

**Australian College of Ministries**

**Guidelines for  
Written Essays &  
Assignments**

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Updated January, 2010

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## Purpose and Approach

This set of Guidelines provides ACOM students with a **general introduction to essay preparation, writing and presentation**. You should read this document thoroughly and to keep it in a convenient place for use when working on your essays and assignments.

The Guidelines highlight key issues in essay construction, and are meant to alert the student to the types of issues that are important in essay construction. The purpose of these guidelines is **NOT to give you a detailed introduction to every aspect of essay preparation, writing, and presentation (including referencing)**. For detailed teaching on how to prepare, write and present essays, ACOM students should register in the ACOM subject **Critical Thinking and Writing**.

## 1. General Guidelines for Essay Writing

- 1.1 Utilise the reading or reference list given by the lecturer for information or starting points and information on your topic.
- 1.2 Wherever possible use primary sources of information rather than relying on secondary sources (i.e., what one person wrote about another person's ideas). For example, when writing on Martin Luther's understanding of *sole scriptura*, find works written by Luther rather than only using sources that write about Luther's ideas.
- 1.3 Don't just read – take notes while you are reading.
- 1.4 Record the bibliographic information for each source (book, journal article, etc.) while you are taking your notes.
- 1.5 When reading books or journal articles, look at the footnotes/references for further source material.
- 1.6 As soon as possible, construct a basic outline of your essay by dividing your material into sections (usually 3 or 4 major sections with a maximum of 3 or 4 subsections in each). Focus on the major sections first and the subsections later.

## 2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of any material (words and/or ideas), in any form, from another author without acknowledging the source of the material. You do not have to use the exact words of an author to plagiarise – stealing their ideas is enough. (See the ACOM Higher Education Handbook sections 4.8.2 and 5.1.1)

## 3. Introduction to Referencing

- 3.1 Referencing means acknowledging the sources of information and ideas used in an assignment (e.g. a major essay or field assignment). Referencing is involved whenever an assignment requires you to find and use information. Sources of information typically include books, journal or newspaper articles, and items from the internet.
- 3.2 Academic assignments require wide reading to show your knowledge of the topic in question. Also, the ideas and approaches of others reinforce the arguments you present in your assignment.  
Referencing in your assignment:
  - (a) identifies the range of ideas and approaches you have found helpful in your work;
  - (b) acknowledges where these ideas and approaches came from;
  - (c) shows where your reader where they can locate the sources you have used;
  - (d) avoids plagiarism.
- 3.3 The two most common types of referencing systems are:
  - (a) Author-date systems: such as the Harvard, American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA) systems; and
  - (b) Numeric-footnote systems: such as the Chicago (or Turabian), Vancouver and Footnote systems.
- 3.4 Many referencing guides are available on the Web. For example:
  - (a) Harvard  
<http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/students/study/referencing/harvard.pdf>
  - (b) American Psychological Association  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
  - (c) Turabian  
[http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

## 4. Referencing in the Body of an Assignment

- 4.1 Every time you use someone else's ideas or information, an in-text reference (e.g., Dowson, 1995) or footnote reference (e.g., <sup>1</sup> – where the <sup>1</sup> is linked to a footnote reference at the bottom of the page e.g.

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Blogs, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), 343.

- 4.2 References are used when you:
- (a) quote (express someone else's idea(s) using their exact words),
  - (b) paraphrase (express someone else's idea in your own words),
  - (c) summarise (provide an overview of a set of someone else's ideas in your own words),
  - (d) copy (reproduce a diagram, table or any other graphic).

### Examples

Quotation: "The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain".

Paraphrase: In Spain, rainfall occurs mostly in the flatter parts of the country.

Summary: Most authors agree that the plains in Spain get most of the rain.

Copy: [A diagram of rainfall distribution in Spain.]

- 4.3 **Not more than 10%** of any assignment should be comprised of direct quotations AND **not more than 30%** (in total) of any essay or assignment should be comprised of references of all kinds (quotations, paraphrases, summaries, and copies). In practice, it is generally obvious to a reader/marker when a student is not including enough of their own ideas and arguments in an assignment.
- 4.4 When you copy someone's exact words, you must clearly indicate that you have quoted them, by placing the words within double quotation marks ("....."), with the appropriate author, year and page reference or numerical footnote reference.

### Examples

Dowson (2010, p. 14) suggests that "essay writing is fun".

Dowson<sup>2</sup> suggests that "essay writing is fun".

It has been suggested that "essay writing is fun" (Dowson, 2010, p.14).

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<sup>2</sup> Martin B. Dowson, Essay Writing (Brisbane: ACOM, 2010), 78

- 4.5 If you omit words from a quotation, the omissions are indicated by three spaced periods (i.e., . . .), plus any punctuation marks within the quote (e.g., words left off the end of a sentence should have four spaced periods, i.e., three periods plus a full stop).

### Examples:

Dowson (2010, p19) indicates that "...essay writing can be difficult".

