A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL INFLUENCES THAT SHAPE THE CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE OF BEGINNING AND ADVANCED SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS


This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, 2007.
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research except where other sources are fully acknowledged by footnotes or referencing.

________________________
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Abstract

A study of the developmental influences that shape the contemporary practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors.

This study explores the similar and different developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. An examination of the contemporary literature on spiritual direction finds that in the main, two developmental influences shape the practice of contemporary spiritual directors: their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees and their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. While the review highlights the presence of these two influences, the literature is deficient in understanding the similarities and differences in how these two influences shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. To address the deficiency, this study reviews three groups of Western Australian spiritual directors, Anglican, Churches of Christ and Roman Catholic. The investigation takes a qualitative, ethnographic approach, using focus groups. An analysis and discussion of the data confirms that the similarities and differences in the influences that shape their practice revolve around two key developmental influences namely, the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance to their directees, and their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. While both influences shape beginning and advanced directors, the former impacts more on the practice of beginning directors and the latter more affects advanced directors.
Two factors may initiate and sustain the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance. First, directors grow by noticing and attending to all the dimensions of their human experience. Second, directors develop by having their experience attended to in some form of therapeutic relationship or through participation in various developmental group processes.

Directors may enhance their capacity to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment through understanding paradigms about spiritual direction practice and spiritual development. Their appreciation of paradigms about spiritual direction may derive from two sources. The first is by how they distinguish more effectively spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices. The second is by how they grow in understanding relevant theological, philosophical, and psychological perspectives that inform good practice. Directors may further increase their comprehension of interpretive frameworks about spiritual development by redressing the attitudinal effects of fundamentalism and incorporating a multiplicity of approaches to spirituality. Training programmes are an important means to introduce and develop directors’ abilities to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. A person’s ecclesial role may influence the context in which a director commences practice. From this discussion, this study draws conclusions and offers recommendations applicable to practice and research.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Background to the research problem

Since the 1970s, there has been resurgence in the practice of spiritual direction. The body of experienced spiritual directors is growing. A significant number of people worldwide are discerning their call to this work. The rapid growth in formal and informal training programmes in spiritual direction across the Western world has supported the development of contemporary spiritual direction. A sample of earlier training programmes in spiritual direction are the Center for Religious Development, Boston, the Institute of Spiritual Leadership, Chicago, the Shalem Institute, Maryland, and the Fordham, Duquesne, and Washington Theological Union programmes.¹ In recent years, various national and international professional bodies have formed to sustain spiritual directors in their formation and practice. For example, Spiritual Directors International endeavours “[to tend] the holy around the world and across traditions”.² The literature in this field concerning spiritual direction is expanding as commentators reflect upon their work of spiritual accompaniment and the new developments emerging in practice. For instance, in drawing upon their Ignatian background and their work at the Center for Religious development, William Barry and Bill Connolly³ articulate that a key role of

directors is to assist directees to adopt a contemplative attitude to their life; Tilden Edwards⁴, in distilling his experience at the Shalom Institute, offers insight into how to guide groups and individuals. Gerald May⁵, a colleague of Edwards at the same institute, reflects on psychiatric issues associated with accompaniment. Margaret Guenther⁶ and Kathleen Fischer⁷ discuss feminist perspectives on spiritual direction. Furthermore, two important international peer-reviewed journals, Human Development and Presence, facilitate professional conversation among spiritual directors and those involved in the formation of spiritual directors. All these developments reflect the rebirth of the practice of spiritual direction since the 1970s.

2. The research problem

Now, a few decades later, there are effectively two groups of spiritual directors: those beginning their practice, and those who are advanced well beyond their initial formation and early practice. With the recognition of this distinction, the question of the varying influences over their respective practices arises: What similar and different developmental influences shape their respective practices? This topic is virtually unexplored in academia, as the following literature review will suggest. This alone is insufficient reason to justify investigating the topic. Other reasons exist that do justify why the problem warrants attention at the level of individual praxis, at the level of organisational training and at the level of professional bodies. The results of such an examination may assist beginning and advanced directors to

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improve their practice. It may highlight the relevant developmental influences that shape their respective practices. The cost of not undertaking such a consideration could lessen the opportunities for spiritual directors to appreciate what may be beneficial for them at their particular stage of professional development. Such research could assist formators to sharpen their vision as to requirements to design and conduct initial and ongoing training programmes. Conversely, the effectiveness of initial and ongoing formation programmes may suffer from having a less precise appreciation of what specifically influences directors in different stages of practice. Such enquiry may assist professional associations for spiritual directors to cater more effectively for the diverse developmental needs of their membership. The inverse cost of not undertaking such enquiry may result in a less accurate awareness of the influences shaping the practice of directors, which may hinder the efficacy of professional associations for spiritual directors to respond to the developmental needs of their various members. The potential benefits of addressing the research problem and the obvious costs of not doing so suggest it is worthwhile investigating the research problem as to similar and different developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced directors.

3. Exploring a solution to the research problem

Before addressing the research problem, certain issues need attention. First, a number of terms require definition: ‘spirituality’, ‘spiritual direction’, ‘spiritual director’, ‘directee’, and what is meant by the phrases ‘beginning and advanced directors’, ‘developmental influences’, ‘contemplative stance’, ‘contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of
accompaniment’, and ‘contemporary culture’. Second, the object of study in the discipline of spirituality and its associated research methodology need to be clarified. Third, how this project applies the research methodology to the research topic needs to be elucidated.

3.1 Definition of terms

3.1.1 Spirituality

It is a daunting task to attempt to define spirituality given the diverse usage of the term. Since the word ‘spirituality’ emerged into general use in the mid-1970s, it has come to replace older phrases such as, ‘devout life’, ‘interior life’, and ‘piety’. The vast explosion of books, groups, and courses on spirituality testify to the modern thirst for some kind of engagement with mystery and deeper meaning in life to address the spiritual vacuum so prevalent in modern Western culture. Spirituality’s popularity has continued to increase as demonstrated by a casual visit to a local bookstore revealing a wide range of spiritual literature on display. A cursory glance at the literature under the label ‘spirituality’, whether popular or more academic, may encompass such varied fields as history, psychology, theology, and devotion. Such a myriad of approaches tends to confound the understanding of spirituality, which in turn produces vague,

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confusing\textsuperscript{14}, and ambiguous\textsuperscript{15} definitions of spirituality. Regardless of this general uncertainty about how to define spirituality, it remains an important subject as its sustained popularity attests.\textsuperscript{16}

The word ‘spirituality’ has an extensive semantic range. It origins are traced through the French \textit{spiritualité} to the Latin \textit{spiritualitas} that finds its origins in the biblical semantic domain of \textit{pneuma}, the Greek noun for spirit.\textsuperscript{17} Saint Paul contrasts the word ‘spirit’ with \textit{sarx}, which equates with flesh.\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Sarx} refers to the spiritual disposition that correlates with the unclean spirit to which the gospels refer: “fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility; idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements, factions, envy; drunkenness, orgies and similar things” (Gal 5:19; cf. 5:15-26; 6:3).\textsuperscript{19} About this, Walter Principe offers an interesting reflection that the ‘flesh’ could be a person’s “mind or will or heart as much as or even more than the physical flesh or the body if the mind, will, or heart resist the influence of the Spirit”.\textsuperscript{20} On the other hand, \textit{pneuma} (Spirit) is the Spirit of God that draws people towards “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5: 22). Thus, Paul’s contrast between \textit{sarx} and \textit{pneuma} highlights that an essential element of the term ‘spirituality’ is the energetic relationship between the divine Spirit and the human spirit.\textsuperscript{21} Kees Waaijman’s comment prompts a concluding observation. It is important not

\textsuperscript{18} Principe, 1983, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{19} Waaijman, p. 362.
\textsuperscript{20} Principe, 1983, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{21} Waaijman, p. 361.
to identify *sarx* with the human body or to suggest that ‘spirit’ equals good and ‘body’ equals evil. *Sarx* describes the whole person from the perspective of creaturely existence that is frail, mortal, prone to sin, and hostile to God.\(^{22}\) The spiritual and unspiritual struggle of Paul in Romans 7:14 - 8:4 is that of *pneuma* and *sarx*, of responsiveness to the Divine invitation in tension with resistance to God’s Spirit.

A notable semantic shift in the use of the term *spiritualitas*, a Latin derivative of *pneuma*, developed in the twelfth century through the growing influence of a new philosophical movement known as scholasticism. The term *spiritualitas* began to take on the sense of the rational creature as opposed to the non-rational creation so that the spiritual (rational) lay in contrast to the material (non-rational).\(^{23}\) By the thirteenth century, this newer philosophical notion of what was *spiritualitas* stood alongside the older Pauline meaning.\(^{24}\)\(^{25}\)

From the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, two directions then emerged about the term *spiritualitas*. First, from a sociological viewpoint, the scholastic distinction between the rational (spiritual) and the non-rational (material) grew to encompass, in the widest and most external sense, what

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\(^{23}\) Sheldrake, 1991, p. 35.

\(^{24}\) Principe, 1983, p. 131.

\(^{25}\) Waaijman notes a growing contrast between *spiritualitas* and materiality emerged during the 11th and 12th centuries. While Waaijman does not use the word ‘dualistic’, it is hard to avoid the term in reading his comments, “the new thought of the 11th/12th century … marks off *spiritualitas* as a sphere of its own over and against everything that is *animalis, carnalis, materialis, corporeus, naturalis, civilis, saecularis, mundanus and temporalis*” (Waaijman, pp. 362 - 363 citing L. Tinsley, *The French Expression for Spirituality and Devotion*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 1953, pp. 89 - 91.
belonged to the clergy. Waaijman suggests the term spiritual referred to “the ecclesiastical as opposed to the temporal order; the authority of the church as opposed to that of the secular authorities; the clergy as opposed to the laity; spiritual goods as opposed to material possessions”. As this ecclesiastical designation of spiritualitas grew in prominence, its earlier philosophical and theological sense declined.

The second direction that emerged was that from a psychological standpoint, the scholastic difference between the rational (spiritual) and the non-rational (material) developed to include an understanding of spirituality as pertaining principally to the sphere of the inner life. The focus of such interiority was upon purifying one’s motivations, noticing one’s affectivity, analysing one’s feelings and clarifying the intentions of one’s will. Thus, spirituality was confined to the interior life, the sphere of the heart, a place of inwardness, the interior states of the soul. It referred to a person’s interior life and in particular, the affective elements of the relationship with the divine.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this process of dichotomising the rational (spiritual) and the non-rational (material) was further emphasised by distinguishing higher and lower forms of spirituality. A spiritual person began to refer to someone who strove for perfection beyond

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26 Waaijman, p. 363.  
27 Waaijman, p. 363.  
29 Waaijman, p. 363.  
30 Waaijman, p. 363.  
32 Waaijman, p. 363.
that demanded by living an ordinary Christian life. The term *spiritualitas* became associated with some of the excesses of quietism\(^\text{33}\) with unfortunate consequences such that it nearly disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century.\(^\text{34}\) Partly in reaction to this excess, a new approach came into vogue that linked an individual’s striving for perfection with the theoretical dogmatic categories of ascetical and mystical theology.\(^\text{35}\) These two terms were clustered sometimes together under the broader heading of ‘spiritual theology’ to describe the mechanics of the spiritual search.\(^\text{36}\) While there was much agreement on the value of categorising spiritual development into its ascetical and mystical components, a difference of opinion emerged about whether the ‘ordinary’ (ascetical) way of Christian living and the ‘extraordinary’ (mystical) way were completely separate\(^\text{37}\) from one another or were contiguous\(^\text{38}\) with each other.\(^\text{39}\) These categories remained the preferred terms in academia until the middle of the twentieth century.\(^\text{40}\)

Since then, there has been a paradigmatic shift in the general approach to theology that has influenced the contemporary understanding of spirituality. In former times, theological reflection was considered an exact body of knowledge. It drew heavily from the rich tradition of the past. Contemporary theology, however, draws more upon human experience as a reliable resource of divine revelation to respond to the issues of the present and the future. This shift from the old emphasis on tradition to the

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\(^{33}\) Sheldrake, 1991, p. 35.
\(^{34}\) Principe, 1983, p. 132.
\(^{35}\) McIntosh, p. 7.
\(^{36}\) McIntosh, p. 8.
\(^{37}\) A. Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, (trans) H. Branderis, Tournai, Desclée, 1930 is an example of this approach.
\(^{39}\) Sheldrake, 1991, p. 46.
\(^{40}\) McGinn, 1993, p. 3.
contemporary importance of experience brought about a movement from the fixed categorised notions of ‘spiritual theology’ to a more fluid view of ‘spirituality’. The focus of this modern understanding of spirituality is not so much on defining what perfection is but on endeavouring to look at the profound mystery of human development within the framework of a vibrant relationship with the Absolute. This emerging sense of spirituality is being far less supported “by a sociologically Christian homogeneity of its situation; it will have to live much more clearly than hitherto out of a solitary, immediate experience of God and of [God’s Spirit] in the individual”. This broader existential approach to spirituality is concerned with articulating the transcendental experiences of believers, regardless of their social, cultural or religious backgrounds.

In general, contemporary spirituality distinguishes three levels of spirituality. The first level concerns the experience itself that transpires

44 McIntosh, p. 8.
46 A good example of this approach is Schneiders who considers that “in its most basic or anthropological sense, spirituality, like personality, is a characteristic of the human being as such” (Schneiders, 2003, p. 165). Just as people have a certain ‘psychology’, “a centre of personal consciousness and subjectivity” (Schneiders, 1993, p. 11) that is essential to their psychic life, Schneiders suggests that every individual likewise has a spirituality that is, “a fundamental dimension of the human being” (Schneiders, 1989, p. 678). Therefore, Schneiders primarily applies the term spirituality “to that dimension of the human subject in virtue of which the person is capable of self-transcending integration in relation to the
at a real or existential level. At this level, spirituality is a fundamental aspect of human being, which is not immediately evident. At this deep spiritual core, people encounter the transcendent dimension of their being; they connect to ultimate reality. Here, people build the capacity to develop beyond themselves in relationship with others and with God in understanding, liberty and love.

The second level of spirituality concerns the lived actuality of this first level. Spirituality at this second level seeks to integrate all aspects of human experience in the pursuit of integration through self-transcendence rather than restrict its concern to the interior life. At this second level, spirituality incorporates the particular social and inculturated spirituality

Ultimate, whatever the Ultimate is for the person in question” (Schneiders, 1993, p. 11). It is interesting to note the polarity of her definition: spirituality is an intrinsic element of the human person, yet it is this specific aspect that is orientated towards self-transcendence or as McIntosh expresses it, “the integration of the human subject is the telos of spirituality, yet that integration is achieved not solipsistically but ‘in relation to the Ultimate’” (McIntosh, p. 19). McIntosh further suggests that these terminological clarifications pinpoint that for Schneiders, spirituality is “an innate human aspiration towards ultimacy” (McIntosh, p. 19). It seems that Schneiders concurs with this in as much as she further says, “In short, spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one’s life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives” (Schneiders, 1986, p. 266). Therefore, from this perspective, Schneiders highlights the intrinsically human significance of spirituality (McIntosh, p. 19) and as she comments, she defines “spirituality broadly enough that the definition can apply to religious and non-religious or secular spiritualities and specifically enough that it does not include virtually anything that anyone espouses” (Schneiders, 2003, p. 166).
through which a person engages his or her spirituality.\textsuperscript{57} This second level is often associated with beliefs, rituals, symbols and various schools or traditions of Christian spirituality.\textsuperscript{58} This second level of spirituality is concerned with prayer, spiritual accompaniment, the different maps of the spiritual journey, and the means of progress in the spiritual ascent.\textsuperscript{59}

The third level\textsuperscript{60} is simply the practical or academic investigation of the two prior levels\textsuperscript{61}; it is necessarily interdisciplinary\textsuperscript{62} and takes note of contextual issues such as feminist concerns, the link between prayer and social justice, the wisdom of classical spiritual texts, developmental psychology and personal experience as the starting point of scholarly reflection.\textsuperscript{63} Thus, in the contemporary use of the term spirituality, three levels of understanding are distinguished.

In conclusion, the basic word ‘spirituality’ has a broad semantic range: it is an energetic relational process between the divine Spirit and the human spirit; this interior process purifies motivation, affectivity, intentions of the will and inner dispositions, and analyses feelings. It is an intimate relational process that resides inwardly within the human spirit; it is expressed in asceticism and mysticism and also it reaches beyond such categories; it goes

\textsuperscript{57} Principe, 1993, p. 932.
\textsuperscript{58} Principe, 1993, pp. 932 - 933.
\textsuperscript{59} Cousins, 1990, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{60} Schneiders expresses this well in terms of “the experimental and theoretical study of human efforts at self-transcending integration and to the pastoral practices aimed at fostering the spirituality of individuals and groups” (Schneiders, 1993, p. 11). It is worthy to note this expands the third element of her earlier definition from “the academic discipline which studies that experience” (1989, p. 678) by including “pastoral practices aimed at fostering the spirituality of individuals and groups” (Schneiders, 1993, p.11).
\textsuperscript{62} Dreyer, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{63} Wolski Conn, 1989, p.31 in Principe, 1993, p. 934.
beyond the confines of religions and philosophical systems. More recently, spirituality pertains to the transforming experience of encounter between the person and what is Ultimate, how this encounter is embodied or actualised in everyday life and the study of both. Drawing upon these considerations, this study defines the term ‘spirituality’ as the experience of self-transcending integration of the human person through engaging in a transforming relational process with what is Ultimate. From this understanding of spirituality, this study now defines some associated terms.

3.1.2 Spiritual direction

While many phrases name the work of spiritual accompaniment, this study principally uses the term ‘spiritual direction’ due to its common usage in the Christian tradition. In defining spiritual direction, the material object of spiritual direction, the phenomenon to be investigated, is the directee’s spiritual experience. The formal object of spiritual direction, the aspect of formality under which the phenomenon is to be investigated, is the transformational, relational process of the directee with what is Ultimate. In spiritual direction, the spiritual director is the agent who attends this process by means of adopting a contemplative stance towards it.

3.1.3 Spiritual director

This study defines a spiritual director as a person who engages in an intentional relational process with a directee to enable that person being

64 Waaijman, pp, 360 - 361, 364.
66 This use of material object and formal object to define spiritual direction is adapted from Schneiders’s use of the terms to define spirituality in S. Schneiders, “The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline,” Christian Spirituality Bulletin vol. 6 no. 1, 1998, pp. 1 – 3.
accompanied to notice and to attend to his or her transforming experience of encounter with what is Ultimate. In this process, the director takes a contemplative stance to a directee’s life experience while being contextually aware of the factors that shape the overall dynamic of accompaniment. In many ways, this sums up the scope and purpose of this research project.

3.1.4 Directee

Linked to the definition of the spiritual director is the ‘directee’. This study defines a directee as a person who engages in a process of being accompanied by a director primarily to deepen his or her relationship with what is Ultimate.

3.1.5 Beginning and advanced directors

With regard to defining spiritual directors as ‘beginning or advanced’, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other as they share some common aspects for example, their ability to attend contemplatively to their directees’ experience. The difference is largely one of self-designation. Directors see themselves as being in the beginning stages of practice or as more established in their field. It is, therefore, an untested premise to categorise spiritual directors as either beginning or advanced spiritual directors. Even a cursory examination of Western thought, starting with the early Greek philosopher Aristotle’s teleological view of the world in which all things having a beginning, a middle, and an end, suggests that to use such dualistic categories is limited.67 Further to this, taking a less linear and a more lateral perspective could suggest the possibility of further cyclic

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interconnections between different phases of the development of directors. Notwithstanding the validity of these points, the research restricts its enquiry to two broad categories, beginning and advanced directors. While respecting its inherent limitations, the enquiry appreciates the diversity of developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced directors. It may open the way for future research to refine further the various phases or cyclic movements in the development of directors beyond this dualistic consideration.

3.1.6 Developmental influences

With regard to ‘developmental influences’, this study defines them as those factors that shape or improve a director’s professional practice. Such influences could include the unfolding life-cycle of the director; the actual experience, and reflection on it, of accompanying people and its personal implications; attending retreats and seminars, participating in supervision, and reading.

3.1.7 Contemplative stance

In defining ‘contemplative stance’, first to ‘contemplate’ is defined as to attend to and to engage with the presence of what is Ultimate at the core of one’s life. Second, ‘stance’ is defined as the approach a director takes to a

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68 It is salutary to recall that Thomas Aquinas (writing in the 13th century) describes the human person as a “contemplative animal”. A writer such as Evelyn Underhill often used the image of the person as a contemplative animal. In noting her debt to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas in this, she highlights that these authors did not speak of a contemplative ‘spirit’. With them she sees the human person as contemplative precisely as an embodied being (A. Callahan, Evelyn Underhill: Spirituality for Daily Living, Lanham, Oxford, 1997, p. 134. E. Underhill, Mysticism: A study in the nature and developments of Man’s spiritual consciousness, A Meridian Book, New York, 1955, p. 17 citing Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentes 3.37.1.). Spirit and body in a person have a mutually dependent relationship. The five senses, emotions, the infra-psychic powers, the depths of the psyche and the *pneuma* are all needed in attending and engaging with the Presence. Given what has been
directee. Therefore in this thesis, ‘contemplative stance’ is defined as the way a director notices and attends to the transforming engagement between a directee and what is Ultimate within a directee’s life experience.\textsuperscript{69} A more thorough examination of contemplative stance follows in the literature review.

3.1.8 Contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment

Associated with the contemplative stance that spiritual directors take to their directees is their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. This study defines contextual awareness as the ability to notice and incorporate the circumstantial influences, either internal or external to the process of spiritual accompaniment, which have some bearing on shaping the overall process of spiritual direction. For example, contextual factors may include whether spiritual direction occurs within an individual, group, or corporate setting; the theological framework within which the process of spiritual direction occurs; the impact of traumatic experiences on both the directee and spiritual director, the degree to which sexual issues may review how spirituality is lived and articulated; the effect of alcohol and substance abuse; the influence of aged, health and cross-cultural issues. A more detailed study of contextual awareness follows in the literature review.

\textsuperscript{69} For the purposes of clarity, ‘contemplative stance’ is used to refer to a director’s relationship to a directee and ‘contemplative attitude’ to a director’s and directee’s personal contemplation of their own personal experience.
3.1.9 Contemporary culture

With reference to broader contexts noted above, there emerges with each new generation changing views of the world, self, others, and spirituality. Within modern society, such influences are affecting many aspects of human experience, including spiritual direction. This study uses Clifford Geertz’s definition of contemporary culture:

A historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.70

It is given sharper focus as to its scope with Don Browning’s definition of culture as “a set of symbols, stories (myths) and norms for conduct that orient a society or group cognitively, affectively and behaviourally to the world in which it lives”.71 This study adopts this definition because it incorporates within its understanding of culture an appreciation that symbolic form can embody a pattern of meanings or a system of inherited conceptions. As the study of spirituality endeavours to express symbolically in literary and other forms the concept of the profound Mystery, these definitions are worth adopting in this project. Furthermore, in this study contemporary culture is limited to the cultures of the Western nations of the developed world, within the specific period extending from the late 1970s to 2003.


3.2 What does spirituality study and what are the tools with which it investigates?

Schneiders elucidates the foundational issue of the object of the academic study of spirituality as the “spiritual life as experience”. An analysis of the constitutive elements of this phrase further clarifies its relevance: First, about the study of the spiritual ‘life’, it is the phenomena of the self-integration of the human person through engaging in a transforming relational process with what is Ultimate. Second, concerning the ‘spiritual’ life, because it is spiritual, an investigation must give equal attention to the human spirit and the Spirit of God. Third, in relation to the study of the spiritual life as ‘experience’, it must attend to the whole spectrum of human experience and not just rare or extraordinary phenomena. In this regard, it necessitates that besides theology and historical studies, the social sciences, literature, art, and other disciplines are important to include in examining the phenomenon under investigation. Thus, the study of spirituality requires an interdisciplinary approach or as Van Harvey depicts it, a “field-encompassing field”.

The study now focuses on how the discipline of spirituality investigates issues of methodology. According to Schneiders, there are three identifiable methodologies: the theological, the historical and contextual, and the hermeneutical. No single approach is complete by itself as each offers only a limited perspective from which to investigate spirituality. Thus, it is best

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73 Schneiders, 1994, p. 10.  
74 Schneiders, 1994, p. 10.  
75 Schneiders, 1994, pp. 10 - 11.  
to use them in an interrelated and mutually complementary manner.\textsuperscript{78} The first is the theological, which is the most traditional approach. This deductive approach draws principles for understanding and the practice of the spiritual life from the conclusions of dogmatic and moral theology.\textsuperscript{79} The advantages of the theological approach are that, firstly, it emphasises the Christian nature of the spirituality under investigation; secondly, it enables spirituality to be presented in the academic environment of seminaries in a way that matches their respective academic environments; thirdly, it maintains the Christian tradition as the principal reference point; and finally, it validates the inclusion of the personal and pastoral formation in ministerial training programmes.\textsuperscript{80}

The limitations of the theological approach are that, firstly, it denies or at least avoids accessing the benefits that are available from the integration of Christian spirituality and non-Christian resources; secondly, an over reliance on the normative tendency of theology tends to subjugate spirituality to the parameters of dogmatic and moral theology;\textsuperscript{81} thirdly, the increased recognition of the value of experience has greatly relativised this approach;\textsuperscript{82} and finally, it stresses the theological character of the field without including the obvious insights available from the social sciences.\textsuperscript{83} Those who favour this stance approach spirituality essentially as spiritual theology.\textsuperscript{84}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} Downey, 1997, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Schneiders, 1993, p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Schneiders, 1994, p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Schneiders, 1994, pp. 11 - 12.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Schneiders, 1993, p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{83} McGinn, 1993, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{84} McGinn, 1993, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
Turning to the historical and contextual methodology, while it can be applied in the contemporary context, it primarily draws upon what is available only within the recorded faith-experiences of people in the past and considers this resource to be the only reliable access.\textsuperscript{85} The advantage of this approach is that it safeguards the relevant spiritual insights of past eras for contemporary use.\textsuperscript{86} While it may give account of spiritual experience, it does not give access to the actual spiritual experience of the people concerned.\textsuperscript{87} The danger is that schemas of past or contemporary experience may be devised and divorced from people’s lived reality. If spirituality is treated only as an abstraction, at some distance from the lived reality of people’s lives, it could be argued that the relevance of what is current is undermined.

Finally, the hermeneutical approach endeavours to appreciate the experiential element of the Christian spiritual life\textsuperscript{88} and as such, understanding is considered as an interpretational strategy.\textsuperscript{89} Moreover, such a project is interdisciplinary because of the complexity of the experience of spirituality.\textsuperscript{90} This hermeneutical process includes three elements: first, a description of the phenomenon under examination; second, critical analysis through a lens such as theology, sociology etcetera; and third, constructive interpretation.\textsuperscript{91} About this latter aspect, the study of spirituality is to understand and appropriate the phenomenon in a manner that is

\textsuperscript{85} Schneiders, 1993, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{86} Downey, 1997, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{87} Downey, 1997, pp. 126 - 127.
\textsuperscript{88} Schneiders, 1994, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{89} Schneiders, 1994, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{90} Schneiders, 1994, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{91} Schneiders, 1994, pp. 12 - 13.
transformative of the subject. Such transformation, for example, can cause attitudinal and behavioural change in a person.

Each of these three methodologies endeavours to study spirituality by highlighting a different aspect of the experience of the spiritual life. They are not mutually exclusive, however, as all three can help to expand the understanding of spirituality. The hermeneutical method is perhaps best suited to this project as it explicitly acknowledges the reason the study is undertaken. One rationale is to endeavour to understand the similar and different developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. Another rationale is that by appropriating this knowledge, it may assist these directors to transform their attitudes towards, and their practice of, spiritual direction.

3.3 How does this project apply the methodology of spirituality to the research topic?

This study addresses the similarities and differences in the developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The accompanying participative, ‘methodological style’ is a qualitative, ethnographic approach, which draws upon the experience of both beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The associated ‘procedure’ incorporates a three-dimensional hermeneutical approach: descriptive, critical analysis and constructive appropriation. In the first phase, ‘descriptive’, focus groups are used to gather qualitative data from twenty-

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one spiritual directors. In the second phase, which is essentially ‘analytical and critical’, the qualitative data is analysed critically to help explain and evaluate the topic. In the third stage, ‘synthetic and constructive leading to appropriation’, the resultant outcomes produce a synthesis of the critical analysis of the data. Finally, this has a direct relevance for praxis in that its ‘objective’ is plural rather than singular in as much as it may be applicable to spiritual directors in multiple ways. For example, it may assist spiritual directors, formators of spiritual directors, and professional associations that support the development of directors.93

This study researches the problem of the similar and different developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced directors. It employs a hermeneutical methodology through a qualitative enquiry and adopts a linear-analytic literary structure involving six elements: statement of research problem and definitions; literature review; methodology; evaluation of qualitative data; discussion of data; conclusions and recommendations.94

These six elements of this study are implemented in the following six chapters.

This chapter has introduced the background to the research problem, namely, the similar and different developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced directors. It discussed the potential benefits of addressing the research problem and the obvious costs of not

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doing so. It defined relevant terms, discussed what spirituality studies, the tools with which it investigates, and how this methodology is applied to this project.

Chapter two reviews a selection of the contemporary literature on spiritual direction to investigate the similar and different developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The primary method employed in this overview is documentary analysis. Selected texts concerned with the contemplative stance and the contextual factors that shape the process of accompaniment are summarised.95 This method, inductive rather than deductive, seeks to identify the presence of particular content, both manifest and inferred, within selected texts or documents. The presence or absence of certain material is an indicator from which certain interpretations are made. Such an instrument enables this study to gain access to commonly held perspectives with regard to the developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors.

The parameters of time and the size of this study dictate the use of selected texts within this survey. Because of the vast body of contemporary literature available on contemporary spiritual direction, a limited selection of key Western Christian texts has been chosen especially, texts written mainly by and for practising spiritual directors with special attention given to the journals Presence and Human Development together with other journals and

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representative texts. The review confines itself to Western Christian literature written in English during the period from the late 1970s to 2003.

Chapter three discusses the methodology for the field study of spiritual directors. It examines the background to the research and justifies adopting a qualitative, ethnographic approach. The method of the data collection was focus group discussions using three groups of spiritual directors, Anglican, Churches of Christ and Roman Catholic in Perth, Western Australia, the city in which the researcher resides.

Chapter four is a synopsis of the qualitative data obtained from the three focus groups.

Chapter five analyses and discusses the evidence gained from the focus group participants. It considers whether the capacities of directors to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees, and to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment, are influences that shape practice. Furthermore, it discusses whether one is more influential if these dual capacities are present.

Chapter six presents a summary of the research findings with its conclusions and recommendations for prospective research.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

1. Introduction

This chapter reviews a selection of the contemporary literature on spiritual direction during the period from the late 1970s to 2003 to ascertain similar or different developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The examination identifies mainly two developmental influences:

1. their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees; and
2. their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment.

The literature is deficient in understanding the similarities and differences in how these two influences shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors.

The literature review examines the literature under two headings:

1. The contemplative stance of spiritual directors; and
2. Contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment.

2. The contemplative stance of spiritual directors

The first category is further subdivided as follows:
1. The essential nature of the contemplative stance;
2. How contemplative stance is fostered thorough supervision and formation;
3. The influence of psychology and other disciplines, and associated clinical issues pertinent to adopting a contemplative stance;
4. Various aids to contemplative attending;
5. Metaphorical understandings of contemplative stance;
6. The contribution of spiritual classics to the understanding of contemplative stance;
7. The contribution of contemporary paradigms to understanding contemplative stance; and
8. Frameworks from within which the contemplative stance is attended.

2.1 The essential nature of the contemplative stance

Examples of early contributors to the rejuvenation of spiritual direction practice were William Barry and William Connolly, and Madeline Birmingham. They were co-workers at the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on a training programme for spiritual directors.


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96 Barry and Connolly, 1982.
98 Barry and Connolly, 1982.
that directors help directees engage in their relationship with God by assisting directees to foster a contemplative attitude to their lives.\textsuperscript{100} They suggest directors should be interested in the whole person, their focus “of interest is the prayer experience of the directee”.\textsuperscript{101} Directors need to help directees “pay attention to God as he reveals himself … [and assist] directee[s] to recognize [their] reactions and decide on [their] responses to this God”.\textsuperscript{102} This dual task is described as “fostering a contemplative attitude”\textsuperscript{103} in directees. Although Barry and Connelly say “director[s] [are interested] in the rest of a person’s life”\textsuperscript{104}, their focus is often confined to directees’ prayer experiences. This limits spiritual direction to the restricted context of a private, intrapersonal approach. It excludes other worthwhile avenues of human experience.

Barry and Connelly significantly helped to promote resurgence in the practice of spiritual direction in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While their exclusive language alienates the sensibilities of many modern readers, their work is still valuable. It draws attention to the director’s principal role to help directees foster a contemplative attitude.

Birmingham describes contemplative stance as the focus of the spiritual director “on what happens between the directee and God”.\textsuperscript{105} She particularly highlights that the director’s role is to focus on the directee’s

\textsuperscript{100} Barry and Connolly, pp. 46 - 64.
\textsuperscript{101} Barry and Connolly, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{102} Barry and Connolly, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{103} Barry and Connolly, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{104} Barry and Connolly, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{105} Birmingham, p. 27.
“intensity of feeling”\textsuperscript{106} Central to Birmingham’s understanding of the contemplative stance is “there can be no spiritual direction if there is no serious attempt to pray”\textsuperscript{107} She acknowledges the importance of a good working relationship of trust between director and directee. Simultaneously, Birmingham insists on “engagement with God”\textsuperscript{108} being the central focus of the relationship rather than the development of friendship. Birmingham highlights the importance of attending the affective content of directees’ human experiences. The use of anthropocentric, patriarchal language, and her confining of the contemplative stance to the intrapersonal domain, may tend to lessen the value of her contribution to the contemporary conversation.

Tilden Edwards and Gerald May of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Maryland, made a notable contribution to the early revival of spiritual direction practice. Edwards’s approach to contemplative stance is bifocal. A director attends to the movements of the Spirit within the particular context of a directee’s life.\textsuperscript{109} Edwards recommends the most important quality of a spiritual director’s presence is his or her appreciation of the “immediate givenness to God”.\textsuperscript{110} He suggests that ‘immediate’ adds a qualitative dimension to the ‘givenness to God’, an inclusion of “a larger container of soul that is freer to receive from God”.\textsuperscript{111} In this stance, spiritual directors help create a free space in which “the misty divine mystery will incarnate itself in some way, that it will illuminate the direction

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{106} Birmingham, p. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Birmingham, p. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Birmingham, p. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Edwards, 1980, p. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Edwards, 1995, p. 6.
\end{itemize}
session in wondrous ways”. The approach requires a director to discern when a directee resists being prompted and what may be the true nature of his or her spontaneous experience. He cautions directors to safeguard a directee’s boundaries, especially if his or her parameters are not clear and stable. It may be speculated that Edwards draws this from his considerable research and years of experience as a director.

May contributes “a concise and practical discussion of a variety of psychiatric considerations encountered in spiritual direction”. He appreciates that directors need to give their primary attention to such aspects as directees’ sense of the absence or presence of God in prayer and personal longing for God. May encourages directors to attend directees moment-by-moment towards God. To be of assistance, directors must first attend to their own experience. He integrates his professional expertise as a psychiatrist into an appreciation of contemplative stance. Like some former commentators, he restricts his consideration of contemplative stance to an anthropocentric, intrapersonal context.

Other significant contributors on this topic are the Episcopalian priest Margaret Guenther who describes the contemplative stance as the “gift of disinterested, loving attention”, and Kathleen Fischer who explores the impact of feminism on direction. While Kenneth Leech discusses

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115 May, 1992, p. x.
118 Guenther, 1992, p. 3.
contemplative stance as being a ‘soul friend’, Jeannette Bakke’s approach “is a kind of discernment about discernment”\textsuperscript{121}, and Josef Sudbrack’s\textsuperscript{122} stance is to be an intermediary between the sacred text and the community. In adopting a contemplative stance, Susan Jorgensen\textsuperscript{123} invites consideration that God is far more than an anthropomorphic being. Janet Weber\textsuperscript{124} posits that spiritual direction is a partnership in God’s contemplative holding of directees. Peter Ball\textsuperscript{125} reflects on how to assist people during the initial stages of contemplative prayer. Dennis Billy\textsuperscript{126} and Tilden Edwards\textsuperscript{127} respectively offer insights into how to conduct a spiritual direction session. Gerald Fagin\textsuperscript{128} cites the value of directors’ contemplative stances to their relationships with God in facilitating a similar stance within directees. A detailed consideration of these contributors follows.

Guenther writes from the perspective of a woman, a teacher and an Episcopalian priest, married for over thirty years, with children.\textsuperscript{129} Her work is unlike the material predominantly written by female religious.\textsuperscript{130} Her vision of the “gift of disinterested, loving attention”\textsuperscript{131} includes three aspects, “hospitality, teaching and midwifery”.\textsuperscript{132} Guenther offers refreshing images through which to consider contemplative stance, however, her input

\textsuperscript{129} Guenther, 1992, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{130} Guenther, 1992, pp. 3 - 4.
\textsuperscript{131} Guenther, 1992, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{132} Guenther, 1992, p. 4.
in this particular text is limited to adopting a contemplative stance from within the context of a one-to-one interview. Viewed from a contemporary perspective her approach is limited. Her exclusive presentation of individual accompaniment fails to consider that directees can be groups and corporations. She does not seem to be aware that accompaniment occurs in diverse ways far beyond the confines of ecclesial structures.

From Fischer’s perspective, feminism “provides a new way of seeing reality”. 133 Thereby, “a feminist perspective transforms both the context and the content of spiritual direction”. 134 Fischer views contemplative stance in spiritual direction as the focus “on awareness of and response to God in one’s life”. 135 She suggests the initial step in the spiritual direction of women is to assist them to “notice key experiences and bring them to speech. Its goal is discovery and awareness”, 136 assisted by the skill of “listening with the imagination”. 137

Fischer’s observation of attending to directees’ experiences becomes more noteworthy when combined with her insight into how patriarchal, theological assumptions underpin spiritual direction. She suggests that even today, “fresh theological and spiritual impulses are transforming the spiritual direction context”. 138 This has meaningful implications for the practice of spiritual direction. They are:

1. women’s experience is an authoritative starting point for spirituality;
2. women’s spiritual issues have social as well as personal roots; and

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133 Fischer, p. 2.
134 Fischer, p. 1.
135 Fischer, p. 3.
136 Fischer, p. 9.
137 Fischer, p. 10.
138 Fischer, p. 5.
3. the power-relationship inherent in any helping context needs demystifying.\textsuperscript{139}

The implication of her feminist contribution invites an “unprecedented revolution in our language for God”.\textsuperscript{140} This challenges the traditional theological language that uses masculine metaphors exclusively, especially that of ‘Father’.\textsuperscript{141} Such sensitivity to language is an integral part of the development of contemporary spiritual direction. It gives women opportunities to make sense of, and to give expression to, their experiences of God. It helps them to develop interpretative frameworks to address the loss of traditional symbolic systems and develop new transformative images for God.\textsuperscript{142} Within this changing context, Fischer considers the primary role of a spiritual director is to accompany women to develop their prayer and find ways to name God out of their experiences. Women are offered the opportunity to explore their images of God and the role they play in how they perceive themselves and the world.\textsuperscript{143}

Leech’s awareness of contemplative stance is inferred from his discussion of spiritual direction. This “is usually applied to the cure of souls when it involves the specific needs of one individual”\textsuperscript{144} and “is an integral part of the ordinary pastoral work to which every priest is called”.\textsuperscript{145} As a spiritual guide, the priest is concerned with directees’ encounters with God and how they become one with the divine.\textsuperscript{146} According to Leech, the spiritual

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\textsuperscript{139} Fischer, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{140} Fischer, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{141} Fischer, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{142} Fischer, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{143} Fischer, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{144} Leech, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{145} Leech, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{146} Leech, p. 37.
director is “a man possessed by the Spirit”. 147 His role is charismatic not hierarchical. He is “a man of experience, [one] who has struggled with the realities of prayer and life”. 148 He is a person familiar with the Scriptures and the wisdom of the Fathers. 149 He is a man of “perception and insight, [a] man of vision, who can read the signs of the times, the writing on the walls of the soul”. 150 He is “a man who gives way to the Holy Spirit”. 151 Such a director can help people recognise and follow the movements of God in their lives. The sacramental ministry of the Church, notably deliverance and healing, is central to the role of direction. Any attempt to exercise ministry beyond the perimeters of corporate Christianity is dangerous to directors and others. 152

In the present context, Leech’s contribution has diminished in relevance. Although he regards the role of the director as charismatic rather than hierarchical, he contradicts this by restricting the spiritual director’s role to male clerics. His sources of understanding are limited mainly to the Scriptures and the wisdom of the Fathers. He recognises that a director needs the ability to discern the signs of the times and “the writing on the walls of the soul”. 153 Such language as ‘soul’ reinforces the false dichotomy between body and soul rather than incorporating inclusive language that articulates a holistic appreciation of the person. He restricts spiritual direction to a ministry with individuals; a ministry exercised only within the sacramental precincts of the Church rather than from within the broader

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147 Leech, p. 88.
148 Leech, p. 89.
149 Leech, p. 89.
150 Leech, p. 89.
151 Leech, p. 89.
152 Leech, p. 121.
153 Leech, p. 89.
scope of the Kingdom of God. Leech perceptively acknowledges that spiritual directors benefit from struggling with the “realities of prayer and life”. Openness to the Holy Spirit can assist people to recognise the movements of God in their lives.

Bakke, also, does not use the term contemplative stance. It is implied from her discussion on spiritual direction as “a kind of discernment about discernment”. Such discernment focuses on what is seemingly more or less important in one’s life, how to make choices and act upon observations. She suggests attention be focused on experiences, thoughts and feelings associated with one’s relationship with God, and how that relationship’s influence on other relationships is interpreted. She recommends spiritual directors do not advise directees as to what they should do in their relationship with God or what decisions to make about their lives. Instead, she advises directors to “support and encourage directees as they listen and respond to God”.

Bakke presents spiritual direction as “a kind of discernment about discernment”. In so doing, she offers an insightful and succinct way to describe how directors pay attention to directees’ attendance to their relationship with God. Her understanding that directors’ interpretation of their experience of God influences their human relationships, correlates

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154 Leech, p. 89.
155 Leech, p. 89.
156 Bakke, p. 18.
157 Bakke, p. 18.
158 Bakke, p. 18.
159 Bakke, p. 19.
160 Bakke, p. 18.
161 Bakke, p. 18.
well with an essential element of spirituality. This is as an energetic relational process between the divine Spirit and the human spirit.\(^{162}\)

Sudbrack suggests the contemplative stance is the role a spiritual director adopts as an intermediary between the sacred text and the community.\(^{163}\) He recommends directors focus principally on directees’ ethical development, rather than their experiences or psychic adventures.\(^{164}\) As directees progress, the spiritual director’s role is to “withdraw from the centre of attention, [and] must become not a ‘master’ but a ‘companion’ and even a ‘disciple’”.\(^{165}\) Directors need to keep in mind, “You have only one Master, who surpasses everything in the world of immanent experience”.\(^{166}\)

Sudbrack’s contribution may assist directors working within clearly established ecclesial structures. This perspective fails to accommodate the broader parameters of contemporary spiritual direction. In his view, spiritual direction is principally concerned with directees’ ethical development. This could be interpreted as not aligning with the prevailing understanding that contemplative stance attends principally to all the dimensions of a directee’s life.

Jorgensen particularly notes that the experience of God is far more than an anthropomorphic being.\(^{167}\) “[T]his being is, above all, relational – a deeply personal presence, uniquely seeking out every human being while also being

\(^{162}\) Waaijman, p. 361.
\(^{163}\) Sudbrack, pp. 13 - 14.
\(^{164}\) Sudbrack, p. 21.
\(^{165}\) Sudbrack, p. 21.
\(^{166}\) Sudbrack, p. 21.
universally present”\textsuperscript{168} She sets out four foundational principles of spiritual direction:

1. God “is present in everything and always self-revealing”\textsuperscript{169} There is value in taking a contemplative stance towards one’s own life and towards one’s directees;

2. Drawing on the Adam and Eve story of Genesis, she proposes this account portrays that “God gives human beings the ability to make choices, even when a particular choice may not be a good one”;\textsuperscript{170} Mindfulness of such freedom to choose enables a person to consider whether one’s “choices and actions align [one] with ‘God’, with this source of all in all”;\textsuperscript{171}

3. “God calls us to a ‘more’ ”.\textsuperscript{172} A person must be able to recognise the ‘more’ in terms of what is required for spiritual growth and, as it is understood, within a particular faith tradition; and\textsuperscript{173}

4. “God is about ‘both/and’ ”.\textsuperscript{174} God is found within the depth of what Jorgensen calls the “balance point … [that place] where one chooses to remain in the tension of opposites”.\textsuperscript{175} Jorgensen says one has to let go “of doing and needing to have answers for everything. God invites us to make this choice consciously and intentionally”.\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{168} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{169} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{170} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{171} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{172} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{173} Jorgensen, 1997, pp. 57 - 58.
\textsuperscript{174} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{175} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{176} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 58.
These principles have assisted Jorgensen to accompany directees in sharing their lives with her, as they together seek that ‘Mystery sometimes called God’.  

Jorgensen’s foundation principles of spiritual direction and their implications for understanding contemplative stance are valuable. She broadens the scope to which contemplative stance attends, from an anthropocentric focus to a sense of ‘Mystery sometimes called God’.

From Weber’s personal experience of contemplative holding, the work of spiritual direction is to hold directees’ experiences contemplatively and “to become graced partners in this contemplative holding by God”.  

Her brief presentation highlights the transformative influence that a contemplative stance may proffer a directee.

Ball’s discussion of how directors can assist people who are at the initial stage of discovering and entering into contemplation infers little about contemplative stance.  

Such a transition is usually preceded by people experiencing prayer more actively. In time, they are drawn to a stance that is more passive, relying more on silence.  

Ball outlines the following signs that alert a director to such a transition:

1. Directees find they cannot pray in the way they used to pray; their prayer feels empty and dry;

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178 Weber, p. 57.
179 Ball, pp. 27 - 32.
180 Ball, pp. 27 - 28.
2. At times, they may feel drawn overwhelmingly into the close presence of God;
3. The language directees use to describe prayer can be characterised by double negatives;
4. Directees can be relating to God in a new way, unaware of the presence of God they experience as an absence; and
5. Directors need to explore with directees other concerns such as unresolved personal issues causing the experience of blockage.\(^{181}\)

Ball’s understanding of accompaniment is not about teaching people techniques. It is to encourage in directees an attitude of quiet availability, to desire gently God in silence and not to be anxious about the success of prayer.\(^{182}\) At this stage, he encourages directees to attend retreats, liturgical prayer, \textit{lectio divina}, and reading of contemporary and classical spiritual texts.\(^{183}\) Regardless of how directees are accompanied, Ball concludes, “the contemplative way is a reminder that prayer is a gift from God and that its end is in God”.\(^{184}\)

Ball’s intention to facilitate directors to assist directees is limited to focusing on the experience of God within the intrapersonal domain of human experience. He presents the contemplative stance within the framework of linear developmental terms, from the stage of meditation to contemplation. Such an understanding was prevalent before the 1960s. It was articulated by

\(^{181}\) Ball, pp. 28 - 30.
\(^{182}\) Ball, p. 30.
\(^{183}\) Ball, pp. 31 - 32.
\(^{184}\) Ball, p. 32.
ascetical and mystical theologians such as Adolphe Tanquerey\textsuperscript{185} and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange.\textsuperscript{186}

Billy’s description of a typical session infers his understanding of contemplative stance.\textsuperscript{187} A session begins with silence in which the director and directee take time to centre themselves and become aware of the presence of God.\textsuperscript{188} The director then assists the directee to explore his or her life. This helps create the space in which directees are free to explore spontaneously what is currently happening in their lives. Directors can reflect what they hear back to the directee by asking questions.\textsuperscript{189} By sensitively offering insights into what is happening, directors aid directees to find connections or themes within their experience. All such suggestions are ultimately subject to the directee’s own self-authentication of such comments.\textsuperscript{190} Billy suggests directors explore with their directees where they sense God may be found in their lives.\textsuperscript{191} Directors can then assist directees to come to a resolution about how they will act upon what they have reflected on. The closing movement is to return to silence in thanksgiving.

Billy’s guiding framework for attending directees is commendable. His understanding of contemplative stance, however, can be interpreted as biased towards an analysis of a directee’s experience, rather than attending

\begin{footnotes}
\item[185] Tanquerey, 1930.
\item[186] Garrigou-Lagrange, 1948.
\item[187] Billy, pp. 38 - 43.
\item[188] Billy, pp. 38 - 39.
\item[189] Billy, p. 39.
\item[190] Billy, pp. 39 - 40.
\item[191] Billy, pp. 40 - 41.
\end{footnotes}
to its affective content. Such analysis would appropriately belong to the task of theological reflection.

According to Edwards, providing a structure for the spiritual direction session is conducive to ensuring openness. He provides three recommendations:

1. A simple, quiet aesthetical warm room invites better attention to the living Presence;

2. Commencing with five minutes of silence or prayerful spaciousness allows both the director and directee to become more receptive to the movement of God’s Spirit. At times, silence or wordlessness may also be appropriate throughout the session; and

3. For the remainder of the session, directors encourage directees to share how the Holy Spirit may have been moving in their lives since the last session. Inclusive in this, is not only directees’ prayer life but also any aspect of their lives. Edwards believes that God’s Spirit is alive in all dimensions of a person’s life.

His simple practical recommendations provide helpful hints that may assist spiritual directors to promote openness during a spiritual direction session.

Fagin introduces another perspective. As a spiritual director takes a contemplative stance to facilitate a directee’s relationship with God,
engagement in his or her own spirituality assumes a greater importance. Fagin practices spiritual direction in the context of a Christian tradition. He expresses a number of themes that name his sources for understanding spiritual direction. An appreciation of the doctrine of the Trinity creates a perspective that invites directors and directees to value the invitation to enter into the Mystery of God. An acknowledgement of the giftedness of life can motivate directors to attend to directees during all the seasons of their lives. The spirituality of directors needs to be “guided by a listening heart, a discerning and wise heart, a welcoming and compassionate heart”. It needs to be “rooted in a lived experience of the Paschal Mystery that calls each day to conversion”. Fagin’s approach is limited to drawing upon certain religious paradigms regarding contemplative stance. His primary insight is that directors need to take a contemplative stance to their own lives as part of effectively attending their directees.

Edwards, like Fagin, supports the need for spiritual directors to develop their own spirituality. He recommends spiritual directors meet regularly with a spiritual friend. This is beneficial and avoids any possible arrogance or authoritarianism resulting from a bloated self-image, or a false sense of worthlessness. This may arise in comparing themselves to their public role as a spiritual director. Being a spiritual friend is “being the physician of a wounded soul”. Edwards notes three aspects, namely cleansing the wound, helping to align the sundered parts, and giving it rest. Directors

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199 Fagin, p. 8.
200 Fagin, pp. 9 - 10.
201 Fagin, pp. 10 - 11.
202 Fagin, pp. 11 - 16.
203 Fagin, pp. 16 - 17.
204 Edwards, 1980, p. 86.
provide an environment in which the natural healing process occurs. Edwards considers this more the role of midwife than healer. 206

2.1.1 Discussion

The abovementioned authors articulate that the central work of spiritual directors is to take a contemplative stance to their directees. Some of the earlier authors were particularly instrumental in re-establishing interest in spiritual direction during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The patriarchal, anthropocentric, and ecclesial limitations found in the work of some authors may tend to diminish their current relevance.

The commentators do not outline similarities and differences in how adopting a contemplative stance shapes the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. Such failure could in part be due to the emphasis during the late 1970s and early 1980s on re-establishing the practice of accompaniment, rather than on how formative influences may subtly shape the practice of beginning and advanced directors. A few authors 207 did see the need for ongoing supervision of directors following initial training. However valuable, this fails to address the growing needs of more advanced directors.

207 The literature on advanced spiritual directors is limited. Therefore, the academic discussion concerning supervision and recommending supervision for advanced spiritual directors is also limited.
2.2 Fostering contemplative stance through supervision and formation

The literature on nurturing contemplative stance is divided into two subheadings, supervision, and formation.

2.2.1 Supervision

Barry and Connelly\(^{208}\) distinguish between the focus of contemplative stance in spiritual direction and supervision. Later, Barry\(^{209}\) differentiates between consultation and supervision. Birmingham and Connolly\(^{210}\) discuss the value of supervisors assisting directors to attend to the affective responses that arise within them as they relate to their directees. Paul Castley\(^{211}\) draws attention to how the Ignatian rules of discernment assist supervisors to track their interior movements during supervision. Maureen Conroy\(^{212}\) clarifies the meaning of supervision. She appreciates how the elements of call, competency, and commitment pertain to becoming a supervisor, and articulates seven phases of the supervisory experience. Jorgensen\(^{213}\), Edwards\(^{214}\), and Conroy\(^{215}\) discuss group settings for

\[^{208}\] Barry and Connolly, p. 177.
supervision, and Janet Ruffing\textsuperscript{216} discusses one-to-one supervision and how to assist supervisees attend directees’ mystical experiences.

\textit{2.2.1.1 Focus and value of supervision in fostering contemplative stance}

Barry and Connelly suggest that, just as a spiritual director focuses on a “directee’s experience with the Lord and on his resistance to those experiences”, a director’s supervisor focuses on the “director’s experiences as a director and the lived beliefs that colour his responses to the directee”.\textsuperscript{217} Such a supervisory process offers supervisees the opportunity to learn “how to be a more effective director, how to overcome the ‘unfreedoms’ that keep one from being more effective”.\textsuperscript{218} Birmingham and Connolly highlight that helping directors attend to their affective responses when relating to their directees is a significant learning tool.\textsuperscript{219} Conroy similarly understands and values supervision. She comprehends that spiritual directors process what is evoked within them during direction sessions. This may assist directors to grow in appreciation of their reactions and responses. Such an appreciation may well enable directors to maintain a contemplative focus with their directees.\textsuperscript{220}

\textit{2.2.1.2 Contribution of the Rules of Discernment}

Within supervisory relationships, Castley suggests Ignatius of Loyola’s rules for discernment can assist supervisors to attend to the interior

\textsuperscript{217} Barry and Connolly, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{218} Barry and Connolly, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{219} Birmingham and Connolly, pp.164 – 171.
movements or impulses within them. He advocates tracking the course of these interior movements. It would become obvious whether such movements are, as Ignatius would say, from the good spirit or the bad spirit. By acting on such attention, clarity of focus is brought to the supervisory relationship.

To confirm the value of this contemplative stance in supervision, Castley draws upon the insights of Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila. He reflects on Julian’s statement concerning religious experience, “So it appeared to me at the time, and I thought this insight I experienced was vivid and full and real compared with my normal reactions”. Castley interprets that “Julian trusted this clarity and vividness as an assurance of the spiritual rightness of her insight”. Castley suggests Teresa of Avila noticed interior movements within herself. Teresa gave special attention to those experiences from God that were “engraved on the memory and invested with certitude in the soul, despite one’s own opinion or wavering intellect saying that they are impossible”. Supporting this, Castley quotes Teresa’s statement, “Truth is seen with such clarity that it leaves the soul … with deeper knowledge of God’s mercy and grandeur”. In drawing on this attention to inner movements as an integral element of supervision, Castley discusses how to put a contemplative approach into practice. When supervisors are drawn to something authentic, they might feel gently moved

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221 Castley, pp. 25 - 30.
222 Castley, p. 27.
223 The study is concerned here with Castley and is not directly commenting upon Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila.
225 Castley, p. 27.
226 Castley, p. 27.
by what they hear. They may experience a peaceful conviction that connects but does not constrict them.\textsuperscript{228} Other signs he suggests are clarity of thought, courage and joy.\textsuperscript{229} Supervisors can notice the reverse when feelings of withdrawal, disconnection and confusion intrude into the supervisory session. Further signs are feelings of depression, boredom and mind wandering.\textsuperscript{230} Another contribution is Castley’s notion of self-supervision. By observing and attending to one’s intuitions, or the contemplative discipline of paying attention to one’s interior movements, supervisors are less likely to introduce irrelevant issues or impose their issues on a supervisee.\textsuperscript{231}

\textit{2.2.1.3 Call, competency and commitment to supervision}

Conroy\textsuperscript{232} examines three dimensions of this ministry: call, competency, and commitment. The call to be a supervisor “is rooted in outer circumstances, an inner drawing and must be confirmed by a faith community”.\textsuperscript{233} The outer circumstance is the need for supervision in particular situations that may emerge in different ways. Potential supervisors experience an inner drawing when they “feel a drawing of the heart, a desire to give what they have received”.\textsuperscript{234} According to Conroy, a desire to assist people involved in the ministry of spiritual direction is born. The call to supervision requires both interior and exterior confirmation. The interior confirmation is a sense

\textsuperscript{228} Castley, p. 28. 
\textsuperscript{229} Castley, p. 28. 
\textsuperscript{230} Castley, p. 28. 
\textsuperscript{231} Castley, p. 29. 
\textsuperscript{234} Conroy, 1995, p. 15.
of authorisation accompanied by a sense of rightness and truth. Conroy considers affirmation by a faith community to act in the role as external confirmation.

Competent supervisors need both inner and outer preparation. Conroy recommends that supervisors have the ability to attend to their own and others’ interior movements. Furthermore, they require “sufficient experience as a spiritual director, adequate theoretical knowledge and skill development”. Commitment to the ministry of supervision must be discerned. Supervisory practice needs to engage in a mentoring process to assist the development of effective supervisory skills. Conroy outlines seven phases in the supervisory process:

1. Spiritual directors need to notice the movements or countermovements within themselves prior to seeing their directee;
2. During the direction session, directors need to pay attention to three interconnected areas: the experiences of their directees, their own interior movements, and God’s presence;
3. After the session, spiritual directors should prayerfully reflect on their experience of direction. This reflection will involve identifying their specific feelings and developing greater clarity as to what may have restricted them from attending directees’ experience;
4. Write a verbatim on a session to bring to supervision. Conroy recommends choosing a direction session that will be most helpful

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to explore. Directors should pay particular attention to those sessions in which they noticed struggle, resistance or strong feelings that emerged within themselves;

5. Supervisors can assist directors by asking questions that explore their feelings and the reasons underlying those feelings;

6. Through reflection on the supervisory session, directors may gain clarity as to their specific affective reaction and the personal issues that may have underpinned their reactions; and

7. Through realising greater freedom or the insight received from processing their experiences, directors are able to attend more effectively their directees and create a more contemplative atmosphere.

These seven phases form the basis of Conroy’s supervisory process.

2.2.1.4 Importance of distinguishing supervision from consultation

Barry differentiates between consultation and supervision. In his view, consultation focuses on effective diagnosis and treatment of the problems directees present. Supervision concentrates on the supervisee’s experience as a director and the process of attending the directee. The supervisor needs to know very little about the directee. Supervision assists the director to explore this experience as well as helping to discern whether it is of God. The “shift from supervisory to the consultative mode often

242 Barry, 1988, p. 27.
243 Barry, 1988, p. 28.
244 Barry, 1988, p. 29.
245 Barry, 1988, p. 29.
signals that resistance is occurring within the person being supervised”.\textsuperscript{247} This, however, may indicate the development of new insight in the challenging process of developing ministerial competence.\textsuperscript{248}

Barry rightly establishes that the main concern of supervision is to clear spiritual directors of any blockages that may taint their work with directees. If the notion that the discernment of what is happening, and whether the experience is of God is included in the supervisory process, such an approach may overlap with spiritual direction.

Conroy equally appreciates that supervision focuses on the spiritual director and consultation on the directee. Beginning directors, however, may need to consult about particular issues concerning a directee. Conroy recommends consultation needs to occur towards the end of the supervision session after directors have had an opportunity to explore their interior experiences.\textsuperscript{249}

\textit{2.2.1.5 Diversity in supervisory practice}

The work of Jorgensen\textsuperscript{250}, Edwards\textsuperscript{251}, Conroy\textsuperscript{252}, and Ruffing\textsuperscript{253} is worth noting. Jorgensen suggests that although supervision is traditionally undertaken in a one-to-one interview, peer-group supervision is a viable option. Edwards recommends supervision enables spiritual directors to share their difficulties and appreciate what is happening in their relationships with

\textsuperscript{247} Barry, 1988, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{248} Barry, 1988, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{249} Conroy, 1995A, pp. 156 – 159.
\textsuperscript{250} Jorgensen, 1996, pp. 23 - 37.
\textsuperscript{251} Edwards, 2001, p. 130 – 132.
\textsuperscript{252} Conroy, 1995, pp. 91 – 105.
\textsuperscript{253} Ruffing, 1995.
their directees. Conroy proposes two models for peer group supervision: (1) a structured process for ongoing spiritual direction and (2) a structured process to use during retreats. Each approach focuses on the director’s experience. The first model usually attends to one director and the second model can have up to two or three directors at a time. The first often includes a verbatim and the second is a brief verbal presentation. The first devotes time to discussing the directee and then the supervisory issues of the director. The second model principally attends the inner experience of the director with little reference to the retreatant. They both conclude with group prayer and feedback, and group learning. Ruffing reflects on how supervisors can assist directors to develop their capacity to accompany directees whose religious experience is marked by ‘love mysticism’. She defines this as mystical experiences that pertain to “human/divine encounters”. Directors who may not be personally familiar with such experience benefit from supervision and reading contemporary and classical mystical literature.

2.2.1.6 Discussion

These authors generally highlight the overall value of supervision as an influence upon spiritual directors. Their comments may be valuable to directors at all stages of development but the focus is more on issues associated with the initial training of supervisors. Their contribution does not compare adequately the developmental influences that shape the

258 Ruffing, 1995, p. 28.
practice of beginning and advanced directors. Their preoccupation with initial formation tends to neglect the full scope of the enquiry’s question.

As the focus on formation matures to embrace ongoing development of more advanced directors, the influences shaping such practices will be more keenly observed and documented. This may lead to scrutiny of some similar and different developmental influences upon beginning and advanced spiritual directors. This development may take some time. A contributing factor in this, according to Patricia Galli who is involved in the formation of directors, is that only a small minority of directors continue to practice formally after five years as a director.259 Those directors that stay involved are often part time, and their work of accompaniment forms only one part of their overall work or ministry. Since few full-time directors practice over many years, it is difficult to establish an adequate sample of advanced full-time directors with which to compare the influences shaping their practice and the practice of the more common beginning directors.

