

*Ted often used “one pagers”—learning activities to prompt discussion of the issue of the day. This one is “The Ecology of Spiritual Development”*

## DISCUSSION

- A. How are these points explained?
1. Spiritual development is the central focus of the mission of Christian education.
  2. The Bible provides grounding for the concept itself (spiritual development).
  3. The tendency among evangelical Christians is to assume that spiritual development rather well “comes along in the bargain” of salvation.
  4. Evangelical Christian emphasis on the centrality of the Word of God has tended to reduce spirituality to matters of information and cognitive process.
  5. Evangelical Christian education tends to treat spiritual development as a by-product rather than as a major purpose.
  6. Twentieth-century Christian education, especially among Protestants has become increasingly uncomfortable with mystical components of spirituality.
  7. In historical perspective, Catholic theology and religious education have put more emphasis on the spiritual development process (spiritual formation) than have the Protestants.
- B. Where do you stand on these uses of words? What do they say to you? What do they leave unsaid?
- spiritual DEVELOPMENT  
human DEVELOPMENT  
the spiritual ASPECT  
the ESSENCE of being human

Are you comfortable with these propositions?

1. The human being is a developing creature, developing throughout life in the following ways:  
PHYSICALLY,  
MENTALLY,  
EMOTIONALLY.  
SOCIALLY,  
MORALLY, and  
SPIRITUALLY.
2. In terms of the ways that social science divides the study of human personhood, there are five empirical aspects of the human being. These five aspects are the first five of the list above.
3. In Christian perspective, the human being can also develop in terms of SPIRITUALITY.
4. It makes a difference whether one thinks of spiritual development as a sixth ASPECT of human development of rather as the ESSENCE of personhood.
5. Spiritual development does not occur in isolation or in a vacuum apart from the empirical aspects of personhood. Thus it can be said that spiritual development is the centerpiece within an ECOLOGY of interdependent developmental processes.
6. The Bible introduces spiritual development through comparisons with the ecology of PHYSICAL development, thus inviting reasoning along the lines of comparisons and insights from what can be known of empirical development.
7. Valid MODELS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT **may** be inferred from theologically disciplined generalizations extrapolated from empirically derived insights into specific characteristics of human development processes and the ecological whole of human encounter.