



## ***Why is UWM committed to Spiritual Formation?***

Through the gospel, all of us are invited by grace into a new relationship with God as our Father, deep friendship with Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit as the One who guides and empowers us for ministry. We are called to a renewal of heart and mind, a life of transformation, becoming like Christ and imitating His ways of loving, serving and leading. It is an invitation to a life intertwined with the heart of God for the world, an authentically missional life in which ministry flows out of being.

United World Mission wants this kind of life for all our missionaries, staff, and for everyone we serve with around the world. Paul affirmed the same desire for the believers in Philippi.

*"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." Phil 1:9-11*

UWM firmly believes that authentic ministry flows out of being, meaning that what we do must flow (and does flow) from who we are in the depths of our beings. Religion made of externals is hollow, empty and doomed. And it has nothing to offer the world. Therefore, the core and foundation of biblical equipping is spiritual formation and discipleship that forms the heart. Spiritual formation has to do with an abiding relationship in Christ that re-forms our heart to Christ's very heart, where we become increasingly more like Him in every aspect of life and ministry.

## ***How does this help us in mission to the world?***

As missional servants we confess that it is our relationship with the Father, our union and friendship with Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit that enable us to be light to a hurting world. Yet the demands of leadership, ministry and family can crowd out our most important life-giving relationship--our relationship with God! We want to foster a culture of intentionality about our walk with God, excitement about his love and his presence in our lives, and holy anticipation about all he wants to do in us and through us. We invite our missionaries and those we serve into intentional care of the soul, and deepening of relationship with Jesus.

The mission of our spiritual formation team is to provide nurturing environments for engaging the deep love of Christ and for serving his mission to redeem a people for his name in every tribe, tongue and nation. We seek to come along side as "companions of the soul" in mentoring relationships and to offer guided resources to help others on the journey. We seek to form leaders and churches that delight God and surprise the world!

Martin Luther, a pastor and leader of the Protestant Reformation wrote,

*"This life therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished but it is going on. This is not the end but it is the road; all does not gleam in glory but all is being purified."*



With this kind of humility we recognize our formation into Christ-likeness (sanctification) as a long, slow, deep, difficult and particular work of God's grace in each of our lives. We desire it. We pray for it. We confess our failings yet move forward with hope, strengthened by God's Spirit who begins and completes the good work.

## **UWM Spiritual Formation Statements**

**Vision:** God-delighting, world-surprising leaders, missionaries and partners formed deeply in Christ, serving the church in mission to the world.

**Mission:** Creating spiritually-formative environments, serving as “companions of the heart” in mentoring relationships, and offering Biblically-rich resources that form and nurture Christ-likeness of the whole person in life, ministry and community.

### **Core Values:**

**Relational Spirituality** - We embrace God’s presence, work, and Word as foundational to everything — especially self-awareness, dependence upon Christ, and cheerful service.

**Surprised by Love** - We seek the good of all people and create authentic, missional communities displaying grace, affection, humility, and mutual support.

**Strongly Grounded** - We emphasize spiritual formation as deeply-rooted in Scripture, centered on Christ, reflecting the Trinity and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**(Life Giving) Spiritually-Formed Character** - We long for the redemptive work of God’s grace and beauty springing forth in the heart, displaying the virtues of Christ, touching/transforming relationships, life and ministry.

**Spiritual Disciplines** - We foster the intentional arranging of one’s life in Biblical rhythms of listening and response through prayer, Scripture, adoration, confession and (times of) sabbath for the nurture of one’s soul.



## *UWM Definitions of Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Mentoring*

UWM recognizes that the terms “Spiritual Formation” and “Spiritual Mentoring” have varying interpretations. We adhere organizationally to the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) statement of faith and Lausanne Covenant of 1974. The following definitions provide our meaning, philosophy, commitments, and way of providing care and facilitating the spiritual growth of others in their journey and relationship with Christ.

**UWM Spiritual Formation:** The process of developing relational connectedness to Christ while learning the themes and disciplines of biblical spirituality, so we can discern, experience and respond to God’s presence, work and Word. The desired outcomes are:

- To experience friendship with Jesus (John 15:15),
- The renewal/transformation of one’s heart and inner world (Galatians 4:19; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:16),
- To pattern one’s entire life in the way of Christ (Ephesians 4:32 – 5:2; Philippians 2:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:6), and
- To have sustained partnership and fruitfulness in the missional purposes of God in the world (John 15:4-5, 8, 16; 20:21).

**UWM Spiritual Mentoring:** A ministry of prayerful listening, guiding, facilitating and empowering individuals and groups as “companions of the heart” so they may fully embrace the spiritual formation process and experience the desired outcomes.

*Note: Sometimes what we refer to as “Spiritual Mentoring” is referred to as “Spiritual Direction”: UWM holds to a biblical and traditional form of providing spiritual care and guidance.*

*The work of Spiritual Mentoring:*

- Provides a supportive, generous and loving presence where the one being mentored will flourish in spiritual growth.
- Practices prayerful, holy listening and biblical discernment about God’s presence, work and Word in the person’s life.
- Provides wise counsel, appropriate instruction, corrective feedback, and consistent affirmation that facilitates a person’s journey with God (as needed, but with caution and care).
- Is always Scripturally rich, Christ-centered and in the service of God’s greater glory and beauty in the life of the person and their ministry.



