of the church. Therefore, an

important strategy is the implementation of *Becoming Rooted* as part of a curriculum to develop the core leadership. This curriculum will have churchwide ramifications. Since transformation is a lifelong journey, remembering that *Becoming Rooted* is simply one of the first miles of that journey and that participants will need to be encouraged to participate in a long-term accountable discipleship group following the end of *Becoming Rooted* is a necessity.

The greatest value of this study is the emerging pedagogy of consonance and receptivity. This study shows that the consonance of the foundational dispositions creates space for receptivity, instead of willfulness, to thrive. Anticipation and hope of transformation occurs in this harmonious receptivity of being rooted in good soil.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to the context of the Bolivar UMC and to the American culture characterized by individualism and privacy (Dunn 12-13). The population, for this study, was small, but the small sample size for this case study can be justified (1) because the purpose of the study was to generalize to a larger sample (Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 885); (2) because the intimacy, character, and nature of spiritual formation prevents the feasibility of a larger sample size (Seawright and Gerring 295); and, (3) because I was also an observational participant in the activities of the study (Baxter and Eyles 505). The sample for the case study was also not entirely random. However, Seawright and Gerring indicate that nonrandom case selection is appropriate when exploring events such as transformation (299).

In real ways, *Becoming Rooted* is also limited by the emotional, mental, and spiritual state of participants. Emotional and relational health are limiting factors as these



affect the communal nature of the formation-in-common experience. People in need of an inordinate amount of support may have a great deal of difficulty processing and appreciatively apprehending humility and abandonment. Some individuals may need private direction in their collage of discipleship before they will be able to be fully engaged in the formation-in-common experience and self-direction.

The findings also revealed some potential limitations. I identify a limitation in the inability of some participants to read and apprehend the experience of others, specifically classical spiritual formation literature that has its own metalanguage, style, and images. Participant motivation limits the study, also. Future participants who participate in *Becoming Rooted* simply to attend or to have an experience are participating by human willfulness and control and will thus limit the possibility of appreciative abandonment.

Another limitation of this study is its length. Great difficulty is present in trying to develop dispositions within just twelve weeks. A longitudinal study is the best way to access transformation of a much longer period. Anecdotal evidence from journals of early Wesleyan followers suggests two years of accountable discipleship often occurs before sense of transformation is described (Albin 43).

### **Unexpected Observations**

One unexpected observation was of how entrenched functionalism is in me and in others. Functionalism is a part of the culture and language. During *Becoming Rooted*, on many occasions participants would choose control over abandonment to God. As I contemplated the future implementation of *Becoming Rooted*, I had to fight deliberately my impulse to turn *Becoming Rooted* into a mechanism of formation.

The communal nature of the formation-in-common process was also a surprise. The surprise was not that community formed but the speed at which it formed. Through the practice of the foundational dispositions and the intimate sharing during the formation-in-common experience, a truly cherished community formed before my eyes.

At the start of this study, I worried if enough variation would occur that the change could be called transformational. In the postintervention interviews, I was surprised at the emotion and power of the participant s' narratives. The personal and communal nature of *Becoming Rooted* provided, in the minds of participants, clear evidence of transformation.

### **Recommendations**

*Becoming Rooted* is a culturally effective pedagogy in spiritual formation and should be used as a leadership preparation class. Because of the high level of accountable discipleship, future participants of *Becoming Rooted* should be disciples who have demonstrated a hunger and thirst for God. Without this hunger and thirst, *Becoming Rooted* may be twisted into another cog in the church machine. If the potential leaders and participants have this hunger and thirst, I have faith that the four foundational dispositions will help leaders to get along and focus on the mission of the church rather than on their personal needs. *Becoming Rooted* leaders, who practice the foundational dispositions, will be less likely to dismiss others or their ideas and to practice humility and gentleness in dealing with others.

Current translations of spiritual classics in a conversational style are best for use as source material for formation-in-common. Participants can easily get lost in the mechanism of trying to decipher the reading instead of being formed by the reading.

The setting is very important for the formation-in-common experiences.

*Becoming Rooted* took place in a comfortable setting but it was too small. Chairs need to be comfortable and have arms on which to rest materials. Tables should be avoided as they create a classroom setting.

The finding that a strong personal identification exists with obstacles suggests a need to provide more focus on consonance, on appreciative abandonment, and gentle obedience. To accomplish this focus, I suggest introducing a trustworthy rule of life to participants early in the *Becoming Rooted* experience. This introduction could be a presentation and a discussion about the role of a rule of life and how to relate personally to the rule of life.

Participants should remain a part of a long-term accountable discipleship group after the end of *Becoming Rooted*. I would like to see the development and evaluation of a long-term discipleship methodology that uses the four foundational dispositions as part of its core values, language, and pedagogy.

One area of further research that is of interest comes to mind. Dunn writes about America's passion with individualism and privacy, which color the context of evangelism and by extension spiritual formation (12-13). Considering America's passion and the cultural effectiveness of *Becoming Rooted* begs for further research and examination. This area of research would be to examine if the personal and communal nature of *Becoming Rooted* and the participant s' affinity for these communal experiences will have any effect on the values of American individualism and privacy.

### Postscript

This study would have been a waste of time if it were just an academic exercise to further human cognition and to stretch the mind. For me, it has become the next vista in my spiritual journey. Since I was a child, I have believed in God and longed for something more in life even when I am confused or disobedient. I remember one winter morning in 1968, sitting in a sunbeam that was streaming through a window, reading a condensed copy of Bernard of Clairvaux about the love of God. I failed then to understand him, and I find I still have not plumbed the depths of Bernard's insights after all these years.

The process of this dissertation has taken me on a phenomenal journey of the mind and the heart. My course work at Asbury Theological Seminary and at the Epiphany Association in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, has challenged my hunger for understanding and the longing of my deprived heart. On 16 August 2008 at 4:30 a.m., when I hung up from talking with an officer of the Missouri Water Patrol, I had just learned of the death of one of our sons. In the darkness of that hour, the truth of van Kaam's appreciative abandonment option became my personal reality. All I could do was abandon myself to God. In the weeks to follow, I learned much about practicing awe, gentleness, humility, and abandonment. The experience was a strange odyssey of joy in the midst of grief. I was so grateful to God to be in the middle of this dissertation process when this life crisis occurred.

The practice of the foundational dispositions, used in this study, and graced moments of experienced epiphanic love ceased being a beautiful concept on the page and became glorious personal realities. God's love is present in every moment, just as Alfred,

a participant in the study, said. I believe that without providential leading in my discovery of these foundational dispositions, my life would be so much emptier.

Thanks be to God for revealing, through the Holy Spirit, that the ancient ways still are vital ways. Dispositional formation, while not a fad, holds great promise for postmodern pilgrims as they search to encounter the God who loves them. The spiritual life is an adventure that catches believers up in the current of God's love and sweeps them along. Eugene H. Peterson writes about the journey:

The way of Jesus cannot be imposed or mapped—it requires an active participation in following Jesus as he leads us through sometimes strange and unfamiliar territory, in circumstances that become clear only in the hesitations and questionings, in the pauses and reflections where we engage in prayerful conversation with one another and with him. (18)

The journey is not predictable but it can be anticipated. Disciples can faithfully follow this spiritual journey and anticipate a transforming experience of God's epiphanic love. Life can be a difficult and challenging journey but when disciples abandon themselves in faith, to a loving God the journey will be grand. My hope and prayer is that this study will help the church to become *just like Him*.

**APPENDIX A**  
**COVENANT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

**Introduction**

This study in formation-in-common is part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree through Asbury Theological Seminary. As such, the high standards of Asbury are followed.

Identities of participants are kept private except among participants themselves. An analysis requires the collection of some demographic information. However, all identities will be left out of the data analysis and other written reporting. Further, all collected data will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

To participate in this study, participants must be willing to attend all fourteen weeks of *Becoming Rooted*, complete all experience questionnaire protocols, journal, and complete all the weekly reports and daily devotions. Further, the sharing of all journals with the researcher is requested as part of the data collection.

This study implements a formational concept called *Formation-in-Common*, which prayerfully discovers directives for further spiritual formation. A participant must be willing to apply these directives for the time period specified, which will not be longer than the fourteen weeks of the study.

*Formation-in-common* requires a healthy concept of community in order to be successful. Therefore, the process is relaxed, peaceful, integrative, and holistic. The strength of this type of formation is that it combines daily life with the richness of eternity by encouraging a lifestyle that is both formative and grateful. This study requires

a high level of commitment for fourteen weeks as each person's level of commitment reflects on to the group as a whole.

A competent and trained leader who will ensure a safe and welcoming environment in which to be open to God's Spirit will lead each formation-in-common experience. All unique concerns will receive the gentle and nurturing care that may be required.

### **Participant Covenant**

To be a successful participant, I covenant to be a fully open participant by practicing daily Christian self-presence by

- Using the daily devotionals provided by *Becoming Rooted*,
- Meditating and journaling, and
- Daily implementing spiritual directives that the formation-in-common experience identifies.

Weekly I will

- Submit a weekly accountability form,
- Be prepared to participate fully and openly in the formation-in-common experience, and
- Attend worship as often as possible during the fourteen weeks of the *Becoming Rooted* experience.

Further, I will participate by

- Honestly and openly participating in the pre-*Becoming Rooted* testing and interviews,
- Sharing my journals, and

- Being available and participating honestly and openly in the *Becoming Rooted* testing and interview after the experience has ended.

Date:

SIGNED:



## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT/INVITATION

Ever desire something *more than* out of your life? Are you looking for something *more than* in your spiritual walk?

You are invited to participate in a fourteen-week spiritual formation process called *Becoming Rooted*. *Becoming Rooted* is an in-depth formation process created to help us be open to God's grace and presence. *Becoming Rooted* is designed to help us live Paul's prayer for us from Ephesians 3:17-19: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

The spiritual formation process of *Becoming Rooted* will begin with a preliminary meeting on Sunday, February 10, 2013 and will conclude with a meeting of closure on Sunday, May 12, 2013. Weekly meetings will be each Sunday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

*Becoming Rooted* is a formation-in-common process designed by Pastor JC as part of his course work at Asbury Theological Seminary. *Becoming Rooted* is part of an evaluative study; therefore, some study-related questionnaires will be a part of your commitment. *Becoming Rooted* is limited to twelve people. There is no cost for the experience. For more information and to sign up, contact Pastor JC or call the office at 555-444-1234.

**APPENDIX C**

**PRELIMINARY MEETING AGENDA**

*Becoming Rooted*

Week 1 Pre-Experience Meeting

Agenda

Welcome

Scripture     Mark 4:1-20

Prayer

Overview of the *Becoming Rooted* experience

Review of materials

    Sign in and remember your participant code.

    Read and sign covenant. Turn in signed copy.

    Review participants' workbook

        Guidelines

        Devotional book

        Weekly accountability form

Interview schedule

Scripture     Ephesians 3:14-21

Prayer

Pre-*Becoming Rooted* Questionnaire completed

## APPENDIX D

### BECOMING ROOTED QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each statement carefully, then circle the number on the continuum that corresponds to a response that most accurately reflects your attitude today, in this moment.

1. I know I am a loved and accepted child of God on the way, by God's grace, to becoming God's intended person.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

2. I have a strong sense that I am on the same page with God and what God is doing in the world.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

3. In my common everyday activities, I see God's eternal love at work.

Never/Not at all — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 — Always

4. I experience life and its eternal mystery as full of meaning.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

5. Every moment is an opportunity to live out the prayer, "Thy will be done."

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

6. Openness guides my relationships with people.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

7. My relationship with God thrives on a sense of total acceptance.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

8. In my daily activities, I have a sense of the ineffable presence of love.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

9. God's presence calls me to create thriving and loving relationships with people.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

10. God has called me to live so my deepest self is becoming a part of the new kingdom of God.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

11. I consistently reset my priorities to be consistent with what Christ is doing in my life.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

12. Daily I appreciate how unique I am to God's gracious purposes for all of creation.

Never/Not at all Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

13. In my relationship with Christ, I hunger and thirst for something more, something deeper, and something more meaningful.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

14. I feel God gently helping me grow spiritually.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

15. God's love and acceptance motivates me to make a difference context where I live.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

16. I have a sense of urgency to renew my relationship with God, first thing every day.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

17. I gently pace myself to move with the will and love of God instead of striving to hurry life along.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

18. The memory of some key and powerful, graced-filled moments in my life  
continue to transform my life.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

19. I desire to organize my life to avoid doing too much.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

20. In every moment I have confidence God is using me to build his kingdom on  
earth.

Never/Not at all

Always

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

**APPENDIX E**

**PRE-BECOMING ROOTED INTERVIEW**

**Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Married: \_\_\_\_\_ Children: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage #: \_\_\_\_\_ Previous Marriage ended by: \_\_\_\_\_

Education level: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you lived in Bolivar, MO?
2. How long have you been a part of Bolivar UMC?
3. Why did you join the Bolivar UMC?
  
4. How long have you been a Christian?
5. Tell me about your experience of becoming a Christian. What drew you? What did you think at conversion? What did you feel at conversion?
  
6. Briefly describe your spiritual history. What has been your relationship with God throughout your life?
  
7. How much time per day do you spend in devotional time (Devotional time includes prayer, Bible reading and study not related to preparation for teaching, meditation, journaling, reading of devotional materials, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many days per week? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Would you describe an experience of God's overwhelming love, grace, and presence (epiphanic love)? Details:
9. How often do you experience a sense of wide-eyed wonder, amazement, or awe in your life?
10. What things or events make you feel wide-eyed wonder, amazement, euphoric, or awe?
11. What things or events in your life help you see the preciousness and fragility of another person? Describe briefly.
12. Do you ever just want to let go and let God? Do you have a desire to surrender to God and just follow God with everything you have, to give yourself away to God? Describe your experiences.
13. How do you experience yourself when you are interacting with others? Do you want to listen, fix, pray, or just shake your head in frustration and/or judgment?
14. Do you see yourself as someone who encourages and helps others?
15. How would you describe your openness to God as opposed to openness with God?