2.2.2 Formation

There is a diversity of approaches to the formation of spiritual directors as attested to by a number of authors. An English Anglican priest, Gordon

259 An email dated 1 September 2003, from Patricia Galli to the researcher confirms this. She writes, “I am not aware of much published on the formation of Spiritual Directors after their initial programs are complete. Jack Mostyn, a Christian Brother in New York published his doctoral work on the training of Spiritual Directors but I don’t know how far he went as to looking at the establishment of a practice.

I have been a supervisor for SD’s in three training programs in the past ten years. My experience leads me to the conclusion that less than one per cent actually continue as Spiritual Directors. I have continued supervision with many of the graduates of these programs and find that within 5 years almost none of them have continued as actual Spiritual Directors in the fullest sense of the term. In the most recent issue of Presence there is an article by a woman in Florida that states her research has led their spirituality centre to do a two level program; one, for those who might possibly become SD’s in the more classic sense and another for those who will engage in some kind of focused contemplative listening in their ministry or life”.

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Jeff\textsuperscript{260}, suggests professional or pastoral care approaches to accompaniment influence respectively North American and English training programmes. In practice, some training programmes include both theoretical and experiential components as reported by Jeff\textsuperscript{261} and Margaret Dunn.\textsuperscript{262} Case studies of individual direction sessions form the basis of William Creed’s\textsuperscript{263} supervisory internships. For Jane Vennard\textsuperscript{264}, taking the stance of a compassionate presence is pivotal. Madeline Birmingham and William Connolly describe the formation programme of The Center for Religious Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{265} An alternative approach is Miriam Cleary’s\textsuperscript{266} use of the Experience Cycle to train directors to attend the societal dimension of human experience. Steven Wirth\textsuperscript{267} examines the different faces of power that operate in the formative process. Susan Rakoczy and Graham Lindegger\textsuperscript{268} report on aspects of the psychological competence of directors. Ruffing\textsuperscript{269} examines issues associated with trainee directors accompanying directees who may be more or less spiritually developed than themselves. She proposes an integrated model of supervision. Susan Loretta’s\textsuperscript{270} social research advocates a two-track

\textsuperscript{261} Jeff, pp. 29 - 36.
\textsuperscript{265} Birmingham and Connolly.
approach to formation. This addresses the needs of a minority of trainees who, upon graduation, continue to practise formally as directors. The majority tend to minister in a variety of informal ways. Mary Ann Scofield\textsuperscript{271} reminds formators that if training programmes are to keep their prophetic edge, they need to stay attuned to the human rights and environmental movements.

\textit{2.2.2.1 Issues underlying different models of formation}

Jeff\textsuperscript{272} suggests the general differences in the practice of spiritual direction in England and North America influence their respective approaches to formation. The North American approach includes such trends as the professionalisation of spiritual direction; spiritual direction as a paid ministry; the fear of litigation; and spiritual directors choosing the role rather than discovering it as a vocation, a result of people seeking them out as spiritual directors.\textsuperscript{273} Jeff sees an element “either closely or loosely linked to the Ignatian tradition”\textsuperscript{274} in English spiritual direction; a second strand he would describe as “essentially eclectic and non-directive”.\textsuperscript{275} This second approach ascribes generally to the members of the Spiritual Direction Network (SPIDIR), an informal ecumenical network for the promotion of spiritual direction, founded in 1979 in South London.\textsuperscript{276} Jeff favours the English approach where all Christians would benefit from opportunities to discuss their spiritual journey periodically. He espouses a more low-key

\textsuperscript{272} Jeff, pp. 29 - 36.
\textsuperscript{273} Jeff, pp. 29 - 30.
\textsuperscript{274} Jeff, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{275} Jeff, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{276} Jeff, p. 30.
approach akin to the looser relationship of pastoral care, as opposed to “the image of the spiritual director as a highly trained paid professional”.\textsuperscript{277} Wary of the North American approach\textsuperscript{278}, he questions whether anyone should make spiritual direction a full-time ministry.\textsuperscript{279}

2.2.2.2 Formation programmes and their curricula

Jeff recommends participants entering formation programmes be drawn from a mixture of people. One programme involves meeting for one day monthly over two years\textsuperscript{280}, led by two leaders, preferably a man and woman. The programme is a mixture of theoretical and experiential learning. They endeavour to develop a curriculum that adapts to suggestions from the participants.\textsuperscript{281}

Creed\textsuperscript{282} has a different approach. He has developed a supervisory internship based on the experiences of intern directors with their directees. His approach focuses primarily on the cases interns bring from their own experience as directors. This differs from his earlier method of working with a published syllabus that explored the fundamentals of spiritual direction.\textsuperscript{283} If candidates are not ready, they need to attend a two-year Spiritual Companioning programme, which teaches skills for personal development and for accompanying others.\textsuperscript{284}

\textsuperscript{277} Jeff, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{278} Jeff, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{279} Jeff, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{280} Jeff, p. 34.  
\textsuperscript{281} Jeff, p. 35.  
\textsuperscript{282} Creed, 1998, pp. 37 - 42.  
\textsuperscript{283} Creed, 1998, p. 38.  
\textsuperscript{284} Creed, 1998, p. 38.
Birmingham and Connolly nominate three major components as central to the formation programme of The Center for Religious Development: the development of the director’s faith as a basis for ministry, direction itself, and the developmental supervision of the director. The central focus is the development of the directee’s relationship with God. Birmingham and Connolly posit that spiritual direction is more effective when the director and directee start to talk about the directee’s experience of God. The more comfortable the director is talking about religious experience, the more effective is the direction session.

The Center for Spirituality and Justice, Bronx, New York, has a very different approach to training. It uses a tool called the Experience Cycle to train spiritual directors. Cleary suggests this supervisory tool assists trainee spiritual directors to engage the societal dimension and its impact on their relationship with God. This better prepares directors to attend as sensitively to the societal dimensions as they do to the personal and interpersonal dimensions of their directees.

Vennard enables trainee-directors to move beyond the skills of accompanying directees to attending with a compassionate presence. Within a triadic formation of trainees (a director, the directee, and the compassionate observer), the observer’s role is “being – not doing”. The observer, in silent witness, brings to the conversation between director and

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285 Birmingham and Connolly, p. xii.
286 Birmingham and Connolly, p. 118.
directee the strong sense of God’s compassion for what transpires.\footnote{Vennard, 1998, p. 30.} Vennard also adapts this process in group spiritual direction by including a number of observers who compassionately listen in silence while directors journey with a directee in a group context.\footnote{Vennard, 1998, pp. 32 - 33.} This training in compassionate observation enables directors to adopt more readily the stance of a compassionate observer, therefore enabling the individuals and groups with whom they journey to be held by the compassionate presence of God.\footnote{Vennard, 1998, p. 33.}

Dunn\footnote{Dunn, pp. 33 - 37.} focuses on ‘Spiritual Growth Ministries’, a training programme that commenced in New Zealand in 1989. This has become a two-year, part-time programme with two interdependent parts, namely theory and the practice of spiritual direction. Participants’ practice of spiritual direction is assessed with the assistance of local supervisors.\footnote{Dunn, p. 35.} Dunn regards individual supervision as the integral part of the course. The theoretical component consists of reading, study guides, and written assignments based around seven modules. Five one-day workshops each year complement these modules.\footnote{Dunn, pp. 35 - 36.}

\section*{2.2.2.3 Issues related to formation}

Wirth\footnote{Wirth, 1997, pp. 30 - 39.} examines the types of power trainers have and in particular, three associated issues. He defines power as “the ability to influence the outcome of a process … [that] may include a group or an individual’s learning as
well as spiritual or psychological development”. 298 Within American culture, power is equated commonly with force. This notion is rightly opposed in spiritual direction circles. 299 Rejecting such a value engenders a loss of clarity about how the issues of power operate. Denying, rejecting or ignoring the real power trainers have can lead to a dispossession of God’s ability to work in the lives of trainees. 300 There is a need for trainers to explore their attitudes towards power. Wirth writes, “[T]he fact that power is morally neutral does not neutralize the often strong feelings [attached] to the word itself”. 301 A healthy appropriation of power is diminished either by fear of power, by wanting to be liked or by wanting to be seen as one of the gang. 302

Trainners exercise power over the training process of spiritual directors, including their selection, evaluation, and presentation of direction and spirituality models. 303 Wirth remarks, “[T]he greatest power trainers have is their power to create a learning community among those they train”. 304 He offers three observations on the use of power in such a training environment. One misnomer is that trainers and trainees were equals in a benevolent egalitarian spirit; “We’re all peers here”. 305 This was true, considering they were in the training project together. This was false, bearing in mind that trainers and trainees were colleagues with very different roles. 306 Wirth observed that acknowledging the real difference

300 Wirth, 1997, p. 31.
301 Wirth, 1997, p. 31.
302 Wirth, 1997, pp. 31 - 32.
303 Wirth, 1997, p. 32.
304 Wirth, 1997, p. 32.
305 Wirth, 1997, p. 33.
306 Wirth, 1997, p. 34.
freed “both team members and participants from a shadow dance of false equality around the issue of competence”.307 This enabled trainees to make mistakes, review the material presented and make trainers “accountable for the appropriate exercise of [their] role, power and authority”.308 Trainers can subtly “craft presentations and responses in a variety of ways that discourage the possibility of real enquiry”.309 Such excessive defensiveness can be exhibited in “citing experts and authorities [that] subtly or overtly identify with our position … communicating strong judgements about alternative positions … and adding power to statements [that let] participants know that they could be judged ignorant”.310 Wirth identifies this defensive teaching stance with the ‘Guru shadow’ that can affect both trainers and directors.311 In empowering others to accept adulation or criticism naively, trainers may risk co-opting the learning moment of a trainee. The risk of not being authentic emerges if a participant’s experience is dismissed or diminished. The trainer needs to empower the group by embodying the very authenticity the trainees need to learn.312 In drawing upon Argyris’s research313, Wirth notes the skilful training of spiritual directors to involve:

1. the theory of how to act;

2. clear examples of how to enact the theory; and

3. the values that govern such action.314

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307 Wirth, 1997, p. 34.
308 Wirth, 1997, p. 34.
309 Wirth, 1997, p. 34.
310 Wirth, 1997, p. 34.
311 Wirth, 1997, p. 35.
312 Wirth, 1997, p. 36.
Trainers adhering to Wirth’s insights may enhance the learning of their students.

Rakoczy and Lindegger\textsuperscript{315} examined what is necessary for the psychological competence of spiritual directors. They explored how psychology and spirituality complement each other and intersect in human experience.\textsuperscript{316} Rakoczy and Lindegger note the most important skill of a spiritual director “is the ability to relate to others and to understand the subtle nuances of relationship and communication … [that can] facilitate healing, growth, and development”.\textsuperscript{317} They emphasise how directors’ awareness of the issues of transference and countertransference can aid the accompaniment dynamic.\textsuperscript{318} A working relationship between spiritual directors and therapists is assisted through peer consultations, referrals, and collaboration.\textsuperscript{319} Supervision is also recommended as an aid to professional development and a buffer against personal burnout, especially during the early stages of practise.\textsuperscript{320}

Ruffing\textsuperscript{321} addresses the issues associated with the formation of intern directors who are accompanying directees more or less spiritually developed than themselves. Drawing upon many development theorists, such as Erik Erickson, Robert Kegan, Jane Loevinger, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, and James Fowler, she suggests two broad categories of

\begin{itemize}
\item Rakoczy and Lindegger, pp. 20 - 32.
\item Rakoczy and Lindegger, p. 20.
\item Rakoczy and Lindegger, p. 24.
\item Rakoczy and Lindegger, pp. 28 - 29.
\item Rakoczy and Lindegger, pp. 28 - 29.
\item Rakoczy and Lindegger, p. 32.
\item Ruffing, 1999, pp. 18 - 28.
\end{itemize}
development, ‘conventional and post-conventional’. Conventional approaches God as an external authority, while post-conventional views God as an intimate, interior experience. When a director is in a ‘conventional’ stage of development and the directee is in a ‘post-conventional’ stage, the director’s response could be envy or fear. Envy can stem from the director’s countertransference of the directee’s religious or mystical experience. The director may fear the directee’s mystical experience. This may lead to the director attempting to control the directee by imposing rules and regulations. Directors who are more spiritually and psychologically mature than their directees can become frustrated and anxious when dealing with directees. They can be frustrated with directees’ apparent intractability when comfortable with a conventional approach to rote prayers and rituals. Directors can become anxious when challenged by directees’ “negative projections and judgements about their more individualised behaviour and originality of views and feelings”.

Ruffing proposes an integrated model of supervision in training spiritual directors. Her model builds on the work of the Center for Religious Development and the work of Maureen Conroy. The former emphasises the spiritual director’s role in taking a contemplative stance to the directee’s

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323 Ruffing, 1999, p. 18.
324 Ruffing, 1999, p. 18.
327 Ruffing, 1999, p. 22.
328 Ruffing, 1999, p. 23.
332 Conroy, 1995A.
religious experience. She summarises the supervisory process of the latter as follows:

(1) the experience of interior movements in the director, (2) the development of the director’s contemplative attitude and approach, as well as (3) the way a director’s personal issues are stirred during sessions (countertransference), (4) moral, theological, or cultural differences between director and directee, and (5) the ongoing relationship between director and directee.

Ruffing proposes a third model that integrates these two and includes Barry Estadt’s supervisory approach within a pastoral counselling context. She draws upon Estadt’s perception of a parallel process between the supervisory relationship and the supervisory process for the director. Ruffing equally suggests that in the spiritual direction and supervisory relationships, there is the “establishing [of] the working relationship, the work of the established alliance and concluding [of] the supervisory alliance”. Of particular note is Ruffing’s use of Estadt’s framework during the middle phase, the working alliance. She focuses on director-directee and supervisor-director issues. This approach attempts to integrate attention to the contemplative approach to spiritual direction with the necessary helping skills and psychological dynamics working within the supervisory process.

Concerning the outcomes of training programmes, Loretta’s research is worth noting. She undertook a qualitative analysis of graduates from the St.

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337 Ruffing, 1999, p. 25.
340 Loretta, pp. 24 - 32.
Thomas University Institute for Pastoral Ministries. Approximately 70 per cent of graduates do not become involved in the formal practice of spiritual direction after graduation. Although these graduates were involved in spiritual accompanying, it took place within an informal context. As a result, Loretta restructured her training programme to include a two-track approach. Those who wanted to be formally involved attended the Spiritual Direction stream. Those who wanted to attend people’s experience in a broader context attended the Spiritual Companionship Programme. By including the possibility of a two-stream approach, Loretta was able to diversify how directees’ spiritual development can be enhanced within formal and informal contexts.

2.2.2.4 Future direction of formation programmes

At the 2002 Spiritual Directors International Symposium, Scofield stated that for the work of spiritual direction to remain current, it must keep its prophetic edge. She made suggestions for training programmes, inviting reflection of whether their theologies embraced the notion of prophetic justice. She asked whether training programmes embodied a global awareness of the interconnection between the contemporary changes in consciousness, such as the human rights and environmental movements. Scofield questioned if such programmes created a spiritual apartheid by catering only for the middle- or upper-middle classes. She further questioned whether such training involves being attuned to the gospel values.

341 Loretta, p. 27.
342 Loretta, p. 32.
343 Scofield, pp. 33 - 39.
344 Scofield, p. 38.
345 Scofield, p. 38.
346 Scofield, p. 38.
that are counter-cultural rather than being swayed by the contemporary worldview.\textsuperscript{347} Finally, she questioned to what degree is cultural diversity an inclusive element of preparation for spiritual direction.\textsuperscript{348}

\textbf{2.2.2.5 Discussion}

While the above-mentioned authors make some noteworthy contributions to the issues surrounding formation, they principally focus on initial training. Of particular note is Wirth’s commentary on power. He originally addresses initial training but does not include reflection on ongoing formation. His deliberation may be valid for initial formation. In ongoing formation, however, where trainers and trainees’ levels of practice are matched more evenly, this tends to promote an emphasis on the collegial exercise of power. Loretta’s survey result that around 70 per cent of trainees do not formally practice after graduation is worth noting. The size of her sample is small. Similar studies to verify the validity of her results on a broader scale are not available. If there is validity to her survey, it may indicate the presence of some significant obstacles to directors commencing, let alone continuing, to practice in their post-formation years. In the absence of available evidence to the contrary, it is worth reflecting on the following speculations. A general lack of viable business or ministerial infrastructures in which to develop one’s practice can be daunting to a fledgling director. Training programmes may form capable directors but may fall short of providing the necessary business skills to establish a viable spiritual direction practice. If the recommended donation or fee is low, the service is subsidised by directors being poorly paid or volunteering their services. This

\textsuperscript{347} Scofield, p. 38.  
\textsuperscript{348} Scofield, p. 38.
is certainly valuable to directees with limited financial means. Unless directors can earn at least a basic salary from their work, or are fortunate enough to be supported by other means, they may not necessarily be able to continue the work in the long term. Arguably, this is a natural part of the growing pains of professionalisation, but the huge dropout rate of directors is of high cost. There are limited numbers of eligible directors for ongoing formation and a limited body of literature relevant to such training. This hinders the successful comparison of issues associated with the developmental factors that shape beginning and advanced directors. To become an advanced director is a slow process. Equally, it takes time to amass a sufficient number of proficient directors to warrant programmes of ongoing formation. These restrictive factors hinder the available data for a comparative study into the developmental influences that shape beginning and advanced directors.

2.3 Influence of psychology and other disciplines on the understanding of contemplative stance, and associated clinical issues

Leech highlights the difference between counselling and spiritual direction, and areas of overlap. Edwards expands this clarification by drawing distinctions between psychotherapy, pastoral counselling, and spiritual direction. John Rich proposes that the psychological processes of psychosynthesis can be of some assistance in the work of accompaniment.

349 Leech, p. 104.
Concerning clinical issues associated with taking a contemplative stance, Barry\textsuperscript{352}, Robert Wicks\textsuperscript{353}, Conroy\textsuperscript{354}, and Ruffing\textsuperscript{355} offer helpful considerations about transference and countertransference. Sandra Lommasson Pickens\textsuperscript{356}, Barbara Keffer\textsuperscript{357}, and Tilden Edwards\textsuperscript{358} address issues associated with the setting of appropriate professional boundaries. James Keegan\textsuperscript{359} highlights how directors’ sensitivity to directees’ ‘holy ground’ may limit their ability to attend directees. Jean Gill\textsuperscript{360} considers how to assist directees to deal with distractions while praying. Janet Ruffing\textsuperscript{361} discusses resistance in spiritual direction, and Paul Bowler\textsuperscript{362} helpfully contributes his insights into how shame can be a primary root to resistance in spiritual accompaniment. David Thayer and Robert Lappin\textsuperscript{363} address the issue of anger. Leith Speiden\textsuperscript{364}, Jeannette Bakke\textsuperscript{365}, and Tilden Edwards\textsuperscript{366} discuss intake interviews. Nancy Pfaff\textsuperscript{367} and Mary Ann Woodman\textsuperscript{368} respectively contribute their insights into directees’

\textsuperscript{352} W. Barry, ‘Distortions in Relationship’, \textit{Human Development}, vol. 6, no. 3, 1985, pp. 7 - 11.
\textsuperscript{353} R. Wicks, ‘Countertransference in Spiritual Direction’, \textit{Human Development}, vol. 6, no. 3, 1985, pp. 12 - 16.
\textsuperscript{361} Ruffing, 2000.
\textsuperscript{365} Bakke, 2002.
experiences of the dark nights of senses and spirit.

N. Graham Standish\textsuperscript{369} evaluates the appropriateness of directive and non-directive approaches to spiritual direction. Barbara Sheehan\textsuperscript{370} advocates the value of a directive approach. Barry\textsuperscript{371} draws attention to the importance of directors attending to directees’ experiences and not distracting them into analysing their experiences. Lois Lindbloom\textsuperscript{372} addresses the issue of how to assist directees who experience interior locutions.

\textit{2.3.1 The influence of psychology and other disciplines on the understanding of contemplative stance}

Leech speculates that casework and counselling are not adequate models for the practice of spiritual direction as it is “concerned with wider issues than personal adjustment and social adaptation”.\textsuperscript{373} Nevertheless, spiritual guidance has benefited from what counselling and clinical pastoral care offer.\textsuperscript{374} Regarding therapy, there are areas of overlap as well as important lines of demarcation.\textsuperscript{375} Both spiritual direction and psychotherapy are necessarily involved with the psyche.\textsuperscript{376} While psychological self-awareness is necessary for emotional maturity, such awareness is “the necessary prelude to the knowledge of God”.\textsuperscript{377} Leech argues that “[t]he spiritual

\textsuperscript{373} Leech, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{374} Leech, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{375} Leech, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{376} Leech, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{377} Leech, p. 105.
director is concerned with wholeness of life, with healing for body and spirit”.

Edwards explores the differences between psychotherapy, pastoral counselling, and spiritual direction. He draws on the work of Gerald May, in which May uses the example of how a person with depression or anxiety is treated. The psychotherapist assists clients to get out of the depression. The pastoral counsellor helps people to reflect on what they can learn if they think God has given the experience. The spiritual director accompanies directees to give himself or herself to God.

May makes a helpful distinction between human psychology and human spirituality. Psychology is “the efficiency of one’s functioning” and spirituality is “the dynamic process of love in one’s life”. Psychotherapy addresses clients’ mental and emotional aspects and spiritual direction attends all that pertains to directees’ sense of relationship with God.

Although less relevant to this review, Rich explains that psychosynthesis is a process that “helps integrate the unconscious content of the psyche toward wholeness, as well as the use of guided affective imagery”. Rich draws upon Robert Assagioli’s book Psychosynthesis, which “posits three levels in the unconscious: higher, middle, and lower”. In dealing with

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378 Leech, p. 121.
380 May, 1992, p. x.
381 May, 1992, p. xvi.
382 May, 1992, p. 15.
383 Rich, pp. 41 - 43.
384 Rich, p. 41.
386 Rich, p. 41.
unresolved unconscious issues, Assagioli draws upon Carl Jung’s work. He proposes ways to deal with ‘complexes’, “patterns of behaviour or major unresolved traumas”\textsuperscript{387} and ‘imagoes’, usually internalised negative images of people whose personality traits have become part of a person’s functioning.\textsuperscript{388} In dealing with unresolved issues, Rich recommends guided affective imagery as an effective way of bringing subconscious material to the surface and dealing with it.\textsuperscript{389} “The past can not be changed but our emotional reaction to it can”\textsuperscript{390}, which results in wholeness and integration in those places where emotional blockages occur.\textsuperscript{391} By engaging in this process, people are put “in touch with the greater wisdom of the transpersonal (higher) self and with the healing power of God’s grace, or the Holy Spirit”.\textsuperscript{392} This is a practical way of dealing with emotional blockages that inhibit people’s relationships with themselves, others, and God. It is difficult to call such an approach spiritual direction, as its principal focus is not on the directee’s relationship and experience with God. Rich’s application of psychosynthesis may be more appropriate in a pastoral counselling context.

\textit{2.3.2 Clinical issues pertinent to taking a contemplative stance}

\textit{2.3.2.1 Transference and countertransference}

Barry\textsuperscript{393} draws from Freud’s understanding in psychoanalytic therapy in which transference refers to the way clients respond positively or negatively

\textsuperscript{387} Rich, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{388} Rich, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{389} Rich, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{390} Rich, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{391} Rich, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{392} Rich, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{393} Barry, 1985, pp. 7 - 11.
as though the therapist was an important figure from childhood.\textsuperscript{394} When such transferences emerge in therapy, some level of freedom is achieved as they are worked through.\textsuperscript{395} As therapists are human, Barry suggests their interpersonal schemata, which originates in childhood, can be triggered and can react accordingly, a phenomenon called countertransference.\textsuperscript{396} In applying the theory and process of psychoanalytic transference to spiritual direction, such “reactions are neither criminal nor crazy; they are ordinary, mundane human phenomena”.\textsuperscript{397} Attending to them can reduce potential harm from such transference.\textsuperscript{398} The role of a spiritual director is not to try to foster transference reactions towards themselves as a therapist might do. Rather, directors can “help the directee, in a non-defensive manner, to look at what is going on, especially as it affects the directee’s relationship with the Lord”.\textsuperscript{399}

Barry suggests that countertransference is more likely to emerge in long-term spiritual direction relationships.\textsuperscript{400} He particularly notices it arises in relation to issues surrounding sexuality and religious experience. If not addressed, directees remain vulnerable to the countertransference reactions of their directors.\textsuperscript{401} Barry strongly recommends two effective instruments for dealing with the phenomena: directors paying ongoing attention to their reactions, and their participation in long-term supervision.\textsuperscript{402}

\textsuperscript{394} Barry, 1985, p. 7.  
\textsuperscript{395} Barry, 1985, p. 7.  
\textsuperscript{396} Barry, 1985, p. 8.  
\textsuperscript{397} Barry, 1985, p. 9.  
\textsuperscript{398} Barry, 1985, p. 9.  
\textsuperscript{399} Barry, 1985, p. 9.  
\textsuperscript{400} Barry, 1985, p. 10.  
\textsuperscript{401} Barry, 1985, p. 10.  
\textsuperscript{402} Barry, 1985, p. 10.
In dealing with such countertransference, Wicks\textsuperscript{403} offers a middle-of-the-road commonsense approach. Directors need not fear countertransference as it is inevitable and needs acknowledging when it surfaces. Directors attending to it will help directees to have a clearer relationship with God.\textsuperscript{404} Some of the primary means of dealing with countertransference Wicks that recommends are “systematic self-analysis, supervision, ongoing personal spiritual direction, case-by-case countertransference review and consultation with a colleague”.\textsuperscript{405}

Conroy\textsuperscript{406} also takes a positive approach towards processing transference and countertransference experiences during supervision. She remarks such attention to the issues of transference and countertransference assists directors to achieve deeper insight into themselves and their past relationships. It also facilitates directors to be free from bias and to adopt a more effective contemplative focus. In addition, attention to these transferential issues may well assist directors to discern what means they need to take in attending their directees in critical situations.

Ruffing highlights how beginning spiritual directors, because of their inexperience, can easily overlook transferential reactions for three reasons. They can approach spiritual direction from the perspective of a spiritual friendship model. They may be aware inadequately of the power differential in the relationship with their directees. They may be deficient in readily

\textsuperscript{403} Wicks, pp. 12 - 16.
\textsuperscript{404} Wicks, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{405} Wicks, p. 15.
recognising and handling transference and countertransference when it emerges.  

Barry, Wicks, Conroy, and Ruffing’s comments are pertinent in assisting directors to focus the contemplative stance of their spiritual accompaniment. By dealing with these issues, principally as they “affect the directee’s relationship with the Lord”, Barry limits the scope of spiritual direction to what is intrapersonal and patriarchal. Ruffing’s comments about beginning directors are pertinent but they fail to address directly how similar or different these concerns are for advanced directors.

2.3.2.2 Boundary issues

Three contributors worth noting in this area are Lommasson Pickens, Keffer, and Edwards. Lommasson Pickens suggests guidelines “for healthy relating that are faithful to the unique relationship constellated in spiritual direction while minimizing potentials for harm”. She defines dual relationships as occurring when a separate and distinct relationship operates alongside or within a reasonable time following the ending of a direction relationship. In dealing with such situations, the relationship needs “to be permeable enough to allow the Spirit the freedom to move and guide the relationship”.

407 Ruffing, 2000, p. 162
408 Barry, 1985, p. 9.
409 Lommasson Pickens, pp. 51 - 58.
410 Keffer, pp. 54 - 58.
412 Lommasson Pickens, p. 51.
413 Lommasson Pickens, p. 52.
414 Lommasson Pickens, pp. 52 - 53.
In working towards a paradigm for spiritual direction, Lommasson Pickens reflects on the “reigning psychodynamic paradigm of psychotherapy that enshrines objectivity and grounds itself in the language of ‘boundaries’”.\textsuperscript{415} Such a paradigm is based on what Miriam Greenspan calls “a distance model … a patriarchal model of the self unfolding in separation rather than connection”.\textsuperscript{416} Drawing upon Greenspan’s approach and understanding, Lommasson Pickens concludes that healing has “less to do with pseudo-objective distance than it does with safe connection”.\textsuperscript{417} Lommasson Pickens advocates that if this is true for therapeutic situations, then it is relevant to spiritual direction in which there is a “dynamic partnership between God and the human dyad of directee and director”.\textsuperscript{418}

Lommasson Pickens further reviews “the only safe connection is one bounded by distance from the rest of life”.\textsuperscript{419} She refutes a model based on protecting the cultivation of transference as a part of the therapeutic process since this is neither the dynamic nor the purpose of companioning. Lommasson Pickens sees the principal relationship as being between the directee and God. The role of the director is to act as “a focusing lens on that relationship”.\textsuperscript{420}

Elements of transference and countertransference may need to be dealt with in spiritual direction. Lommasson Pickens suggests, “relationships are

\textsuperscript{415} Lommasson Pickens, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{417} M Greenspan, p. 56 cited in Lommasson Pickens, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{418} Lommasson Pickens, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{419} Lommasson Pickens, pp. 53 - 54.
\textsuperscript{420} Lommasson Pickens, p. 54.
messy\textsuperscript{421}, and it is in such messiness that the Spirit works. Within the multiple relationships of religious communities and congregations, Lommasson Pickens considers “the deepening process of direction becomes possible to many precisely because the director is already known and perceived as a human being”.\textsuperscript{422} The primacy of the work of direction is protected if the director manages the imbalance of power in the spiritual direction relationship and works well within dual and multiple relationships.\textsuperscript{423} She considers that other disciplines, such as psychotherapy, may have something to offer the practice of spiritual direction. This is so, as long as its underlying assumptions do not mitigate against the essential elements of spiritual direction work.\textsuperscript{424}

Barbara Keffer highlights the issues associated with accompanying people whose inner and outer boundaries become clouded due to an insufficiently formed ego. Keffer counsels that such directees be encouraged to attend more to their outer life, since focusing too much on their inner life may overexpose them to issues they may not be strong enough to handle.\textsuperscript{425}

Edwards advocates that central to the protection of boundaries in a spiritual direction relationship is the question of what protects the mutual freedom of the director and directee to be present to the experience of God.\textsuperscript{426} He recommends that especially with strong feelings such as sexual attraction, directors neither suppress nor act out their feelings. They simply need to

\textsuperscript{421} Lommasson Pickens, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{422} Lommasson Pickens, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{423} Lommasson Pickens, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{424} Lommasson Pickens, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{425} Keffer, pp. 57 - 58.
\textsuperscript{426} Edwards, 2001, p. 124.
appreciate their feelings without judging, identifying with or acting them out. While this may not always be easy, Edwards claims such an approach promotes freedom that protects and nurtures the spiritual direction relationship.\(^\text{427}\)

Lommasson Pickens’s article highlights the dominancy of therapeutic models as the current context of spiritual direction practice. She highlights the true spiritual nature of the work of direction as the companioning of the relationship between the directee and God. It also involves being open to how dual or multiple relationships may assist, rather than hinder, such spiritual development. Keffer points out that the appreciation of awareness of psychological health issues, for which a directee comes to direction, is a helpful indicator of the directee’s readiness to engage in spiritual direction. In taking a contemplative stance to such directees’ experiences, directors sometimes need to include referral to appropriate therapy. Such referrals may involve suspending spiritual direction or working in tandem with a therapist. Edwards succinctly points to how good boundaries promote and nurture the necessary sense of freedom that a spiritual direction relationship requires to attend the presence of God in an unfettered way.

\[2.3.2.3\] Dealing with difficulties when endeavouring to adopt a contemplative stance in spiritual direction

Keegan\(^\text{428}\) suggests that one of the difficulties impeding directors’ effectiveness is their unwillingness to intrude into another’s holy ground.\(^\text{429}\)

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This may occur when their directees’ encounter with God puts directors in touch with their own religious experiences. This might reveal their own prayer or lack of, or their own commitment to the poor. 430 Even though such experiences can be unsettling, Keegan suggests, “if God is indeed in the encounter between director and directee, then God is working for the salvation and growth of the director, too”. 431 When attending directees’ religious experiences, “not looking beyond the surface” 432 is a trap into which directors can fall while “being interested in something else”. 433 This is particularly significant in a culture that prizes progress and action rather than contemplation and vulnerability. 434

A further difficulty that directors face is how to assist directees to deal with distractions in prayer. Gill 435 suggests “distractions [are] … an extraordinarily valuable way of prayer”. 436 People often consider distractions a hindrance because they pull them away from the direction to which they may have chosen to pray. 437 If prayer is when people “hope to connect with God” 438, and, as Gill suggests, “when we know our own heart’s desire we know and hear God’s desire for us” 439, then, what may be perceived as a distraction may be a means through which God communicates. Gill considers different types of distractions. If people are averse to scrutinising a particular distraction because of concern they will be

435 Gill, pp. 6 - 18.
436 Gill, p. 6.
437 Gill, p. 7.
438 Gill, P. 7.
439 Gill, p. 7.
overwhelmed or act against their better values, an important distinction must be made between outer and inner reality.\textsuperscript{440} The actions of outer life have a moral dimension while inner thoughts, feelings, and fantasies as such are neither good nor bad.\textsuperscript{441} By attending to these inner movements, Gill suggests that people are able to be more honest with God and allow themselves to be accepted and unconditionally loved by God.\textsuperscript{442} When people experience persistent distractions, a breakthrough may emerge when attending to them in prayer. The result is a deeper relationship with God and others.\textsuperscript{443} Gill recommends that in a direction session, a spiritual director can assist a directee by encouraging the person to attend to distractions in prayer. Such attention, especially with persistent distractions, “can lead to clarification of that direction in which a pray-er is being invited to turn”.\textsuperscript{444}

Ruffing skilfully identifies various forms of resistance in spiritual direction.\textsuperscript{445} The first is directees’ avoidance of religious experience.\textsuperscript{446} The second is because of a problem in the dynamic between the director and the directee. The director may be inept, obtuse or abusive. This may result in directees feeling averse to sharing their intimate experience of God. The third results from how a director develops avoidance behaviours towards a directee or to the directee’s experience.\textsuperscript{447}

Another common difficulty directors have to deal with according to Bowler is shame. He considers it a primary root to resistance in spiritual

\begin{itemize}
\item Gill, pp. 8 - 9.
\item Gill, p. 9.
\item Gill, p. 9.
\item Gill, p. 17.
\item Gill, p. 18.
\item Ruffing, 2000, pp. 33 – 55.
\item Ruffing, 2000, pp. 36 – 43.
\item Ruffing, 2000, pp. 46 – 49.
\end{itemize}
accompaniment. In his review of some psychological and theological literature, he explores the experience of shame and its implications for the ministry of spiritual direction. He examines the causes of shame, the defences used to shield shame, and ways to heal shame. Bowler distinguishes shame from guilt, suggesting shame “refers to the feeling one has about one’s very self” and “guilt is associated specifically with an action – something one has said or done”. Such shame “is a self-alienating emotion which leads a person to believe that there is some fundamental flaw – however difficult to define – that renders him or her unworthy”. He argues that the mythical story of Adam and Eve’s departure from the Garden of Eden reflects a developing understanding that humankind is “frail, exposed, and limited”. In the story, the covering of human nakedness with a fig leaf symbolises the defence mechanisms people use to deny the experience of shame to deal with life. Traditional Christian theology uses the term ‘original sin’ to describe this condition, Bowler suggests the term “original shame” may be more apt. He regards the similarities between the theological and psychological perspectives on shame as impressive.

One example he quotes from the psychologist, Carl Goldberg, “the function of shame, as a self process, is to confront us with the impact of our tenuous existence as human beings”, is similar to the theological perspective stated above regarding ‘original sin’. Such similarities offer a rich potential for interdisciplinary dialogue. In exploring the causes of shame, Bowler cites its various manifestations: one’s family of origin, genetic variables,

448 Bowler, pp. 25 - 33.
451 Bowler, p. 27.
452 Bowler, p. 27.
453 Bowler, p. 28.
issues associated with human sexuality, the biological variables of race and gender, and the socio-economic aspects of class, educational opportunities, and profession. All such variables have the potential to influence a person’s level of shame.\footnote{Bowler, p. 29.} Drawing upon the work of Donald Nathanson\footnote{D. Nathanson, \textit{Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of Self}, Norton and Co., New York, 1992.}, Bowler outlines four dynamics that act as defence mechanisms against shame: “withdrawal, attacking self, attacking others and avoidance”\footnote{Bowler, p. 30.}. He presents another paradigm, the Enneagram typology, an ancient Sufi tool encompassing nine sources of shame.\footnote{Bowler, p. 30.} While regarding shame as being damaging or unhealthy, Bowler believes shame can have a positive or healthy power.\footnote{Bowler, p. 32.} Shame can protect the behaviour of individuals and play a role in the formation of conscience.\footnote{Bowler, p. 32.} It can expose a person to their true fragile identity before God. From within that place it can then empower them to the experience of being loved despite their woundedness.\footnote{Bowler, p. 32.} According to Bowler, the process of spiritual accompaniment can promote healing from unhealthy shame and painful rebirth can emerge through dealing with healthy shame.

Another significant difficulty encountered in the work of spiritual guidance is anger. Thayer and Lappin\footnote{Thayer and Lappin, pp. 37 - 48.} propose that directees need to be aware of their anger, express it to God in prayer, and find constructive concrete ways to deal with it.\footnote{Thayer and Lappin, p. 44.} While the expression of anger may be therapeutic, the
authors recommend directors help their directees discover that it can be a positive component in the process of conversion.\textsuperscript{464}

In review, Keegan identifies a source of reluctance within directors that, if addressed, will help directees attend their experience in a more focused way. Gill suggests how to handle distractions during prayer. Bowler outlines practical ways how to assist directees to deal with issues associated with shame. Finally, Thayer and Lappin provide directors with advice as to the contemplative stance required to assist directees to engage their experience of God through exploring their anger.

\textit{2.3.2.4 Intake interview}

A difficulty directors face in commencing spiritual direction with a new directee is the intake interview. Currently, there is limited research material available on this topic. Speiden\textsuperscript{465} offers a model based on her experience at a small Anglican retreat centre with twenty associate directors. She tailors it to meet the specific needs of the retreat centre. It takes into account the different types of applicants that may apply and the various types of directors available at the centre.\textsuperscript{466} This approach endeavours to match the most suitable director to the applicant. Speiden’s centre, however, appears to focus strongly, if not exclusively, on the intrapersonal dimension of a person’s life.

Bakke describes a variety of ways directors approach their first meeting with their directees. Some invite potential directees to complete an

\textsuperscript{464} Thayer and Lappin, p. 46.  
\textsuperscript{465} Speiden, pp. 14 - 19.  
\textsuperscript{466} Speiden, p. 15.
application form in advance. Others request directees to write a short spiritual autobiography and forward it prior to their first meeting. Other directors begin their first meeting without such background information because they want to see what will emerge during the conversation. Bakke also suggests that the first interview may proceed in many different ways. Some directees may begin cautiously while other directees may be able to communicate openly. During the interview, planning for future meetings and the setting of a date to review the progress of the spiritual direction relationship is important.

In beginning with a new directee, Edwards advises consideration be given to the rightness of seeing a particular directee either due to compatibility or to the availability of time. He advises commencing the first session with prayer and silence to ensure that the meeting focuses upon the Spirit’s presence and guidance. During the first session, Edwards recommends that it may be important for the director to ask the directee something about his or her spiritual biography. Towards the end of the first session, Edwards recommends that both director and directee discuss whether to continue or not. Such a decision may be made readily or it may take a few days to discern. If both parties decide to continue, Edwards advocates they agree to a kind of covenant that spells out the nature and terms of the relationship.

467 Bakke, p. 111.
468 Bakke, p. 111.
469 Bakke, p. 112.
2.3.2.5 Dark Nights

A common difficulty spiritual directors face is how to accompany directees facing the ‘dark night of senses’ and the ‘dark night of the spirit’. Pfaff\(^{474}\), drawing upon John of the Cross\(^{475}\), describes two phases respectively as transformation of self-images and of our God-images.\(^{476}\) Pfaff asserts, “the dark night is meant to bring us to a deep stillness in which we find a union with God in being, in love”.\(^{477}\) For directors privileged to accompany such directees, Pfaff suggests that adopting the role of a “listener present”\(^{478}\) brings a tangible presence of God to those journeying with interior darkness; a journey that in time breaks forth into what she describes as “a larger, fuller, more life-giving relationship with God in love”.\(^{479}\)

In a similar but more general way, Woodman\(^{480}\) discusses how to assist directees in engaging their experiences of spiritual darkness at different stages of their spiritual journey. Such darkness can induce significant spiritual transformation.\(^{481}\) She addresses the paradox in terms of it being a state in which “one experiences the impotence of human effort and the sheer gift of grace flowing through the whole human organism”.\(^{482}\) During the stage of the ‘dark night of senses’, Woodman considers that directees experience a purging of their sensory attachment to their “feelings, personal identity, and the imperfections of [their] rational and emotional experience

\(^{474}\) Pfaff, pp. 32 - 43.  
\(^{476}\) Pfaff, p. 33.  
\(^{477}\) Pfaff, p. 40.  
\(^{478}\) Pfaff, p. 42.  
\(^{479}\) Pfaff, p. 42.  
\(^{480}\) Woodman, pp. 31 - 37.  
\(^{481}\) Woodman, p. 31.  
\(^{482}\) Woodman, p. 32.
of God”. During the stage of the ‘dark night of the spirit’, directees’ rational and volitional lives undergo further cleansing. It leads to a liberating sense of union with God through which directees’ false self and submerged attachments are transformed. From this experience, a person opens to a “fuller resurrection of the unitive life”.

Pfaff and Woodman’s considerations are clear and practical. They assist directors considering how to adopt a contemplative stance to directees during the various experiences of darkness. In attending to directees during such experiences, Woodman counsels watchfulness. What appears to be a dark night may be a manifestation of various types of mood disorder.

2.3.2.6 Different approaches to the contemplative stance of spiritual direction

Standish evaluates the appropriateness of directive and non-directive approaches to spiritual direction. Many classical spiritual teachers and certain psychological theorists have contributed to the non-directive approach. Some of the spiritual teachers are “Evagrius, John Cassian, Benedict, Gregory of Palamas, Bernard of Clairvaux, the writer of The Cloud of Unknowing, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, and Brother Lawrence”. Standish views Carl Rogers as the most influential psychological theorist. While the non-directive approach is

483 Woodman, p. 34.
484 Woodman, p. 35.
485 Woodman, p. 36.
486 Standish, pp. 6 - 14.
487 Standish, p. 8.
488 Standish, p. 8.
predominant in the formation of spiritual directors\textsuperscript{489}, a more directive style may help directees deepen spiritually.\textsuperscript{490} Many people may approach direction without a solid background in a particular religious tradition or may be returning after many years of separation or seeking. Their religious development may correspond to the stage of sixth graders when they perhaps physically and emotionally left the church.\textsuperscript{491} The structured religious practices – Bible Study in the Protestant tradition, daily Mass in the Roman Catholic tradition, prayer, journaling, meditation – benefited some directees in the past and may assist older directees in the present.\textsuperscript{492} Many directees not exposed to similar practices may need to be disciplined to nurture their interior life. Such development, Standish considers, can be assisted with a more direct approach to spiritual companioning, which may include providing a course of spiritual guidance.\textsuperscript{493}

Often within group spiritual direction programmes, more directive forms of spiritual direction operate. Group directees can undertake structured reading, journaling, and guided meditation between sessions.\textsuperscript{494} Spiritual development includes facing inner and outer issues. Such a directive approach can address the requirements for interior and exterior readjustments.\textsuperscript{495} Standish advises caution, suggesting the importance of focusing on directees’ interior dispositions. Then at other times “it may be important to intentionally teach, advise, and be more directive”.\textsuperscript{496} When in doubt, caution and a less directive stance should be adopted since such a

\textsuperscript{489} Standish, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{490} Standish, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{491} Standish, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{492} Standish, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{493} Standish, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{494} Standish, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{495} Standish, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{496} Standish, p. 8.
directive approach could be strongly influenced by issues of countertransference. Reluctance to do so could be dictated by a desire to be liked by one’s directees.

Standish advises that a determination of the breadth and depth of a directee can help indicate which stance to take. Breadth involves assessing directees’ “familiarity with spiritual disciplines”. Depth is construed as directees’ understanding of their tradition, if they have one. Directees steeped in such breadth and depth benefit from non-directive methods. For those who are unfamiliar with different spiritual disciplines and are not steeped in their own religious traditions, the directive method may be more helpful. Although there are various combinations of the directive and the non-directive approach, the challenge, Standish concludes, is to find the best way to nurture directees.

Sheehan advocates a more direct approach. Confrontation, if carefully and appropriately used, can be helpful in spiritual direction. She defines confrontation as “truth-telling grounded in mutual loving respect”. The director gives the directee “information on how the director is hearing her or him, yet offers freedom of response”. Sheehan recommends it be undertaken in progressive stages. In the initial phase of forming a relationship, confrontation is associated with the skills of reflective

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497 Standish, p. 11.
498 Standish, p. 11.
499 Standish, p. 12.
500 Standish, p. 12.
501 Standish, p. 12.
502 Standish, p. 12.
504 Sheehan, pp. 47 - 54.
505 Sheehan, pp. 47 - 48.
506 Sheehan, p. 48.
listening. \textsuperscript{507} During later sessions, when the relationship is more established, it may involve stronger forms of clarification, especially when the directee employs defence mechanisms to avoid deeper realities. \textsuperscript{508} Three signs attest to the effectiveness of confrontation. First is the response of the directee to confrontation. If the directee is ready, it may serve to deepen a directee’s spiritual growth. If they are not ready, a directee may demonstrate avoidance responses. Sheehan affirms that the director’s countertransference may cause inappropriate confrontation. \textsuperscript{509} The multiple use of confrontation in one session is the second sign. Such multiplicity can be a disservice to directees and put them into a defensive stance. She considers directors unnecessarily withdrawing what they perceive can also be damaging. \textsuperscript{510} Sheehan says “whatever the reason, multiple uses of confrontation suggest that something personally significant to the director is interfering in the direction relationship”. \textsuperscript{511} The third sign is the director’s personal openness to being confronted and confronting. This has a dual nature: “(1) how one responds to confrontation when receiving care, and (2) how one experiences God as confronter and as One able to be confronted”. \textsuperscript{512} Sheehan perceives the principles of parallel process operating as key elements of the skill of confrontation. \textsuperscript{513}

Barry \textsuperscript{514} discusses how the ‘hermeneutic of suspicion’, may get in the way of spiritual direction. Barry understands Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of suspicion in terms of an interpretation of reality that involves suspecting the

\textsuperscript{507} Sheehan, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{508} Sheehan, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{509} Sheehan, pp. 49 - 50.
\textsuperscript{510} Sheehan, pp. 50 - 51.
\textsuperscript{511} Sheehan, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{512} Sheehan, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{513} Sheehan, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{514} Barry, 2000, pp. 25 - 30.
meaning of everything. Barry applies his understanding to the practice of spiritual direction. The director may be more interested in understanding the underlying psychological dynamic behind directees’ religious experience rather than facilitating the directee to describe and savour the experience first. Such false emphasis may stifle the directee’s intimacy with God. Barry argues such a hermeneutic of suspicion can restrict directees in engaging the religious dimension of their experience. There may be many reasons underlying suspicion in directors. Meeting people influenced by obsessive religious thoughts may have negatively affected directors. Such encounters need to be treated with tact. Directors must remain open to the possibility of encountering the religious dimension within the diversity of human experience. In ministerial training, a second source of suspicion is an emphasis on psychological theories of development over spirituality itself. Even though directors’ religious experiences may be positive, they can protect themselves from the experience of God. According to Barry, facing the overwhelming mystery of God may induce fear.

The particular value of the contributions of Standish, Sheehan, and Barry lies in the degree to which each helps directors to focus on the affective component of directees’ experiences.

515 Barry, 2000, p. 25.
517 Barry, 2000, p. 27.
518 Barry, 2000, p. 27.
519 Barry, 2000, p. 28.
520 Barry, 2000, pp. 28 - 29.
521 Barry, 2000, p. 30.
2.3.2.7 Interior voices

An area not often addressed, but still of value, is that of assisting directees who experience interior locutions. Lindbloom interprets such experiences as the Spirit of God opening a person to the presence of the Divine. In discussing this phenomenon, she draws upon the classic work of Teresa of Avila and the modern writings of Gerald May. From analysing Teresa of Avila’s work, she names three kinds of locutions: auditory, an imaginary representation of words, and a deep imprint of an understanding within a person’s spirit. Lindbloom presents three criteria for evaluating the source and value of the locution from Teresa’s work: the message has a sense of power and authority, it produces peace in the recipient, and it leaves a lasting impression. Lindbloom notes Gerald May “identified hearing an inner voice as one of several examples of sensory experience with spiritual implications”. She also refers to his suggestions that it is more important to give an emphasis to the fruits of such experiences than to the experiences themselves. The issue of dealing with directees’ concerns about interior locutions is a small part of a director’s work. Both Lindbloom and May’s contributions offer valuable assistance, especially if such has not been part of a director’s own experience.

2.3.2.8 Discussion

Leech, Edwards, May, and Rich highlight that psychology offers valuable

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522 Lindbloom, pp. 14 - 17.
523 Lindbloom, p. 15.
525 May, 1992.
526 Lindbloom, pp. 15 - 16.
527 Lindbloom, p. 16.
528 Lindbloom, p. 16.
529 Lindbloom, p. 16.
insight into the possibility of self-knowledge. This helps clear blocks in
directees’ relationships with God. Although they note such awareness is
worthwhile, they mostly concur that a directee’s relationship with God
remains the specific focus of spiritual direction. While Ruffing’s comments
about beginning directors are pertinent, they do not address directly how
similar or different these concerns are for advanced directors. Barry, Wicks,
and Ruffing highlight how psychological insights into transference and
countertransference are relevant to the practice of spiritual direction.
Ruffing makes some insightful comments regarding beginning directors.
These three contributors, however, do not distinguish how awareness of
transferential issues is similar or different for beginning and advanced
spiritual directors.

Directors at all stages of development need to be vigilant about such
dynamics. These authors do not address the finer points of specific stages of
practice. The longer directors relate with directees, the more likely they are
to be influenced by the issues of countertransference. The intimacy of
direction can be mistaken for personal friendship. Lommasson Pickens,
Keffer, and Edwards’s respective commentaries on boundaries are insightful
and pertinent to effective practice. Nevertheless, they do not address the
specific focus of this enquiry. Beginning directors could be safer ensuring
their professional boundaries are well defined. More advanced directors
could perhaps manage to hold directees’ experiences together with other
appropriate forms of relating to them. A proviso to this is that mutual
friendship could not be included in such a mix. Gills, Ruffing, Bowler,
Thayer and Lappin highlight the influences attending to different elements
of directees’ emotional lives can have on the process of spiritual direction. Bowler makes a distinction between guilt and shame but does not address how it is applicable to directors with different levels of experience. Advanced directors may be more astute as to how directees deal with guilt in the early stages of their development. They may be more attuned to how experienced directees will be better acquainted with deep places of shame and the healing that can come from engaging it. Standish and Sheehan point to the influence of non-directive and directive approaches to spiritual direction. They note the respective advantages and disadvantages of each but do not distinguish its use for directors at differing developmental stages. Beginning or advanced directors may adopt a directive approach; the non-directive approach is more suitable for beginners. To confront directees effectively requires more skill. Less harm could result from taking a more cautious approach. Depending on the director’s personality type, a beginning director could be comfortable with confrontation. To limit such a director’s natural ability could diminish the beginner’s effectiveness and legitimate style.

The above authors contribute mainly to issues more applicable to beginning directors. They do not examine how these issues compare for more advanced directors. While such a point of view may be valid, it could be open to accusations of naivety if not qualified. Established directors may be more experienced than beginning directors, but they are not immune to the influences of clinical issues. For example, advanced directors may need to be vigilant to the influence of issues of transference and countertransference on their practice. They may be more experienced, however, they are still
prone to these effects. For advanced directors to believe they are beyond such influences carries the potential danger of self-deception leading to possible unprofessional conduct. In summary, the literature reviewed in this section does not make a significant contribution to resolving the question of this enquiry.

2.4 Aids to contemplative attending

This section reviews various aids to contemplative attending: dreams, working with images, art, and bodywork. Craig Mueller\(^530\) and Jaime Filella\(^531\) highlight the significance of attending to the images contained in directees’ dreams. Martin Dean\(^532\) draws attention to directees’ images that arise in their practice of active imagination work. Anne Schank discusses how images arise out of intentional or spontaneous processes.\(^533\) Lucy Abbott-Tucker’s contribution draws upon Eugene Gendlin’s focusing exercises.\(^534\) Carol Eckerman\(^535\) reiterates the value derived from directors dutifully attending to the words and images that arise within them and their directees. Regarding the use of art, Alexander Shaia\(^536\) promotes sandplay, Jane Steinhauser\(^537\), the use of diverse art mediums in prayer, and Marianne Hieb\(^538\), the adoption of art-journaling. In reference to bodywork, Gloria

Ray Carpeneto\textsuperscript{539} and Dianne Costanzo\textsuperscript{540} respectively highlight the healing power of bodywork and what Aikido, a Japanese martial art, can offer to accompaniment. Christina St. Clair\textsuperscript{541} describes the practicalities of making a labyrinth. Edward Simeon Kostyk\textsuperscript{542} admonishes directors to take heed of how the labyrinth is a valuable spiritual practice for some directees.

\subsection*{2.4.1 Dreams}
Mueller\textsuperscript{543} suggests exploring dreams can be significant as “dreams are a profound way to listen for the voice of the sacred speaking to us”.\textsuperscript{544} Dreams “move us toward wholeness (salvation, to use religious language) and an awareness of deeper truths not always apparent in our conscious, waking state”.\textsuperscript{545} He regards dreams as “revealing soul energy”.\textsuperscript{546} By processing a dream, its wisdom can be tapped.\textsuperscript{547} Filella proposes, “dreams do contain valuable information that, with proper study and interpretation, can help us to understand how we are faring in our spiritual growth”.\textsuperscript{548}

\subsection*{2.4.2 Working with images}
Dean defines active imagination as “a process or tool in which a bridge is established between one’s conscious and unconscious self through the use of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{542} E. Kostyk, ‘Labyrinths: Coming to the Center’, \textit{Presence}, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002, pp. 28 - 34.
\item \textsuperscript{543} Mueller, pp. 15 - 23.
\item \textsuperscript{544} Mueller, p. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{545} Mueller, p. 16.
\item \textsuperscript{546} Mueller, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{547} Mueller, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{548} Filella, p. 34.
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imagery”. The unknown segment of a person’s total experience can be accessed. By using active imagination, it becomes “effective when a directee can accept, without censoring nor repressing, all that is truly present in his or her immediate personal experience – both the blockages and the yearnings”. Such an experience may not be the way a directee would like to feel but, for that moment, it is the truth. As people get in touch with their truth, God awaits to meet them there.

Schank distinguishes between guided imagery as an intentional process and spontaneous images that appear unbidden. Attending to spontaneous images that arise and are then shared can form the basis of a discussion that opens up the depth of spiritual meaning. To trust the spontaneous images that arise within a director, and which are carefully discerned, can at times be a helpful aid to directees in exploring their spiritual experiences in depth.

In *Focusing*, Eugene Gendlin describes a process whereby people are empowered to develop a relationship between their feelings and life events. ‘Focusing’ involves inviting a person to clear a space within him or herself and then to be present to the different issues concerning their life. A person is invited to attend to their physical sense in a non-judgemental way. Then they await a word or image to arise spontaneously to hold the experience. The director’s role is to assist the directee to go back and forth between the

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549 Dean, p. 19.  
550 Dean, p. 19.  
551 Dean, p. 21.  
552 Dean, p. 22.  
553 Schank, pp. 22 - 27.  
554 Schank, pp. 24 - 25.  
physical sense and the word or image with which they endeavour ‘to put a handle’ on their experience. Once the right fit has occurred, a shift will be felt in the body. Even if it is only a slight shift, the work of focusing has begun. Abbott-Tucker\textsuperscript{557} suggests that such an interior movement is a way of encountering the movement of God in one’s life\textsuperscript{558}, which is particularly relevant in spiritual direction.\textsuperscript{559}

Eckerman\textsuperscript{560} believes words and images are invaluable tools in spiritual direction. It is valuable for directors to affirm the words and images of directees, to attend to the images and words that surface within themselves, and to offer these to their directees for reflection. She recommends that directors encourage directees to be open to emerging words and images and to suggest reading material that may connect with directees’ religious experiences.\textsuperscript{561}

### 2.4.3 Working with art

Among the various aids to contemplative attending are the myriad of approaches to working with art. Shaia\textsuperscript{562} recommends sandplay as one avenue of artwork with art that can serve as a spiritual practice in taking a contemplative stance in spiritual direction. In sandplay, a person places miniatures in a shallow, rectangular sand tray as a means to reflect or meditate upon their life.\textsuperscript{563} By observing a directee’s sandplay, a director may better perceive and respond to some of the deep interior movements

\textsuperscript{557} Abbott-Tucker, pp. 6 - 10.
\textsuperscript{558} Abbott-Tucker, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{559} Abbott-Tucker, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{560} Eckerman, pp. 9 - 14.
\textsuperscript{561} Eckerman, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{562} Shaia, pp. 7 - 19.
\textsuperscript{563} Shaia, p. 8.
that may be happening within the directee. Another avenue for working with art as a spiritual practice is Steinhauser’s use of art as prayer. It can help directees take a stance that invites them “into the heart of God – into a dance of intimacy and co-creation”.

Hieb uses the term art-journaling to describe “the use of simple art materials to help focus, express, or respond to prayer”. Material can be brought to a session “as an aspect of sharing, it can be an opening into the directee’s prayer expression and a tool for mutual contemplation within the session itself”. It “can reveal feelings, thoughts, and experiences” that combine both visual and verbal articulation. Art-journaling can invite deeper reflection and induce an intuitive leap, which leads to a freer response to life.

2.4.4 Bodywork

Carpeneto considers “any touch that is not abusive or harmful is healing”. She supports this assertion with research conducted by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami Medical School. It concludes that although touch does not instantaneously cure, it can evoke the innate recuperative powers within the body. Carpeneto suggests there is a parallel between how bodyworkers provide a healing touch and how spiritual directors create an open space for attending the holy; they both

564 Steinhauser, pp. 8 - 17.
565 Steinhauser, p. 11.
566 Hieb, 1996, p. 5.
567 Hieb, 1996, p. 5.
570 Carpeneto, p. 10.
571 Carpeneto, p. 10.
enable healing. She suggests, “the nature of touch is to invite the body into a place of spaciousness, into an openness where healing and a gradual movement toward wholeness can occur”. Carpeneto thinks bodyworkers use healing touch according to their clients’ needs. She recommends four broad categories: Manual Therapies, Hand-Medicated Energetic Therapies, Movement RE-Education Therapies, and Global Health Traditions. The healing touch of such work can “give the directee a visceral, felt sense of how God is existentially embodied in our incarnation”. This complementarity of spiritual direction and bodywork is not recommended if a directee is prematurely referred and not ready to deal with the emotions that may be unlocked in such work. Carpeneto is aware of the complex ethical issues associated with being a spiritual director and a body worker for the same person. While the dual role is rarely taken, she suggests it is not out of the question.

Costanzo draws upon another form of bodywork, Aikido, a Japanese martial art. Aikido, like spiritual direction, involves the subtle cooperation of energies between one’s own energy, another’s energy and what Costanzo terms as the Universal energy. Aikido has assisted her “to recognise the presence and nature of these various energies in a given session or relationship, and taught [her] how to cooperate with them”. In spiritual direction, she suggests directors can learn “to recognize the energy in a

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572 Carpeneto, p. 10.
573 Carpeneto, p. 10.
574 Carpeneto, p. 11.
575 Carpeneto, pp. 11 - 12.
576 Carpeneto, p. 13.
578 Costanzo, pp. 16 - 20.
579 Costanzo, p. 16.
580 Costanzo, p. 16.
given session, energy that is felt with and in our bodies”. Armed with such recognition, directors can create a space in which they, God, and their directees can be together in the messiness of life. They find that there is no place in which God is not present. Such awareness can be a profound liberation for those who come to direction.

The use of the labyrinth as a form of walking meditation, a type of bodywork more common in the past, is experiencing a revival. St. Clair describes the practicalities of making a labyrinth. Kostyk suggests a director needs to be alert to whether the labyrinth is a regular part of a directee’s spiritual practice. It may be appropriate to suggest to a directee that it may be valuable in certain circumstances.

**2.4.5 Discussion**

These authors draw attention to the creativity and diversity of aids available to assist directors. Muller, Filella, Dean, Schank, and Abbott-Tucker highlight how working with images in dreams and active imagination is a powerful influence in spiritual direction. While these contributions are relevant, they correlate more to beginning directors. As the literature that addresses the needs of more advanced directors in this area seems deficient, comparing whether these developmental influences shape beginning and advanced directors offers little scope. As such skills of attending are quite complex, more advanced directors could tend to have greater aptitude for accompanying directees. One area where advanced directors may tend to be

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581 Costanzo, p. 19.  
582 Costanzo, p. 19.  
583 St. Clair, pp. 17 - 23.  
584 Kostyk, pp. 28 - 34.  
585 Kostyk, pp. 33 - 34.
more apt is offering their own images and words to directees. Beginning directors may need to discern carefully such offerings so not to leave them exposed to projecting their own unresolved issues onto their directees. This does not mean advanced directors are not prone to such tendencies. Their experience could perhaps help separate their issues from what is helpful to their directees.

2.5 Metaphorical understandings of contemplative stance
Margaret Guenther advocates three metaphors: “spiritual direction as hospitality, teaching and midwifery”.586 Joyce Diltz587 resonates with the midwifery metaphor and offers her perspective. Marianne Hieb588 perceives spiritual direction as a work of art. Debra Donnelly-Barton589 draws on her experience of growing up near the Arctic Circle and offers the metaphor ‘The Arctic as Desert’. Robert Schmitt’s590 distinction between the life-servant and life-fixer models gives a further perspective. Following Marcel Neels’591 use of an image from nature, Shaun McCarty592 unpacks the metaphorical term ‘mystagogue’ to describe a director’s contemplative stance. Jack Mostyn’s593 approach emerges from the anthropological theology of Karl Rahner.

