

# Holistic Spiritual Formation in Dialogue with Jonathan Edwards' Theology of Spiritual Sense

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## Abstract

Recently, religious communities have devised multiple practical training programs for spiritual formation and direction. In this study, we define Christian spiritual formation as a life-long journey of growing, progressing, increasing and strengthening toward wholeness in the image of Christ. In dialogue with J. Edwards' theology of spiritual sense, this essay suggests three major points of holistic spiritual formation in depth: first, spiritual Formation is a process; second, spiritual formation should attend to the balance between God's Initiative and Human Agency; third, holistic spiritual formation is a process to seek God-self. Spiritual formation is not a static status acquired by several techniques, methods or programs. It is a formative process through which one prepares to comprehend divine love and purpose. Spiritual formation is a dynamic process to respond to the One who shapes our life path with increasing faithfulness. Holistic comprehension of Christian spiritual formation will assist postmodern people to find meaning, value, purpose, and identity through deeper experiences with God in the midst of the fragmented and troubled world, so that they could restore wholeness in the image of God.

## Key Words

Spirituality, Spiritual formation, Holistic, Jonathan Edwards, Spiritual sense, Process, Postmodern

## 통전적 영성 형성 : 조나단 에드워드 영적감각의 신학과의 대화를 통한 고찰

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### 논문 요약

**연구 목적** : 최근 종교단체들은 다양한 영성 형성과 지도를 위한 프로그램들을 실행하고 있다. 본 연구는 조나단 에드워드의 신학, 특히 그의 영적감각에 대한 신학과의 대화를 통하여 기독교 영성 형성의 궁극적 목적과 과정을 통전적 관점에서 고찰해 보고자 한다.

**연구 내용 및 방법** : 본 논문은 교차학제적 대화를 통하여 기독교 영성 형성을 예수그리스도 안에 계시된 하나님 형상의 온전성을 향해 성장하고 진보하고 충만해져가는 일생에 걸친 순례의 여정이라 정의한다. 영성 형성은 몇 가지의 기술이나 방법, 프로그램을 통해 달성되는 정적인 어떤 상태가 아니다. 영성 형성의 궁극적 목적은 하나님으로부터 무엇인가를 얻기 위함이 아니라 우리의 자아가 하나님께 조율되고 비워져서 하나님과 하나 되는 것이다. 기독교 영성 형성은 전생애를 통하여 하나님의 사랑과 하나님 나라의 목적을 더욱 더 깊이 이해하며, 깊어진 이해에 따라 하나님의 부르심에 더욱 신실하게 매일의 삶으로 응답해가는 역동적인 과정이다.

**결론 및 제언** : 기독교 영성의 주요 특징을 다음과 같이 제안한다. 첫째, 영성 형성은 과정이다: 둘째, 건강한 영성 형성을 위해서는 하나님의 전적인 은혜와 인간의 책임이라는 두 가지 측면에 지속적으로 주의를 기울이며 균형을 유지하는 것이 중요하다: 셋째, 통전적인 영성 형성은 하나님 자체를 구하는 과정이다. 기독교 영성 형성에 대한 통전적 이해는 파편화되고 고뇌에 찬 세상에서 삶의 의미와 가치, 인생의 목적과 정체성을 찾기 위해 몸부림치는 포스트모던 시대의 사람들이 하나님의 형상과 온전성을 회복하도록 인도하는데 기여할 것이다.

### 〈 주제어 〉

영성, 영성형성, 통전적, 조나단 에드워드, 영적감각, 과정, 포스트모던

## I. Introduction

In the last few decades, the term “spirituality” has been used in a more comprehensive way. Not only within Christianity but also within secular movements, the word “spirituality” has been applied for various implication, e.g. “feminist spirituality,” “Black spirituality,” and “Marxist spirituality”(Dreyer & Burrows, 2005, xi). According to J. Arnett(2015), a psychologist, insists that in the post-modern area humans have experienced increasing anxiety faced with the uncertainty of the age and brought about spiritual hunger and interest. More and more people have been craving for meanings in their fragmented lives. They have searched direction for deeper realities as individual and community and sought for personal spiritual guidance. Arnett(2015) claims that the quest for spirituality in the postmodern world has stimulated participations in various forms and practices such as yoga, meditation, and apprenticeship with the Native American tradition etc. Interestingly, a recent survey of young Christians demonstrates that one of the major reasons why young people disengage in the Christian community and leave church is the lack of spiritual formation among the members(Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, 79-80). Young people regard current institutional church as rigid religious organization, which does not meet their personal spiritual needs.

