

# Spiritual Formation by Jay Taylor for Ministry



AGTS encourages students to achieve genuine spirituality in their own walks with Christ for preparation in ministry through efforts implemented by the Seminary. Christian leaders face a tremendous privilege and awesome challenge. The world searches for authentic spirituality—faith that addresses and answers real-life concerns. At the same time, the Enemy targets attacks pointed directly at Christian leaders. For example, statistics of ministers who succumb to ethical and moral failure are staggering. To prepare for these realities, it is crucial that church leaders have a vibrant personal spirituality resulting in a Spirit-led and empowered life and ministry. What the Church needs today, more than ever before, are truly spiritual leaders.

**A** study conducted by the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust on graduate theological education suggests that many students leave the hallowed halls of higher education unprepared to care for their own spiritual well-being. The study discovered that a vast gulf exists between theological education and the real-life expectations of graduates and the constituencies they serve.

In many institutions the focus remains on the external skills and practices of ministry, neglecting a holistic picture of what “spiritual leadership” is all about. Many students struggle to maintain a healthy balance between their academic and spiritual lives. They spend much time studying the Bible critically, historically, and theologically, yet fail to spend time in daily devotions, thus negatively impacting their relationships with God. In light of this, 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 AGTS students to be proactive in this area, intentional efforts have been implemented to provide tangible assessment of personal spiritual growth and facilitate students in developing a strategy for enhancing ongoing spiritual transformation throughout their ministerial training. The Seminary has established a new spiritual formation program, which uses a holistic developmental approach to give students the opportunity to experience and learn from the many facets of the spiritual formation process. The program flows from the following values:

- Spiritual formation must be intentional.
- Spiritual formation must be integrated.
- Spiritual formation must be measurable.
- Spiritual formation must be a priority for every student.
- Spiritual formation must span the entire seminary experience.


Toward this end, AGTS students are being provided with many opportunities to facilitate spiritual

growth. The emphasis on spiritual growth includes regular chapel services, weekly covenant groups and service opportunities, mentoring links, peer accountability, and individual meetings of all students with the director of spiritual formation to talk about spiritual formation issues on a personal level. A focused course on the spiritual formation of the minister allows stu-

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- Jay Taylor, *director of spiritual formation*

dents to assess their personal and spiritual dispositions, develop a personal growth strategy, participate in a weekly small group for accountability, and reflect regularly upon their spiritual growth experience.

The goal is to integrate spiritual formation into all aspects of AGTS life. Ministers who are prepared to deal with their own ongoing spiritual transformation will be able to make a significant contribution to the spiritual growth of others. 



ABOVE: Students learn about spiritual leadership and formation in the classrooms at AGTS.

BELOW: Students build accountability relationships through weekly small groups.