In teasing out the metaphor of hospitality, Guenther suggests that, as a dinner host prepares, is present to guests, and graciously farewells them, so too do spiritual directors extend hospitality to their directees.\textsuperscript{594} The director as a teacher has two tasks. The first is discernment, in which the director is “able to put himself out of the way and be fully present to the person sitting opposite”.\textsuperscript{595} The second is the use of encouragement and example to assist the directee “to develop and trust her own powers of discernment”.\textsuperscript{596} Using the metaphor of midwifery,\textsuperscript{597} Guenther describes the practice of spiritual direction in terms of assisting people to enter into labour and accompanying them as they go through the processes that lead to giving birth. The director’s role is to do “things with and not to the person giving birth”.\textsuperscript{598}

Diltz\textsuperscript{599} resonates with this metaphor when describing her stance on spiritual direction. As a midwife, she “is privileged to witness and assist in the birth of the sacred”.\textsuperscript{600} She comments on “how often a person’s struggle is a struggle to give birth”.\textsuperscript{601} Guenther and Diltz’s use of metaphor gives a feminine insight into the contemplative stance of spiritual companioning.

Hieb, drawing upon her understanding of iconography, offers the metaphor “spiritual direction is a work of art”.\textsuperscript{602} Just as “icon art invites us to enter a new space that is created between the icon and the person gazing at it”\textsuperscript{603}, so

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{594} Guenther, 1992, pp. 6 - 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{595} Guenther, 1992, p. 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{596} Guenther, 1992, p. 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{597} Guenther, 1992, pp. 84 - 112.
  \item \textsuperscript{598} Guenther, 1992, p. 90.
  \item \textsuperscript{599} Diltz, pp. 18 - 22.
  \item \textsuperscript{600} Diltz, p. 18.
  \item \textsuperscript{601} Diltz, p. 22.
  \item \textsuperscript{602} Hieb, 1996A, p. 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{603} Hieb, 1996A, p. 21.
\end{itemize}
too the contemplative stance of directors’ transforming quality of presence can assist directees.604

Donnelly-Barton605 finds the metaphor ‘The Arctic as Desert’ helpful in accompanying people who experience life as somewhat lost, empty, dull, and colourless. This metaphor is valuable since it calms the soul by using an image that cuts “through words and speaks directly to the heart”.606 She acknowledges that wilderness images of the desert are familiar images and have assisted many people. Directors in their endeavours to offer their directees new ways of exploring their journeys, however, can help by bringing in new images. Donnelly-Barton uses Arctic imagery to illustrate the spiritual journey. Her contribution highlights how fresh imagery can be helpful in taking a contemplative stance to a directee’s spiritual experience.

Schmitt607 articulates his understanding of contemplative stance by comparing what he perceives as two distinct models of spiritual direction: the life-servant model and the life-fixer model. He sees the two models as two circles in a Venn diagram in which there are areas distinct to each and an area common to both.608 The former is based on a more scientific approach and the later on a more contemplative stance. The role of the spiritual director in the first model is to “assess and intervene [and in the second, to] discern and cooperate”.609 The goal of the life-fixer approach focuses on “master, control, [and] mak[ing things] happen” while the life-

605 Donnelly-Barton, p. 44 - 50.
606 Donnelly-Barton, p. 44.
608 Schmitt, p. 28.
609 Schmitt, p. 29.
servant’s focus is to “serve and cooperate with”.610 The danger of the first approach is that a director can “intervene too quickly” while to not do so, can be a failure of the second style of accompaniment.611 The developmental orientation of the life-fixer is linear, as opposed to the circular orientation of the life-servant approach. The developmental approach relies upon a divide-and-conquer style of logic for the life-fixer framework, which only has ‘either/or’ outcomes. The logic of the life-servant paradigm is a synthesis of ‘both/and’.612 Compartmentalisation and separation characterise the life-fixer model. The life-servant stance endeavours to combine opposites and to see the overall picture.613 The life-fixer model relies on the power of personal knowledge and technology. Faith in, and engagement with the divine is the empowering source of the life-servant model.614 The accompaniment style of the life-fixer approach is marked with rigidity, while the life-servant approach is more flexible.615 Spiritual directors who are life-fixers value answers and definitions. Life-servants are comfortable with questions and paradox.616 Spiritual directors as life-fixers assume responsibility, while God holds the ultimate responsibility of the life-servant.617

Neels notes the metaphor of progress falls short of describing spiritual development.618 He suggests that the meandering flow of a river backwards and forwards across the terrain better illustrates the unfolding nature of

610 Schmitt, p. 29.
611 Schmitt, p. 29.
612 Schmitt, p. 29.
613 Schmitt, p. 29.
614 Schmitt, p. 29.
615 Schmitt, p. 29.
616 Schmitt, p. 29.
617 Schmitt, p. 29.
618 Neels, p. 7.
spirituality, preferring this metaphor of process. The role of spiritual accompaniment within this reframing is helpful in assisting people “with recognising, entering upon, and staying with their process, with those life-giving and healing waters”. In this way, spiritual companioning helps people to “be attuned to their personal experiences in life, as they come and go like the course of a river”. Such an approach takes the pressure off spirituality being approached as a “performance chart”. It ensures spiritual guidance becomes more attuned with assisting people to stay “with their inner process and moving forward with it, in the reality of the here and now”.

McCarty uses the metaphorical term ‘mystagogue’ to describe the contemplative stance of a spiritual director. He defines this as one who “conveys the notion of leading into, building up, supporting, revealing more clearly how awesome and impressive mystery is”. Mystagogues facilitate “others’ attentiveness to mystery”. This type of accompaniment helps lead directees more deeply into mystery within the ordinariness of their lives and assists them to develop a language to talk about it. Directors exercise leadership by leading directees more deeply “into a ‘devotional knowledge’ of the mysteries of faith”. Devotional knowledge is distilled from the intimacy of personal experience, a quest guided by loving intention rather

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619 Neels, pp. 7 - 10.
620 Neels, p. 10.
621 Neels, p. 10.
622 Neels, p. 10.
623 Neels, p. 11.
624 McCarty, pp. 7 - 15.
625 McCarty, p. 8.
626 McCarty, p. 9.
627 McCarty, p. 9.
628 McCarty, p. 10.
than intellectual enquiry. McCarty cites Mystery as being “about personal experience of God and the inexhaustible riches of ever unfolding meaning available through God’s self-revelation”. McCarty suggests this experience of God has to be discussed by analogy, as it cannot be analysed or controlled. The best way to approach God is by analogy. The language of mystery includes “paradox, parable, metaphor, passion, ritual and, ultimately, silence”. The mystery of God can not be programmed. It often comes in surprising and mysterious ways.

Compared with the metaphors so far reviewed, the work of Mostyn stands out in terms of its clear insight into the process of adopting a contemplative stance. His metaphor grew out of a discovery that he and his colleagues made. Traditional spiritual direction “tended to be privatistic, focusing only on the directee’s vertical relationship to God and prayer”. From their discovery, Mostyn and his associates began to develop a new style of spiritual direction. Over a period of three years, they developed an experiment to broaden spiritual direction’s scope to include a “focus on the social structures which influence and are influenced by the directee”. Besides attending to the intrapersonal world of people and their vertical relationship with God, Mostyn proposed that spiritual direction needed to encompass other contextual dimensions of human experience.

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629 McCarty, p. 10
630 McCarty, p. 10
631 McCarty, p. 10
632 McCarty, pp. 10 - 11.
633 McCarty, p. 11.
635 Mostyn, 1996.
638 Mostyn, 1996, p. i.
the interpersonal, societal, and environmental spheres. Foundational to his work was the awareness that the presence of ‘Mystery sometimes called God’, can arise in any of these four social wholes, not just within the privatistic intrapersonal dimension. In developing this approach, Mostyn drew upon the work of Berger, Muelder, Berger, Luckmann and Thomas, and other personalist theologians and social philosophers. Mostyn based his approach to spiritual direction on the anthropological theology of Karl Rahner. From this revisionary perspective, Mostyn suggests directees begin by talking about the concreteness of their daily lives. This is the ‘whatness’ of their lives. He perceives the concrete human experience that constitutes this level in terms of four arenas: the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, the societal, and the environmental (See Figure 1 below).

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639 Mostyn, 1996, p. 177.
The intrapersonal is the personal or intra-psychic aspect of human experience. The interpersonal is what occurs in the interaction between two or more people. The societal is the influences associated with organisational, cultural or customary factors. The environmental refers to the influence of the natural or created world. These four arenas are separate domains. A connection, ‘simultaneity’, flows between them. Once grace occurs in one arena, it generally flows to the others. It may take time to emerge in the person’s life. Waiting for the emergence of grace is necessary. While people enter their human experience through these four contextual doorways, the

646 Mostyn, 1996, p. 182.
processing of this experience occurs at different, deeper levels. What a person shares initially with his or her director is usually at the first level of disclosure. This top level, called ‘objective’, ‘conceptual’ or ‘interpretive’, is where most people live at all times.\footnote{Mostyn, 1996, p. 180.} This level constitutes common perceptions and values. Life is related to in terms of its conceptualisation or interpretation.\footnote{Mostyn, 1996, p. 180.} The spiritual director’s role is to listen for the interior movements a person may experience within the shared concrete experience. This second level, the ‘reflexive level’, “includes those events, situations and moments that break the conscious conceptual flow and make us stop, look and listen”.\footnote{Mostyn, 1996, p. 180.} These reflexive moments occur in all four arenas at any time of day or night. This ‘reflexiveness’ has the power to make one pause and consider the moment and its meaning. At this stage, rather than staying with the ‘whatness’, the role of the director is to enable a person to stay with the ‘howness’ of their experience – their feelings. After a directee has stayed with this experience for a while, a director observes them move down to encounter, at times, the deepest level that Mostyn calls ‘non-thematic’.\footnote{Mostyn, 1996, p. 181.} At this level of ‘being-in-existence’, the ‘Mystery sometimes called God’ is contactable.\footnote{Mostyn, 1996, p. 181.}

Mostyn collated these sociological and anthropological-theological considerations with ten avenues of enquiry into a “Guiding Framework of Enquiry”. This provided a self-study guide for spiritual direction training centres that desired to be involved in the transformation of social wholes.
He tested this framework in three spiritual direction training centres in the United States.

Mostyn’s contribution is twofold. In the contemplative process of attending the affective content of directees’ experiences, he encourages directors to be present to an unfolding, threefold anthropological-theological movement. The first movement comprises the objective, conceptual or interpretive level. The second is the reflexive level. The third movement is the experience of encounter with Mystery at the non-thematic level. Mostyn expands the contextual parameters of the paradigm within which directors attend their directees’ experiences. Directors are encouraged to attend to more than a singular intrapersonal perspective of human experience. Directors are invited to be present to the unfolding movement of the ‘Mystery sometimes called God’ in other arenas of human experience: the interpersonal, the societal, and the environmental. The combination of this aforementioned grid and Mostyn’s ten avenues of enquiry assist the development or redevelopment of effective formation programmes in spiritual direction.652

2.5.1 Discussion

The metaphors expressed by these authors offer a qualitative insight into what is generic in taking a contemplative stance in spiritual direction. Mostyn’s approach is valuable as it comprehensively articulates the levels of engagement that lead to an encounter with Mystery. It assists directors to discern the level at which to attend their directees. While the above

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metaphors influence practice, they do not consider a corresponding assimilation of their individual relevance to beginning and advanced directors. The literature specific to this section of the review fails to address the enquiry’s focus.

An advanced director may be able to work more effectively within the parameters of a particular metaphor. Such a director may also be more versatile in choosing the metaphorical framework from which to accompany a particular directee. In Mostyn’s model, noticing directees’ reflexive moments requires highly refined skill. Advanced directors would, hopefully, be noted for their astuteness in such observation and their ability to engage directees within such moments.

2.6 Contribution of spiritual classics to understanding contemplative stance

The application of classical spiritual texts to spiritual direction practice could easily be a series of major studies in its own right. This review restricts its consideration to a brief selection of texts.

Josef Sudbrack considers that around the core of the scriptures the “story of God’s dealings with his people … [is] wrapped the manifold devotional texts of Christianity”. In such books, the wisdom of the tradition is available. By meditating on such texts, the written word becomes a “partner in a mute but enduring conversation”. Classical spiritual texts may have something to offer in terms of understanding contemplative

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653 Sudbrack, p. 11.
654 Sudbrack, p. 12.
655 Sudbrack, p. 12.
stance. Regina Bäumer and Michael Platting discuss the writings of the anchorite period in the sixth century, and John Chryssavgis investigates the early desert tradition within the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Max Woolaver and Kerrie Hide discuss the writings of Elizabeth of the Trinity and Julian of Norwich respectively.

Bäumer and Platting discuss the significant characteristics of spiritual direction in the early, anchoritic period of monasticism that flourished in Egypt, the Holy Land, and Asia Minor until the 6th century. The goal of spiritual direction and its realisation was to “bring a person to contemplation and mystical union with God”. Directees were assisted by being given concrete advice when asked, comfort and support, and taught by example. Bäumer and Platting suggest helping directees to become aware of their emotions and desires was essential. They report that the early monastic approach was to welcome all desires and passions as acceptable; all such things needed to transform gently over time. Bäumer and Platting regard the role of the spiritual director in the times of the early monks as “pneumatikos, that is, imbued or filled with the Holy Spirit”.

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660 Elizabeth of the Trinity was a French Carmelite nun (1880 - 1906).
661 Julian (b. ca. 1342) lived the later part of her life as an anchoress in Norwich, East Anglia.
663 Bäumer and Platting, p. 33.
664 Bäumer and Platting, pp. 34 - 35.
666 Bäumer and Platting, p. 40.
directors was to be “mystagogues, teachers of the art of contemplation, of becoming close to God, and of achieving union with God”.\textsuperscript{668}

Chryssavgis\textsuperscript{669} reflects upon the role of the spiritual leader in the early desert tradition within the Eastern Orthodox tradition. He draws upon the notion of the spiritual director being a spiritual elder whose role is to act as a guide, physician, teacher, and icon. As a person cannot rely only upon him or herself in following the spiritual journey, the spiritual director is a valuable guide. Like Moses leading the people out of Egypt into the Promised Land, a spiritual guide can lead disciples on their journey.\textsuperscript{670} As a physician, Chryssavgis suggests a spiritual director’s role is to accompany disciples through the healing process.\textsuperscript{671} As a teacher, the spiritual guide inspires by wisdom drawn from personal experience. Such wisdom is not necessarily drawn from institutional sources.\textsuperscript{672} As an icon, the spiritual elder “stands vicariously not only in the place of [the directee] before God, but also in the place of God before [the directee]”.\textsuperscript{673}

Woolaver\textsuperscript{674} proposes a number of important aspects for the inner disposition of a spiritual director. He applies the fruits of Elizabeth’s reflections on her words, “to remain as intentionally present to God as is possible – each moment of each day”\textsuperscript{675} to the process of the spiritual direction. He notes Elizabeth’s instruction to directors “From such a

\textsuperscript{668} Bäumer and Platting, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{669} Chryssavgis, pp. 40 - 50.
\textsuperscript{670} Chryssavgis, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{671} Chryssavgis, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{672} Chryssavgis, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{673} Chryssavgis, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{674} Woolaver, pp. 9 - 18.
\textsuperscript{675} Woolaver, pp. 12 - 13.
position, where they are focused on God’s presence, he considers directors are better able to take a contemplative stance to their directees. 676

Hide677 relates aspects of Julian of Norwich’s theology of grace directly to the ministry of spiritual direction. In sensitising directors to what Julian describes as the “sweet touchings of grace”678, she highlights the importance of directors taking time to focus their awareness on the presence of grace at the centre of their being. They can then be present to it in their directees.679

2.6.1 Discussion

While there are innumerable classical texts, this brief sample highlights that these enduring elements within the tradition are still relevant. Such texts show clearly how directors understand contemplative stance. The authors reviewed do not specifically refer to beginning and advanced directors. Chryssavgis refers to the value of spiritual guides drawing on the wisdom of their personal experience. Woolaver implies from Elizabeth of the Trinity. These two authors suggest that directors’ engagement in their own sanctification may parallel the degree to which they assist their directees. The assumption is that the more experienced directors are, the more effective their accompaniment is. Correspondingly, their depth of personal spirituality influences their capacity to accompany directees. While not clearly enunciated, directors’ degree of spiritual depth could be, to some extent, a factor in determining whether they are beginners or more advanced practitioners.

677 Hide, pp. 6 - 12.
678 Hide, p. 12.
679 Hide, p. 12.
2.7 Contribution of contemporary paradigms to understanding contemplative stance

Many contemporary paradigms contribute to understanding contemplative stance. They provide a framework from within which such spiritual development emerges. A small number of contributors are reviewed: Hillevi Ruumet’s\(^{680}\) Helix Model; Kent Groff’s\(^{681}\) consideration of Howard Gardner’s\(^ {682}\) theory of multiple intelligences; Kathleen Hurley and Theodore Dobson’s\(^ {683}\) insights into the Enneagram; N. Graham Standish and Ellen McCormack’s\(^ {684}\) study of Adrian van Kaams’s formative spirituality.

Ruumet\(^ {685}\) suggests that the split in the Western Christian tradition between the spiritual and the temporal creates the potential for psychological issues, when they emerge in spiritual accompaniment, to be perceived as barriers in the directee’s spiritual development. It is believed that these psychological issues need to be removed through various psychological processes so the spiritual journey can continue. Ruumet suggests there is an emerging awareness of the interdependence between the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of human experience.\(^ {686}\)


\(^{685}\) Ruumet, pp. 6 - 24.

\(^{686}\) Ruumet, p. 6.
Ruumet presents a model of psychospiritual development that articulates what she sees as an ongoing relationship between “the psyche/spirit connection … in which both have to grow in tandem to accommodate the unique tasks that each soul faces”.  

She names this the Helix Model.

The spiral-shaped model describes the multi-dimensional labyrinth within which each individual needs to journey throughout life. The following diagram summarises her model (See Figure 2 below).

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687 Ruumet, p. 7.
688 Ruumet, p. 7.
689 Ruumet, p. 9.
Rather than seeing development as stages of linear progressions, while development may focus at any one time around one or two centres, she suggests a person’s focus may be engaged multi-dimensionally. People occupy two major territories: (I) to (III) and partially (IV), and from actualised (IV) to (VI). (VII) includes, but is beyond, both. In Centre (I), the Physical/Survival Centre, people desire to satisfy their “basic physical needs in the service of safety and survival”. In Centre (II), the Emotional/Cathctic Centre, issues of need, greed, and attachment are focused upon. In engaging Centre (III), the Egoic/Power Centre, people face power issues. The successful engagement of such leads to feelings of competence and self-esteem. The unhealthy side of such engagement may lead a person to destructive egotistical outcomes.

Ruumet surmises that (I) and (II) commence immediately after birth. (III) develops during childhood and matures in adulthood. People in fully actualised (IV) appreciate there is a common divine energy in every person. From (III) to (IV) is a transition to a trans-personal worldview. The interplay between (IV) and (III) is similar to the interaction between (V - II) and (VI – I). In (V), people follow their own unique “Star of Destiny”. Self-expression rather than ego-expression influences their life direction. This is characterised by a new level of creativity, which is not conventional.

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690 Ruumet, p. 10.
691 Ruumet, p. 10.
692 Ruumet, p. 11.
693 Ruumet, p. 13.
696 Ruumet, p. 15.
or necessarily based on societal standards.\textsuperscript{697} It involves returning to deal with unresolved issues in (II). The few people who journey to the Sophia Centre (VI), usually do parallel work with (I). In this place, Ruumet says the dichotomies between body and spirit disappear and all polarities are reconciled even though their dualistic manifestation remains.\textsuperscript{698} Ruumet suggests that coming to Divine union (VI) is infrequent, as most people have more to learn or have issues that need to be explored further. In such a place, final transcendence takes people into an experience of ultimate non-duality when they engage the Ground of Being.\textsuperscript{699} While Ruumet’s different Centres find parallels in much of the psychospiritual literature, her perception of the work of “return”\textsuperscript{700} is insightful. Such ‘return’ is psychospiritual integration in which vertical and horizontal balance is maintained as much as possible. As people move closer to the Divine, their human development achieves its fullest potential.\textsuperscript{701}

Groff offers another contemporary paradigm.\textsuperscript{702} He suggests that Howard Gardner’s theory\textsuperscript{703} of multiple intelligences is a “holistic way to ‘practice the Presence’ for different personality types, from varied cultural and economic backgrounds, for women and men”.\textsuperscript{704} These categories provide a useful framework for attending to the Spirit in the life of a directee. Gardner proposes seven categories that operate in an interactive rather than sequential manner. These categories are linguistic, logical-mathematical,
spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.\textsuperscript{705} This broad approach enables directors “to cultivate the awareness of God in all things and all things in God”.\textsuperscript{706}

Hurley and Dobson\textsuperscript{707} draw upon the Enneagram, since self-awareness and understanding personality are required for spiritual development.\textsuperscript{708} The understanding of personality through the nine typologies of the Enneagram is a helpful means for exploring transformation. Each typology aids in awareness of how a person’s essential essence of ‘true self’ is distorted in one of nine different ways.\textsuperscript{709} Foundational to these nine typologies are three centres: the thinking, feeling, and doing centres. Each of the nine Enneagram types results from learning to use primarily one centre to interpret life. Another centre supports this centre to be dominant, and the remaining centre is undervalued or underused and is responsible for the influence of unconscious disruptive energy. Transformation involves liberating each centre to operate fully and freely.\textsuperscript{710} When directors assist directees to free themselves from the dysfunctional elements of their centres, especially the repressed centre, such action helps the directees to liberate their human potential. It assists them with their spiritual journey in a practical and accessible way.\textsuperscript{711}

Standish and McCormack\textsuperscript{712} consider the essence of Adrian van Kaams’s formative spirituality as an attempt to understand and integrate the diverse

\textsuperscript{705} Groff, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{706} Groff, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{707} Hurley and Dobson, pp. 44 - 54
\textsuperscript{708} Hurley and Dobson, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{709} Hurley and Dobson, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{710} Hurley and Dobson, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{711} Hurley and Dobson, pp. 53 - 54.
\textsuperscript{712} Standish and McCormack, 2001, pp. 7 – 19.
levels within the human person - the spiritual, mental, physical, and social - to assist people in gaining insight. This will help their everyday lives in society.\textsuperscript{713} They summarise van Kaam’s understanding of what he terms ‘interformation’ as everything that is shaped by the world and an individual’s relationship with other people. ‘Intraformation’ refers to the interior dimensions, dispositions, and directives that shape the interior dynamics of an individual.\textsuperscript{714}

There are four intraformative dimensions: sociohistoric, vital, functional, and transcendent.\textsuperscript{715} They describe the sociohistoric dimension as internalisation of the traditions, beliefs, philosophies, and ideologies that shape a person’s social history. In spiritual direction, a director needs to be aware particularly when a person is guided strongly by such pulsating influences. By helping people become aware of these influences and then assisting them to choose how these influences will shape their lives, a director can provide a vital service. Van Kaam’s vital dimension is the biological and physical.\textsuperscript{716} By attending to directees’ physical and emotional impulses, a director can enable directees to become present to their thoughts, reflections, and actions, especially those elements that tend to be dominating and addictive.\textsuperscript{717} Van Kaam’s third basic dimension, the functional, is how people perform in life – in particular, how they execute and manage daily activities. Standish and McCormack recommend directors explore the strength or weakness of directees’ functional dimensions. If their sociohistoric or vital dimensions are dominant, this may weaken directees’

\textsuperscript{713} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{714} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{715} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{716} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{717} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 11.
abilities to function in managing the basic tasks of daily life.\textsuperscript{718} Van Kaam’s fourth dimension, the transcendent, is the spiritual dimension. This refers to living one’s life in openness to God, or needing to be open to the mystery of formation, in van Kaam’s terminology.\textsuperscript{719} Standish and McCormack assert that spiritual directors need to be particularly aware of this dimension in their directees’ lives, and to nurture it.\textsuperscript{720} To live a healthy life, the strength of van Kaam’s theory lies in integrating a healthy balance between these four diverse dimensions.\textsuperscript{721}

Standish and McCormack articulate the understanding of the importance of listening to God’s call at the deepest level of individuals’ lives through what van Kaam terms the “foundational life-form”.\textsuperscript{722} They highlight his distinction that the soul is more foundational than the human spirit. ‘Foundational life-form’ and ‘autarchic pride-form’ conflict at the very core of each individual’s being. This autarchic pride-form leads to ignorance of their deepest identity in God. It tends to distort a person’s true nature.\textsuperscript{723} Liberation from the damaging effects of the autarchic pride-form entails a choice called ‘foundational formation option’.\textsuperscript{724} This is a fundamental decision to be formed by the foundational life-form or to close in on oneself through an adherence to the autarchic pride-form.\textsuperscript{725} The role of the director in van Kaam’s theory is to assist directees to recognition of the destructive power of the autarchic pride-form in their lives and to open up to the life-giving dimensions of the foundational life-form. Directees are assisted in

\textsuperscript{718} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{719} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{720} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{721} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{723} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{724} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{725} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 15.
making a foundational decision to open up to God.\textsuperscript{726} Such decisions appear in the development of what van Kaam terms consonant or transcendent dispositions. These are attitudes or perspectives that direct one’s life and reflect the emergence of God’s call from within the depth of one’s being that make a person’s life more coherent and consistent.\textsuperscript{727} These formative dispositions produce a kind of secondary or superseding foundational life-form.\textsuperscript{728} The role of directors is to help directees discover and nurture such formative dispositions in their own lives as well as being open to their development.\textsuperscript{729} The value in considering van Kaam’s theory is a viewpoint that is integrative, foundational, and not limited to a religious and theological perspective.

Besides the power of the individual to form, the power of the surrounding forces within the universe also shapes individuals.\textsuperscript{730} These forces are identified as five poles shaping the formation field:

1. the performative pole (the biogenetical roots of a human person);
2. the intraformative pole (the interior aspects of the human person);
3. the interformative pole (the influence of human relationships);
4. the situational pole (a person’s relationship with the components of the current context); and
5. the world pole (general world and cultural context).\textsuperscript{731}

Within the interconnectedness of these polarities, van Kaam theorises that the mystery of formation, God, permeates the fabric of a person’s formation

\textsuperscript{726} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{727} Standish and McCormack, 2001, pp. 16 - 17.
\textsuperscript{728} Standish and McCormack, 2001, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{731} Standish and McCormack, 2001, Part II, p. 9.
The role of the spiritual director is to assist directees to discover the directives emerging from this field. These transformation directives can lead one to experience a transcendence crisis. This may lead a person beyond their limitations to adopt a more integrated life. The authors suggest spiritual directors should engage in an appraisal process through which directees can listen to the formative directives arising within them. The directors should also help to interpret these directives.

2.7.1 Discussion

These authors highlight a move from linear to lateral and multidimensional appreciations of contemplative stance, which in turn obviously influences practice. In relation to the enquiry, while not directly addressed, it is possible to suggest the developmental progression from beginning to more advanced directors is not necessarily linear. Development could proceed in a lateral, multi-dimensional fashion. Such a feasible suggestion, and its applicability, warrant further enquiry. It is outside, however, the immediate scope of this study.

2.8 Framework from within which the contemplative stance is attended

James Keegan\textsuperscript{735} approaches practice from the perspective of action for justice. Janet Ruffing’s\textsuperscript{736} approach is from the standpoint of encountering

\textsuperscript{733} Standish and McCormack, 2001, Part II, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{734} Standish and McCormack, 2001, Part II, p. 15.
God in nature. Ramona Miller\textsuperscript{737} approaches from the point of view of her experience of leading pilgrimages.

Keegan\textsuperscript{738} undertakes spiritual direction from the perspective of engaging in action for justice. Four qualities are considered important: “it will be integral to the ministry itself; it will be action; it will be founded in a contemplative attitude towards life and reality; it will be recognisably rooted in the gospel”\textsuperscript{739}. Directors, in attending directees’ experiences, need to cover the whole “frame” of a person’s life.\textsuperscript{740} This constitutes four arenas: “the Individual, Interpersonal, Structural, and Environmental”.\textsuperscript{741} By engaging this “Lifeframe”\textsuperscript{742}, directors can more effectively “do justice” in spiritual accompaniment by broadening their scope of the reality of the directee’s experience. The scope of the individual arena is all the intrapersonal elements that constitute a relationship with oneself.\textsuperscript{743} The interpersonal arena involves the interactions between one person and another.\textsuperscript{744} The structural arena incorporates the roles, structures, and systems of the groups and organisations within which one associates.\textsuperscript{745} The environmental arena incorporates the influence of cultural assumptions and nature.\textsuperscript{746} By attending to these four dimensions, spiritual directors can apply a contemplative attitude to the whole of a directee’s life.\textsuperscript{747} Directors can assist their directees to be more present to the movement of God within

\textsuperscript{738} Keegan, 1995, pp. 4 - 19.
\textsuperscript{739} Keegan, 1995, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{740} Keegan, 1995, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{741} Keegan, 1995, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{742} Keegan, 1995, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{743} Keegan, 1995, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{744} Keegan, 1995, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{746} Keegan, 1995, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{747} Keegan, 1995, p. 15.
the diversity of their experiences of life. Keegan recommends the Lifeframe as “an instrument for holistic contemplative work”.

Ruffing points to the value of directors helping directees explore how they can encounter God in nature. Nature is a fundamental and frequent means through which God reveals Godself. Such experiences are often taken for granted. Directees may not include them, especially if their principal focus is on experiencing God in prayer. While pointing out the value of engaging God in nature, Ruffing recommends that spiritual directors probe all areas of their directees’ experiences “for traces of God’s presence and activity”.

Miller draws on her experience of leading pilgrimages to sacred places. She addresses three important aspects of pilgrimages: “(1) the value of liminality, (2) the axioms of sacred space and (3) the importance of remembrance and rituals in our lives”. Liminality describes those times when “one is without social status and social roles”. Such occasions open a person to an inner path and provide the basic context within which a director can begin to assist a directee to engage their spiritual journey. When such an experience occurs in a sacred space on a pilgrimage, Miller draws upon four axioms from the work of Belden Lane:

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748 Keegan, 1995, p. 15.
752 Ruffing, 1997, p. 53.
753 Miller, pp. 7 - 13.
754 Miller, p. 8.
755 Miller, p. 8.
756 Miller, p. 9.
(1) sacred place is not chosen, it chooses, (2) sacred place is ordinary place, ritually made extraordinary, (3) sacred place can be tread upon without being entered, and (4) the impulse of sacred place is both centripetal and centrifugal, local and universal.  

Aware of these axioms, Miller suggests directors “can provide insights when responding to directees, and assist them in making the most of a positive pilgrimage experience”. When a directee cannot return to the sacred place, the director can explore with the directee ritualistic means by which such a sacred place can be revisited with the imagination of faith.

2.8.1 Discussion

These commentators highlight the value of directors appreciating the diverse frameworks in which directees engage the spiritual moments of their lives. It is worth noting the priest and social psychologist, Diarmuid Ó Murchú’s suggestion that authentic spirituality is more than an understanding of spirituality in individualist terms. Rather, it is an appreciation of the profound interconnectedness of life. The experience of God may be available in surprising ways.

Keegan presents a comprehensive framework. There is no direct reference, however, to those influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. A consideration by Ruffing suggests directors are skilful if they can probe all the areas of directees’ human experiences for signs of God’s presence and activity. This could suggest that a director’s

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758 Lane, p. 13.
759 Lane, p. 12.
761 Whiston, p. 20.
skill level may indicate whether they are beginning practitioners or more advanced.

3. Contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment

The extensive body of literature on the contextual factors associated with the dynamic of accompaniment is reviewed here under the following subheadings:

3.1 Contemporary contextual issues
3.2 Group context for spiritual direction
3.3 Organisational context for spiritual direction
  3.3.1 Discussion
3.4 Ignatian context
3.5 Trauma
3.6 Feminism
3.7 Alcohol abuse
3.8 Cross cultural contextual issues
  3.8.1 Discussion
3.9 Youth
3.10 Aged-care related issues
3.11 Illness
3.12 Dying
  3.12.1 Discussion
3.13 Professionalisation of spiritual direction
  3.13.1 Discussion
3.14 Gay and lesbian issues
The review commences by investigating the first three topics. First, Edwards recognises the growing need for spiritual direction from many different quarters. Second, Edwards recognises the value of one-to-one direction, advocating the emergence of group direction as standard. Frank Wallace concurs and highlights its worth. Bill Edens and Ken McGuire see the value of group direction for young adults and Duane Bidwell and Lee Self outline their successful six-week programme. Helen Marie Raycraft observes the value of group spiritual direction for contemporary American society based on her experience of basic ecclesial communities among Hispanics. Jeannette Bakke comments on the essential dynamics.

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768 Bakke, pp. 139 – 148.
of group spiritual direction. Rose Mary Dougherty\textsuperscript{769} advocates three conditions for effective groups and outlines an effective method of group spiritual direction. Felicia McKnight\textsuperscript{770} concludes this section by reinforcing the value of group accompaniment.

Margaret Benefiel\textsuperscript{771} leads the contribution in the next section of the review by proposing spiritual accompaniment for groups and organisations. Gordon Self\textsuperscript{772} experience of the changing trends in health care in North America drew him to become more involved in corporate accompaniment. Liz Budd Ellmann\textsuperscript{773} considers this new approach can bring fresh creativity and innovation to the work place. Mostyn\textsuperscript{774} offers a theological framework to support this emerging trend.

3.1 Contemporary contextual issues

Edwards sees spiritual direction as “spiritual friendship”.\textsuperscript{775} In the current environment, a shared perspective of the world within the church and of cultural support for such a worldview is diminishing. People are faced with many choices that society and the church offer.\textsuperscript{776} A further element arises “from the sense of limitation in educational and professional therapeutic

\textsuperscript{772} G. Self, ‘A Little Soul Work Does a Hospital Well’, \textit{Presence}, vol. 6, no. 1, 2000, pp. 42 - 49,
\textsuperscript{775} Edwards, 1980.
relationships”. Another aspect emerges out of the hunger of social activists who sacrifice their personal self to the social self. A totally exteriorised and communualised life may not be satisfying. Spiritual direction seems to be emerging from a “reawakening to the neglect of a careful oral tradition of spiritual guidance in the church”.

3.2 Group context for spiritual direction

Edwards considers group direction to be “the standard form of guidance in Christian tradition”. Groups gathering for Eucharist, healing, reconciliation, faith sharing, and scriptural reflection are some examples to which he ascribes. Group guidance is a process that “comes closest to the intent of one-to-one direction” in as much as such groups focus “on the spiritual appreciation (Sabbath) and vocation (ministry) of its members, with the clear leadership of a particular ‘group director’”. For some people, such interaction may be more helpful than one-to-one direction.

Wallace is of a similar opinion about group spiritual direction. He considers the change from spiritual direction being essentially a one-to-one dialogue to a group process is “not only possible but also valuable”. Conducting prayer weekends for groups based on Sadhana: The Way to God by Anthony de Mello validated the value of this process for Wallace.
Edens and McGuire\textsuperscript{788} developed an effective original approach to group spiritual direction with young adults. The groups met for one and a half hours, once a week, for ten weeks.\textsuperscript{789} For several years, they invited participants to share their life stories according to different weekly themes, for example trust, fear, loneliness, and love.\textsuperscript{790} In recent years, they have assisted directees to learn more about themselves by administering the Hall Tonna Inventory of Values and processing its results.\textsuperscript{791} This inventory is based on a “theoretical framework for understanding the links among psychology, theology, organisational development, and personal development theories”.\textsuperscript{792} The Hall Tonna method “promotes the development of self-knowledge, provides information to the director, and offers the group members a system for growth”.\textsuperscript{793} A weakness in the instrument is that it “lacks overt connection with traditional God language and does not offer specific suggestions for the development of one’s prayer life or relationship with God”.\textsuperscript{794} Edens and McGuire are sensitive to the need of young adults for initial self-awareness. Their use of the Hall Tonna inventory respects these young people’s developmental context. Their process, however, appears limited in assisting their directees to engage the affective content of their self-awareness, an essential element of accompaniment.

\textsuperscript{788} Edens, and McGuire, pp. 28 - 32.
\textsuperscript{789} Edens and McGuire, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{790} Edens and McGuire, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{791} Edens and McGuire, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{792} Edens and McGuire, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{793} Edens and McGuire, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{794} Edens and McGuire, p. 31.
Bidwell and Self\textsuperscript{795} conducted a six-week spiritual direction group. They focused on assisting the participants to discover purpose in their lives as a means of developing meaningful relationships with themselves and others.\textsuperscript{796} The metaphor of ‘weaving’ describes the process.\textsuperscript{797} Their group process was based on the Reformed doctrine. According to this doctrine, each individual has a unique call that includes a specific ministry within the church. This call also involves a specific obligation to be a witness to God’s truth in the everyday events of life. An individual’s calling is first “an inner prompting and then as an outer call affirmed by the faith community”.\textsuperscript{798} The threads in their metaphor of ‘weaving’ are the lives of the participants. They endeavoured to assess each individual’s suitability to entering the structured group process and their ability to relate mutually to one another within this process.\textsuperscript{799} The ‘loom’ was the context and structure of the group, which met for six consecutive Wednesday evenings. Continuing the metaphor, the ‘shuttle, warp and woof’ of their group project consisted of the weekly exercises done independently and as a group. The concluding element of ‘weaving’ was the ‘tapestry’. At the final meeting, each participant shared what they had determined was their statement of purpose.

Bakke\textsuperscript{800} offers valuable insight into the essential dynamic of group spiritual direction. For effective group spiritual direction, its members need to adopt a contemplative stance towards themselves, God, and each other.\textsuperscript{801} Bakke clarifies this by distinguishing spiritual formation groups from direction

\textsuperscript{795} Bidwell and Self, pp. 41 - 46.
\textsuperscript{796} Bidwell and Self, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{797} Bidwell and Self, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{798} Bidwell and Self, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{799} Bidwell and Self, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{800} Bakke, pp. 139 – 148.
\textsuperscript{801} Bakke, p. 141.
groups. Spiritual formation groups can support people’s spiritual journey through introducing them to a variety of spiritual disciplines, methods of prayer, and reflective practices. They can offer learning and development, but do not provide a contemplative attending to the movement of God in a person’s life as do spiritual direction groups. Spiritual direction groups meet with the intention to listen contemplatively for the presence of the Holy Spirit with others. Endeavouring to explore their relationship with God through a group process can assist members to appreciate that they are not alone in their search for God.

Dougherty\(^{802}\) advocates three conditions for effective groups. First, members of the group must commit themselves to be honest in their relationship with God. Second, participants must partake wholeheartedly through prayerful listening and responding to one another in the group. Three, each member of the group needs to be open to the considerations of others about their spiritual journey. Dougherty and her colleagues at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda have evolved a process of group spiritual direction. The group best works with four people, a maximum of five and a minimum of three for about two-and-a-half hours once a month for a ten month period. This is followed by a review and a renewal of the contract to meet, if the group so desires. Groups often benefit from the presence of an outside facilitator, especially at the beginning. The process commences with the group gathering in silence for about twenty minutes. Then the facilitator invites someone to begin sharing when he or she is ready. The group listens prayerfully to each individual’s sharing.

\(^{802}\) Dougherty, p. 36
without interruption. The group is then silent for three to four minutes to make space for God. This allows group members to respond from a place of freedom through having listened to God in silence. The facilitator then invites the members of the group to share for about ten minutes. The sharing could include their comments and questions arising from the silent reflection. This is followed with about five minutes of silent group prayer for the person who has just presented. The presenter may want to take some notes on what he or she has heard. This cyclic movement of ‘sharing—silence—response—silence’ is repeated, with a short break midway, until all members have presented. Then for about ten minutes, the group prays for any absent group member. Dougherty considers that the most important thing members can do for one another is to pray. The group concludes with a ten-minute reflection on the time together. This is not as a critical analysis of the group, but a time to look gently and notice the movement of God in the group and to share honestly what is observed. Dougherty sees such gatherings can help form a very enriching spiritual community for people. 803

Raycraft804 observes the emerging and growing value of group spiritual direction. She writes from within the context of contemporary American society, characterised by extreme individualism and the “divorce of faith from ordinary family and social life”.805 People are graced by reaching out for community.806 Raycraft is mainly associated with Basic Ecclesial Communities among the impoverished Hispanic population. Given their poverty, individual spiritual direction is a luxury. In yearning to have their

803 Dougherty, pp. 49 – 55.
804 Raycraft, pp. 37 - 43.
805 Raycraft, p. 37.
806 Raycraft, p. 37.
experiences listened to, many such people are finding a communal solution to their need. This invites a new understanding of spiritual direction. 807 Raycraft’s understanding of spiritual direction has changed radically to incorporate a contemplative listening to the mystery of God within a communal context. 808 Such groups “possess a new, creative, and transforming energy”. 809 This energy invites spiritual directors “to acquire new pastoral skills in spiritual guidance in order to work more effectively with networks of communities as they discover a new way of being Church”. 810 The skills required are

1. the knowledge of group dynamics that assist in developing communities’ shared leadership;

2. a sensitivity to listening to the diverse movements of the Spirit within individuals and the group as a whole; and

3. a gentle encouragement of people to share their experience while protecting them from dominating or being dominated by others. 811 Raycraft suggests these three skills equip directors to facilitate group spiritual direction.

In appreciating the value of the practice of spiritual direction in groups, McKnight 812 suggests the group process immerses itself in the “life-death-life process”. 813 Such groups succeed better if led by a professionally trained
director. It is valuable for the group leader to maintain accountability through supervision.\(^{814}\)

These contributors offer diverse views and illustrate the growing value and emergence of the group as the context within which spiritual accompaniment is practised.

### 3.3 Organisational context for spiritual direction

Benefiel\(^ {815}\) offers suggestions for the spiritual accompaniment of organisations, both religious and secular. She invites a change of thinking of spiritual direction as limited to working with individuals to encompassing corporate bodies. The individualistic focus of Western culture has contributed to this prejudice.\(^ {816}\) According to Benefiel, there is a difference between group spiritual direction and the spiritual direction of organisations. The former focuses on each member in the group to enhance the individual’s spiritual development. In the latter, “the group focuses on discerning God’s presence and activity in the organization as a whole, on listening for its heart”.\(^ {817}\) Her model may be applicable in religious organisations. Contemporary commercial organisations, however, whose major focus is profit, may be quite resistant to this approach, but could possibly benefit.

Self\(^ {818}\) reflects on corporate spiritual direction in a healthcare context in Canada and the United States of America. Due to these health reforms,

\(^{814}\) McKnight, p. 43.  
\(^{815}\) Benefiel, pp. 40 - 49.  
\(^{816}\) Benefiel, p. 41.  
\(^{817}\) Benefiel, p. 48.  
\(^{818}\) Self, pp. 42 - 49.
patients are generally in hospital for shorter stays. This has shortened the period in which one-to-one spiritual direction can be conducted.\textsuperscript{819} Listening to the staff on a longer-term basis has enabled him to begin “to hear deeper questions, and sense the movement of the Spirit in the organisation”.\textsuperscript{820} If a hospital can be perceived as a corporate body with a soul, Self argues, “is it not possible that this same soul is also on a journey, one requiring the skill and grace involved with spiritual accompaniment”?\textsuperscript{821} Within former faith-based institutions that once had a strong, visible Christian culture, “reference to the founding story was enough to rekindle passion for the mission, and to sustain staff in their difficult ministry to the sick”.\textsuperscript{822} In the current context, only a minority of hospital personnel find the founding story in any way meaningful. Within contemporary culture, there are many varied stories and Self argues that a new approach must be pursued. The challenge is to articulate the mission of the organisation in a language that its diverse staff can understand and live by.\textsuperscript{823} Through such means as a newsletter and staff lunches, staff can be invited to reflect on the mission of the organisation.\textsuperscript{824} These can invite “staff to take responsibility for putting a little soul back into the workplace”.\textsuperscript{825} According to Self, “attending to the spirituality of staff has implications for leadership and corporate decision-making”.\textsuperscript{826}

\textsuperscript{819} Self, pp. 42 - 43.  
\textsuperscript{820} Self, p. 44.  
\textsuperscript{821} Self, p. 45.  
\textsuperscript{822} Self, p. 45.  
\textsuperscript{823} Self, p. 45.  
\textsuperscript{824} Self, p. 46.  
\textsuperscript{825} Self, p. 48.  
\textsuperscript{826} Self, p. 48.
Budd Ellmann\textsuperscript{827} suggests group spiritual direction can bring fresh creativity and innovation to the working community.\textsuperscript{828} In introducing such practice within the workplace, the language needs to be chosen carefully since there are many different ways to describe and relate to spirituality. “Group spiritual direction is created by a group that intentionally listens to and looks for a lived relationship with mystery”.\textsuperscript{829} To the critics who see workplace spirituality programmes as a means of placating workers, Budd Ellmann suggests such programmes awaken “workers’ deep desires and [reorientate] work around core values that enliven the workplace”.\textsuperscript{830}

Mostyn\textsuperscript{831} suggests a new growth in the art of spiritual direction has arisen from the awareness that “institutions themselves have a spirit”.\textsuperscript{832} This insight has led some directors to explore ways of accompanying institutions in the belief that “the spirit of institutions has its source in the Mystery we call God”.\textsuperscript{833} Underpinning Mostyn’s perspective on corporate spiritual direction is the anthropological-theological approach of Karl Rahner. Mostyn describes this approach in terms of all human experience being the “aperture to the divine”.\textsuperscript{834} Since institutions are part of human experience, the ‘Mystery sometimes called God’ is therefore available within such structures and a valuable place for directors to attend.\textsuperscript{835} Mostyn suggests institutions’ effective accompaniment will involve helping the membership of the organisation to come to know its origins, the culture of the

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\textsuperscript{827} Budd Ellmann, pp. 46 - 53.
\textsuperscript{828} Budd Ellmann, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{829} Budd Ellmann, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{830} Budd Ellmann, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{831} Mostyn, 2003, pp. 148 - 169.
\textsuperscript{832} Mostyn, 2003, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{833} Mostyn, 2003, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{834} Mostyn, 2003, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{835} Mostyn, 2003, p. 150.
\end{flushright}
corporation, and the story of how it was founded. Such knowledge will assist in the process of reviewing, challenging and perhaps changing the corporate culture.\(^{836}\)

To assist the spirit of the institution to be noticed within leadership meetings, Mostyn suggests spiritual directors need firstly to be centred themselves. From this place, they can contemplate the group experience more objectively.\(^{837}\) During the times of intervention within the meeting, directors need to offer concrete examples of their tracking of the various movements they notice, then initiate discussion that invites the group to attend more deeply to the spirit of the group.\(^{838}\)

Mostyn distinguishes group spiritual direction from accompanying the group spirit. In group spiritual direction, the director’s focus is on the individuals in the group. In the latter, the focus is on the group as whole. The intervention in each context is different. In the former, the director works with each directee in turn. In the latter, a planned and agreed intervention is required so all know the rules of engagement.\(^{839}\) In preparing to attend the group spirit, directors must develop a contemplative attitude towards themselves and be supported in their work by supervision and competent spiritual direction.\(^{840}\) To engage in corporate accompaniment, a clear contractual arrangement must be established with the leader of the institution in question. Such arrangements are needed to develop a mutual understanding that the focus of the work is upon attending to the ‘Mystery

\(^{837}\) Mostyn, 2003, p. 155.
\(^{838}\) Mostyn, 2003, pp. 155 - 156.
\(^{840}\) Mostyn, 2003, pp. 158 - 159.
sometimes called God’, together with how the group intends to pay attention to the communication among themselves and the power of the spirit within the group.841

3.3.1 Discussion

The context within which directors work is expanding beyond the traditional, one-to-one setting. This expansion includes accompanying individuals in group-settings and attending to the group spirit of organisations. The change has certainly influenced the scope of contemporary directors’ practices. The literature makes no discernable reference to the similar and different developmental influences shaping beginning and advanced directors. Directors need increasingly complex skills to practise in a contemporary setting. They usually start with learning to take a contemplative attitude to their own lives, then developing the ability to attend to another in individual direction. Finally, the complex skills associated with accompanying groups and organisations are developed. It is clear the skills get extremely complex and more likely will be exercised by a more experienced rather than a less experienced director. Some advanced directors may have commenced their training not with learning the skills of one-to-one accompaniment, but with group facilitation skills. In fact, they may never learn the skills with which to accompany individuals. It may be assumed that directors grow in experience through first attending individuals, groups, then organisations. Some directors, however, may start with groups and organisations and never be involved in individual accompaniment. Such a possibility adds to the complexity of

841 Mostyn, 2003, p. 159.
discerning the similarities and differences influencing directors at different levels of experience.

The next bracket of contextual factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment is now reviewed. Michael Cooper\(^{842}\) clarifies three misunderstandings of the Ignatian approach, which depreciates its value. Sudbrack\(^{843}\) suggests a particular way to present the Ignatian exercises. Barry\(^{844}\) points out the different interior movements that are part of the Ignatian discernment of spirits that need to be complemented in an act of faith. Wilkie Au\(^{845}\) suggests how Gestalt therapy can open exercitants to the Ignatian retreat experience.

There are several contributors to the topic of trauma. Margaret Schrader\(^{846}\), Karen Ander Francis\(^{847}\), and Susan Gaumer\(^{848}\) specifically address the issues of sexual abuse. Nancy Gower\(^{849}\) and William Creed\(^{850}\) deal respectively with Christian workers traumatised in ministry and people hurt through their association with church-related institutions. Robert Grant\(^{851}\) discusses the

\(^{843}\) Sudbrack, p. 29.
\(^{848}\) S. Gaumer, ‘From Costly Silence to Spiritual Health’, Presence, vol. 6, no. 3, 2000, pp. 7 - 14.
effects of such trauma. Mari West Zimmerman\(^{852}\) examines the role of forgiveness in the healing process of people so traumatised.

Guenther\(^{853}\), Fischer\(^{854}\), and Patricia Brown\(^{855}\) address the influence of feminism. Guenther draws attention to women’s capacity to listen that has arisen from their marginalisation and powerlessness. Fischer outlines the awareness of how a feminist perspective transforms both the context and content of accompaniment. Patricia Brown details the unique contribution of women’s spirituality groups.

Margaret Bullitt-Jonas\(^{856}\) and Sarah Stockton\(^{857}\) discuss issues associated with alcohol and substance abuse. Bullitt-Jonas draws attention to how directees’ dysfunctional backgrounds, arising from being adult children of alcoholics, play a part in the process of accompaniment. Stockton compares the sponsor-sponsee relationship with the director-directee relationship.

Dominic Maruca\(^{858}\), Leonard Blahut\(^{859}\), and Susan Rakoczy\(^{860}\) address cross-cultural contextual issues. Maruca\(^{861}\) points out that directors’ awareness of the intricacy involved in such issues improves their sensitivity

\(^{853}\) Guenther, 1992, p. 115.
to accompaniment. Blahut\textsuperscript{862} and Rakoczy\textsuperscript{863} illustrate this from their respective experiences in Melanesian and African cultures.

### 3.4 Ignatian context

Cooper\textsuperscript{864} considers Ignatius Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* to have been a renewing influence on Catholic and Protestant traditions in their personal religious awakening and development since the 1960s. Cooper examines three elements of how Roger Haight\textsuperscript{865} perceives the *Spiritual Exercises*.\textsuperscript{866} Cooper names Haight’s contemporary criticisms on the *Spiritual Exercises* as being “essentially too other-worldly, too individualistic, and too therapeutic (too concerned with personal issues and not looking outward to address the crying issues in society and culture)”\textsuperscript{867}.

Cooper rejects the first criticism of Ignatian spirituality as being ‘other-worldly’ and hence only about the individual saving his or her soul. He interprets Ignatius as “caring for the whole person in the here and now and not just getting them to heaven at some unknown future time”\textsuperscript{868}. The second criticism involves the interpretation of the word ‘man’, which “besides the problem of sexist language, today carries the sense of rugged individualism”\textsuperscript{869}. When considered within the cultural context of Ignatius’ era, the use of such a term heralded a shift that “involved a movement away from [people] passively receiving their destiny from a feudal world view to

\textsuperscript{862} Blahut, 1997, pp. 57 - 61.
\textsuperscript{863} Rakoczy, 1992; Rakoczy, 2003, pp. 39 - 43.
\textsuperscript{864} Cooper, pp. 25 - 39.
\textsuperscript{866} Cooper, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{867} Cooper, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{868} Cooper, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{869} Cooper, p. 30.
actively making their own way in the world”. 870 Cooper suggests Ignatius
was a pioneer in adopting this view. The third criticism is that Ignatian
spirituality is too therapeutic, with an emphasis on “a certain privatisation of
spirituality while the crying societal, cultural, and ecclesial issues never dent
the spiritual horizon”. 871 Cooper points out the Jesus to whom Ignatius
introduces people in the Exercises is the image of “Christ on Mission …
[which] immediately and directly focus[es] the contemplative regard on the
outer world of everyday life as the context of prayer”. 872 He enables
Ignatian spirituality to be a more accessible means with which spiritual
directors accompany their directees. He does this by revisiting some of its
fundamental elements and presenting their relevance for the contemporary
context.

In discussing how to present the Spiritual Exercises, Sudbrack suggests,
“the initial stage of spiritual guidance was always a careful, ongoing
presentation of specific material”. 873 Obedience is another constituent of
Sudbrack’s understanding of spiritual direction. Directees submit
themselves “to the ‘discernment of spirits’, that is, concretely speaking, to
the scrutiny of the Church, of tradition, of critical intelligence and personal
conscience”. 874 Sudbrack acknowledges the contextual contribution of
literature and community to spiritual development, by restricting spiritual
direction to the boundaries of a tradition. He fails to appreciate that
accompaniment can operate across traditions and even beyond formal
religious structures. He largely confines the process of spiritual direction to

870 Cooper, p. 31.
871 Cooper, p. 33.
872 Cooper, p. 35.
873 Sudbrack, p. 29.
874 Sudbrack, p. 37.
intrapersonal content and by favouring a directive approach. This approach focuses on directees’ ethical development, which limits the scope of spiritual direction.

Sudbrack acknowledges that directors need to attend to the hidden motives of themselves and their directees. He gives inadequate emphasis to the affective content of human motivation. His use of the Ignatian retreat method does not translate well into the work of accompaniment outside such a context. His exclusive, patriarchal language limits his contribution to an outmoded religious scene.

Barry\textsuperscript{875} reflects on his experience as a spiritual director within the Ignatian tradition. In attending to the different interior movements that form the basis of discernment, he recommends such attention needs to be complemented. “[D]iscernment of spirits is not complete until it ends with an act of faith”.\textsuperscript{876} This act of faith is incomplete until acting on it proves its truth.\textsuperscript{877} In acting on such discernment, its validation derives from the reassurance of “continued peace and joy on the journey”.\textsuperscript{878}

Au\textsuperscript{879} suggests Gestalt therapy can open exercitants to the Ignatian retreat experience. He highlights that the primary focus of Frederick Perls’s Gestalt therapy is the emotional health of the individual; the Ignatian exercises focus on spiritual development. Despite this, Gestalt therapy can contribute to exercitants’ abilities to open themselves up to the retreat experience. The

\textsuperscript{875} Barry, 2001, pp. 11 - 16.
\textsuperscript{876} Barry, 2001, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{877} Barry, 2001, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{878} Barry, 2001, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{879} Au, 2001, pp. 17 - 29.
use of the Gestalt approach in work with dreams can complement the Ignatian approach to contemplation. By becoming cognisant of the Gestalt approach to present-centred awareness, a director’s ability to guide a retreatant’s prayer experience can be enriched.

This brief review of commentators draws attention to the influence of the Ignatian context on spiritual direction. Its influences have significantly shaped contemporary practice and shall continue to do so.

### 3.5 Trauma

Schrader examines the effects of sexual abuse on women’s naming and experiencing of God. She suggests, “a survivor’s internal dynamic with God will also affect the way she relates to those around her”. The process of spiritual direction can enable women to move beyond outdated institutional images to ones that can more healthily shape their lives. Schrader remarks, “care needs to be taken to help them name God as God seems to be for them in this present moment”. As part of the recovery process, survivors “need to name God anew with images or metaphors that speak of their truth”. She describes metaphors as always having “an ‘is’ and an ‘is not’ character” which assists in describing the experience of God, as “all talk of God is indirect and partial”. In such recovery, women survivors need to form within themselves “what feels like the real picture of God,

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880 Au, pp. 18 - 20.  
882 Schrader, p. 48.  
883 Schrader, p. 49.  
884 Schrader, p. 50.  
885 Schrader, p. 51.  
886 Schrader, p. 52.  
887 Schrader, p. 52.
coming from their knowing and experiencing.” 888 Some women find the masculinity of God difficult while others experience Jesus’ compassion healing. 889 For those for whom such images are not helpful, Schrader recommends focusing on God or the Spirit or other non-human images to be more suitable. 890 Among such images are Wisdom and nature. 891 Spiritual directors accompanying women dealing with sexual abuse need to create a safe place within which women can take the time to tell their painful stories. Directors must accept the truth of the stories. Sometimes this truth can be so horrific it may prove difficult to accept or believe. 892

Francis 893 suggests how “an experience of spiritual emergence and eventual sacred union” 894 can assist recovery from childhood sexual abuse. She considers “often the trauma of childhood abuse causes a person to experience what has been referred to as soul loss or the loss of the self”. 895 This loss of soul alienates people from “that core of aliveness, the ground of action and being, the image of God”. 896 In response to such loss, a false self emerges; an adapted personality in order to survive the effects of the abuse. 897 The spiritual director’s role is to assist directees to shed their false self and move into a transformed life. 898 Francis advocates a “shamanistic model of direction” 899 towards such directees. Such a model

888 Schrader, p. 52.
889 Schrader, pp. 53 - 54.
890 Schrader, p. 54.
891 Schrader, pp. 54 - 55.
892 Schrader, pp. 57 - 58.
893 Francis, pp. 41 - 55.
894 Francis, p. 41.
895 Francis, p. 42.
896 Francis, p. 42.
897 Francis, p. 42.
898 Francis, p. 43.
899 Francis, p. 43.
is a form of pastoral care that seeks to alleviate the pain sufficiently so that the directee can function and gain insight into the ways the pain is related to the inner journey, and to help the person develop a sustaining relationship with God.⁹⁰⁰

Francis proposes a map for this journey of recovery (See Figure 3 below).⁹⁰¹

(Figure 3)

In these two movements, one reflects the soul loss through abuse and the other its healing and recovery. The loss of soul can involve deprivation, abuse, disconnection, loss of meaning, and loss of identity. The experience of deprivation involves such things as not experiencing sufficient love, nurture, protection, and respect.⁹⁰² The abuse can come in many forms: physical, emotional, and sexual.⁹⁰³ Disconnection emerges as abused children begin to believe the lies told about them. Such experiences lead people to disconnect from themselves and adopt behaviours that will ensure safety and acceptance.⁹⁰⁴ Disconnection leads directees, in time, to

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⁹⁰⁰ Francis, p. 43.
⁹⁰¹ Francis, p. 54.
⁹⁰² Francis, p. 46.
⁹⁰³ Francis, p. 46.
⁹⁰⁴ Francis, p. 47.
experience a “hole in my soul”. Francis describes this as “a feeling of aimlessness, of wandering through life without direction, reacting to events rather than initiating them”. With the passing of years, this experience concretes as a loss of identity: such loss can be described as “soul murder”.

Francis says recovering the soul involves learning to disbelieve the lie. Its constituents include longing, remembering, emotional catharsis, authenticity, and meaning and mission. The first step of recovery is longing. She refers to this existential longing in many ways: “hunger, thirst, or an aching need for God, relief from the past, comfort from the pain, or help in understanding their purpose on the planet”. Following this longing, emerges remembering. This involves reconnecting with the memory and the emotional pain that accompanied the originating event. Attending to such emerging memories can lead to an emotional catharsis in which the broken-off pieces are integrated … [and] a part of the true self, forgotten so long ago, is remembered. The survivor is freed from the lie’s bondage and becomes more integrated and authentic.

In time, such catharsis can invite the emergence of the voice of the true self. This reclaimed voice is the recovery of basic authenticity, which enables people to initiate an immediate adult response to situations that emerge in life. After some time of becoming grounded in such authenticity and the reclaiming of one’s identity, there emerges a desire to search for meaning in

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905 Francis, p. 47.
906 Francis, p. 47.
907 Francis, p. 47.
908 Francis, p. 50.
909 Francis, p. 50.
910 Francis, p. 50.
911 Francis, p. 52.
earnest and to express it in meaningful mission in the world.\textsuperscript{912} Francis concludes with saying:

Once the victim crosses the threshold to recovery, there is a back-and-forth movement between the two spirals. It is an infinite dance of homecoming that leads the celebrant of healing always deeper into the Divine Embrace.\textsuperscript{913}

Gaumer\textsuperscript{914} considers some women come to realise such silence is not only an emotional issue but also a significantly spiritual one.\textsuperscript{915} She comments:

the silence of the suspended self is a reaction to circumstances, which threaten the well-being of an individual, a fear-driven negation of the self for purposes of protection and survival.\textsuperscript{916}

Various women Gaumer interviewed who had reconnected with their true self found contemplative prayer was a way out of their dilemma. Contemplative prayer became a “means by which a deeper and more intimate relationship with God and with self [came] about”.\textsuperscript{917}

Gower\textsuperscript{918} discusses the accompaniment of Christian workers who were traumatised while involved in ministry. The most effective accompanier is a person who has undergone and dealt with a similar trauma. Such a qualification gives the spiritual director credibility in the directee’s eyes.\textsuperscript{919} A spiritual companion needs the skills to assist directees to grieve their feeling of betrayal by God and its implications for their vocation as a Christian worker and their psychological health. At times, such accompaniment will need to deal with directees’ experiences of denial of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[912] Francis, p. 53.
\item[913] Francis, p. 55.
\item[914] Gaumer, pp. 7 - 14.
\item[915] Gaumer, p. 8.
\item[916] Gaumer, p. 9.
\item[917] Gaumer, p. 9.
\item[918] Gower, pp. 38 - 46.
\end{footnotes}
God’s existence. A third qualification Gower suggests for accompanying traumatised Christian workers is that such a person:

must be one who is skilled at facilitating relational communications, and who understands God to be in personal, personalized communication with humankind, for it is the relationship between the counselee and God which is broken and in need of restoration.

Gower recommends assistance can be offered by “long-term caring companioning”. This journey may take years. Another pointer is for spiritual directors to try to establish an “honest exchange between the directee and God”. Another helpful suggestion is for directors to help directees expand their paradigm of reality. This enlarging of their construct of reality can be achieved by assisting them to appreciate a broader perspective of who God is for them, within the reality of their traumatised world. She states, “it takes time to assimilate, to understand, to try out new ideas, change old thought patterns, rework a worldview and a theology”. 