Responding to the current quest for spiritual formation, Christian theological schools and seminaries have developed spiritual formation and guidance as a part of curriculum(Howard, 2018, 4-9). Though it is almost impossible to define the complicated term “spiritual formation” in a single sense, the scholars have indicated significant points of spiritual formation through their definitions of the term. E. B. Howard(2018), a scholar of Christian spirituality, delineates Christian spiritual formation as “a Spirit-and human-led process by which individuals and communities mature in relationship with God(Father, Son and Spirit) and are changed into ever-greater likeness to the life and gospel of this God”(244). Richella Parham(2013) defines Christian spiritual formation in her book, *A Spiritual Formation Primer*, as “the process in which believers cooperate with God and one another so that their souls are nourished and their characters are transformed into Christlikeness”(6).

In current study, Christian spiritual formation denotes a life-long journey of growing, progressing, increasing and strengthening toward wholeness of the image of God. It is noteworthy that Christian spirituality is not something given instantly, rather but attained through life-long process. Actually we, all humans, are in the midst of a constant process of formation e. g. birth, growth, death, and beyond, just as reality itself is in a continuous process of formation: coming to be changing or ceasing to be(Howard, 2012). It is a reason that the term spiritual “formation” is preferred over spiritual “education.” This essay also emphasizes that spiritual formation is a holistic process. Throughout the article, we will develop the core features of Christian spiritual formation as a holistic process in dialogue with Edwards. Particularly, Edwards’ notion of spiritual sense(1959) will offer theological ground for holistic approach to spiritual formation. Christian spiritual formation should deal with the entire person encompassing belief, character development, deep personal transformation, living relationship with God and experience with the divine within the context of the personal and congregational practices(Lee, 2022, 16). I further claim that spiritual formation should attend to the balance between God’s initiative and human agency. Finally, I insist that holistic spiritual formation is a process to seek God-self(*italic-emphasis*). Spiritual formation does not aim to acquire something from God, but to seek God-self. The goal of life-journey toward God is communion with God.

## II. Theological Ground for Holistic Spiritual Formation in

### Jonathan Edwards

Lately, researches for spirituality in academia and ardent practices in community have been burgeoned. From the mid-twentieth century, scholars have vigorously engaged in redefining the definition, object and unique method of the study of spirituality(Schneiders, 1986, 255-256). In this flourishing academic field, scholars tend to empathize holistic aspect of the spiritual life as lived experience, promoting practical dimension of spirituality rather than traditional dogmatic approach(Joo, 2015). Holistic spiritual formation is a process to seek

God-self in the way through which cognition, affection and volition are actively interacted and integrated to embrace the totality of the divine Being. It is a life-long journey toward communion with God of the whole person.

Edwards' theology of spiritual sense(1959) will contribute to formulate core factors of holistic spiritual formation. In the 18th century, Edwards was a theologian and pastor who had experienced two great religious revival movements at a church of Northampton. While he was an espouser of revival movement, Edwards(1972) also had observed some destructive features of revival movement such as uncontrolled emotionalism having been devoid of social standard and ethics(151). In face of the perplexing questions about what true religion is, Edwards (1959; 1972; 1980) has constructed his philosophical theology of religious affection. Against both rationalism and the anti-intellectual emotionalism, Edwards(1959) claims that the true religious experiences touch the whole person including cognition, affection and the inclination of the will. In the midst of this exciting but confused situation, Edwards attempted to define what the nature of true religion and genuine spirituality is, overcoming prevailed dichotomy between emotionalism and rationalism regarding religious experiences(Lee, 2005, 105-110; McClymond, 1998).