**APPENDIX F**

**POST-BECOMING ROOTED INTERVIEW**

1. How was the *Becoming Rooted* experience for you?
2. During this study, did you have any experience of God's overwhelming love, grace, and presence?
3. Do you feel as if you have grown in your spiritual walk during this study?
4. In what ways do you think you have changed since this study began?
5. What helped facilitate any experience of God's love and presence?
6. What, if anything, hindered your experiences of God's love and presence?
7. This study focused on four habits or dispositions (awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment). Which disposition, if any, helped you grow in your spiritual life?
8. Which disposition, if any, hindered growth in your spiritual life?
9. How much time per day do you spend in devotional time? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many days per week? \_\_\_\_\_ (Devotional time includes prayer, Bible reading and study not related to preparation for teaching, meditation, journaling, reading of devotional materials, etc.)

10. Is it your intention to keep this schedule going forward?
11. Because of this experience, what changes, if any, do you wish to make in your spiritual life?
12. How often do you experience a sense of wide-eyed wonder, amazement, or awe in your life?
13. What creates in you a feeling of wide-eyed wonder, amazement, or awe?
14. What things in life help you see the preciousness and fragility of another person?  
Describe briefly.
15. Do you ever just want to let go and let God? Do you have a desire to surrender and just follow God with everything you have, to give yourself away to God?  
Describe.
16. How do you experience yourself in relationship to others? Do you see yourself as someone who helps and encourages others?
17. How would you describe your openness to God as opposed to openness with God?

REVIEW OF QUESTIONNAIRE (Discuss questions with greater than a +/-1 change) Reflect about the change. What might be the cause of the change? Is the change related to *Becoming Rooted*? What thoughts, impressions do you have about the change?

Question 1.

Question 2.

Question 3.

Question 4.

Question 5.

Question 6.

Question 7.

Question 8.

Question 9.

Question 10.

Question 11.

Question 12.

Question 13.

Question 14.

Question 15.

Question 16.

Question 17.

Question 18.

Question 19.

Question 20.

**APPENDIX G**

**WEEKLY PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FORM**

Mark each day you were able to do the daily devotions.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wed	<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
Were you able to attend worship? Reflect upon your worship experience.						
What did you do in response to the directives received from last week?						
Share a story from your personal experience of formation this week.						
What ways were you able to minister to others this week?						
In what events this week did you experience or were aware of being part of the body of Christ?						
<b>Examination of Conscience</b>						
Have you had an experience of wonder, awe and amazement? If yes, briefly describe.						
Have you lifted others up this week? If yes, briefly describe.						
Have you responded to the preciousness and fragility of another person this week? If yes, describe briefly.						
Have you given yourself away to God sometime this week? If yes, briefly describe.						
<b>Review of Experience</b>						
Reflect on what was helpful to you as you tried to be more Christlike?				Reflect on what hindered you as you tried to be more Christlike		

## APPENDIX H

### ***BECOMING ROOTED PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK***

#### INTRODUCTION

As we begin the *Becoming Rooted* experience together, let's take a moment and look ahead. In the next twelve weeks, we will encounter the Word of God and several of God's faithful servants, writers like, Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, Adrian van Kaam, and James Bryan Smith. We also will be thinking about and delving into four habitual attitudes and behaviors, which we can call dispositions. The *Becoming Rooted* study was designed to illuminate the important dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment. These dispositions or habits are necessary for mature spiritual life and a life deeply rooted and grounded in love (Eph. 3:17). We each experience these dispositions even when their presence in our lives goes unacknowledged.

Because of God's great love and rich mercy, believers are made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:4-5). The goal of this new life in Christ is to grow into the full stature of Christ (Eph. 3:13) by putting away the former life and putting on the new life in Christ (Eph. 4:22-24).

The end of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 is a foundational Scripture for our time together:

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:14-19, NRSV)

Paul invites believers to live a life worthy of God's call on their lives through humility and gentleness (Eph. 4:1-3) in order to "live in love" (Eph. 5:2). Through the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ who dwells in believers, they are "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17). The process of becoming rooted and grounded in love produces comprehension, experience, and expression of God's love. Being rooted and grounded in love is the transformed life. This transformation is the supernatural work of the Spirit.

Being rooted in love is a theme throughout Scripture and is an indication of God's grace, mercy, and promise for the transformed life. Of significance is Jesus' key parable into the secret of the kingdom life known as the parable of the soils (Mark 4:1-20).

The fourth chapter of the gospel of Mark introduces us to the teaching of Jesus and his parables describing the kingdom of God. Mark 4:10-12 illustrates that parables demonstrate that any teaching concerning the kingdom of God is not about personal cognitive ability but about hearing the words of Jesus in such a way that a change occurs in how one perceives the very foundations of life and this change in perception results in change of behavior. Being rooted is the very nature of receptivity and spiritual formation.

While growth in Mark 4 is not the result of the human will humanity is called to cooperate with God in order to grow. The mystery of growth is in the nature of the seed (Word) and the receptivity and responsiveness of the person.

For seeds to grow, they must become rooted in good soil (Mark 4:6, 17). Being rooted in good soil is at least a metaphor of how deeply humanity should allow the mystery of the kingdom to become rooted in life through sustained and deeply intimate relationships. A rooted life in the kingdom is a gift of grace.

The illumination and cultivation of the basic dispositions of awe, humility, gentleness, and abandonment may allow us to receive the graced state of being rooted in love. This is our goal together, to become alive in Christ through becoming rooted and ground in love. I pray that our journey together leads us to the places where we experience the embrace of God's love in our lives.

Love is central to this study and we will experience several expressions, sources, and objects of love. We will find the concept of epiphanic love woven all through this study and it is important to have a working definition. In this study, I refer to epiphanic love as the love that creates transformation. Epiphanic love is the sense of love, of acceptance, and of transformation that we experience when by grace alone and the work of the Holy Spirit, a person becomes aware of God's love and presence. When God's love breaks through the noise of living and becomes a profound part of our life experience, we can refer to it as epiphanic. This love is gently present in every experience of our lives.

From some place I clipped the following devotional that should help set the tone for this experience. Reflecting on Ps. 63:1-8, C. P. Hia writes:

A hotel in Singapore introduced an express buffet—eat all you can in 30 minutes and pay just half the price! After that experience, one diner reported: “I lost my decorum, stuffing my mouth with yet more food. I lost my civility ... and I lost my appetite for the rest of the day, so severe was my heartburn.”

Sometimes I think in our devotional reading we treat God's Word like an express buffet. We wolf it down as fast as we can and wonder why we haven't learned very much. Like physical food, spiritual food needs chewing! For those of us who have been Christians for a long time, we may have a tendency to speed-read through the passages we've read many times before. But in doing so, we miss what God is meaning to show us. One sure sign of this is when we learn nothing new from that passage.

David's desire was right when he wrote in Psalm 119:15, "I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways." That's the way to treat God's Word—to take time to mull it over.

Let's not come to the Bible as if we were going to an express buffet. Only by meditating on God's Word will we get the most value for our spiritual well-being.

Our experience with *Becoming Rooted* in love is not to rush but to savor. May the Holy Spirit guide our time together.



**WEEKLY FORMATION–IN-COMMON EXPERIENCE OUTLINE**

**CONTEMPLATION** (approximately 5 minutes)

This is time to center our hearts and prepare for our encounter with God.

**CONFERENCE** (approximately 5-10 minutes)

Leader focuses discussion of text and identifies key points.

**CONVERSATION** (approximately 30 minutes)

The group has a conversation about what God through the Holy Spirit has to say to everyone in common.

**COMMUNION** (approximately 5 minutes)

The group reflects as leader reads aloud the directives that have been shared during the conversation.

**CLOSURE** (approximately 5 minutes)

The group agrees on no more than three directives for implementation in our lives during the next week. The directives are to be written down in next week's guidelines.

**COMMITMENT** (approximately 5 minutes)

On week twelve the sacrament of Holy Communion will be shared together.

## WEEK 1 GUIDELINES

Part of the commitment to *Becoming Rooted* is to participate by having daily devotionals. To ensure we all have similar experiences, as a community, we will be using Ruben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck's prayer book *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*.

Each new week, in the book, begins with Monday. Thus, week one of our journey begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_ (date), on page \_\_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_\_ of the lectionary and the readings for Week 1 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

### Readings for Week 1

We begin our quest to become rooted in God's love through exploring the disposition of awe. A disposition is really little more than a habit. A disposition can be a habitual response, attitude, or way of responding. When our habits become an essential part of our identity of who we are, we refer to them as dispositions. Therefore, we begin with the essential habit of awe. There is an awareness of the disposition of awe throughout scripture.

Many words are used to express awe. Words such as mystery, wonder, amazement, marvel, and reverence. God has wired people with a default setting for *awe*. People have an innate sense there is *something more* to life. Awe is the experience of wide-eyed-wonder, the experience of being overwhelmed by how good and loving God is, and the experience of discovering how impoverished we are in comparison to God.

Sometimes an experience of awe will seem to transcend our lives. Time may appear to slow or even stop. The concerns of life seem to drop away and all of our attention becomes focused on our encounter with God's transforming love in an "aha" moment. This sense of a transforming "aha" moment of God's love is called an experience of epiphanic love. When we experience God's epiphanic love nothing else matters, our entire attention has been captured. This seems to be what happened to Isaiah when he received his call:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Master sitting on a throne—high, exalted!—and the train of his robes filled the Temple. Angel-scraps hovered above him, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two their feet, and with two they flew. And they called back and forth one to the other,

Holy, Holy, Holy is GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies.  
His bright glory fills the whole earth.

The foundations trembled at the sound of the angel voices, and then the whole house filled with smoke. I said,

“Doom! It’s Doomsday!  
I’m as good as dead!  
Every word I’ve ever spoken is tainted—  
blasphemous even!  
And the people I live with talk the same way,  
using words that corrupt and desecrate.  
And here I’ve looked God in the face!  
The King! GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies!”

Then one of the angel-seraphs flew to me. He held a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with the coal and said,

“Look. This coal has touched your lips.  
Gone your guilt,  
your sins wiped out.”  
And then I heard the voice of the Master:  
“Whom shall I send?  
Who will go for us?”  
I spoke up,  
“I’ll go.  
Send me!” (Isaiah 6:1–8 The Message)

The experience of awe can be so strong that it can be perceived as terror. The great early preacher John Chrysostom writes regarding awe:

Do you desire to learn how the powers above pronounce that name; with what awe, with what terror, with what wonder? “I saw the Lord,” says the prophet, “sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up; around him stood the seraphim; and one cried to another and said, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” Do you perceive with what dread, with what awe, they pronounce that name while glorifying and praising him? But you, in your prayers and supplications, call upon him with much listlessness; when it would become you to be full of awe and to be watchful and sober! (Homily Concerning the Statues 7.9)

Only God can evoke this sense of wonder, terror, and awe.

When we have an experience of God, people are often overwhelmed by God’s holiness and love. The reason we are overwhelmed is that we are so unholy. Even

the most holy human being pales in comparison to the holy God in Isaiah 6. Jesus described this sense of brokenness as a form of bankruptcy. Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3 ESV).” Those who are blessed are not just spiritually poor. They have a wide-eyed-wonder at their spiritual impoverishment. They are amazed when they discover they are completely indebted to God and his gracious love.

It is one of the goals of *Becoming Rooted* to kindle intentionally our awareness of awe daily. We wish to let awe be a lens through which we perceive life. The Psalmist gives us a glimpse of a life lived in harmony with a disposition of growing awe:

God, investigate my life;  
     get all the facts firsthand.  
 I'm an open book to you;  
     even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.  
 You know when I leave and when I get back;  
     I'm never out of your sight.  
 You know everything I'm going to say  
     before I start the first sentence.  
 I look behind me and you're there,  
     then up ahead and you're there, too—  
 your reassuring presence, coming and going.  
     This is too much, too wonderful—  
 I can't take it all in!  
 Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit?  
     to be out of your sight?  
 If I climb to the sky, you're there!  
     If I go underground, you're there!  
 If I flew on morning's wings  
     to the far western horizon,  
 You'd find me in a minute—  
     you're already there waiting!  
 Then I said to myself, “Oh, he even sees me in the dark!  
     At night I'm immersed in the light!”  
 It's a fact: darkness isn't dark to you;  
     night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same  
 to you.  
 Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out;  
     you formed me in my mother's womb.

I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking!  
 Body and soul, I am marvelously made!  
 I worship in adoration—what a creation!  
 You know me inside and out,  
 you know every bone in my body;  
 You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,  
 how I was sculpted from nothing into something.  
 Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to  
 birth;  
 all the stages of my life were spread out before you,  
 The days of my life all prepared  
 before I'd even lived one day.  
 Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful!  
 God, I'll never comprehend them!  
 I couldn't even begin to count them—  
 any more than I could count the sand of the sea.  
 Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you!  
 And please, God, do away with wickedness for good!  
 And you murderers—out of here!—  
 all the men and women who belittle you, God,  
 infatuated with cheap god-imitations.  
 See how I hate those who hate you, GOD,  
 see how I loathe all this godless arrogance;  
 I hate it with pure, unadulterated hatred.  
 Your enemies are my enemies!  
 Investigate my life, O God,  
 find out everything about me;  
 Cross-examine and test me,  
 get a clear picture of what I'm about;  
 See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong—  
 then guide me on the road to eternal life. (Psalm 139,  
*The Message*)

The disposition of awe leads the believer into a heart led relationship with God.

## WEEK 2 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

We have committed together in *Becoming Rooted* to participate by having daily devotionals. To ensure we all have similar experiences, as a community, we are using Ruben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck's prayer book *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*.

Week two of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_. This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to

express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 2 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_ (date).



## Readings for Week 2

For week two our focus is on the disposition of gentleness. The disposition of awe, which we explored last week, allows us to cultivate the development of gentleness as we respond to and interact with other people. With wide-eyed wonder, we sense Christ in them and perceive them as God's fragile children just like us.

Scripture is the primary source for spiritual truth. However, as Methodists, we also recognize the importance of tradition. Tradition includes spiritual masters who lived and wrote about their encounters with God and scripture. These masters' writings have helped people through the centuries unlock the mysteries of scripture and of God's epiphanic love. Last week we learned from scripture. Presently, our teacher is one of the great spiritual masters, Bernard of Clairvaux.