Creed discusses the process of spiritual direction with people who have been hurt through their association with church-related institutions. His understanding is “the wounded one can often recognise a hidden identification of self with the institution, or over-idealisation of religious leadership”. The wounded person needs to face this experience of eroded self-worth and re-establish a more worthwhile reference for dignity and self-worth. From this basis, such a movement will enable directees to get more

920 Gower, p. 39.
921 Gower, p. 39.
922 Gower, p. 41.
923 Gower, p. 42.
924 Gower, pp. 44 - 46.
925 Gower, p. 45.
926 Creed, 2000, pp. 38 - 46.
927 Creed, 2000, p. 39.
in touch with their true selves and “continue on the spiritual journey with new sobriety and perspective, and ultimately new energy and creativity”.  

Even though directees work through their wounds, their woundedness may still be there. Their woundedness, however, may no longer control them.  

Grant says trauma can result in people experiencing the effects of Post Traumatic Stress. These include intrusion of flashbacks and denial exhibited in such forms as depression, avoidance, addiction, and dissociation. The deconstructive effects of trauma have horizontal and vertical impacts. The horizontal impact is the deconstruction of the belief systems that hold a person’s reality together. The vertical deconstruction involves the disintegration of the ego or social self. Much of what helped to build a person’s identity is destroyed, and a person is forced to face their mortality and personal powerlessness. Such trauma throws a person into a place of nothingness. Unfortunately, mental health professionals often want people to return quickly to a functional world. In doing so, they deny the need to find ways to integrate the deeper truth the trauma has opened. The trauma can expand the former organisational structures of a person to take in more of the Self. Grant makes two essential points. First, spiritual direction should be grounded in knowledge, timing, and technique. Second, the ability of a director to engage his or her own woundedness influences the environment in which a directee can find help. Knowledge of a directee’s capacity to relate to the structure of their identity will assist the

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928 Creed, 2000, p. 40.  
929 Creed, 2000, p. 40.  
930 Grant, pp. 48 - 58.  
931 Grant, p. 50.  
932 Grant, p. 50.  
933 Grant, p. 51.  
934 Grant, p. 52.  
935 Grant, p. 55.
director to determine the directee’s capacity to relate to God.\textsuperscript{936} With time, assisting a directee to differentiate between the ego and the Deeper Self can help a person’s journey through the helplessness associated with being thrown into a void. The journey through loss will enable the rebirth of a rediscovered self in God.\textsuperscript{937} A director’s knowledge and comfort with his or her own interior territory of powerlessness helps to create a place of compassion and understanding. This will enable directees to examine the damaged remains of their own lives.\textsuperscript{938}

Directors often have to assist their directees who struggle with the issue of forgiveness because of hurt, injury or betrayal. Zimmerman\textsuperscript{939} suggests that, to be competent guides to wounded people, directors need to understand the process of forgiveness for themselves.\textsuperscript{940} In the early stages of forgiveness, directees need to face, perhaps for the first time, the full reality of their losses.\textsuperscript{941} In examining who is responsible, authentic forgiveness requires responsibility being placed courageously where it belongs.\textsuperscript{942} The betrayer may not acknowledge his or her responsibility, and repentance and reconciliation may not eventuate as a result. The liberating power of forgiveness is still possible for the person against whom the offence was committed. This shift from victim to survivor is gradual.\textsuperscript{943} Anger, being an integral part of this process, can assist a person to move beyond the restraints of a victim’s mindset, a development that may facilitate the growth of spiritual freedom in directees.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{936} Grant, p. 55. \\
\textsuperscript{937} Grant, p. 57. \\
\textsuperscript{938} Grant, p. 58. \\
\textsuperscript{939} Zimmerman, pp. 44 - 52. \\
\textsuperscript{940} Zimmerman, p. 46. \\
\textsuperscript{941} Zimmerman, p. 47. \\
\textsuperscript{942} Zimmerman, p. 47. \\
\textsuperscript{943} Zimmerman, p. 48. \\
\end{tabular}
\end{footnotesize}
3.6 Feminism

A significant influence on the practice of women directors is their own experience as women. Guenther suggests the particular contribution women bring to spiritual direction is their capacity for listening.\textsuperscript{944} Women have been outsiders on the edges of society and ecclesial communities for so long. A freedom has arisen for women directors through their “marginality and powerlessness”.\textsuperscript{945} This enables them to be more open to the stories of those pushed to the edges of society. Guenther encourages women to value their experience in their own right as a legitimate spiritual resource.\textsuperscript{946} Fischer\textsuperscript{947} contributes her appreciation that “a feminist perspective transforms both the context and the content of spiritual direction”.\textsuperscript{948}

Patricia Brown\textsuperscript{949} outlines the unique contribution women’s spirituality groups make. “They are community-centred, allowing women to explore, express, and develop their experiences and understandings of God and how God is at work in their lives”.\textsuperscript{950} The basic components of such gatherings are:

1. sacred texts and stories that reflect on how to change one’s life;
2. encouragement for women to share their personal stories;
3. teaching women practical means to use their time for themselves and God; and

\textsuperscript{944} Guenther, 1992, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{945} Guenther, 1992, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{946} Guenther, 1992, pp. 129 - 134.
\textsuperscript{947} Fischer, 1988.
\textsuperscript{948} Fischer, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{949} Brown, pp. 54 - 61.
\textsuperscript{950} Brown, p. 57.
4. the inclusion of relevant prayer rituals. Brown considers that incorporating these four primary elements into women’s spirituality groups contribute to women’s spiritual development.

3.7 Alcohol abuse
Bullitt-Jonas’s contribution focuses on how the context of accompaniment is influenced when directees come from dysfunctional families in which one or both parents was alcoholic. Many adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs) who are “seeking spiritual direction today are struggling to recover from the spiritual damage that addiction inflicts on the human psyche and spirit”. Such impairment is seen in ACOAs’:

1. obsession “with control and the fear of being out of control”; 
2. their difficulty in trusting themselves or others; 
3. their tendency “to avoid experiencing or expressing their feelings”; and
4. ignoring personal needs; and fear of criticism, conflict, and abandonment.

Such dysfunction “can affect their capacity and their inclination to pray, their images of God, and their relationship to the divine”. Bullitt-Jonas focuses on two aspects of ACOAs’ spiritual lives: attitudes towards prayer and forms of prayer. “All prayer … ultimately involves our willingness to reveal ourselves, just as we are, to the eyes of God, and all

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951 Brown, p. 57.
952 Bullitt-Jonas, pp. 5 - 10.
953 Bullitt-Jonas, pp. 5 - 6.
954 Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
955 Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
956 Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
957 Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
958 Bullitt-Jonas, p. 5.
prayer therefore involves risk.”\textsuperscript{959} For ACOAs, however, this natural resistance can intensify since they may carry such “a load of shame and repressed feelings that it may be threatening indeed to begin to expose them to the judgment and mercy of God”\textsuperscript{960}. The two forms of prayer, with which Bullitt-Jonas finds ACOAs are most comfortable, are “either positive affirmations or imageless prayer”.\textsuperscript{961} She warns that either approach can be used falsely to avoid self-encounter and encountering God.\textsuperscript{962}

Stockton\textsuperscript{963} reflects on the relationship of the sponsor-sponsee in the Al-Anon programme. This is a support programme for people with relatives and friends dealing with alcoholism. Such a relationship closely resembles how a director and a directee relate. Al-Anon is based on the twelve-step recovery programme of Alcoholic Anonymous and is not affiliated with a particular faith tradition. It welcomes all who have any faith or none. The sponsor’s role is to assist sponsees with Al-Anon’s three A’s: awareness, acceptance, and action.\textsuperscript{964}

\textit{3.8 Cross cultural contextual issues}

The focus of this enquiry is principally within a Western cultural context. The following commentators discuss the implications of a Western approach to accompaniment being introduced into another cultural context.

\textsuperscript{959} Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{960} Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{961} Bullitt-Jonas, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{962} Bullitt-Jonas, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{963} Stockton, pp. 41 - 47.
\textsuperscript{964} Stockton, p. 44.
Maruca proposes the importance of directors respecting the culture into which they enter. This involves learning the language and literature, and developing an appreciation of the history, geography, economic and political structures. Such awareness better disposes the director to listening attentively to what is communicated, thereby enabling him or her to respond more effectively. A spiritual director’s effectiveness is diminished if he or she has “any feeling, conscious or unconscious, of ethnocentric superiority that prevents [the director] from respecting the uniqueness of each person who comes to [him or her]”.

Maruca recommends directors learn to balance an appreciation of the value of their own spiritual tradition and, at the same time, a healthy awareness of its possible limitations. Such an approach assures respect for the culture in which the director is a guest. A director needs “to confront and challenge others with the utmost caution and humility, as well as with courage and honesty”. A “spiritual director has a formidable challenge in moving from spiritual principles to practice”. Directors’ abilities to minister effectively will depend more on their abilities to be flexible rather than upon being overly concerned with compromising their principles. An attitude of “unwillingness to wait patiently for divine grace to prepare and dispose each person for the full truth of our Christian faith” diminishes a spiritual director’s helpfulness.

Maruca makes a sensitive contribution to the contextual elements of spiritual direction practice. By advocating direction as a tool of
evangelisation, however, he limits the scope of spiritual guidance to the boundaries of a particular religious tradition. A broader approach would be to consider spiritual direction as a process of accompanying directees across and beyond the boundaries of religious traditions.

In reflecting on his practice of spiritual direction within Melanesian culture, Blahut\textsuperscript{973} considers the missionary model he adopted in going to Papua New Guinea was one of host and guest. He, the host, welcomed his Melanesian directees as guests. He discovered this model, steeped in Western cultural values, was ineffective. He was the guest in a country where his directees were the hosts.\textsuperscript{974} Three main insights emerged for Blahut from his reflection on this cross-cultural setting. Conscious of enculturation, he noticed he held onto his own cultural ground and cues. He was the perfect host, but not the perfect guest. He discovered that such a stance was a survival technique.\textsuperscript{975} Whether in his own culture or a cross-cultural situation, it is a grace to be a guest in a directee’s life, an invitation to approach the depth of another with sensitivity and flexibility.\textsuperscript{976} Finally, Blahut suggests that continued openness is required to different emerging forms of spiritual direction that may be more appropriate than the highly developed Western one.\textsuperscript{977}

Rakoczy\textsuperscript{978} discusses the cross-cultural implications for practising spiritual direction as an American woman working in Africa. Her contribution draws

\textsuperscript{973} Blahut, pp. 57 - 61.
\textsuperscript{974} Blahut, pp. 58 - 59.
\textsuperscript{975} Blahut, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{976} Blahut, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{977} Blahut, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{978} Rakoczy, 1992; Rakoczy, 2003, pp. 39 - 43.
upon the writings of Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry Murray in which they suggest each person is “like all others, like some others, like no other”.\textsuperscript{979} Regardless of their culture, the people she accompanied spoke of their “deep yearning for God and of profound desires to be closer to God”.\textsuperscript{980} She noticed African culture had common unity, “in certain values such as the absolute value of life, community, and hospitality”, which differed from North American culture. Regardless of the cultural context from which people come, each person is “utterly and blessedly unique”.\textsuperscript{981}

3.8.1 Discussion

Directors’ awareness and incorporation of these contextual factors enhances their ability to accompany directees. These commentators do not refer to how such contextual factors may influence directors at the initial or more advanced stages of their practice. At best, inferences only can be made. The first concerns accompanying people dealing with issues of trauma. Because of the sensitivity and complexity of such situations, beginning directors can flounder, particularly if they have unresolved trauma in their own lives. Their unrecognised problems regarding issues of transference and countertransference may impede their ability to accompany directees so affected. Advanced directors may have addressed their own issues of trauma. They may need, however, to ensure their own personal boundaries are in place when accompanying directees whose experiences may parallel their own. Traumatised directees may benefit from being attended by directors who have faced and resolved similar issues themselves.

\textsuperscript{980} Rakoczy, 2003, pp. 39 - 40.
\textsuperscript{981} Rakoczy, 2003, p. 42.
An implication of Maruca’s comment concerning cross-cultural issues is that learning the language, literature, culture, history, and other elements of society can enhance directors’ abilities to accompany directees. Given the intricacy of such learning and the time involved, it could take many years for directors to incorporate such learning into their practice. This suggests that more advanced directors may well have integrated this into their practice more than beginning directors.

Such comments are more obvious for directors working in cross-cultural situations in foreign countries. They may also be relevant for directors working in their own country with an ethnic or indigenous minority group.

Continuing to examine contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment, the next bracket of contextual issues involves the different stages of life including youth, aged-care issues, illness, and dying. Regarding youth, Pat Hendricks\(^982\) and John Mabry\(^983\) perceive their responses in terms of how to accompany young people influenced by being part of ‘Generation X’. In attending the experience of people in the second half of life, Susan Sihler\(^984\) suggests the particular interior work in which they need to engage before commencing their third journey. Eugene Bianchi\(^985\) draws attention to the threats posed by middle age and old age. Concerning dementia, a specific age-care issue, Rita Hansen, John Mabry

and Robert Williams discuss helpful means to accompany people with such affliction. In dealing more generally with illness, Mary Earle discusses the application of *lectio divina* from Benedictine spirituality. Jeanette Bakke makes some valuable observations about loss in general. Concerning dying, Margaret Guenther speaks about how such circumstances necessarily require establishing formal and informal contexts in which to attend dying patients and their families and friends. Joy Carol and Barbara Koch discuss Carol’s own close encounter with death and Koch’s experience of bereavement respectively.

### 3.9 Youth

Hendricks discusses the spiritual accompaniment of Generation Xers, people born between 1961 and 1981, ranging, at time of writing, from 20 to 40 years of age. In accompanying such post-modern directees, popular culture is not only the language of this generation, but also the context within which they encounter their spiritual practice. Accompanying these directees involves letting go of one’s fears and prejudices about youth. As Generation Xers are more spontaneous and their spiritual thinking more random, it may be helpful to stay centred and not get caught in their energy. Such action may help pull directees’ random thoughts together and find some focus. Helping them to discern about their life is also important.

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987 M. Earle, ‘Reading the Text of an Illness’, *Presence*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2000, pp. 7 - 11.
988 Bakke, 2002.
992 Hendricks, pp. 51 - 59.
993 Hendricks, p. 55.
This may involve assisting young people to sort through “ideas, emotions, feelings, cultural attitudes, family of origin attitudes, and denominational beliefs”.\textsuperscript{994} As they begin to talk about their spiritual experiences, some directees may need assistance in finding the words to articulate the experience.\textsuperscript{995} Considering that Generation Xers are communal in their orientation, group spiritual direction may be more beneficial to them.\textsuperscript{996}

Mabry suggests the term ‘Generation X’ comes “from [their] lack of identity, and an ambivalence about their future”.\textsuperscript{997} As Generation Xers grew up, they experienced the world as “fierce, dangerous, and doomed”.\textsuperscript{998} The subsequent effect on Xers’ psyches was that they became “intolerant of authority figures”.\textsuperscript{999} This intolerance is expressed by pervasive cynicism that differs from their Boomer parents’ outlook. Although they share a distrust of authority, their parents believed they could change things, unlike Xers.\textsuperscript{1000} Within such a state of distrust, “Xers are the first generation to truly internalise a post-modern sensibility”.\textsuperscript{1001} Some Xers retreat to ideological fundamentalism and others struggle with constructing “their own meaning, a chaotic process of assimilation, syncretism and continuous self-conscious reassessment”.\textsuperscript{1002} At best, Xers are trying to survive in a world “which they perceive to be largely devoid of transcendent hope”.\textsuperscript{1003}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[994] Hendricks, p. 56.
\item[995] Hendricks, p. 56.
\item[996] Hendricks, p. 56.
\item[997] Mabry, p. 36.
\item[998] Mabry, p. 36.
\item[999] Mabry, p. 37.
\item[1000] Mabry, p. 37.
\item[1001] Mabry, p. 37.
\item[1002] Mabry, p. 37.
\item[1003] Mabry, p. 37.
\end{footnotes}
Generation X may seem directionless. Mabry proposes the Gnostic Myth captures some of the experience of this generation.\textsuperscript{1004} Although different in many ways, Xers share similarities with the Gnostics “through their social experience, religious experience, and eschatological hope”.\textsuperscript{1005} Like the social experience of the Gnostics that perceived the world as a place in which everything was wrong, Xers similarly experience the world as unwelcoming, with little to offer them.\textsuperscript{1006} The religious view of the Gnostics, which favoured direct spiritual experience as opposed to institutionalised religion, finds a parallel in Xers’ suspicion of religious dogma. They “are more likely to trust the ecstatic experiences they know first-hand through music, dance, community, sex, meditation, and mood-altering substances”.\textsuperscript{1007} The Gnostics desired to shed their bodies to rejoin the fullness of the Pleroma. To achieve this, Xers do not need to wait for death: they escape into the otherworld of cyberspace.\textsuperscript{1008} Xers can perceive the one-to-one relationship of spiritual direction as a relationship in which there is a power imbalance. They feel a particular revulsion with such relationships. They reject anything suggestive of a hierarchical structure. This being the case, many Xers will not associate with spiritual direction in its present form. To address this issue, Mabry offers two models for accompanying Xers: “Mentoring and Wisdom Circles (a form of group spiritual direction)”.\textsuperscript{1009} Mentoring involves both parties treating one another with respect and as equals. It is important for the younger person to feel appreciated and not to be treated poorly by the older mentor. The older

\textsuperscript{1004} Mabry, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{1005} Mabry, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{1006} Mabry, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{1007} Mabry, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{1008} Mabry, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{1009} Mabry, p. 44.
A mentor needs to be authentic, as the younger person is very perceptive.\footnote{Mabry, pp. 44 - 45.} Wisdom circles are groups in which people meet as equals. Such groups often include some combination of discussion, prayer, and at times, ritual.\footnote{Mabry, p. 45.} The effective accompaniment of such Xers will assist them to deepen their “distinctively realized eschatology, grounding spirit and vision in the here and now”.\footnote{Mabry, p. 47.}

### 3.10 Age-care related issues

Addressing the provision of spiritual direction services to directees who are in later life, Sihler\footnote{Sihler, pp. 45 - 54.} draws upon such authors as Carl Jung\footnote{C. G. Jung, \textit{Psychological Reflections: A New Anthology of His Writings}, (ed) J. Jacobi Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1973.} and Gerald O’Collins.\footnote{G. O’Collins, \textit{The Second Journey}, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1978.} The work for people in the second half of life is to take the opportunity to reacquaint with aspects of themselves hidden during their earlier years.\footnote{Sihler, p. 46.} This second journey-work is necessary to prepare the way for the third journey, which involves the process of aging and moving through the last chapter of a person’s life until death.\footnote{Sihler, p. 47.} Sihler suggests the image of ‘the desert’ describes how later life “is not only a place of silence but also a place of struggle”.\footnote{Sihler, p. 47.} In a territory of decline and loss of life’s companions, in such a void, the paradox is the surprising availability of knowing God in a new way.\footnote{Sihler, p. 47.} Sihler also draws upon the psychologist Erik Erikson’s eight stages of psychosocial development, in particular the seventh stage: ‘Generativity versus Stagnation’ (age 35 – 60) and the eighth

\begin{footnotesize}
\bibitem{Mabry} Mabry, pp. 44 - 45.
\bibitem{Mabry2} Mabry, p. 45.
\bibitem{Mabry3} Mabry, p. 47.
\bibitem{Sihler} Sihler, pp. 45 - 54.
\bibitem{Sihler2} Sihler, p. 46.
\bibitem{Sihler3} Sihler, p. 47.
\bibitem{Sihler4} Sihler, p. 47.
\bibitem{Sihler5} Sihler, p. 47.
\end{footnotesize}
stage, ‘Integrity versus Despair’ (the last stage). In addition, the seminal work of Bianchi suggests that the losses and threats that rise due to middle and old age can be addressed through developing a holistic framework that draws from the insights available in the social sciences and religion.

Hansen, Mabry and Williams make a number of helpful suggestions for accompanying people suffering from dementia. It is important to provide a safe container in which directees can express their feelings. “[F]eeling useless, low, angry, surprised, and taken unaware may be part of a long list of negative feelings that a person with dementia can display”. They recommend comforting and reassuring dementia sufferers. Fear and anxiety surface quite commonly because they are somewhat aware of what is happening to them. Directees may experience an increased sense of loneliness. Reassuring and reminding them of the people who care for them can encourage them to relax and trust. The authors invite directors to consider the degree to which they can continue their commitment. If their conditions worsen, directees may need to go into assisted care. As people with dementia reach the later stages of decline, directees still need to be treated with respect and helped to reconnect with their memories. The authors draw attention to the needs of directees and of the families and friends of such patients. The family and friends are often forgotten in the process. This often gives rise to spirituality-related issues in dealing with

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1020 Sihler, p. 48.
1022 Hansen et al, pp. 45 - 54.
1023 Hansen et al, p. 49.
1024 Hansen et al, p. 49.
1025 Hansen et al, p. 50.
1026 Hansen et al, p. 50.
1027 Hansen et al, pp. 50 - 51.
their loved one who is in decline. The authors refers to statistics that by 2030, 25 per cent of the United States’s population will be over 65 years old. This suggests the accompaniment of such people as directees is increasing.

3.11 Illness

Earle suggests that the way illness is ‘read’ in Western culture is through reductionism. This falls foul of the perception that personal blame can be assigned to disease. Applying the Benedictine practice of lectio divina can help in dealing with illness. A person “can listen for God’s presence in the midst of pain, disorientation, and the task of creating new patterns of living within physical limits”. Earle applies lectio divina in three steps. The first step is assisting directees to recall the initial experience of illness, and the associated feelings. The second is meditatio or meditation. This involves sitting with the experience, being present to the images that may emerge and the inner stillness that waits in silence. The final movement is oration, the expression of one’s deepest yearnings. Such expression may be in the form of verbal, written or spoken prayer. Other expressions may be in dance, gesture, art or yoga. Earle considers “learning to read the illness as a sacred text allows directees to discover the interpretations that lead them back to their own lives”. In making this journey, “God is there,

1028 Hansen et al, p. 52.
1029 Hansen et al, p. 54.
1030 Earle, pp. 7 - 11.
1031 Earle, p. 7.
1032 Earle, p. 7.
1033 Earle, p. 8.
1034 Earle, p. 8.
1035 Earle, pp. 8 - 9.
1036 Earle, p. 9.
1037 Earle, p. 10.
1038 Earle, p. 11.
waiting silently to speak through the details of the experience, through the images, through the very flesh that is needing care and nurture”.

Bakke draws attention to times of loss when directees experience a series of emotions that are normally associated with grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Directees do not necessarily experience such emotions in a predictable fashion. In fact, directees often fluctuate back and forth until they reach some degree of resolution and closure. Directees can experience loss in many different facets of life, for example, physical losses that arise from normal aging or traumatic situations such as accidents and disease.

### 3.12 Dying

Guenther suggests that discussing spiritual direction with the dying, within either a formal or an informal context, occurs within its own timetable. The regular meetings every month or so can be compressed into almost daily meetings. In spite of the dying’s diminished autonomy, they still need to be treated respectfully and not as objects to be minimised or patronised. Guenther counsels the need for patience. This can simply be in finding the time to sit by, rather than hover over, a person in bed. It can also be just waiting while a person tries to say a few words especially if they are struggling with very low energy. She suggests, “We must be willing to wait, comfortable in the long pauses, and never be guilty of rushing to

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1039 Earle, p. 11.
1040 Bakke, p. 50.
1041 Bakke, p. 50.
1045 Guenther, 2000, p. 31.
complete the other’s hesitantly uttered sentences”\textsuperscript{1046} The director should come with no agenda, and be prepared to “offer a safe place” within which a person can talk about whatever they wish.\textsuperscript{1047} Sometimes, family or medical staff may not be able to deal candidly with the person’s impending death.\textsuperscript{1048}

Carol\textsuperscript{1049} had her own close encounters with death. From this personal experience, she suggests that if the issue of death is faced, it becomes less frightening. If the process of death is dealt with in a reality-based way, the journey can be more successfully accomplished.\textsuperscript{1050}

Out of her own experience of bereavement, Koch\textsuperscript{1051} notes that grief can be marked with shock, denial, anger, and depression.\textsuperscript{1052} Such experiences can open up the opportunity for faith development. In directing people in times of bereavement, it is important to ensure spiritual direction is not task-orientated and outcome-based. The director is “a facilitator between the directee and God, allowing directees to find their own answers from within themselves”.\textsuperscript{1053}

\subsection*{3.12.1 Discussion}

To review the previous sections on accompanying directees in different stages of life, illness, and dying, attention to such commentary can influence directors’ effectiveness towards their directees. There are no direct comments that highlight the similarities or differences in the developmental

\begin{footnotes}
\item Guenther, 2000, p. 31.
\item Guenther, 2000, p. 32.
\item Guenther, 2000, p. 32.
\item Carol, pp. 35 - 42.
\item Carol, p. 42.
\item Koch, pp. 40 - 48.
\item Koch, pp. 41 - 43.
\item Koch, p. 47.
\end{footnotes}
influences that shape beginning and experienced directors. Guenther’s work is worthy of further reflection. Directors who have experienced mid-life issues themselves, and have engaged their own diminishment, may tend to be more effective in their work. This implies that the ability of directors to accompany directees is influenced by their experience with similar issues. It could be inferred that advanced directors may have engaged more of their personal issues. This brings up the question of the degree to which directors’ experiences with similar issues to their directees influence the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors.

3.13 Professionalisation of spiritual direction

Continuing to examine contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment, the topic of professionalisation of spiritual direction as a newly emerging area in spiritual direction practice is addressed. Bruce Lescher\(^{1054}\) discusses the advantages and disadvantages of this growing trend. To protect this escalating movement, Janicemarie Vinicky\(^{1055}\) sees the necessity to develop an effective code of practice. Joel Giallanza\(^{1056}\) argues for its particular ethical application in religious and seminary formation. Continuing with this theme, Kenneth Overberg\(^{1057}\) explores how Christian ethics challenge spiritual directors.


Lescher notes that the ministry of spiritual direction has significantly changed in the last thirty years. It is shifting from a ministry primarily exercised by clerics, to a distinguishable ministry in its own right, exercised by a broad range of practitioners, lay and religious. He perceives professionalisation as a modern phenomenon “whereby a social service or ministry which has been carried out by volunteers gradually comes to be carried out by professionals”. Lescher refers to Robert J. Willis’s three stages, or levels, to the process of professionalisation: “personal, structural, and societal”.

Paraphrasing Willis, he writes:

The personal level involves education and training: ‘a body of knowledge ... extensive training, on-going education, an annual convention.’ The structural involves the formation of a professional organisation, including levels of membership and publication of a journal. The societal level involves articulating the profession’s relationship to the society of which it is a part. This third step ‘necessitates a code of ethics, peer review, a recognition by society of

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1061 Bakke, p. 118 – 120.
1064 Lescher, pp. 81 - 90.
1065 Lescher, p. 81.
1066 Lescher, p. 81.
1067 Lescher, p. 82.
the important contribution the profession makes to society, and certification/licensure’.  

Lescher observes that most of these stages are fairly well in place. Many centres for training spiritual directors exist pointing to the personal level being achieved. The structural level he considers is well catered for in terms of the various formal and informal supervision networks in place throughout the world. The formulation of codes of ethics as enunciated by Spiritual Directors International and other comparable bodies reflects the societal stage.

In discussing the promise and perils of professionalisation, Lescher firstly notes its advantages:

1. The increased availability of spiritual direction as it has become less associated with the almost exclusive context of the sacrament of reconciliation. Such professionalisation has enabled the ministry to be exercised by a whole range of people within the church;  
2. The wide availability of professional education and training in spiritual direction has greatly enhanced the ministry;  
3. Significant organisational benefits include the development and practice of peer supervision, annual conferences, the founding of professional organisations, and the publishing of professional journals and articles.

Among the disadvantages are:

1068 Willis, p. 41, in Lescher, p. 82.  
1069 Lescher, pp. 82 - 83.  
1070 Lescher, p. 83.  
1071 Lescher, p. 84.
professionalisation threatens to locate spiritual direction within a white, Western, middleclass mind set; separating direction from an ecclesial base; neglecting the social dimensions of ethics; and downplaying those voices who emphasise the charismatic nature of this ministry.\textsuperscript{1072}

There is a creative tension between “promises worth celebrating and perils worth attending”.\textsuperscript{1073}

Vinicky\textsuperscript{1074} remarks that since spiritual direction practice has “recently evolved into the equivalent of professionalisation”\textsuperscript{1075} within the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, it is ready for a code of ethics. Such emerging considerations duly influence the current context within which accompaniment is practiced. In reference to such a code, she proposes that spiritual directors need to focus on the directee’s relationship with God, whether the directee is an individual or a group.\textsuperscript{1076}

Giallanza\textsuperscript{1077} suggests that within the context of religious or seminary formation, spiritual direction needs to serve the training process. This is because candidates could compromise the process by hiding relevant material under the guise of discussing it confidentially with their directors.\textsuperscript{1078} Vinicky holds that the moral or religious values of a spiritual director should not be imposed on a directee. Giallanza adds, “spiritual directors should not impose their theological opinions or interpretations of scripture”.\textsuperscript{1079} Vinicky suggests that directors’ need to possess a basic

\textsuperscript{1072} Lescher, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{1073} Lescher, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{1074} Vinicky, pp. 20 - 24.
\textsuperscript{1075} Vinicky, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{1076} Vinicky, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{1077} Giallanza, 1994, pp. 34 - 37.
\textsuperscript{1078} Giallanza, 1994, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{1079} Giallanza, 1994, p. 36.
knowledge of counselling, psychotherapy, and appropriate referral. Giallanza affirms the “separation of services because of the significant differences in content”. He recognises that at times there will be some overlap in these disciplines. Confusion will emerge if counselling and spiritual direction are undertaken in the same setting. If directors are not involved in ongoing formation and peer review supervision, “spiritual direction will remain outside the professional world, and the possibility of charlatans will stand firm”. Giallanza acknowledges Vinicky’s proposal that spiritual directors need to avoid consciously deceiving directees. This includes not promising certain spiritual outcomes implicitly or explicitly. He reaffirms that, as “direction is the Lord’s work”, ongoing reassessment “safeguards against the insidious compromises of complacency”.

There are two existent issues of concern regarding spiritual direction in the context of formation. If there is a lack of disclosure between the formation directors and the religious or seminarian in training, the issue should be dealt with in that context. The professional boundaries should not be skewed by triangulating relationships. A directee’s interior process is the integral element of his or her conscience. The smooth and effective running of a religious formation system is of importance. Regardless of formators’ good intentions, to access such privileged information, however, is a perversion.

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1080 Giallanza, 1994, p. 36.
1081 Giallanza, 1994, p. 36.
1082 Giallanza, 1994, p. 36.
1083 Giallanza, 1994, p. 36.
Overberg examines how Christian ethics challenge spiritual directors. He suggests the values of Western Culture, namely success, power, and pleasure, conflict with the values of the Gospel. It is within this conflicting framework that moral decisions are made. The importance and meaning of moral choices is important to Overberg for three reasons:

1. they shape the person we are becoming,
2. they have a real effect on people and the world,
3. they embody and express our relationship with God.

Directors can assist directees by noticing these values and their interdependence. This encourages directees to shift beyond ethical relativism to recognising that their moral choices have a great significance on oneself, others, the world, and God. Overberg advises moral decisions should be determined neither by the extremes of oppressive subservience to law and authority, nor by the excesses of moral relativism. The path of virtue’s true discernment lies between these two extremes. In this, the role of authority and the wisdom of law, and the uniqueness of each situation, are considered as parts of the process of experiencing freedom and responsibility for a person making a mature decision. Within this argued position, Overberg assumes that spiritual direction is occurring within a distinctive religious context.

Foster advocates that along with the growing professionalisation of spiritual direction come associated public and legal responsibilities. His
reflections are drawn from his experience as the director of a retreat house in Illinois, the United States of America. Two spiritual directors, being supervised by a fifteen-member board, staff this ministry. The board had to address issues regarding staff and board members’ liabilities. The solution was to adopt a statement of individual indemnification, reinforced by an Illinois statute. This exempted members of boards of not-for-profit organisations.\footnote{Foster, p. 51.} Foster outlines staff policies in three areas: “qualifications and competence, boundary issues, and malpractice insurance”.\footnote{Foster, p. 52.} The staff is required to have “a degree or certificate in spirituality or a related field”.\footnote{Foster, p. 52.} They are also required to participate in spiritual direction, ongoing formation, and supervision. Concerning boundaries, “spiritual direction is not viewed as ‘spiritual companioning’ in which sharing is mutual”\footnote{Foster, p. 52.}. They are cautious about spiritual direction developing into friendship and discourage contact with directees outside the professional context.\footnote{Foster, p. 52.}

Foster makes clear distinctions between spiritual direction and psychological counselling. He suggests monthly direction as normal and referral to appropriate professionals when required. The people using the services of the retreat house are asked to make a financial contribution from within a certain recommended range, rather than use the term ‘fee’ or ‘stipend’. They take the stance that, with prudent practice, “malpractice is highly unlikely”\footnote{Foster, p. 53.}, and therefore insurance is not necessary. Foster’s article highlights that, with the increasing professionalisation of spiritual

\footnote{Foster, p. 51.} \footnote{Foster, p. 52.} \footnote{Foster, p. 52.} \footnote{Foster, p. 52.} \footnote{Foster, p. 52.} \footnote{Foster, p. 52.} \footnote{Foster, p. 53.}
direction, the context within which it is delivered is radically changing. It requires the development of a clearer business model. His approach to malpractice insurance is a gap in his policy. Without comprehensive malpractice or public-risk liability insurance, even a spurious allegation could financially bankrupt the organisation due to high legal fees. Basic insurance is a fundamental requirement of any professional practice.

Willis\textsuperscript{1098} considers the profession of spiritual direction is characterised by three signs:

1. The personal, which involves the knowledge derived from training and on-going education;
2. The structural grouping of regional or national professional bodies and subscribing to professional journals; and
3. The societal level incorporating a code of ethics, peer review, public recognition of the profession and certification\textsuperscript{1099}

Since spiritual direction in recent centuries was exclusively an extension of the ministry of male clerics, until as recently as the 1970s, adding another profession seemed unnecessary.\textsuperscript{1100} Spiritual direction’s function was to help a person integrate their spiritual life within a religious tradition. Thus, spiritual direction fell within denominational frameworks.\textsuperscript{1101} With the recent changes in the societal-cultural milieu, the practice has changed. Western societies are more generally educated, and thus not as reliant on the clergy as a sole body of educated people. There is a growing shift away from paternalism as the populace in general becomes more informed and

\textsuperscript{1098} Willis, pp. 41 - 54.  
\textsuperscript{1099} Willis, p. 41.  
\textsuperscript{1100} Willis, pp. 41 - 42.  
\textsuperscript{1101} Willis, p. 43.
capable of making their own decisions.\textsuperscript{1102} As the number of professional religious, who once provided such ministry, is declining, others need to provide the service.\textsuperscript{1103} With the decline in religious spiritual directors, other organisational structures are needed to ensure the quality of directors who are not operating within religious institutions.\textsuperscript{1104} Even though professionalisation is beneficial, Willis suggests it has inherent dangers. If spiritual direction is confined to being provided solely within the boundaries of an ecclesial structure, the danger is that the art of direction could be lost as some spiritual seekers have little or no engagement with mainstream religious institutions.\textsuperscript{1105} Spiritual direction has become “less a professional means of introducing a person into a group and more a means of helping a person move in his or her relationship to God”.\textsuperscript{1106}

Willis comments on the different professional requirements for beginners and more established directors. Beginners require immediate one-on-one supervision from a well-trained person until they are judged able to work alone.\textsuperscript{1107} As a person gains experience, becoming more secure in their profession, the frequency and function of ongoing education and supervision may change. For well-trained and well-experienced directors, peer supervision becomes more like sharing among colleagues. There is always a beneficial need to allow peers to review one’s practice. Concerning legal responsibilities, there is a duty to warn and report. The limits of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1102} Willis, p. 44.
  \item \textsuperscript{1103} Willis, p. 44.
  \item \textsuperscript{1104} Willis, p. 44.
  \item \textsuperscript{1105} Willis, p. 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{1106} Willis, p. 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{1107} Willis, p. 46.
\end{itemize}
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confidentiality are different for adults and for children.\footnote{1108} Entering dual relationships is not recommended and appropriate referrals must be made when required.\footnote{1109} Record taking keeps track of the work in progress. It helps keep the director honest about the efficacy of his or her practice.\footnote{1110}

Creed\footnote{1111}, Bakke\footnote{1112}, and Edwards\footnote{1113} examine the issue of charging fees for spiritual direction. Creed highlights two polarities in the discussion, spiritual direction as a ministry and as a profession.\footnote{1114} He raises the need for a just wage for spiritual directors involved in full-time practice.\footnote{1115} An issue arises as to whether the fee, when compared to other professional service fees, conveys the importance of such accompaniment.\footnote{1116} In addition, the social settings in which a service is provided may shape the practice; for example, if it is a clergyperson providing spiritual direction as part of his or her pastoral duties in a parish, or a layperson operating out of a private practice from home.\footnote{1117} Whether seeking a donation or fee influences the direct legal responsibilities is another factor in setting fees.\footnote{1118} Creed comments that cultural, political, psychological, economic, and theological factors also impinge on the context of practice.\footnote{1119}

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\footnotetext[1108]{Willis, p. 48.}
\footnotetext[1109]{Willis, p. 49.}
\footnotetext[1110]{Willis, p. 50.}
\footnotetext[1111]{Creed, 1995, pp. 45 - 50.}
\footnotetext[1112]{Bakke, pp. 118 – 120.}
\footnotetext[1113]{Edwards, 2001, pp. 122 – 124.}
\footnotetext[1114]{Creed, 1995, p. 46.}
\footnotetext[1115]{Creed, 1995, p. 47.}
\footnotetext[1116]{Creed, 1995, p. 48.}
\footnotetext[1117]{Creed, 1995, p. 48.}
\footnotetext[1118]{Creed, 1995, p. 49.}
\footnotetext[1119]{Creed, 1995, pp. 49 - 50.}
\end{footnotes}
Bakke’s concern regarding payment is shaped by her belief that “spiritual direction is a gift from God”.\(^{1120}\) Any discussion between directors and directees about fees needs to keep this clearly in mind.\(^{1121}\) She summarises various contemporary approaches. For some spiritual directors, this ministry is full-time work for which they receive payment that enables them to commit themselves fully.\(^{1122}\) Directors with other means of support are able to see a few directees, fee free, each month. In another context, Bakke remarks that spiritual direction is offered in retreat houses. In such situations, the fees received support the ministry but do not cover the costs.\(^{1123}\) Some directors in parish settings offer spiritual direction within an informal arrangement whereby spiritual direction takes place by telephone, email or face-to-face meeting without any cost involved.\(^{1124}\) Others meet as part of a group spiritual direction arrangement led by a paid facilitator.\(^{1125}\) Underlying these examples is an understanding that people are not so much paying for a service but helping to support a particular ministry.\(^{1126}\)

Edwards discusses two elements that affect contemporary practice regarding the question of payment. First, the general availability of a fee-for-service model for psychological counselling conditions people’s approach to the provision of spiritual direction. Second, there is a growing number of laypersons as spiritual directors without the financial backing of a religious

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\(^{1120}\) Bakke, p. 118.
\(^{1121}\) Bakke, p. 118.
\(^{1122}\) Bakke, p. 118.
\(^{1123}\) Bakke, p. 119.
\(^{1124}\) Bakke, p. 119.
\(^{1125}\) Bakke, p. 119.
\(^{1126}\) Bakke, pp. 119 - 120.
organisation. They increasingly rely on fees to subsidise their involvement in this ministry.\textsuperscript{1127}

Stout\textsuperscript{1128} addresses the issues of how to develop a practice. She suggests an important part of building a practice is ongoing public education such as publishing articles and interviews in newspapers. There needs to be a suitable room, a place that guarantees directees’ privacy and confidentiality. Advertising and promotion are integral steps she recommends in developing a business. This includes using business cards, flyers, and advertisements in specific newspapers and magazines. Networking is an integral part of developing a long-term practice. As a director becomes more experienced, specialising in a particular area can be an advantage. As in any other business, it is important to keep good financial and professional records. Acquiring and maintaining malpractice and public risk insurances is one of Stout’s top recommendations. Depending on the legal status of the practice, income tax issues need to be covered. A careful recording of various expenses can help lessen a director’s income tax threshold.

These commentators highlight issues associated with the growing professionalisation of spiritual direction. As a profession, spiritual direction is still in the early stages of its acceptance in society.

\textit{3.13.1 Discussion}

The commentators show that the professionalisation of spiritual direction definitely influences the contemporary practice of spiritual direction. In

\textsuperscript{1127} Edwards, 2001, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{1128} Stout, pp. 29 - 39.
fact, it may direct its future development. Concerning the similarities or
differences in the developmental influences that shape beginning and
advanced spiritual directors, a number of points are worth reflecting upon.
Willis perceives the difference between a beginner and a more trained
director is whether the beginner is able to operate without immediate one-
on-one supervision. As the director becomes more experienced, supervision
occurs in a more collegial context. This distinction might well highlight the
different supervisory requirements of beginners and advanced directors.
Such a distinction is based on directors’ subjective level of self-confidence
and self-selection of one form of supervision over the other. This distinction
may be appropriate in some cases. This consideration, as an effective
indicator of an influence that distinguishes beginning directors from
advanced practitioners, is open to accusations of self-deception. Some
directors may promote themselves as more experienced yet others may
underplay their ability.

Stout offers another perspective that may help to distinguish the influences
shaping different levels of practice. As directors become more advanced,
they may be more capable and eligible to specialise. The implication is that
more-established directors may tend to be specialists whereas beginning
directors may be more generalists in their practice. Although the capacity to
specialise may pertain to advanced directors, it does not necessarily mean
directors’ fields of interest may equate with actual expertise.

Further investigating contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the
dynamic of accompaniment, the next section of this review canvasses a
variety of issues and concerns. Peg Thompson offers a practical guide in accompanying directees with gay and lesbian issues. Richard Young specifically addresses the needs of homosexuals in religious and priestly formation. Edwards discusses issues related to sexual identity. Pat Luce and Bob Schmitt address the role of accompaniment in relation to interdenominational issues. Joseph Driskill offers some insightful, general comments about spiritual guidance within the mainline Protestant context. Gary Furr addresses issues specific to the Baptist tradition. Joel Giallanza addresses the accompaniment of directees entrapped by fundamentalism, regardless of the tradition from which they derive. Jeanne Estella and Andre Heuer comment on the still fledgling area of spiritual direction using the Internet. Susan Finn is concerned with the homeless. Loretta Ross-Gotta deals with rural directees. Donald Bisson addresses the needs of men, while Jane E. Vennard discusses the accompaniment of seminarians. Barbara Erakko Taylor speaks about directing hermits.

3.14 Gay and lesbian issues

Thompson\textsuperscript{1142} presents a very practical and insightful view of the accompaniment of gay and lesbian directees. Heterosexism is an “ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatises any nonheterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community”.\textsuperscript{1143} It underpins society’s current homophobic response to homosexuals. The individual expression of cultural and internalised psychological heterosexism results in self-hate, which non-heterosexuals inflict upon themselves in a heterosexist society.\textsuperscript{1144} Thompson suggests there are many models for describing the process of ‘coming out’.

One model suggests coming out starts with an “awareness of differentness”.\textsuperscript{1145} In this stage, spiritual directors accompany homosexuals by creating a listening space in which they are free to tell the story of their lives. Receiving such stories helps address the experience of being rendered invisible by a society that only presents heterosexual marriage or celibacy as valid lifestyles for encountering the sacred.\textsuperscript{1146} During the second stage, “Identity confusion”\textsuperscript{1147}, a person “has a dawning awareness that the sense of difference in the first stage may be related to a nonheterosexual identity”.\textsuperscript{1148} During the time a person ponders their sexual orientation can be a painful period. This is especially compounded where societal stigmatisation may prolong identity confusion.\textsuperscript{1149} Accompanying people during this stage involves helping them “to sift and sort all the conflicting

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{1142} Thompson, pp. 35 - 46.
\bibitem{1143} Thompson, p. 37.
\bibitem{1144} Thompson, p. 37.
\bibitem{1145} Thompson, p. 38.
\bibitem{1146} Thompson, p. 39.
\bibitem{1147} Thompson, p. 39.
\bibitem{1148} Thompson, p. 39.
\bibitem{1149} Thompson, p. 39.
\end{thebibliography}
messages and behaviours and try to claim the deeper spiritual truth about their lives and who they were created to be”\(^\text{1150}\). The third stage of coming out is acceptance\(^\text{1151}\). Individuals more readily acknowledge their true feelings, and their behaviour indicates they are homosexual\(^\text{1152}\). Accompaniment during this stage assists directees to appreciate that self-definition comes from the truth of their interior experience rather than from the prevailing cultural determinants\(^\text{1153}\). During the next stage, “identity assumption”\(^\text{1154}\), people begin to affirm themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. This attitude is more from tolerance rather than pride or affirmation\(^\text{1155}\). Spiritual companionship for such directees involves being with them as they challenge the religious structures that kept them from wholeness. Directees may claim and develop a spirituality that does not put them in a false dilemma where they are forced to make a choice between their deepest truth and full participation in a spiritual life\(^\text{1156}\). Following this stage is affirmation and celebration;\(^\text{1157}\) being homosexual is incorporated as an open way of life. Spiritual direction at this stage “requires a director who is unambivalent about their sexual orientation as they are, one who can truly celebrate their relationships, their communities and their spiritual path”\(^\text{1158}\). In the final stage, gay and lesbian directees “move from awareness of oppression to action in the world to change it”\(^\text{1159}\). Direction involves accompanying such directees as they engage in the work of justice. Within this process of coming out, Thompson says directors can play a vital role in

\(^{1150}\) Thompson, p. 40.
\(^{1151}\) Thompson, p. 41.
\(^{1152}\) Thompson, p. 42.
\(^{1153}\) Thompson, p. 42.
\(^{1154}\) Thompson, p. 43.
\(^{1155}\) Thompson, p. 43.
\(^{1156}\) Thompson, p. 43.
\(^{1157}\) Thompson, p. 45.
\(^{1158}\) Thompson, p. 45.
\(^{1159}\) Thompson, p. 46.
assisting directees to engage the long and often painful process of discernment and self-affirmation.\textsuperscript{1160}

Young\textsuperscript{1161} focuses on issues associated with accompanying homosexuals within religious and priestly ministry. Young draws on John Bradshaw’s work\textsuperscript{1162} on the dynamics of dysfunctional families and institutions. He uses Bradshaw’s term, “toxic shame”, to define the psychological damage that arises when homosexuals consider themselves “flawed and defective in the very core of their beings”.\textsuperscript{1163} Toxic shame can lead people to behave in either or both of two ways: to act “(1) more than human, or (2) less than human”.\textsuperscript{1164} Regardless of which response, such a person considers himself or herself as not being quite human.\textsuperscript{1165} Spiritual directors find an antidote to toxic shame through Creation Spirituality in working with gay and lesbian people.\textsuperscript{1166} The four pathways of this spirituality, as detailed by Matthew Fox in \textit{Original Blessing},\textsuperscript{1167} can be helpful in accompanying homosexuals wounded by toxic shame.

In Fox’s first pathway, \textit{via positiva}, “a way or path of affirmation, thanksgiving, ecstasy”\textsuperscript{1168}, the role of the director is to help “empower their gay and lesbian directees to trust their inner authority with even greater intensity, asserting that all is gift, and no one is a mistake”.\textsuperscript{1169} The second

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1160} Thompson, p. 46.  \\
\textsuperscript{1161} Young, pp. 38 - 46.  \\
\textsuperscript{1162} J. Bradshaw, \textit{Healing the Shame that Binds You}, HarperSanFrancisco, Deerfield Beach, 1983.  \\
\textsuperscript{1163} Young, p. 39.  \\
\textsuperscript{1164} Young, p. 39.  \\
\textsuperscript{1165} Young, p. 39.  \\
\textsuperscript{1166} Young, p. 42.  \\
\textsuperscript{1167} M. Fox, \textit{Original Blessing}, Bear and Company, Sante Fe, 1983.  \\
\textsuperscript{1168} Fox, p. 33.  \\
\textsuperscript{1169} Young, p. 43.
\end{flushright}
pathway, *via negativa*, is “a theology of the cross”.1170 This is companioning directees to grieve and to accept pain as a part of a life lived fully.1171 Fox advises directors “to challenge [directees] not to seek to escape from their darkness but to enter into it and to learn its lessons”.1172 The third pathway, *via creativa*, is to be “co-creators with God”1173 where spiritual guidance involves promoting the creativity of lesbian and gay religious professionals. The fourth pathway is *via transformative*, a pathway that includes compassion, celebration, and justice making.1174 Young applies this to spiritual direction work in terms of transforming “love for the cosmos into action”.1175 Directors are encouraged to help directees celebrate the “sacrament of coming out”.1176 In companioning directees through this journey, the role of directors is to assist their directees in becoming radically obedient to their inner authority and to break free from toxic shame.1177

Young addresses contextual issues of homosexual religious professionals seeking transformation and integration of their sexual orientation through creation spirituality. He ascribes the director’s stance as one of spiritual direction. In actuality, this stance could easily be misinterpreted as pastoral counselling. This approach focuses more on achieving freedom within personal and societal spheres. It is less focused on the centrality of directly engaging the transforming experience of God within the human experience of lesbian and gay directees.

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1170 Fox, p. 131.
1171 Young, p. 43.
1172 Young, p. 44.
1173 Young, p. 44.
1174 Fox, p. 245.
1175 Young, p. 45.
1176 Young, p. 45.
1177 Young, p. 46.
Edwards\textsuperscript{1178} encourages spiritual directors to attend the issues of homosexual and bisexual directees with the same open-to-God stance they attend heterosexual directees.\textsuperscript{1179} He poses a number of helpful questions to sensitise directors to the specific spiritual dimension of sexuality. For example, he raises questions about the relationship between directors’ sexual feelings and behaviours, and their relationship to God.\textsuperscript{1180}

3.15 Interdenominational issues

Luce and Schmitt\textsuperscript{1181} examine the question, “Do I believe that someone can be on a serious spiritual journey and not be walking within my own tradition?”\textsuperscript{1182} They reflect on Carolyn Gratton’s statement, “‘Only a great religious tradition – entered deeply and freely – can provide a ‘story’ great enough to speak to that immense longing’ we have for God’”\textsuperscript{1183} and “the tradition is not the Spirit”.\textsuperscript{1184} Luce and Schmitt’s consideration of the above question arises from their attempt to achieve a balance of the two standpoints that Gratton mentions. They also hold together the dual truths that “spiritual traditions are wondrous gifts and revelations of God’s work … [and] God meets people where they are and not where we think they should be”.\textsuperscript{1185} This plurality offers “a rich tapestry of images, stories, experience, and practices to help [directees] find their own authentic expressions”.\textsuperscript{1186} An invitation to become more aware of assumptions and

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1178} Edwards, 2001, pp. 140 – 144.
\textsuperscript{1179} Edwards, 2001, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{1180} Edwards, 2001, pp. 141 – 142.
\textsuperscript{1181} Luce and Schmitt, pp. 9 - 24.
\textsuperscript{1182} Luce and Schmitt, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{1184} Gratton, p. 36 cited in Luce and Schmitt, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{1185} Luce and Schmitt, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{1186} Luce and Schmitt, p. 21.
\end{footnotes}
the implications that may impede practice is an advantage for directors.\textsuperscript{1187} There is a corresponding pitfall, for those uncommitted to a specific tradition or spiritual practice, whether director or directee. They can move on as soon as the novelty wears thin and end up treating spirituality as a smorgasbord.\textsuperscript{1188} A further pitfall is disconnection from the community. By not being connected, directors and directees are deprived of “forms of worship, support, and wisdom from others’ experiences, and learning from others’ examples [that] normally play a critical role in spiritual development”.\textsuperscript{1189}

Driskill\textsuperscript{1190} discusses the relevant interdenominational issue of spiritual guidance in a mainline Protestant context. He considers “the individual model of one-on-one spiritual direction will not, in the near future, become a major way mainline Protestants develop their spiritual lives”.\textsuperscript{1191} He notes, “in mainline Protestant traditions, spiritual direction will focus on the experience of God’s presence in daily life and in the life of the gathered church community”.\textsuperscript{1192} People will attend spiritual growth mainly through engaging the experience of God within Sunday morning worship.\textsuperscript{1193} Spiritual growth within the Protestant tradition will focus upon nurturing spiritual development in daily life through “such things as listening to music, quiet time, jogging, meeting the needs of others, reading, and in nature, to name a few”.\textsuperscript{1194} There is an increase in both clergy and laity training in spiritual direction programmes. Protestant spiritual directors

\textsuperscript{1187} Luce and Schmitt, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{1188} Luce and Schmitt, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{1189} Luce and Schmitt, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{1190} Driskill, pp. 21 - 33.
\textsuperscript{1191} Driskill, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{1192} Driskill, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{1193} Driskill, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{1194} Driskill, p. 30.
engage in various ecumenical endeavours with Catholics to promote the formation and practice of spiritual directors. Driskill writes, “while some spiritual direction will be done one-on-one, much spiritual direction in mainline Protestant churches will be done in small groups”. Driskill considers “the Bible and the theological language of the tradition will be approached by spiritual directors from both a critical and a devotional stance”. In consideration of these two approaches to accompaniment, Driskill implies that:

spiritual directors from the mainline Protestant perspectives will use the two hermeneutical moves … the hermeneutic of suspicion and the hermeneutic of retrieval – as they listen to those they direct.

Protestant spiritual direction “will include a concern for social justice within the context of a world horizon”. This emerges from an appreciation “that true faith is not world-denying, but world affirming”.

Furr considers “spiritual formation happens within the Baptist tradition, primarily through the use of scripture, the practice of pastoral leadership, and the corporate dimensions of congregational life”. Baptists see the scriptures as “the sufficient source of divine guidance”. This resource they read “with [the] heart”. This approach affirms:

the freedom of the Spirit to speak through the Bible to any individual, this has in practice left Baptists vulnerable to

1195 Driskill, p. 30.
1196 Driskill, p. 30.
1197 Driskill, p. 31.
1198 Driskill, p. 32.
1199 Driskill, p. 32.
1200 Driskill, p. 32.
1201 Furr, pp. 31 - 40.
1202 Furr, p. 32.
1203 Furr, p. 33.
1204 Furr, p. 33.
authoritarian personalities, cultural Christianity, and individualism in the use of the Bible.\textsuperscript{1205}

Bible study in small groups is a powerful antidote that offsets such individual tendency within the Baptist tradition.\textsuperscript{1206} Such groups focus upon the practical application of scripture in people’s lives. Overall, the Bible is central to Baptist spirituality.\textsuperscript{1207}

The next major influence on Baptists’ spiritual lives is the leadership of pastors within the local congregation. The pastor exercises spiritual direction principally through the sermon. The pastor can freely interpret the preaching text. Consequently, this can shape the spiritual growth of the congregation in healthy or unhealthy ways. Pastors also provide spiritual guidance to individuals. The growing institutional demands of congregational life mitigate against such individual guidance. Thus, spiritual guidance is often exercised more through small groups and similar educational efforts.\textsuperscript{1208}

The third influence on Baptists’ spiritual development is “the notion that the local congregation is the seat of authority, decision-making and nurture”.\textsuperscript{1209} The growing influence of more-developed, centralised structures (guiding local congregations) contrasts with this approach.\textsuperscript{1210} Despite such influence, the strong emphasis on local congregational leadership invites contribution of strong laypersons.\textsuperscript{1211} The ways of praying that emerge from

\textsuperscript{1205} Furr, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{1206} Furr, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{1207} Furr, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{1208} Furr, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{1209} Furr, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{1210} Furr, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{1211} Furr, p. 37.
this spiritual framework favour congregational members “feeling comfortable with talking to God in a very personal, conversational way”. The focus is more on kataphatic rather than an apophatic appreciation of spirituality. The tradition struggles to embrace a language of contemplative prayer, although the experience of contemplation may not necessarily be unfamiliar to Baptists.

Giallanza addresses the issues of companioning people recovering from fundamentalism. The context within which people make contact with fundamentalism is “a deeper personal search for structure, stability, and security”. This initial contact is reinforced by the ‘formation’ they receive as their involvement in the group progresses. This formation establishes and reinforces norms in accord with the narrow boundaries intrinsic to fundamentalism. To step outside these norms, fundamentalists risk alienation or even expulsion from the group. Fundamentalism also adversely affects self-image and relationships. Positing what leads a person to dissatisfaction and questioning, Giallanza suggests that stimulants induce questions. He offers advice to directors in attending directees during recovery. Directors are exhorted to encourage directees to seek “catechesis, diverse forms of prayer, various images of God, and the development of a sense of mission and an appropriate perspective on feelings and signs”.

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1212 Furr, p. 38.
1213 Furr, p. 38.
1214 Furr, p. 39.
1215 Giallanza, 1995, pp. 31 - 35.
1216 Giallanza, 1995, p. 32.
1217 Giallanza, 1995, p. 32.
1218 Giallanza, 1995, p. 32.
1219 Giallanza, 1995, p. 32.
1220 Giallanza, 1995, p. 35.
3.16 Internet

Estella and Heuer\textsuperscript{1221} affirm the value of face-to-face direction. They envisage the Internet is a way to broaden the practice of direction. Four issues need to be noted in such electronic companioning work:

1. The lack of physical face-to-face contact between director and directee can influence transference;\textsuperscript{1222}

2. The pace the dialogue can unfold due to possible differences in time zones and the written nature of the communication;\textsuperscript{1223}

3. The lack of personal contact and awareness of the community context within which director and directee live can weaken the direction relationship;\textsuperscript{1224}

4. The issue of language and the cultural interpretations of words, phrases, and expressions need to be revised to ensure clarity.\textsuperscript{1225}

Estella and Heuer acknowledge the value of spiritual companioning over the Internet for some directees. For others, face-to-face meeting may be preferable.\textsuperscript{1226}

3.17 Spiritual direction in marginalised situations

Finn\textsuperscript{1227} suggests spiritual direction with homeless people occurs more within casual encounters as opposed to the more formal approach within traditional settings.\textsuperscript{1228} Such brief interactions can be powerful because any

\textsuperscript{1221} Estella and Heuer, pp. 33 - 46.
\textsuperscript{1222} Estella and Heuer, pp. 42 - 44.
\textsuperscript{1223} Estella and Heuer, pp. 44 - 45.
\textsuperscript{1224} Estella and Heuer, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{1225} Estella and Heuer, pp. 45 - 46.
\textsuperscript{1226} Estella and Heuer, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{1227} Finn, pp. 30 - 34.
\textsuperscript{1228} Finn, p. 34.
encounter is a life-changing moment, a step on a journey out of despair and helplessness.  

Donald Bisson stipulates the importance in understanding:

first, the context in which spiritual direction is done; second, the unique issues faced in the direction process; and third, the radical effect on the director. … The emotional context is directly impacted by the physical.  

Life in the inner city can be violent; fear becomes ever-present. Such a state highlights “the radical absence and presence of God while working with the marginalized”. Spiritual direction empowers individuals, communities, and neighbourhoods. Faith is often strong among such people; without it, there would be little meaning left in their lives. These people are particularly vulnerable to charlatans and fundamentalists who offer quick answers to complex situations. Effective spiritual direction helps to provide a healthy framework to hold the raw stuff of life. Directors can draw on supports such as supervision, direction, and therapy as required. Such a ministry can be healing for the directors themselves. Through contact with the marginalised, directors confront whatever is unresolved and marginalised within themselves. There are several implications from this. First, the marginalised need to be able to access such a ministry. Second, it needs to be actively promoted in multicultural inner-city settings. Third, the formation of spiritual directors needs to be inclusive.

1229 Finn, p. 33.
1232 Bisson, 1995, p. 35.
1233 Bisson, 1995, p. 36.
1234 Bisson, 1995, pp. 36 - 37.
of issues associated with minority culture and socio-economic groups. Fourth, spiritual directors need to come from minority cultures to empower their own people.1238

3.18 Rural spiritual direction

Ross-Gotta1239 advocates that:

the setting and environment in which spiritual direction occurs may have significant influence on the direction session and the quality of an individual’s attentiveness to God. … The role of the environment and setting figure significantly in many stories of spiritual growth.1240

She explores how the qualities of a rural setting inform the experience of directors and directees in such settings.1241 Her hermitage in Kansas exemplifies how a rural setting informs experiences. It takes some effort to get there, up to four hours of travelling. The slow pace of rural life can be confronting to someone used to urban living.1242 The very ordinarness of the setting can “encourage a simplicity of spirit and the safety and freedom for [directees] to be honest with [themselves] and God”.1243 The director’s role is to be the directee’s host. Such hospitality allows visiting directees to be welcomed and introduced to the environment that will speak to them during their time of retreat.1244 The setting in which the spiritual guidance occurs actually becomes a strong influence in the spiritual direction. The role of the director is to foster attentiveness and to assist directees to notice and name their interior movements.1245 A rural setting may have its

1239 Ross-Gotta, pp. 34 - 41.
1240 Ross-Gotta, pp. 34 - 35.
1241 Ross-Gotta, p. 35.
1242 Ross-Gotta, p. 36.
1243 Ross-Gotta, p. 36.
limitations but it is “holy ground”. In this place, “rural spiritual direction is telling and listening to the living stories of our surrender into the Great Story of God’s redeeming love for this world”.