Edwardian theology and psychology contribute to synthesize different elements and construct integral standpoint(Morris, 2005, xv). As the pastor, preacher, revivalist, metaphysician and theologian simultaneously, Edwards reframed Calvinistic Scholasticism into his integral conception of spiritual sense of the heart(Erdt, 1980, 29). According to Edwards(1972), affection and cognition are not mutually exclusive, but rather true spiritual experience requires the cognitive capacity of understanding and the proper affective and willful response to Holy Spirit's awakening(296). Edwards' sensible knowledge, or heart-knowledge of the spirit can be properly understood only from the perspective of "the totality of being itself"(Simonson, 2009, 100).

Edwards(1959) asserts that cognition, affection, and inclination are involved in process acquiring spiritual apprehension: "All knowledge of this sort, as it is of things that concern the heart or the will and affections, so it all relates to the good or evil that the sensible knowledge of things this nature involves"(272).

Edwards distinguishes spiritual knowledge from mere “speculative knowledge” or “notional knowledge.” According to him, speculative knowledge is represented in the mind only as an idea that does not necessarily require real existence of it (Chamberlain, 2000, 459). On the other hand, spiritual apprehension is invoked by the actual divine presence. Then, spiritual apprehension accompanies the actual feeling such as pleasure or pain because the idea is about something actually exists (Edwards, 1959, 137). For example, having an abstract idea of beauty is different from sensing or experiencing beauty. Sensing beauty provokes a certain kind of feeling. As another example, having a mere notional idea of honey is distinguished from tasting actual honey. In tasting honey, a person experiences sweetness, the feeling of pleasure which sweetness induces, and also inclination in concomitant to that feeling of pleasure: “All that understanding of things, that does consist in, or involve, such a sense or feeling, is not merely speculative, but sensible knowledge” (Edwards, 1959, 137). As a whole person, we obtain a spiritual sense in integral way beyond a merely notional knowledges: “nothing is called a sensible knowledge upon any other account but the sense, or kind of inward tasting or feeling, of sweetness or pleasure, bitterness or pain, that is implied in it, or arises from it” (Edwards, 1959, 137).

According to Edwards (1734), when people encounter the divine reality and perceive excellency and beauty of God, they must have unique emotional responses such as “amiableness,” or “delight” toward such Being: “There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account, or a sense of the beauty of this divine attribute” (para. Doctrine, A Sense of the Divinity and Excellency of the Things of Faith). To taste the glory and the beauty of God is to feel something, to have a certain response in the will as well. Proper affective responses toward God such as fear, joy or gratitude are necessary parts in one’s religious experiences (Walton, 2002, 153).

Particularly, in spiritual experience, the will, which cooperates with the re-generated disposition upon the divine grace, must be exercised in order to perceive the divine beauty with appropriate inward feelings and inclination. Inclination refers to an affective response of a person to the received data, ei-

ther positive or negative. Edwards(1959) insists that affection accompanies the strong expressions of the will, either positive or negative, toward an external object or circumstance. Edwards(1959) explains in a way that it is the degree to which the will is active, either toward or against something, that makes it an affection(7). Then, holistic spiritual formation should involve affective and volitional aspects as well as cognitive-rational dimension, and actually, integral development of all human faculties.

Spiritual formation can be appropriately understood only in holistic manner as well. In spiritual formation, a human respond to God as the whole person. Spiritual formation is holistic process whose cognition, emotion, and volition are always and inevitably involved(Seo, 2022, 49). As the whole person, a human engages in the process of spiritual formation. Integration of precise comprehension and appropriate responses of the affect and the will can help the believers grow spiritually. Holistic spiritual formation is a process through which cognition, affection and volition are actively interacted and integrated toward Christ-likeness.

