

TOWARD DEVELOPING BIBLICALLY SOUND,
SPIRITUALLY FORMATIVE, AND CONTEXTUALLY APPROPRIATE
CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS IN
MYANMAR

BY

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WE HEREBY APPROVE THE DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the spiritual formation practices in two selected theological schools (TSTS) in Yangon, Myanmar. It seeks to understand the spirituality of the students and to propose guidelines for Biblically sound, contextually appropriate and spiritually formative curriculum for the theological school students in Myanmar. The ultimate goal of theological school students is to develop a Christ-like character by loving God and loving others.

The descriptive study used a mixed-methods research approach involving survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Based on the transformational learning theory of Jack Mezirow and the experiential learning theory of David A. Kolb, the study examined the spirituality of the students in TSTS. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile (CSPP), developed by Jane O. Thayer, was utilized to examine the spiritual growth of the students. The profile includes fifty survey questions under ten spiritual discipline categories. The interview questions were developed by the researcher based on the research questions.

The statistical analysis yielded the following conclusions in relation to the null hypotheses. The first null hypothesis (“There are no significant differences between men and women for spiritual practices”) is accepted. Therefore, there were no significant differences when the participants were grouped according to gender. The second null hypothesis (“There are no significant differences in spiritual practices by the number of years of faith”) is rejected. There are three areas of spiritual practices that showed significant differences. Older Christians are more practiced in terms of prayer, repentance, and worship than newer Christians. The third null hypothesis (“There are no

significant differences in practice across the ten areas of spiritual practices”) is rejected because prayer, repentance, worship were used more among the ten spiritual practices. Stewardship, evangelism, and meditation were used less among the ten spiritual practices. The fourth null hypothesis (“There is no significant difference between participants from the two different theological schools”) is rejected. There were significant differences in four areas of spiritual practice between the two schools. Theological School A (TSA) used prayer, meditation, Bible reading and study less frequently than Theological School B (TSB). TSA showed more frequent use of service than the TSB.

The qualitative data shared the most used spiritual formation practices in the two selected schools and their effectiveness. The interview data demonstrated that the spiritual formation course contributed to the spiritual life and vitality of the students by providing understanding and meaning of spiritual practices. Moreover, the spiritual emphasis week helped them to become stronger in their spiritual lives through the solid and powerful messages preached by the speakers. Fellowship, Bible reading and study, worship, prayer, meditation, discipleship, fasting, examen of conscience and service are noted as the most crucial and necessary disciplines by the students, graduates, and faculty in the interview data. The quantitative data pointed out the most helpful practices for spiritual formation of the students in TSTS as prayer, repentance, and worship.

Further study needs to be done in three areas: developing a Christian Spiritual Participation Profile in the context of Myanmar Christian churches; a review and comparison of the spiritual formation curriculum of theological schools of different faith traditions in Yangon; and a study on how to help students with different learning styles grow through their spiritual formation classes of theological schools in Yangon.

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DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.



Ning Ngaih Lian
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DEDICATION

Dedicated to
All my teachers and mentors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
SIGNATURE PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
COPYRIGHT STATEMENT	v
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITMENT	vi
DEDICATION	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF TABLES	xv
ACRONYMS	xvi
CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Problem	5
The History and Challenges of Christianity in Myanmar	6
Purpose of the Study	11
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Null Hypotheses.....	13
Theoretical Framework.....	13
Conceptual Framework.....	17
Brief Description of the Research Design	19
Significance of the Study	19

Assumptions.....	20
Definition of Terms.....	20
Scope and Delimitations of the Study.....	22
Overview of the Dissertation	22
 CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES	
Organization of the Chapter.....	23
Historical Background	23
Spirituality and Animism in the Context of Myanmar	23
Buddhist Spirituality	26
Buddhist Worldviews and Christian Spiritual Formation.....	30
Christian Spirituality.....	35
Comparison of Spiritual Practices and Values in Buddhism and Christianity	41
The Nature and Impact of Theological School Graduates.....	44
Need for Reconstruction of the Spiritual Formation Curriculum	47
Review of Literature Related to the Research Topic and Methodology	48
Literature on Spirituality.....	48
Biblical Theology of Spirituality and Spiritual Formation.....	49
Various Approaches to Spiritual Formation	61
Buddhist and Christian Spiritual Practices Compared.....	72
Spiritual Practices in Theological Schools	73
The Transformative Learning of Jack Mezirow	79
The Experiential Learning of David A. Kolb and the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile of O. Jane Thayer	81