The disposition of gentleness flows out of God's epiphanic love, the "aha" of transforming love. Love is gentle but it is not weak. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote about the epiphanic love that leads to a balanced and gentle life. Bernard wrote eighty-six talks on the biblical book "Song of Songs" over eighteen years. He drew so much inspiration that he was only able to get through the third verse of the third chapter of the "Song of Songs." In sermon twenty of this collection Bernard writes:

"Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord" (1 Corinthians 16:22). It is natural to love the one responsible for my existence, my mind. If I am not thankful, I am not deserving. Anyone who does not live for Jesus is not living at all. The person ignorant of him is a fool. The one who wants to become something apart from him is certainly loathsome.

How much he loves us? He is not returning love. He is offering it without restraint. "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us" (1 John 4:10). Paul explains, "When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son" (Romans 4:10).

Let Christ teach you how to love him. Discover a love that is gentle, reasonable, and healthy. With this kind of love you can escape the lures of the world and the flesh. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Love has three dimensions. Heart love has to do with warm endearment. Soul love involves activity and discretion. Strong love may relate to perseverance and spiritual stamina. We are instructed, then, to love God unreservedly, but intelligently, and to such a degree that we would even offer our lives for him. "For love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave" (Song 6:8). Your love should be strong and dependable, unafraid and willing to do hard work.

We can find many scriptural illustrations of this. For instance, the disciples were sorrowful when Jesus told them goodbye at the end. He told them love would completely change their feelings. "If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father" (John 14:28). That sounds like a contradiction! It was their love that made them sorry he was leaving. Their love was not complete. It was more of the heart than of the soul. It was tender, but not thoughtful. They loved him with all their heart, but not with all their soul. This was not in their best interests. Jesus appreciated their feelings, but needed to give them a deeper understanding. "It is for your good that I am going away" (John 16:7).

Peter truly loved Jesus. When he heard his Lord talking about his impending death, "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him" (Mark 8:32). Jesus' response was also a rebuke. "Out of my sight, Satan! . . . You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Mark 8:33). Jesus was correcting Peter's lack of prudent soul-love. Human sensitivities rather than God's plan motivated him.

Peter seems to have learned his lesson. When Jesus spoke at a later time about his imminent death, Peter did not object. Instead, he emphatically insisted, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you" (Mark 14:31). He was not able to keep this promise, because his love had not yet reached the third level of love, with all his strength. He loved Jesus fully with his heart and soul, but his love continued to be weak. He had learned his lessons, but he was not ready to function. He was cognizant of mystery, but he remained fearful of taking a personal stand for it. Love is not "as strong as death" when it shies away from the threat of death.

The day came when Peter loved Jesus with a strength that feared nothing. When the Sanhedrin ordered the apostles not to teach in the name of Christ, "Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than men!'" (Act 5:29). Peter offered his life for the love of Jesus.

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Loving with your whole heart means not letting other loves turn your head. Loving with the completeness of your soul makes you invulnerable to misdirection. Loving with all your strength keeps you from being frightened away by high personal cost.

We are naturally interested in the human dimension of Christ. We respond immediately to the things he did and said. The written narrative is gripping. We should keep these images in mind as we pray. This is one reason that God, who can't be seen, was born in Jesus. Now he can be perceived and heard in human form. Genuine love of God becomes easier for us. Starting with God incarnate, we can gradually rise to spiritual love. Paul had reached this higher degree of love when he wrote: “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer” (2 Corinthians 5:16).

Beginners should revel in human devotion. It is the perfect starting place. The Holy Spirit inspires love for the man Jesus. Loving him with the whole heart is to love his sacred humanity. Such love develops into a thinking love of the mind and soul. Ultimately, it will become a perfect spiritual love.

Bernard's dimensions of love challenge how we live out the disposition of gentleness in our lives every day.

### WEEK 3 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week three of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_.

This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 3 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 3

When we explored the dispositions of awe and gentleness, we also experienced two sources for formation, namely, biblical readings and the writings of the spiritual masters. A third source of formation material we are using in *Becoming Rooted* is the writings of more contemporary writers on spiritual formation who are not yet recognized as spiritual masters by the church.

This week we are reading James Bryan Smith. Smith is a contemporary writer and a selection from his book, *Embracing the Love of God*, introduces us to the disposition of humility. Smith is chair of the religion department at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas. J. B. Smith writes on humility's role in spiritual formation:

The truth of the matter is that I am a bundle of paradoxes. If I watch myself closely in brutal honesty, I see that I am capable of lying, cheating, stealing, fantasizing, using others, and hating people who have more than I. And all that before noon. I am no stranger to pride, envy, anger, laziness, greed, and lust.

I am also capable of doing good to people, making a selfless sacrifice for another, and having the good sense to keep quiet about it. I am capable of telling the truth, of behaving in a moral way, and of standing up for the cause of justice. I have had moments of real humility, peace, joy, and love.

St. Francis of Assisi, it is said, considered himself the worst of all sinners, even though he was renowned for his moral life and works of charity. When asked how he could say this of himself when it was obvious there were more immoral persons than he, St. Francis replied, "If God had blessed them with such great mercy as he has blessed me, they would acknowledge God's gifts much more than I do and serve him better than I do, and if my God would abandon me I would commit more misdeeds than any other man."

His words sound foreign to modern ears. We would rather declare St. Francis a neurotic than admit that maybe, just maybe, he might be right. Perhaps the solution to our problem of shame is not to try to think better of ourselves or to think worse of ourselves. Perhaps the answer is to think rightly about ourselves.

Jesus told a story about a religious man and a man whom society deemed a sinner simply by his occupation as a tax collector, who both went up to the temple to pray (see Luke 18:9-14). The religious man prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to God that he was such a pious person. The other man stood off in the distance, afraid to get near God's holy temple. He fell to his knees and prayed, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Jesus says that one of the two men went home in favor with God. Which one? The one who was honest. The one who cried out in need.

Evelyn Underhill, commenting on this passage, notes,

The publican's desperate sense of need and imperfection made instant contact with the source of all perfection ... He had got the thing in proportion. We need not suppose he was a specially wicked man; but he knew he was an imperfect, dependent, needy man, without any claims or any rights. He was a realist. That opened a channel, and started a communion, between the rich God and the poor soul.

In order for us to begin the process of self-acceptance we will have to acknowledge our true selves. We do not need to beat ourselves up, or call ourselves names, or excessively confess our sinfulness. All we have to do is be realistic.

We are imperfect. We are highly dependent. We have not claims and no rights. We are sinners. And that is a good thing, considering the fact that Jesus said, "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners" (Matt. 9:13). Pretending that we are righteous simply keeps God at bay and delays our healing.

St. Paul knew who he was, and therefore he relied all the more on God's grace. He even went so far as to say that he would boast of his weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:5-10). The truth that we must accept if we are to be healed is the truth that we are weak and broken and imperfect, for that is who we are.

The inability to be weak before God is the nemesis of the spiritual life. Paul would often boast, but not of his own abilities, his wisdom, or his accomplishments. He proudly proclaimed all that God had done and was doing in him. Paul was proud, not of himself but of God. The more he realized his weakness, the less he relied on his own effort, thus allowing God to become more and more powerful in his life. God's love and acceptance rested on him, a man who did not deserve it. Consequently, he made his life a gift back to God. (33-35)

Learning to think rightly, humbly about ourselves is how we begin to be transformed to give our lives back to God.



### WEEK 4 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week four of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_. This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 4 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 4

The disposition for this week four is abandonment. In some of the formation literature today, abandonment is referred to as surrender. Abandonment is very much a habit of *letting go and letting God*. In many of life's decisions and crises, we have a choice to make. The choice is what Adrian van Kaam and Susan Muto call the *appreciative abandonment option* (*Epiphany Certification Program Course I* 40). When I suffer disappoint, loss, or pain I must choose either to abandon God in frustration and anger or to throw myself into the mysteries of Gods' grace and love in appreciative abandonment to God.

For a personal spiritual formation exercise, I wrote a poem about abandonment, preserving the peace of Christ, and a river called Love-Will. I was meditating on Ezekiel 47 when I wrote *The Love-Will River*, a copy of which follows:

Your Love-Will River flows from your altar and  
Everywhere the River flows, there is Life.

O Mystery your Love-Will River flows  
And calls to the very core of my heart.  
The Love-Will calls me out of the hot, dry,  
And barren fields of my life.

At the River's edge obstacles bar my way,  
Brush, weeds, and rocks bar my approach.  
Yet the Love-Will invites me to perceive  
The epiphanic gift of a rope swing.  
As for Abraham, the Mystery provides for my transcendence.

To cling to the rope is a risk.  
The brush, weeds, and rocks whisper fearful words and images and  
It is easy to see the doom and despair they suggest,  
They are obstacles from past fears and failures.

The Love-Will calls me to abandon myself,  
To swing out to the middle of Love-Will,  
To leave the past, the dry and the barren,

To let go and be covered over by the swirling waters of your Love-Will.  
I am swept away to adventures yet to be perceived.

Your dark waters heal, refresh, and cleanse.  
In joy I rise out of the deep darkness and  
New life fills my lungs to overflowing.  
With deep consonance I am buoyed by your Love-Will.

In your Love-Will I now drift in my humble little boat.  
Everywhere I look your beauty thrills and vivifies your earth.  
I am free in my identifiable little boat  
To explore the joys of your Love-Will.  
To be in consonant movement, discovering your directives as we go.

If I strive too much for past shores I endanger my way  
The turbulence of dissonance can turn my boat upside down  
But even then I would be in your Love-will.  
I gently learn to watch for and listen to the directives of your Love-Will.

Looking back I see the barren landscapes left behind and  
Miss the next twist and disclosure of life,  
Then the rocks loom, the weeds and brush grab,  
I remember their fearful words and images and  
I again abandon myself to staying in the center of your Love-Will.

Other streams invite exploration  
But they grow stagnant without the flow of your epiphanous love.  
I join with other boats, together we live, we love  
We are busy working, steering, fishing, sleeping and providing for others  
But always from the center of your Love-Will

Your Love-Will River flows out of your altar and  
Everywhere the River flows there is Life.

The Love-Will River is the river of God's love, grace, and will for life and is a good description of abandonment. The disposition of abandonment is central to the teachings of Jesus:

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him,

“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:58-62)

Abandonment means living in complete trust and surrender to the mystery that is God. God, through Jesus, has dispensed with our past failings through the cross. The same awesome God who controls the future also assures our present and eternal future. The God of reality, addressing the issues of our past and our fears about the future, enables and equips us to live in the current moment appreciatively abandoned to God’s providential care.

Abandonment is gentle and humble obedience, in contrast to rigid moralistic obedience that often becomes deformative and pulls us into a bottomless pit of self-criticism. The apostle Paul also struggled with abandonment and writes about it:

What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary.

But I need something *more!* For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t *do* it. I decide to do good, but I don’t *really* do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn’t that the real question?

The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into Christ’s being-here-for-us no longer

have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death.

God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In his Son, Jesus, he personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity in order to set it right once and for all. The law code, weakened as it always was by fractured human nature, could never have done that.

The law always ended up being used as a Band-Aid on sin instead of a deep healing of it. And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what the Spirit is doing in us.

Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly

what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's *within* us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? (Romans 7:15–8:31 Message)

Abandonment to God occurs as we release our hold and efforts of control, which creates room in our hearts for God to live fully.

## WEEK 5 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week five of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_. This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling



is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 5 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 5

This week we return to reflecting on the disposition of awe. We use many words to describe awe. Words such as mystery, wonder, amazement, marvel, and reverence. God wired us with a default for awe, to sense that there is something more in life beyond what we can see, touch, measure, and control.

One of the greatest writers on the spiritual life was St. Augustine Bishop of Hippo. His honest story of his dramatic transformation is still one of the best available. Augustine wrote in his confessionals in 401 AD:

Can any praise be worthy of the Lord's majesty? How magnificent his strength! How inscrutable his wisdom! Man is one of your creatures, Lord, and his instinct is to praise you. He bears about him the mark of death, the sign of his own sin, to remind him that you thwart the proud. But still, since he is a part of your creation, he wishes to praise you. The thought of you stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you.

Grant me, Lord, to know and understand whether a man is first to pray to you for help or to praise you, and whether he must know you before he can call you to his aid. If he does not know you, how can he pray to you? For he may call for some other help, mistaking it for yours. Or are men to pray to you and learn to know you through their prayers? Only, how are they to call upon the Lord until they have learned to believe in him? And how are they to believe in him without a preacher to listen to? Those who look for the Lord will cry out in praise of him, because all who look for him shall find him, and when they find him they will praise him. I shall look for you, Lord, by praying to you and as I pray I shall believe in you, because we have had preachers to tell us about you. It is my faith that calls to you, Lord, the faith which you gave me and made to live in me through the merits of your Son, who became man, and through the ministry of your preacher.

Realizing we are made for God and God alone is a mind blowing and awesome thought.

Julian was a nun in Norwich, England in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century when she received and wrote *16 Showings*. In the fifth chapter of *Showings* Julian writes with a sense of awe as we begin to understand the vastness of God's love:

At the same time as I saw this sight of the head bleeding, our good Lord showed a spiritual sight of his familiar love. I saw that he is to us everything which is good and comforting for our help. He is our clothing, who wraps and enfolds us for love, embraces us and shelters us, surrounds us for his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us. And so in this sight I was that he is everything which is good, as I understand.

And in this he showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed to me, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with eye of my understanding and thought: What can this be? I was amazed that it could last, for I thought that because of its littleness it would suddenly have fallen into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God.

In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God preserves it. But what did I see in it? It is that God is the Creator and the protector and the lover. For until I am substantially united to him, I can never have perfect rest or true happiness, until, that is, I am so attached to him that there can be no created thing between my God and me.

This little thing which is created seemed to me as if it could have fallen into nothing because of its littleness. We need to have knowledge of this, so that we may delight in despising as nothing everything created, so as to love and have uncreated God. For this is the reason why our hearts and souls are not in perfect ease, because here we seek rest in this thing which is so little, in which there is no rest, and we do not know our God who is almighty, all wise and all good, for he is true rest. God wishes to be known, and it pleases him that we should rest in him; for everything which is beneath him is not sufficient for us. And this is the reason why no soul is at rest until it has despised as nothing all things which are created. When it by its will has become nothing for love, to have him who is everything, then is it able to receive spiritual rest.