Dowson<sup>3</sup> shows that "essay writing is a difficult task...."

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<sup>3</sup> Martin B. Dowson, Essay Writing (Brisbane: ACOM, 2010), 102

- 4.6 Longer quotations (also known as “block” quotations) which extend for more than 3 lines (or 40 words) in your text should be indented by at least 5 spaces on left for the entire quotation. Block quotations should be single-spaced, as opposed to the rest of the essay which is double-spaced. Generally speaking, block quotations should not exceed 5 or 6 lines. Block quotations do not require quotation marks.

**Example:**

Central to the thesis is the proposition that faith is not foundationally *belief-that* but is foundationally *belief-in*. When faith is defined as *belief-that* (i.e., as objective assent to various ‘truth’ statements about God) it is difficult (for the person potentially or actually experiencing belief change) to see how propositional belief can change without threatening faith.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Martin B. Dowson, *Faith* (Sydney: ACOM, 2010), 102

- 4.7 If you are quoting a quote (i.e., within the section you have copied there is a section that the author has copied), then you use single quotation marks (‘. . .’) to indicate the quote within your quote.

**Example:**

“This essay represents a ‘multi-faceted’ approach to the topic.”

- 4.8 If you are citing the work one author in the work of another the quotation is rendered as follows.

**Example:**

Captain James Cook (cited in Dowson, 2010, p.11) says “I hate fish for dinner”.  
 “I hate fish for dinner” (Cook, cited in Dowson, 2010, p.11).

- 4.9 If you add a word or more of explanation, clarification, or correction to a quotation, you should enclose your own addition within square brackets [.....].

**Example:**

“This [is] a good example of a word addition.”

- 4.10 In any referencing system, when you quote the Bible, place the quoted section in inverted commas and provide the reference in brackets after the verse.

**Example:**

“Happy are the pure in heart” (Matt. 5:8).

**Note:** Even if using a numeric referencing system DO NOT put a Bible reference as a separate footnote e.g., do not put “Happy are the pure in heart”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> (Matt. 5:8).

## 5. In-Text References (Author Date Style)

Author-date styles of referencing use in-text references that look the same e.g., (Author, Date, Page Number); regardless of the form in which the author’s information is presented e.g., book, journal, encyclopaedia, etc. Numeric-footnote styles of in-text referencing are more varied and detailed.

Both the Harvard and American Psychological Association (for example) use the author-date style of in-text referencing. This section (Section 5) includes some indicative (not exhaustive) examples of author-date styles of in-text referencing. Examples of numeric-footnote styles of in-text referencing follow in the next section (Section 6).

5.1 **No Author** (Book Title Only)

Harvard: (*Reflections*, 1986: 74)

APA: (*Reflections*, 1986, p.74)

5.2 **Single Author** (Where the author's work is paraphrased or summarised by the student, but not directly quoted. For the rest of this section, paraphrases or summaries will be referred to as "No quote")

Harvard: (Stanner 1969)

APA: (Stanner, 1969)

5.3 **Single Author** (Where the work of the author is directly quoted. For the rest of this section the word "Quote" refers to this situation.)

Harvard: (Hogan 1987: 204)

APA: (Hogan, 1987, p.204)

5.4 **Two Authors** (No quote)

Harvard: (Tilly and Wood 1957)

APA: (Tilly & Wood, 1957)

5.5 **Two Authors** (Quote)

Harvard: (Tilly and Wood 1957: 18)

APA: (Tilly & Wood, 1957. p.18)

5.6 **Three Authors** (No Quote)

Harvard: (Bentley, Blombery and Hughes 1991)

APA: (Bentley, Blombery & Hughes, 1991)

5.7 **Three Authors** (Quote)

Harvard: (Bentley, Blombery and Hughes 1991: 19)

APA: (Bentley, Blombery & Hughes, 1991, p.19)

5.8 **More than Three Authors** (No Quote)

Harvard: (Russell et al. 1990)

APA: (Russell et al., 1990)

5.9 **More than Three Authors** (Quote)

Harvard: (Russell et al. 1990: 78)

APA: (Russell et al., 1990, p.78)

5.10 **Two Authors by the Same Name**

Harvard: (Rubinstein, H. 1986)

APA: (Rubinstein, W., 1986)

5.11 **Author with More than One Publication in One Year**

Harvard: (Porter 1989a: 10; 1989b: 17)  
 APA: (Moltmann, 1980, 1984a, 1984b)

5.12 **Corporate Author** (Use Initials as Appropriate)

Harvard: (NSW Dept. of Education, 1990:2).  
 APA: (NSW Dept. of Education, 1990, p.2).

5.13 **Recent Edition of a 'Classic' Work**

Harvard: (Kant [1785] 1959:104)  
 APA: (Kant 1959 [1785], p.104)

5.14 **Approximate Date**

APA: (Brunner, ca. 1924) ca. = circa = approximately

5.15 **No Year Given**

Harvard: (Grainger n.d.) n.d. = no date given  
 APA: (Grainger, n.d.)