3.19 Men

Men often cannot deal with forgotten or repressed grief. They have to bottle up such feelings. By not addressing their underlying pain, they may turn to violence. Bisson advises that when men suffer their grief consciously, they end the cycle of rage towards themselves and others. Detoxifying shame is another issue to be addressed. This shame is influenced by patriarchy. This inturn induces a man to cover up his authentic self and fosters his belief of inadequacy. As a result, men tend to become emotionally frozen. In direction, men are invited to be present to themselves as they are before God, which is “a freeing yet terrifying invitation”. Another issue men have to face is the need to recover from trauma and abuse. Men, like women, need to negotiate such issues. In spiritual direction, as a man brings his whole history, traumatic scars may be but a memory away. Men seek spiritual direction during three specific seasons of their lives: “during the thirties transition, mid-life, and retirement”. Of particular interest is Bisson’s comment that “many men

\[\begin{align*}
1246 & \text{Ross-Gotta, p. 41.} \\
1247 & \text{Ross-Gotta, p. 41.} \\
1249 & \text{Bisson, 2000, pp. 31 - 37.} \\
1250 & \text{Bisson, 2000, p. 33.} \\
1251 & \text{Bisson, 2000, pp. 33 - 34.} \\
1252 & \text{Bisson, 2000, p. 34.} \\
1253 & \text{Bisson, 2000, p. 34.} \\
1254 & \text{Bisson, 2000, p. 34.} \\
1255 & \text{Bisson, 2000, p. 34.}
\end{align*}\]
relate to God as they related to their father.” In spiritual direction, men are encouraged to reflect on what such an image may be and, if necessary, to let it go and explore a more positive perception. Another issue for men is their difficulty acquiring a sense of interiority. They often avoid such inner journeying because it can be quite confronting to negotiate such a pathway. Dealing with relational issues is another concern. Men can be over dependent on their spouses for their emotional and spiritual development. When such relationships end, pain can lead men to relate to life in a completely new way. A skilful director can assist men to listen to their deepest desires, and not just be satisfied with resolving the pain. A final observation is men’s ambivalence towards organised religion. Women have suffered more at the hands of institutionalised religion, yet they are more faithful than men in their participation in most ecclesial communities. As men desire clarity, they are more prone to the influence of fundamentalism. This can lead them to surrender too much of themselves to a church governed by authoritarianism.

3.20 Specialised groups

Vennard’s research specialised in the accompaniment of seminarians. She interviewed twelve seminary students ranging in age from their late 20s to early 50s. These seminarians were seeking what most other directees were seeking, namely: “presence, compassion, acceptance, [and]
What was different was their context. The seminarians were “on a path not only for their own spiritual formation but for the spiritual formation of others through their ministry”.\textsuperscript{1264}

Taylor\textsuperscript{1265} discusses the accompaniment of people who live a hermitical life. One particular difficulty is that of finding directors who have experienced solitary living or are at least open to the experience.\textsuperscript{1266} As a person living a hermitical life becomes more at ease with a silent relationship with God, the need for a director lessens.

\textit{3.20.1 Discussion}

These directors’ familiarity with special interest groups and issues is beneficial. The commentators do not address how this leads to further understanding of the possible differentiation between the developmental influences that could shape beginning and advanced directors. Consequently, only inferences concerning beginning and advanced directors can be made about their capacity to address the issues associated with sexual orientation and interdenominational accompanying.

An inexperienced director may be less able to hold the experience of directees exploring issues related to sexuality. Often it can be quite confronting for new directors. This is especially true if directors are not comfortable with their own sexuality, and may be associated with a religious tradition steeped in homophobia. Even advanced directors may be

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\item \textsuperscript{1263} Vennard, 2003, p. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{1264} Vennard, 2003, p. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{1265} Taylor, pp. 15 - 19.
\item \textsuperscript{1266} Taylor, p. 19.
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\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushright}
blind to their homophobic responses. Hopefully, as directors become more skilled, their experience will influence them to accompany directees whose issues are similar to their own. More importantly, they must be able to be present to issues with which they are not personally familiar. If not, whether as beginning or more advanced directors, they need to address such issues in supervision.

Beginning directors may be less likely to distinguish between their own and directees’ spirituality from the religious traditions, beliefs and practices of which they have experience. In reference to this, more advanced directors could have a broader grasp of different religious paradigms that inform the directees who come to them from different traditions. The supposition is that beginning directors may tend to be more comfortable operating within the parameters of their own tradition and therefore be less comfortable accompanying people from different religious backgrounds.

3.2.1 Beginning directors

Reviewing further contextual awareness of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment, the literature on beginning directors is examined and appears to be almost nonexistent. Patricia Galli\textsuperscript{1267} notes some of the initial developmental signs. Keith Stormes\textsuperscript{1268} characterises his experience as a beginning director. Joann Wolski Conn\textsuperscript{1269} comments on her

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1267} P. Galli, ‘The Emergence of a Director’, }Presence\textsuperscript{, vol. 6, no. 3, 2000, pp. 15 - 18.\\
\textsuperscript{1268} K. Stormes, ‘Fate Takes the Faithful Out to Lunch’, }Presence\textsuperscript{, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002, pp. 35 - 39.\\
\textsuperscript{1269} Wolski Conn, 1999, pp. 86 - 97.}
\end{footnotesize}
discernable signs for beginners. Janet Ruffing articulates her insights into the reasons beginning directors miss transferential phenomena.\footnote{Ruffing, 2000, p. 162.}

Galli\footnote{Galli, pp. 15 - 18.} articulates the different developmental moments in a novice spiritual director’s practice. The initial movement she discerns is the call to be a spiritual director. This call can arise while in a training programme, or in being sought by others to discuss spiritual matters.\footnote{Galli, p. 15.} From this initial call, other significant developmental capacities emerge. The first is “the development of the ability to listen or contemplative listening”.\footnote{Galli, p. 15.} Besides the normal listening skills of attending directees’ experiences, the skill of hospitality is integral in this approach. This hospitality creates a “listening space that affirms that this time belongs to directees to use as they see fit”.\footnote{Galli, p. 16.} Beginning directors learn to transfer their stance from contemplative prayer to contemplative listening. In so doing, their contemplative listening becomes focused on their directees’ human experiences.\footnote{Galli, p. 16.} The next stage is discernment, the development of a heightened sensitivity to signs of the movement of God in the director and directee.\footnote{Galli, p. 17.} Such discernment includes noticing when directees move quickly between subjects. It also involves noticing inconsistencies and alertness to directees spiritualising particularly difficult experiences. Beginning directors’ awareness of their feelings of boredom can serve as an alert to what may be happening within the direction process.\footnote{Galli, p. 17.} Directors who attend to their own interior movements are not self-absorbed – rather are present to the interior
movements of the Spirit within directees.\textsuperscript{1278} This stance of discernment has two elements: “The first is discerning what is happening in the director and is accessed by the director noticing his own movements during the session.”\textsuperscript{1279} The second involves a director being grounded in both theological and personal experience of the movements of God.\textsuperscript{1280} One such framework is the rules of discernment developed by Ignatius of Loyola.\textsuperscript{1281} The next developmental element in directors is their ability to attend to the interactive movement of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{1282} This element involves co-attending the movement of the Spirit that is activating the interior life of the directee. Such co-attending can involve helping the directee to focus on the essential affective components of his or her story and helping to make it visible for the directee. The effectiveness of such elements is, at times, simultaneously evident in the director and directee; they both become aware of the inflowing of God’s grace within the directee’s life.\textsuperscript{1283}

Stormes\textsuperscript{1284} reflects upon a personal perspective about the influences that shaped his early practice as a spiritual director. He mentions a growing sense of call to be a spiritual director. This emerged after being in spiritual direction for many years and then from hearing a talk about spiritual direction. He confirmed this sense of call by exploring close friends and relatives’ responses to his interest in becoming a director.\textsuperscript{1285} Following an introductory interview with Father Keegan at the Office of Ministry and Spirituality, he entered a two-year Spiritual Direction Practicum. A key

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Galli, p. 17.
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\item Galli, p. 18.
\item Galli, p. 18.
\item Stormes, pp. 35 - 39.
\item Stormes, pp. 35 - 36.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
element of the training programme that influenced his early practice as a
director was the value of being a skilled listener. This was a shift from what
he termed “fix-it advice”. Learning to ask concrete questions was
another factor that shaped his initial practice. Such a practice tended “to
keep directees in [their] experience and lessen the potential for them to be
distracted by their analysing”. Stormes acknowledges the need to
distinguish between assumptions that may be perceived as ‘truths’. These
‘truths’ will remain unless presented to a directee for confirmation of
accuracy. Another initial influence in his early practice was the growing
realisation that spiritual direction is not about “assembling the God-facts
and constructing an on-ramp path, but, more for validating the directees’
experiences regardless of where God is for them”. The fourth initial
influence is the importance of “Being Grounded” during a spiritual direction
session. This stance simply allows directees to “be their imperfect selves
and not who they think they should be”.

Conn suggests four criteria that help identify potential beginning
spiritual directors:

1. The person demonstrates both a desire and a capacity to develop his
or her spirituality;

2. The candidate already has some experience of being in spiritual
direction;

1286 Stormes, p. 38.
1287 Stormes, p. 39.
1288 Stormes, p. 39.
1289 Stormes, p. 39.
1290 Stormes, p. 39.
3. There are clear indications that people have already sought out such a person to explore their spiritual journey; and

4. Such people are aware of both their gifts in this area and the areas that require development.\textsuperscript{1292}

These four criteria are Wolski Conn’s discernable signs to help identify people’s capacity to become beginning spiritual directors.

Ruffing discusses the issues of transference and countertransference as relevant to beginning spiritual directors. Their inexperience can easily overlook transferential reactions for three reasons. They can approach spiritual direction from the perspective of a spiritual friendship model. They may be inadequately aware of the power differential in the relationship with their directees. They may be deficient in readily recognising and handling transference and countertransference when it emerges.\textsuperscript{1293}

\textit{3.21.1 Discussion}

The above commentators draw attention to the influences that shape the practice of beginning directors. They do not, however, proceed to the next level of enquiry into more advanced directors. Although Ruffing asserts that beginning and advanced directors responded positively to her book, \textit{Spiritual direction: Beyond the Beginnings}\textsuperscript{1294}, she does not explicitly define the similar and different developmental influences that shape them. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw viable inferences from the contributions of the above authors. Among the commentators canvassed, Galli’s work was beneficial regarding the development of beginning directors. Her

\textsuperscript{1292} Wolski Conn, 1999, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{1293} Ruffing, 2000, p. 162
\textsuperscript{1294} Ruffing, 2000, p. 4.
contribution is her ability to note an important step in their development. This defining step is beginning directors’ ability to be sensitive to the interior movements of God in themselves and their directees. Directors need to be grounded in frameworks that articulate the theological and personal experience of the movement of God within directees. This is a significant insight into the formation of beginning directors. While dual appreciation is given to sensitivity to interior movements and the necessary grounding in meaningful constructs, such consideration falls short in prioritising the contribution of each factor. Should they be valued evenly or is one of these elements more or less prominent in the development of directors in the early stages of their formation?

While Galli does not comment on how such issues are relevant to more advanced directors, it is an avenue worthy of speculation. If these issues are relevant to advanced directors, do they hold the similar priorities as beginning directors? While such inference may be insightful, it would be unwise to broaden this speculation as currently the evidence to confirm it is nonexistent.

4. Conclusion and recommendation for further research

This review illustrates a body of evidence reflecting the varied developmental influences that generally shape spiritual directors. It highlights their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees and to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. The existent contemporary literature offers little support in addressing the issue of the similarities and differences in the
developmental influences shaping beginning and advanced directors. This deficiency warrants further exploration and is the basis of the following enquiry.
Chapter 3

Methodology

1. Introduction

The previous chapter reports on two developmental influences that shape the practice of contemporary spiritual directors. It highlights the concern that the current literature is deficient in addressing the similarities and differences in how these two developmental influences shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. To investigate this, this study adopts the methodology of social research.

This chapter first discusses the issues that underpin social research relevant to this project. It compares quantitative and qualitative approaches to research and chooses the latter. It examines the qualitative alternatives, opting for the ethnographic approach. Then it explores the related issues of reliability and validity.

Subsequently, the enquiry focuses on the type and number of respondents in this study. This enquiry examines the data collected from a small sample of twenty-one spiritual directors rather than undertaking a saturation survey. It argues for non-probability sampling over probability sampling. In reviewing the four possible applications of non-probability sampling, the purposive sampling method is preferred.
The next step is to address how data was collected from this small sample. This study adopts the usage of focus groups over a combination of other methods. The semi-structured approach is chosen over structured and unstructured questioning formats. This technique is used to achieve the objective of the goal-directed discussion of such groups. From the information collected about the developmental influences shaping directors’ practices, this study examines ways to analyse and interpret this data. This chapter concludes by presenting a corresponding design method and the details of its implementation.

2. Quantitative versus qualitative approach to social research

The relevant advantages and disadvantages of the quantitative and qualitative social research methods need to be investigated in order to discern which suits this study better. Positivist or neopositivist philosophy is the basis of quantitative methodology.\(^{1295}\) It employs quantitative measurement and involves statistical analysis.\(^ {1296}\) Qualitative research, although based on a variety of theoretical principles, for example phenomenology, hermeneutics, and social interactionism, approaches data collection and analysis non-quantitatively. It endeavours to describe reality according to how respondents experience it.\(^{1297}\)

Sotiris Sarantakos’s\(^ {1298}\) critical analysis of these methodologies suggests quantitative methodology has an advantage in being clear and objective. It provides a disciplined and systematic approach that is not confined by

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1296 Sarantakos, p. 6.
1297 Sarantakos, p. 6.
1298 Sarantakos, pp. 42 - 45.
vague and loose speculative thoughts about reality. It guards against the confusing influences of everyday assumptions. Such an approach would help clarify the influences shaping directors at various stages of their practice. It would do so unambiguously and objectively, and could give verifiable results. It would help guard against giving unwarranted authority to conjecture or spurious factors.

Sarantakos has a general understanding of the disadvantages of quantitative methodology. Such a methodology would be disadvantageous to this study. The complexity of the social phenomena of the influences shaping the practice of contemporary spiritual directors would be overlooked. This social phenomena does not exist in a state of objectivity, but within the subjectivity of a whole group of spiritual directors. Quantitative methodology relies only on what is perceived by the senses, and tools that can only extract quantifiable data to test hypotheses. It would restrict, therefore, the valid parameters of effective research into what may be strictly subjective influences shaping directors’ practices. The advantage of such a quantitative undertaking is that it may gather beneficial statistical data for example, demographic and other related socio-economic factors concerning directors. The disadvantage may be imbedded, for example, totally overlooking significant intangible intrapsychic influences.

The lack of subtlety is another difficulty within Sarantakos’s general critique of the quantitative approach. Its basic assumption is that what

1299 Sarantakos, p. 42.
1300 Sarantakos, p. 43.
1301 Sarantakos, p. 43.
appears as an influence is the essence of reality.\(^{1302}\) For example, a hypothetical quantitative study of female spiritual directors may suggest they tend to work more in private practice than institutional settings. This could falsely suggest that women prefer private practice. In reality, the presence of patriarchal bias within certain ecclesial structures may restrict the degree to which women are included in such organisations. Women’s choice, therefore, to work privately or within an organisational setting may be restricted by patriarchy. What appears as women’s preference may not reflect the essence of what may truly shape women’s choices about the context within which they may seek to practice as directors.

A further disadvantage is the way quantitative research approaches reality as social events that can be measured and quantified. It is biased in its perception that the influences on directors’ practices are measurable and quantifiable.\(^{1303}\) For example, a hypothetical quantitative study that examined the influence of directors’ schedule of fees upon their practice may notice a correlation between the variations in fees charged and the demographics of the population served. Such a study may not take into account how issues of social justice may have influenced particular directors’ decisions about their schedule of fees or the locations in which they work.

Another limitation is that quantitative methodology approaches reality as if it pertains to the rules of natural phenomena. By inference, such an approach may not be applied effectively to spiritual directors since there is

\(^{1302}\) Sarantakos, p. 43.
\(^{1303}\) Sarantakos, p. 43.
less regularity regarding their spontaneous desires, perceptions, and interests. The intention of this study is to understand the influences upon directors’ practices, so applying a quantitative approach limited to measuring what are quantifiable influences that shape directors’ practices, may restrict, if not alter the research’s objective.1304

Sarantakos’s general critique notes another limitation of a quantitative approach. It presupposes the existence of hypotheses and research design before any enquiry can commence. It can potentially restrict the options available for the research process and, at worst, produce artificial data that distorts the enquiry.1305 In relation to this study, such an approach may pinpoint developmental influences upon directors that in reality may be very limited in their scope. For example, a hypothetical study testing the hypothesis that there is a relationship between directors’ age and the length of time they have practiced may highlight some interesting statistical data. Such data, however, may have little bearing on truly assessing the main developmental influences shaping directors’ practice.

Bruce Chadwick, Howard Bahr, and Stan Albrecht provide general insights into adopting a qualitative approach. One notable advantage of this method is that spiritual directors are more effectively examined within their natural settings.1306 It offers a means to deepen insight into understanding the influences shaping directors’ practices by principally soliciting directors’ subjective interpretation of their experience as practitioners. Its inbuilt

1304 Sarantakos, p. 44.
1305 Sarantakos, p. 45.
flexibility allows the research to be less rigid in its interpretation of the influences shaping practice. Thus, it can be more sensitive to the breadth of influences shaping directors’ experience. Another advantage is its ability to embrace the necessary complexities associated with understanding the diverse factors shaping directors’ practices. It does not predetermine what multiple developmental influences there may be or what interplay may exist among them. This is in contrast to a quantitative approach where the key factors of analysis are predetermined by the hypothesis and research design.1307

A disadvantage of using such a qualitative approach is that the implicit subjectivity of the methodology could affect the reliability of the research’s outcome into directors’ practice. For example, unbeknown to the researcher, the authenticity of some directors’ responses may be questionable if respondents censor their experience. While the researcher may seek data from directors, the researcher’s non-verbal cues may manipulate respondents’ freedom to share their experience. To safeguard against such eventualities, for clarification and authentication, the researcher may repeat back to respondents what he or she heard them say. Although such a technique can be used for verification, it does not guarantee it. Working from carefully prepared questions can safeguard the researcher from potential bias during the interviews. During the interview, he or she can consciously endeavour not to solicit a particular point of view from directors by giving them emotionally loaded non-verbal cues.

1307 Chadwick et al, pp. 214 - 15
This methodology may risk collecting information about spiritual directors that is irrelevant to the focus of the research. This risk can be limited by ensuring that the interview questions align with the objectives of the enquiry. If the researcher observes the respondents straying into extraneous areas, he or she needs to marshal carefully the conversation back to the topic under discussion. This needs to be done without detracting from the spontaneity and synergy of the group’s discussion.

The reliability of the findings about directors could also be prone to over-generalisations.\textsuperscript{1308} This can be guarded against by ensuring that due caution prevails while interpreting the data and by ascribing qualifications to such findings as may be necessary.

While the qualitative or the quantitative method could contribute to this study, the qualitative approach is more effective because the developmental influences that shape spiritual directors are substantially subjective in nature. Qualitative methodology accesses more effectively how directors experience and report the influences shaping their practices. Quantifying the vagaries that fashion directors’ practices could well test the limits of the legitimate tools of quantitative methodology. Such a method is not equipped to ascertain the distinctive subjective elements of directors’ practices. Qualitative research is more effective in achieving the goal of undertaking an initial foray into broadly interpreting and understanding the developmental influences shaping the practice of spiritual directors.

\textsuperscript{1308} Chadwick et al, pp. 214 - 15
Quantitative methodology, at best, is limited to examining what is externally measurable.

3. Types of qualitative research

The next step is to determine which qualitative method most effectively achieves the specific purposes of this enquiry. Sarantakos describes three methodologies:

1. Subject-directed methodologies that focus on collecting, analysing, and interpreting data that is significant to the goal of the enquiry;

2. Development-orientated methodologies that emphasise the occurrence of change and development within individuals and groups instead of focusing upon individuals as subjects and objects; and

3. Object-directed methodologies that emphasise exploration and reconnaissance of the object under question rather than interpretation. Within this are three main approaches: psychoanalysis based on Freud’s theory; symbolic interactionism of the Chicago School that uses observation, questioning and document analysis; and ethnology, which entails gathering information while being part of the group under consideration, by conversing and communicating with the group.\textsuperscript{1309}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{1309} Sarantakos, pp. 56 - 57.}
4. Ethnographic approach

The ethnographic approach, as appreciated by Robert Burns\textsuperscript{1310}, appears most valuable for the purposes of this enquiry since his approach endeavours to uncover the social, cultural, and normative patterns of the particular group being studied and in this study, it is spiritual directors as a group\textsuperscript{1311}. His method promotes an understanding of the contextual factors that influence human behaviour\textsuperscript{1312}. It can be inferred that his ethnographic method can be applied effectively to study the human behaviour of spiritual directors. The process of applying the ethnographic method can reveal a dynamic picture of the group’s life\textsuperscript{1313}. This ethnographic approach provides an adequate means with which to canvass the similarities and differences in the developmental influences that shape beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The researcher becomes a participative observer of the group of spiritual directors under investigation\textsuperscript{1314}. It includes “triangulation, interviewing and qualitative analysis – essentially, interpretation – in order to arrive at an understanding of the observed patterns of behaviour engaged in by those [spiritual directors] being studied”\textsuperscript{1315}. These three issues will be discussed later in more detail.

Burns addresses the issue of reliability in the ethnographic approach, and it can apply to this enquiry in two ways:

1. This study must be reproducible, and through applying similar categories and procedures, two or more people will draw the

\textsuperscript{1310} Burns, 2000.
\textsuperscript{1311} Burns, p. 395.
\textsuperscript{1312} Burns, p. 394.
\textsuperscript{1313} Burns, p. 394.
\textsuperscript{1314} Burns, p. 395.
\textsuperscript{1315} Burns, p. 395.
same conclusions about the developmental influences shaping the practice of directors; and

2. Replicating the findings of the research would be very difficult. The stream of information held within the social role of any group of spiritual directors studied, together with the knowledge estimated to be apposite for the role, would most likely be different.\textsuperscript{1316}

According to Burns, the reliability of a project improves if the physical, social, and interpersonal contexts within which the data is collected are delineated.\textsuperscript{1317} It can be inferred that this study’s reliability will be enhanced if similar action is adopted. Reliability is strengthened by:

1. the research’s purpose being outlined;
2. its principle question being addressed;
3. stating the research’s assumptions and biases to explain its approach; and
4. explaining the data-gathering procedures.\textsuperscript{1318}

By stating and qualifying prudently the parameters of the project, any factors that may potentially diminish reliability can be excluded or at least compensated for to some degree. The introduction to this study addresses these issues.

Burns states validity is demonstrated if the propositions generated match the causal conditions present within what can be ascribed to general human

\textsuperscript{1316} Burns, p. 417.
\textsuperscript{1317} Burns, p. 418.
\textsuperscript{1318} Burns, p. 418.
experience. This validity is likely to be demonstrated if propositions are generated concerning the issues of this study. Burns suggests that the internal validity of the research design needs to be determined clearly to ensure the observations made are accurate. To achieve this internal validity in this study, a similar approach needs to be adopted. Four elements are required to ensure internal validity:

1. Sufficient data must be collected over a reasonable period of time to ensure the participants’ reality matches the scientific categories constructed to analyse the data;

2. “informant interviews … necessarily must be phased close to the empirical categories or participants, and are less abstract than many instruments used in other research designs”;;

3. The participative observation of the research needs to be situated in natural settings that match participants’ experience as opposed to more contrived settings;

4. The research must reflect a disciplined subjectivity that exposes the different stages of the research to continuous monitoring.

Incorporating these four elements ensures internal validity.

Burns states that triangulating the methods of data collection improves internal validity. Such triangulation involves checking the consistency of the responses from a number of different groups of spiritual directors. The

\[1319\] Burns, p. 418.
\[1320\] Burns, p. 418.
\[1321\] Burns, p. 418.
\[1322\] Burns, p. 418.
\[1323\] Burns, p. 418.
\[1324\] Burns, p. 418.
\[1325\] Burns, p. 419.
project will interview three groups of spiritual directors from the same geographical area.

Burns suggests that external validity is ensured if a reasonable basis in reality is achieved through cross comparison between different groups.\textsuperscript{1326} For the purpose of this study, the descriptions used to identify the similar or different influences shaping initial and ongoing practice need to be reasonably matched through cross comparison with other groups of spiritual directors. The frameworks to interpret the qualitative data need to have at least some currency in the field of spiritual direction. Validity is discussed later in this chapter in reference to Mostyn’s interpretative framework.\textsuperscript{1327}

5. Sampling

The study engages in an ethnographic study of spiritual directors. Another issue of concern is the type and number of respondents required. As a worldwide saturation survey of spiritual directors is impractical, a representative sample is the most feasible option. The number of spiritual directors worldwide is quite large and difficult to determine accurately. One indicator of the figure is the listing of 3,756 members of Spiritual Directors International in their 2002 – 2004 membership directory.\textsuperscript{1328} A study based on a smaller sample of directors requires less time and produces quicker results. The amount of labour and the associated costs required affirm the

\begin{flushright}
1326 Burns, p. 420.
\end{flushright}
need for a smaller survey population. Highly accurate information is more obtainable through engaging relatively smaller numbers of directors. 

In contrast, Sarantakos suggests smaller sampling consumes more time and energy and is not as valid as a larger saturation survey. The volume of work involved in contacting the above-mentioned members of Spiritual Directors International would be exhaustive and well beyond the financial restraints of the researcher. The results of a sample study of directors may not be as valid as a larger survey. The content of a larger survey, however, would not be as detailed or in-depth as a smaller, more concentrated study.

In developing a research design, the two basic types of sampling are available: probability and non-probability. Probability sampling uses strict rules of probability in the selection process. This ensures “every unit of the population has an equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being selected for the sample”. This offers a high degree of representation and selection accuracy. Its limitation is the considerable cost, time and complexity associated with its application. Non-probability sampling is less strict and cannot claim the representativeness of probability-sampling. The researcher determines the constituency of the samples. Non-probability sampling is more suitable in exploratory research like this project is.

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1329 Sarantakos, pp. 139 - 140.
1330 Sarantakos, p. 140.
1331 Sarantakos, p. 140.
1332 Sarantakos, p. 141.
1333 Sarantakos, p. 141.
1334 Sarantakos, p. 141.
1335 Sarantakos, p. 141.
There are four basic sampling techniques in non-probability sampling: accidental sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling, and purposive sampling.\textsuperscript{1336} Accidental sampling includes all respondents who accidentally meet a researcher during a certain period. While this may be suitable for certain studies, for example sampling shoppers at a supermarket, it has little chance of collecting a good sample of spiritual directors.\textsuperscript{1337} Quota sampling relies on dividing a population into strata, and choosing a number of respondents randomly, according to quotas set by the researcher. A researcher using quota sampling may attempt to choose respondents according to the proportion in the entire population. This would be ineffective as the number of spiritual directors in the general population is so small.\textsuperscript{1338} Snowball sampling begins with the researcher selecting the few respondents available and following up others referred by these initial respondents. This method concludes when the researcher considers sufficient data has been collected, through exhausting the known information or the potential sample of respondents. This approach is limited due to its time consumption. Other available methods are more efficient in collecting data from spiritual directors.\textsuperscript{1339} In purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately chooses subjects whose appreciation of the topic is relevant to this study. The investigator’s judgement thus has more bearing than obtaining a probability sample. It involves choosing informants and arranging meetings with them. This sampling method is better suited for

\textsuperscript{1336} Sarantakos, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{1337} Sarantakos, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{1338} Sarantakos, pp. 152 - 153.
\textsuperscript{1339} Sarantakos, p. 153.
selecting and arranging interviews with spiritual directors since they are a small, select group.\textsuperscript{1340}

6. Data collection

An ethnographic methodology and a purposive means of sampling spiritual directors have been selected for this enquiry. The next step is to collect the required qualitative data about the diverse developmental influences shaping directors. Many factors influence the method of data collection used. The type of research methodology adopted is most influential. This being a qualitative enquiry, a less obtrusive method is preferred over one that would entail more direct participation through for example, the researcher sitting in as an observer in some of the spiritual direction sessions of the directors who volunteer to be part of the study.\textsuperscript{1341} A quantitative approach may require a series of long-term field studies and controlled experiments that could be invasive of directors’ personal lives and could intrude into the confidentiality of the director-directee relationship. A qualitative study can be more sensitive to the privacy issues associated with spiritual direction. It is also more open to receive directors’ distilled perceptions of the developmental influences that shape them due to open-ended questions.

Each social research project usually uses one basic methodology and one basic method. It is often common practice among researchers to incorporate different methods of data collection. This process is known as

\textsuperscript{1340} Sarantakos, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{1341} Sarantakos, p. 165.
triangulation.\textsuperscript{1342} There are two types of triangulation available. Inter-method triangulation incorporates “two or more methods of different methodological origin and nature”\textsuperscript{1343}, and intra-method triangulation employs “two or more techniques of the same method”.\textsuperscript{1344} Some researchers believe such methods help obtain a variety of information on the same issues. They advocate that the strengths of one method may help to overcome the deficiencies of another.\textsuperscript{1345} Other commentators, however, suggest the opposite. While the diverse methodologies used may support each other’s findings, this does not necessarily guarantee that the findings are more valid.\textsuperscript{1346}

This study respects the relative advantages and disadvantages of each method. The researcher, however, will use one method to collect data about the influences shaping spiritual directors. The project will apply one method to a sufficient variety of groupings of spiritual directors to ensure that the data collected contains less hidden bias. As spiritual directors often affiliate with a particular religious denomination, sampling spiritual directors who self-select according to their denominational affiliation may improve the validity and reliability of the qualitative data. This is particularly so if the emergent trends from each denominational grouping are similar. Sampling groups who self-select according to their denominational affiliation, however, may introduce hidden bias into the process of collecting data due to the specific influence of each denomination’s paradigmatic emphases. Encouraging directors to describe their human experience of the

\textsuperscript{1342} Sarantakos, p. 168.  
\textsuperscript{1343} Sarantakos, p. 168.  
\textsuperscript{1344} Sarantakos, p. 168.  
\textsuperscript{1345} Sarantakos, p. 169.  
\textsuperscript{1346} Sarantakos, p. 169.
developmental influences that shape them, rather than asking them to interpret it theologically, may counter potential bias. Nevertheless, some partiality may prevail since directors will rely, to some extent, on the theological framework of their respective denomination to describe their experience. The potential influence of directors’ denominational affiliation upon directors is noted but this factor is not the subject of this enquiry.

The next step is to examine the various means of data collection and to select the most relevant one for this ethnographic study. Of the methods available, this study limits its consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of focus groups and one-to-one interviews. Focus groups gather data more efficiently and economically than individual interviews. They limit generalisation to a larger population more than do extensive individual interviews. The synergistic effect of the focus-group process may generate data that individual interviews might not reveal. The assertions of dominant or reserved group members, however, may influence the opinions and the degree to which fellow group members may contribute. To safeguard against either extreme, the group facilitator needs to request dominant members to allow others to contribute, and to encourage participation from reticent members. The open response format of focus groups offers the chance to obtain extensive data from spiritual directors. Such data is more difficult to summarise and interpret than the more structured response format that individual interviews of directors may provide. The advantage of highly structured individual interviews about

1347 Sarantakos, p. 198.
1349 Stewart and Shamdasani, pp. 16 - 17.
directors’ practices is that such interviews are less likely to collect extraneous data. The gathering of what may seemingly be unrelated data from focus groups, however, may be pertinent to the research.\textsuperscript{1350}

This study notes the relevant advantages and disadvantages of focus groups and individual interviews. Due to these factors, focus groups are selected as a research tool for data collection. Such a choice promotes the gathering of data more efficiently and economically. The synergy of the group process offers the possibility of more extensive data about the diverse developmental influences that shape the practice of spiritual directors.

Some researchers suggest an ideal focus group size is six to eight members for non-commercial topics.\textsuperscript{1351} They recommend multiple groups for the validation of data in some instances.\textsuperscript{1352} Successful focus groups, however, can have as few as four members.\textsuperscript{1353} Researchers note such mini-focus groups are becoming more popular and are useful in eliciting more in-depth information and gaining specific insight into specialist topics.\textsuperscript{1354} Authors suggest that a researcher’s purpose determines the number of focus groups conducted. A single focus group may be sufficient for a valid case study.\textsuperscript{1355} In examining the specialised topic, the above-mentioned considerations call for a number of focus groups. These groups are selected according to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1350} Stewart and Shamdasani, pp. 16 - 17.
\item \textsuperscript{1351} A. Krueger, and M. Casey, \textit{Focus Groups}, Sage, Thousand Oaks, 2000, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{1353} R. Shaw Morrison, ‘Using Focus Group Methodology in Nursing’, \textit{The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing}, Thorofare, March/April, 1999, pp. 62 ff.
\item \textsuperscript{1354} Krueger and Casey, pp. 73 - 74.
\item \textsuperscript{1355} P. J., O’Connor, ‘The Needs of Adult University Students: A Case Study.’ \textit{College and University}, 1994, vol. 69, no. 2, pp. 84 - 86.
\end{itemize}
denominational affiliation with at least four to eight spiritual directors in each group to ensure valid data.

A further consideration is whether the goal-directed discussion of the focus groups is structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (open-ended). An open-ended approach may promote access to the influences shaping directors’ practices. It may stray, however, from reporting in an even-handed fashion the similar or different influences shaping initial and ongoing practice. A structured format will ensure directors receive the same questions and thus ensure objective comparability between their responses. It may limit, however, the fullest exposure of the breadth and depth of their feedback. The semi-structured interviewing technique combines the strengths, and attempts to avoid the limitations, of structured and unstructured methods. It offers greater flexibility in the scope of possible interview questions. It also allows respondents to respond more validly from their perception of the reality of the influences shaping their practices. Considering these factors, this study opts for semi-structuring to ensure that each focus-group interview holds pertinent questions to elicit sufficient data regarding the developmental influences that shape their practices. In making their data available, directors are allowed adequate flexibility to contribute their experience fully. Detailed implementation of these considerations is in the following section on research design and implementation.

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1356 Sarantakos, p. 183.
1357 Burns, p. 424.
1358 Burns, p. 424.
1359 Burns, p. 424.
7. Data analysis and interpretation

The next step is to interpret the existent data and develop relevant theories and concepts from this information for future evaluation and interpretation. Sarantakos’s five, post–data collection recommendations are applicable in analysing the collated data:

1. Transcribe the data and edit the text to remove typographical errors;
2. Check and edit the transcripts by arranging the data into relevant parts;
3. Analyse and interpret the data by developing categories through coding and data reduction to identify relevant trends. Sarantakos recommends Miles and Huberman’s method of pattern coding. This reduces already summarised information into more concise analytic units. It develops a cognitive map that schematises the research, and assists with comparing and contrasting the various data units;
4. Develop typologies by generalising the findings through identifying the differences and similarities within the interview data;
5. Verify or modify the hypotheses to check their validity, by the researcher alone or with other researchers examining the transcript and checking the validity of the interpretations.

A key element is to adopt a pattern of coding that gathers the diverse data about the developmental influences that shape directors into concise analytic units for later generalising and categorising. The use of semi-

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1360 Sarantakos, p. 313.
1361 Sarantakos, p. 321.
1363 Miles and Huberman p. 69 in Sarantakos, p. 319.
structured questions will necessarily bring forth data around the various influences shaping practice. A patterning code that encompasses all material gathered under such a broad heading needs to be developed or drawn from an existing paradigm, particularly one that relates to the practice of spiritual direction.

The collated data needs to be interpreted and relevant conclusions drawn to resolve the research question. To achieve this objective, the most effective method needs to be selected. The research of the similarities and differences in the developmental influences that shape beginning and advanced spiritual directors strongly dictates which interpretative avenue to employ. Sarantakos’s method of comparisons is the most effective one from the various interpretative frameworks available. This approach establishes the existence of similarities and differences between sets of data, with particular reference to the relevant elements of this research project. In this case, the focus being the developmental influences shaping beginning and advanced spiritual directors.1364

8. Research design and implementation

8.1 Method

The following research design was devised and implemented for this investigation of the developmental influences that shape beginning and advanced spiritual directors. A qualitative, ethnographic approach was adopted. A qualitative approach better suited the subjective nature of the

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1364 Sarantakos, p. 324.
enquiry’s intention to understand developmental influences. A quantitative study would only attempt to measure such influences externally.

8.2 Reliability and validity

The research design endeavoured to incorporate the requisite physical, social, and interpersonal contexts of the spiritual directors studied. It examined similarities and differences based on at least some level of cultural and religious homogeneity. In doing so, it appreciated that any similarities may contain some known and unknown differences or inconsistencies. Seeking consistency in directors’ overall responses assisted internal validity and cross comparison of various groups of directors’ responses contributed to external validity.

8.3 Sampling

The study considers the aspect of sampling in the design process. It notes the relative contributions of saturation surveys and smaller sampling. The efficacy and economics of the latter outweighed the value of the former. Smaller sampling offered an opportunity for more in-depth study. Non-probability was selected over probability sampling due to the exploratory nature of this study. Purposive, non-probability sampling of directors suggested itself as being more appropriate since directors are a very small percentage of the general population. For the purpose of convenience, the respondents were chosen from Perth, Western Australia, the same geographical area in which the researcher resides. In undertaking non-probability sampling, more specifically purposive sampling, this study selected respondents from three existing groups of spiritual directors. Group
membership derived from one of three denominational sources: Anglican, Churches of Christ, and Roman Catholic.

This form of sampling fosters the formation of reliability and validity. This study notes the potential differences between the groups and the individual idiosyncrasies of the directors that could negatively influence reliability. Their cultural and broad Christian religious homogeneity, however, helps to promote the establishment of reliability. Reliability could have been influenced by certain limiting factors. Such potential factors not included in the design were cross-comparisons between directors from non-Australian contexts, diverse cultural backgrounds, and other religious traditions. The design sought to examine the consistency of each director’s overall responses as a tool for testing internal validity. A cross-comparison of the three groups of directors’ responses was conducted for the purposes of external validity.

8.4 Human Research Ethics Committee approval

The initial research proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee of Murdoch University dated 16 November 2001 requested approval to study the Roman Catholic group using focus group discussion and possible follow-up interviews. On 14 December 2001, the request was approved and was valid until 31 December 2004. Permit Number 2001/273 was assigned to the project. A subsequent successful application, dated 3 December 2002, broadened the research profile to include a focus-group study of three groups of Western Australian spiritual directors according to their self-selection into one of three denominational groups: Anglican, Churches of
Christ and Roman Catholic. The selection of two more groups served the purpose of improving the reliability and validity of this study.

8.5 Data collection
The study opted for data collection through one means, focus groups, rather than several or a combination of methods. The design sought to rely principally upon the synergetic effect of such groups over the relative advantages of one-to-one interviews.

8.6 Questioning technique
Semi-structured questioning was included in the design to highlight effectively the similarities and differences in the developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced directors. For the purpose of this study, the questions were designed to be specific in their focus. They were also broad enough to elicit additional material generated by the synergetic element present within the focus group process. This additional material was potentially beneficial in gathering important data.

The principle purpose of the questions aimed to discover what the focus groups identified as the influences that shaped their practice as beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The researcher supplied the group members with a pre-focus group reflection sheet with the intention of stimulating awareness of their experiences as spiritual directors. This was undertaken to foster their optimum contribution in respective focus groups. To reflect on such issues in depth without prior preparation would have unnecessarily limited their capacity for self-disclosure. The questions
contained in the pre-focus group reflection sheet correlated with the questions posed later in the focus group. A copy of the sheet is available (Appendix C). Each spiritual director attending a focus group was sent a reflection sheet and a covering letter (Appendix A) detailing the aims of the research. Included were the practical details to assist respondents to participate in their respective group interview. A Research Consent Form (Appendix B) was also supplied.

The researcher informally approached each group to encourage their participation in this study. Upon acceptance, a date was set for each group to meet. The focus groups were conducted as follows:

1. The Anglican Focus Group on 4 April, 2002;
2. The Churches of Christ Focus Group on 28 May, 2002; and

The duration of each group discussion varied from approximately one and a half to two hours. The researcher conducted each focus group according to the format as outlined in Appendix D. It commenced with an introduction and warm up activity to help form the group and to engage the group’s synergy. The researcher then posed a series of questions to collect the group’s responses. Each session was concluded by seeking the group’s summary and confirmation of the proceedings. At the end of each focus group, the researcher informed the members of the group that a completed transcript of the proceedings would be forwarded to each group member for confirmation. The researcher then thanked the group for their participation.
8.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Sarantakos’s previously mentioned post-data collection recommendations were implemented to analysis and interpret the data. The data from the audio recordings of the focus groups was transcribed and the audiotapes are stored in a secured environment. Participants were forwarded a raw transcript of their respective focus group and were invited to edit and remove typographical errors. To protect the confidentiality of the respondents, each of the twenty-one group members was given a code name ranging from Spiritual Director number one, SD1, to SD21. Personal, identifying information was disguised. Upon receiving the re-edited transcripts, the researcher incorporated the changes as required. The general characteristics of each focus group were as follows in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Anglican</th>
<th>Churches of Christ</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. in group</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy/Religious</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean no. of years</td>
<td>16 (approx.)</td>
<td>3 - 4</td>
<td>16 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 1)

Approximately 10 years is the average number of years of practice of the above 21 spiritual directors. The relative inexperience of the Churches of Christ focus group is discussed in Chapter 5.

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1365 Sarantakos, p. 321.
The data from the three edited transcripts was categorised to identify relevant trends. It was reduced into concise analytical units by separating it according to each group’s discussion. Each discussion was further divided into general information about respondents’ reported family and religious backgrounds. A synopsis of each group’s comments about two areas followed. First, the experiences that shaped them when they began practising as spiritual director were coded as ‘beginning experiences’. Second, the experiences they reported as currently shaping their practice were coded as ‘advanced experiences’. The participants’ reported experiences were independent of the length of time they had been directors.

Within these two overarching categories, the data was further divided into four domains of human experience as previously described by Mostyn: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and environmental. The intrapersonal is the personal or intra-psychic aspect of human experience. The interpersonal is what occurs in the interaction between two or more people. The societal involves the influences associated with organisational, cultural, or customary factors. The environmental refers to the influence of the natural or created world. Each category was further subdivided into analytical sections as determined by the researcher’s examination of the transcript for words, phrases, and themes that matched the relevant general category or one of its subcategories. A summary of these categories is as follows in Table 2.

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## Categories of Beginning and Advanced Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Beginning experiences</th>
<th>Advanced experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal experiences</td>
<td>Physical and emotional illness</td>
<td>Physical and emotional illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal conversion and prayer experiences(^{1368})</td>
<td>Personal conversion and prayer experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant dreams</td>
<td>Significant dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal reflections</td>
<td>Personal reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal experiences</td>
<td>(No subdivisions)</td>
<td>(No subdivisions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal experiences</td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work-related</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and the natural</td>
<td>(No subdivisions)</td>
<td>Peer-group supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world experiences</td>
<td>(No subdivisions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1368}\) ‘Personal conversion and prayer experiences’ are catalogued as ‘intrapersonal experiences’ according to the internal location of the experience within the person undergoing conversion or praying. Moreover, from another perspective it may appear that there may be a difference in the location with regard to corporate, liturgical prayer, where participants may locate the experience of God outside themselves in the liturgical space i.e., in the societal domain. Then again, from another viewpoint, as experiences of prayer and conversion are associated with an interpersonal relationship with God, such experiences could also be considered to have an interpersonal dimension as well. While noting these differing perspectives, ‘personal conversion and prayer experiences’, for the purposes of simplicity, are housed under the heading ‘intrapersonal’.

(Table 2)

The full details of this analysis are contained in chapter four. The interpretation of this analysis is discussed in chapter five. Sarantakos’s method is employed to compare the units of data to identify the differences and similarities within it. This may highlight any relevant trends that future research may consider re-examining or building upon. Chapter six presents a summary of the findings including conclusions and prospective recommendations for future research and implementation.
Chapter 4

Qualitative data – Synopsis of focus group discussions

1. Introduction

This chapter details an analysis of the qualitative data from the three focus groups. Prospective interpretation of this data is undertaken in the next chapter. The chapter presents the data from each focus group commencing with the Anglican group, followed by the Churches of Christ and then the Roman Catholic group. Each presentation begins with extraneous information regarding the focus-group participants’ family and religious backgrounds. Then each group’s discussion is collated according to what they ascribe as the beginning and advanced experiences that shaped them as spiritual directors. This data is categorised according to Mostyn’s four domains of human experience.\(^{1369}\) Their relevant subcategories are listed below in Table 3. Note that each group does not necessarily refer to all categories.

\(^{1369}\) Mostyn, 1996, pp. 181 - 182.
## Categories of Beginning and Advanced Experiences according to Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Anglican</th>
<th>Churches of Christ</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and emotional illness</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal conversion and prayer</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant dreams</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reflections</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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*(Table 3)*
2. Anglican focus group

The participants in this group have been ascribed the codes SD1 to SD7. The focus group consisted of seven Anglican spiritual directors who gathered once a month for peer support in their ministry. Of the seven, two directors were laywomen\textsuperscript{1370} and the remaining were male priests.\textsuperscript{1371} Their years of experience as spiritual directors ranged from 6 to 48. This range did not necessarily specify full time or part time, formal or informal, of each director’s professional practice. The average number of each director’s experience was approximately 16 years. There were no laymen or female priests in this self-selecting group. If such directors had wished to participate, they would have been included.

The context within which they currently provide their services as spiritual directors falls into two main areas. Principally the two laywomen’s practices are home-based. To a lesser degree, they are involved in providing Ignatian retreats at an Anglican retreat centre. Spiritual direction is one aspect of the priests’ overall parish ministry.

The female directors entered spiritual direction from diverse professional backgrounds. SD1 was an educator and SD2 a medical practitioner. They chose this work due to personal interest. The five male spiritual directors (SD3-SD7) became involved as an assumed part of their clerical role.

SD1 found it interesting that nobody approached her for spiritual direction from her own worshipping community. Unlike SD1, SD2 consciously chose

\textsuperscript{1370} SD1 and SD2
\textsuperscript{1371} SD3, SD4, SD4, SD6 and SD7
not to take someone for spiritual direction from her own worshipping community due to possible complications. SD2 also was drawn to “stand with one foot in the camp of Anglicanism and another foot in the camp of Catholicism”. She perceived this as a possible conflict but it had not eventuated so far. She has worked informally as a director for about seven to eight years. For the last four years, she has relied on this ministry as her source of income.

The priests (SD3-SD7) generally operated as spiritual directors within their respective parishes. SD3, a semi-retired priest provides spiritual direction from his rural home. He was ordained in 1954 in England and came to Australia in recent years. He offered spiritual direction in various contexts throughout his many years of ministry. His practice had been “very informal for quite a long time”. He said:

It is all bound up with the fact of being a priest, and a sticky-beak about other people's lives.

He also connected it with:

Trying to find out some kind of meaning for my own life and a spirituality, which actually works for me.

The other four priests provide spiritual direction services mainly in parishes. SD4 has been involved in direction work in “quite small ways”. He currently works part time in a parish. In the past, when he worked full time, he only accompanied people in the parish. In recent times, his spiritual direction work has led him to become involved in various community settings with men’s groups, particularly violent men.

1372 As a humorous addendum, SD3 noted that, in his early days of ministry, he did not even know the term ‘spiritual direction’. In fact, he said, “If I had known it, I would have been horrified because that is Roman Catholic or Anglo-Catholic or some horrible offspring of the ‘Scarlet Woman’!”
SD5 described his spiritual direction practice as “informal”. For the last four years, a small group of people have approached him to provide spiritual direction on a more formal basis.

SD6 described his practice as “informal conversations without a contractual arrangement”. These occasionally occurred in a parish setting, with other clergy, and with an ecological group with which he is associated.

SD7 indicated that, besides some of his parishioners, his spiritual directees came from a number of sources, some by way of referral. Previously, some directees came while theological students but he said, “it is a little more informal of late”.

2.1 Familial and religious background
In early teens, SD1 was greatly influenced by her next-door neighbours. The woman next door converted to Roman Catholicism. Her daughters told SD1, very firmly, that God was not in SD1’s church. SD1 informed her own mother that she wanted to convert to Catholicism and enter the Carmelite order. Given the poor state of relationships between Anglicans and Catholics at that time, her mother replied, “Over my dead body!” Although SD1 put aside her youthful desire to be a nun, in recent years, she has become a postulant in a religious organisation that operates as a dispersed community. SD1 said this was a “most extraordinary feeling of coming home”. She claimed that her early experience influenced her later desire to be a spiritual director.
A conservative Sydney Anglicanism strongly influenced SD2’s family of origin. Her aunt, whom she described as “a very faithful churchwoman”, was an important influence in her life. At age eight, she decided to become a missionary doctor after hearing Dr Paul Wright speak. SD2 described herself as a “passionate Christian” during adolescence. On going to university, she “bounded away” from the Church but “retained great interest in Christianity and Christian people”. For some time, she worked in a Christian general-medical practice, but it left her feeling very cynical about Christians and Christianity. Then she came to Western Australia where her contacts were with Catholic people. She experienced these as “all positive ones”, while contacts with Anglicans were “anything but positive”.

SD3’s religious background was “very evangelical” and “the whole emphasis was on winning people for Christ”. He said:

I didn’t know what was my immediate experience and what was the experience of the Church generally and this particular group of people who were the only real Christians and it was very confusing for me. It wasn’t until I was ordained a priest that I had my first breakthrough, which is usually called a breakdown.

The group expressed humorous appreciation of SD3’s expansion on this comment when he added:

[This] was really [making use of] every opportunity whether you were sitting in a train or digging in your tuck box at school or whatever it was. If anything came up which could be twisted to have a biblical or religious connotation one should take it and I [adopted a stance of] … ghastly moral obligation trying this out.

This is a reference to the particular evangelical approach of the Anglican Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia.
SD4 indicated that he tried to please his father for the first thirty-seven years of his life. He failed to do so and subsequently shifted his ‘desire to please’ onto God. His recovery from this has taken some time.

SD5 made no comment on his family background.

SD6 said:

I come from a working class background, non-Anglican roots, of parents who had no interest and have no interest in the Church, and from a family that wasn’t really poor but poor enough that I had to win scholarships to pay my way through high school and university. I think that is not a common experience in Anglicanism.

SD7 described the faith tradition within which he grew up as “conservative evangelical”.

In summary, this focus group’s members came mainly from Anglican familial backgrounds. Their religious backgrounds tended towards conservative, evangelical faith.

2.2 Beginning experiences

The participants’ examples presented below were collated according to Mostyn’s aforementioned categories. These examples more likely impute rather than make a direct link with the developmental influences that shaped them as spiritual directors.

2.2.1 Intrapersonal experiences

The intrapersonal experiences are subcategorised as follows:

1. Physical and emotional illness;
2. Personal conversion and prayer experiences;
3. Significant dreams; and
4. Personal reflections.

2.2.1.1 Physical and emotional illness

SD1 experienced a series of physical illnesses for which she was hospitalised. Speaking about how such an experience benefited her practice, she said:

It is good to know that sort of thing is familiar to other people too, as being physically vulnerable and being incarcerated in hospital, actually can produce enormous spiritual growth.

SD3’s experience of emotional breakdown eventually led him to progress from a life stance of “trying to act out as a Christian person” to “beginning not to act out at all”. The radical change left him feeling disorientated. In time, he recuperated and emotionally connected to a sense of self, as if for the first time.

SD4 also experienced an emotional breakdown. He attended weekly therapy for five or six years. SD4 said this experience:

Started to integrate me as a human, to change my whole stance to life, to become a creative human rather than a workaholic.

Subsequently, he became “more radical” which was “an exciting change”.

2.2.1.2 Personal conversion and prayer experiences

SD2 gave two examples of intrapersonal experiences. The first was a significant experience of conversion. SD2 said:

I didn’t know what to do about it [so] I thought about becoming a Catholic. The only Christian I knew at the time was a Catholic and
she put me in touch with a spiritual director. This person gave me books to read and she said why should you go through the rigmarole of becoming a Catholic. Why don’t you go and see what happens in your own church, so I did.

SD2 followed this advice, which led her to a “profound experience” during a series of meditations. These were part of a Lenten study conducted in her local Anglican church. The particular meditation was a contemplation on the nativity. She discovered later this was taken directly from the Ignatian exercises. This experience led SD2 to seek out an Ignatian prayer group, attend Ignatian retreats and a training programme in spiritual direction. While attending her first retreat, her director suggested to her that she might ‘be called’ to be a spiritual director. She thought to herself, “Can this woman read my mind”.

2.2.1.3 Significant dreams

SD7 experienced a number of significant dreams after his father’s death in 1988. SD7 said, that through interior work:

I … started to hear and experience things in a totally different way, particularly in my own spiritual life and my own growth.

In earlier days, he lived an “extremely unconscious” life. He emerged from this lack of awareness during mid-life transition. He claimed that early signs of this emergence came from “reading Richard Foster’s book Celebration of Discipline” about which he said, “But it was only a taste”.

2.2.1.4 Personal reflections

An early formative influence occurred while SD5 was a theological student. One of his formators invited him to take note of the college’s logo, ‘Attend’. This invitation led him to adopt an ‘attentive stance’ towards his own life and ministry. He remarked:

That simply to pay attention to what is going on, both the darkness and the light, is kind of nine-tenths of what we have to do.

2.2.2 Interpersonal experiences

SD3 worked with a psychiatrist in England and later a Jungian analyst in Australia. With the English psychiatrist he gained an experience of being with someone “who actually listened to me”. He appreciated the psychiatrist’s clear interest in what was actually happening inside of him. He described the encounter as, “it enabled me to be more honest”. Similarly, the Jungian analyst:

Was really interested in what I really did think and feel not just what I believed and what I thought I ought to do.

SD3 said the professional contact:

Set me off on a way of thinking and behaving, which was an enormous help to me because the real experience was what he valued and what he helped me to value.

Participation in Ignatian retreats, lectures and the supervisory components of a training programme in spiritual direction had a positive effect on SD3. He valued particularly the experience of attentive listening by the programme’s facilitators. This enriched his spiritual direction practice. He said, “[I learnt] how to shut up rather than preach at people”.

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SD4, as previously mentioned, attended weekly therapy for five to six years following his emotional breakdown. Because of such attentiveness, he was able “to become a creative human rather than a workaholic”.

SD5 also recalled the positive effects he derived from attentive listening while in a therapeutic relationship with a psychotherapist. He said:

I think that the significant thing that has shaped me had been an experience of psychotherapy for a year which helped to crack open my feelings. [This was] a kind of dimension in my life which was shut down and I knew immediately that the most productive and useful thing in any discussion with someone would be an exploration of what’s going on in your feeling world rather than what they were thinking about things.

In a similar vein, SD5 valued the helpfulness of having the attentive assistance of a Jungian therapist with his dreams. As a result, his knowledge of dreams was a useful resource to employ with others.

For SD6 and SD7, attentive listening by their theological college chaplains facilitated their journey of engagement with their human experience. SD6 described his chaplain as a “wonderfully open and accepting listener” who assisted him to resolve his vocation issues. The long-term benefit of this experience led SD6 to continue attending spiritual direction. He was encouraged at a later stage of his life to become a spiritual director for others. He recalled, “It just became a natural consequence”.

SD7 described his college chaplain’s attentiveness as ‘informal spiritual direction’. At that time, SD7 was not aware that in later years he would become a “soul friend to people”. He perceived his ministry would solely
revolve around “running bible studies, teaching and preaching”. The change from this position eventuated “fairly gently and slowly”.

SD1 spoke of her interpersonal experience with two of her male formation directors who were “significant wiser older men”. During her spiritual direction training, they “have been an influence and very much listeners”. A significant factor that impacted on her was:

They all disappeared out of my life and that’s been a huge learning about what God’s on about with me. Why do these men, whom I rely on as mentors, why have they gone? And that has been an enormous influence.

Some participants highlighted the power of having their experiences attended to within the interpersonal context of a group. SD5, SD6 and SD7 participated in the group processes of Clinical Pastoral Education. SD5 said:

Suddenly [I became] aware that what was going on in my feeling response to a person was likely to be a critical indicator of what was going on in them and (name provided), helped me to really trust in my intuition and since then, it has been very helpful, powerful.

SD6 benefited from attentive listening during Clinical Pastoral Education, which occurred, “definitely before [he] had any inkling of being a spiritual director”. The impact of the change was:

Like seeing a new universe, a part of my life and the life of others that I barely knew existed which I sort of experienced but denied by the rational background in which I had been brought up, and to which I was naturally inclined anyway.

I can remember saying, it is as if little doors have been opened in a wall; I am peering out at a vast expanse of an interior universe that is there to explore and I am agog about. And what is more, God works in that universe. And so for me, that was not the first time that I had experienced emotions in life, far from it, but it was the first time I think I understood or experienced, in a little community of people, that this was part of the wealth and constitution of common humanity of which I was a part.
Besides attending Clinical Pastoral Education, SD7 valued the group experience of ‘Lab One’\textsuperscript{1375}, which assisted him with listening skills. He also appreciated the intense level of attentiveness of one of the programmes at Holyoake.\textsuperscript{1376} This enabled him “to deal with the issues of an alcoholic background in the family and that sort of stuff”.

A group’s attentiveness can facilitate a person to change. SD2 referred to her Catholic friend who had attended a ‘Cursillo’ weekend and then joined a Christian Life Community based on Ignatian spirituality, which made a “massive difference to [her] rather rigid friend”.

2.2.3 Societal experiences

The Societal experiences are collated under the following headings:

1. Educational context; and

2. Work-related context

2.2.3.1 Educational in nature

During his theological studies, SD5 endeavoured to integrate “the head and the heart together”. He found this helpful in the development of his practice. He highlighted the value of “the unifying theological framework” that helped him to make sense of things from a historical perspective. He found this beneficial while assisting people to:

Make some kind of connection between, say, their experience, and the experience of other people throughout the ages, [so that] there might actually be some kind of helpful connection there. That we are

\textsuperscript{1375} Lab One is a training programme in listening skills.
\textsuperscript{1376} Holyoake is a non-religious, non-profit organisation incorporated under the Associations’ Act of Western Australia. Holyoake provides unique educational, training and rehabilitation services to individuals and their families who have alcohol and other drug problems.
not alone, that we stand on the shoulders of the ancestors, kind of thing. That’s been helpful for me, and I hope to other people.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator typology helped SD5 to appreciate that:

[It] gave me a sense that not everybody prays in the same way. And that people’s experience of God could come in quite radically varying ways according to the type of personality that they had.

Further examples under this educational subcategory are five group members who participated in a Perth-based spiritual direction programme. SD2 said, “The Weekend’s programme, the [August] Residential programme1377” and “the ambience of [the] place has been profoundly influential for me”. SD3 commented on the benefit of the lectures and the supervisory components of the training programme. He valued the experience of being attentively listened to and the helpful clarification and reinforcement about the role of the spiritual director. This clarification assisted him to appreciate:

The sort of expected bounds of the Church’s ministry to people rather than a private way of just trying to be available as a person and as a priest. It gave me an insight and I learnt some more of my more glaring mistakes and the difference especially between spiritual direction and psychotherapy. I found that very helpful.

SD6 noted the value of the August programme:

[It was] enormously influential and coincided more or less with a conscious recognition that some of the things I was doing was spiritual direction.

He further remarked on the sessions given by Alan Jones, from the General Theological Seminary at the 1982 August programme held in Perth. This learning was:

The first combination of some sort of formalised framework and experiential engagement in something that was described as spiritual

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1377 This was a three-week intensive programme, which was held regularly over a number of years.
friendship and Anamchara friendship that led to any sort of formal understanding of spiritual direction.

SD4, who as a young priest attended the General Seminary in New York, recalled:

[This training] was very influential and being a good naive early priest, I accepted that I needed to learn my job in terms of spirituality, so I read everything that was available on the journey through faith in God.

SD7 made a frank admission in reference to his own level of readiness to participate in such training. He highlighted that a person needs to be at a sufficient level of awareness to benefit from such a course. Upon returning to Perth after his theological formation in Melbourne, he attended a ministerial training programme that was orientated around spiritual direction. He said, “[The programme] went straight over my head”. Although he attended lectures by Alan Jones on spiritual direction and participated in peer, spiritual direction training, SD7 “was trying to work in a totally different place. [He] had no idea of what it was about”.

SD1 commented on the benefits of attending the spiritual direction training at (name provided). She was assisted to affectively engage her human experience, which helped her in “being a soul friend” to her directees. She said:

Everything we did in the course … help[ed] me … it was this personal contact stuff and this encouragement and shutting up … as Kenneth Leech said, ‘When you become a director, don’t talk’.

SD1’s focus was more on learning to engage affectively with her experience. Her brief reference to Kenneth Leech’s comment showed she
valued reflecting on her experience through the insight of such an international commentator.

2.2.3.2 Work related

SD1’s experience as a schoolteacher provided a further example of how a work-related structural environment can also assist people to engage affectively their human experience within the workplace. SD1 said that, “it actually started when I became, very reluctantly, a teacher”. In hindsight, she witnessed “the movement of the Spirit in the boys” that could be interpreted as a beginning experience, connecting her to the affective process operating in her work environment. SD1 said that what she sometimes did with her directees was similar to what she had learnt to do with her students. She did not talk so much about God but gave encouragement. She encouraged her directees “to be fully alive, passionate human beings” as she did her students, who “wanted to reject God straight away”. She “then [slipped] in somewhere, just keep your options open about this God stuff”.

In summary, SD1 was the only person to speak about her workplace. The remainder of the group commented more on the learning they gleaned while attending educational training courses in spiritual direction. What appears here is a clear emphasis on educational rather than work-related experiences. This possibly could be influenced by a hidden bias as the majority of the group were involved in parish ministry. They may not make such a clear distinction between their home-life and their ministerial work as people who are involved in secular employment. Unfortunately, the
qualitative data collected from the Anglican focus group does not clarify this subject.

2.2.4 The environment and the natural world

The number of examples in this category is less than in the others. Nonetheless, they are worth considering. For some group members, the ambience of the environment and the natural world provided a welcoming and healing place within which they engaged their humanity. This experience enriched their own lives and enhanced the lives of their directees. SD2 engaged in an intensive, three-week, residential training programme in spiritual direction. She remarked on the residential programme’s bush setting together with its chapel, “The ambience of [the] place has been profoundly influential for me”. While recovering from a previously mentioned emotional breakdown, SD3 lived at an English evangelical centre situated in a rural community. Occupied with simple domestic and farming chores, he engaged with nature. Slowly over time, this engagement partly contributed to how SD3 learnt to begin to engage with his humanity. The reflective insight, “I learnt to just be ordinary”, was gleaned from his affective encounter with nature. This insight, which painstakingly emerged in the early years of SD3’s ministry, slowly taught him to embrace what was authentic in his humanity. Before becoming a priest, SD4 worked as an agriculturalist for seventeen years. Through engaging the land, he claimed he was more able to identify with people living in farming communities. More importantly, it gave him the confidence to connect with the people in those rural communities in which he later worked as a priest.
During the group, SD4’s comments on nature triggered SD6 to remark, “I think the impact of nature and the environment is a very important impact for me personally”. Regrettably, SD4 did not expand on his comments in the course of the group’s subsequent conversation. The usefulness his example might have yielded remained unexplored. This diminishes the value of the fourth example, except to say that SD4 acknowledged that his engagement with nature was an initial experience that shaped the early stages of his practice as a spiritual director.

