

**A Spiritual Transformation program for Resident Students
at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**

Reverend Jay P. Taylor

ABSTRACT

Today's seminarians, tomorrow's church leaders, must receive more than a mere exercise in academic achievement they must understand how to care for their ongoing personal spiritual transformation and the growth of those they serve! To assist the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) to be proactive in this area, an intentional means needed to be developed to provide tangible assessment of personal spiritual growth and facilitate students in developing a proactive strategy for enhancing ongoing spiritual transformation throughout their ministerial training and beyond.

In light of the opportunity, this project was designed in an effort to assist AGTS in addressing the need of facilitating holistic spiritual transformation in the lives of its students. The purpose of this project was to develop and teach a program for the AGTS masters level course *Spiritual Formation of the Minister* that helps to assess and enhance the spiritual growth of seminarians. This included conducting the necessary research to acquire the instruments and to develop a model for tangibly assessing students' initial spiritual formation and developing a realistic strategy for ongoing spiritual transformation. The goal of the project was that the lesson plans, combined with students' personal spiritual growth plans carried out in a small group accountability experience, would result in measurable spiritual transformation over the course of the semester. In addition, the model could provide a means for ensuring ongoing spiritual growth throughout and beyond the students' seminary experience.

The purpose of this project was to evaluate and document the spiritual growth in the lives of students participating in the study at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS).

The project focused on the research and development of a spiritual transformation model by which students could experience quantifiable spiritual growth. The model consisted of the following components: (1) a theological, historical, and practical introduction of spirituality and the spiritual transformation process; (2) the use of the *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis* to help students discover how their natural dispositions influence their spiritual pilgrimage; (3) the use of the *Christian Life Profile* to help students assess their current spiritual formation beliefs, virtues, and practices; (4) the use of appreciative inquiry to assist students in assessing their current spiritual formation; (5) the development of a personal spiritual growth strategy outlining specific goals and practical steps for spiritual transformation; (6) the establishment of small groups that met weekly to provide accountability in carrying out students' growth plans; (7) students' reflection upon their growth experience and strategy for ongoing spiritual growth.

The project design involved the use of the *Christian Life Profile* as a pre- and posttest for gaining quantitative data as to whether spiritual growth had occurred over the course of the semester. An additional postsession evaluation was administered to provide specific feedback on the helpfulness of the various components to spiritual transformation.

The major implication of the research is that seminarians can experience quantifiable spiritual growth through participation in a program that presents a realistic working model for assessing and developing an intentional spiritual transformation plan. AGTS should consider integrating these components in an intentional spiritual formation strategy.