**6. In-Text References (Footnote Style)**

Footnote style referencing uses superscripted numbering (e.g.,<sup>1</sup>) to identify and locate quotes or citations. The appropriate footnote, corresponding with the in-text number, looks (roughly) like the following.

6.1 **No Author**

No Author, Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, date), page.  
 No Author, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), 343.

6.2 **Single-author book reference**

Author, Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, date), page.  
 Roland K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), 343.

6.3 **Books with two or three authors**

Author 1 and Author 2, Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, date), page.  
 William S. LaSor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush, Old Testament Survey (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1982), 215.

6.4 **Books with more than three authors**

Author 1 and Author 2, Author 3, et al. Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, date), page.  
 William S. LaSor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush, et al., Old Testament Survey (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1982), 215.

6.5 **Corporate-author book reference**

Name of Organisation, Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, date), page.  
 Australian College of Ministries, Introduction to the Old Testament (Brisbane: ACOM, 1975), 343.

**6.6 Books with chapters and authors different from the editor**

Author of Article, "Article Title", Title of Book, Editor, Edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>], (Place: Publisher, date), page.

Marvin A. Sweeney, "Formation and Form in Prophetic Literature",  
Old Testament Interpretation Past, Present and Future, James L. Mays, David L. Petersen  
and Kent H. Richards, eds (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 114.

**6.7 Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries, Word Study Books \***

Author of Article, "Article Title", Title of Book, Editor, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>]  
(Place: Publisher, date), page.

F.F. Bruce, "Chenoboskion", The New Bible Dictionary, J.D. Douglas,  
ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1973), 207.

**Note:** Often these type of sources provide a list of contributors (with their initials) at the beginning of the book, and only the initials of the author are written after the article. You must check the initials, then go to the list of contributors to find the full name.

**6.8 Journals**

Author of Article, "Article Title", Journal Title, Journal volume and/or number (year) page.

S. Japhet, "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles", Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 33  
(1985) 83-84.

**6.9 Internet Reference**

Author of Article, "Article Title", Book Title [if material is from a larger writing], Author of Book [if applicable], Web page URL [if available], "retrieved via Internet access", date taken from Internet page.

Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New", Bibliotheca Sacra, Fred Blogs, [www.blogs.com/usefulbook](http://www.blogs.com/usefulbook), retrieved via Internet access, 27/9/96.

**6.10 Computer Disk Resource**

Author of Article [if available], "Article Title", CD-Rom, disk title or programme title (Place: Publisher/distributor, date).

"Women's poetry and feminist poetry", from The Columbia Granger's World of Poetry on CD-Rom  
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

**6.11 ACOM 'Hard Copy' (Print) Subject**

Content Provider, Session #: Title of Session [if available], Title of Subject, (Brisbane: Australian College of Ministries, date [year you are completing the subject], page [if provided]).

Martin Dowson, Session 10: Balance and Boundaries, Personal Formation 1, (Brisbane: Australian College of Ministries, 2010), 19.

**6.12 ACOM 'On-Line' (Digital) Subject**

Content Provider, Session #: Title of Session [if available], Title of Subject, (Brisbane: Australian College of Ministries, date [year you are completing the subject]). retrieved via elearning access, date taken from elearning site.

Martin Dowson, Session 10: Balance and Boundaries, Personal Formation 1, (Brisbane: Australian College of Ministries, 2010). Retrieved via elearning access, 18/10/2009

- 6.13 **ACOM Facilitation (or Other) Lecture**  
 Facilitator/Lecturer, Lecture delivered on [date], City, State: Subject Name.  
 Martin Dowson, Lecture delivered on 19/05/07, Rhodes, NSW: Personal Formation 1.
- 6.14 **Approximate Date (i.e., the date is uncertain) book reference**  
 Author, Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, ca. approximate date), page.  
 Roland K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids:  
 Wm. B. Eerdmans, ca. 1975), 343.
- 6.15 **No Date (i.e., the date is not given) book reference**  
 Author, Title of Book, edition [if not the 1<sup>st</sup>] (Place: Publisher, n.d.), page.  
 Roland K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids:  
 Wm. B. Eerdmans, n.d.), 343.

## 7. Formal Presentation

- 7.1 All assignments should be typed or Word Processed, and double-spaced.
- 7.2 All page margins (top, bottom, left and right) should be set to at least 2.5 centimetres.
- 7.3 A bibliography/reference list must be included. Cite all works used in the body of the essay in the Bibliography. Do not cite work in the bibliography that is not directly used in the body of the essay.
- 7.4 A cover sheet (title page) must be attached to the front, giving the following information:  
 Student's name  
 Subject code and title  
 Assignment type (eg Field, Main, Integration)  
 Email address  
 Maximum Mark  
 Word limit  
 Number of words written  
 Full essay topic  
 Date assignment is due  
 Date assignment is submitted

The following is an example of a complete title page:

Student's name:	Ima Student
Subject code and Title:	BB100C Introduction to Biblical Studies
The FULL essay question:	How does the nature of God revealed in the Bible lead one to conclude God is a 'missional' God?
Essay type:	Main essay
Email:	imas@hotmail.com
Maximum mark:	60
Essay word limit:	3000 words
Actual number of words:	2895 words
Date assignment is due:	Friday, Dec 4, 2009
Date assignment is submitted:	Tuesday, Sep 1 2009

## 8. Bibliography / Reference List

You may use ANY accepted style of referencing (Harvard, Turabian, American Psychological Association, etc.) However, you must use ONLY ONE style in each essay and you must use this style accurately.

