Spiritual Formation - Introduction - This is a foundational course in Christian spiritual formation. The primary goal is to help participants develop a deeper spiritual life by exploring these practices, their roots, and the interconnections among them. Students will have opportunity to experience, individually and in groups, various practices of prayer and other spiritual disciplines. This course lays the ground work for a series of future courses that will explore in greater depth various aspects of spiritual formation, for both the participants’ personal lives as well as their ability to nurture and guide the spiritual formation of others.

Instructor: Rev. Ken G Crawford, MDiv. He is currently pursuing a DMin at Perkins, SMU, in Missional Church Leadership and Spiritual Formation.

Format: This course is taught through a combination of classroom, online, downloads and conference-call.

| Competency Description: Spir 211: Spiritual Development: Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines that lead to personal growth, and prepare effective programs to help others develop a rich spiritual life. |

Modules of the course:
1. Finding Your Heart’s True Home – Through conversation, activity, and a spiritual assessment, we will explore how each of us uniquely experience the Spirit’s pull on our lives. This will provide a starting place for our exploration over the following hours and weeks. We will revisit this conversation in our final session to see what we might have learned, how we might have been challenged, and grown.

2. The Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament – As people of Christian faith, our spirituality is rooted in and informed by our scriptures. We learn how to be spiritual people in the way of Jesus by studying the bible and the spiritual lives depicted there. We also receive the scriptures as God’s gift to the church through which we hear God speak. Therefore, we not only study the bible, we also pray the scriptures, inviting the life giving creating word to speak to and form us.

3. Eastern Wisdom, Western Wisdom – Christianity evolved in two distinct streams – eastern and western – informed by significant background differences in philosophy and worldview. These distinctions included theological, political, and devotional. We will explore and experience some of these practices.

4. Reformation, Reformed and Restoration Insights – The second millennium of Christianity brought with it dramatic upheavals in the West. These were often prompted by reactions against perceived excesses or heresies, met with spiritual stirrings and revival in the hearts and minds of their leaders. These resulted in a refocusing on lay involvement in church and lay spirituality, including but not limited to access to the bible, and a new prioritizing of personal spiritual devotional practices.

5. Charismatic and Pentecostal Insights – Though much of Christian history has been written by more rational and intellectual theologians and historians, there has often been an outburst of Pentecostal fervor and experience at the beginning of renewal movements, even those that eventually became dominated by anti-charismatic forces. We will look at some of these movements, and the gifts that they offer to the church, if we will dare to open our hearts and minds to the mystery of these expressions of God’s work in the world.

6. Receiving the gifts of global spirituality – When triumphalism gives way to appreciation, Christians are coming to hear, respect, and learn from people of many cultural backgrounds and religious/spiritual traditions. We in the West are learning how “Christianity is done” in other places, as well as how people of other faiths understand God and the human condition. The result is a broadening appreciation for and practice of prayer and other spiritual disciplines. We are learning to pray using mandala, yoga, and meditation techniques from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. This often then leads to a rediscovery of and appreciation for Eastern perspectives within Orthodox Christianity. Interfaith dialogue includes learning to see and hear how God might be at work among every people group, drawing them into deeper spiritual communion with humanity, creation, and the divine.

7. The New Monasticism and Missional Spiritualities – Often arising in surprising places, like within evangelical bible churches, these movements are both a reaching back to ancient practices of the church as well as a striving forward into the emerging reign of God around us. These spiritualities prioritize sharing
life together, including common housing, common meals, and common prayer. This sharing is hospitable to others who come from outside, while not focused on “getting them to join us” but rather, “equipping and preparing and sending us” to be among them. We come in, so that we can go out. God is no more “in here” than “out there.” Everything is sacred, until we make it profane.

8. **Spiritual Formation throughout the Ministries of the Church** – Everything the church does shapes and forms our ideas and practices of faith. This session will explore how our administration and programming provide opportunities to overtly and subtly offer experiences of spiritual formation, and become intentional expressions of our spiritual life.

9. **Spiritual Direction as a part of your ministry** – What does it mean to give and receive spiritual direction? How is this distinct from other forms of spiritual leadership and formation? We will review some approaches to spiritual direction mentioned in previous sessions, and then practice a set of simple skills used in this relationship of spiritual companionship and guidance.

10. **Psychology and Spirituality** – Who are we, anyway? Many things that once were seen simply as spiritual disorders have come to be viewed as more complex, with multiple psychological components as well. These insights can help us understand what we are experiencing and witnessing in ourselves and others, which can then inform our spiritual development. Conversely, we may need to recognize that some things our culture understands as psychological may have distinctly spiritual origins and sources of help.

11. **Spirituality and Health** – How does spirituality affect our health? What happens when we pray? Is prayer more than meditation to reduce stress induced blood pressure and other health issues? How is our spiritual development impacted by chronic and incurable injuries, diseases or disorders? How do death, grief, and loss impact our spiritual development? What is healing? What is wholeness?

12. **We are in God and God is in us** – The spiritual life reminds me of a Mobius strip, or an MC Escher print, where discerning inside from outside and up from down becomes impossible – everything is in and out, up and down, at the same time. This seems to be what Jesus is saying in John 17:21 – “I in you and you in me and them in us.” Our experiences are distinctly unique, and yet remarkably similar. What further study and exploration will you pursue to help you grow and develop spiritually? What relationships and resources will you seek? What action steps will you take daily, weekly, regularly, to dwell more fully in your heart’s true home?

13. **Spiritual Discernment** – How do we know God’s will for our lives, for the church, for the community and world? Is it more than intuition and hunches? What is happening when the discernments of individuals or groups are in direct conflict? We will look at various approaches to discernment and practices a few techniques individually and as a group.

**TWITTER:**
New course-SPIRITUAL FORMATION: Explore diverse practices, develop deeper #spiritual life, and be equipped to help others

This training event will be held at Northway Christian Church, Dallas.

**Cost is $229 including lunch, refreshments and course workbook.**

*When registering for the course, you may opt to receive a $60 ministry partner scholarship by contacting Ken by email or phone.*

**Schedule for both will be: Friday 6-9 and Saturday 8:30-4:30**

followed by 4 weekly conference calls with all participants

(Discounts available for registering for multiple courses at once, and for 2+ registrations from the same organization.)

**TO REGISTER:** Please visit KenGCrawford.com/Training/

For details on these and other courses offered by Christian College and the Atlanta United Divinity Center, visit:

[TransformingTheChurch.org](http://TransformingTheChurch.org) & [DisciplesDivinityCenter.org](http://DisciplesDivinityCenter.org)

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Additional resources @ [www.SynchronousLife.com](http://www.SynchronousLife.com) and KenGCrawfordCoaching on Facebook.