In holistic spiritual formation, holiness does not mean simply a matter of private devotion. As Matthew 7:21-23 states, the standard of God's judgment are not just whether they recognize Jesus as Lord but rather, whether they do the will of God by meeting the physical and spiritual needs of others. Again, in the story of Matthew 25:31-46 the Lord divides all people into two groups, the Sheep and the Goats. Though it reads like a parable, it actually describes the future judgment of all the nations. People of the first group, the Sheep, are those who cared for the needs of the hungry, thirsty, alienated, naked, sick, or jailed. People of the second group, the Goats, are those who neglected their neighbors in want. The criterion of classifying the Sheep and the Goat is practice, that is, whether they have carried out what they believe(Smith, 2010, 56-57). God seriously concerns on how we act and treat one another. Spirituality is being formed and grown not through an cognitive agreement in belief alone but through a conformity with God's action to restore the world. Holiness is "wholeness."

Mulholland(1993) explicates spiritual formation as the experience of being shaped by God toward wholeness(20). God molds our whole self including think-

ing, feeling, and acting. Smith(2010) points up the balance of various dimensions in spiritual life. He explains, “the dimensions of the spiritual life are much like a wheel. A wheel is formed by placing spokes around a center hub. Each spoke must be equally strong and equally long”(Smith, 2010, 27). Otherwise, a wheel doesn’t move ahead but just “bump, bump” in the same place. Likewise, lack of balance in spiritual formation leads one to harmful extremes. In spiritual formation, all kinds of human faculties are employed, unified, and integrated to the entire soul. Spiritual formation must be elucidated in light of totality. Any fragmented and one-sided approach to spirituality succumbing a sense of the whole, is misleading in understanding holistic spiritual formation.

### **III. Holistic Spiritual Formation in Christianity**

#### **1. Christian Spiritual Formation as Process**

Contemporary Christians have often misunderstood Christian spirituality as a kind of static status which is achieved by possessing certain informations or techniques. However, the Scripture teaches us that Christian spirituality is a very dynamic and ever-developing process of growing toward wholeness in Christ (Mulholland, 1993, 16). Spiritual formation is a process of being formed in the image of God and a life-long pilgrimage of transforming of oneself into Christ-likeness by strengthening our connection to the Triune God.

In the Hebrews, Christian formation is illustrated as progress or development of faith(Heb. 10:22-24). In a similar way, the author of the First Peter describes Christian formation with the metaphor of development of a newborn baby with the phrases “grow up in your salvation” through “spiritual milk”(1Pe. 2:2). In Galatians 4:19, Paul also uses the imagery of childbirth to delineate features of church growth, e.g. “the pains of childbirth” until “Christ is formed in you.” Building construction is another frequently used symbol to characterize Christians’ growing in faith both as individual and as church. The writer of the first Peter declares, “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood...”(1Pe. 2:5). In Ephesians, Paul specifies Christ as the



cornerstone of Church and portrays the believers as being built into the ongoing construction project: “In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit”(Eph. 2:21-22)(Howard, 2018, 6-7). The Scriptural representations mentioned above imply that Christian formation is a dynamic progress of growing and developing with aid of the Holy Spirit(Assis, 2021, 12).

In the second century, Irenaeus(2014) affirms that the Creator has formed us for the sake of growth. Augustine(1997) also insists that we should grow toward a purification of our minds and nurture in our relationship with God. On Christian Doctrine, he(1997) claims that our mind should be purified in order to increasingly appreciate our relationship with God: “consider this process of cleansing as a trek, or a voyage, to our homeland”(12). Such process includes formation and transformation of our character to be like Christ. Through spiritual formation, Christians should demonstrate growth in those fundamental virtues of character as well. Galatians 5:22 summarizes the results when the Holy Spirit works in us as nine virtues, i.e., love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. A person in Christ-likeness is a person of compassion, forgiveness, and of caring for others and the world. Holistic spiritual formation is a pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God’s call in all dimensions of our life and being. It requires an intentional and continual commitment to a life-long process of growth toward wholeness in Christ.