- 8.1 A Bibliography / Reference List should **begin on a separate page** and have a heading *Bibliography* or *References* (no italics required).
- 8.2 A Bibliography / Reference List should be organised **alphabetically by author or editor**, or, in the case of an Encyclopaedia or Dictionary, by **title**.
- 8.3 In general, the required information for any entry in a bibliography / Reference List is shown in the Table below.

	Book	Chapter (in Edited Book)	Article (in Journal, Encyclopaedia, Magazine, Newspaper)	ACOM Subject/Lecture
Author, Corporate Author, Content Provider, Facilitator	✓	✓	✓	✓
Date	✓	✓	✓	✓
Title of work (e.g., book, chapter, article, ACOM session)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Title of work in which another work appears (e.g., edited book, journal, magazine)		✓	✓	
Publisher	✓	✓		✓
Location of publisher	✓	✓		✓
Volume number (of book, journal, magazine, encyclopaedia)	✓	✓	✓	
Page numbers of chapter or article		✓	✓	

- 8.4 Some sample formats for a Bibliography in both Author-date and Numeric-footnote styles are presented below.

### Books

One author

#### Author-Date:

Healey, J. (2001). *Alternative energy*. Balmain, N.S.W.: Spinney Press:

#### Numeric-Footnote:

Healey, J 2001, *Alternative energy*, Spinney Press, Balmain, N.S.W.

Two or more authors	<b>Author-Date:</b> Charlesworth, S., Turner, J.N. & Foreman, L. (1999). <i>Lawyers, social workers and families</i> . Sydney: Federation Press. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> Charlesworth, S, Turner, J N & Foreman, L 1999, <i>Lawyers, social workers and families</i> , Federation Press, Sydney.
No author	<b>Author-Date:</b> <i>McGraw-Hill dictionary of chemistry</i> , 2nd edn. (2003). New York: McGraw-Hill. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> <i>McGraw-Hill dictionary of chemistry</i> , 2nd edn, 2003, McGraw-Hill, New York.
Book with an editor	<b>Author-Date:</b> West, S. (ed.) (1996). <i>Guide to art</i> . London: Bloomsbury. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> West, S (ed.) 1996, <i>Guide to art</i> , Bloomsbury, London.
Chapter in edited book	<b>Author-Date:</b> Bloggs, M. (1996). <i>Picasso</i> . In West, S. (ed.) (1996). <i>Guide to art</i> . London: Bloomsbury. pp.36-42. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> Bloggs M 1996, Picasso, In West, S (ed.) 1996, <i>Guide to art</i> , Bloomsbury, London, pp.36-42.

## Encyclopaedia Articles

No author	<b>Author-Date:</b> 'Germany', <i>The World Book Encyclopedia</i> , Vol. 8. (2004). Sydney: World Book. pp. 114-116. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> 'Germany', <i>The World Book Encyclopedia</i> 2004, World Book, Sydney, vol. 8, pp. 114-116.
Author	<b>Author-Date:</b> Bloggs, F. (2004). 'Germany', <i>The World Book Encyclopedia</i> , Vol. 8. Sydney: World Book. pp. 114-116. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> Bloggs F 2004 'Germany', <i>The World Book Encyclopedia</i> , World Book, Sydney, vol. 8, pp. 114-116.

## Journal Articles

Author	<b>Author-Date:</b> Choi, C. (2003). Cleaner living, <i>Scientific American</i> , 289(5), 32. <b>Numeric-Footnote:</b> Choi, C 2003, 'Cleaner living' <i>Scientific American</i> , vol. 289, no. 5, p. 32.
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No author                   **Author-Date:**  
 Cleaner living, *Scientific American*, 289(5), 32.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
 'Cleaner living' *Scientific American*, vol. 289, no. 5, p. 32.

### Newspaper Articles

Author                       **Author Date:**  
 Oakley, V. (2003). The tragic trade, *Australian*, 15 November. p. 29.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
 Oakley, V 2003, 'The tragic trade', *Australian*, 15 November, p. 29.

No author                   **Author Date:**  
*Australian*. The tragic trade, 15 November, 2003. p. 29.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
*Australian*, The tragic trade, 15 November, 2003 p. 29.