2.3 Advanced experiences

2.3.1 Intrapersonal experiences

These experiences can be categorised under the following subheadings:

1. Literature;

2. Personal reflections; and

3. Personal conversion and prayer experiences.

2.3.1.1 Literature

SD2 mentioned such literature as C. Martini, Letting God Free Us: Meditations on Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (1993),\(^ {1378}\) and S. Moore, The Crucified Jesus is no Stranger (1977).\(^ {1379}\) She also referred to The Cloud of Unknowing (1973).\(^ {1380}\) Likewise, finding the journal Human Development helpful, SD7 said, “it tries to make the connection between psychiatry, psychology, and spirituality”.

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SD5 commenting on the influence of literature upon him as a spiritual director said:

I think for me, having started to do some direction, I thought I better read up on this. I read Margaret Gunther’s book on *Holy Listening*. She provided a very useful framework in there that kind of reached across two kinds of dimensions that we can use as a framework in approaching, in making sense of what a person is sharing with us. One was the dimension of my past and my future, so where do I come from and where am I going, which I related theologically to the story of salvation history, that God works through history, though the person’s story that they come from somewhere and God is calling them somewhere.

SD5 further suggested that the paradigms within which he functioned as a spiritual director were widened through reading other literature such as, G. May, *Addiction and Grace* (1991). This text assisted him to be more attentive to the movement between addiction and grace within his own life and within the life of his directees. His further additional reading about co-dependency helped him to reflect on the quality of his own initial formation in theological college. He said that:

What may have been good religious formation in the head might actually just be masking a kind of addictive, co-dependant kind of behaviour.

At another stage in the group discussion, SD5 mentioned reading the writings of Melanie Beatty. She proposed that the “movement from slavery to freedom … only happened by grace”. This helped SD5 experience a helpful paradigmatic shift. Reading literature that discussed the apophatic and kataphatic poles of spirituality, SD5 said:

I started to see my own kind of ambivalence between those two and realising that I’d gone from one end, I started to see the frameworks, which were underpinning my intuitions.

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SD5 understood authors like John of the Cross, Anthony de Mello and Bede Griffiths who “[talked] about finding God in absolute silence and no images”. On the other hand, SD5 appreciated authors such as Ignatius of Loyola and Carl Jung as:

People [who] actually grapple[ed] seriously with the wonderful rich images that are being thrown up by our unconscious”. Such awareness led him to ponder, “How can God be in two places at once?

Considering this led him to conclude there are “two quite different ways that God comes to us”, the apophatic and kataphatic approaches. Even though SD5 seemed to have a personal preference for image-based prayer, he found he was able to accompany people in spiritual direction, “for whom the alternative way [was] the way for them”. Talking further about the implications for him as a spiritual director, he expounded:

It is important to me, to not impose one model onto a person, but to try to sense what is kind of working for them [and to ask them], would they have ever considered the option of the other, [and] perhaps float it as a possibility to see where they are.

2.3.1.2 Personal reflections

While sharing about the experiences that have shaped his practice as a director, SD3 identified a radical change had occurred since his early “fundamentalist evangelical training”. The former approach was concerned with knowing “the right thing and [having] the right doctrine”. The newer approach was one in which he learnt that:

The Spirit is in the other person, hopefully in here too, (pointing to himself) and between us, but the other person actually knows, but they don’t always know that they know.
This change of emphasis assisted him in his spiritual direction practice to “shut my mind off from being a smart arse and knowing the answer for other people”. This stance opened SD3 to appreciate that:

The Spirit is actually working even in a non-religious setting; if the other person is given the chance, [they] will come up with their answer.

SD4 remarked that some of his ponderings about life had led him to move out of “the traditional framework of spiritual guidance” into working with people in more ordinary circumstances. Further reflection has led him to move away from identifying with such terminology as being a ‘spiritual director’. As he began to appreciate that he was more of an extrovert by nature, he adopted a role description more along the lines of being a “mentor”. Taking on this new role, he discarded what he saw as some of the counselling skills more attuned to introverts. He adopted a more dialogical approach. This was more creative for him and for those extroverts with whom he ministered. Reflecting on a recent developmental experience, SD4 reported:

I have only found out nine months ago that I can think because I was brought up to think I couldn’t. So I am enjoying that freedom and it is involving me and influencing my practice, which I am not really sure where it is going, except group work in a way, because I do work within a group, then that group dialectic is beginning to, I am beginning to really enjoy.

Further reflections from SD7 were particularly significant. While sharing his personal thoughts, he coined the phrase “multi-paradigmatic”. This phrase described his appreciation of many paradigms through which a spiritual director needed to attend to people’s spiritual experience. In addition, he considered that directees also engage in and reflect on their experience
within the range of so many different paradigmatic frameworks. About the benefit of adopting such a multifaceted stance in his practice, SD7 said:

I am finding that there is a very rich tradition now [and] in that, there [are] so many different components that in some sense there has been a restoration and a healthiness about even my evangelical tradition.

SD7 said he had been reflecting recently on what he would call “the phenomenology of spiritual direction”. He considered two necessary processes occurring in a complementary way. Such processes are concerned about what “God [is doing] within the life of other people, but also God at work in my own life”. Offering a further pertinent reflection:

I couldn’t study spiritual direction as a discipline at distance and not be the slightest bit concerned about what was happening in myself.

He concluded his reflection as, “[This] is the only way that I can actually work as a spiritual director”.

2.3.1.3 Personal conversion and prayer experiences

There is only one example that can be collated under this heading. In this single but striking example, SD6 described a weeklong Ignatian retreat he attended a few years ago as “a sort of a ‘raise from the dead’ experience in the course of that week”. Before the retreat:

I was depressed and in the early stages of taking drugs for depression and I think [the retreat] experience was a sort of turning point in rising from depression to some sort of new life.

2.3.2 Interpersonal experiences

Reflecting on her experience as a clinician, SD2 said that:

One of the most important experiences for me was … doing psychotherapy and becoming confronted with my own innate powerlessness and finding that while praying during a psychotherapy session ideas would come from what I experienced as a very
different place in myself and which I now think of as coming from the Holy Spirit.

Speaking further about her experience as a clinician, SD2 spoke about a patient with whom she had been working for about six years. SD2 said, “These words from this other place were the keys to [her] transformation”. These two experiences of working in a therapeutic interpersonal relationship as a clinician outline clearly how, in being more engaged in her own experience, SD2 was able to be more effective as a spiritual director.

A final example concerns an interpersonal experience that occurred in a group context. SD4 said that from having been:

Brought up a thoroughly middleclass Pom [that] one of the really important changes for me was working alongside Aboriginal people in (place named) and Drop-in Centre work and ordinary people and that was the thing that shifted me to a feminist theology especially in the issues of race and gender and even more so in class.

2.3.3 Societal experiences

Unlike the examples under the subheadings of work and education, which illustrated beginning experiences, the group respondents only mentioned educational experiences when illustrating the advanced experiences that shaped their practice as spiritual directors.

Among the examples mentioned was SD1’s experience of attending a training programme in spiritual direction. During the programme, of particular note was:

Attending the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius and having had a particular experience of a kind of Ignatian retreat in Wales in 1998.
At this retreat, she came to “seriously [understand] what the nature of proper Ignatian detachment is, it was just absolutely revelatory”. The value of this training was that for her, “it is all sort of ticking away in the back [of her mind]” and when she was with directees she said, “it has provided a framework for my thinking, which is extremely helpful … in working with people”.

Further to this, attending Sister Judith Rheimer’s course on Ignatian Spirituality in January 2002 further assisted her practice.

A second example is SD2’s experience of attending a nine-month, Ignatian-based, residential, spiritual-direction training programme in Canada. This was a very significant developmental stage in her formation as a spiritual director. It gave SD2 the skills and the theory with which to accompany her directees.

A final example of how a societal experience shaped a director’s ongoing spiritual direction practice was SD6’s comment that through regularly attending a monthly Anglican spiritual directors’ group meeting, “it sort of affirms [his] eclecticism in a way”.

### 2.3.4 The environment and the natural world

SD4 and SD2 briefly acknowledged the influence of living in indigenous environments at various periods of their lives. Unfortunately their conversation did not disclose how it influenced them as spiritual directors, suffice to say they regarded it as an advanced experience.

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1382 In an aside, SD1 remarked that upon returning from Wales one of the first people who contacted her for spiritual direction warned her “she wanted none of this Ignatius stuff!” SD1 accepted this without difficulty and adopted an approach that she described as, “what is right for one person is not right for another”. While respecting her directee’s request, SD1 found her Ignatian training helped her to recognise what her directee was experiencing.
3 Churches of Christ focus group

The participants in this group were assigned the codes SD8 to SD16. The group consisted of nine directors from the Churches of Christ. They are members of a centre for spirituality in Perth, Western Australia. To maintain its anonymity, it is not named in this study. All references to the unnamed centre will be the ‘Centre’. Of the nine, five directors were women\(^{1383}\) and four were men.\(^{1384}\) Five directors were either active or retired ministers. Of these five, there were four men\(^{1385}\) and one woman.\(^{1386}\) Their years of experience ranged from nine months through to 10 years. This range accounted for neither how full time nor part time, nor how formal or informal, each director’s practice may have been. The average number of years of experience as a director was approximately three to four years. The membership of the group consisted of attendees invited by SD8, the Director of the Centre. He was the spiritual director of some of these participants and was involved in this group’s formation as spiritual directors. The majority of the group practiced as spiritual directors at the Centre and the remainder practiced in diverse contexts.

SD8 is a male minister within the Churches of Christ. He operates as a spiritual director within the Centre as well as being associated with an Anglican retreat centre. He has been practising as a spiritual director “for about ten years”.

\(^{1383}\) SD9, SD10, SD12, SD13, and SD16.
\(^{1384}\) SD8, SD11, SD14, and SD15.
\(^{1385}\) SD8, SD11, SD14, and SD15.
\(^{1386}\) SD12
SD9 is a female, lay spiritual director who is a retired nurse. She too practices as a spiritual director in association with the Centre. She has been practising for about nine months.

SD10 is a female, lay spiritual director who practises within the Centre. She describes herself as more a “learner” and has been practising for about nine months.

SD11 is a male spiritual director with a ministerial background. He does not practice spiritual direction either “formally or informally”. He has been involved with spiritual direction, however, which he calls “spiritual formation” work, in a number of ministerial training programmes. He sees spiritual direction more as “spiritual friendship” and has been involved in this work for about five years.

SD12 is a female spiritual director who once worked as a minister. She is currently having a break but had undertaken spiritual direction work in the previous twelve months. She is associated with the Centre.

SD13 is a young laywoman who is just starting out as a spiritual director. She described her current involvement as being part of a home-based spiritual formation group, which is like “group spiritual direction”.

SD14 is a rural male pastor who does “a form of spiritual direction”. He said:

I think there are a number of places that spiritual direction crosses over into a number of things that I do in pastoring, ministering,
mentoring, supervising, and a mixture of all of those. I recognise that there are times when there is very specific spiritual direction and times when it is just part of an overall package and it is what is appropriate at the time. So I am very much a learner too.

SD15 is a retired male pastor who described himself as being in training for spiritual direction. Eight or nine years ago, he joined a group, led by SD8, which examined the link between spirituality and ministry. He has taken part in the group’s monthly meetings since its inception. He said:

I first joined the group with the intention of training for spiritual direction because at that time it was the only avenue of that sort of training available in the Churches of Christ.

SD16 is a laywoman who is a professional counsellor. She undertakes spiritual direction “when it pops up at work”.

3.1 Familial and religious background

The following background information emerged in the group’s discussion.

SD8 described his early religious background as based on “fundamentalism”, one that has “been very didactic”. He said:

I had a set of answers to most questions. If someone asked me a question, I would give them a set answer. ... So I probably will reflect my teaching background, my initial approach would be, you have got a question, here’s the answer and I had already formulated a question to conform to my ideal answers.

He also said his upbringing was a:

Richly biblical, intercessory background, [which included] great fervour and spiritual energy, but my experience is that a lot of us have just run out of steam after a while and that is where [in our] late thirties and early forties we start[ed] this other journey which we [had] a great need to [begin].

SD8 gave an example of his biblical background. He said:

Once upon a time, I would have gone to a Christian bookshop and sought out books that said, Introduction to John’s Gospel and after
reading various chapters, and you would have read chapter 1 vs. 1-15, answer the following questions and there’d be half a question. You know that closed type and then there’d be a series of dots and you sort of fill in the missing words, Navigator type of stuff. I used to think that was great, great for a number of reasons. One, it gave the Scriptural truth and, secondly, it saved a heck of a lot of work.

SD9 remarked:

I certainly came from a very evangelical setting and when I first began to look into, I suppose, me and who I was etcetera, etcetera. It was very difficult to talk with anybody about it, family included because family didn’t want to hear that because I was sort of moving away from the tradition and moving away from the family, and what I experienced within the family. And they, I suppose they, poor old Mum and Dad, they were the older types and I think, and never ever accepted my journey, that I was changing.

Furthermore, SD9 said that in her earlier years, faith was, “believing certain principles and believing what the scriptures say is true”. In the midst of the conversation, SD10 added, “I come from perhaps a very didactic background too”.

SD13 described her theological background as “having the right answers for the questions”. It was like having “to believe A, B, C, and D, and that is what it [was] all about”.

Similarly, the emphasis in SD14’s background was on “what you believe[d] and what you practice[d]”. She said:

The emphasis used to be very much on the biblical view on what you used to believe on all sorts of stuff. People used to argue for ages about theories about how Jesus was going to come again. They used to fight each other about it, split from Churches over it. But even if we didn’t on that, there were other issues that we did.
3.2 Beginning experiences

3.2.1 Intrapersonal experiences

The intrapersonal experiences are subcategorised as follows:

(1) Personal conversion and prayer experiences;

(2) Personal reflections; and

(3) Literature.

3.2.1.1 Personal conversion and prayer experiences

SD8 began to think formally about spiritual direction quite some years ago, when a parish priest with whom he was working with in England said he was going to see his spiritual director. SD8 said:

I was completely nonplussed by that. I then went through a period of crisis in my own spiritual journey and started to experience laterally, and outside my own denomination and that started to inform my pastoral practice and we started running what we called prayer workshops and trying to lead mature Christians to a deeper experience of prayer.

SD9 initially became interested in working as a spiritual director after she retired from work. She said:

I was looking for something concrete I could do after I had to leave nursing. So I went through a period of a few years where I didn’t feel as if I knew what God wanted me to do. And I heard about the (name provided) programme, and I felt that maybe this was an area that I could enter into and be helpful. And I think I was led into this and I did the four year programme there and I found it even although I have been feeling pretty inadequate about it all, I have been able to get some help and I am beginning to feel as if I am more at ease in what I am doing.

In describing the experiences that initiated her involvement in spiritual direction, SD10 said:
I suppose my starting point came in my later life along with (SD8) and the journey that we were on together.\footnote{SD8 and SD10 are a married couple.} It came in the sense of a longing for a more contemplative life and view of life and of God in my daily life and as I shared with other people, I had that sense that this was where I was comfortable and open to share with people.

SD15 described the experience of the first silent retreat he attended about eighteen years ago in the United States. He said:

I found that was quite a ministry-transforming experience and through the enormous changes that took place within me in the space of two days, I realised that God was indeed present and very much alive in the silences of life just as I had always known he was in the verbal and more intellectual understanding of the faith.

3.2.1.2 Personal reflections

Because of SD8’s previously mentioned experience, he started to run retreats. He said:

I discovered that people were asking questions I didn’t have answers to, but the questions, which were reflecting the kind of truth-searching that I was undergoing myself.

Before that, SD8 said that he would have been “very didactic” in his approach. He said:

I had a set of answers to most questions. If someone asked me a question, I would give them a set answer.

Reflecting on this experience, SD8 said that in starting to explore this area:

I realised that people’s spiritual experience was crossing over and going backwards and forwards more an encounter experience than what I had envisaged would happen. But it also reflected my own experience. So that is when I started to look for a way of training because I realised I didn’t have a frame of reference nor did the denomination of which I was a member really have an experiential frame of reference to look at kinds of experiences and questions that people were asking of me.

Talking further about this experience, SD8 said:
It didn’t take us long to realise that what people were talking about was quite different. That was quite a learning tool.

SD8’s comments prompt SD14 to remark:

My journey is probably very similar to (SD8) in asking those very basic but common questions that people don’t often ask and seeking to discuss where is God in this? How has your faith been? And those sorts of very basic questions, which I discovered, are part of the spiritual direction journey. But still very much learning, whenever I am in town I am at courses whenever they are run. So, still very much learning.

3.2.1.3 Literature

In the group, only two participants referred to literature influencing them as spiritual directors. SD10 said:

My feeling has also been coloured, even at that stage, with Margaret Guenther’s book on *Holy Listening*.1388

SD14 commented, “I am drawn to the Barry and Connelly type approach to direction”.1389

3.2.2 Interpersonal experiences

Describing the influence of her spiritual director upon her own beginning experience as a director, SD9 said:

For me very definitely it was my own spiritual director that shaped my initial direction, because I found her very helpful.

SD9 added that it enabled her to “model that practice” in her own work as a spiritual director.

SD10 remarked that:

1388 This is reference to Guenther, 1992.
1389 This is a reference to Barry and Connolly, 1982.
I think my initial experience [as a spiritual director] arose out of my early retreat experience and Ignatian prayer, which I followed through within direction.

Describing her early retreat experience SD10 said:

I think the first real area of awakening came out of the first time I went to a longer silent retreat. I have been on short bursts like a one-day, silent retreat *(audiotape inaudible)*. I was asked following a passage of scripture, ‘What is the deep for you *(SD10)*’ and I struggled mightily with that and found that I would only be able to perhaps access that with some help and guidance and I then saw the spiritual director and I then eventually went, within the context of that directing. [It took] … some eight months to do the Retreat in Daily Life, which was a very rich experience for me and awakened me to the sense of call to a discipline of being in that sacred space. That was my starting point.

Then in speaking about her experience of being in direction, SD10 said:

I would be the same as *(SD9)*. My experience of being directed, I found so helpful to my own personal growth and particularly my director would always give me scriptures to reflect on and how he used the gospel stories for me to discover more and more of myself and so that is the approach I took to directing, looking at who God is for this person. Asking them to reflect on who God is for them and then their reflection through the gospel stories [on] how … they see … themselves.

Reflecting on his experience of being in ministry about fifteen years ago, SD11 said:

I felt very discontented with programmes and things that were running and I found that approaching people in visitation and so on. And just asking them, how you are travelling spiritually or asking them how is your relationship with God, actually startled people into thinking and reflecting on their relationship with God. And I began to meet regularly with certain people just to continue to explore their relationship with God and to journey with them in that. So that became my starting point of interest and then coming up to Perth and getting involved with [a] spirituality of ministry programme and then coming under direction myself has really expanded my whole thinking and desire to be more specific in the area of spiritual direction.
Although SD12 had attended a Perth-based spiritual direction training programme, she said:

I really don’t feel that I learnt much about spiritual direction through that programme rather I felt I learnt more from being directed myself and doing the seven-day Ignatian retreat with (name provided). But after I finished, graduated from the programme then a couple of people heard of me through [the Centre] and through the Church and that is where I started.

SD13 was initially influenced to work as a spiritual director through being a directee. She said:

I went to [a] Spirituality for Ministry Training for trainee ministers about four years ago and then went into spiritual direction with (SD8) so that formulated my initial start and through doing that feeling what a difference it can make in your journey and wanting to be able to train to do that myself.

Although SD16 is an experienced counsellor, she has only recently begun to explore the practice of spiritual direction. She said:

I don’t feel as though I have started yet. I work as a counsellor and because I am a Christian, the topic of God comes up, an easy situation to just allow people to talk and to listen to them and be present with them in the same way I am psychologically. It is only since I have been doing spiritual direction myself that I have noticed how similar the two are and actually what I have been doing has been probably quite close to spiritual direction although I am still trying to find out what it is.

3.2.3 Societal experiences

These societal experiences are principally educational in nature. As mentioned previously, SD9 and SD12 attended a four-year training programme in spiritual direction at a Perth-based College. Through attending this programme, SD9 said, “I found it [helpful] even although I have been feeling pretty inadequate about it all”.

SD12’s experience was not so positive. She said:
I really don’t feel that I learnt much about spiritual direction through that programme rather I felt I learnt more from being directed myself.

SD11 and SD13 spoke about their early experience of attending a Spirituality for Ministry training programme, which led them to become involved in spiritual direction for themselves.

Furthermore, SD11 also benefited from becoming involved in a two-year programme conducted in Bunbury. Its programme was based on Ignatian spirituality.

3.2.4 The environment and the natural world

The group did not offer any examples that could be categorised under this heading.

3.3 Advanced experiences

3.3.1 Intrapersonal experiences

The intrapersonal experiences are subcategorised as follows:

(1) Literature;

(2) Personal conversion and prayer experiences;

(3) Personal reflections; and

(4) Physical and emotional illness.

3.3.1.1 Literature

SD8 recalled that he had:

“Some kind of epiphany reading a section of John Main’s writing about meditation as conversion.
He said it was a “revelatory experience”. It helped him to realise that he was involved in a “process of conversion” and that such “an experience of conversion of soul” was “an ongoing event”. He came to realise that “in spiritual direction, that [same] conversion experience [was] present in a way”.

SD8 suggested such an approach would have been quite different to his former manner. He said:

If I was pastorally visiting (SD15), as an example, my whole stance to him 20 years ago would have been ‘Well you’re a valuable member of the faith, you were converted in 1943 or ‘44 or something like that. My process was just to comfort him with scripture because he would already know as much about scripture as I would etcetera. You know, so we were sharing a received experience.

3.3.1.2 Personal conversion and prayer experiences

SD8 reported that he had “gone through a conversion experience” which made him:

“Compassionate towards other people [so] that they might mature as a Christian in the same kind of liberation that [he had] experienced.

Through this experience, he said:

Probably one of the most important things that has happened to me is the realisation I am unique and I have a unique own brand spiritual experience rather than trying to make one shoe fit everything which I tended to do a lot with my received tradition in a sense.

Attending an Ignatian retreat helped him adopt this approach. He remarked:

When I went to my first Ignatian retreat the discussion was quite particular about my experience and I had this deep longing in my personal encounter with God and it was quite different to what I had anticipated and probably not what I liked. But it made me ponder the significance of other people’s uniqueness and the process, which I discovered to be spiritual direction, which enables other people to search for that company.
SD15 noted:

It is not only alright but it is also enriching … to let my spiritual imagination go and believe that can be part of the leading of the Spirit for me, not only in understanding particular passages of scripture but also understanding myself.

SD15 further commented:

I find that increasingly there is enormous spiritual freedom in being able to take a typical Ignatian approach to scripture. By that, I mean to let my imagination run riot in the sort of way that when I was just a boy or a young person, the people who were influential in my early years as a Christian would have never countenanced, and if they had thought about it specifically, they would probably have squashed it.

SD13 reported that her experience had grown so that:

Rather than having the right answers for the questions, the theology, it is more about relationship, that’s the shift, rather than I have to believe A, B, C and D, and that is what it is all about. It is more what is my experience of having a relationship with God and that is the shift I think, a shift from head to heart, from knowledge to experience in the relationship, the end results may be different for people but it is authentic because it is an actual experience.

3.3.1.3 Personal reflections

SD8 deliberated that the “biggest shift” that has happened for him theologically was through discovering an “incarnational” approach to life. He remarked that this was a “discovery” of “the enigma and mystery in the heart of God”, which he regarded as a “huge liberation” for him.

He indicated that he did not grow up with such an approach:

My original coming into this area was through having a desert experience and not being able to, didn’t know that’s what it was, but just feeling that this couldn’t be all there was to Christianity. And so for me that was the start of seeking to look for something else other than the traditional ways of theology you know the question and answer Bible studies and stuff, to me it was just hard. And at times, that’s what started the shift in me, actually trying to find out what
more there was or else give up altogether, which was my decision but like that was a choice I felt like I was faced with, you know. So that’s what started me looking into that area and spirituality.

He recalled that discovering “contemplation and mystical practices” contributed to this change of theological focus, in particular Benedictine and Ignatian spiritualities.

SD8 found Benedictine spirituality “a very formative experience” in the way it introduced him to reflecting in “silence”. He noted it influenced his practice as a spiritual director in that he learnt to “listen out of reflection”.

He came to see that as a spiritual director together with his directee, they were:

Engaged in a parallel conversation where I was listening to the Spirit and the dialogue generated by that parallel conversation.

Through engaging scripture in an Ignatian way, SD8 found he was able to engage his “personal experience of God” in the text. Through such encounter, reading the text became “autobiographical” for now he was able to have his “own encounter rather than a received encounter”. Incorporating this approach in spiritual direction was a “powerful tool”. It was of benefit to people whom he described as being:

More in captivity to the [scriptural] text rather than liberated by the spirit of the text.

Reflecting upon her experience, SD9 commented that her early faith was formed in a “very evangelical setting”. The changes occurring since then were described as:

It is like having a faith now that works, instead of just having a faith in believing certain principles and believing what the scriptures says is true; it’s now, it actually works, its real in my life, I know I am
loved by God but I can also feel it in my daily grind of living. It works.

Overall, SD9 described it as a process of “daily conversion”.

SD9 offered further reflections gained from her analysis of her own experience as a spiritual director. She said:

“A couple of things for me, realising that it is not all me, an openness to God’s spirit and like (SD10) waiting, just even though they are long waits sometimes. The directee to give the way and not for me to try and butt in and direct in a sense, it is just listening, waiting and facilitating what is within the very (audiotape inaudible). I have also found that the directee, I mean, my first client I saw once and she made the appointment and then cancelled it and never heard from her again (group laughter). I thought what have I done? So I was able to analyse that a little bit and perhaps think, I could have handled that better and maybe I gave her too much to do at home and those sorts of things. And I found that helpful too. But also the positive things that come from the directees that confirm what I am doing with them in the way I am doing it, is okay.

SD10 spoke about her growing appreciation of the influence of “time” and “silence” upon her practice. With regard to time, she has come to appreciate that there is a “right timing” in matters pertaining to spiritual growth. She said, “It is something that you grow into in a sense, as well as you are trained”.

Regarding silence, SD10 suggested that in attending her spiritual directees, which she considered was as if one were “standing on holy ground”, she has discovered the importance of “silence, listening silence” and “just waiting” upon people’s experience. This stance grew out of her own “contemplative practice” and “meditation” and:

Within the training role of listening and [the] realisation of the need to and being ready to move into that stance.
SD11 reflected that his “search for authentic ministry” influenced the development of his practice as a spiritual director. He recalled:

It was in searching for authentic ministry, ministry that really counted and lasted and wasn’t just traditional that I was introduced in a sense to meditation and prayer; my eyes have been really opened. So entering into that has been quite transformative for me and authentic ministry is no longer a question. I have been overtaken by stealth in a sense and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Considering further the change in emphasis, that has influenced him as a spiritual director, SD11 said:

I think what we were talking about earlier, in terms of direction, I think early on. I think proof texts were a sort of a way of directing people, like you somehow related scripture to where they were at and gave them the verse and that type of thing. But I found within our tradition that what really opened me up to this whole area, was the emphasis on the sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism and worship being centred around the Eucharist and through that seeking to help people to encounter God. I feel that opened up possibilities for me in the whole area of symbolism and reaching God, not through knowledge but through experience. So that, so it wasn’t as difficult as in some ways into what we were experiencing in our community but there was a definite shift for me from just relying on scriptures to experiencing worship and the Eucharist which is very central in our tradition and then moving onto [the Centre] and for me. (SD8) has been very formative in that his choice of the Benedictine spirituality and John Main and so on, has been something I have just followed in a sense and our community as well.

He later said:

Ah well for me it was all there was, to begin with in a sense. That’s what I meant by having a redemption-based theology. To me it was the only way to engage people with God, outside of the knowledge-based way to begin with so that opened up possibilities to imaginatively approach scripture.

During conversation, the group was asked if anything had changed. SD11 said:

I don’t. … I think it’s there, but there’s so much else with it as well and I think that’s (SD8’s) emphasis. I remember when I first began going to [the Centre], (SD8’s) emphasis on the centrality of Christ and the scripture and always having Eucharist and so on for me was a very comforting place to be because of my tradition.
In considering what has been useful for her, SD12 said that she has come to realise that:

We are all on the pathway of looking at a deeper experience of faith and growth of self.

From this stance, she suggested that:

We don’t have to be victorious Christians all the time. We can admit that we fail and we get down and we get blue.

SD13’s changing perception of conversion has influenced her practice. She remarked that she considered conversion “as a journey rather than a one-off decision”. Previously she thought, “You become Christian and that’s it”. Now she sees it:

As a journey and you’re constantly moving forward and seeking, you know, to become more and more Christ-like.

Thus for SD13, conversion has become “an everyday experience”. She said:

It is [lived out] in daily life, that’s the difference, rather than being tacked on.

SD14 recounted the influence of his changing perception of faith. He said:

Generally speaking, it is a move from an emphasis on what you believe and what you practice to who you believe. The emphasis used to be very much on the biblical view on what you used to believe in, all sorts of stuff. People used to argue for ages about theories about how Jesus was going to come again. They used to fight each other about it, split from Churches over it.

He humorously described the change as a “move from being caged parrots, learning stuff parrot fashion” to being “more like free-range chickens and ducks and geese”.
SD15 spoke about two developmental experiences that shaped him as spiritual director, firstly a new understanding of iconography. He said:

So that instead of being somewhat condemnatory of people as I might have been as a young person, of people who used icons as worshipping idols. Instead of that, to appreciate the fact that through icons, people can in fact have a spiritual sight through the object or the picture or whatever in front of them and get a glimpse of something of the depth of God’s nature. So that has been a radical shift for me.

Secondly, he has come to appreciate the value of silence. He said:

I think [there has been] a gradually increasing willingness on my part, and that has been a trend for many, many years right through my hospital chaplaincy years as well, to value silences rather than feeling threatened by them and to give people space to be able to share what they would like to share.

3.3.1.4 Physical illness and emotional difficulties

SD12 spoke of the experiences that influenced her “listening and compassion for people”. She said she had God with her:

Through divorce, through leaving ministry and feeling rejected there, through illness in the family. I have been so aware of God’s walking with me through that, that I am very conscious that God is there to walk every step of the way for the directee and for myself and being open to seeing the God encounters that are there all the time.

SD16 spoke about the experience of how a death in her family was handled by some of the people attending her church. She said:

I came just after (name provided) died and when (SD12’s) grandson was very sick. And the thing that I have noticed is that there is much more of a listening to what’s going on in that experience for you and entering into it rather than trying to drag you out of it and say ‘Well OK, get on the right track again. Come on, get your act together.’ and ‘You [have] got to have faith’. There isn’t a tramline that you have to go on, that people enter into it with you. I overheard conversations; it was balm to my ears. I never experienced this in a Church ever before, where people would just enter into it and not try to do anything.
3.3.2 Interpersonal experiences

SD8 described how relating to his spiritual director in a thirty-day Ignatian retreat and in his regular relating to his spiritual director assisted his practice as a spiritual director. Speaking about the retreat, he said:

The going to the thirty-day retreat in Pymble in the Jesuit house … was a very profound experience for me as well and that made me realise that you can have an intense experience in a short span which is a graced experience with a good listener that doesn’t say anything that happens.

In relating to the benefit of this for his practice, he said:

It has been quite a shift for me to actually listen to people and listen to the Spirit within their conversation. So that has been a mutually [beneficial experience], that thirty days of silence has certainly empowered me to do that.

Concerning his own experience of being in spiritual direction, SD8 remarked:

Those experiences of personal spiritual direction have been so powerful because they have enabled me to have a release within me, the energies which I am looking for. I have been quite bemused by the simplicity of the thing at times. I am now becoming more and more aware of the subtlety within that simplicity of what is happening.

Speaking about the benefits of spiritual direction and retreats, SD11 said:

I think for me being under direction and currently doing the Ignatian Retreat in Daily Life has really shifted me and I sort of see it theologically in that I had a very much redemption-based theology based around the Eucharist and so on before. But now, while that is still there, the whole sense of God’s creativity, also that incarnational theology of servanthood and of being human as a servant, is very much influencing me in my relationship with God and others as well. So I feel a lot less directive in a sense, more hands on, let-God-do-his-creative-work type of feeling. And I feel less concerned about people and less worried about the results of my informal direction and so on because … my own journey in some ways consumes me but out of that, I sense that I can minister, if that makes sense.

SD15 acknowledged:
One very powerful influence for me in recent years was to share in a seven-day guided Ignatian retreat at Wollaston College.

3.3.3 Societal experiences

The societal experiences are categorised as follows:

(1) Community; and

(2) Education.

3.3.3.1 Community

SD8 highlighted the experience of community on shaping the advanced spiritual directors at the Centre. He said:

“I like what (SD11) said about community, the fact that we identify ourselves as the [Centre’s] community, for example. You know we’ve all been going, how long now? Ten, eight, nine years ago now we began to form ourselves into a community of ministers; sort of seeking personally, has integrated everybody, made a closeness, it’s self-supporting.

In describing further some of the communal influences that have shaped the spiritual directors at the Centre, SD8 said, that they are “more open to the influence of women” and that they have moved from:

A male emphasis on knowledge and authority to a community life which is more, which is flat and where we affirm the contribution of what is sometimes loosely called feminine spirituality.

SD8 further indicated that such an approach is “quite contrary” to his denomination, which he described as “very male hierarchical orientated and that in turn influences the kind of spirituality and practice of ministry”.

Freedom was another communal characteristic of which SD8 spoke. He said:

I think freedom is an important thing. We all feel very free whereas I suspect that that wouldn’t have been the case a decade ago. Certainly
in my case when I first went to the Redemptorist monastery, to
Gerry Pierce’s retreat, (SD10) cried, she literally cried because she
said to me [that] you have taken ten years to live down being youth
director. That’s all forgotten, and now you are going to the Catholics
(general laughter). So freedom, that’s a very important
commonality. We give each other permission. It is a community of
freedom.

SD8 saw this formative experience of community as a call from God. He
remarked:

A common experience that we’d share, I think, is the belief that we
have been drawn by God. That … we’re sharing the prospect of, I
would say without being trite, a God-given ministry. This is a God-
given ministry and that our little experiences of it and the response
that we made by people encourage us to believe that spiritual
direction is a God-given, is a grace and that as a community of
people who are starting this journey together, that we’re a graced
community in which we don’t really know where it’ll go.

SD11 reflected on some of the difficulties associated with incorporating
spiritual direction within their communal setting. He said:

I think the fact that we are a community and in some sense isolated,
being in Western Australia doing spiritual direction in Churches of
Christ, is an isolating thing, in a way. It just doesn’t happen
everywhere. … It still is, it’s fairly reasonably fresh (audiotape
inaudible) in I would think Western Australia is probably still all out
there too, compared to some of the other states. Queensland would
be well and truly out back. And New South Wales, Victoria not so
much, South Australia probably similar to us.

Commenting on this experience, SD11 said:

I have noticed that as time has gone on, [the Centre] has gone further
from the main traditional base in some ways, and you have to change
your language. Yes, so there’s a sense in which some people find it
quite threatening to come from some of our Churches. So even
talking about it can raise fear in some people, yes so I don’t know if
it’s a normal process of development but I have noticed that … Yes
that’s right. So you almost have to use different language with them.

SD13 also appreciated SD8’s insight into the communal value of freedom.

She said:
“Yes freedom to explore different types of spirituality rather than it all has to be the same, we all have to be a homogeneous bunch, that we can actually take the experiences and not fear rejection.

Another element of the communal influence was expressed by SD14 who said:

I think we can push that a little further on … in terms of trying to think of new elements. I think that hints us towards one of the new elements, in the way that (SD8) has modelled. The fact that we all have something to contribute and we know he’s the guru and he’s done a lot of other stuff but at the same time we have found ourselves doing stuff, leading sessions doing things at various times and the modelling, that we have got something to contribute, we are on a journey together. It isn’t one person that knows it all pouring down to us little underlings. I think the modelling that’s been done is the proof of what we have just been talking about.

SD14 further commented on the leadership component of this modelling. He said:

Its … leadership but there’s sharing under that leadership, within that leadership. I think it’s a healthy model. There is still someone setting the direction.

SD15 added a further comment about some of the leadership difficulties associated with introducing spiritual direction within the Churches of Christ. He recalled:

When I came back from the United States after having spent six weeks in the Protestant Episcopal Seminary in Alexandria Virginia, in the United States, of which this two-day silent retreat was a part, right in the middle actually, I longed that people in Christian leadership, particularly in Churches of Christ in Western Australia, would have the opportunity of experiencing the same sort of change that I did, myself. And, after a few years, I was in a position where I was able to try to facilitate that because I then began to arrange for a series of annual prayer retreat days for ministers and chaplains and spouses. And, when I wanted to invite a spiritual director to come to lead a day like that, I found that I just had to go outside our denomination. It was just so obvious that I needed to move outside in that choice and normally I think I’d invite an Anglican clergyman to come in and lead that sort of day. And it was pretty risky! However, I was already in an ecumenical position myself and nobody could sack me for making those sorts of, creating those sorts
of initiatives and it didn’t worry me that numbers, in the beginning, were small. But then I learned more of what (SD8) had been involved in for a long time, and realised that we were really on a common journey in a sense. Both of us were involved in trying to offer people opportunities for spiritual life and growth, which normally would not have been available within our own denomination. And so again, it was so obvious that we had to tap into the spiritual treasures and look elsewhere for what had been there for centuries and really meant a lot to the faithful in those particular denominations but was really ‘foreign territory’ to our people. Um, but there’s been a lot of change since then, it’s been interesting to watch and participate in some of the change.

Another comment was made by SD16 regarding the experience of communal changes. She said:

“But the strange thing is, even though we are moving away from the tradition, we are actually moving closer to the tradition, different traditions. Like when I was in the monastery in England, I felt totally and utterly at home with the life style, the pattern, and the prayer. It was like (audiotape inaudible) so ancient, very comfortable.

3.3.3.2 Education

SD13 spoke about the benefit of attending an intensive workshop on spiritual direction. She said:

There was a course in January where the Retreat in Daily Life was unpacked by (name provided). And that really opened it up and helped me understand what spiritual direction is all about and using the concept of people being in a different week even if they are not doing the retreat at all. That you cycle through those weeks throughout your journey, that really helped me to build up a picture of spiritual direction. That was very useful.

SD14 commented on the value of a number of personality typologies. He said:

There are probably all sorts of things in there, some things you probably wouldn’t expect, like Myers-Briggs stuff and how it is related to spirituality that was very enlightening for me. The Enneagram was the Enneagram until it was related to spirituality. That was extremely enlightening and still is for me and I find this helpful for others as well.
3.3.4 The environment and the natural world

In speaking about the experience of nature on his practice of spiritual direction, SD14 said:

I think (SD11’s) comment sparked off something in me that helped me to reflect that I think I have realised that some of my spiritual direction has been … creation-based type stuff. I reflect back that I have taken … various people who were struggling just out bush. Billy tea and damper type stuff in a place where they … had to stop thinking about all the stuff that was crowding in on them and just sat around a fire, I made them some damper and Billy tea and other places in the group, stuff we have done by watching dugongs and watching turtles lay eggs. There is a whole bunch of stuff there, whole families have been directed by the awe of God’s creation, and that is part of direction, that is a very common base for me. Creation stuff, where we appreciated the trees and colours and stuff. That’s quite insightful sometimes, where we have not done anything wordy or left-brained but people have come back from some of our four wheel-drive trips different, it is part of the spiritual direction type package, in a very rough way.

SD9 further expressed the experience of nature. She said:

Yes I feel that I was just reflecting as a youngster many years ago before I came to know and understand Christ for me, looking up at the stars, it is an experience that reflects on what (SD14) was saying, because I have always touched God’s space on the seashore or whatever and I guess that one of the things that really spoke to me as I was reading Margaret Gunter’s book and having been a part of that immersing experiencing that (audiotape inaudible), the spark of life opening and the intimacy of direction and the wonder of it and the anticipation of something happening in that circle (audiotape inaudible) as a directee and then, knowingly, something that I have come to see that something wonderful has happened and it is like an almost a birth. So that for me has been a very recent growth point for direction for me in shaping my practice.

4 Roman Catholic focus group

The participants in this group have been ascribed the codes SD17 to SD21.

The group consisted of five Roman Catholic spiritual directors who gathered for peer support in their ministry. Of the five directors, one was a
laywoman\textsuperscript{1390}, two were religious sisters\textsuperscript{1391}, one was a diocesan priest\textsuperscript{1392}, and one was a religious priest.\textsuperscript{1393} Their years of experience as spiritual directors ranged from 10 years through to 40 years. This range accounted for neither how full time nor part time, nor how formal or informal, each director’s practice may have been. The average number of years of experience as a director was approximately 16 years.

SD17 is a diocesan priest who has been involved in the initial formation of priests for the past six years. For the first eighteen years of his priesthood, he worked in parish ministry, which included spiritual direction.

SD18 is a laywoman who has been involved in spiritual direction work at a spirituality centre for fourteen years. Before that she worked in pastoral care and nursing in various hospital settings.

SD19 is a female religious whose spiritual direction practice is in her religious congregation within her role of ongoing-formation work, and within a parish in which she is a pastoral associate. She has been involved in spiritual direction work for ten years.

SD20 is a female religious who has worked as a spiritual director from about 1983 onwards. She has taken a break from this work in the last twelve months.

\textsuperscript{1390} SD18
\textsuperscript{1391} SD19 and SD20
\textsuperscript{1392} SD17
\textsuperscript{1393} SD21
SD21 is a religious priest who has been involved in spiritual direction within the various parishes he has ministered for approximately forty years.

4.1 Familial and religious background
This group of spiritual directors has had significant initial and ongoing formation as either religious or priests. Their ministerial experience ranges from twenty-five to forty years. They made little comment of their familial or religious backgrounds.

4.2 Beginning experiences
The participants’ examples presented below are collated according to Mostyn’s fourfold categorisation of human experience.

4.2.1 Intrapersonal experiences
The intrapersonal experiences are subcategorised as follows:

(1) Personal reflections; and

(2) Literature and music.

4.2.1.1 Personal reflections
SD18 considered she worked “informally” as a spiritual director in the late 1970s while she worked as a midwife in a private hospital. She remarked:

I was aware that there were a lot of needs with the women and there were a lot [of] activities going on around in the wards, it was like trying to get a job done, to get the work done.

1394 SD18 was a religious sister for 13 years.
In this situation she became “very highly sensitive to the women” and because of the hectic nature of the work she “could not attend to the pain” of these women. She said:

I used to intuitively kind of go back to the people that I felt had a bad day. I was not aware that this was spiritual direction. I would stay with them, often with the young single women who were relinquishing their baby for adoption. I would stay with them. I would often be called to give assistance to women who had a stillbirth.

Reflecting further on her experience of companioning people in such situations SD18 said:

I remember particularly working with a couple who were about to lose their dying baby. I stayed with them as they cuddled and kissed their baby until it died. My attitude, my approach, well I would be attentive to what they were saying. I would be listening, I would try to keep their confidence and I would be experiencing all this stuff that they were telling me deep inside of me. I felt I was drowning in it, with nowhere to go with it. And I suppose there was a sense in me [that] I often felt that I wanted to rescue them. Looking back now, I probably did that, but that’s where I was at that time. I was often there; I had a sense of the great needs there. So, that was when I first started in spiritual direction.

The dilemma SD18 faced was that although being in charge of hospital wards provided an opportunity for people, as she said, “to come and talk things over with me. I felt that more time was needed there, I felt and sensed that was the area that was often neglected”.

Through her awareness of this need, she discovered a desire to become more involved in the work of accompaniment. SD18 reflected:

I suppose, I was often aware of a sense of the women not being attended to in a sensitive caring way, like getting the job done, while I always loved my nursing and enjoyed it and was also into doing a good job. I could see where there were certain needs that were being neglected and I suppose it helped my own heightened awareness, the sensitivity of that. I also felt a call, I was drawn to work in this area but I wasn’t sure yet within myself. I felt that was a specialised
training but I was unsure and it was only when I was invited to become the Director of the Pastoral Care Department that this call, in a sense, became more crystallised and became more clear for me but I also was aware that I didn’t have the training. And while it was often said to me, I had trained in my religious life, I would always say I didn’t have training in my religious life. In those days you didn’t have the training like you have today and so I asked if I could do a unit of CPE, [Clinical Pastoral Education], and I did that at (name of hospital) and then I came back to the hospital for a few months. I then went and did four more units of Clinical Pastoral Education. That was a very significant time for me. Although it was a very painful and growth filled time, it was also a fairly powerful time so I became further aware of myself and also I was able to put boundaries between the patient and myself and there was a sense of a calling there. I felt that I was being called further because in some ways, some of the patients would come into the hospital, I would minister to them, and then they were gone. Afterwards I had a longing to be able to continue to journey with them.

4.2.1.2 Literature and music

SD18 recalls:

Earlier in my life, some of the reading that I did was very significant for me. I can still remember the day during the charismatic conference going for a walk and sitting down by the river surrounded by stillness and reading the book Clowning in Rome by Henri Nouwen.\textsuperscript{1395} That book had such an effect on me, where I found it very enlightening and significant which helped me to be more reflective. I think, if I read it now, it may not have the same affect on me. Also the song My God How Great Thou Art, I had a very deep spiritual experience as I was singing it, I felt enveloped by God’s love. Also The Rose [sung by] Bette Midler, that had a very different impact on my own self-journey of discovery.

4.2.2 Interpersonal experiences

For SD17, the various pastoral relationships he encountered in parish ministry influenced his practice as a spiritual director. He recounted:

It was as a priest and it was really by request, … you’re in a parish, assistant priest in a parish and it was the odd request, it was usually one off, well they never came back (group laughter). So, it was a mixture of coming for advice, coming for a bit of direction and coming from, you know I might mean ‘where is God’. Sometimes you know in Reconciliation, … the sacrament is not specifically spiritual direction, however, sometimes people were clearly asking,
… so that was … my approach to be honest. I was probably flying by the seat of my pants and my own personal experience of God and some listening skills that God’s given to me and a few things have developed, but [at] that time it is what I had and it’s probably just as well they didn’t come back (group laughter). But I’m going back 24 years.

During her early years as a primary school teacher, SD19 found her conversations with her students’ parents helped to shape her original practice. She recalled:

[The] parents of the children would come and talk, after school or sometimes in the middle of school [while] … you should be doing other things. Then some of the parishioners would come and talk [about] … the … struggles they were having or you know [about] their life with God.

During such occasions, SD19 said:

Well I just sat there and listened sometimes … [providing] listening kind of presence.

In developing such a listening skill, SD19 began to develop a stance through which she considered that within whatever was going on for these people, “God actually cared and they were important”. Moreover, she said:

It was like being with them in their struggle and giving them the dignity and honour, even though I felt, ‘God, what am I doing here, I can’t do anything!’ [It was] just being there and … listening close[ly] and [by being there showing] that somehow somebody does care. So it sort of forms the basis of the approach. So even though I felt immobilised, couldn’t do anything, at least I was there, listening, somehow being a God-presence.

Describing her own experience of being a directee, SD20 said:

For me, [my spiritual director] was a very good listener, she would probably make a statement, then I would speak and it was after whatever I said, that she kept taking the whole thing forward. So I found that very helpful for myself because I felt as though it wasn’t somebody from outside trying to put something on me, tell me something. It was the director being so good at listening, and out of that, she was drawing me that little step further so it wasn’t
something foreign. That was very helpful and I was able to use that approach myself.

Summarising the essence of her experience of being in direction, SD20 said:

I found that very true accompaniment, listening to me and reflecting back what I said.

Recalling his early experiences SD21 said:

The context was the post-ordination meetings with anybody and everybody, people calling to see the new priest, see what he was like. That was in 1960, and everything then was the Council of Trent at its best and I reckon I was my best (audiotape inaudible).

My approach was the law. I think I tried to help people to follow it according to their way of [being] right. The law couldn’t be changed, and it couldn’t be broken as far as I was concerned (audiotape inaudible). For example, I was telling a woman who came to me for help about her marriage; it’s one thing I will never forget, saying to her, I’ll never forget it, it frightened me, I said to her, ‘Of course Mary you did say words in front of God in the church’.

Reflecting back on that period in his life, SD21 said:

I was practically very keen, you know, on the law and doing God’s will, on obeying the law and perhaps that’s why I was so, the way I was at first. But that changed.

4.2.3 Societal experiences

The societal experiences are categorised as follows:

(1) Education; and

(2) Work.

4.2.3.1 Education

“In a word”, SD17 said, “it was the seminary training” that helped to shape his practice as a spiritual director. He further said:

We weren’t trained specifically; there was no unit as such for spiritual direction. But in hindsight, I think there were some things. … I was in Adelaide as a diocesan [seminarian] and there was a
In summary, SD17 said that although his formation was “not specifically [in] spiritual direction”, he learnt “some tools … that flowed over into spiritual direction”.

As previously mentioned, SD18 attended Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Describing its benefit, she said:

Well for me, with CPE when I began the training … I knew it was more than CPE experience for me, it was a transforming experience … because I was, I wasn’t as overwhelmed as I was when I was in midwifery because I felt that I was able to put clear boundaries [around my experience].

The opportunity to participate in a professional American training programme in spiritual direction was initially very influential for SD20. At that institute, she said:

I had the opportunity for spiritual direction and also some form of training, being in groups throughout the time and we were learning from one another and so it was after that, that I took up spiritual direction. To me, it meant being ready to be a support, a companion for people.

Recounting his formation in the pre-Vatican II era of seminary training, SD21 said:
It was emphasised to us in our order and if you were praying that you would have to be doing God’s will. You can’t be praying and not doing God’s will and I wanted to be sure that I was doing it. … We were always taught in the order, by the Provincial, definitely very much, that we would be used for spiritual directors. We were never given any training, but he simply said it should come from your life of prayer, we were not given any training, … it was presumed we could do it.

4.2.3.2 Work

SD20, in describing the initial formative influence of the ministry in which she became involved following her attendance at an American training programme in spiritual direction, said

My first role for doing [spiritual direction] was when I was formation director, as it was called in the congregation, and luckily, I had the training I needed to be able to offer it, and I felt confident because of the experience I had. I know that I didn’t know as much then as I know now. The opportunity from that time was the experience gained from working with one or two people, then I moved into working with a team.

4.2.4 The environment and the natural world

The group did not offer any examples that could be categorised under this heading.

4.3 Advanced experiences

4.3.1 Intraperonal experiences

The intrapersonal experiences are subcategorised as follows:

1. Literature;
2. Personal conversion and prayer experiences;
3. Personal reflections;
4. Physical illness; and
5. Significant dreams.
4.3.1.1 Literature

SD17 found the book *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*\(^\text{1396}\) helpful. He said:

To me, that was probably the first time it gave me a bit of structure as to how this Ignatian thing actually worked, why it seemed to work well for me at least.

4.3.1.2 Personal conversion and prayer experiences

Commenting on his various retreat experiences, SD17 said:

I go back to my seminary training. We had a deaconate retreat, which was an Ignatian-directed retreat, it was, I had never heard of them before, so it was a completely new experience and I contrast that then [with what I experienced by way of retreats after]. I was ordained and I went along to the annual clergy retreats, which were preached retreats, retreats with a small ‘r’, and … you stop going to them.

[I then moved] away from preached retreats, I went to (*name of retreat and retreat house*) and they were very discerning of God in my life, certainly God in the life of others. It was quite extraordinary to see, you know 18 year olds alongside 80 year olds. It was just a tremendous experience, you know, [seeing God] moving in peoples’ lives and that the people could truly get in touch with that, very extraordinary, very, very moving at least.

In speaking about what confirmed her initial approach SD18 said:

I suppose I had a few things and I feel that this carries through my whole life whether I am a spiritual director or not. I had a very significant personal experience of being really enveloped by the love of God, which nobody could ever take away. It indeed has been very significant for me throughout my life, and it happened I suppose in 1981. And it was like an originating moment, resulting in a deep inner awareness that I was deeply loved by God, and it felt that it didn’t matter if nobody ever loved me, and that’s how the experience was. It also changed the way in which I related to other people and could see them for who they were. It is, this moment that I felt, I can always go back to and to reconnect [with] because it is in this moment and [in] this experience [that] I have been empowered to be able to embrace the dark and unknown times in my own life. It’s like a ‘knowing there’, which enables me to be able to keep going with the various tribulations and seasons of my life, like whatever life offers me.

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\(^{1396}\) Barry and Connolly, 1982.
Speaking further about this experience SD18 said:

Because you can know about it, know knowledge about it, but if you don’t know out of it, … it’s like floundering. It’s like knowing out of my own experience, out of my own struggles and darkness, that there is a deeper knowing.

4.3.1.3 Personal reflections

In a brief comment SD17 made, she highlighted the need to maintain “attentiveness to our own spiritual journey”.

During the group’s discussion, SD18 reflected on an assumption that underpinned her work. She said:

Well I suppose for me … the Paschal Mystery is about really, life death and resurrection. It’s not about, for me, something out there. For me, I remember when I saw that play, “The Passion”. You know the passion play, I saw it when I was overseas, well that highlighted the Paschal Mystery, the life, death and resurrection and how we re-enact that every day in our own life, it’s not something out there, it’s about entering into it deeply, embracing it, it was really magnificent you know.

Linking her spiritual journey and her work as a spiritual director, SD18 said:

I think when I look back … I [did not always have] someone to be able to process with or walk beside me. Having done that, to be able to touch into my own journey, that struggle of, you know, the skill of spiritual direction is kind of natural now because I’m being present to my own journey.

A further reflection was:

During CPE time, I was aware that I didn’t want to spend all the time in pastoral ministry in a hospital, I loved it but I also felt being called to do something more, to journeying with people. So I suppose that was a very real thing for me. I mean, I loved the pastoral area but I felt there was something further and that I really needed to make that decision to do that thing.

Discussing her approach to spiritual direction SD18 said:
I’m very aware of when a person comes to our meeting, that God is very present as directing the direction and I would take people where they are at. I don’t set their agenda, I just take people where they’re at and leave them, and help them, invite them to be present to what’s happening. I think we’ve kind of covered that and then that sort of deeper awareness. You’re not turning on the Christian thing but allowing that deeper awareness of the Mystery we sometimes call God but other people might have another name for it.

Expressing her perception of the difference between counselling and spiritual direction SD20 said:

Well I think for me, I was aware at some particular time that being there as [a] spiritual director, and the listener, … [that] there’s a big separation between counselling and spiritual direction, in fact spiritual direction is not counselling.

Reflecting on her growing understanding of her role as a spiritual director, SD20 said:

I [came to] wonder … whether … was I … definite enough on saying to a person, ‘Where is God in that?’; ‘You didn’t speak about God.’ or something like that. So, I became aware of that and I think that I knew there was need for a change with that. And then myself, I think since making a few other retreats, where I was able to see the director so I learnt other skills that made a more rounded picture, it was more helpful I suppose, I felt that I had learned more and would be able to be a bit more sure and supportive perhaps.

Expressing another aspect of her understanding of her role, SD20 said:

Probably from hearing came understanding, you had to know, you had to ensure that that person was aware of God in their life and that I, as the director, might be able to hear for myself how God is working in them and I might be able to give that picture back, which I did. But it was most important trying to help the person to be able to see where God was, so that was one of those experiences.

The process of spiritual direction, SD20 suggested, was to assist each directee:

Attend to [their] own inner journey and in that sense hopefully … develop, and grow in inner awareness.
SD20 remarked on the different ways the directors in the group became spiritual directors. She suggested that for the priests, it was one of the “role expectations” of being a priest whether they were “trained for it or not”.

Whereas for people like herself:

If I want[ed] to take on that role, I need[ed] training for it in preparation, so it wasn’t expected of me, even though, the same as (SD19) was saying, when I was [teaching] in school, primary schools, pre-school too, you always had people talking to you.

SD21 said he came to realise that “God was the director” and he was “just the tool”. He also said:

I picked up things, first of all from being directed myself … and I also picked up things in books. I think I was somewhat directed by the Lord in books, things I needed.

Reflecting further on his work as a spiritual director, SD21 said:

It amazes me how beautiful the whole experience of direction [is] and how much God does with people.

SD21 continued:

Only recently I’ve become aware that in the darknesses which I’ve endured in my life, I was really afraid that I was going away from God and God might be going away from me … but … I realised how much he was with me.

4.3.1.4 Physical illness

SD18 remarked:

The experience of engaging in human vulnerability in the form of a number of major significant illnesses helped me to shape my own way of being present to people's human vulnerability. All these at times have helped me to engage and to embrace and to strengthen my own experience, thus enabling me to engage and help people in their own vulnerability and allowing them to enter into that sacred space, a little bit like what (SD20) was saying, you know. Touch that Mystery within, the Mystery we sometimes call God, other people might have another name for it.
4.3.1.5 Significant dreams

SD18 spoke about the details of a significant dream she had during a transition in her life. She said:

I came to an intersection, to a ‘stop’ sign, that was very significant for me in shaping my influences in spiritual direction. Yes that extensive training that we got at (name of a spiritual direction training programme) where we were able to begin to befriend, and to companion my own experiences, I was able to befriend and companion people in their own experiences, so for me a lot of things developed.

4.3.2 Interpersonal experiences

SD18 said:

I guess falling in love a few times had a very significant effect on me, and by being present to my own experiences, it helped to shape the way in which I was able to be present to others.

SD18 further remarked:

I suppose also, one of my supervisors at my CPE he was very significant in helping me to be with the experiences that I was increasingly having.

Speaking about her experience of meeting with a spiritual director during her attendance at an ongoing formation programme SD19 said, “He shot the boundaries with all kinds” of questions that were different from:

How I thought it was supposed to be, but he was so effective, you know. I think he got such tremendous [results]; people were just being changed before your eyes.

Speaking about her experience of direction during her final profession retreat SD19 said:

Round about life vows … nothing made sense [to me] so I went to this retreat director, who was a (name of religious order). He made me draw; he made me write in journals, like, not made me, but advised it because I was talking in circles the whole time. [It was] … very powerful, and underneath all that, [I] was struck by the profound respect he had for my journey.
SD20 commented:

I have also noticed, from having a spiritual director who kept coming in with their own questions and had almost nothing to do with what I was saying and it was as though, they’ve got their own agenda, and they’re trying to ask me questions that cut right across, it was so foreign to what was going on within me. I learnt from this myself to be very aware … [that] when I am there as the director, that such practice could happen [for] me therefore [I learnt] what not to do.

4.3.3 Societal experiences

The societal experiences are categorised as follows:

1. Education; and

2. Peer-group supervision.

4.3.3.1 Education

SD17 said a “major influence” was going to an English spiritual direction training programme four years ago. He said:

Unfortunately, I was only able to participate in half the course, then I had to come home. And [I] got to a point of being supervised and directing others and feeding back and there was also an in-depth looking at the Ignatian approach.

For SD18, the value of attending five units of Clinical Pastoral Education was that it helped her:

To be able to put more effective boundaries between myself and the patient thus … I progressed in spiritual direction.

Another “significant formative time” for SD18 was the opportunity to undertake training in spiritual direction at an American training programme in spiritual direction. She remarked:

That formative time was very grounding for my own development as a spiritual director; also, I was very helped by the incarnational
theological [approach] … prior to that, I had experienced receiving spiritual direction and always there was this God talk and for me, I knew God was in everything. You didn’t have to keep bringing God into everything. And for me doing this training was so affirming, for me, that I was on the right journey, and that to be confirmed in all those things helped. This was a very significant affirming time for me, although quite painful and growth filled time, but it was also significant.

SD19 indicated the value of her training as a spiritual director that she said she could “always fall back on” when she needed it.

SD20 valued the seminars the American Jesuit spiritual director, William Connelly, presented in Australia. She said:

They were always really helpful. It is important to have a good background when taking on this role. In this role, to be aware I am walking alongside the directee. I’ve always tried to find a peer-group to belong to, to find a supervision group, this I found helpful.

SD20 also appreciated the insights of Ignatian spirituality for spiritual direction practice. She said, “I found that all very helpful” because of its application to spiritual direction practice.

Speaking about a number of diocesan sponsored programmes on psychology that SD21 attended during the 1970s and 1980s, he said, “I picked up a good deal from that [such that] … my awareness is completely changed now”.

4.3.3.2 Peer-group supervision

SD18 commented:

I would say the peer-group supervision, particularly in the latter years, as I was not here in the earlier years, I did find the peer supervision helpful for me.

Reflecting on her experience SD20 said:
Through supervision, I think I learnt that the supervision was good whether it was team supervision or one on one; I think that has always been important and helpful.

Naming the benefit of such supervision SD20 said:

Listening to where the person is at, that’s something that I have learnt. I don’t think I’ve said this before, listening to the Spirit in the person and to me.

4.3.4 The environment and the natural world

The group did not offer any examples that could be categorised under this heading.

5. Conclusion

From this synopsis of the three focus groups collated according to Mostyn’s four categories of human experience, the next chapter interprets this qualitative data.
Chapter 5

Analysis of Qualitative Data and Discussion

1. Introduction

Chapter 2 reviewed a selection of the contemporary literature on spiritual direction to ascertain what similar or different developmental influences shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. The examination identified two developmental influences:

1. their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees; and
2. their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment.

Chapter two further argued the literature was deficient in understanding the similarities and differences in how these two influences shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. Chapter three proposed to research the similarities and differences in the developmental influences that shape beginning and advanced directors through a qualitative, ethnographic approach using focus groups. The qualitative data gathered from the focus groups was collated in Chapter four and the first part of this chapter analyses this data. It will be argued that dual developmental influences shape beginning and advanced spiritual directors. One influence is the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards directees. The other is the ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. The former is more influential upon the
practice of beginning spiritual directors and the latter upon the practice of advanced spiritual directors. This first section will further contend that regardless of which developmental influence is more significant, there is a vital interrelationship between the two approaches. In this first part of the chapter, a person’s ecclesial role is also examined in relation to beginning spiritual directors.

The second part of this chapter discusses the interrelation of the findings and the relevant literature. It explores how directors may initiate and sustain their capacity to adopt a contemplate stance to their directees. It examines what contributes to directors’ contextual awareness of the factors that shape the dynamic of accompaniment.

2. Analysis of Qualitative data: an analysis of the beginning and advanced experiences that shaped the spiritual directors of the three focus groups.