Our belief is that spiritual mentoring can provide helpful care and guidance for deepened transformation. Thus, by God’s grace, it leads to a more healthy, ethical, and integrated leader (missionary, pastor, lay-leader, mission leader etc.) who has increased capacity to serve God’s people and God’s purposes, and to sustain a faithful life over the long course of life and ministry.

### ***UWM’s Evangelical Approach to Spiritual Formation and Mentoring***

To be clear about our foundations, presuppositions, and framework that undergird UWM spiritual formation and spiritual mentoring, we articulate the following convictions in alignment with our organizational adherence to the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) statement of faith and Lausanne Covenant of 1974.

Christ-centered– Our work of spiritual formation is Christ-centered. We seek to help people draw closer to Christ and to an obedient response to his will.

Scripture as instrumental in spiritual formation – Scripture self-attests as being “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness”; it is piercing to the heart and formative of the soul. We are to know it truly, receive it affectively, and obey it responsively. The work of Spiritual Mentoring takes seriously the role of Scripture in practically shaping a person’s heart, mind and soul.

Salvation by grace through Christ alone– We affirm salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. We also believe our justification and sanctification are gifts of God’s grace given through Christ’s work on the cross. Spiritual disciplines are a response to God’s love and invitation to us in Christ, not “meritorious works” that gain favor with God. They are the biblically-defined instrumental means of growing into the fullness of the salvation that has been given to us.

High, biblical view of humanity – We affirm that every human being is created in the image of God, is valuable to God, and has purpose, meaning, and dignity. God’s desire is to restore and renew his people into the image of Christ (marred due to sin). This defines our understanding of sanctification and the work of spiritual formation and mentoring.

Biblical view of sin – We believe that every person has sinned and falls short of God’s glory. As such, we experience tragic ruin, radical evil, an orientation of rebellion against God and resistance to his will. Self-deception works against healthy relationship with God and others, and is a daily issue needing careful attention in our lives. While church and culture may de-emphasize sin, we see Scripture pointedly emphasizing sin as experienced in heart and behavior. Spiritual formation and mentoring helps us recognize the work of the Holy Spirit revealing ingrained patterns of sin, and encourages responses of true, deep repentance and experience of God’s abundant grace which is greater than our sin.



Relational spirituality – We believe that Christianity is not only, or even mainly, a set of doctrines to be believed or moral codes/principles to be obeyed. The gospel of reconciliation brings a person back into a loving relationship with a personal God. Spiritual mentoring aims to help believers learn to live in and enjoy this relationship on a daily basis. We glorify God when we enjoy, love, follow and serve him.

Missional spirituality – While valuing solitude, prayer, study, reflection, adoration and intimacy with Christ, we believe the outcome is meant to be passionate missional service in his kingdom. Withdrawal from the world is always for the sake of fuller and more fruitful engagement in the world. We desire to experience God’s presence equally in private devotion and public activity expressed in relational, incarnational, contextualized and world-engaging ministry.

Church and Community – A Christian is called to loving community with others. Spiritual formation has both personal and “one another” elements. We “do life” together, journey together, and pursue God together in the company of friends. The church is God’s people on mission with Him in the world, the community of faith that is called to delight God and surprise the world.

Holistic – We believe that spiritual formation should affect and bring transformation and Christ-likeness to every area of a person’s life. In some cultures this is referred to as “integral” formation. We align with the Holy Spirit’s good work of restoring broken lives into a seamless whole that radiates Christ.

## ***Desired Outcomes: Characteristics of a mature disciple of Jesus***

The end goal of spiritual formation and mentoring is of great importance to us. We recognize this process is a long, slow, deep, difficult and particular work of God’s grace in each of us. This cannot happen apart from God’s Spirit at work in us. Yet, we seek this for all and desire to foster a life of awareness and response to God’s presence, work and Word. This is for the praise and glory of God.

- A transformed life in Christ bearing the fruit of the Spirit (i.e. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control)
- A single-minded devotion to God and a life of loving obedience to His will and ways
- A deep love for God and others that is self-sacrificing, humble and generous
- An increasing depth of awareness of sin and self
- An increasing depth of awareness of God’s presence, the capacity to “find God in all things”
- A full measure of faith and trust in God (even in the midst of trials)
- A life of profound holiness, wisdom and intimacy in Christ
- A generous life offering compassion, grace, and forgiveness to others
- A countenance of gratitude and joy in all things



- A servant
- A person disposed to sacrificial giving in various forms
- A faithful steward of relationships, roles and responsibilities
- A rich “regula” (pattern) of spiritual practices—daily and weekly rhythms of spiritual disciplines that foster deep heart connection with God
- A life involved in mission for God’s glory and service to others

As we all are being transformed into the likeness of Christ we were created to be, ministry will flow and leave fruit that lasts (John 15). This is our desire for spiritual formation in the ever progressive abiding in Christ and He in us.