### Pamphlets (Booklets up to 40 pages)

**Author Date:**  
*Preventing heart disease* (2000). Adelaide: National Heart Foundation.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
*Preventing heart disease* 2000, National Heart Foundation, Adelaide.

### An ACOM Subject

Content Provider           **Author-Date:**  
 Dowson, M. (2010). Session 1: Balance and Boundaries, *Personal Formation 1*.  
 Brisbane: Australian College of Ministries.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
 Dowson, M 2010, 'Session 1: Balance and Boundaries', *Personal Formation 1*,  
 Australian College of Ministries, Brisbane.

Two Content Providers   **Author-Date:**  
 Dowson, M., & Whiteley, S. (2010). Session 1: Balance and Boundaries, *Personal  
 Formation 1*. Brisbane: Australian College of Ministries.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
 Dowson, M & Whiteley, S 2010, 'Session 1: Balance and Boundaries', *Personal  
 Formation 1*, Australian College of Ministries, Brisbane.

No Content Provider      **Author-Date:**  
 Session 1: Balance and Boundaries, *Personal Formation 1*. Brisbane: Australian  
 College of Ministries.  
**Numeric-Footnote:**  
 'Session 1: Balance and Boundaries', *Personal Formation 1*, Australian College of  
 Ministries, Brisbane.

Facilitation Session /  
Lecture

**Author-Date:**

Dowson, M. Lecture delivered on 19/05/07, Rhodes, NSW: Personal Formation 1.

**Numeric-Footnote:**

Dowson, M, Lecture delivered on 19/05/07, Rhodes, NSW, Personal Formation 1.

## Appendix 1

### Some Important Writing Tips

1. Check and **triple-check** your **spelling, grammar and references!** Use a spell check and a grammar check, and re-read your work as well!
2. Don't use the first-person when you can use the **third-person** e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *You will find this subject very stimulating.*  
**Instead write:** *Students will find this subject very stimulating.*
3. Don't use more than one "**and**" in a sentence. Also, don't use "and" if you can use a full stop e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *Some dogs are lazy and this laziness means that some dogs get fat.*  
**Instead write:** *Some dogs are lazy. This laziness means that some dogs get fat.*
4. Always **specify the referent** when using "this" e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *Some dogs are lazy. This means that some dogs get fat.*  
**Instead write:** *Some dogs are lazy. This laziness means that some dogs get fat.*
5. Ensure that your **sentences and paragraphs follow each other** logically and syntactically e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *Some dogs are lazy. This laziness means that some dogs get fat. Fat in humans is also a problem. Dogs should be given enough exercise to ensure they don't get fat.*  
**Instead write:** *Some dogs are lazy. This laziness means that some dogs get fat. Dogs should be given enough exercise to ensure they don't get fat. Fat in humans is also a problem.*
6. Be **consistent** with your **use of terms**. e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *Some dogs are lazy. Lack of motivation means that some dogs get fat. Dogs should be given enough exercise to ensure they don't acquire obesity.*  
**Instead write:** *Some dogs are lazy. Laziness means that some dogs get fat. Dogs should be given enough exercise to ensure they don't get fat.*
7. If you do wish to introduce **new terms** you must do so explicitly e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *Some dogs are lazy. Lack of motivation means that some dogs get fat. Dogs should be given enough exercise to ensure they don't become obese.*  
**Instead write:** *Some dogs are lazy. Lack of motivation (or laziness) means that some dogs get fat. Dogs should be given enough exercise to ensure they don't become obese (i.e., so that they don't get fat).*
8. Once you've established an **order of ideas** or concepts stick with that order throughout e.g.,  
**Don't write:** *Obesity in dogs can be caused by over-eating, lack of exercise or genetic factors. Genetic factors, over-eating and lack of exercise are....."*  
**Instead write:** *Obesity in dogs can be caused by over-eating, lack of exercise or genetic factors. Over-eating, lack of exercise and genetic factors are...."*  
Also, if you introduce **sections in your work** (which you *should* – see Point 10 below) then these sections should be dealt with in the order that you introduce them. So, the Section Headings that might follow from the sentence above are: "*Over-Eating*", "*Lack of Exercise*" and "*Genetic Factors*" **IN THAT ORDER**.
9. Use LOTS of **linking sentences** to alert the reader to your train-of-thought: e.g.,  
*"The preceding section of this chapter dealt with obesity in animals. This section deals with obesity in humans."*

*"In the last paragraph some key causes of obesity in animals were specified. These reasons, however, are not definitive. Other reasons important for animal obesity include....."*

*"In the last part of this chapter we will deal with obesity in animals more generally. However, in this section we deal specifically with obesity in cats because cats are the most common household pet in the United States."*

10. Use **headings and sub-headings** freely to break-up your text. As a rough guideline, don't go more than one-page-and-a-half without a heading or sub-heading of some kind.
11. Don't qualify absolutes.  
**Don't write:** *"She was very pregnant."* [She's either pregnant or she's not.]  
**Instead write:** *"She was eight months [or whatever] into her pregnancy".*
12. Be specific.  
**Don't write:** *"The government said..."* [What government? When?]  
**Instead write:** *"The Australian Commonwealth government said in June, 1987..."*
13. Don't make unsubstantiated generalisations.  
**Don't write:** *"Everyone knows that..."* [How do you know that "everyone knows"?]  
**Instead write:** *"Surveys (e.g., Bloggs, 1995) indicate that most people recognise...."*

## Appendix 2 Sample Essay

Following is an example of a good (NOT perfect) essay.  
The comments in the margin highlight some of the reasons why this is an example of good essay.