And also our good Lord revealed that is very greatly pleasing to him that a simple soul should come naked, openly and familiarly. For this is the loving yearning of the soul through the touch of the Holy Spirit, from the understanding which I have in this revelation: God, of your goodness give me yourself, for you are enough for me, and I can ask for

nothing which is less which can pay you full worship. And if I ask anything which is less, always I am in want; but only in you do I have everything.

And these words of the goodness of God are very dear to the soul, and very close to touching our Lord's will, for his goodness fills all his creatures and all his blessed works full, and endlessly overflows in them. For he is everlastingness, and he made us only for himself, and restored us by his precious Passion and always preserves us in his blessed love; and all this is of his goodness. (183-84)

God made us, God loves us, and God preserves us for all eternity out of love.

Julian also writes, "It is true that sin is the cause of all this pain, but all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well" (225). What an awesome thought!

## WEEK 6 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week six of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_. This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 6 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 6

For week six, we are again exploring the disposition of gentleness. We have explored a classical spiritual master's description and understanding of gentleness. This week we will focus on more contemporary writers.

One way to think about gentleness is to think of ourselves as instruments of God's grace. Jerry Bridges in *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love* writes as follows:

In fact, we will not experience the peace with God and the joy of God if we are not willing to extend grace to others. This is the point of Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:23-34. He told the story of a man who was forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents (millions of dollars), but who was unwilling to forgive a fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii (a few dollars). The unstated truth in the parable, of course, is that our debt of sin to God is "millions of dollars," whereas the debt of others to us is, by comparison, only a few dollars. The person who is living by grace sees this vast contrast between his own sins against God and the offenses of others against him. He forgives others because he himself has been so graciously forgiven. He realizes that, by receiving God's forgiveness through Christ, he has forfeited the right to be offended when others hurt him. He practices the admonition of Paul, in Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (51-52)

Forgiveness is an extension of God's grace and requires us to see each other with a gentleness that comes with having received grace.

The writings of Adrian van Kaam are very helpful for understanding the connection between grace and gentleness as we explore two selections from his book *Spirituality and the Gentle Life*. Father van Kaam writes:

I spent part of last summer writing a paper. My decisiveness to get the thing over and done with made me feel tense and strained. Before going any further, I began to tell myself, "This time try to do your work with ease of mind." So I tried. I began to muse in a leisurely way about my topic. I read thoughtfully material related to it. Only then did I feel ready to write out a few paragraphs or pages. When the work became too much,

I would stroll in a nearby park, look at the flowers, follow the antics of playful ducks in the pond. I tried not to let myself become upset, strained or willful. Neither did I try to obtain the results of my study instantly. I was sure my topic would speak to me in its own good time if I would keep myself quietly open for hints, sudden associations, flashes of insight. My faithful readings and reflections would sooner or later show me the main aspects of the question I was dealing with.

So I trusted. I also kept my inner freedom to occasionally close my books, halt my typing, and leave my notes to enjoy the radiance of the sun in the garden or the pleasant breeze along the lanes and meadows of the park. My new way worked. Slowly I could feel the ideas rise, the right words come. A gentle perseverance in my attention to the topic and its expression proved sufficient for the paper to be written.

At first I had approached my task with the anxious drive to get the work over with. Now I had given myself over to the calming effect of a gentle life style. I could almost feel the tautness leaving my head, the tenseness draining from my muscles. No longer was the will to force things present in me. I did not command my topic to make itself clear at once. I was content to be nothing more than I could be at the moment, content to make as much headway as I was humanly able to. There was no compulsion to be more efficient, more clever or faster than I reasonably could be in a relaxed manner. Gone was the eagerness to hurry up the process of production. The spirit of gentility had invaded my work. (24-25)

This is a basic truth of the spiritual life in Jesus where a gentle life is often in conflict with our culture. Therefore, we will also let Dr. van Kaam speak to us through poetry. Father van Kaam writes:

Lord,  
 The earth lights up  
 As a symbol  
 Of your presence;  
 All nature is suffused  
 With your light and life.  
 Let everything of beauty  
 Evoke in me  
 Loving gentility:  
 Each one is a reflection  
 Of your eternal splendor,  
 Each one a mirror  
 Easily dimmed



If I don't tend it  
With gentility.  
Let the awareness  
Of your presence  
Instill gentleness  
In my soul;  
Gentleness towards myself too,  
The broken mirror of your love.  
Let my self-presence share  
In your forgiving presence  
Of my fragile life. (23)

Gentleness is often the way we experience and express God's forgiveness in our personal lives.

## WEEK 7 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week seven of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_.

This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 7 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 7

The key disposition (habit of attitude) for this week is humility. Often when we think of humility we confuse humility with humiliation but they are not the same. Humiliation happens to us and we perceive it as demeaning while humility is a virtuous choice we make about how to live our lives.

In order to live a life in consonance (harmony) with God we must be open to the directives God sends our way. Openness, in the Christian tradition, is equated with humility (van Kaam, *Formation of the Human Heart* 24). The disposition of humility is openness to all disclosures from God in things, people, and events. Teresa of Avila wrote that to be humble we must accept the truth of who we are (*Interior Castle* 165). Humility, then, is simply grace given knowledge of God, self, and others.

Susan Muto writes in *John of the Cross For Today: The Dark Night* that self-knowledge is like a wellspring of blessing (126) but clearly this self-knowledge is not limited to knowing one's strengths, personality style, and weaknesses. These are important but they are superficial. Self-knowledge, as John of the Cross, Bernard of Clairvaux, and other spiritual masters use the term has to do with understanding our basic nature, our essence, the ground from which we come.

In *Formation of the Human Heart* van Kaam elaborates on humility's etymological roots in the word *humus* as the essence of who we are (25) and which mirrors the acknowledgement of human fallibility and finiteness found in the Ash Wednesday pronouncement "from dust you have come and to dust you shall return." Self-knowledge is the key, we humans need to be aware that we are the creation and not the creators, that life is given to us and not created by us, that we are totally and

completely dependent on God who loves us and calls us to Himself. Humility fosters a “wide-eyed-wonder” at life and our relationship with God and clearly implies a way of living in relationship that understands our human brokenness and the reality that we are the object of God’s love.

The apostle Paul helps us in understanding humility in his Christological hymn:

If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father. (Phil. 2:1-11 *The Message*)

Paul connects humility with obedience to our personal and relational life call. The disposition of humility manifests as an openness to God. Humility is loving God, self, and others.

Humility is not just personal. Humility is also an act of community as Paul discusses:

In light of all this, here’s what I want you to do. While I’m locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don’t want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don’t want anyone strolling off, down

some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness. (Eph. 4:1-6 Message)

Without a sense of community and relatedness, humility may easily become about ourselves and not about our relationships.

## WEEK 8 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week eight of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_.

This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 8 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).



### Readings for Week 8

In week eight, we again reflect upon the disposition of abandonment to God and we do so through the lens of a spiritual master. We have read before from Bernard of Clairvaux who is considered the premier spiritual master on God's love and how love transforms the heart of the disciple. This week's reading is from "Sermon 18" in *Talks on the Song of Songs*, where Bernard writes:

"Your name is like perfume poured out" (Song 1:2). What truth is the Holy Spirit attempting to teach us with this text? The reference has two applications. One is an improvement of our interior life, our salvation. The other is a strengthening of our active service to others. Inflow and outflow. It is the outflow that is described in the words of our text. The perfume is poured out, not in. The bride speaks of the Bridegroom's name poured out like perfume on her breasts. If we have an exterior feature that is attractive to others, we can also say to the Lord, "Your name is like perfume poured out."

We need to be circumspect here. Be careful not to give away what is intended to be for private edification. At the same time we must not save what is given to us to pass on to others. If you have a gift of public speaking, but neglect to cultivate and use it, then you are suffocating a gift intended to help others. "People curse the man who hoards grain" (Proverbs 11:26). Conversely, you throw away gifts intended for your private benefit if you carelessly parade your incomplete insides in public. The law is explicit. "Do not put the firstborn of your oxen to work, and do not shear the firstborn of your sheep" (Deuteronomy 15:19).

If you are wise, you will understand that life is more like a pool than a channel. A channel immediately releases what it receives. The pool is gradually filled until it naturally overflows without diminishing itself. There are many Christians who behave like channels. Deep pools are the exception. We become eager to let the Spirit flow through us. We begin to pour it out before we are filled. We speak when we should be listening. We try to teach lessons we have not yet learned. We would direct others when we are not sure where we are going ourselves.

If I have only "a little oil" (2 Kings 4:2), barely enough to anoint myself, should I share it with you? Then I would have nothing. If you beg me for it, this is my reply: "No ... there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves" (Matthew 25:9). You remind me that love "is not self-seeking" (1

Corinthians 13:5). No, it isn't. It doesn't need to be. It already has what it wants. What love desires is to have it in overflowing abundance – enough for herself and plenty to share. But she always keeps a sufficient supply for herself. That's the only way she can be helpful to others. Only full love is perfect.

If you are new at this, your love is either absent or scanty. You are “tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). In your enthusiasm, you may even love your neighbor more than you love yourself. Your meager love could be so fragile that it will respond to flattery, will quiver with fear, and will be withered by greed, fouled by ambition, troubled by suspicions, distraught by insults, wearied by worries, bloated by honors, depleted by jealousy. If this sort of turmoil is raging in your soul, what insanity prompts you to push yourself into the business of others? It is enough if you “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). There needs to be a careful balance here. Outflow follows inflow. We must be filled to overflowing before what we pass on to others will have any substance. Otherwise, it is vacuous yawning. Take care that you do not embarrass yourself while assisting others. Be sure you are full. Control your delivery to others. “My child, do not let these escape from your sight: keep sound wisdom and prudence” (Proverbs 3:21). “We may pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (Hebrews 2:1). Are you wiser than Solomon or holier than Paul? Wasting your endowment does not improve me. If you have plenty for yourself, you may share with me. Otherwise, don't bother.

The Holy Spirit comes to the soul the same way a doctor visits an injured person. Baptism may heal the wound of original sin, but the devil continues to needle us. The Holy Spirit may hear you praying, “My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly” (Psalm 38:5). Like a good doctor, his first task is to surgically remove this spiritual cancer. Bad habits are the carcinogen. These are pierced with a scalpel of grief. This produces an excruciating pain, but it can be relieved with a salve of devotion. You will soon be expressing gratitude. “You have freed me from my chains. I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord” (Psalm 116:16-17).

After this, the Spirit will prescribe the medicine of penance. “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). Good works inspired by love are a vital part of penance. Eating brings thirst with it. The food of good works is to be dampened with a libation of prayer. Prayer is “wine to gladden the human heart” (Psalm 104:15 NRSV).

After the sick person has food and beverage, it is time for quiet contemplation. One can fall asleep in prayer and dream of God. The resulting love will fill the soul to full capacity until it overflows and gushes. This love will ask, "Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?" (2 Corinthians 11:39). Such a person should preach and bear fruit.

Seven things working together will produce spiritual fruit.

A feeling of contrition.

An earnest spirit.

The toil of penance.

Good works of love.

Enthusiastic prayer.

Time for contemplation.

Complete love.

"All these are activated by one and the same spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses" (1 Corinthians 12:11 NRSV). Outflow follows inflow. (36-37)

We can be a channel or a pool of God's grace and love. The pool, as a symbol of abandonment, produces life. To have outflow we must first have inflow from God's epiphanic love.

One of the significant writers during the second century was Irenaeus of Lyons (fl. c. 175-195). He was Bishop in southern France at Lyons. Irenaeus is known for his vigorous defense against heresy. One of Irenaeus greatest teachings is about what really constitutes God's glory:

[T]he glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God. For if the manifestation of God which is made by means of the creation affords life to all living in the earth, how much more does that revelation of the Father which comes through the Word give life to those who see God.

The idea of the glory of God being a fully alive human challenges us to abandon ourselves to God to glorify God by being fully alive.

## WEEK 9 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week nine of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_.

This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 9 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 9

This is our final week to explore the disposition of awe. We have explored awe through scripture and the spiritual masters so now we turn to more contemporary spiritual writers. First, we turn to Thomas R. Kelly's work *A Testament of Devotion*. Kelly describes the awe experience in a wonderful way. A Quaker missionary, educator, speaker, and teacher Kelly lived from 1893 to 1941. For Kelly obedience to God flows out of our awe of God:

Some men come into holy obedience through the gateway of profound mystical experience.

It is an overwhelming experience to fall into the hands of the living God, to be invaded to the depths of one's being by His presence, to be, without warning, wholly uprooted from all earthborn securities and assurances, and to be blown by a tempest of unbelievable power which leaves one's old proud self utterly, utterly defenseless, until one cries, "All Thy waves and they billows are gone over me" (Ps. 42:7). Then is the soul swept into a Loving Center of ineffable sweetness, where calm and unspeakable peace and ravishing joy steal over one. And one knows now why Pascal wrote, in the center of his greatest moment, the single word, "Fire." There stands the world of struggling, sinful, earth-blinded men and nations, of plants and animals and wheeling stars of heaven, all new, all lapped in the tender persuading Love at the Center. There stand the saints of the ages, their hearts open to view, and lo, their hearts are our heart and their hearts are the heart of the Eternal One. In awful solemnity the Holy One is over all and in all, exquisitely loving, infinitely patient, tenderly smiling. Marks of glory are upon all things, and the marks are cruciform and blood-stained. And one sighs, like the convinced Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Dare one lift one's eye and look? Nay, whither can one look and not see Him? For field and stream and teeming streets are full of Him. Yet as Moses knew, no man can look on God and live – live as his old self. Death comes, blessed death, death of one's alienating will. And one knows what Paul meant when he wrote, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20).

One emerges from such soul-shaking, Love-invaded times into more normal states of consciousness. But one knows ever after that the Eternal Lover of the world, the Hound of Heaven, is utterly, utterly real, and that life must henceforth be forever determined by that Real. Like

Saint Augustine one asks not for greater certainty of God but only for more steadfastness in Him. There, beyond, in Him is the true Center, and we are reduced, as it were, to nothing, for He is all. (30-31)

The awed moment lingers and sustains long after the initial awed moment has passed.