## **2. The balance between the Initiative of God and Human Agency in Christian Spiritual Formation**

In spiritual formation, a human is both passive and active. Edwards helps us understand passive and active dimensions of human agent in spiritual formation with his theology of the spiritual sense. Edwards(2000) indicates three core components of spiritual perception as “a human perceiver,” “the presence of divine illumination in the perceiver’s mind,” and “a perceived spiritual object

(God or spiritual things).” The dynamic interaction between the Holy Spirit and human is essential in spiritual perception. On the one hand, the knowing mind of human is passive because it receives some ideas in encountering God by the work of the Holy Spirit(Smith, 1976, 311). The human mind is passive in receiving the simple ideas from sensation:

Sensation. How far all acts of the mind are from sensation; all ideas begin from thence and there never can be any idea, thought, or act of the mind unless the mind first received some ideas from sensation, or some other way equivalent, wherein the mind is wholly passive in receiving them. (Edwards, 1980, 390; Lee, 2000, 123)

The spiritual sensation is based on a new simple idea generated from the irreducible reality of encountering God. Edwards(1980) never think that religious experience is caused by nature. The right spiritual sense is not available without the awakening work of the Holy Spirit. Grace of God is prerequisite for a sense of divine things. According to Edwards(1980), spiritual apprehension never happens naturally without God’s special grace and Holy Spirit’s work:

But as to ... therefore men merely with the exercise of those faculties, and their own natural strength, can do nothing towards getting such a sense of divine things, but it must be wholly and entirely a work of the Spirit of God, not merely as assisting and co-working with natural principles, but as infusing something above nature(141).

Although Edwards designates human as a “perceiver” in spiritual sensation, it does not mean that a human is entirely passive in spiritual activity. On the other hand, human mind is active because the mind holds the spiritual illuminations generated by the Holy Spirit in a certain way and arranges them in a particular meaningful pattern(Lee, 2000, 127). In further detail, Edwards(2010) explains that the human mind arranges the received ideas according to the “rules of harmony or regularity” in knowing process. He corroborates that the mind orders the ideas according to cause and effect, and contiguity as well as the rule of harmony and regularity(Lee, 2000, 127-128).

In fact, Edwards keenly recognizes the interactive function between passive and active operation of human mind and then applies that principle to spiritual sensation which has both passive and active dimensions. According to Edwards(1734), God uses our natural faculties such as reason to attain spiritual perception on God's excellency and beauty, but without divine illumination, we cannot actually acquire such perception. In the same way, the delicate interplay of the Holy Spirit and human agent is a key in spiritual formation.

Primarily, spiritual formation is based on God's gracious work. God begins to work within us and initiative work of the Holy Spirit leads us to grow up toward wholeness of Christ over a period of time(Mulholland, 1993, 20). 1Corinthians 2:11 states "in the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." As v.12 declares, "What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God," Christian spiritual formation is completely dependent on the Spirit of God. Smith(2010) summarizes work of the Holy Spirit in spiritual formation as following:

Leads us into all truth; Helps us worship God; Guides our decision-making; Illuminates our Bible study; Motivates us to action; Gives us the right words as we share our faith with others; Softens the minds and hearts of those with whom we share our faith(52).

The Spirit works foremost by shaping the way we think, the way we feel, and the way we act in concordance with the way of God(Atkins, Jr., 2021, 219). In sum, the Holy Spirit gives us a sense of our unity with Christ.

At the same time, spiritual formation requires proper response of human part to the act of God. While spiritual formation completely relies on the Holy Spirit's initiative, there are things that humans must do. We should open ourselves to the Spirit to begin dwelling within us. The key of spiritual exercises is to surrender ourselves to the Spirit for molding and shaping our lives(Joo, 2021, 94). Humans should decide to enter into his/her way of holiness. Human is an responsible agent in responding to the divine invitation. Philippians commands that "...continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"

(Phil. 2:12-13). Mulholland(1993) articulates the dynamic interaction of the Holy Spirit and human in spiritual formation as following:

“a journey that unfolds through an increasingly faithful response to the One whose purpose shapes our path, whose grace redeems our detours, whose power liberates us from crippling bondages of the prior journey and whose transforming presence meets us at each turn in the road”(29).