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Unit Code: PT472C

**Comment [M1]:** The title page contains all information required.

Unit Title: Personal Formation

Essay Type: Academic Assignment

Academic Assignment: If we could see beneath the surface of many a life, we would see thousands of people within the church are suffering spiritually from 'arrested development'. They never reach spiritual maturity; they never do all the good they intended to do; and this is due to the fact that at some point in their lives they refused to go further.... They refused to take the one step which would have opened up for themselves a new and vital development. They suffer on in life as stunted souls.

Discuss the quote above with specific reference to developmental, relational and educational factors that may cause a person to either thrive or stagnate in their spiritual development.

**Comment [M2]:** It is helpful, to include the question on the title page.

Trimester, Year: Trimester 2, 2009

Word Limit: 2,000 words

Number of Words: 1911

Percentage of Marks: 50%

Due Date: Friday, 21 August 2009

Date Submitted: 21 August 2009

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**Introduction**

**Comment [M3]:** Don't include the heading "Introduction" at the beginning of an essay.

There is a tendency among Christians today, to shrug off the call to holiness by idealizing the process and seeing it as something that is irrelevant to a normal life. *Spiritual formation* is an area that is largely neglected among believers, resulting in a form of weak Christianity that has more number of *stunted souls* than spirit-filled people. A biblical godly life is characterized by a relationship with the living God, which is not complete without a transformation of one's being into wholeness in the image of Christ. What are some of the factors that can help in living a life of love marked by continuous **formation**?

**Comment [M4]:** The introduction clearly establishes the line of argument the student intends to take.

### **Spiritual Arrested Development (SAD)**

**Comment [M5]:** The use of sub-headings throughout essays is helpful and desirable.

A condition of spiritual stagnation has sadly been inbreeding within the Christian community, as rightly pointed out by Olive Wyon. It is a condition that is similar to being a Christian for twenty two years, and living like a one-year old Christian twenty two times.<sup>1</sup> While church programs and activities have been on the rise over the past decade, this condition has actively yet quietly eroded the foundation of much Christian endeavors. Some Christians recognize the condition and make efforts to treat it, and others live a dreary life of compromise and resignation, hopeless that life could be different. “*Spiritual arrested development*” (SAD) refers to a condition of spiritual stagnation, constituted by a phase of life in which a person's relationship with God seems weak or nonexistent, resulting in a sense of dryness below the surface that they

**Comment [M6]:** Correct use of footnote-style referencing.

<sup>1</sup> Scazzero, Peter *Emotional Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a revolution in your life in Christ* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2006) 26

never see.<sup>2</sup> It is characterized by a ‘*spiritual amnesia*’ which is the inability to sense the presence and action of god in daily being and doing.

### Symptoms of SAD

**Comment [M7]:** It is not necessary to leave a space between a sub-heading and the text.

People with spiritual arrested development are those who live in the extreme of following their feelings in an *unhealthy and unbiblical way*. They believe in God, but live a life that hardly demonstrates the presence of Him. Hence, either consciously or not, they have an increased tendency to divide life into secular and sacred components. They are found to be running away from God, by creating ‘God activities’ all the time, thereby ignoring the difficult areas in their lives that God wants to change. Their experiential sense of worth and validation gradually shifts from God’s unconditional love for them in Christ to their works and performance. Their failure to recognize the condition prevents them from working on the unhealthy and destructive patterns that have prevented them from loving as God as designed by Him, leaving them “arrested” in their spiritual condition.

**Comment [M8]:** The paragraphing in this essay is about right i.e., the paragraphs are neither too short nor too long. Also (in most cases), each paragraph contains only one main thought (as should be the case).

People with an *acute form* of the condition, are characterized by symptoms such as: hanging on to resentments towards those who have wronged them; focusing on things that are trivial and unnecessary, while failing to acknowledge the blessings of life; having poor images of self resulting from childhood traumas which haven’t been dealt with; being less vulnerable and loving as a result of pain and hurt from past intimate

<sup>2</sup> Au, Wilkie, *The Enduring Heart: Spirituality for the Long Haul* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 2000), 10

relationships; staying away from trying new things because of fear of failure; being cynical about life as a result of their poor decisions, missed opportunities and past failures; and, harboring anger and past disappointments which prevent reconciliation with God. The aggravation of these symptoms over a consistent period of time can result in suffering, leaving their souls “stunted”.