The second contemporary writer for this week is Jerry Bridges. Our selection is from Bridges book *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love*. A past vice-president of Navigators, Bridges is a gifted communicator. I believe that as we understand our true relationship with God, as Bridges describes that relationship, we are often filled with awe:

Now, you may have never thought of it this way, but you are bankrupt. I'm not referring to your financial condition or your moral qualities. You may be financially as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar and the most upstanding person in your community, but you are still bankrupt. So am I. You and I and every person in the world are spiritually bankrupt. In fact, every person who has ever lived, except for Jesus Christ regardless of his or her moral or religious state has been spiritually bankrupt. Listen to this declaration of our bankruptcy from the pen of the apostle Paul: There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Romans 3:10-12) No one righteous, no one who seeks God, no one who does good, not even one. This is spiritual bankruptcy in its most absolute state. Usually in a bankrupt business, the company still has a few assets that can be sold to partially pay its debts. But we had no assets, nothing we could hand over to God as partial payment of our debt. Even "our righteous acts are like filthy rags" in His sight (Isaiah 64:6). We were spiritually destitute. We owed a debt we could not pay. Then we learned salvation is a gift from God; it is entirely by grace through faith not by works, so that no one can boast (see Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9). We renounced confidence in any supposed righteousness of our own and turned in faith to Jesus Christ alone for our salvation. In that act we essentially declared spiritual bankruptcy. (13-14)

For Bridges, awe results from coming to understand fully the richness of our relationship with God.

## WEEK 10 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week ten of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_. This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling



is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 10 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 10

In week ten, we focus on the disposition of gentleness. As we have seen, dispositions become a sort of second nature for us, creating automatic responses in the activities of life. Gentleness is always a little hard to define but it is something we are all aware of when it is experienced. Adrian van Kaam, in *Spirituality and the Gentle Life*, writes:

Gentleness directs itself to something or someone in a distinctive way; it implies a special relation of a person to God, to himself, to others, to things.

What is it that evokes this gentleness? Gentleness is usually enkindled by something that is precious but vulnerable. Everything that appears fragile and vulnerable and at the same time precious in some way seems to evoke gentleness: a sick person, a child, a pregnant woman, the victim of an accident. All that is small and somehow precious: a baby, a newborn puppy, an old woman emaciated by age and sickness. Yet also something large and powerful can evoke gentleness. A person could feel gentle about the boss of a large company who is all bluster and no bite. Gentleness is not evoked by the impressive function and power of the boss but by the vulnerability of inner endearing traits that hide behind a façade of strength. (16)

Clearly then gentleness is about how we interact with God, ourselves, people, and things.

Gentleness, as a spiritual disposition, is not about weakness. Gentleness is always balanced and accompanied by a disposition of firmness, which provides for an equilibrium, flexibility, and humanness (Formation of the Human Heart 83).

In *Spirituality and the Gentle Life* van Kaam reminds us that gentleness is a precious gift of God's presence:

Awareness of the presence of the Divine instills gentleness in the human soul. This same gentleness seems in turn to deepen awareness of the Presence that evoked this feeling in the first place. The key to a gentle life style, that pervades all thoughts, feelings and actions, seems to be a continuous awareness of the Divine Presence. (19)

We grow spiritually as we grow in gentleness. We find examples of gentleness throughout scripture. Here are a few references.

Gentleness is one of the fruit of the spirit. Paul writes about the fruit of the spirit in Galatians:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23 ESV)

The fruit of the spirit not only place Paul demonstrates gentleness. Paul encourages Philippian believers to live a gentle life of give and take:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:4–7 NRSV)

There is gentleness in the way the apostles deal with the Thessalonica church. Paul writes, “though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children” (1 Thess. 2:7 NRSV).

Jesus describes the implications of gentleness when he said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4 ESV). Mourning is not just about loss of life but is also about mourning for our sin and the sin of others. To mourn is to have empathy for those who suffer evil, injustice, and experience the absence of God’s loving presence. When we mourn as God mourns, we have gentleness in life that comforts others.

Gentleness with others and ourselves is derived from our awareness of the protection and gentle presence of God. The psalmist describes gentleness in this way:

You who sit down in the High God's presence,  
 spend the night in Shaddai's shadow,  
 Say this: "GOD, you're my refuge.  
 I trust in you and I'm safe!"  
 That's right—he rescues you from hidden traps,  
 shields you from deadly hazards.  
 His huge outstretched arms protect you—  
 under them you're perfectly safe;  
 his arms fend off all harm.  
 Fear nothing—not wild wolves in the night,  
 not flying arrows in the day,  
 Not disease that prowls through the darkness,  
 not disaster that erupts at high noon.  
 Even though others succumb all around,  
 drop like flies right and left,  
 no harm will even graze you.  
 You'll stand untouched, watch it all from a distance,  
 watch the wicked turn into corpses.  
 Yes, because GOD's your refuge,  
 the High God your very own home,  
 Evil can't get close to you,  
 harm can't get through the door.  
 He ordered his angels  
 to guard you wherever you go.  
 If you stumble, they'll catch you;  
 their job is to keep you from falling.  
 You'll walk unharmed among lions and snakes,  
 and kick young lions and serpents from the path.  
 "If you'll hold on to me for dear life," says GOD,  
 "I'll get you out of any trouble.  
 I'll give you the best of care  
 if you'll only get to know and trust me.  
 Call me and I'll answer, be at your side in bad times;  
 I'll rescue you, then throw you a party.  
 I'll give you a long life,  
 give you a long drink of salvation!" (Psalm 91 The Message)

Gentleness is our most natural response to the loving and transforming presence of God.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians describes the gentle life:

What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense.  
 Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each  
 other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself.

Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.

Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work.

Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted.

Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that. (Eph. 4:25–5:2 The Message)

Gentleness is invoked when we humbly and openly respond to Christ, as we perceive Him in others and in ourselves.

## WEEK 11 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week eleven of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_

This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 11 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

### Readings for Week 11

God has graced us with another week to grow into his likeness. This week we return to the disposition, our developing second nature, of humility and reflect upon what the great spiritual masters have to say. This week we will read from four spiritual masters.

**John Chrysostom** (344/354–407; fl. 386–407). According to “Introduction and Biographical Information” John Chrysostom was a notable orthodox Bishop of Constantinople. Chrysostom is remembered for attacking the moral laxity of Christian leaders and his eloquent sermons, and his attacks on Christian laxity in high places. John Chrysostom writes on humility:

It is no humility to think that you are a sinner when you really are a sinner. But whenever one is conscious of having done many great deeds but does not imagine that he is something great in himself, that is true humility. When a man is like Paul and can say, “I have nothing on my conscience,” and then can add, “But I am not justified by this,” and can say again, “Christ Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am the chief,” that is true humility. That man is truly humble who does exalted deeds but, in his own mind, sees himself as lowly. (On the Incomprehensible Nature of God 5.6.)

True humility is knowing who we are deep inside and not hiding our flaws. Humility is graced knowledge of our failings as well as a celebration of our blessed uniqueness.

**Thomas à Kempis** wrote *The Imitation of Christ* between 1420 and 1427. Many consider this book to be the most influential source of Christian devotional reading, except for the Bible. It certainly was at the top of John Wesley’s reading list.

Thomas à Kempis writes regarding humility,

Everyone has a natural desire for knowledge but what good is knowledge without the fear of God? Surely a humble peasant who serves



God is better than the proud astronomer who knows how to chart the heavens' stars but lacks all knowledge of himself.

If I truly knew myself I would look upon myself as insignificant and would not find joy in hearing others praise me. If I knew everything in the world and *were still without charity*, what advantage would I have in the eyes of God who is to judge me according to my deeds?

2. Curb all undue desire for knowledge, for in it you will find many distractions and much delusion. Those who are learned strive to give the appearance of being wise and desire to be recognized as such; but there is much knowledge that is of little or no benefit to the soul.

Whoever sets his mind on anything other than what serves his salvation is a senseless fool. A barrage of words does not make the soul happy, but a good life gladdens the mind and a *pure conscience* generates a bountiful confidence in God.

3. The more things you know and the better you know them, the more severe will your judgment be, unless you have also lived a holier life. Do not boast about the learning and skills that are yours; rather, be cautious since you do possess such knowledge.

4. If it seems to you that you know many things and thoroughly understand them all, realize that there are countless other things of which you are ignorant. *Be not haughty*, but admit your ignorance. Why should you prefer yourself to another, when there are many who are more learned and better trained in God's law than you are? If you are looking for knowledge and a learning that is useful to you, then love to be unknown and be esteemed as nothing.

5. This is the most important and most salutary lesson: to know and to despise ourselves. It is great wisdom and perfection to consider ourselves as nothing and always to judge well and highly of others. If you should see someone commit a sin or some grievous wrong, do not think of yourself as someone better, for you know not how long you will remain in your good state.

We are all frail; but think of yourself as one who is more frail than others. (4-5)

Humility celebrates who we are but is always extremely aware of our frailties.

**Anonymous, *The Cloud of Unknowing***, edited by Johnston, is a main stay of devotional reading from fourteenth century. The master writes on humility as follows:

Take courage, now, and frail mortal though you are, try to understand yourself. Do you think you are someone special, or that you have deserved the Lord's favor? How can your poor heart be so leaden and spiritless that it is not continually around by the attraction of the Lord's love and the sound of his voice? Your enemy will suggest that you rest on your laurels. But be on your guard against this treachery of his. Do not be deceived into thinking that you are a holier or better person because of your great calling or because you have progressed to the Singular way of life. On the contrary, you will be a most pathetic and culpable wretch unless, with God's grace and proper guidance, you do all in your power to live up to your calling. Far from being conceited, you ought to be all the more humble and devoted to your heavenly Lord when you consider that he, the Almighty God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, has stooped so low as to call you. For out of all his flock he has lovingly chosen you to be one of his special friends. He has led you to sweet meadows and nourished you with his love, strengthening you to press on so as to take possession of your heritage in his kingdom.

I urge you, then, pursue your course relentlessly. Attend to tomorrow and let yesterday be. Never mind what you have gained so far. Instead reach out to what lies ahead. If you do this you will remain in the truth. For now, if you wish to keep growing you must nourish in your heart the lively longing for God. Though this loving desire is certainly God's gift, it is up to you to nurture it. But mark this. God is a jealous lover. He is at work in your spirit and will tolerate no meddlers. The only other one he needs is you. And all he asks of you is that you fix your love on him and let him alone. Close the doors and windows of your spirit against the onslaught of pests and foes and prayerfully seek his strength; for if you do so, he will keep you safe from them. Press on then. I want to see how you fare. Our Lord is always ready. He awaits only your co-operation.

"But," you ask, "how am I to go on; what am I to do next?" (38-39)

Humility is not humiliation but it is an understanding of ourselves that acknowledges there is always a weak link in our lives. Sometimes the weak link is not appreciating our true value in God's creation.

**Bernard of Clairvaux** lived from 1090 to 1153 and is one of Christianity's greatest writers on the topic of love and humility. For Bernard, humility was about knowing God, self, and others and loving the Christ we find in people. In "Sermon 50" on the Song of Songs Bernard writes regarding humility:

There are some crumbs remaining from last time. Jesus said, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted" (John 6:12). Rather than let them spoil, I will pass them on to you. These sweet tidbits are served from a platter of love. "His banner over me is love" (Song 2:4).

Love is exhibited in action and affection. The first can be commanded. The Lord said, "Love your enemies," and went on to say, "Do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27). The order is for activity and has nothing to do with feelings. He even describes our love for him in terms of action: "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). If love consisted only of feeling, he would not have asked for activity. This does not mean we can express love aloofly with uninvolved service – kind hands and a cold heart.

Active love gets busy in the everyday world. The love we call "affective" is involved with higher concerns. It is easier to give our attention to earthly needs than to the things of heaven. Our frail bodies distract us from the care of our souls. Prayer is often interrupted by business. A book is frequently put down in order to labor. Active love sets its own priorities.

We are instructed: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 19:19). As you love only God in yourself, so it is with your neighbor. It is God's love for your neighbor that makes your neighbor lovable.

I am looking for a person who loves God wholeheartedly, whose love for self and neighbor results from the love of God, who loves enemies, parents, and spiritual leaders. Such a person can discriminate between what is important and what is not, what is lasting and what is passing. This person will truly be wise and can claim, "His banner over me is love." (88)

One of many obstacles to living a humble life is the fear of humiliation and that we will be taken advantage of. This is when we combine the dispositions of true humility with appreciative abandonment to God by living as if His banner over us is love.



## WEEK 12 GUIDELINES

First, list the directives and personal insights from Sunday's formation-in-common experience in the space below.

DIRECTIVE 1:

DIRECTIVE 2:

DIRECTIVE 3:

OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

Week twelve of our journey begins on page \_\_\_\_ entitled \_\_\_\_\_

This week begins on Monday \_\_\_\_\_.

Follow the pattern outlined in Job and Shawchuck's book that was demonstrated in our orientation meeting and write any thoughts and comments in your journal. If you have any questions contact \_\_\_\_\_.

To help you with your journal writing, reflect on your prayers, readings and thoughts considering the following things: You might wish to write a prayer or poem to express yourself. Consider the ideas that challenged you, the ideas that encouraged you, and the things that you hear God say to you as you spent time in the devotional book. It may be that you wish to list what you disagree with and why. The discipline of journaling

is important to organizing our thoughts and becoming aware of what God may be saying to us.

Continue the use of Job daily, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then on Sunday, use Job, however read only the Gospel reading for year \_\_ of the lectionary, and the readings for Week 12 on page \_\_\_ of this workbook in preparation for the formation-in-common experience at \_\_\_\_\_(time) on Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_(date).

## Readings for Week 12

This is our final week in our *Becoming Rooted* experience. We end our time together by reflecting on the disposition of becoming appreciatively abandoned to God. We do our reflection through the eyes of a contemporary writer. In *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality*, David Benner gives a modern analysis of abandonment. Benner, who is a psychologist and spiritual director, writes about abandonment as follows:

If the core of Christian obedience is listening to God's will, the core of surrender is voluntarily giving up our will. Only love can induce us to do this. But even more remarkable, not only can love make it possible, it can make it almost easy.