In Christian spiritual formation, a human is an active agent of developing relationship with God. The Scripture provides us numerous imageries to illustrate spiritual nurture, for example, growing plants(Matt. 13:31-32; 1Cor. 3:6-8), athletic training(Ac. 20:24; 1Cor. 9:24; 1Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1-2), taking a stewardship role(Matt. 25:21; Lk. 19:11-27), and building a construction(Eph. 2:22; 1Pet. 2:5). Such metaphors imply that we should do certain disciplines and exercises as a means of developing spirituality just as athletes train for their purpose to become more proficient at a particular area (Smith, 2010, 43). Spiritual development requires our dedicated commitment to on-going journey and we are responsible for our own spiritual formation.

Mulholland(1993) points out significance of paying prudent and equal attention to both factors: “it is always difficult to maintain the delicate balance between working out our own salvation through spiritual disciplines and allowing God to work in us”(121). Spiritual formation involves complex forces. The coner-stone of Christian faith is to acknowledge that “God loves me more than I love myself.” Christ died in the place of us, the sinners, even when we are ignorant of what our sin deserves. Based on that belief, we relinquish control of our life to God. Then the Spirit can begin changing the way we think and live(Mulholland, 1993, 43-52). As we acknowledge the vital interplay between the Holy Spirit and the human agent, we must attend to both factors of spiritual formation, that is, the work of the Holy Spirit and of a human in balance.

### 3. Goal of Christian Spiritual Formation: Communion with God

Holistic spiritual formation nurtures our whole person. Through a process of spiritual formation, a Christian is becoming a spiritual being whose body, mind, and will are reflecting the person of Jesus Christ. As Mulholland(1993) insists, spirituality is “not an add-on,” but “the very essence of our being”(7). In this sense, spirit is the core of our personality and of existence. Holy Spirit works to change in the depth of our very being. Spiritual formation is not merely a change of a few habits but transformation of who we are in a way to be harmonious to the divine persons.

For Edwards(2010), spiritual apprehension is fundamentally related to his ontology. Things in Edwards' metaphysical logic are just as objective and real as things in physical universe. God's ideas constituted the Universe and the creature exists only in God. Edwards' fundamental metaphysical concepts give structure to “new spiritual sense.” In divine revelation, God reveals universals gradually to us by particular ideas and those ideas convey the very divine Being(Lee, 2000, 57-59). God's mind together with His will “shall gradually communicated to us and to other minds”(Howard, 1963, 54). Edwards(2010) finds the real source of these sensations that are transmitted to the mind from God, the real Being.

Edwards(2010) continues to claim that act of knowing cannot be separated from existential state of the knower. Knowledge is an act in which the knower is actualized. Edwards emphasizes how knowing and being are essentially connected:

And again they have relation to God as their object: for the knowledge communicated is the knowledge of God; and the love communicated, is love of God: and the happiness communicated, joy in God. In the creatures knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledge; his fullness is received and returned(62).

According to Edwards(2010), the true nature and union of outer world and inner mind are revealed as one in the new simple idea of the divine. In other words, God, humans, and the world are united(Morris, 2005, 456). We can rec-

ognize real essences and archetypes in and through particular substances with the divine presence and the Holy Spirit's assistance. The spiritual perception is not merely an act of acquiring knowledge about God but a human response to God as God is in Himself. In spiritual perception, what we have acquired is not only by the intellectual agreement of ideas, rather but by "union" with God. An increasing communication with God generates not only an increasing knowledge about God but also increasing communion with God and then, in turn, increasing communion with God leads to a deeper communication with God. They are fundamentally interconnected:

There are many reasons to think that what God has in view, in an increasing communication of himself throughout eternity, is an increasing knowledge of God, love to him, and joy in him. And it is to be considered that the more those communications increase in the creature, the more it becomes one with God; for so much the more is it united to God in love, the heart is drawn nearer and nearer to God, and the union with him becomes more firm and close, and at the same time the creature becomes more and more conformed to God(Edwards, 2010, 18; Lee, 2000, 113-114).

In spiritual perception, we not only communicate with God but rather communion with God.