**Comment [M9]:** This phrase links the answer directly back to the quote in the assignment topic. This strategy shows that the essay is clearly addressing the question.

### The Treatment – Spiritual Formation

The solution to this stunted condition of the soul is “growing up” - growing up not necessarily in terms of growing up physically or growing in wisdom, but “growing up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ” (Eph 4:5). This process of growing up is very similar to a Christian journey, and involves an intentional and continual commitment to a lifelong process of growth toward wholeness in Christ.<sup>3</sup>

**Comment [M10]:** Mis applications of Scripture are common in essays – especially where students feel ‘compelled’ to quote Scripture. In the present case, the verse is plural (applying to the church) not singular (applying to the individual believer). Hence, the verse does not match the student’s point.

The soul or the “inner man” has a capacity for knowing that is created by God Himself (Eccl 3:11). Knowing God from the heart through the working of the spirit reflects the strength of the inner man, which leads to wholeness. Therefore, *spiritual formation* is the shaping of our inner character and outer conduct, in cooperation with the work of the Spirit, so that we are gradually being conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

**Comment [M11]:** Use of the word “therefore” and others like it, shows the student is (as should be the case) attempting to set up a clear argument – and is not just randomly associating ideas.

<sup>3</sup> Mullholland, M. Rober. *Invitation to a journey: a road map for spiritual formation* (: Colorado Springs: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 24

<sup>4</sup> Demarest, Bruce *Satisfy your Soul: Restoring the Heart of Christian Spirituality* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999), 23

Some of the necessary *internal correlates of Christ-likeness* include: authenticity of heart; purity of heart; and, holiness of heart. A growing sense of self-acceptance in Christ promotes the ability to recognize one's weaknesses, failings and sins, and encourages transparency or authenticity of heart. This transparency promotes the deconstruction of the soul's damage and internalization of the signs of God, to become increasingly centered on God. The soul which is centered on God, finds refinement and meaning in God, thereby reflecting the holiness of God, which is a prime sign of Christian well-being that feeds all other Christian virtues of Christ-likeness. The internal correlates of Christlikeness are highly influenced by educational, relational and developmental factors, which will now be discussed.

### **Developmental Factors**

**Comment [M12]:** The sub-headings are directly linked to the question – keeping the essay on track.

Human development is both *secular and spiritual*. It involves both nature and grace because the conversions that lead us to greater self-knowledge and re-situate us in regard to our human environment are not simply psychological but salvational.<sup>5</sup> The balanced path of growth which involves changing the mind and heart in order to change the outward actions can only be complete if it is done alongside growing in Christ. This is facilitated to a large degree by practicing *spiritual disciplines*, such as prayer, fasting, solitude, silence, study, simplicity, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance and celebration. The disciplines place a person where God can work within and transform the being of the person to the image of Christ. In this

<sup>5</sup> Au, Wilkie *By the way of the heart: toward a holistic Christian* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1989), 20

regard, *meditating and reflecting* on the word of God, can enkindle affections in manner as to enlighten one's understanding.<sup>6</sup>

**Comment [M13]:** This essay probably overuses italics. However, italics are an appropriate way to highlight important terms and phrases.

*Development* is a life-time process, involving progress at different stages of growth. Dallas Willard, in his book "Renovation of the Heart", introduces the idea of *involuntary obedience*, which involves being conformed to the image of Christ insomuch that our involuntary actions will reflect those that of Christ.<sup>7</sup> This involuntary obedience is facilitated by two elements – grace and intelligent effort. While the *enabling presence of God (grace)* is vital for the process of spiritual formation, certain developmental factors that an individual puts in place can help in the process of formation. *Notions* such as Christ centered beliefs, commitment to community, practice of spiritual disciplines, balanced approach to *honoring the place* and work of the Holy Spirit, participating in spiritual leadership, understanding Christian spirituality etc serve in aiding the process of spiritual formation.

**Comment [M14]:** The student helpfully links a new phrase ("the enabling presence of God") to the previously introduced term ("grace").

**Comment [M15]:** Watch "Americanized" spelling in spell-checkers. If you do use Americanized spelling, it must be used consistently throughout i.e., don't switch between American and Anglicised spelling.

## Educational Factors

Educational institutions have a clear counterpart to the communal discipline of spiritual life, and thereby impact the spirituality of a believer. The rules and relationships of a school comprise a "*hidden curriculum*" which can have greater *formative* power over the lives of learners than the curriculum advertised in the

<sup>6</sup> McGrath, Alister. E., *The Journey: A Pilgrim in the lands of the Spirit* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999), 14

<sup>7</sup> Willard, Dallas, *Renovation of the Heart*, (Leicester : Inter-Varsity Press, 2002)

catalogue. The relationships of the academic community form the hearts and minds of individuals, shaping their sense of self and their relation to the world. While the *communal sense* within schools play a credible role to spiritual formation, the *content* of education, and the message it conveys, significantly shapes a person's understanding of life. Palmer identifies that the role of education in society is not to be limited to fact, theory, objective and reality, but should be extended to teach a message of truth.<sup>8</sup>

A holistic approach of education must involve the whole person, and should be aimed at making a person's *whole being* living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction. The patterns of epistemology should help people decipher the patterns of their lives.<sup>9</sup> Education is too narrowly viewed when it is reduced to the development of the mind and when it leaves out **the cultivation of wonder and daring to think otherwise**. Curriculums that encourage thinking beyond the contexts discussed at class, improve the formation process of students.