Surrender to anything other than love would be idiocy. Alarm bells should go off when we hear of people surrendering to abusive relationships. Surrender involves too much vulnerability to be a responsible action in relation to anything other than unconditional love. Ultimately, of course, this means that absolute surrender can only be offered to Perfect Love. Only God deserves absolute surrender, because only God can offer absolutely dependable love.

In spite of our natural resistance to submission, deep within the human soul there seems to be a yearning to surrender. Although it does not fit with the image I usually want to project, all my life I have longed to give myself completely to someone or something bigger than myself. This lies right at the heart of what it means to be human. We are creatures made in the image of God, and Spirit calls to spirit, reminding us that there is no freedom apart from surrender.

But being made in the image of God means that to fail to find our freedom in surrender to God is inevitably to experience frustration and disappointment. No other love is worthy of our surrender. No other cause is big enough. Surrender to lesser gods will always become a source of bondage, not a spring of vitality.

Jesus is the key to surrender to God. He does not command us to surrender or wield authority to demand obedience. Instead he welcomes us with love that invites intimacy. Rather than commanding with power, he invites with vulnerability. In Jesus, God becomes human and courts us with tenderness and unimaginable kindness. He does so because he wants

our heart and not just our will. He knows that only love will make us willing to give him both our heart and our will.

Jesus invites us to come to him and relinquish the control of our life. He invites us to give up our desperate and illusory striving after autonomy. He also invites us to abandon the isolation and rigidity associated with our egocentricity. And in their place he offers rest, fulfillment, and the discovery of our true and deepest self in Christ. When we take this step of surrender, we suddenly discover the place for which we have been unconsciously longing. Like a tool seized by a strong hand, we are at last where we belong; we know we have been found.

Paradoxically, the abundant life promised us in Christ comes not from grasping but from releasing. It comes not from striving but from relinquishing. It comes not so much from taking as from giving. Surrender is the foundational dynamic of Christian freedom—surrender of my efforts to live my life outside of the grasp of God's love and surrender to God's will and gracious Spirit.

Surrender is being willing rather than willful. It is a readiness to trust that is based in love. It is relaxing and letting go. It is floating in the river that is God's love.

I recently had a fascinating experience teaching some people how to swim. A group of spiritual directors I was working with in the Philippines came with my wife and me to the beach for a few days of holiday. All were considerably more advanced on the spiritual journey than in their swimming skills. In fact, all were complete non-swimmers, and all had some degree of terror of the water.

But it was remarkable how quickly they learned to swim. Within an hour of first entering the water wearing life jackets, having just released their white-knuckled grip of the sides of the boat, all of them had abandoned the life vests and were snorkeling on their own in the ocean. How could this be possible?

The key was not skillful instruction. The key was that they had already grasped the spiritual principle of surrender, that we already had a relationship of trust, and that they were willing to enter the water and let go of the side of the boat.

They trusted me when I told them that they would float, and lo and behold, when they took off their life vests and lay back in the water, they did just that. And they trusted me when I told them that they could breathe through the snorkel without having to lift their heads out of the water, and



lo and behold, this also proved true. They had learned to surrender to God, so learning to trust in this situation was relatively easy.

With delight one woman exclaimed, “Nobody told me that you don’t have to do anything to float!” She made a more profound spiritual point than she realized.

The English word surrender carries the implication of putting one’s full weight on someone or something. It involves letting go – a release of effort, tension and fear. And it involves trust. One cannot let go of self-dependence and transfer dependence to someone else without trust.

Floating is a good illustration of this, because you cannot float until you let go. Floating is putting your full weight on the water and trusting that you will be supported. It is letting go of your natural instincts to fight against sinking. Only then do you discover that you are supported.

It is interesting that the apostle John describes the Spirit as a stream of flowing water, a spring welling up inside us (John 4:10-14). This same image is repeated in Revelation, where we encounter the river of life that flows from the throne of God and from the Lamb (Revelation 22:1-2).

Richard Rohr notes that “faith might be precisely that ability to trust the river, to trust the flow and the lover.... There is a river. The river is flowing: we are in it. The river is God’s providential love.” The reason we do not have to be afraid is that we have been given the Spirit of God. We are in the river. We do not need to thrash about trying to float.

Early Christian writers often imaged the Christian life in terms of living in water like a fish. Tertullian called Christ the “Heavenly Fish” and Christians “little fish” who take their name from Ichthus (fish). Christians, according to these writers, are born and live within the divine waters of the Spirit. The Christian life is learning to be supported by these waters.

An ancient Sufi story speaks of fish that spend their days anxiously swimming around in search of water, failing to realize that they are in the midst of it. Their distress is suddenly eliminated when they open their eyes and see where they really are.

One of the women in the group of spiritual directors who were learning to swim did have a problem. Her biggest challenge was letting go of seeing where she was. She was afraid that while she was floating she might run into something, so she kept lifting her head out of the water to look around. Each time she did so, she began to sink.

So it is with us. We need to stop searching and see that we are surrounded by the sea of Perfect Love. But we also need to stop our panicky thrashing about in an effort to float. Paradoxically, our efforts to stay afloat usually lead to sinking. Every time we start to panic and think we need to do something to stay afloat, we lift our head out of the water and no longer rest in it. As soon as we do we begin to sink. Our efforts to stay afloat may keep our head above the water for a while, but eventually we tire, and eventually our efforts to keep afloat will drown us.

The woman who raised her head reminds me of how quickly we get nervous when we stop to observe how our floating is going. For as soon as we stop and observe our floating, we're overcome by an automatic impulse to do something to keep afloat. We start thrashing about. Like Peter, who began to sink as soon as he observed himself walking on the water, we begin to sink as soon as we begin to worry about how the floating is going. Our efforts to stay afloat – that is, our efforts to earn God's love – are always counterproductive. We must simply open our spiritual eyes and see that we are in the river of God's love and that our staying afloat and moving along are God's responsibility. All we have to do is surrender.

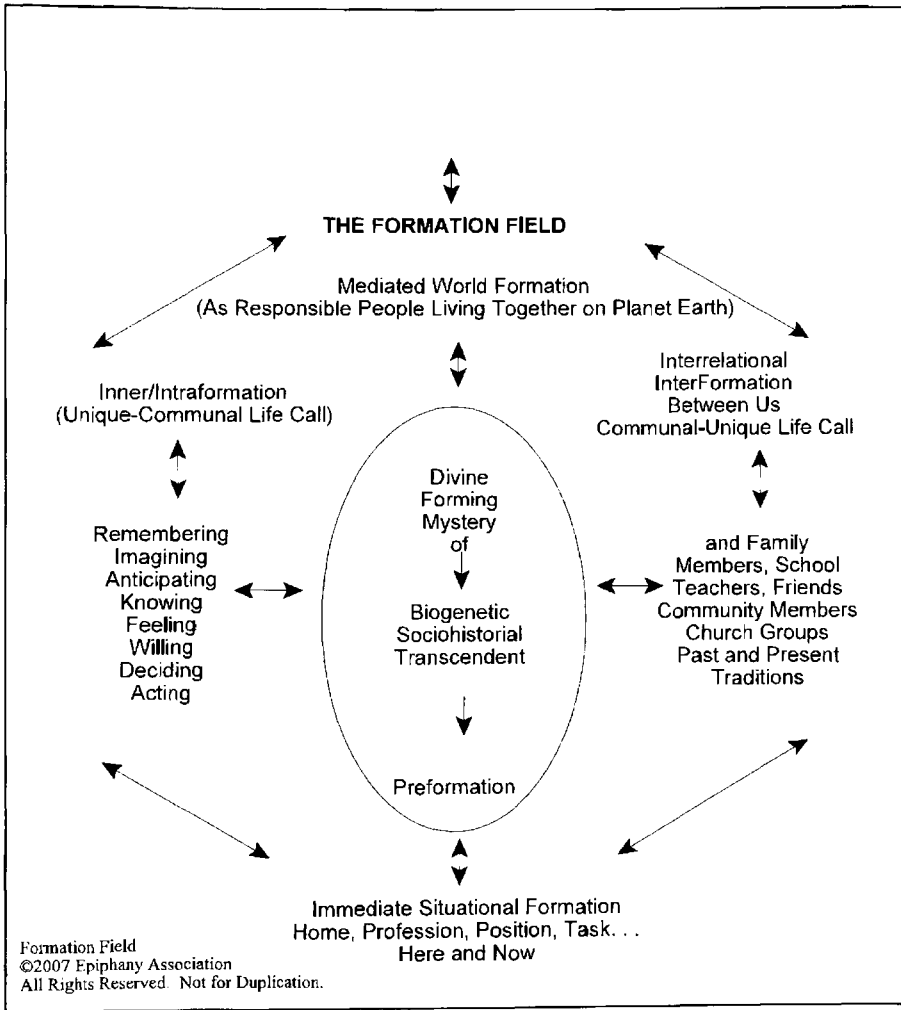
We float only when we stop trying to do so. And we never discover that we do not need to do anything to stay afloat until we let go. That is surrender.

Surrender is the discovery that we are in a river of love and that we float without having to do anything. Apart from such surrender, we always are in the grip of some degree of fear. Apart from such surrender, we will always thrash about, trying to stay afloat by our own efforts. And apart from such surrender, we remain self-preoccupied as our willful attempts to stay in control cut us off from life itself. (59-63)

Abandonment is a gentle way of living a life. Abandonment is gentle obedience that allows our lives to be under the complete control of our savior Jesus Christ.

# APPENDIX I

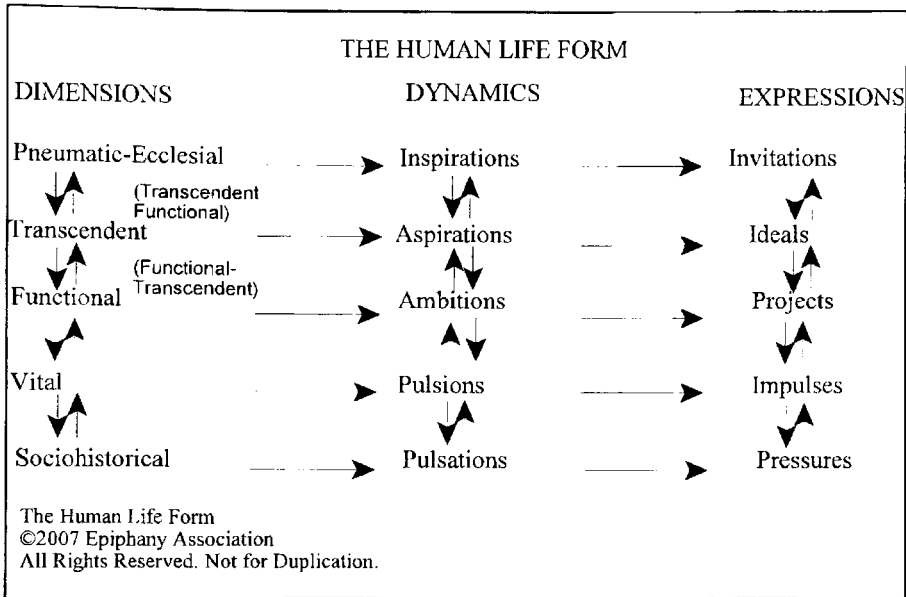
## FORMATION FIELD



Used by permission.

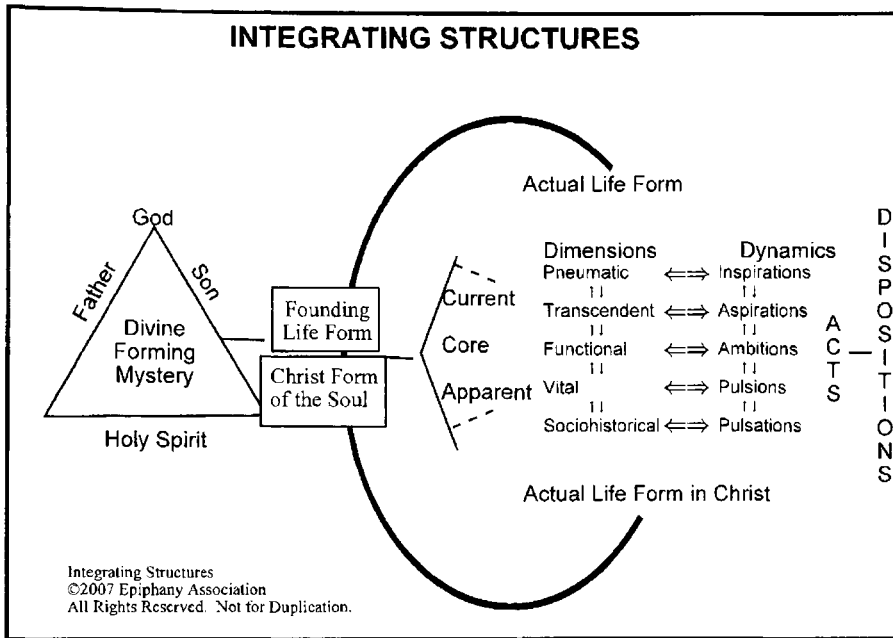
APPENDIX J

THE HUMAN LIFE FORM



Used by permission.

APPENDIX K  
INTEGRATING STRUCTURES



Used by permission.

## APPENDIX L

### USE OF COPYRIGHT MATERIALS REQUEST

April 30, 2008

Dr. Susan Muto  
820 Crane Ave.  
Pittsburg, PA 15216-3050

Greetings and blessings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Pentecost is fast approaching and with it our remembering and reliving the power of the Spirit to guide our unique-communal formation.

As you are aware I am a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. As a part of my dissertation I am reviewing some of the work of the Epiphany Association, Father van Kaam, and yourself. For this dissertation I think it would be helpful for me to reprint three of the charts from courses 1 & 2 of the Epiphany Certification Program.

Therefore I would request permission to reprint only the three charts mentioned below. I will not edit in any way except for size and other manipulations necessary to meet the dissertation publishing requirements. I expect any requirements to be cosmetic and not substantive. It is also my expectation these charts will be printed in the dissertation with all appropriate copyright information.

The three charts are titled "Formation Field," "Integrating Structures," and "The Human Life Form."

