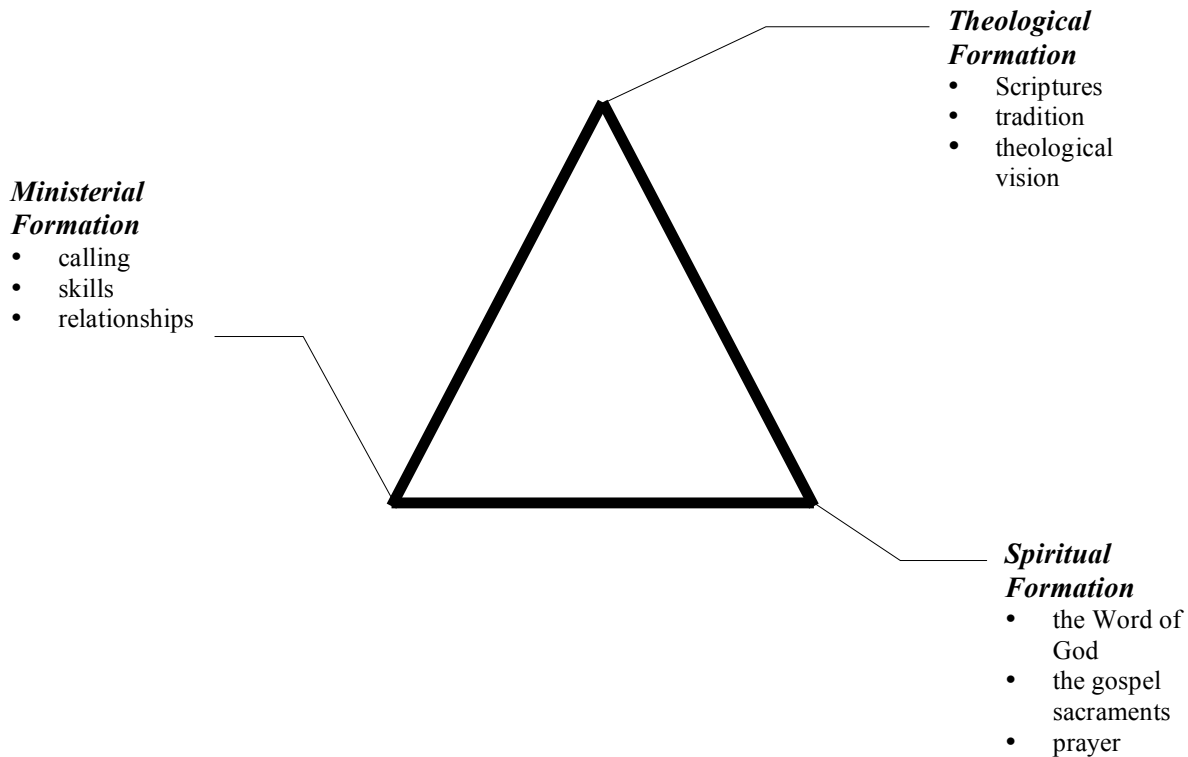


Exploring Christian Spirituality

APPENDIX 1: CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Craig R. Higgins, Spring 2008



There are three key elements in the formation of mature followers of Christ:¹

- Theological formation—the development of our *comprehension*. Even this can be broken down into a further triad: We seek to be followers of Christ who are formed (1) in the *Holy Scriptures*, (2) in the *great theological tradition* of the church, and (3) in a *vision* for seeing how our theology shapes the church’s mission, worldwide and in local contexts.

¹ For some of this “triadic” thinking I am indebted to the work of the Rev. Dr. Richard P. Kaufmann, former executive pastor at Redeemer in Manhattan, now planting Harbor Presbyterian Church in San Diego. Both he and I have been deeply influenced by the (often triadic) “multiperspectivalism” that is reflected in the works of John M. Frame and Vern S. Poythress, two contemporary theologians in the confessional Reformed tradition. See Frame’s *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (A Theology of

- **Spiritual formation**—the development of our *character*. The triad here lists the traditional means of grace, the principal instruments through which the Spirit works in our lives to transform us into the image of Christ. We are to be people who are hearing and obeying the written Word of God, who are shaped by the gospel sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and who are formed by deep and abiding prayer.
- **Ministerial formation**—the development of our *competency*. We want to be people who understand the nature of God’s calling on our lives (in whatever our vocation), who are developing the skills necessary for the tasks set before us, and who are living in community (relationships of encouragement and accountability) with other believers.