Summary	84
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	
Overview	86
Research Methodology	86
Research Design and Instruments	89
Selection of Subjects Dealing with Sample Population	90
Development of Instruments	92
Pilot Studies	96
Data Collection and Recording Procedures	96
Data Processing and Analysis	97
Summary	101
CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	
Overview	102
The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants	103
The Spiritual Formation Practices Being Used by the Students in each of the TSTS	107
Documents Review	107
Survey Data	113
Interview Data	123
The Impact of the Spiritual Growth and Practical Ministry of Students by the Spiritual Formation Course and Related Activities Offered in the Curriculum	153
Spiritual Formation Class	153
Spiritual Emphasis Week	155

The Most Crucial and Necessary Disciplines for the Students, Graduates, and Professors on the Spiritual Formation Practices	157
The Spiritual Formation Practices which Help Students the Most in the Two Selected Theological Schools	159
The Participation of Students Across the Ten Spiritual Practices CSPP.....	159
Biblically Sound, Contextually Appropriate, and Spiritually Formative Curriculum Guidelines for the Two Selected Theological Schools	169
Biblically Sound.....	169
Spiritually Formative.....	169
Contextually Appropriate	170
Summary	170
 CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary	172
Conclusions	175
Recommendations	181
APPENDICES	184
A. Spiritual Disciplines and Desires	184
B. Questionnaire (For Students)	188
C. Interview Questions.....	193
D. Document Review Checklist.....	194
E. Letter to the Principal of Theological School X for Pilot Studies.....	195
F. Questionnaire (Burmese version)	196
G. Interview Question (Burmese version)	211

H. Letter to the Principal of Theological School A	213
I. Letter to the Principal of Theological School B	214
J. Letter from the Program Director of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary to Theological School A	215
K. Letter from the Program Director of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary to Theological School B	216
L. Informed Consent Letter for the Interview Session with Current Students, Graduates, and Faculty Members	217
M. Code for Determining Scales of Spiritual Practices	218
N. Spiritual Practices and their meanings	220
REFERENCE LIST	222
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	234

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Mezirow’s Theory of Transformational Learning.....	14
Figure 2: Kolb’s Model of Learning.....	15
Figure 3: Theoretical Framework of this Study Based on Jack Mezirow, David A. Kolb and O. Jane Thayer.....	17
Figure 4: Conceptual Framework	18
Figure 5: The Most Crucial Practices	158
Figure 6: Means for the Spiritual Practices on the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile (n = 79)	165
Figure 7: Means for the Spiritual Practices on the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile by School (n = 79)	168

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The Coding of the Interview Respondents	99
Table 2: Name of the Theological School	103
Table 3: Gender of the Participants	104
Table 4: The Categories of Role of Participants.....	105
Table 5: Age Ranges of the Survey Participants	105
Table 6: Years as Christian of the Survey Participants.....	106
Table 7: Generation as a Christian of the Interview Respondents.....	107
Table 8: Participants of the Survey and Interview	107
Table 9: Means and Standard Deviations for the Items of the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile (n = 79)	120
Table 10: Themes of Spiritual Practices in Qualitative Data.....	124
Table 11: Assessment Report Form Based on the Four Scales of Spiritual Practices	160
Table 12: Means and Standard Deviations for the Spiritual Practices on the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile by Gender (n = 79).....	162
Table 13: Means and Standard Deviations for the Spiritual Practices on the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile by Years of Christian (n = 79).....	163
Table 14: Means and Standard Deviations for the Spiritual Practices on the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile by School (n = 79).....	167

ACRONYMS

AGST	Asia Graduate School of Theology
APNTS	Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary
CSPP	Christian Spiritual Participation Profile
MEGST	Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
TSA	Theological School A
TSB	Theological School B
TSTS	Two Selected Theological Schools
WCC	World Council of Churches