Fundamental metaphysical concept of Edwards offers a framework to understand Christian spirituality and an insight for holistic spiritual formation. In spiritual formation, the Holy Spirit begins working in your mind and heart, knowing that change will come through sustained communion with God (Smith, 2010, 53). Edwards(2010) expresses such state as "the consent" of being to Being in general and claims it as the emblem of the true saint. In Edwards, the term consent refers to the renewed harmonious relation between the believer's mind and the system of God. Edwards(2010) distinguishes two kinds of consent: the mind's consent toward things, that is, "choice," and the mind's consent toward mind, that is, "love." If the consent of being to being is to be cordial, it must be a heartfelt, loving union. It is a process of consent between the sentient creature and the personal divine Being in a loving relationship. In perceiving God, the true believers not only attain the notional knowledge about God but

also feel union with God when they sense divine excellency or beauty and have agreeableness with it(63). Edwards(2010) finds the possibility of such consent in the trinitarian divine relatedness. Edwards construed the divine disposition as ontologically self-communicative and relational. For Edwards, an essence of the trinitarian God is the relationship of loving and knowing among three Persons. For Edwards, the essence of the divine being as the personal disposition to consent through knowing and loving. True consent to God is to embrace God's Being as the whole.

As Edwards argues, a love of any other divine attribute, strength, knowledge or profitable good to a human person is not true love to God. Spiritual formation is for a metaphysical mutuality between the consenter and the consented. The whole person of a believer becomes agreeable to the personality of God. During spiritual formation, our spiritual quest is neither demanding nor acquiring something but seeking God-self(Mulholland, 1993, 29-30). In prayer, what we ask is not only for an already-made answer but rather, presence of God. The spiritual sense is the indwelling "active tendency of the entire self that determines the direction of all the functions of the human" faculties, rather than "a separate faculty" or "a new natural faculty" in the soul(Lee, 2000, 51). The divine disposition is a dynamic force to multiply and increase loving relationships in new relational circumstances and contexts of creature. In spiritual formation, we seek for God to enter us and fill us with His/Her thoughts, passions, and will so that our mind, heart, and will may be agreeable to those of God(Smith, 2010, 51). Paul teaches that Christians should reflect on their way of thinking, feeling and acting through "the Spirit who is from God." The spiritual person evaluates their life in light of the teaching that comes through the Spirit of God(e.g., Gal. 6:1 [following 5:22-23]; Col. 1:9; 3:16). The more we consciously allow the Spirit to enlighten inside of us, the more we are sensitive to the inner attitudes, thoughts, and feelings. Through spiritual formation process, the more we appreciate the divine presence, the more we feel and the more we will in agreement with God

## IV. Conclusion

In dialogue with Edwards' theology of spiritual sense, this study examined three major points of holistic spiritual formation in depth: First, spiritual formation is a process; Second, spiritual formation should attend to the balance between God's initiative and human agency; Third, holistic Spiritual formation is a process to seek God-self. Spiritual formation is not a static status acquired by some techniques, methods or programs. It is a formative process through which one prepares to comprehend divine love and purpose. Spiritual formation is a dynamic process to respond to the One who shapes our life path with increasing faithfulness. Christian spiritual formation is a life-long journey of growing and strengthening toward wholeness in the image of Christ.

As a holistic process, Christian spiritual formation denotes deep personal transformation of belief, trust, practice and character in living relationship with God. Just as Reality itself is in a continuous process of formation, we are in the midst of a constant process of formation. All things in our daily life, e.g. every thought, every emotion, every decision, every action, and every relationship of ordinary life shape us into some kind of being little by little. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one direction or the other. Whether we are conscious or not, we all are in a process of spiritual formation either toward fulfillment of life or destruction of life.

Christians are the ones who commit themselves to a growing process toward the fullness of Christ who is the head. Christian spirituality is continuously formed and reformed through spiritual exercises within the context of daily life. In spiritual pilgrimage, we will experience ups and downs, winnings and losings, triumphs and defeats. In such a path, we should remember that any genuine change takes time. As Smith(2010) points out properly, "while I may desperately want to be patient, it will take time for this fruit of the Spirit to blossom and grow in my life"(52). Above all others, interior transformation takes time. Deep change of the whole being occurs gradually. Whenever we are exhausted during the journey, we should remember that we are not alone: God accompanies us always until the journey ends.



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