If there are expenses, directions, or other concerns associated with this request, please let me know.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Grace, peace, and joy,

Rev. John C. Harp, Jr.

# EPIPHANY ASSOCIATION

*Fostering the Ongoing Transformation of Life and World through its*  
EPIPHANY ACADEMY OF FORMATIVE SPIRITUALITY

**BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

- Doris Natali, MD\**  
*President/Treasurer*
- Susan Muto, PhD\**  
*Executive Vice President*  
*Executive Director*
- Thomas J. Antos, MD*
- James Gregory\**
- John J. Henry\**
- Joseph Kieppner, STL, PhD\**
- Keith Loupt*
- Stephen L. Martin, PhD*
- Ronald L. Mead*
- Sharon Richards, DC, PhD*
- Ralph Tajak, OLE*
- James E. Weil*

February 7, 2013

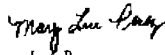
Reverend John C. Harp  
1508 East Laverne Street  
Bolivar, MO 65613

Dear Reverend Harp,

Please accept this letter as permission to use the charts "Formation Field," "Integrating Structures," and "The Human Life Form." This use is granted with the understanding that proper reference will appear on the charts and appropriately noted as necessary.

©Epiphany Association  
All rights reserved. Not for duplication.

Yours truly,



Mary Lou Perez  
Administrative Secretary  
For Susan Muto, PhD, Executive Director

## WORKS CITED

- Albin, Tom. "Finding God in Small Groups: Tom Albin's Doctoral Research Reveals Why the Wesleys' System Worked So Well." Interview by Tim Stafford. *Christianity Today* Aug. 2003: 42-44. *ATLA*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.
- Ambert, Anne-Marie, Patricia A. Adler, Peter Adler, and Daniel F. Detzner. "Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 57.4 (Nov.1995): 879-93. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Nov. 2012.
- Augustine. "Book 1." *St. Augustine: Confessions*. Trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin. London: Penguin, 1961. 21. *Kindle File*.
- Barna, George. *The Second Coming of the Church*. Nashville: Word, 1998. Print.
- Barna Group. "American Lifestyles Mix Compassion and Self-Oriented Behavior." *Barna.org*. Barna Group, 5 Feb. 2007. Web. 22 Nov. 2010.
- Barron, Robert. *And Now I See: A Theology of Transformation*. New York: Crossroad, 1998. Print.
- . *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*. New York: Crossroad, 2008. Print.
- Baxter, Jamie, and John Eyles. "Evaluating Qualitative Research in Social Geography: Establishing 'Rigour' in Interview Analysis." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 22.4 (1997): 505-25. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Nov. 2012.
- Beck, James R., and Bruce Demarest. *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology: A Biblical Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005. Print.



- Belcher, Jim. *Deep Church: A Third Way beyond Emerging and Traditional*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009. Print.
- Bell, Judith. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. 5th ed. Maidenhead: McGraw Open U, 2010. *eBook Collection*. Web. 9 July 2013.
- Benner, David G. *Spirituality and the Awakening Self: The Sacred Journey of Transformation*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012. Print.
- . *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003. Print.
- Bernard of Clairvaux. "On Loving God." Evans 173-205. Print.
- . "On the Steps of Humility and Pride." Evans 99-143. Print.
- . *Talks on the Song of Songs*. Ed. and trans. Bernard Bangley. Brewster: Paraclete, 2002. Print.
- Bondi, Roberta C. *To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Print.
- . *To Pray and to Love: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. Print.
- Bridges, Jerry. *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008. *Kindle file*.
- Buscaglia, Leo F. *Personhood*. Thorofare: Slack, 1978. Print.
- Chapin, Harry. "Cats in the Cradle Lyrics." *Lyrics Depot*. Lyrics Depot, n.d. Web. 27 Oct. 2010.

- Chrysostom, John. "On the Incomprehensible Nature of God." *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Ed. Peter Gorday. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000. 145. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. *Logos* file.
- . "Homily Concerning the Statues." *Isaiah 1-39*. Ed. Steven A. McKinion. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004. 50. *Logos* file. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture.
- Coe, John. "Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation Opening to Spiritual Formation in the Cross and the Spirit." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1.1 (Spring 2009): 54-78. Print.
- Collins, Kenneth J. "John Wesley's Topography of the Heart: Dispositions, Tempers, and Affections." *Methodist History* 36.3 (1998): 162-75. Print.
- . *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997. Print.
- . *Soul Care: Deliverance and Renewal through the Christian Life*. Wheaton: Victor, 1995. Print.
- . *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007. Print.
- Conn, Joann Wolski. "Toward Spiritual Maturity." *Exploring Christian Spirituality*. Ed. Kenneth J. Collins. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 355-78. Print.
- Demarest, Bruce. *Satisfy Your Soul: Restoring the Heart of Christian Spirituality*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999. Print.

- Desilva, David. "Remember Your Baptism: Living Out the Christian Rite of Transformation." *Conversations: A Forum for Authentic Transformation* 8.1 (Spring Summer 2010): 86-91. Print.
- Dongell, Joseph. "Biblical Interpretation for Life and Ministry." DM802. Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore. 12 Jan. to 16 Jan. 2009. Lectures.
- Dunn, Dan W. *Offer Them Life: A Life-Based Evangelistic Vision*. Eugene: Wipf, 2013. Print.
- Dweck, Carol S. "Mindsets: How Praise is Harming Youth and What Can Be Done about It." *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 24.5 (Jan. 2008): 55-58. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.
- . *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Ballantine, 2006. Print.
- Evans, Gillian R., ed. and trans. *Bernard of Clairvaux: Selected Works*. New York: Paulist, 1987. Print.
- Fee, Gordon D. *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996. Print.
- Fitch, David E. *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church from Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism, and Other Modern Maladies*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. Print.
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path of Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco: Harper, 1978. Print.
- . Foreword. *Embracing the Love of God: The Path and Promise of Christian Life*. By James Smith. New York: HarperOne, 1995. xiii-xv. Print.

- Foster, Richard J., and Gayle D. Beebe. *Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009. Print.
- Frost, Michael. *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006. Print.
- Funk, Mary Margaret. *Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life*. New York: Continuum, 2006. Print.
- Gallup, George, Jr. Foreword. *Growing an Engaged Church: How to Stop "Doing Church" and Start Being the Church Again*. By Albert L. Winseman. New York: Gallup, 2007. ix-xii. Print.
- Goggin, Jamin. "Unchristian Mirrors." *Conversations: A Forum for Authentic Transformation* 8.1 (Spring/Summer 2010): 68. Print.
- Gottlieb, Lori. "How Do I Love Thee?" *The Atlantic Monthly* Mar. 2006: 58-70. Print.
- Gruen, Anselm. *Heaven Begins within You: Wisdom from the Desert Fathers*. Trans. Peter Heinegg. New York: Crossroad, 1999. Print.
- Guder, Darrell L., ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. Print. The Gospel and Our Culture Ser.
- Hai, C. P. *East Fast, Pay Less*. *Philstar.com*. Philstar, 1 Jan. 2013. Web. 21 Apr. 2013.
- Halcomb, Elizabeth J., and Sharon Andrew. "Triangulation as a Method for Contemporary Nursing Research." *Nurse Researcher* 13.2 (2005): 71-82. *CINAHL*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.
- Harper, Steve. *John Wesley's Message for Today*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983. Print.
- Hawkins, Greg L., Cally Parkinson, and Eric Arnson. *Reveal: Where Are You?* Barrington, IL: Willow Creek Association, 2007. Print.

- Henderson, D. Michael. *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*. Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury, 1997. Print.
- Herrington, Jim, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr. *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. Print.
- Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006. Print.
- Howard, Evan B. *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008. Print.
- Imbach, Jeffrey D. *The Recovery of Love*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Print.
- Irenaeus of Lyons. "Irenæus Against Heresies." *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. Buffalo: Christian Literature Company, 1885. Logos file.
- Job, Rueben P. and Norman Shawchuck, eds. *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*. Nashville: Upper Room, 1983. Print.
- "John Chrysostom." *Introduction and Biographical Information*. Ed. Thomas Oden. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005. 496. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. Logos file.
- Johnston, William, ed. *The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counseling*. New York: Doubleday, 1973. Print.
- Julian of Norwich. "Showings." *Julian of Norwich: Showings*. Ed. and trans. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. Mahwah: Paulist, 1978. 125-70. Print.
- Kelly, Thomas R. *A Testament of Devotion*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1941. Print.

- Kempis, Thomas à. *The Imitation of Christ*. Ed. and trans. S. J. Joseph N. Tylenda. New York: Random, 1998. Print. Vintage Spiritual Classics.
- Kinghorn, Kenneth Cain. "Introduction to Sermon 10: The Witness of the Spirit Discourse I." *John Wesley on Christian Beliefs*. Ed. Kenneth Cain Kinghorn. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002. 168-70. Print. Vol. 1 of *The Standard Sermons in Modern English*. 3 vols. 2002-2003.
- Kinnaman, David, and Gabe Lyons. *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. Print.
- Knight, Henry H., III. "Amazing Love! The Atonement in John and Charles Wesley." *Circuit Rider* 28.5 (Sept./Oct. 2004): 7-8. Print.
- . *Eight Life-Enriching Practices of United Methodists*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001. Print.
- . *Is There a Future for God's Love: An Evangelical Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2012. *Kindle* file.
- . Personal conversations. 1 Jan. 2004 to 31 Dec. 2010.
- Knight, Henry H., III, and F. Douglas Powe, Jr. *Transforming Evangelism: The Wesleyan Way of Sharing Faith*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2006. Print.
- Leclercq, Jean. Introduction. Evans 13-57. Print.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, 1960. Print.
- Lough, R. Keith, comp. *Formative Spirituality Glossary of Words and Phrases from Adrian van Kaam's Science Anthropology and Theology of Formation*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany, 2003. Print.

- Lovelace, Richard F. *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*.  
Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1979. Print.
- Maddox, Randy L. "Reconnecting the Means to the End: A Wesleyan Prescription for the  
Holiness Movement." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33.2. Fall (1998): 29-66.  
*ATLA*. Web. 26 Apr. 2013.
- Manskar, Steven W. *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household*. Nashville:  
Discipleship Resources, 2000. Print.
- Matthews, Keith J. "The Transformational Process." *The Kingdom Life: A Practical  
Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*. Ed. Allan Andrews. Colorado  
Springs: NavPress, 2010. 83-104. Print.
- McKnight, Scot. *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others*. Brewster: Paraclete,  
2004. Print.
- Morris, Leon. *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible*. Grand Rapids:  
Eerdmans, 1981. Print.
- Mulholland, M. Robert, Jr. *The Deeper Journey: The Spirituality of Discovering Your  
True Self*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006. Print.
- . *Invitation to a Journey*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993. Print.
- . *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation*. Nashville:  
Upper Room, 1985. Print.
- . "Spiritual Formation in Christ and Mission with Christ." *Journal of Spiritual  
Formation and Soul Care* 6.1 (Spring 2013): 11-17. Print.
- Muto, Susan. *John of the Cross for Today: The Dark Night*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany  
Association, 1994. Print.

- "Living Contemplatively and Serving God in the World: Two Sides of the Coin of Christian Ministry." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 6.1 (Spring 2013): 82-92. Print.
- . *Pathways of Spiritual Living*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 2004. Print.
- . "Spiritual Direction." DM857. Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore. 8-12 Jan. 2007. Lectures.
- Muto, Susan, and Adrian van Kaam. *An Epiphany Manual on the Art and Discipline of Formation-in-Common*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 1998. Print.
- Olson, Roger E. *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. Print.
- Outler, Albert C., and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1991. Print.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. Print.
- Porter, Steve L. "Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1.2 (2008): 129-48. Print.
- Rainer, Thom S., and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. Nashville: Broadman, 2006. Print.
- Reese, Martha Grace. *Unbinding Your Heart: 40 Days of Prayer and Faith Sharing*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2008. Print. Real Life Evangelism Ser.
- Rogers, Carl. *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. New York: Houghton, 1961. *Kindle* file.



- Roxburgh, Alan J., and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006. Print. Leadership Network.
- Rusaw, Rick, and Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*. Loveland: Group, 2004. Print.
- Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*. Carol Stream: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996. Print.
- Seamands, Stephen. *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005. Print.
- Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61.2 (June 2008): 294-308. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 Nov. 2012.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene: WIPF, 2011. Print.
- Shults, F. LeRon, and Steven J. Sandage. *Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology*. Grand Rapids: Academic-Baker, 2006. Print.
- Smith, Gordon T. *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion and Authentic Transformation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. Print.
- Smith, James Bryan. *Embracing the Love of God: The Path and Promise of Christian Life*. New York: HarperOne, 1995. Print.
- . *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2009. Print.

- Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship: Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. Print. Vol. 1 of *Cultural Liturgies*. 3 vols. 2009-.
- . *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?: Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. Print.
- Snyder, Howard A. *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. Print.
- Springle, Patrick. "Changing Metrics: Churches Discovering the Benefits of Measuring More Than Size." *Leadership Network Advance*. Leadership Network, Nov. 2008. Web. 26 June 2010.
- Staub, Dick. *The Culturally Savvy Christian: A Manifesto for Deepening Faith and Enriching Popular Culture in an Age of Christianity-Lite*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007. Print.
- Teresa of Avila. *The Interior Castle*. Ed. Richard J Payne. Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh. Mahwah: Paulist, 1979. Print. Classics of Western Spirituality.
- The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Ed. Andy Langford. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing, 1992. Print.
- van Kaam, Adrian. *Formative Spirituality*. 7 vols. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 1985-2003. Print.
- . *In Search of Spiritual Identity*. Denville: Dimension, 1975. Print.
- . *On Being Involved: The Rhythm of Involvement and Detachment in Human Life*. Denville: Dimension, 1970. Print.
- . *Spirituality and the Gentle Life*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany, 1974. Print.