Education in the spiritual primarily happens through the *reading of scriptures*, or their unpacking thereof. Scripture is important in the process of transformation because it provides the primary *cognitive* means for the human participation in worshipping God. It is vital for people intentionally focusing on the process of spiritual formation to use means such as generating a biblical image (mental picture), identifying with the

**Comment [M16]:** The language here is almost poetic. If you do have the gift of language, please do use it in your essays (as demonstrated beautifully here). However, don't use flowery for the sake of it.

<sup>8</sup> Parker, Palmer J., *To know as we are known: a spirituality of education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 23

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 31

witnesses of the biblical stories, and applying biblical idea or theme to personal life. Similarly, *false teaching* has been the culprit in some of the mis-representations of the word.<sup>10</sup> The educational environment that one is subjected to, can tremendously shape spiritual formation, either consciously or unconsciously.

### Relational factors

The western world is much concerned with the *question of image*, both corporate and individual. As a result of this, the number of people who derive their *identity* from their image is increasing day by day, even within the church. In explaining the relationship between image and identity, Hughes says that “because of the confusion of image with identity, we pursue or protect images with all the intensity of our deep-rooted instinct for self-preservation, and in the process start questioning our identity”.<sup>11</sup> Paul reminds where one’s true identity ought to be: “I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me”. (Gal 2:20).

An *individual’s identity* affects their relationship with their *community*. When an individual’s identity is not secure in God, they tend to evaluate their own meaning, value and purpose from what *others* say about them. Relationships with others are not only the testing grounds of a person’s spiritual life but also the places where their

**Comment [M17]:** The student (inappropriately) changes thoughts mid-paragraph i.e., from a focus on “identity” to a focus on “relationships”. Any change of thought within paragraphs must be either avoided, or clearly signaled by a logical linking sentence.

<sup>10</sup> Hart, Thomas N. *Hidden spring: the spiritual dimension of therapy* (Paulist Press, NJ, Mahwah, 1994), 38

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, Gerard W., *God in All Things: the sequel to God of Surprises* (London: Hodder & Stoughton: 2003), 17

growth toward wholeness in Christ happens.<sup>12</sup> A community that has people, who are willing to give *feedback*, is more likely to be supportive of people who have issues with identity. In such a community, the love of others (the love of the ethical order) is necessarily correlated with the love of God (of the spiritual order).<sup>13</sup> In being a part of such a community, an individual can experience God's grace that comes through the community, not just through the love that comes from people, but also a brilliant and yet mystical love that pours forth among the people.<sup>14</sup>

The *culture* that an individual lives in can have a significant impact on their spiritual formation. The “*instant gratification*” culture that is very prevalent in today's society, affects the aspects of discernment and patience that are vital for the process of spiritual formation. A similar observation can be made with the *technological/informational* aspects of culture that can affect the aspects of simplicity and silence that are again required for spiritual formation. Mullholland notices that “the culture that is prevalent today has reversed the biblical order of being and doing, where our doing flows out of our being instead of the other way around.”<sup>15</sup> All the negative influences of *culture* on spirituality can be countered by offering one's self to God in ways that enable God to do the transforming work of grace, to transform our being into wholeness in the image of Christ.

<sup>12</sup> Mullholland, M. Rober. *Invitation to a journey: a road map for spiritual formation* (: Colorado Springs: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 40

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, Eric., *Foundations for soul care: a Christian psychology proposal* (Colorado Springs: Inter Varsity Press, 556

<sup>14</sup> Gerald, May G., *Addiction and Grace* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 173.

<sup>15</sup> Mullholland, M. Rober. *Invitation to a journey: a road map for spiritual formation* (: Colorado Springs: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 30

## Conclusion

The purpose of God’s act of reconciliation is to make us conform to the image of His son Jesus, who was powerfully and extraordinarily different to others. This requires transformation of our nature into the nature of Christ, which is a life-time of work that God places within us. This work of formation is enhanced by various developmental, educational and relational factors. It is important that every individual realizes the importance of personal formation, to achieve the goal of the Christian life – Christ-likeness.

**Comment [M18]:** The conclusion is directly related to the substance of the essay and the original question.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Comment [M19]:** The bibliography is complete, correct and consistent. Only 12 sources have been used – but the sources have been used thoughtfully and appropriately.

Au, Wilkie., *By the way of the heart: toward a holistic Christian* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1989)

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