This section analyses the qualitative data of the previous chapter. The participants of the three focus groups were asked to discuss two topics. First, the experiences that shaped them as they began practising as spiritual directors. The researcher defined these as the ‘beginning experiences’ of the participants when they were ‘beginning directors’. Second, the experiences they reported as currently shaping their practice. The researcher defined these as ‘advanced experiences’ of the members of the focus groups that were connected with being ‘advanced directors’. What participants were asked to nominate as their advanced experiences was independent of the length of time they had been spiritual directors.
Within these two overarching categories, the data was sorted into more manageable units for analysis. This data was divided further into four domains of human experience as previously described by Mostyn: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and environmental.\(^{1397}\) The intrapersonal is the personal or intra-psychic aspect of human experience.\(^ {1398}\) The interpersonal is what occurs in the interaction between two or more people. The societal involves the experiences associated with organisational, cultural, or customary factors. The environmental refers to the experiences of the natural or created world.\(^ {1399}\)

Each category was subdivided further into analytical sections as determined by the researcher’s examination of the transcript for words, phrases, and themes that matched the relevant general category or one of its subcategories. A summary of these categories is in above-mentioned Table 2, page 227.

This analysis now addresses the data collated according to Mostyn’s four categories of human experience in relation to two perceived developmental influences that shape spiritual directors. One is their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees. The other is their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion their dynamic of accompaniment. The conclusions were drawn from the qualitative data of the focus groups according to the weight and value of the evidence. It should be noted here that similar experiences according to one of Mostyn’s

\(^{1397}\) Mostyn, 1996, pp. 181 - 182.

\(^{1398}\) A colloquial way of expressing this is what happens for a person from the ‘skin in’.

\(^{1399}\) Mostyn, 1996, pp. 181 - 182.
four domains may be analysed in such a way as to support different developmental influences. This is irrespective of whether they are beginning or advanced experiences. For example, SD2 and SD20 described two somewhat parallel interpersonal experiences in listening. For SD2, it was her one-to-one psychotherapy with her clients, and for SD20, her accompaniment of individual directees. For SD2, the innate powerlessness she felt in engaging with her clients taught her to listen to her interior movements. This enabled her to listen more attentively to her directees. This may be interpreted as enhancing her ability to take a contemplative stance. Alternatively, SD20 became aware that in accompanying people, spiritual direction is significantly different from counselling. This insight may be analysed as an advance in her contextual awareness of the differing dynamics that shape the process of accompaniment. These are clear instances that a specific domain of experience (interpersonal) can be common to two people yet influence them in different ways in their role as spiritual directors. In one case (SD2), the outcome relates to her contemplative stance, whereas for the other (SD20), it is her contextual awareness that is enhanced. Keeping this observation in mind, an analysis of the different focus groups is now undertaken.

2.1 Analysis of Anglican focus group

2.1.1 Beginning experiences

The data from the Anglican focus groups indicates the presence of the two key developmental influences in the beginning experiences of the group, namely the dual capacities for (a) a contemplative stance and of (b) contextual awareness shaping the dynamic of accompaniment. Both
influences can be observed in the Anglican focus group. The ability to adopt a contemplative stance, however, was stronger for the Anglican directors in beginning their practice.

Commentators like Jorgensen\textsuperscript{1400} and May\textsuperscript{1401} suggest that the response to and interpretation of intrapersonal experiences is an important factor in enabling a person to attend to other people. The Anglican group’s responses appear to support these claims by Jorgensen and May in that some of their intrapersonal experiences influenced them to attend contemplatively to themselves and, later, to their directees.

One category of intrapersonal experiences is ‘physical and emotional illness’ that exposes a person to their vulnerability. The physical illness of SD1 and the emotional breakdowns of SD3 and SD4 exposed them to physical and emotional vulnerability that they recognised as subsequently shaping their beginning practice as directors. Exposure to physical illness similar to that found in SD1 may enable other beginning directors to empathise with their directees’ experiences of hospitalisation and the spiritual growth that can come from such experiences. Alternatively, SD3 and SD4’s breakdowns led each to a sense of emotional connection and a growing sense of integration. In the case of SD4, it had the added effect of heightening his awareness of the need to be more critical about one’s frame of reference concerning life and God. Two observations can be made about these modes of interpersonal experience. First, as the experience of SD4 illustrates, such influences can lead directors to take on a more radical

\textsuperscript{1400} Jorgensen, 1997, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{1401} May, 1992, p. 116.
attitude such as challenging a directee to reassess a particular worldview and its implication on their understanding of and relationship with God. Second, and more fundamentally, the vulnerability evoked within these Anglican directors through illness enabled them, in their early stages of accompaniment, to attend contemplatively to their own lives and, in turn, adopt a contemplative stance with their directees.

Other intrapersonal experiences that can lead to a profound change in a person’s life are those that fall into the category of ‘personal conversion’. As Ruumet has shown, various forms of conversion may occur under different circumstances and according to different timelines. For example, the Ignatian exercises are structured intentionally to induce a conversion experience in participants, and through involvement in the Ignatian exercises, participants may be exposed to transformative experiences. In the focus groups, SD2 reported such a transformative experience through meditating on the nativity of Jesus with the assistance of the Ignatian method. Through integrating a transforming experience into one’s ongoing spiritual journey, a person may be motivated to attend their lives contemplatively. Another consequence of a transformative experience may be that a person intentionally seeks out formal spiritual direction and eventually undergoes training in spiritual direction. For example, SD2’s experience of conversion during the Ignatian exercises was part of an ongoing process that eventually led her to becoming a spiritual director and to study at an Ignatian training programme. While such transforming experiences of personal conversion may be a factor that influences people to

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1402 Ruumet, pp. 6 - 24.
undertake training, this is not the focus here. Rather the point to be highlight with regard to transforming experiences is that attentiveness to these experiences, whether personally or in dialogue with other people, may more finely tune directors’ capacity to adopt a contemplative stance to their directees undergoing similar personal conversion.

Significant dreams and dreamwork, seen particularly from a Jungian perspective, provide another example of intrapersonal experiences, which may influence new spiritual directors. By taking a contemplative stance to a number of significant dreams, SD7 underwent a sustained process of spiritual growth that in turn led this person to become a spiritual director. Working with images, participating in guided visualisations and exploring one’s story through narrative may provide similar intrapersonal experiences in that they direct a person’s attention to his or her inner life. For example, SD7 related that her ‘beginning experiences’ of attending her dreams and images seemed to have enhanced her initial ability to adopt a contemplative stance towards her directees.

Finally, within the beginning experiences of the Anglican group, another category that stimulated intrapersonal work may be broadly called ‘personal reflections’. In this type of experience, the development of contemplative stance is facilitated through the process of reflection. SD5 was invited by one of his formators to take note of his theological college’s motto, ‘Attend’. Through reflecting on the word ‘attend’, SD5 had a powerful experience that deepened his understanding of, and ability to adopt a contemplative stance. Again, the invitation or the challenge to reflectively
‘attend’ to one’s personal experience or the experience of another person may emerge through various channels such as other people, life events, literature, film etcetera. In the case of SD5, another person provided the stimulus that led to subsequent reflection. Regardless of the mode of invitation or challenge, directors who have had similar beginning experiences, may develop a powerful attentive stance to the breadth of their human experience. Such empowerment may encourage directors in their early formative stages, as it did SD5, to adopt a similar contemplative practice to those they accompany.

As Barry and Connelly have demonstrated, the experience of attentive listening by another person and the knowledge that one has been ‘heard’ may provide a person with a safe place to explore his or her story and “overcome [their] ‘unfreedoms’ that keep [them] from being more effective”.1403 This may enable a person to explore his or her creative depths and provide a model of ‘how to listen’. Conroy has demonstrated that these types of experiences are important in enabling a person to develop a contemplative stance in the spiritual direction relationship.1404 The Anglican participants’ responses to some of their interpersonal experiences likewise illustrate the developmental influence of adopting a contemplative stance. SD1, SD3, SD4, SD5, SD6, and SD7 reported the value of participating in a therapeutic relationship with a psychiatrist, a Jungian analyst, a psychotherapist, or a chaplain. The experience of attentive listening enabled SD3 to be more honest emotionally. Similar experiences can help a director such as SD3 to be better able to listen to their directees rather than “preach”

1403 Barry and Connolly, p. 184.
to them. For SD4, the experience of being attended to helped him to be more creative rather than remain a workaholic. Becoming more present to their directees, as was SD4’s experience, enables directors to accompany them, rather than being caught up in emotional chaos. ‘Being opened up’ to his feelings was significant for SD5. This experience helped him, as a director to appreciate how important it is to explore directees’ feelings in spiritual direction. SD6 and SD7 described their mutual experience of attentive listening by their theological college’s chaplain. This prompted them into adopting a contemplative stance to their own experience. ‘Received’ attentiveness also enabled them to be better able to accompany others in a similar way. The experiences of “being listened to”, “being attended to” and being “opened up” appeared to enable these Anglican spiritual directors to develop a contemplative stance in the early stages of being a spiritual director.

In the focus groups, the participants’ responses to certain societal experiences appear to influence the process of adopting a contemplative stance. As Cleary found, helping people to engage the societal dimension of their lives influenced how they relate to God. Moreover, as spiritual directors, the directors also appeared to grow in sensitivity to the personal and interpersonal dimensions of their directees.1405 This pattern, which was discerned by Cleary, was also evident in the focus groups. For instance, the experiences of SD5, SD6, and SD7, were contemplatively attended to within such diverse group processes as Clinical Pastoral Education, Lab One and Holyoake. These directors reported that this attentive engagement combined

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with the specific context influenced their beginning practice as directors. Through being attended contemplatively while participating in these group processes, they learnt to identify their emotional responses. Furthermore, they learnt that their interior responses towards a directee might be a critical indicator of what might be happening for that person. This may be particularly true where a person has been influenced by a similar societal influence, for example alcoholism or drug abuse. Learning to recognise one’s emotional landscape is important because, if directors have not dealt with issues in their own lives, they may collude with their directees in avoiding a similar issue. Learning to identify one’s interior response in different contexts, therefore, may be important for monitoring the dynamics of a spiritual direction relationship and enabling a person to deepen their ability to be contemplatively present to another person. SD5, SD6, and SD7’s responses to their societal experiences appeared to influence their process of adopting a contemplative stance.

The environment and the natural world have long been identified as stimulus for spiritual growth and healing.¹⁴⁰⁶ For example, Ruffing considers nature is a primary and recurrent way through which God reveals ‘Godself’.¹⁴⁰⁷ The responses of the Anglican participants to their experiences of the environment and the natural world illustrate factors that

¹⁴⁰⁶ Rachel Carson expresses this well, “What is the value of preserving and strengthening this sense of awe and wonder, this recognition of something beyond the boundaries of human existence? ... I am sure there is something much deeper, something lasting and significant. Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Whatever the vexations or concerns of their personal lives, their thoughts can find paths that lead to inner contentment and to renewed excitement in living. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts ... there is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter” (R. Carson 1999, The Gift of Wonder, HarperCollins, New York, pp. 100 - 101).
nourish a contemplative stance as they began as spiritual directors. SD2, SD3, and SD4 refer to the transformative influence the ambience of the environment had upon them. Although SD2 only spoke about the influence of the environment as a general influence, SD3 and SD4 directly referred to the influence of the environment on their early development as directors. SD3 reported that the healing influence of living in a rural context helped him to recover from an emotional breakdown. There is an interplay here of the influence of two factors influencing contemplative stance, the intrapersonal and the environmental arenas. SD3 later claimed that realising the transforming influence that the environment had had upon him assisted him to attend more effectively the authentic humanity of his directees. In addition, SD4 indicated that having prior experience of working in agriculture and the appreciation of everyday rural experiences helped him to identify with rural people, and as a consequence, to take a contemplative stance to their stories. This highlights another point, directors with similar backgrounds to their directees may be able to interact more emphatically than perhaps they would relate without that background. The experience of encountering God through nature seems to have promoted the capacity of these spiritual directors to adopt a contemplative stance during the initial steps they took in becoming a spiritual director. These experiences helped them to engage with what was authentic in their human experience and as a corollary, to be more sensitive to what was genuinely authentic in their directees. Through the respective heightening of their sensitivities, this facilitated these directors to be more contemplatively attentive to their directees.
Training programmes in spiritual direction are another example of a societal experience mentioned in the Anglican focus groups as shaping the beginning phase and the contextually aware dimensions of accompaniment. While attending a training programme in spiritual direction, SD3 learned the difference between psychotherapy and spiritual direction. At the same programme, that SD6 also attended, he reported an enhancement of his awareness of the nature of the formalised framework within which spiritual direction is practised. Like SD3 and SD6, directors who participate in training programmes in spiritual direction may develop a clearer perspective of their practice. Again, through participating in another formative programme, SD4’s study of spiritual theology equipped him with a richer understanding of how directees’ spiritual journeys unfold. This enabled him to accompany directees more effectively.

Finally, although not directly related to a programme in spiritual direction, SD5 was enriched by his exposure to an overarching historical, theological perspective during his seminary formation. As Barry suggests and as some of the participants in this research have observed, exposure to critical theological reflection may enable directors commencing practice to assist directees to make meaning out of their experience. Again, during a spiritual directors training programme, participants may be led to appreciate a variety of different psychological typologies. For instance, SD5 benefited from learning about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Authors such as Len Sperry, together with the experience of SD5, confirm that directors once

introduced to such paradigms about personality development would appear to be in a better position to discern the complex interconnections between the religious experience and the individual personalities of their directees. Such formative influences seem to have aided the Anglican spiritual directors to develop their capacity to be aware contextually in their early stages of being a spiritual director.

In examining the transcripts of the beginning experiences of the Anglican focus group, there is evidence for two developmental influences. There is the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance and the ability to be aware contextually of the factors shaping the dynamic of accompaniment. Although experiences related to both areas, more examples of the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance than of the ability to be aware contextually were reported in the beginning experiences of the Anglican group. This suggests that, while both influences are present, the former was more influential for this group of spiritual directors when they were beginning directors.

2.1.2 Advanced experiences

In turning to the Anglican examples of their advanced experiences, it can be seen that both abilities (contemplative stance and contextual awareness) shaped their practice. The latter influence, however, is more pronounced in the Anglican focus group. As with the beginning spiritual directors, the examples they reported can be found in their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal experiences.
Like the beginning experiences of the Anglican spiritual directors whose intrapersonal experiences facilitated powerful deep change within them, the Anglican participants also reported similar outcomes with regard to their advanced experiences. SD6 attended a weeklong Ignatian retreat in which he encountered a “sort of ‘raise from the dead’ experience”. According to SD6, this transformational moment enabled him to adopt a more contemplative stance towards his directees. With this as a basis, SD6 was able to recommend the benefits of similar retreats to his directees. Retreats\textsuperscript{1410} appear to provide an especially suitable context in which both directors and directees may develop and grow in their ability to adopt a contemplative stance towards their own inner experience as well as the experience of others.

As with the beginning experiences identified by the Anglican directors, the therapeutic relationship can offer an important context for interpersonal experiences that can enhance a contemplative stance in a spiritual director. SD2 illustrates how her advanced experience of working as a clinician smoothed the way for her to adopt a contemplative stance. She experienced an innate powerlessness while engaging in psychotherapy with her clients. This sense of being powerless taught her to listen to the inner movements of her own spirit and this in turn enabled her to listen more attentively to her directees. As Guenther\textsuperscript{1411} notes, this quality of listening is essential to the work of the effective director.

\textsuperscript{1410} It is worth noting that while retreats may provide a space for intrapersonal experiences, they also can assist retreatants to engage the interpersonal, societal and environmental dimensions of retreatants.  
\textsuperscript{1411} Guenther, 1992, p. 115.
Again, although not related to a clinical-therapeutic setting, SD4’s encounters with disadvantaged Aboriginal people assisted him in his stance to his directees. By attending to their experience of being marginalised, he widened his theological perception to include a feminist perspective. This in turn influenced his mode of presence with his directees. Interpersonal relationships whether based within clinical settings or more widely in pastoral or social settings, provide the opportunity and the challenge to engage with the power dynamics that colour relationships at all levels of interaction.\textsuperscript{1412} As Mostyn\textsuperscript{1413} and Keegan\textsuperscript{1414} observe, such an engagement may be formative in the ability to adopt a contemplative stance.

While the directors’ responses to their advanced intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences, as detailed above, enhanced their ability to adopt a contemplative stance, SD2, SD5, and SD7’s reporting on how they responded to other intrapersonal experiences seems to point to a shift in their contextual awareness. All of these participants indicated that reading a variety of books and journals influenced their practice. For example, SD5 suggested such literature helped to widen the frameworks through which he perceived how he functioned as a spiritual director. Structurally, stories generally have a beginning, middle, and an end. Similarly, the stories told by people in spiritual direction have a past, present, and future. This threefold pattern is also true of salvation history in how God actively intervenes into the different phases of the history of humankind, most noticeably so in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. This ‘divine

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1412] While this example is discussed under the heading of the interpersonal arena, it is worth noting that the experience of injustice, such as exemplified here, is an aspect of the societal category that can trigger or enhance contemplative awareness.
\item[1413] Mostyn, 1996, p. 177.
\end{footnotes}
intervention’ as seen in the stories of directees’ personal histories can also, in the setting of spiritual direction, be mirrored in the direction process. SD5 observed that, by attending to directees’ personal stories, the presence of God can be found in the past, present, and future dimensions of the directee’s lives. Through this listening attitude, a director may draw parallels between the story of God’s saving work and a directee’s story. Such an approach suggests that, just as God works through history, directors can attend to the work of God in a person’s past, present, and future.

Another illustration of contextuality that arose as an advanced experience within the Anglican focus group, relates to paradigmatic shifts in understanding. Although formal reference to shifts in worldview are perhaps more closely associated with the physical sciences and disciplines such as philosophy, they are expressed in a phrase such as “seeing the world with new eyes”. This colloquialism captures at a personal level, an alteration in human consciousness that SD5 experienced. This paradigmatic shift influenced SD5’s practice as a spiritual director in that awareness of the movement from addiction to grace within him helped him to attend similar transformations in his directees. Another shift was instigated by SD5 reading about co-dependency. This helped SD5 to reflect on the quality of his initial formation in theological college. The movement from ‘slavery to sin only happens by grace’ was another insightful shift of awareness for SD5. Further, his understanding of the apophatic and kataphatic poles of spirituality was a helpful framework within which to hold directees’ experiences. In summary, directors appreciative of diverse paradigmatic shifts within their directees may more competently attend to the immediacy
of what is spiritually unfolding within their directees. The above illustrates such shifts of awareness may invite directors to notice the movement from addiction to grace and the presence of co-dependency. In addition, directors may become more sensitive to how the movement from slavery to sin principally may emerge through the action of grace, and how directees may gravitate towards a particular spiritual polarity.

SD3, SD4, and SD7 provided further examples of how their responses to intrapersonal experiences illustrate the developmental influence of contextual awareness upon advanced directors. SD3 discussed his shift of awareness from his early fundamentalist evangelical training, which emphasised the importance of knowing “the right thing and [having] the right doctrine” to an awareness that God’s spirit is already within the director and the directee, even if they do not know it. This is a movement from a stance of knowing the answers for others to trusting the Spirit will enable directees to come up with their own insights. Whereas SD3’s experience highlighted a theological shift in the understanding and experience of the Spirit of God, that of SD4 demonstrates a shift from a counselling to a mentoring perspective. As he grew in his skills as a spiritual director, SD4 moved beyond the traditional framework, which he believed relied on counselling-related skills, to one that emphasised a mentoring type relationship. SD4 adopted a dialogical approach that he considered suited extroverted directors like him and the extraverted directees with whom he journeyed. While he did not detail this further, he may have considered the dialogical approach was better than a more conventional approach such as inviting directees to ‘sit in silence’ with what was surfacing for them. The
use of silence and stillness may be more effective in the dynamics between introverted directors and directees. Thus, through reflection on their interpersonal experiences, directors may develop their capacity to appreciate the contextual factors associated with their directees.

The phrase “multi-paradigmatic” was coined by SD7. He uses this phrase to identify that there are many paradigms through which he attends the diversity of his directees’ experiences. By using multiple frameworks, he became more skilled in attending his directees. Another intrapersonal example is SD7’s reflection on “the phenomenology of spiritual direction”. He considers spiritual direction as a process; a complex, complementary relationship wherein God is simultaneously working within the lives of directors and directees. Since spiritual direction is a many-sided discipline, if spiritual directors are to be effective, they need to engage with a multi-paradigmatic approach, which is a blend of theoretical study with immersion in their own experience.

As with the beginning experiences of these Anglican directors, training programmes were an important societal experience. SD1 and SD2’s societal experiences illustrate how an appreciation of contextual factors was an advanced influence on these directors. Whereas these spiritual directors, in describing their beginning experiences, pointed out how training programmes deepened their understanding of spiritual direction and developed their capacity to act as spiritual directors, their more advance experiences seemed to highlight how such training programmes broadened their understanding and thus enriched their capacity to act as spiritual
directors. For example, SD1 and SD2’s participation in Ignatian, spirituality-training programmes enabled them to develop theoretical frameworks about spiritual direction and spiritual development. It appears that training programmes are important beginning and advanced experiences for spiritual directors. The benefit for advanced directors from such programmes is that they may become more mindful of different theoretical frameworks while attending their directees’ experiences.

These previously mentioned examples suggest the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance and to be aware contextually shape advanced spiritual directors. Both influences appear to have shaped the Anglican beginning and advanced directors. A consideration of the quantity of examples tends to suggest that the former is more influential upon the practice of beginning directors and the latter is more significant for advanced directors.

2.2 Analysis of Churches of Christ focus group

2.2.1 Beginning experiences

The Churches of Christ group participants generally originated from fundamentalist, religious backgrounds. This influenced them to take a very didactic approach to religious matters. For example, if someone approached SD8 with a problem, he would respond with a set of answers to most questions. The particular type of evangelical setting in which SD9 was raised predisposed her to believe certain principles, including the literal truth of the scriptures. Her very didactic, religious background reinforced this position. Similarly, SD13’s theological upbringing consisted of believing that faith was very much about having the right answers. The
primary emphasis of SD14’s religious upbringing concurred with the tenets of her belief. This fundamentalist background was the starting point for this group of spiritual directors and as such, was influential in their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance and to be aware contextually of the factors shaping the dynamic of accompaniment.

As has been observed with the Anglican focus group, the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance and to be aware contextually can be analysed from the participants’ responses to Mostyn’s four domains of human experience. With the Anglican group, examples of intrapersonal experiences that led to an ability to adopt a contemplative stance included such factors as physical and emotional illness, conversion experiences, dreamwork, and reflective experiences. Likewise, participants’ responses to their intrapersonal experiences of personal conversion emerged as factor in the Church of Christ focus group. In both the Anglican and Church of Christ focus groups, personal crisis emerged as a factor that might lead to a deepening of a person’s ability to adopt a contemplative stance towards others. Moreover, in the Church of Christ group, the response to personal crisis involved a shift from an intellectual engagement towards a more experiential engagement with the questions raised through the crisis. Taking a contemplative stance to his personal crisis led SD8 to explore beyond his religious denomination. The consequence of this exploration led him to start running workshops to assist people deepen their prayer experience.

Crisis is not the only factor that may facilitate this shift in focus, intentional reflection upon experience is also important as was seen in the life
experiences of the Church of Christ focus group. As with the beginning responses of the Anglican directors to their reflective experiences, which enhanced their capacity to develop a contemplative stance, it was likewise for some of the Church of Christ focus group. SD9 spoke about a longing for a more contemplative life, which drew her into a more reflective inner space. Such a longing may be indicative of a more attentive engagement with her life.

Retreats were an important element in the Churches of Christ group as they were for the Anglican focus group. SD15’s participation in a silent retreat helped to stimulate his spiritual growth and his ability to adopt a contemplative attitude in life. For both SD9 and SD15, learning to take a contemplative stance with respect to their own personal inner space enabled them to be present to what unfolded within the lives of the directees whom they accompanied. The response of these Church of Christ directors to moments of personal conversion, reflective, and retreat experiences seem to have aided them to develop their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance during their early formative years.

With the Anglican focus group, interpersonal experiences included the importance of attentive listening by another person, being given permission to explore one’s creative depths, and being shown a model of how to listen. The importance of attentive listening by another person also emerged as an important element for the Churches of Christ group. Having their interpersonal experiences contemplatively attended to, shaped SD9, SD10, SD11, SD12, and SD13’s beginning experiences as directors. They
encountered this experience of attentive listening as a directee in spiritual direction or while on retreat. For directors like SD10, such experiences evoked a sense of call within them and an awareness of how to invite directees to encounter God within the scriptures. Similar experiences facilitate directors like SD11 to explore with their directees the quality of their relationship with God.

As seen earlier, training programmes can provide a context in which spiritual development may be facilitated, skills learned and paradigms in spiritual direction broadened. As Wirth\textsuperscript{1415}, and Rakoczy and Lindegger\textsuperscript{1416} discuss, the influence of a training programme may vary according to the person or according to the quality of the programme. SD9 and SD12 attended the same programme in spiritual direction. Their reports on its influence on their practice varied. Although both participants experienced quality spiritual direction, SD9 found it marginally more beneficial than SD12. Through the direction that they received, they had the interpersonal experience of attentive listening by another and they believed this experience subsequently influenced their ability to attend to their directees.

The importance of reading books and journals was noted in the Anglican focus group. Whereas the directors in the Anglican group, however, made this observation concerning reading as part of their advanced experiences, in the Church of Christ focus group, the reading of relevant books and journals was linked with directors’ beginning experiences and the fostering of their contextual awareness. SD10 and SD14’s responses to the various books they

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Wirth, 1997, pp. 30 - 39.
  \item Rakoczy and Lindegger, 1997, pp. 20 - 32.
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read on the practice of spiritual direction helped to provide constructs that assisted them to attend to their directees. For example, SD10 was influenced by “Margaret Guenther’s book on Holy Listening” and SD14 was drawn to the “Barry and Connelly type approach to direction”.1417 Directors examining such constructs and others that articulate the process of accompaniment may develop their practice through drawing reflectively upon the breadth of literature relevant to spiritual guidance, and through incorporating different theories into their practice, they may well enhance the quality of their accompaniment. Such integration of theory and practice may assist directors to finetune intelligibly the necessary micro skills associated with adopting a contemplative stance.

Only a couple of examples (SD10 and SD14’s responses to various books) indicate the influence of contextual awareness upon the Churches of Christ beginning directors. The quantity of evidence is that the primary influence shaping the beginning experiences of these directors was their capacity to assume a contemplative stance.

2.2.2 Advanced experiences

In reviewing the advanced experiences for the Churches of Christ directors, the developmental influence of adopting a contemplative stance was more significant than the appreciation of contextual factors. This contrasts with the findings of the Anglican focus group. Again, their experiences may be examined through their responses to the domains already explored: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and environmental experiences.

1417 This is a reference to Barry and Connolly, 1982.
Exposure to life incidents involving personal crisis that brings a person face to face with his or her own vulnerability, has been seen to be important in enabling a director to cultivate a contemplative mode of presence. Directors affected by personal crises, for instance, may be able to listen more compassionately to their directees. In the Church of Christ focus group, these types of experiences included several of those linked with transitions in life. SD16 had to deal with a death in her family. She attended to what was happening to her rather than taking refuge in a dogmatic faith. Through processing her experiences of divorce, leaving the ministry, and dealing with family illness, SD12 was led to the awareness that God was with her through these major life changes.

In the Anglican group, conversion was named as an important intrapersonal experience enabling a director to adopt a contemplative stance. Likewise, in the Churches of Christ focus group, SD8 underwent a freeing conversion during an Ignatian retreat. Directors touched by such transformative experiences in retreats may encourage their directees to be open to the same kind of process in their lives. Through such experiences, as Jorgensen suggests, directors may experience God as “a deeply personal presence, uniquely seeking out every human being while also being universally present.” SD8 became aware of the uniqueness of his spirituality through the emergences of an intimate relationship with God within his life of prayer. The emergence of intimacy with God through retreat, personal

prayer and like experiences may enable directors to appreciate the uniqueness of their directees’ spiritual journeys.

It was noted earlier that imaginative activities such as working with dreams, images, and visualisations might provide a way of encountering and deepening the contemplative dimension in life, and that if directors have been empowered to attend the diverse movements of their own interior lives, they may better facilitate their directees to attend themselves. In the Church of Christ focus group, SD15 discovered active imagination was a powerful tool to attend his experience. In the Anglican focus group, participants’ responses to paradigm shifts in awareness were linked with contextual awareness. In the Church of Christ focus group, however, shifts in paradigms are linked to developing a contemplative stance. For instance, a significant change occurred in SD13’s life when she began to make a shift from her head to her heart. This shift enabled her to deal better with issues from an experiential point of view rather than relying solely on knowledge of Scripture and doctrine for the right answers. Directors in touch with their affectivity may better attend their directees’ issues rather than feel obligated to give directees the right answers. In SD9’s case, a similar type of paradigmatic shift occurred that helped shape her stance as a director. It was a change in her ‘knowing’, from one that was objective and intellectual to one more embodied and subjective in nature. She moved from a faith based on belief in the factual truth of the scriptures to one that was more personal, namely that the scriptures rang true for her.
In the Anglican focus group, reflective experiences were identified as important in fostering a person’s contemplative manner of being present to directees. Likewise, meditation helped SD11 move away from relying on proof texts alone as a source of knowledge. This may indicate that directors may better accompany people to encounter God through having first been faithful to their own meditative practices. SD14 echoed a similar change; his appreciation of faith moved from an emphasis on what one believed to in whom one believed. Further, SD10 grew to appreciate the value of silence and time. By incorporating such insights, as did SD14 and SD10, directors may appropriately realise the importance of silence and waiting upon their directees’ experiences. SD15 also developed an appreciation of silence through attending a silent retreat in the United States. One consequence of directors who are familiar with the benefits of silence is they are more likely to give their directees the space they require to say what they would like to disclose.

Once again, in this focus group, the experience of attentive listening by another, and the experience of being encouraged to allow creative energies to emerge were two interpersonal experiences that arose. SD8 felt graced through being noticed and heard in spiritual direction. A sense of creativity and liberation emerged within SD11 through being a directee. Raycraft suggests that such contemplative listening, when applied within a communal context, enables groups to develop “a new, creative, and transforming energy”.1419 This suggests that such interpersonal factors, which singly or

1419 Raycraft, p. 43.
even perhaps through interplay with one another in individual or communal situations, may help to shape a director’s attitude and mode of attentiveness. One of the societal influences alluded to earlier is the influence of feminism in a paradigmatic shift in perception. A broadening perspective better equips a director to be more like a companion with their directees. SD8, for instance, moved from a masculine, spiritual emphasis on knowledge and vertical authority to a feminine, spiritual appreciation of a more horizontal approach within his community. Further, while the experience of community can range from being restrictive to liberating, having personally experienced the breadth of such communal experiences can enhance directors’ personal flexibility. For example, SD13 experienced an opening up, a freedom, through her experience of community at the Spirituality Centre of which she was a part. This led her to explore different types of spirituality. In contrast, the Roman Catholic director SD21 noted that for a time, he was entrapped by the legalistic restraints of his ecclesial community. While immersion in such ecclesial experiences of community is not intrinsic to directors’ capacity to contemplatively attend, such engagement can enable directors to hear more sensitively similar experiences in directees. Moreover, directors’ participation in other secular communal experiences may also sensitise them to attend contemplatively directees who engage in various civic, social, and sporting organisations.

Besides responding to their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal experiences that developed their contemplative stance, these directors reported responses to other intrapersonal and societal experiences that
highlight the developmental influence of contextual awareness. Two intrapersonal examples are SD8 and SD13’s revelatory understandings that conversion was an ongoing experience rather than a single event. This radically changed their perception of conversion and their stance to accompaniment. A further intrapersonal example is found in SD8’s appreciation of an incarnational approach to life. This breakthrough moved him from a theological stance that drew heavily on a question-and-answer approach to biblical studies. It led him to one that relied more on insights derived from contemplation and mystical practices. In exploring this, SD8 found the Benedictine and Ignatian spiritualities helpful. From Benedictine spirituality, SD8 learnt about reflective silence. This taught him to “listen out of reflection”. Further, it can be inferred from Woolaver\textsuperscript{1420} that astute directors discover the existence of a parallel conversation in spiritual direction. The director and the directee listen to the Spirit and they heed what emerges from the dialogue within that parallel conversation. From Ignatian spirituality, SD8 discovered that the scriptures were autobiographical. Although the scriptures can be engaged with as received encounters, they can also provide a place to have one’s personal encounter with God. Through utilising their contextual awareness of such ‘powerful tools’ as the Benedictine and Ignatian paradigms, directors may assist directees to move from being captivated to being liberated by the spirit of the text.

As was seen with the Anglican focus group, training programmes and the study of personality typologies can be significant societal experiences. Such

\textsuperscript{1420} Woolaver, pp. 9 - 18.
societal experiences in this group illustrate how contextual awareness influences the advanced practice of directors. Through processing such societal experiences, directors may be better attuned to how directees develop spiritually and consequently are able to accompany them more effectively. For example, SD13 and SD14 respectively attended an intensive training programme in spiritual direction and studied a number of personality typologies. SD13 learned the Ignatian concept that directees are in one of four different ‘weeks’. SD14 gained insight into the relationship between spiritual development and personality types.

This evidence suggests that those factors shaping both contemplative stance and contextual awareness may do so in relation to the experience of both beginning and advanced directors. Influences on the capacity to adopt a contemplative mode of presence, however, seem more pronounced for both beginners and the more skilled directors. In comparing this outcome with that of the Anglican focus group, both groups agree that contemplative attending is more influential upon directors as they begin practice. They differ in what they understand is the main formative advanced influence upon directors. What gives rise to this difference? This will be explored after the analysis of the Roman Catholic focus group.

2.3 Analysis of Roman Catholic focus group

2.3.1 Beginning experiences

A consideration of the background of the Roman Catholic focus group helps to appreciate the developmental influences that have shaped their beginning and advanced practices as spiritual directors. The average experience of this
group of five directors is approximately 16 years. All have engaged in several years of initial and ongoing formation as religious and priests.\textsuperscript{1421} They mostly commenced their initial religious or priestly formation in their late teens or early twenties. At the time the focus group was conducted, their involvement in full-time ministry ranged from twenty-five to forty years.

Like the preceding Anglican and Churches of Christ groups, the influences determining the ability to adopt a contemplative stance and to be aware contextually of the factors that mould the dynamic of accompaniment shaped their beginning experiences as directors. While both influences were operative, the former was prominent as may be seen from examples of their interpersonal and societal experiences.

In the Roman Catholic group, in contrast with the other focus groups, examples of experiences that might be classified as intrapersonal did not emerge when the participants remembered their early days of being a spiritual director. Nevertheless, as the following case illustrates, there is an interrelationship between intra and interpersonal factors. SD20’s response to her interpersonal experience as a directee influenced her contemplative stance as a beginning director. Her director listened and helped her to unpack slowly her experience.\textsuperscript{1422} As can be seen in this example, being exposed to a nurturing environment may prompt intrapersonal processes within directees. When these directees, in their turn, become directors, this experience of attentive listening and being supported, may provide them

\textsuperscript{1421} While SD18 is a laywoman, she was a religious sister for a number of years.

\textsuperscript{1422} In the Church of Christ focus group, SD9 and SD12 reported similar experiences.
with a model of praxis, which enables them to listen actively to their directees.

In the Anglican and Church of Christ focus groups, several examples of societal experiences were named such as Clinical Pastoral Education and exposure to different cultural groups. In remembering their early days as spiritual directors, members of the Roman Catholic focus group recalled a number of different societal experiences that illustrate the connection between their response to these influences and their ability to adopt a contemplative stance. For example, while working in parish ministry, a number of parishioners sought SD17’s help. This drew upon his personal experience of God and upon some of the listening skills learnt in the seminary. Such informal requests prompted SD17 to become a spiritual director. The experience of being sought out specifically by others to help them in their spiritual lives is a common initiating factor to becoming a spiritual director as Galli observes. One of the consequences of being drawn to accompany others in their spiritual lives may be recognition of the need to seek formal training.

A further example of a societal factor influencing a person to become a spiritual director arises out of a specific clinical context. As a midwife, SD18 became very sensitive to the spiritual needs of some of the women she was attending. While the women’s medical needs were addressed, some of their deeper concerns were overlooked due to the hectic pace of the hospital.

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1423 Galli, p. 15.
Sensitivity to such situations can lead some medical professionals like SD18, to undertake more training in pastoral care and spiritual direction.

Another societal factor is found in the setting of education. The role of the teacher, especially as a source of advice and wisdom, can lead students and their parents to attend their life more deeply. For example, students, parents and some parishioners would frequently seek out SD19, a primary school teacher, to talk about life issues and their experience of God. These experiences prompted her to cultivate a more contemplative attitude and mode of attentiveness in pastoral settings.

A profound societal change for the Roman Catholic focus group was the Second Vatican Council. One of the consequences of this council in some places and for some people was a liberating of ideas and praxis. For example, SD21 was ordained a priest in the early 1960s before the changes of the Second Vatican Council. People sought him out to discuss issues concerning them. Taking an authoritarian approach to spiritual direction, SD21 directed people according to what then was the unwavering dictates of the law. Such a stance does not necessarily mean that a spiritual director is unable to be a listening presence and, through this, convey to directees that they are important to God. The inner freedom required of a director to be able to flow with the experiences of a directee, however, might create an uncomfortable or conflictual situation for the director if his or her authoritarian boundaries are pushed beyond the accepted rules and regulations governing religious life. Fortunately, since the Second Vatican Council, approaches to spirituality, and by inference spiritual direction, have
changed significantly.\textsuperscript{1424} These changes mean that there is now an opportunity for directors who were trained to take an authoritarian manner in spiritual direction to grow in intra and interpersonal awareness as well as to incorporate more flexible approaches.

In all three focus groups, training programmes are one of the societal experiences to be identified consistently as having an influence on beginning spiritual directors as enabling them to adopt contemplative stance. SD17, SD18, and SD20 each discussed how various professional training programmes assisted them. In the seminar, SD17 learnt about the stages of human development and some of the theory and practice of counselling. Whether through participation in seminary formation programmes or secular courses, the learning of basic listening tools and theories about human development appears to enable directors to enhance their practice. As in the Anglican and Church of Christ focus groups, Clinical Pastoral Education was named as an important training programme. SD18 found Clinical Pastoral Education formative. CPE and other similar programmes may assist participants to establish appropriate professional boundaries. Learning to set boundaries is one of the many transferable skills that may assist directors in their practice. Finally, a professional training programme in spiritual direction helped SD20 learn the skills of accompaniment. By integrating related skills, directors may be better prepared to apply these in accompanying directees. Later as the director of formation, SD20 did so with trainee religious sisters.

These examples illustrate that the capacities to adopt a contemplative stance and to appreciate contextual factors shaped the beginning experiences of the Roman Catholic directors. While this focus group reflected on the early experiences that shaped their praxis, however, the importance of adopting a contemplative stance through becoming a listening presence appeared to outweigh the importance of these types of experiences to increase their contextual awareness within the process of spiritual direction. Nevertheless, the evidence for this claim about beginning directors seems less than that which supports the similar claims made in the other focus groups. Overall, this evidence suggests that while both developmental influences are present, the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance may be more significant.

2.3.2 Advanced experiences
The dual developmental influences concerning contemplative stance and contextual awareness are present again in the advanced experiences of the directors in this focus group. As will be seen, the latter, however, is more dominant. The following examples, drawn from their discussion, illustrate all four of Mostyn’s contexts that have been used in this analysis.

In parallel with observations made by the other focus groups, illness, dreams, and retreats provide examples of intrapersonal experiences. For SD18 these were found in times of major illness. In addition, significant dreams affected her during transitional phases in her life. As has already been noted, directors with experiences akin to these may appreciate their own and subsequently their directees’ vulnerabilities more profoundly. For SD17 retreats were an important factor. This director changed from
attending retreats that were preached to those that were directed. Participating in such processes assisted him to connect with his own spiritual experience and to witness how similar transformation occurred in the lives of others. In this way, retreats may enable a person to adopt a contemplative stance towards their own lives and the lives of others. In so far as this transformation occurs during the early formation of spiritual directors, retreats may be identified as a developmental influence.

Many spiritual directors may begin their journey towards becoming spiritual directors through being involved as directees. The spiritual direction relationship provides the context for significant interpersonal experiences to occur. SD19 and SD20 developed their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance through interpersonal experiences emerging from what it was like for them as a directee. SD19 thought her journey was profoundly respected. It might be suggested that insightful experiences of respect may engender respect. If as a directee a person experiences respect, that person may be able to transfer the attitude and behaviour of respect to those persons he or she subsequently attends. In such situations, the practice of respect may deepen his or her ability to listen from a contemplative stance. For SD20, however, it was the opposite in that her director “kept cutting across” what she was saying and inserting his own agenda. Such negative experiences may be cautionary incidents for directors ensuring their respect for their directees. Because of what happened to her as a directee, SD20 resolved not to replicate such intrusive behaviour in her dealings with directees.
In the previous examples of the influence of intra and interpersonal experiences, the directors in the focus group linked these with fostering and deepening their contemplative stance with respect to their directees. These experiences, however, may also increase the director’s ability to appreciate contextual factors in spiritual direction and consequently broaden the scope of their awareness. When this broadening of a person’s horizon occurred in the other focus groups, the significant developmental influences had their roots in major life changes and crises and in paradigmatic shifts in theology and praxis, literature and retreats. In the Roman Catholic focus group, significant shifts in theological outlook and praxis were identified again. Although the link between stages and transitions in life was evident in the other focus groups, SD18 takes this link one-step further through her association of the stages of life with the Pascal Mystery. She maintained that underpinning an appreciation of her work was an understanding of the Paschal Mystery. What is seen here is an attentiveness to the phases in a person’s life that are viewed through the perceptual lens of the Pascal Mystery. Such an attentiveness grounds the practice of direction in the personal context of a person’s life story as well as in the Christian story. In accompanying directees, SD18 reflected that she has learned the importance of simply taking people where they are at in their lives. It is through this radical acceptance of the other, that spiritual directors may help directees to be present to what is happening within their experience, and to be open to a deeper awareness that resides within that reality. The consequence of such an awareness of contextual factors and the ability to accept people where they are in their spiritual journeys, may be an experience that SD18 described as an encounter with the “Mystery sometimes called God”.

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Another example, noted above, of the link between intrapersonal experiences and the development of contextual awareness arises from the engagement with literature. Often SD21 was directed through what he read in books. This helped to broaden his understanding about what was occurring in the lives of his directees. As seen in the other focus groups and in the literature review, the exposure to a range of classic and contemporary spiritual classics and texts on spiritual direction may equip directors to be able to better accompany their directees. Directors equipped with a broad range of such contextual appreciations are better placed to discern and respond to the concrete particularities of the diverse spiritual movements that may unfold in directees’ lives. Viewed from another perspective, directors restricted to a singular or even a few perspectives may overlook the specific sensibilities of their directees.

In the Anglican focus group, one of the participants observed that making the distinction between counselling and spiritual direction was an important interpersonal factor that influenced his work as a spiritual director. In the Roman Catholic group, SD20 also makes a similar observation with respect to interpersonal experience and her ability to appreciate how contextual factors shape accompaniment. SD20 became aware that in accompanying people, spiritual direction is significantly different from counselling. As has been seen, the significance of understanding such distinctions opens the possibility that directors will more effectively focus their conversations on where God is within their directees’ human experience and reflect that back
to them, rather than being lured into problem solving action associated with counselling and psychotherapy.

Many of the societal experiences identified in the Anglican and Church of Christ focus groups were also named in the Roman Catholic focus group. Those undergone by SD17, SD18, SD19, SD20, and SD21 helped to develop their abilities to appreciate how contextual factors shaped their accompaniment as advanced directors. For instance, these directors had participated in various formal and informal training programmes in spiritual direction. Involvement in one of these had given SD17 an appreciation of an Ignatian approach to accompaniment. In another programme, SD18 found that learning about the incarnational, theological approach was very affirming of how she accompanied her directees. SD19 found her training confirmed how she accompanied people. Formation within a formal process also offered SD20 a good background to understand the role of a director. SD21 discovered that various courses in psychology offered him other ways of considering the process of accompaniment. SD18 and SD20 spoke of the value of one-to-one and peer-group supervision. Through their participation in training programmes, these directors were helped to listen more effectively to where directees may be in their lives and to where the Spirit of God is active.

Overall, the Roman Catholic focus group presented examples of the dual developmental influences explored in this study. They are the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards directees and the ability to appreciate those influences that contribute towards the growth of a contextual
awareness of the many dynamics present in accompaniment. The latter influence, however, appears to be more significant for this third focus group. Other than SD18, the group members seemed generally more reserved about sharing their personal experiences than the other two focus groups.

2.4 Conclusion

Before a general finding is considered, the issue raised earlier in the analysis on the Churches of Christ focus group needs addressing (see infra p. 319). Two interrelated questions emerge. How do the Churches of Christ group and the Anglican and Roman Catholic groups perceive the nature of the main formative influence upon advanced directors? If there is a difference, what gives rise to it? A failure to resolve this issue may raise a question about the validity of the findings of this study.

The evidence from the Churches of Christ group suggests that the capacities to adopt a contemplative stance and to be aware contextually of the factors that shape accompaniment are informing their praxis as advanced directors. The development of a contemplative stance, however, is more predominant in this group. In contrast, the influence of contextual awareness in regard to advanced directors is emphasised more by the Anglican and Roman Catholic groups. Even when considering their experiences from the perspective of advanced directors, although the Churches of Christ group presented particular instances of influences for beginning and advanced spiritual directors, their examples appeared to have a higher correlation with beginning directors. Nevertheless, it is significant that, in comparison with the years of experience within Anglican and the Roman Catholic focus groups.
groups, the majority of this Churches of Christ group were beginning directors. The average number of years the members of the group had engaged in direction was three to four years. It could be argued that, overall, the phrase ‘beginning directors’ characterised this group as a whole. This helps to explain why the group provided similar responses of the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance as the more significant influence shaping both beginning and advanced directors.

This raises another matter. If the explanation just noted about the composition and experience of the Churches of Christ group is feasible, it raises a question about the accuracy of the evidence of this particular group concerning the influences shaping advanced directors. Relevant in this context is the contrast between the majority view of this particular group and the few members, a minority, who could be considered advanced directors. SD8, for instance, had been a director for considerably longer than many of the others in the group. An interpretation of his contribution suggests he appreciated that contextual factors influenced his practice more as an advanced director. This correlates with the findings of the Anglican and Roman Catholic focus groups. It also confirms the assertion above about the dominant nature of the Churches of Christ group as one of beginning directors. Their responses and general focus on contemplative stance were consistent with their level of experience as directors, just as those of the more advanced director, and his awareness of contextual issues, were consistent with his years in that role. Having examined and accounted for the differing perceptions about the nature of the main formative
influence upon advanced directors and the reasons behind them, some further observations are needed here.

This study argues that dual developmental influences shape the practice of beginning and advanced directors. To recapitulate, these are:

1. Their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees; and
2. Their ability to appreciate the contextual factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment [contextual awareness].

The data suggests that the former influence was more significant for beginning directors with the latter was noteworthy for advanced directors. Underlying these claims, however, is the assumption that regardless of which developmental influences is more significant, there is a necessary interconnection between the two.

In spiritual accompaniment, a spiritual director adopts a contemplative stance to the transformational, relational process of a directee with what is Ultimate (explored in the first chapter of this study). In adopting this manner of being ‘present’, a director notices and attends to the diverse interior movements that constitute the relationship between the directee with mystery and the realm of Ultimacy. To focus effectively on the directee’s interior movements a director, however, needs to appreciate the contextual factors that influence how both the directee and the director attend the relational process of the directee with what is Ultimate (however that is perceived and named by the directee).
The relational character of the transformation process, as noted above, is central here. This does not refer only to the directee’s orientation towards what is Ultimate or to the relationship between director and directee. Both parties in the direction process live within a network of relationships, something captured in the fourfold framework of this study (intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and environmental). The process of transformation is one of growth in one’s awareness of the scope and depth of a range of relationships, primarily of the one to Ultimate mystery but also, if growth is to be authentic, of the network of relationships that provides the context of human existence.

In the more specific area of awareness and presence in the matrix of relationships, the focus groups point to a necessary interconnection between how a director adopts a contemplative stance towards a directee and how a director finely adjusts his or her contemplative focus. The director puts this into practice by observing relevant, contextual factors that inform the overall process of accompaniment. This interrelationship can be compared to the act of a person using a magnifying glass to gaze upon a precious stone. By finely adjusting the focus of the magnifying glass according to its optimum, focal length, the precious stone can be seen more or less clearly. In this analogy, the person is the spiritual director. The precious stone is the transformational, relational process of the directee with what is Ultimate. The magnifying glass is the director’s contemplative stance. The optimum, focal length is analogous to the contextual factors that shape the process of accompaniment.
This image applies to the relational process. In a spiritual direction encounter, a spiritual director takes a contemplative stance (the person takes up the magnifying glass). The spiritual director directs his or her contemplative focus towards the transformational, relational process of the directee with what is Ultimate (the person focuses the magnifying glass on the precious stone). By considering relevant, contextual factors, the director finely adjusts the focus of his or her contemplative stance (the person finely adjusting the focal length of the magnifying glass to its optimum length to appreciate fully the precious stone). This allows both the director and the directee to gaze on the directee’s relational process with what is Ultimate. Simultaneously, the directee embraces and is embraced by the transformational power of this encounter.

Before completing this analysis, an observation SD20 made is worth investigating further. For the priests in her Roman Catholic focus group, being a spiritual director was an expected part of their role as priests. This was regardless of whether they were trained for it. She then referred to the remaining religious women and laywoman in her focus group. She remarked that they often needed to partake in formal training before they were accepted in the role of a spiritual director. This occurred even when they were quite experienced in dealing with people’s concerns.

In exploring SD20’s observation, the question can be posited: what factors draw or facilitate people to consider becoming spiritual directors? In this, two elements stand out. For some directors, it is an expected or an easily accessible extension of their existing ministerial role. For others, however,
who are not so formally involved in ministry, it may evolve out of an experience of personal conversion or of being approached by others and a subsequent desire to facilitate others to engage their spiritual journey. Such an assertion does not suggest that those who become involved in accompaniment as a direct result of, or as an extension of, their ministerial work, may not have had some experience of personal conversion in their lives. This brings the study to an examination of how those in ministerial roles became involved in accompaniment.

Starting with the Anglican focus group, for SD3, being a spiritual director was a part of being a priest and being what he described as “a sticky-beak about other people’s lives”. In a similar way, by virtue of their roles as priests, spiritual direction was a natural part of the ministry of SD4, SD5, SD6, and SD7. For most of them, the parishes within which they ministered shaped the context within which they mainly offered spiritual direction, although SD4, SD6, and SD7’s practices later reached out to people and groups outside their parishes.

Unlike the previously mentioned Anglican clergy and the Roman Catholic clergy next to be analysed, the Churches of Christ ministers did not have a preconceived notion that being a spiritual director was a part of their role as a minister. Although SD8, SD11, SD12, SD14, and SD15 are ministers, or had been active as pastors at different times in their lives, they did not consider that being a spiritual director was a formal part of their role as a minister. This is not to deny that they ably companioned members of their congregations. They did not consider being a spiritual director was an
identifiable part of their ministerial role. For example, SD8 said that he was a minister for a number of years before he had even heard of spiritual direction. For some of the other ministers, it was only through their contact with SD8 and their participation in some Anglican spiritual direction training programmes that they became interested in spiritual direction and later became directors.

Regarding the clergy in the Roman Catholic group, SD17 and SD21 considered that being a spiritual director was part of the role of being a priest. For SD17, operating as a spiritual director was a part of his parish duties. This was even though, initially, he had little formal training. SD21 suggested that in his early days of being a priest, the general thinking was that being a spiritual director was considered an extension of what one learnt from one’s own prayer and that formal training was not given. It was simply presumed that one was a spiritual director because one was a priest.

In reviewing how the clergy in the three focus groups became involved in spiritual direction, the established denominational understanding of their role as ministers influenced how they practised. For the Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy, being a spiritual director was an identifiable element of being a minister. This was not so for the Churches of Christ clergy. These men and women became spiritual directors through personal experience, or through contact with other religious denominations in which spiritual direction was a more common component. It is worth noting that although being a spiritual director was an assumed role for the Anglican and
Roman Catholic clergy, they often exercised this role without the benefit of formal training.

This analysis turns its attention to how directors not formally designated as ministers began practice. Often what drew such directors into this work related more to personal stimulus as opposed to being an assumed part of a particular role. The following illustrates this. In the Anglican focus group, SD1 and SD2 experienced a deepening or a renewal of their faith such that they experienced a desire to help others in a similar fashion. Each in turn found attending various professional training programmes assisted them in becoming directors and to be recognised as such. In the Churches of Christ group, SD9, SD10, SD13, and SD16’s attraction and involvement in spiritual direction were assisted through their association with SD8 and their involvement in assorted spiritual development courses and, for some, training programmes in spiritual direction. In the Roman Catholic group, SD18 came to the work of spiritual direction after having worked as a midwife, and because the women she assisted needed someone to listen to them. This led SD18 to become a pastoral care worker and, later, a spiritual director. Throughout this time, her own experience of ongoing conversion also prompted her to pursue this work and undergo professional training in spiritual direction. SD19 and SD20 had been involved informally in spiritual accompaniment for many years. They became more formally involved through their respective religious orders sending them to undertake training. After completing their training, they became involved in various roles as formators within their respective religious orders. They later became

\[1425\text{ The literature review appears to be silent on the topic of the influences that lead people to undertake becoming a spiritual director.} \]
spiritual directors to directees outside their religious congregations. In summary, these directors’ experience of personal conversion primarily stimulated them to become involved as spiritual directors. The exceptions to this were SD19 and SD20. Their religious orders, by sending them to train as directors, initiated their more formal involvement in accompaniment.

It appears that various factors contributed to what initially drew or facilitated people to consider becoming spiritual directors. Some spiritual directors commenced practice through their association with their ministerial roles. Other directors took up the work of accompaniment as a result of experiences of personal conversion and a subsequent desire to assist others to develop spiritually. This assertion presumes that spiritual directors are affiliated with a religious denomination. While it is conceivable that a spiritual director may have no denominational affiliation, the twenty-one directors sampled were associated with one or other of three denominations. The resultant limitations of this selective sample leave unexplored the experience of those directors who may commence or continue their practice with little or no denominational connection. This raises the contentious issue as to what degree or otherwise does a director need to be associated with a religious domination to claim to be a director. While this issue is noteworthy, it is outside the essential focus of this study.
3. Discussion of the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance and to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment

3.1 Introduction

The existence of dual developmental influences was previously analysed. The second part of this chapter draws attention to:

1. What initiates and sustains the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance?; and
2. What contributes to the ability of directors to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment?

3.2 What initiates and sustains the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance?

In the field of spiritual direction, various writers argue that directors’ abilities to adopt a contemplative stance to their directees is central to being a spiritual director. May suggests that directors attend the realisations of how God is present moment-by-moment in their lives and that this attentiveness is a prerequisite to assisting directees to attend similar realisations of the presence of God. Jorgensen considers that directors simultaneously need to take a contemplative stance towards themselves and their directees. She asserts, God “is present in everything and always self-revealing”. Conroy makes two recommendations. First, spiritual directors need to notice the movements or countermovements within themselves prior to seeing their directee. Second, directors need to pay

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1426 May; Jorgensen, 1997; Conroy, 1995A; Castley.
attention to three interconnected areas: the experiences of their directees, their own interior movements, and God’s presence. Directors by noticing and becoming attuned to these movements and counter movements within themselves and their directees may become more proficient in accompaniment. Castley advocates that supervisors observe and attend to their intuitions, or contemplatively attend their interior movements.\textsuperscript{1430} By doing so, they are less likely to introduce irrelevant issues or impose their perceptions on a supervisee.

The literature is confirmed by the experience of the focus groups in this study. As directors grow in the ability to notice and attend to the dimensions of their human experience, they may develop their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees. Some directors in the focus groups suggested that growth in the ability to notice and attend to the dimensions of their own personal human experience helped them to develop their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees. Alternatively, in being guided by their directors to engage the affective content of the scriptures in meditation, SD11 and SD14 were introduced to ways of adopting a contemplative stance to their experience. Because of this, SD11 began to facilitate his directees to encounter God through their own experience rather than through scriptural and doctrinal knowledge alone. Further to this, SD14 began to focus his directees’ attention more on ‘Whom’ one believes in rather than in what one believes. If directors cannot notice and attend to their human experience and the movements of the Spirit of God in their lives, it seems unlikely they would be able to recognise, let

\footnote{\textsuperscript{1430} Castley, p. 29.}
alone assist directees to become aware of how God’s Spirit is moving within their lives. As May observes, for directors to attend their directees, directors must first attend to their own experience.1431

Just because directors grow in the ability to notice and attend to their human experiences and their awareness of the presence of God, this does not guarantee they are more competent in accompanying directees. Further skills may be required to attend to directees’ experiences. Traditionally, silence has provided a backdrop against which the movements of the Spirit might be discerned.1432 It was through the structured silence of the retreats in which SD9 and SD15 participated, that they were enabled to listen more deeply to their affectivity and subsequently to the affectivity within their directees. It needs to be noted, however, that there is a similarity, yet a slight difference, between directors’ abilities to notice and attend to their experience and that of directees. The similarity is the focus of directors upon the interior movements within themselves and their directees. The difference is found in the context within which directors focus. Directors are participants in and observers of their experience. They can attentively observe their directees’ experience but never fully claim to participate in it. The unique subjective manner in which directors learn to attend to themselves may be partly transferable to attending directees. Directors’ particular styles of personal attentiveness, however, may not always be compatible with the different personal circumstances of each directee.1433

1433 Sheehan, p. 51.
A director’s ability to appreciate a directee’s individual circumstance is fashioned by his or her capacity to evaluate the subtle contextual factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. As has been discussed, there is a broad spectrum of contextual factors in the literature. For example, a director attuned to the issues associated with alcohol and substance abuse may more effectively take a contemplative stance to a directee whose family of origin was marred by an alcoholic parent. Directors may be more alert to how a directee’s possible unresolved issues with his or her alcoholic parent may affect a directee’s relationship to God. From another perspective, a director’s heightened awareness of and personal struggle with issues associated with alcohol or substance abuse may effectively dispose him or her to the art of attending. Consequently, a director may be more alert to the presence of possible countertransference issues. Directors aware of such issues are more likely to be freer psychologically to be present to their directees instead of being caught up in avoiding or colluding with their directees’ possible dysfunction. SD7 drew attention to the role of Holyoake in learning to deal with his alcoholic family as well as in learning both intra and inter-personal listening skills. Together with enabling SD7 to adopt a contemplative stance, the program at Holyoake may have also helped SD7 to attune finely his ability to notice and respond to such issues related to substance abuse in his directees.

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1434 The contextual factors reviewed encompassed: Contemporary contextual issues; Group context for spiritual direction; Organisation context for spiritual direction; Ignatian context; Trauma; Feminism; Alcohol and substance abuse; Cross-cultural contextual issues; Youth; Aged-care related issues; Illness; Dying; Professionalisation of spiritual direction; Gay and lesbian issues; Interdenominational issues; Internet; Spiritual direction to the homeless; Rural spiritual direction; Men; Specialised groups; Beginning directors.

1435 Stockton, p. 44.
Several commentators argue that therapeutic relationships enhance the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees. As has been noted, Barry and Connelly suggest that supervision offers supervisees the opportunity to learn “how to overcome the ‘unfreedoms’ that keep [a director] from being more effective”. Birmingham and Connolly recommend that helping directors attend to their affective responses when relating to their directees is a significant learning tool in addressing such ‘unfreedom’. Equally, Conroy considers that directors growing in appreciation of their reactions and responses during direction sessions assist them to maintain a contemplative focus with their directees. Castley suggests Ignatius of Loyola’s rules for discernment can assist supervisors and supervisees to attend to the interior movements or impulses within them. While the literature reviewed advocates the therapeutic value of professional supervision, it fails to refer to other therapeutic practices.

In the focus groups, a number of directors attributed their enhanced capacity to adopt a contemplative stance to their directees to the therapeutic relationships in which they had engaged as clients. The attentive listening SD5 received in psychotherapy helped him to “crack open” his feelings. Such an experience helped SD5 as a director. In experiencing his own feelings fully, he was better equipped to explore what happens in the directees’ “feeling world rather than what they were thinking about”.

1436 Barry and Connolly; Birmingham and Connolly; Conroy, 1995A; Castley.
1437 Barry and Connolly, p. 184.
1438 Birmingham and Connolly, pp.164 – 171.
1440 Castley, pp. 25 - 30.
1441 The researcher acknowledges that other literature beyond the scope of the current literature review may contain such reference.
Likewise, SD5’s Jungian therapist helped him to attend to his dreams and consequently SD5 was more able to attend to the dreams of his directees. SD8 was encouraged by the “graced experience [of being] with a good listener” during a thirty-day retreat. Being intentionally and effectively being listened to and heard such as in a thirty-day retreat, may have a profound therapeutic value, which can empower those in the role of spiritual director to “actually listen to people and listen to the Spirit within their conversation”. Although not a formal therapeutic relationship, the approach SD20 adopted to her directees derived from her experience of being with a director who was “so good at listening”. Her director was skilled in “drawing” her out, a “little step” at a time. This study argues that directors’ participation in therapeutic relationships or other formal interpersonal relationships such as spiritual direction may facilitate their contemplative capacity to attend to themselves and in turn to their directees.

Remembering that therapeutic relationships are an example of interpersonal relationships, there are three suppositions that underpin this assertion of the importance of therapeutic relationships. First, it is assumed that therapeutic relationships provide a reliable means by which directors can attend to their experience. By emulating her director’s approach to accompaniment, SD9 confidently developed a “model [of] practice”. Another basic assumption is that unless the therapist is a competent practitioner, directors may derive little benefit from their therapeutic session. In extreme circumstances, directors may be harmed by incompetence and unethical therapy. The therapeutic practice needs to be reputable. If one were to consider therapeutic practice along a continuum, then at the least damaging end, the
practice may be ineffective whereas in the worst scenario along the continuum, it may be criminally abusive. It is vital that the practice assists people engage with their human experience. A second assumption is that emphasis on therapeutic relationships may unfairly assume directors can emulate their therapists’ skills in accompanying directees. Engaging with skilful therapists may benefit directors. Being recipients of such skills, however, does not necessarily guarantee directors can easily replicate these skills with directees. The contrary can also occur. For example, SD20’s director asked her questions that “cut right across” what she was processing. Hence, because of poor modelling in a therapeutic relationship, SD20 focused on ensuring that she did not deliberately interfere with directees’ processes. The third assumption is that there is a causal relationship between growth in the ability to notice and to attend to the dimensions of a director’s personal human experience that may determine his or her capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards his or her directees.