- van Kaam, Adrian and Susan Muto. *Christian Articulation of the Mystery*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 2005. Print. Vol. 2 of *Formation Theology*. 4 vols. 2004-2007.
- . *Dynamics of Spiritual Direction*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 2003. Print.
- . *Epiphany Certification Program, Course I: Foundations of Human and Christian Formation Workbook*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Academy, 2007. Print.
- . *Epiphany Certification Program, Course II: Basics of Formation Anthropology and Formation Theology Workbook*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Academy, 2007. Print.
- . *Epiphany Certification Program, Course III: Formation of the Human and Christian Heart Workbook*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Academy, 2008. Print.
- . *Epiphany Certification Program, Course IV: Living Our Faith and Formation Traditions Workbook*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Academy, 2008. Print.
- . *Epiphany Certification Program, Course VI: Integrating Contemplation and Action in Daily Life Workbook*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Academy, 2009. Print.
- Vine, W. E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Westwood: Barbour, 1952. Print.
- Webb, Christopher S. "Shaping a Rule of Life." *Conversations: A Forum for Authentic Transformation* 11.1 (Spring/Summer 2013): 48-52. Print.
- Wesley, John. "The End of Christ's Coming." Outler and Heitzenrater 441-50. Print.
- . "God's Love to Fallen Man." Outler and Heitzenrater 475-84. Print.
- . "The Image of God." Outler and Heitzenrater 14-21. Print.
- . "The Means of Grace." Outler and Heitzenrater 157-71. Print.
- . "On Zeal." Outler and Heitzenrater 465-73. Print.

- . *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1966. Print.
- . "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount Discourse IV." Outler and Heitzenrater 194-206. Print.
- Whiteman, Darrell L. Foreword. *Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples across Cultures*. By A. H. Mathias Zahniser. Eugene: WIPF, 1997. ix-x. Print.
- Wiersma, William, and Stephen G. Jurs. *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. Boston: Allyn, 2005. Print.
- Wilhoit, James C. "Only God's Love Counts: Van Kaam's Formation Theology." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1.2 (2008): 168-81. Print.
- . *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. Print.
- Wilken, Robert Lewis. "Christian Formation in the Early Church." *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*. Ed. John Van Engen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. Print.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. San Francisco: Harper, 1997. Print.
- . *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. New York: HarperOne, 2006. Print.
- . *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002. Print.
- . *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York: HarperOne, 1988. Print.
- Williams, Daniel Day. *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*. New York: Harper, 1968. Print.

Williams, Watkin. *The Mysticism of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*. London: Oates, 1931. Print.

Winseman, Albert L. *Growing an Engaged Church: How to Stop "Doing Church" and Start Being the Church Again*. New York: Gallup, 2007. Print.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1972. Print.

## WORKS CONSULTED

- Bandy, Thomas G. *Road Runner*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002. Print.
- Barna, George. *Fish Out of Water*. Nashville: Integrity, 2002. Print.
- Benner, David G. *Sacred companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction*.  
Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002. Print.
- Bernard of Clairvaux. "On Consideration." Evans 145-72. Print.
- . *Saint Bernard: The Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride*. Trans. Barton R. V. Mills.  
London: Macmillan, 1929. Print. Translations of Christian Lit. Ser. II—Latin  
Texts.
- . *The Steps of Humility*. Trans. George Boxworth Burch. Notre Dame: U of Notre  
Dame, 1963. Print.
- Brooks, David. "Your Brain on Baseball." *NYTimes.com*. New York Times, 18 Mar.  
2007. Web. 26 Apr. 2013.
- Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Community 101*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997. Print.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd ed. New York: Doubleday, 1995. Print.
- Ciszek, Walter J. *He Leadeth Me*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1973. Print.
- Collins, Kenneth J., ed. *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*. Grand  
Rapids: Baker Books, 2000. Print.
- Conder, Tim. *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the  
Emerging Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. Print.
- Cousins, Ewert H. Preface. Evans 5-11. Print.
- Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character  
Ethic*. New York: Simon, 1989. Print.

- Davis, Woody Lynn. "Beyond the Personal Pronoun: Gender Schemas and Perceptions of Christians and Their Messages." Diss. U of Kentucky, 1991. Print.
- Eales, Samuel J. *St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1890. Print. Fathers for English Readers.
- Engen, John Van, ed. *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. Print.
- Entwistle, David N. *Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity: An Introduction to Worldview Issues, Philosophical Foundations, and Models of Integration*. Eugene: WIPF, 2004. Print.
- Evans, G. R. *The Mind of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1983. Print.
- Fernando, Ajith. *Jesus Driven Ministry*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002. Print.
- Foss, Michael W. *Power Surge*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000. Print.
- Foster, Richard J. *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*. New York: HarperOne, 2008. Print.
- Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: Guilford, 1985. Print.
- Friedman, Thomas L. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Farrar, 2006. Print.
- Fulcher, James, and John Scott. *Sociology*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- Gilson, Etienne. *The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard*. Trans. A. H. C. Downes. London: Sheed and Ward, 1940. Print.
- Golcman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam, 1985. Print.

- Green, Joel B., and Mark D. Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: The Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000. Print.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1977. Print.
- Groeschel, Benedict J., with Kevin Perrotta. *The Journey toward God: In the Footsteps of the Great Spiritual Writers—Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox*. Cincinnati: Servant, 2000. Print.
- Guerin, Philip J. Jr., Thomas F. Fogarty, Leo F. Fay, and Judith Gilbert Kautto. *Working with Relationship Triangles: The One-Two-Three of Psychotherapy*. New York: Guilford, 1996. Print.
- Gunton, Colin E. *Act and Being*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. Print.
- . *Intellect and Action*. Edinburgh: Clark, 2000. Print.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981. Print.
- Hall, Amy L., and Ray C. Rist. "Integrating Multiple Qualitative Research Methods: Or Avoiding the Precariousness of a One-Legged Stool." *Psychology & Marketing* 16.4 (July 1999): 291-304. *WorldCat*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.
- Hansen, Douglas, and Robert Drovda. "The Holding Power of Love: John Wesley and D. W. Winnicott in Conversation." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 25.1 (2006): 54-63. Print.
- Harper, Steve. *A Pocket Guide to Prayer*. Nashville: Upper Room, 2010. Print.
- Hawkins, Greg L., and Cally Parkinson. *Follow Me: What's Next for You?* Barrington: Willow Creek, 2008. Print.



- Henderson, D. Michael. *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*.  
Nappanee: Asbury, 1997. Print.
- Hill, Peter C., and Ralph W Hood, cds. *Measures of Religiosity*. Birmingham: Religious  
Education, 1999. Print.
- Hillery, George A., Jr. "Triangulation in Religious Research: A Sociological Approach to  
the Study of Monasteries." *Review of Religious Research* 23.1 (Sept. 1981): 22-  
38. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.
- Janda, Louis. *The Psychologist's Book of Self-Tests*. New York: Perigee, 1996. Print.
- Johnson, Susan C., Carol S. Dweck, and Frances S. Chen. "Evidence for Infants' Internal  
Working Models of Attachment." *Psychological Science* 18.6 (June 2007): 501-  
02. *MEDLINE*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.
- Kaiser, John Edmund. *Winning on Purpose: How to Organize Congregations to Succeed  
in Their Mission*. Ed. Tom Bandy and Bill Easum. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006.  
Print. Convergence eBook Ser.
- Kinghorn, Kenneth Cain, ed. *The Standard Sermons in Modern English*. 3 vols.  
Nashville: Abingdon, 2002-03.
- Kouzes, James M., and Barry Z. Posner. *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why  
People Demand It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003. Print.
- Lake, Frank. *Clinical Theology*. New York: Crossroad, 1987. Print.
- Langford, Jeremy. "How to Be Good Dirt: Nurturing God's Seeds of Faith in Our Lives."  
*Conversations: A Forum for Authentic Transformation* 8.1 (Spring/Summer  
2010): 76-81. Print.

- LaRossa, Ralph. "Grounded Theory Methods and Qualitative Family Research." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67.4 (Nov. 2005): 837-57. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 Nov. 2012.
- Leaders on Leadership*. Ed. George Barna. Ventura: Regal, 1997. Print.
- Leech, Nancy L., and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. "An Array of Qualitative Data Analysis Tools: A Call for Data Analysis Triangulation." *School Psychology Quarterly* 22.4 (2007): 557-84. *WorldCat*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.
- Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002. Print.
- Lewis, C. S. "The Weight of Glory." *A Guide to Prayer*. Job and Shawchuck 85. Print.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 3rd ed. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame, 2007. Print.
- Manskar, Steven W. "Forming Disciples Spiritually." *Interpreter* 51.6 (Nov. Dec. 2007): 15. Print.
- McKnight, Scot. *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. Print.
- Moon, Gary W., and David G. Benner, eds. *Spiritual Direction and Christian Soul Care: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004. *Kindle file*.
- Muto, Susan. *Blessings That Makes Us Be: A Formative Approach to Living the Beatitudes*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 2002. Print.
- . *John of the Cross for Today: The Ascent*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 1990. Print.

- Muto, Susan, and Adrian van Kaam. *Divine Guidance: Seeking to Find and Follow the Will of God*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 1994. Print.
- . *Growing through the Stress of Ministry*. Totowa: Resurrection, 2005. Print.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*. New York: Crossroad, 1993. Print.
- Olsen, Roger E., and Christopher A. Hall. *The Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. Print.
- Ortberg, John. *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. Print.
- Oswalt, John N. *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*. Ed. R. K. and Robert L. Hubbard Harrison, Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986. Print. New International Commentary on the Old Testament.
- Parrott, Les, and Leslie Parrott. *The Love List: Eight Little Things That Make a Big Difference in Your Marriage*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. Print.
- Patten, Mildred L. *Questionnaire Research: A Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Pyczak, 2001. Print.
- Peck, M. Scott. *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*. New York: Simon, 1987. Print.
- . *People of the Lie*. New York: Simon, 1983. Print.
- . *The Road Less Traveled and Beyond: Spiritual Growth in an Age of Anxiety*. New York: Simon, 1997. Print.
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Pattern for Maturity*. Chicago: Moody, 1966. Print.

- Placher, William C. *Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, Theology, and Scripture*.  
Louisville: Westminster-Knox, 1994. Print.
- Principe, Walter. "Toward Defining Spirituality." Collins 43-59. Print.
- Quinn, Robert E. *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996. Print.
- Scanish, John D., and Mark R. McMinn. "Christian Experience Inventory." Hill and Hood 160-62. Print.
- Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. Print.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Genesis in Space and Time*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1972. Print.
- . "The Mark of the Christian." *Library of Online Evangelical Christian Books*. The Evangelical Christian Library, n.d. Web. 24 Dec. 2012.
- Scheller, Christine A. "A Divine Conspirator: Dallas Willard Is on a Quiet Quest to Subvert Nominal Christianity." *Christianity Today* Sept. 2006: 45-48. *ATLA*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. "Spirituality in the Academy." Collins 254-69. Print.
- Seamands, David A. *Healing for Damaged Emotions*. Wheaton: Victor, 1984. Print.
- Seamands, Stephen A. *Wounds That Heal: Bringing Our Hurts to the Cross*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003. Print.
- Sherwood, John J., and John C. Glidewell. "Planned Renegotiation: A Norm-Setting OD Intervention." *1973 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*. Ed. J. W. and J. E.

- Jones Pfciffer. Iowa City: U Associates, 1972. 195-202. *WorldCat*. Web. 26 Dec. 2012.
- Smith, James Bryan. *The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2010. Print.
- . *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2009. Print.
- Smith, James K. A. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. Print. Vol. 2 of *Cultural Liturgies*. 3 vols. 2009-.
- Sternberg, Robert J. *Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships*. New York: Oxford, 1998. Print.
- . *The Triangle of Love: Intimacy, Passion, Commitment*. New York: Basic, 1988. Print.
- . "A Triangular Theory of Love." *Psychological Review* 93.2 (1986): 119-35. Print.
- Sternberg, Robert J., and Michael L. Barnes, eds. *The Psychology of Love*. New Haven: Yale, 1988. Print.
- Stevens, R. Paul. *The Other Six Days*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. Print.
- Stevenson, Daryl H. "Spiritual Maturity Index." Hill and Hood 201-04. Print.
- Storrs, Richard S. *Bernard of Clairvaux: The Times, the Man, and His Work: An Historical Study in Eight Lectures*. New York: Scribner's, 1912. Print.
- Stott, John. *Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002. Print.
- Strawn, Brad D. "Restoring Moral Affections of the Heart: How Does Psychotherapy Heal?" *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 23.2 (2004): 140-48. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.

- Streets, Edward David. "Understanding the Cross of Christ as It Relates to Leadership Development at Wesley United Methodist Church." Diss. Asbury Theological Seminary, 2004. Print.
- ten Boom, Corrie. *The Hiding Place*. New York: Bantam, 1971. Print.
- Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville: Westminster, 1995. Print.
- Thayer, O. Jane. "Constructing a Spirituality Measure Based on Learning Theory: The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 23.3 (2004): 195-207. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 24 Apr. 2013.
- The Theologia Germanica of Martin Luther*. Trans. Bengt Hoffman. Mahwah: Paulist, 1980. Print. The Classics of Western Spirituality.
- Thrall, Bill, B. McNicol, and Ken McElrath. *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999. Print.
- Torrance, James B. "Contemplating the Trinitarian Mystery of Christ." Collins 296-307. Print.
- van Kaam, Adrian. *Looking for Jesus*. Denville: Dimension, 1978. Print.
- . *The Tender Farewell of Jesus*. Hyde Park: New City, 1996. Print.
- . *The Woman at the Well*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 1976. Print.
- van Kaam, Adrian, and Susan Muto. *Epiphany Certification Program Workbook*. 7th rev. 6 courses. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 2007-09.
- . *Foundations of Christian Formation*. Pittsburgh: Epiphany Association, 2004. Print.
- Vol. 1 of *Formation Theology*. 4 vols. 2004-2007.

- Wesley, John. "The New Birth." Outler and Heitzenrater 335-45. Print.
- . "The Scripture Way of Salvation." Outler and Heitzenrater 371-80. Print.
- . "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse 1." Kinghorn 2: 36-54. Print.
- Wilhoit, James C. and Evan B. Howard. *Discovering Lectio Divina: Bringing Scripture into Ordinary Life*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012. Kindle file.
- Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983. Print.
- Willimon, William H. *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002. Print.
- Zahniser, A. H. Mathias. *Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples Across Cultures*. Eugene: WIPF, 1997. Print.