Various members of the three focus clusters indicated that developmental group processes promoted their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance to themselves that consequently assisted them to attend their directees. For example, through participating in the group processes of Clinical Pastoral Education, SD5 became aware that his “feeling response to a person was likely to be a critical indicator of what was going on in [his directees]”. From this, it might be postulated that learning to trust one’s intuition is both a valuable lesson to be learned and an essential practice in attending to others in spiritual direction. By inference from Castley’s notion of self-supervision, directors who observe and attend their intuitions are less likely
to introduce irrelevant issues or impose their issues on directees.\textsuperscript{1442} SD7 valued the group experience of ‘Lab One’, which assisted him with listening skills. It has already been observed that he received an intense level of attentiveness while attending Holyoake that assisted him “to deal with the issues of an alcoholic background in the family”. SD3 learnt “to shut up rather than preach at people” through attentive listening during a training programme in spiritual direction that built on what he had experienced within Ignatian retreats.

It appears that programmes such as CPE, Lab One, and Holyoake and other such courses that promote and practice attentive listening can facilitate the ability of directors to listen to the deep interior movements within their directees. As Fagin\textsuperscript{1443} and Raycraft\textsuperscript{1444} point out, such a quality is essential in a spiritual director. From another angle, Creed\textsuperscript{1445} suggests supervision in their internship may promote directors’ capacity to attend contemplatively to themselves and their directees. Overall then, directors who are exposed to a variety of developmental group processes as noted above and are also able to focus reflectively on their own experience as directors, may be better able to attend their directees.

Cleary takes quite a different approach to the formation of spiritual directors. She uses a tool called the “Experience Cycle”.\textsuperscript{1446} This tool trains spiritual directors to engage the societal dimension and its impact on their relationship with God. Directors who learn to attend to societal dimensions

\textsuperscript{1442} Castley, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{1443} Fagin, pp. 11 - 16.
\textsuperscript{1444} Raycraft, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{1445} Creed, 1998, pp. 37 - 42.
\textsuperscript{1446} Cleary, pp. 26 - 31.
may be more sensitive to the personal and interpersonal dimensions of their
directees.\textsuperscript{1447} Besides training programmes, other group processes may be
used to promote the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance to
themselves, which in turn facilitates them to attend to their directees.
Edwards recommends peer-group supervision\textsuperscript{1448} as it enables spiritual
directors to share their difficulties and appreciate what is happening in their
relationships with their directees.\textsuperscript{1449}

The evidence from these commentators and from the focus group
participants indicates that developmental group processes may promote the
capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance to themselves and this
consequently assists them to attend to their directees. For this to occur,
however, the developmental group processes need to be structured in certain
ways. Underlying this claim are three assumptions. The first assumption is
that developmental group processes may be a dependable means through
which directors can attend to their experience when the group processes are
based upon sound and clinically proven group theory. In such situations, it
could be very helpful that group leaders be skilled facilitators and that the
goals of the group endeavour specifically to assist people to engage their
human experience. For example, five units of Clinical Pastoral Education
assisted SD18 to learn how “to put more effective boundaries between
[herself] and [her] patient thus … [she] progressed in spiritual direction”.

The second assumption is that directors may emulate the skills and different

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\textsuperscript{1447} Cleary, p. 26. \\
\textsuperscript{1448} Conroy proposes two models for peer group supervision: (1) a structured process for
ongoing spiritual direction and (2) a structured process to use during retreats (Conroy 
1995A, pp. 91 – 105). \\
\textsuperscript{1449} Edwards 2001, p. 130.
\end{flushright}
approaches of their group facilitators. Such emulation could assist some directors to attend directees. For example, attending an American training programme in spiritual direction was a “significant formative time” for SD18. It was “very grounding” for her development as a spiritual director both in skills development and theology. It introduced her to taking a ‘hands-on’ contemplative approach to accompaniment. It may be helpful to remember, however, that not all methods may be helpful. For example, the strategies necessary to confront a person with an alcohol-addiction during a family-intervention session may not be appropriate to use with a shy directee.

The third and perhaps most important assumption is the recognition that in spiritual direction programmes, while trainers and trainee directors are all participants in the group processes of the training, power may not be equally shared within the group. Wirth reminds trainers to exercise vigilance in addressing issues of power in working with trainees. To pretend otherwise could lead to the misuse of power in a group. Although Wirth discusses power in the context of training, there are other power relationships in other settings that can be addressed and interestingly, the issues of how power is exercised may be influenced somewhat by the overarching paradigm within which practice operates in different cultural contexts. For example, SD21’s initial formation as a Roman Catholic spiritual director occurred in a pre-Vatican II environment. The hierarchical and legalistic overtones of this context contributed to him taking a very authoritative and at times a dominating approach to his directees. In the contemporary context, Jeff

perceives that there are diverse approaches to spiritual direction training. North American programmes tend towards the professionalisation of spiritual direction. The English approach leans towards pastoral care. While both generally incorporate theoretical and experiential learning, the former is stricter than the latter about how trainers and trainees maintain the professional boundaries between them. These issues will be taken up and expanded in Chapter 6 when recommendations for the professional development of spiritual directors are set out.

In addressing the question “What initiates and sustains the capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance”, what has emerged in the study? Central factors are an increasing attention to the movements of the Spirit of God within the self and within others, together with a developing appreciation of the factors shaping the dynamic of spiritual direction. Growth through developmental group processes may facilitate contemplative listening and recognition of contextual factors. It was seen in the first part of this chapter, that the participants in the three focus groups linked several different types of experiences, such as exposure to their vulnerability, conversion or transformation, imaginative work, and reflective practices, to their being drawn to becoming spiritual directors. It might be argued that the same experiences may lead a person into becoming a therapist with an interest in spiritual matters. This raises the question of the subtle differences between spiritual direction and other practices involving accompanying other persons such as in psychotherapy or supervision. While it is interesting to note this, it will not be examined now; next explored is the

1451 Jeff, pp. 29 - 36.
capacity of directors to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment.

3.3 What contributes to the capacity of directors to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment?

In this following section, a range of influences will be considered. The literature devoted to spiritual direction reveals a wealth of perspectives and approaches to the practice of spiritual direction. The results of this study mirror this diversity and support the notion that good practice involves directors improving their appreciation of paradigms about spiritual direction through incorporating relevant theological, philosophical and psychological perspectives into their practice. SD7 used the term “multi-paradigmatic” to describe an approach to spiritual direction that may integrate such different perspectives. Through adopting SD7’s “multi-paradigmatic” approach, directors may develop a broader and richer contextual framework within which to accompany directees. The study now addresses the relevance of these three theological, philosophical and psychological perspectives in developing contextual awareness.

In examining first the breadth of theological perspectives that may improve directors’ appreciation of paradigms about spiritual direction, the following influences are considered: the Ignatian Exercises, theological systems (Paschal Mystery, Trinitarian, and the Lifeframe), metaphorical images
(nature, pilgrimage, midwifery, mystagogue, and iconography), Mostyn’s model, and spiritual classics.

The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises were a formative influence on some of the focus group participants. Some directors integrated the theological framework of the Exercises into their practice. For example, SD2 and SD13 used the theoretical framework of the exercises to provide a helpful backdrop with which to adopt a contemplative stance to their directees’ experiences. SD1 observed that when she “seriously understood … the nature of proper Ignatian detachment”; this was “just absolutely revelatory”.

In the words of one of the focus group members, the spiritual exercises of Ignatius may provide directors with “a framework for [their] thinking, which [may be] extremely helpful … in working with people”. Through attending a nine-month, Ignatian-based, residential, spiritual-direction training programme in Canada, SD2 learnt the skills and the theory with which to accompany her directees. SD13 became acquainted with the Ignatian concept that directees can be in one of four different ‘weeks’.

Awareness of the different dimensions of the Ignatian paradigm may enable a keener appreciation of a directees’ spiritual development and so facilitate the process of contemplative listening within the context of a directee’s life.

While the theological framework of the Ignatian exercises has been helpful to many directors, its contemporary use is not without controversy. Cooper believes that three elements of the Spiritual Exercises have been misunderstood. Cooper, p. 25. He argues against the criticism of Roger Haight that

\[1452\] Cooper, p. 25.

\[1453\] The criticism is found in Haight, 1997, pp. 3 – 5.
the *Spiritual Exercises* are “essentially too other-worldly, too individualistic, and too therapeutic (too concerned with personal issues and not looking outward to address the crying issues in society and culture)”.\(^{1454}\) In answer to the first criticism, Cooper interprets Ignatius as “caring for the whole person in the here and now and not just getting them to heaven at some unknown future time”.\(^{1455}\) Although Cooper claims that the Exercises attend the whole person, the Exercises use primarily intrapersonal, meditative methods. For example, the Exercises’ guided meditations invite retreatants to reflect principally on scripture passages through active imagination. While beneficial, this intrapersonal method does not so readily promote retreatants to engage with other domains of their human experience. From this perspective, it may appear that the Exercises in their original form may fail to appreciate that humankind lives within an expanding cosmos. Recent studies in the Exercises, however, attempt to interpret them in terms of contemporary understandings of the cosmos and of creation.\(^ {1456}\) Such awareness may radically reconceptualise the theological frameworks within which directors accompany directees. This is particularly true in assisting directees whose principal theological paradigm is redemption-based theology underpinned by an old steady-state cosmology. Directors assisting directees to attend their spiritual experience within a modern cosmological perspective may help directees encounter new spiritual depths within this expanded worldview. This may encourage directees to reassess their redemption-based theology and perhaps find new ways to theologise about their experiences.

\(^{1454}\) Cooper, p. 29.  
\(^{1455}\) Cooper, p. 30.  
In response to the second critique, Cooper argues that when appreciated from within the cultural context of Ignatius’ era, the use of such a term ‘individual’, heralded a movement “away from [people] passively receiving their destiny from a feudal world view to actively making their own way in the world”.\textsuperscript{1457} Ignatius was a pioneer in adopting this view. This view may correlate well with the individualistic emphasis that prevails within Western culture. In cultures in which self-identity aligns more with a sense of communal consciousness, the Ignatian approach, however, may be of less value. It would be important for directors using the Ignatian exercises to be aware of this contextual factor.

Concerning the third assessment, Cooper posits the Exercises focus directly on a “contemplative regard on the outer world of everyday life as the context of prayer”\textsuperscript{1458} and not on a “privatisation of spirituality”.\textsuperscript{1459} Cooper argues the Exercises regard contemplatively the external world as the context for spiritual engagement. As discussed in the first point, the Exercises’ main method of engagement, however, is through intrapersonal methods alone and from the discussion within the focus groups, the intrapersonal experiences arising from the Exercises led to the deepening of their ability to adopt a contemplative stance. Moreover, it could be claimed that the Spiritual Exercises provide an interpretative framework and a set of tools that contribute to the ability of directors to appreciate the contextual factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment.

\textsuperscript{1457} Cooper, p. 31.  
\textsuperscript{1458} Cooper, p. 35.  
\textsuperscript{1459} Cooper, p. 33.
Considering further the range of theological perspectives that may develop directors’ appreciation of paradigms about spiritual direction, the theological systems associated with the Paschal Mystery, the Trinity, and the Lifeframe are discussed. From a theological perspective, SD18 considered that the stages of life, death, and resurrection of the Paschal Mystery were a valuable motif for directors to keep in mind. Such a framework may provide a map with which to journey with directees throughout the different stages of their lives. Further, Fagin invites directors to perceive the doctrine of the Trinity as a theological framework with which to accompany directees. Working within this paradigm, directors may facilitate directees to accept the invitation to enter into the Mystery of God.1460 Finally, Keegan1461 approaches practice from the theological perspective of action for justice. He urges directors to attend the whole “frame” of a directee’s life.1462 This frame constitutes four arenas: “the Individual, Interpersonal, Structural, and Environmental”.1463 He argues that Directors who engage this “Lifeframe”1464 with their directees may more effectively “do justice” 1465 in spiritual accompaniment. In addition, the Lifeframe may help to broaden a director’s understanding of the directee’s experience. Consequently, directors may assist their directees to be more present to the movement of God within the diversity of their experiences of life.1466

1460 Fagin, pp. 9 - 10.
1461 Keegan, 1995, pp. 4 - 19.
1466 Keegan, 1995, p. 15.
The experiences of the focus groups were examined under a similar division as the Lifeframe. Whereas Keegan refers to a structural arena, in the present analysis, however, the term societal was used. It could be argued that systems and an understanding of the power dynamics within systems are features underlying structural and societal approaches. These terms, therefore, may be comparable. If such is the case, then it might be claimed that drawing upon experiences from the whole Lifeframe was important in facilitating the ability of directors to be aware contextually of the factors that shape the practice of spiritual direction. While the participants in the focus groups do not explicitly make this reference, it can be inferred from the examples they proffered. For example, SD1’s reflection on her intrapersonal experience of physical illness and hospitalisation led her to reflect on how the context of “being incarcerated in hospital, actually can produce enormous spiritual growth”. Pondering her interpersonal encounters as a directee, SD10 drew from this an appreciation of the contextual connection between how the stories of scriptures reflected what was happening in her life. This awareness assisted her to hold better her directees’ stories. SD14 incorporated his learning about the Myer-Briggs and the Enneagram from the societal context of an educational training programme into his practice. This expanded SD14’s contextual awareness of how to attend others. While recovering from an emotional breakdown, SD3 lived in a rural community. His affective encounter with nature helped him to begin to engage with his humanity such that he “learnt to just be ordinary”. This aided him to be aware contextually when accompanying others that whatever was happening in their lives was authentic. These

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1467 SD3’s story illustrates the interaction between a Lifeframe event, societal influence and an environmental influence.
examples from the four arenas (intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and environmental) highlight that attending to the whole Lifeframe is worthwhile in promoting directors’ capacities to be aware contextually of the factors that shape spiritual accompaniment.

Continuing an appreciation of the breadth of theological perspectives that may enhance directors’ awareness of paradigms about spiritual direction, the theological value of the metaphorical images of nature, pilgrimage, hospitality, teaching, midwifery, mystagogue, and iconography are examined. As already noted, the influence of nature is another factor that may contribute to spiritual direction praxis. Ruffing, Neels, and Donnelly-Barton offer theological frameworks based on encountering God in nature. As mentioned earlier, Ruffing suggests that nature often mediates the presence of the divine. As directees often take such experiences for granted, an understanding of the significance of nature can enable directors to probe “for traces of God’s presence and activity.” SD3’s encounter with nature after his emotional breakdown connected him to his humanity that later opened him to a deeper experience of God. SD14 found taking people out into the Australian bush helped them to connect to “the awe of God’s creation”. SD9 further expressed her experience of nature. As a youngster, “looking up at the stars” spoke to her of God.

Neels envisages the metaphor of the meandering flow of a river backwards and forwards across the terrain to illustrate the unfolding nature of
Directors companioning within this perspective may help people to “be attuned to their personal experiences in life, as they come and go like the course of a river”. This standpoint relieves spirituality from being approached as a “performance chart”. It ensures that spiritual guidance becomes more attuned with assisting people to stay “with their inner process and moving forward with it, in the reality of the here and now”. Donnelly-Barton uses the metaphor, ‘The Arctic as Desert’, to accompany people for whom life is somewhat lost, empty, dull and colourless. In comparison to the familiar wilderness image of the desert, this is a fresh image to describe the spiritual journey. Through the power of adopting new images drawn from nature, Directors may invite directees to look at innovative ways to take a contemplative stance to their spiritual experiences. Although images drawn from nature may be powerful in spiritual direction, these types of images did not arise strongly within the discussions of the focus groups. If at a future time, the focus groups were reassembled and images were intentionally explored, such images derived from nature, however, might emerge as a contextual factor shaping these directors’ praxis.

The human imagination is not limited to images drawn from nature. Other images may arise from different life experiences. For example, Miller theologises about practice from her experience of leading pilgrimages. On such journeys, a pilgrim experiences liminality, those times when “one is

1473 Neels, pp. 7 - 10.
1474 Neels, p. 10.
1475 Neels, p. 10.
1476 Neels, p. 11.
1477 Donnelly-Barton, p. 44 - 50.
1478 Miller, pp. 7 - 13.
Directors working from a similar perspective may help directees to be more open to an inner path. Guenther uses three metaphors with which to theologise about spiritual directors: “spiritual direction as hospitality, teaching, and midwifery”. Each image is drawn from life experience and offers a feminine perspective with which to theologise about practice. Diltz draws upon the midwifery metaphor, and using this metaphor considers it is a privilege to witness “the birth of the sacred” in their directees. McCarty unpacks the metaphorical term ‘mystagogue’ to describe a director’s contemplative stance. Mystagogues facilitate “others’ attentiveness to mystery”. Directors who assist their directees to develop a language to talk about their spiritual experience are better placed to lead their directees more deeply into mystery within the ordinariness of their life. As can be seen from the preceding examples, spiritual direction involves entering a liminal space where language strains against its limitations and images, and metaphors arise as means to express the inexpressible. Expression, however, is not confined to words and speech. The image may also be used as a mode of expression in spiritual direction as well as providing a framework with which to engage in praxis. For example, drawing on iconography, Hieb perceives spiritual direction as a work of art. Working within this paradigm,

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1479 Miller, p. 8.  
1480 Miller, p. 9.  
1481 Guenther, 1992, p. 4.  
1482 Diltz, pp. 18 - 22.  
1483 Diltz, p. 18.  
1484 McCarty, pp. 7 - 15.  
1485 McCarty, p. 9.  
1486 McCarty, p. 9.  
directors invite directees “to enter a new space that is created between the icon and the person gazing at it”.  

Finally, in this section discussing the range of theological perspectives that may add to directors’ awareness of paradigms about spiritual direction, Mostyn’s model and spiritual classics are examined. As previously discussed, Mostyn’s model draws principally upon the anthropological theology of Karl Rahner. Within this model, directors may attend to an unfolding, threefold anthropological-theological movement within directees. The first movement comprises the objective, conceptual or interpretive level; the second movement, the reflexive level, and the third movement, the experience of encounter with Mystery at the non-thematic level. Although such a framework was not systematically articulated by any one of the focus group participants, elements of this process could be discerned in their stories. More specifically, some of the experiences related, such as the conversion effect of the Ignatian exercises, facilitated the move from one level to another, in this case the move from a conceptual understanding of one’s religion to a reflective engagement with one’s faith.

The theological frameworks of spiritual classics and their commentators contribute to appreciating the dynamics of accompaniment. For example, Bäumer and Platting draw upon the writings of the anchorite period in the sixth century. Directors in this vein may become “mystagogues, teachers of the art of contemplation, of becoming close to God, and of achieving

1488 Hieb, p. 21.
1489 Unfortunately, respondents were silent in this matter.
1490 Mostyn, 1996.
1491 Bäumer and Platting, pp. 28 - 45.
union with God”. This early monastic approach to accompaniment welcomed all desires and passions as acceptable, to be transformed gently over time. Chryssavgis investigated the early desert tradition within the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Directors who emulate this approach may consider themselves as a spiritual elder who acts as a guide, physician, teacher and icon. Woolaver and Hide respectively obtain insight through reflecting upon Elizabeth of the Trinity and Julian of Norwich. Woolaver notes Elizabeth’s instruction to directors “to remain as intentionally present to God as is possible – each moment of each day”. Directors may enhance their contemplative stance to their directees when they focus on God’s presence. Hide links Julian of Norwich’s theology of grace with spiritual direction. Directors developing a similar sensitivity to Julian’s “sweet touchings of grace” help open their directees to the profound awareness on the presence of grace at the centre of their being. They then may be more present to it in their directees. Through reflection on the classics, some members of the focus groups deepened their ability to engage contemplatively as well as become more sensitive to the contextual factors that influence the dynamic of spiritual direction. For example, learning to understand the apophatic and kataphatic poles of spirituality expanded the context within which SD5 held directees’ experiences. SD8 expressed appreciation for the depth of Benedictine and Ignatian spiritualities. He grew to value that they are powerful ways to assist

1492 Bäumer and Platting, p. 43.
1493 Bäumer and Platting, p. 40.
1494 Chryssavgis, pp. 40 - 50.
1495 Woolaver, pp. 9 - 18.
1496 Hide, pp. 6 - 12.
1499 Hide, pp. 6 - 12.
1500 Hide, p. 12.
1501 Hide, p. 12.
directees. SD8 unearthed the power of reflective silence in exploring Benedictine spirituality. From Ignatian spirituality, he came to depth his awareness of how scripture could be autobiographical and as such, it could provide a space in which to encounter God. In this discussion on the breadth of theological perspectives that may improve directors’ appreciation of paradigms about spiritual direction, these commentators and the above-mentioned directors draw upon various theological frameworks to attend their directees. This suggests that appreciating theological frameworks helps fashion good practice.

From a consideration of theological frameworks, this discussion very briefly turns to how an appreciation of paradigms from a philosophical perspective promotes practice. SD7 understands there is a “phenomenology of spiritual direction” in that directors may find that what occurs in the relationship between God and a directee complements what transpires between God and the director. While such philosophical paradigms appear under-represented in the discussion of the focus groups, this does not indicate necessarily that philosophical frameworks do not have any influence. Their precise bearing and influence may require further observation and analysis. Nevertheless, from this very limited amount of evidence from the focus groups, there was an association, at least in the perception of one participant, that a relationship exists between philosophical frameworks and their influence on directors’ development of a broader contextual awareness.

Finally, moving from this brief deliberation of philosophical paradigms to a more lengthy examination of how, through directors integrating
psychological frameworks, the dynamic of their accompaniment may be enhanced. Among the topics addressed are the insights derived from counselling; distinguishing spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices; drawing upon various psychological processes; appreciating transference and countertransference issues; the setting of professional boundaries, and being cognisant of trauma and difficult transitions.

In appreciating how psychological interpretative frameworks help shape the dynamic of accompaniment, Leech draws upon an insight from counselling that psychological self-awareness is essential for emotional maturity and is “the necessary prelude to the knowledge of God”. 1502 Here, therapy and spiritual direction overlap. They are, however, different in that spiritual direction is “concerned with wider issues than personal adjustment and social adaptation”. 1503 Through understanding the relationship between spiritual direction and counselling, directors may be able to focus more accurately their directees’ attention on the spiritual content of a particular life event. This awareness may also provide clarity to directors as to when the issue a directee presents may be addressed better by discussing the matter with a therapist.

Although several commentators distinguish spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices, these practices may contribute to an understanding and practice of spiritual direction. One of the key therapeutic practices arising in the literature concerns supervision. Barry and Connelly make a distinction between spiritual direction and supervision. Spiritual direction focuses on a

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1502 Leech, p. 105.
1503 Leech, p. 104.
“directee’s experience with the Lord and on his resistance to those experiences”.\textsuperscript{1504} Supervision concentrates on the “director’s experiences as a director and the lived beliefs that colour his responses to the directees”\textsuperscript{1505}

Conroy distinguishes spiritual direction from supervision and consultation. In spiritual direction, a director adopts a contemplative focus towards the directee. In supervision, spiritual directors process the inner experiences evoked during direction sessions. Directors who develop an appreciation of their reactions and responses may better assist directees; they may respond more freely to their directees.\textsuperscript{1506} At this point, it is important to note the difference between supervision and consultation. In consultation, the consultant focuses on how to effectively diagnose and treat the problem with which directees present.\textsuperscript{1507} Hence, it can be seen that whereas supervision focuses on the spiritual director, consultation concentrates on the directee.\textsuperscript{1508} Directors may be more attuned to the specific dimensions of the contextual framework within which accompaniment is practiced through becoming aware of these distinctions.

Although, the participants in the focus groups did not specifically discuss supervision, a number of the participants distinguished between spiritual direction and other professional practices. SD3 stressed the value of recognising the difference between psychotherapy and spiritual direction. SD6 developed a clearer focus about practice by distinguishing the formalised framework within which accompaniment is practised through appreciating the Ignatian approach to spiritual direction. SD20 focused more

\textsuperscript{1504} Barry and Connolly, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{1505} Barry and Connolly, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{1506} Conroy, 1995A, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{1507} Barry, 1988, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{1508} Conroy, 1995A, pp. 156 – 159.
clearly while accompanying directees through learning to differentiate spiritual direction from counselling. One the consequences of directors learning to distinguish spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices may be like that of SD20 who learned to concentrate on where God is within directees’ human experiences and reflect that back to them.

Theorists such as Barry and Connelly, and Conroy, and the spiritual directors in the focus groups, distinguish clearly spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices. Through attention to this distinction, it could be suggested that directors may enhance their capacity to appreciate different paradigms associated with spiritual direction. This presupposes that first, however, it is possible to delineate clearly the object and method of spiritual direction from that of other clinical practices, and second, that this delineation is valuable. As was set out in Chapter 1, this is possible to achieve by defining the material object of spiritual direction, the phenomenon to be investigated, as the directee’s spiritual experience. The formal object of spiritual direction, the aspect of formality under which the phenomenon is to be investigated, is the transformational, relational process of the directee with what is Ultimate. Spiritual directors may attend to this process by means of adopting a contemplative stance towards it. This demarcation enables spiritual directors, formators, and trainee directors to focus clearly on what is integral to good practice.

Further to discussing how incorporating psychological frameworks may enhance the dynamic of accompaniment, various psychological processes are discussed. With respect to psychological frameworks, both SD3 and
SD5 referred to Jungian psychology and SD5 mentioned the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was helpful. Further, SD7 drew heavily on his understanding of the psychology of addiction he gained at Holyoke. SD17 benefited from learning about the stages of human development according to Kohlberg and Erikson. Finally, Rich proposes that the psychological processes of Psychosynthesis can assist the work of accompaniment. Psychosynthesis puts people “in touch with the greater wisdom of the transpersonal (higher) self and with the healing power of God’s grace, or the Holy Spirit”.

Directors attuned to and trained in these types of psychological practices are more likely to address better the emotional blockages that inhibit people’s relationships with themselves, others and God.

Other psychological frameworks that may enhance the dynamic of accompaniment are the psychological insights into transference and countertransference issues, and the setting of professional boundaries. For Barry, Wicks, and Conroy, psychological insights about transference and countertransference help shape the process of spiritual direction. Barry comments that transference and countertransference “reactions are neither criminal nor crazy; they are ordinary, mundane human phenomena”. Attending to them can reduce potential harm. Wicks recommends directors need not fear facing such issues when they inevitably arise. Directors will better help directees to have a clearer relationship with

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1509 Rich, pp. 41 - 43.
1510 Rich, p. 43.
1511 Barry, 1985, pp. 7 - 11.
1512 Wicks, pp. 12 - 16.
God. Conroy remarks that attention to transference and countertransference assists directors to achieve deeper insight into themselves and their past relationships.

Based on the observations by these theorists, it might be postulated that directors aware of such psychological issues are less biased and more effectively adopt a contemplative focus to their directees. Whether this is true for all spiritual directors, many directors in the focus groups demonstrated an awareness of the interrelationships existing between spiritual direction and psychology and commented upon how such an understanding had enhanced their ability to interact with their directees. Where the participants were reflecting on their practice as beginning spiritual directors, these insights into human psychology and the skills they learned tended to enable them to develop their ability to adopt a contemplative stance. Where they were reflecting upon their practice as advanced directors, exposure to different psychological frameworks and skills, however, seemed to enhance their contextual awareness within the spiritual direction relationship.

Lommasson Pickens, Keffer, and Edwards believe that setting appropriate professional boundaries is helpful in developing the practice of spiritual direction. When directors are able to maintain appropriate boundaries, they protect “the unique relationship constellated in spiritual

1516 Wicks, p. 13.
1518 Lommasson Pickens, pp. 51 - 58.
1519 Keffer, pp. 54 - 58.
direction while minimizing potentials for harm.\textsuperscript{1521} Keffer draws from counselling theory to accompany people whose inner and outer boundaries become clouded due to an insufficiently formed ego. Focusing too much on their inner life may over expose directees to issues they may not be strong enough to handle.\textsuperscript{1522} Edwards advocates that good boundaries promote and nurture the necessary sense of freedom that a spiritual direction relationship requires to attend the presence of God in an unfettered way. This is especially true with strong feelings such as sexual attraction. Directors need sufficient self-awareness so that they neither suppress nor act out their feelings. Directors simply need to appreciate their feelings without judging, identifying with or acting them out. While this may not always be easy for directors, Edwards claims such an approach promotes freedom that protects and nurtures the spiritual direction relationship.\textsuperscript{1523} Although the many nuances of self-awareness and boundaries were not explored intentionally in the focus groups, the issue did emerge when some participants commented upon the value of training programmes and professional supervision.

Finally, other psychological frameworks that may influence practice are the psychological issues associated with how people bring the whole gamut of their lives into the spiritual direction relationship. Within the breadth of life, trauma and difficult transitions are as integral to spiritual life as are experiences of profound joy and meaning. Hence, addressing issues such as shame\textsuperscript{1524}, anger\textsuperscript{1525}, abuse and other traumas\textsuperscript{1526}, stress, marginalisation\textsuperscript{1527},

\textsuperscript{1521} Lommasson Pickens, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{1522} Keffer, pp. 57-58.
\textsuperscript{1523} Edwards, 2001, pp. 124 – 125.
\textsuperscript{1524} Ruffing draws upon Bowler’s insights into shame to address resistance in spiritual direction (Ruffing, 2000; Bowler, pp. 25 – 33).
generation X\textsuperscript{1528} and even dementia\textsuperscript{1529}, are important. Awareness of issues, however, is insufficient in and of itself. How a spiritual director engages with the issues that a directee brings will be coloured by perspective. For example, Guenther\textsuperscript{1530} and Fischer\textsuperscript{1531} advocate a feminist methodology because it “provides a new way of seeing reality”.\textsuperscript{1532} In addition, spiritual direction may occur at the community and corporate levels, each with their own set of issues.\textsuperscript{1533}

In reviewing the discussion so far, the commentators and the focus group participants highlight that there is a wide range of theological, philosophical, and psychological frameworks that contribute to the capacity of directors to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of

\textsuperscript{1525} Thayer and Lappin encourage directees to find constructive concrete ways to deal with anger and to express it to God in prayer. While expressing anger may be therapeutic, directors may help their directees to discover that anger can be a positive component in the process of conversion (Thayer and Lappin, pp. 37 – 48).

\textsuperscript{1526} Schrader, Francis and Gaumer discuss how the trauma of sexual abuse influences both directors and directees (Schrader, pp. 46 – 59; Francis, pp. 41 – 55; Gaumer, pp. 7 – 14). Gower and Creed deal with Christian workers traumatised in ministry and people hurt through their association with church-related institutions (Gower, pp. 38 – 46; Creed, 2000, pp. 38 – 46). Grant details how trauma can cause people to experience Post-Traumatic Stress (Grant, pp. 48 – 58). Zimmerman suggests that to be competent guides to wounded people, directors need to understand the process of forgiveness for themselves (Zimmerman, pp. 44 – 52). Bullitt-Jonas and Stockton promote awareness of how an understanding of the psychological issues associated with alcohol and substance abuse can play a part in fashioning the process of accompaniment (Bullitt-Jonas, pp. 5 – 10; Stockton, pp. 41 – 47).

\textsuperscript{1527} Thompson draws attention to society’s underlying homophobia that often ill affects the self-image of gay and lesbian people (Thompson, 1998, pp. 35 – 46). Young (Young, pp. 38 – 46) draws from John Bradshaw’s term, “toxic shame”, to describe the psychological damage that arises when homosexuals consider themselves as flawed at the very core of their beings (Bradshaw, 1983).

\textsuperscript{1528} Edens and McGuire assisted young adults to learn more about themselves by administering the Hall Tonna Inventory of Values (Edens, and McGuire, pp. 28 – 32). Hendricks\textsuperscript{1528} and Mabry\textsuperscript{1528} throw light on the accompaniment of young people in ‘Generation X’ (Hendricks, pp. 51 – 59; Mabry, pp. 35 – 47).

\textsuperscript{1529} Hansen, Mabry and Williams draw upon an appreciation of the experience of people suffering from dementia (Hansen et al, pp. 45 – 54). Bakke includes insights from a general understanding of loss into how she accompanies directees (Bakke, 2002).

\textsuperscript{1530} Guenther, 1992, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{1531} Fischer, 1988.
\textsuperscript{1532} Fischer, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{1533} Raycraft notes the dominance of extreme individualism divorces faith from ordinary family and social life within contemporary American society when she conducts spiritual direction groups (Raycraft, p. 37). Mostyn accompanies institutions based on the understanding that “institutions themselves have a spirit” (Mostyn, 2003, p. 148).
accompaniment. It is worth noting that the philosophical frameworks reported were sparse in comparison to the range of theological and psychological frameworks presented. This does not suggest philosophical frameworks are less valuable in informing practice. It may be argued, as the evidence from the focus groups suggests that directors may improve their appreciation of paradigms about spiritual direction through learning to understand relevant theological, philosophical, and psychological perspectives that inform good practice. Yet this presupposes a link between a directors’ understanding of conceptual theories and their ability to attend to their directees. In this, perhaps awareness alone does not ensure that directors are willing and able to apply such insights in accompanying directees. For example, directors may understand the theory of transference and countertransference. They may note the presence of both dynamics in relating to directees. Awareness, in and by itself, however, may not guarantee that directors will establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with their directees. What could also be required is that directors seriously reflect on their practice and consciously bring their reflections to supervision so that it shapes their behaviour. Such considerations underline the importance of designing carefully professional training for spiritual directors – something addressed in the following chapter.

A further point to consider that may underpin this range of theological, philosophical, and psychological frameworks is the assumption that such theoretical representations can depict spiritual growth. At best, such charts of the spiritual journey are generalised allegorical depictions of spiritual development. As generalisations, they may helpfully summarise themes
common to directees. As each directee’s spiritual journey is uniquely personal, no generalisation, however, is completely accurate. Directors and directees can fail to appreciate that even the most established charts of the spiritual journey are at best guides and not architectural blueprints. This is especially true for beginning directors and directees.

A further underlying presumption could be that, in accompanying directees, incorporating multiple paradigms is more helpful than applying a single framework. This multi-paradigmatic approach equates well in the current post-modern era. Post-modernism holds there is no single meta-narrative that encapsulates all of reality. This trend is worth noting, but the controversial debates surrounding it are not pursued here. Nevertheless, it may be helpful for directors to notice the pluralistic trends that intersect the lives of their directees in order to accompany them effectively. While noting these underlying assumptions, the discussion now turns its attention to two further elements that may influence the ability of directors to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion their practice. First, formation programmes may promote directors’ appreciation of the contextual factors that shape the dynamic of accompaniment. Second, by redressing the effects of fundamentalism, directors may enhance their realisations about spiritual development.

A number of participants in the three focus groups (SD1, SD13, SD14, SD17, SD18, SD19, SD20, and SD21) remarked, in various ways, that formation programmes promoted their ability to appreciate the contextual

factors shaping the process of spiritual direction. For example,

1. Attending a training programme may “provide [directors with] a framework for [their] thinking, which [is] extremely helpful … in working with people”. 1535

2. Participating in various programmes on psychology and their application to accompaniment, 1536 studying personality typologies, 1537 understanding the appropriateness of professional boundaries, 1538 attending various programmes on psychology and their application to accompaniment 1539 and comprehending some basic principles of adult formation 1540 may opens directors to new perspectives.

Jeff 1541 and Dunn 1542 stress the need for training programmes to incorporate theoretical learning alongside experiential learning. For Dunn, the theoretical component consists of reading, study guides, and written assignments. 1543

These comments suggest that training programmes promote the awareness of contextual factors that shaped the process of spiritual direction. This suggests training programmes are an important means to introduce and develop directors’ abilities to appreciate how an awareness of contextual factors fashions the dynamic of accompaniment. While acknowledging this

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1535 SD1
1536 SD21
1537 SD13 and SD14
1538 SD18
1539 SD21
1540 SD19 and SD20
1541 Jeff, pp. 29 - 36.
1542 Dunn, pp. 33 - 37.
1543 Dunn, pp. 35 - 36.
benefit, ineffective training can have adverse consequences. In the concluding chapter, recommendations are suggested to ensure effective training.

Members of the focus groups drew attention to how redressing the effects of fundamentalism changed their realisations about spiritual development. SD3 experienced a paradigmatic shift from knowing “the right thing and [having] the right doctrine” to being able to acknowledge that God is simply present within directors and directees without having to induce it. SD8, SD9, SD13, and SD14 remarked that their fundamentalist background influenced them to adopt a very didactic approach to spirituality. Similarly, SD21 changed from operating out of a very authoritarian stance. He initially directed people according to what he perceived were the unwavering dictates of the law. In breaking out of strictures such as fundamentalism or legalism, directors may shift from perceiving spirituality as a received experience or as one confined within prescribed boundaries, to seeing a person’s spirituality as a dynamic, unfolding life process, and spiritual direction as journeying with people without imposing upon them.

Giallanza\textsuperscript{1544} addresses how to assist directees to recover from fundamentalism. The context within which people make contact with fundamentalism is “a deeper personal search for structure, stability, and security”.\textsuperscript{1545} This parallels SD3’s earlier need to know “the right thing and [having] the right doctrine”. Giallanza observed directees who step outside the norms established within the narrow boundaries intrinsic to

\textsuperscript{1544} Giallanza, 1995, pp. 31 - 35.
\textsuperscript{1545} Giallanza, 1995, p. 32.
fundamentalism risk alienation or even expulsion from the group.\textsuperscript{1546} By inference, this could be similar for directors making the same shift. It could even be more difficult if they hold a prominent position in their faith community. The advice Giallanza offers directors in attending directees during recovery has implication for recovering directors. He advises directees to seek “catechesis, diverse forms of prayer, various images of God, and the development of a sense of mission and an appropriate perspective on feelings and signs”\textsuperscript{1547} Through catechesis, SD3’s perception of spirituality shifted. In appreciating that God can be perceived through various images, SD21 broke out of an authoritarian perception of God. Thus, by inference from Giallanza and the above focus group participants, directors may increase their comprehension of interpretive frameworks about spiritual development by redressing the effects of fundamentalism or legalism. Underlying this is the assumption that this redress involves a shift in spiritual typologies.

The move from fundamentalism in whatever form it may take has been described by George Wilson\textsuperscript{1548} as a movement from a utopian to an incarnational spirituality. Utopianism is based on a desire for clarity and purity. It arises from an aspiration for resolution and definition. It is seductive in that it offers people the false security of a clearly delineated approach to the world. Such an ideological position struggles to live in the real world, which is finite and full of complexity. The messy reality of life is not untangled easily through the application of black and white principles.

\textsuperscript{1546} Giallanza, 1995, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{1547} Giallanza, 1995, p. 35.
Incarnational spirituality bespeaks an appreciation that living life to the full involves being “immersed in the intractable specifics of the present”. This perspective acknowledges that life, unlike abstract formulas, can never be captured adequately by concepts. This view invites a humble appreciation that true wisdom may be more flexible than one’s interpretation of the truth.

Appreciating this assumption alone does not necessarily ensure that a spiritual director may effectively make the shift in paradigms. Often, entrapped directors need to encounter the limits of their utopian views of the world. The complexity of life is such that understanding and even willingness to change on the part of a spiritual director does not mean that the transition from a utopian to an incarnational spirituality will occur. Some spiritual directors may take refuge, for whatever the reasons, in ideology. SD3’s recovery from his ideological refuge caused him to have an emotional breakdown, from which he eventually recuperated and connected emotionally to a sense of himself as if for the first time.

Before concluding this discussion, it may be helpful to stand back and have an overview of this study so far. Such a review can be approached in terms of the definition of spirituality adapted from Schneiders etcetera and the ethnographic model adopted from Mostyn that forms the methodological template for this study.

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Wilson, 2006, p. 36.
For the purposes of this project, ‘spirituality’ is defined as “the experience of self-transcending integration of the human person through engaging in a transforming relational process with what is Ultimate”. What has emerged in this study is that ‘transformation’ happens as much to the director as to the directee with regard to contemplative stance or contextual awareness. Second, this transformation is ‘contextual’ in that it occurs within a ‘relational’ setting, namely through the intersection of the intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal and environmental. Thirdly, the study demonstrates that change and growth in the director is gradual and ongoing, moving towards a contemplative stance and from there to contextual awareness. Fourthly, this process is not inevitable but may be influenced by choice. For instance, such choices can take the form of deliberately entering certain programmes or of intentionally attending to, and engaging with, life-events such as suffering and illness. Fifthly, as Schneiders notes, spiritual transformation is “in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence”. The director moves beyond the self in greater awareness and care. It is a process whereby a director ‘stands’, attends, and behaves differently, at personal and professional levels, by reason of seeing and responding to the claims of a wider and deeper reality. Finally, the blend of the “away from the self” direction and the increasingly inclusive scope of a director’s transformation is captured in the need to have multiple paradigms and comprehensive frameworks in the spiritual direction process. This confirms, at the practical level, Schneider’s concern to define spirituality “broadly enough that the definition can apply to religious and non-religious

1550 See infra p. 12.
1551 Schneiders, 1986, p. 266.
or secular spiritualities and specifically enough that it does not include virtually anything that anyone espouses”.1552

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the similar and different developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced directors revolve around two key trends:

1. The capacity of directors to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees; and

2. The ability of directors to appreciate the contextual factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment, that is, their contextual awareness.

The subtle emphasis on how each developmental influence respectively affects the practice of beginning and advanced directors was revealed as central in explaining the similarities and differences in the practice of beginning and advanced directors. Contemplative stance is more significant for beginning directors and increasing awareness of context is the main issue for advanced directors. In addition, a person’s ecclesial role may influence the setting within which a director commences practice.

Directors may initiate and sustain their capacity to adopt a contemplate stance to their directees by growing in the ability to notice and attend to all the dimensions of their human experience. This can be complemented by having their experience heard and acknowledged in some form of therapeutic relationship and through participation in various developmental

1552 Schneiders, 1986, p. 266.
group processes. The contextual awareness of directors in relation to the
dynamics of accompaniment may be enhanced by appreciating various
paradigms about spiritual direction as well as interpretive frameworks about
spiritual development. Directors may improve their understanding of
different models of spiritual direction through learning to distinguish
spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices. This can be nourished
further by a growing insight into relevant theological, philosophical, and
psychological perspectives that inform good practice. It was also suggested
that directors might increase their grasp of interpretive frameworks about
spiritual development by redressing the effects of fundamentalism and
incorporating a multiplicity of approaches to spirituality. Training
programmes are an important means to introduce and foster directors’
abilities to appreciate how consciousness of contextual factors has a bearing
on the dynamic of accompaniment. From these reflections, the next chapter
draws conclusions and offers recommendations applicable to training
programmes and further research.
Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The significance of this study

The literature in the field of spiritual direction is undergoing exponential growth through the contribution of many scholars. This research has contributed to this field in that it helps to refine some of the developmental factors that shape the practice of spiritual directors. The extensive body of literature in this area includes only a few direct remarks about beginning directors. A few commentators contributed to the discussion on beginning directors. Galli\textsuperscript{1553} noted some of the initial developmental signs. Stormes\textsuperscript{1554} characterised his experience as a beginning director. Wolski Conn\textsuperscript{1555} commented on discernible signs for beginners. The review of the literature revealed that insufficient attention is given to advanced directors.

Overall, then, virtually no attention was given to the similarities and differences of developmental influences shaping the practice of beginning and advanced directors. The apparent absence of specific literature concerning this was evident in Chapter 2 of this study. As set out in Chapter 3, a qualitative, ethnographic study of twenty-one participants from three Western Australian groups of spiritual directors investigated this deficiency. Chapter 4 collated the data from the three focus groups according to

\textsuperscript{1553} Galli, pp. 15 - 18.
\textsuperscript{1554} Stormes, pp. 35 - 39.
\textsuperscript{1555} Conn, 1999, pp. 86 - 97.
Mostyn’s four categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and environmental.\textsuperscript{1556} Chapter 5 analysed this data revealing dual developmental influences shape spiritual directors. One is their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees. The other is their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. The research suggests that the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance is more influential upon the practice of beginning directors. The ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment is more prominent for the practice of advanced directors.

Finally, Chapter 5 further discussed ways in which the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance is initiated and sustained in directors. It identified two factors in this process. First, directors grow by noticing and attending to all the dimensions of their human experience. Second, directors develop by having their experience attended to in some form of therapeutic relationship or through participation in various developmental group processes.

Chapter 5 also drew attention to the understanding that directors’ growth in adopting a contemplative stance is fashioned by the complementarity of their ability to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. It emphasised that directors’ practices are enhanced through understanding paradigms about spiritual direction practice and spiritual development. It stressed that by growing to appreciate the diversity

\textsuperscript{1556} Mostyn, 1996, pp. 181 - 182.
of paradigms about spiritual direction, directors can enhance their practice and protect themselves from operating out of too narrow a perspective.

This study is significant in its focus on directors expanding their interpretative frameworks about spiritual direction from two sources. This occurs in two ways: firstly, by the manner in which they distinguish more effectively spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices; secondly, by their growing understanding of relevant theological, philosophical, and psychological perspectives that inform good practice.

This study has highlighted that directors may increase their comprehension of paradigms about spiritual development. This is achieved by redressing the effects of fundamentalism in the various attitudes it takes and incorporating a multiplicity of approaches to spirituality. This study affirms the value of training programmes in spiritual direction as a means of developing directors’ abilities to attend to another person. A person’s ecclesial role may offer insight into how lay directors might start practice in spiritual direction. It might be more difficult for them to do this if the ecclesial infrastructures within which they may be associated are less than supportive. Furthermore, by way of corollary, such a consideration may help to highlight that just because clergy are ordained, it does not necessarily mean they are competent spiritual directors. They too might benefit from professional training in spiritual direction.
2. The application of this study’s findings

The results of this research indicate that the integrity of four key formative elements needs to be assured for effective training of spiritual directors. First, suitable candidates need to be recruited and assessed. Second, the content and process of the training programmes needs to be comprehensive and integrated. Third, trainers need to be well qualified and competent in their respective areas of expertise. Fourth, post-formative assistance is available to fledging directors as they transit from professional training to initial professional practice. Ineffective training can give directors false confidence in their ability. Inadvertently, poor training can lead to poor practice. At worse, it can contribute to dysfunctional practice.

2.1 Recommendations

The study’s findings are pertinent to the admission of candidates to training programmes, the curricula and management of such programmes, the ongoing formation of spiritual directors, and professional associations for spiritual directors.

2.1.1 The admission of candidates to training programmes

In selecting prospective candidates into a training programme for spiritual direction, consideration needs to be given to whether aspirants show sufficient initial capacity to adopt a contemplative stance to their experience and to appreciate the contextual factors that underpin what they experience. In assessing the matter of contemplative stance in candidates, it could be helpful to inquire of applicants how they notice and attend to all the dimensions of their human experience. It is also important to ascertain the
degree to which they already have undertaken this by engaging in therapeutic relationships and participating in various developmental group processes. The level of aspirants’ development might be gauged through inviting them to write and reflect upon the story of their life. This autobiography could be explored in greater depth during a subsequent assessment interview.

On the second matter, there are four key aspects in examining aspirants’ capacity to appreciate the contextual factors associated with their lives. To assess this, written application and subsequent assessment interview could invite applicants to:

- Describe their current understanding of spiritual direction and the way this is similar to or different from counselling and pastoral care. Such an exercise might help them clarify the level and scope of their understanding as well as give a picture of their starting point;
- Detail their theological, philosophical, and psychological background, which may give some indication of some of the formative influences in their spiritual journey;
- Describe their spiritual journey. This may reveal whether fundamentalism or legalism has adversely affected them. It may also reveal if candidates have already been able to incorporate a multiplicity of approaches to spirituality into a consideration of their own development. This would have obvious implications in gauging their capacity to adopt a similar approach to their potential directees; and
• Designate their ecclesial background. This may reveal what it is that motivates a candidate to apply. It may also help in any planning for support that graduates may require to begin or continue practice after graduation.

For various reasons, some candidates may be inadequately prepared to undertake formal training in spiritual direction. For example, they may lack the basic self-awareness necessary to move into a contemplative mode of presence or to appreciate contextual factors at work in their lives and in accompaniment. If so, some consideration might be needed about the preliminary resources to which such candidates could be referred. This may enable them to develop a sufficient level of proficiency to begin formal training. The learning process for the other trainees could be delayed or undermined if a candidate is accepted into a training programme without the required level of proficiency. This is to say nothing of the added burden this may place on the formators who try to form such trainees.

2.1.2 The curricula and management of training programmes
Programmes need to ensure that they assist trainees to develop their capacity to adopt a contemplative stance towards their directees and appreciate the contextual factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. Trainees may be helped to develop the first by participating in guided contemplative exercises during the programme and in their own time. They may be assisted through engaging in therapeutic relationships particularly spiritual direction and supervision. Some trainees may need to undertake further therapeutic work with other healthcare professionals. They may be aided by
participating in developmental group processes specifically process groups, supervision groups, and small training triads to practice the roles of director, directee, and observer.

Assisting trainees to appreciate contextual factors may be undertaken by presenting a wide variety of paradigms about spiritual direction practice and spiritual development. This would ensure that students are able to distinguish spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices. It would help them to understand the relevant theological, philosophical, and psychological perspectives that inform good practice. It may assist them to recognise and to work with directees adversely influenced by fundamentalist or legalistic attitudes. It may enable them to appreciate the multiplicity of interpretative frameworks concerning spiritual development and in sensitively integrating them to accompany different directees according to their specific requirements.

As mentioned previously, the findings suggest that adopting a contemplative stance and contextual awareness of the influences on accompaniment are integral elements in the practice of spiritual direction. Adopting a contemplative stance appears to be more influential upon the practice of beginning directors. More significant for advanced directors is the development of contextual awareness concerning the factors that fashion the dynamic of accompaniment. This has implications in designing programmes. More emphasis might need to be given to developing the capacity to adopt a contemplative stance in the early stages of training.
Formation in developing contextual awareness perhaps needs either to be introduced or to be concentrated upon later in the course.

In applying the findings to the management of such training programmes, trainers would need to be proficient, or at least well acquainted, with the two previously mentioned developmental influences. Trainers may need to take note that in the early stages of forming their trainees, they may need to focus more on assisting them to move into a contemplative mode of attending and listening to their experience. The emphasis of the need to appreciate contextual awareness of the factors underlying their experiences, by trainers to trainees, may be better undertaken later in the programme.

2.1.3 The ongoing formation of spiritual directors

It is important to note that directors adopting a contemplative stance to their experience is a lifelong commitment. Given this, this research indicates that directors may enhance their professionalism in contemplative stance and contextual awareness. With regard to contemplative stance, there are three ways. First, they maintain the regular practice of noticing and attending all the dimensions of their human experience. Second, they participate in ongoing spiritual direction, supervision and other therapeutic relationships as needed. Third, they participate in peer-support groups.

Directors may enhance their appreciation of contextual factors in three ways. First, they may purchase texts and subscribe to professional journals that distinguish spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices. This literature may expand further the range and depth of the theological,
philosophical, and psychological perspectives within which they engage their lives and their directees’ journeys. Such texts may broaden their understanding of the multiplicity of approaches to spirituality. Second, their consideration of contextual factors may develop by participating in peer-groups that discuss relevant books and journal articles. Third, attending peer-groups and conferences at which invited guest speakers present on relevant topics may contribute to their contextual awareness. Fourth, they undertake professional supervision.

2.1.4 Professional associations for spiritual directors.

The membership of professional bodies often incorporates beginning directors through to the most proficient directors. Such bodies sometimes offer corporate membership to organisations, such as retreat houses and formation programmes. Thus, an application of the findings has diverse implications. Professional associations can assist beginning directors in a number of ways. Firstly, by fostering and certifying training programmes in spiritual direction. Such a measure could ensure that there is an adequate inclusion and balance in how the content and process of each programme addresses the two key developmental issues addressed in this study, namely contemplative stance and contextual awareness.

Professional associations are also important for developing and supervising the implementation of a professional code of ethics. In addition, by conducting conferences and sponsoring professional journals they can ensure that the basic developmental needs of novice-members are not overlooked. When a professional body is long established, its focus may
inadvertently shift towards the needs of its more established and vocal members who may be more advanced directors. Such consideration would help remind professional bodies that, regardless of how long they have been established, their new and inexperienced members need their developmental requirements attended to just as much, if not more than their more experienced members. Professional associations may need to establish an editorial policy that ensures that their respective journals incorporate an adequate representation of articles in the two areas highlighted in this project. First, articles fostering a contemplative mode of presence in directors, in particular articles that:

- Assist directors to grow in the ability to notice and to attend to all the dimensions of their human experience; and
- Share the reflections of directors who have benefited from engaging therapeutic relationships and participating in developmental processes.

Second, articles that facilitate directors to be aware contextually of the factors that fashion their approach to accompaniment. In particular, essays that

- Distinguish spiritual direction from other therapeutic practices;
- Discusses the relevant theological, philosophical, and psychological perspectives that inform good practice;
- Examine the effects of fundamentalism and legalism on directors and directees and explore ways to promote recovery from its adverse effects;
- Articulate the multiplicity of approaches to spirituality; and
• Address how directors’ ecclesial roles may influence the context in which a director commences practice.

Associations may also help by becoming repositories for the growing literature in the field. They could host such material on web sites for easy dissemination among their members. This would benefit beginning and advanced directors. It would also assist training programmes and researchers to gain more immediate access to the literature available.

Finally, associations may contribute by actively promoting relevant research in areas that would benefit their members. In addition to such sponsorship, they could promote excellence among scholars by offering awards and remuneration for outstanding scholarship that promotes reflection upon topics of vital interest to the international community of spiritual directors.

This study’s findings are significant as they can be seen to bear directly on the initial formation of directors in terms of their admission and on the development of the curricula of training programmes and their management. This study’s results are applicable to the ongoing formation of directors. The findings have application to professional associations for spiritual directors.

3. Opportunities for further research

The sample for this research project was taken in Perth, Western Australia, in a developed country, for a group generally classifiable as middle-class (both economically and socially) and, for the most part, tertiary educated. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that the assumptions behind the
questionnaire and the participants’ responses are more in tune with the individualistic self “with its emphasis on autonomy, self-development, precedence of the individual's goals over those of the group”.\textsuperscript{1557} Other cultural backgrounds raise the issue of the collectivist (dyadic) self. This is found in cultures where persons predominantly define themselves in terms of the groups in which they are embedded. Group goals precede those of the individual.\textsuperscript{1558} Self-awareness depends on group embeddedness. A person needs others or another to know who one is.\textsuperscript{1559} Malina cites Triandis in noting, "70% of the world’s population are collectivistic".\textsuperscript{1560} What bearing do these considerations have in relation to the concerns driving this study and its conclusions? One possible avenue of research could be a cultural setting where the collectivist self is the general norm. From within this perspective, there could be an examination of the nature and extent of its impact on contemplative stance and contextual awareness. Would it share the same emphasis as the findings of this study with regard to beginning and advanced directors?

A further avenue of enquiry could focus on personality types, for example, as articulated by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Enneagram. Concerning this, the study limited its exploration to how an appreciation of such personality types may contribute to an understanding the dual developmental influences of contemplative stance and contextual awareness. A consideration of such typologies, however, could be widened to include an exploration into what are their roles and possible impact on

\textsuperscript{1558} Malina, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{1559} Malina, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{1560} Malina, p. 78.
directors as they develop their contemplative stance and contextual awareness. In addition, is there any correlation between the directors’ personality types and the particular developmental influence they gravitate towards as beginning and advanced directors? For example, do those with the Introvert preference on the MBTI scale instinctively favour and easily move towards the contemplative stance, whereas Extroverts have a ready sympathy with contextual issues? Again, do 891-Enneagram-type beginning directors lean towards a greater nurturing of their contemplative stance because of their strong inclination for the instinctual, gut-centred approach to life? Alternatively, could 567 Enneagram-type beginning directors, due to their highly developed perceptual centre, be drawn to cultivate their capacity for contextual awareness early, rather than later, in their practice?

In this thesis, the phrases ‘the capacities to adopt a contemplative stance’ and ‘to be aware contextually’ represent overarching categories and hence are open to the critique of being over simplified. These terms were purposely oversimplified for the purposes of this initial research into the similarities and differences in the developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors. Hence, in further research these two broad categories could be refined and explored in more depth.

From this brief consideration of the opportunities for research that the findings of this study could generate, further weight is added to the value of the findings of this study in that this research opens up new areas of research that would particularly benefit the initial and ongoing formation of directors.
Finally, while new areas of research are always emerging, this study presents a new avenue of scholarship to the worldwide community of spiritual directors. This study prepares the groundwork for other scholars to explore further the developmental influences that shape the practice of beginning and advanced spiritual directors.
Appendices

Appendix A: Introductory letter

(Participant’s name and address)

(Date)

Dear (Participant’s first name),

As you may be aware, I am a part-time PhD student in the Theology Programme at Murdoch University. My enquiry examines the key factors influencing spiritual directors in their practice.

As part of this research, I need a group of spiritual directors who would be willing to talk about their experience as a spiritual director in a small group context and possibly in a formal individual follow-up interview. I would like to invite you to be a part of this group. In both settings, the discussion will include questions regarding your professional practice as a spiritual director. You will be only asked to share your experience to the degree to which you feel comfortable.

I anticipate that your initial involvement would require participation in a group discussion of no longer than two hours. Following this, you may be asked to participate in an individual interview of approximately one hour. To facilitate ease of data collection, both group and individual interviews will be tape-recorded.
All information arising out of the group discussion and the individual interview will be treated as confidential and no names or other information that may identify you will be used in any publication arising from the research. Should you decide to participate in this study you are free to stop your involvement and withdraw consent for the use of any of your recorded material at any time. The two-hour focus group discussion will commence at (time and place of focus group).

If you are willing to participate in this study, could you please complete and return the attached consent form in the envelope supplied. If you have any questions about this project please contact either myself on Ph (w) 9389 8550 or my supervisor Dr Nancy Ault on Ph 9360 2602 in association with Dr Bill Loader.

My supervisor and I are happy to discuss any concerns you may have regarding how this study is being conducted or alternatively you can contact Murdoch University’s Human Research Committee on Ph 9360 6677. I would appreciate if you would commit some time to the enclosed “Pre-Focus Group Reflection Sheet” and bring it with you to our focus group discussion.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Truscott
Appendix B: Research consent form

Researcher: Stephen Truscott

I __________________________ have read the attached information letter. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity, however, I know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree that the group discussion and individual interview in which I participate may be tape-recorded.

I agree that any research data gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information that might identify me is not used.

Participant’s signature: __________________________ Date: ___________

Researcher’s signature: __________________________ Date: ___________
Appendix C: Pre-focus group reflection sheet

Over the years, many influences may have contributed to the formation of your practice as a spiritual director. The purpose of the forthcoming focus group discussion is to elicit the key influences that have informed your practice as a spiritual director.

Before attending the focus group meeting starting (time and place), I invite you to reflect on the following questions. Please use the available workspace to record your reflections and bring it with you to our focus group meeting.

With thanks

Stephen Truscott
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

(1) What was the context or setting within which you first began working formally or informally as a spiritual director?

(2) Describe your approach to giving spiritual direction at that time?

(3) What influences shaped your approach at that time?

(4) Since you first began as a spiritual director, what influences have helped to either confirm this initial approach or led you to change your approach? Some examples could be

- A book or journal article you have read.
- A retreat experience either as a director or as a participant
- A meditation on a piece of scripture
- A significant time of illness
- Your own experience as a director
- A dream you may have had
- Feedback from a directee
- Reflection on your experience as a director
- A comment a fellow spiritual director made to you
- An experience of supervision
- A piece of music
- A lecture you attended
- A spiritual direction training programme
- A particular experience in nature
An experience in your workplace

Seeing something on television

Attendance at a particular religious service

Encountering a different approach to theology e.g., redemption based theology, creation theology, feminist theology, incarnational theology, liberation theology and etcetera.

(5) How would you describe your current approach to spiritual direction?
INTRODUCTION AND WARM UP ACTIVITY

As we begin our focus group discussion, I invite you, firstly, to introduce yourself by your first name, secondly, briefly to say the context within which you currently practice as a spiritual director and finally, how long you have been a spiritual director. I realise that you all know each other and that this may seem superfluous, however, bearing in mind that this session is being recorded, introducing yourself in this way will assist me later to recognise your different voices when I am transcribing this discussion from the audiotape.

(Allow time for introductions)

You have each had the opportunity to reflect on the pre-focus group reflection sheet that I sent to you. In it, you were asked to recall some of your different experiences as a spiritual director. As a group, I would now like to invite each of you to describe briefly one of the events that stand out as being particularly significant for you in your formation as a spiritual director.

(Give time for sharing)

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1561 After conducting the first focus group, the researcher decided to remove this discussion prompt from his pre-set questions when facilitating the discussion in the second and third focus groups. In making this change, the flow of the dialogue between the participants in the subsequent focus groups improved.
Now, I invite you to remember how you first began practicing as a spiritual director.

1. I invite you to describe in concrete terms how you generally conducted a spiritual direction session. Let me give you an example of the type of information I am looking for. What was context in which you first began as a spiritual director? Were you in a parish, visiting someone in a hospital or chatting to someone over a few beers? Furthermore, what do you sense was your approach to giving spiritual direction?

   (Allow time for discussion.)

2. What do you consider were the major factors that influenced you to adopt such an approach to spiritual direction practice?

   (Allow time for discussion.)

3. Now, as you look back from the present moment to that time when you first began practising as a spiritual director, what do you consider are some of the influences that either have confirmed your initial approach to spiritual direction practice or have prompted you to change your approach?

   (Allow time for discussion.)

Now having listened to one another’s experiences of what has influenced
either the continuation or the change in your spiritual direction practice style, I would like you to consider this question:

4. What do you consider are the influences, which are common to you as a group of spiritual directors that have either shaped or reshaped your approach to spiritual direction practice?

(Allow time for discussion.)

5. What do you consider are the different or even disparate influences that have influenced your practice as a group of spiritual directors?

(Allow time for discussion.)

I would like to summarise briefly the key factors that you, as a group, have articulated. (Provide summary)

6. Does this summary adequately and accurately represent your views? If it does not do so, what changes would you make?

(Allow time for discussion.)

CONCLUSION
(Convey thanks to the group for their participation. Inform group members that a transcript of the group discussion will be made available to them for their verification and comments.)
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