

# **A monastic dance with the sacred Earth**

Exploring the relationship between the spiritual and the physical: an ethnography of a Dutch faith community

Anouck Fietje  
September 2022

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# A Monastic Dance with the Sacred Earth

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Thesis report

Anouck Fietje

**September 2022**

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# Summary

The way in which people perceive themselves to relate with the Earth influences the way they treat her. In Western countries, such as the Netherlands, there is an anthropocentric perception in which humans regard the Earth as something that is shaped for their own benefit. In conventional industrialised agriculture, the Earth is cultivated for human benefit, at the expense of more-than-human others. Increasingly, people are finding out that this way of relating is harmful for the Earth and not sustainable in the long term. Western people's perceptions of their relationship with the Earth might be changing as Western people and communities, such as the faith community of the Dutch Dominican Priory of Zwolle (DPZ), are seeking ways to live their relationship with the Earth differently. In my study, I explored to what extent the members of the (DPZ) live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God and how this relates with agroecology. To study lived spirituality, I conducted ethnographic research for one month, in which I conducted participant observations, interviews, and focus groups. I studied the participants' affects, cognitions and behaviours.

In this study, I offer a new perspective to Christian human-nature relationships. I found that the Fathers, Lay Dominicans, Other Residents and Parish members of the DPZ's faith community find purpose and meaning, experience connectedness, and experience transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, implicitly and explicitly. Moreover, I found that the DPZ's faith community seeks to live a more reciprocal relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. The different social groups embody this relationship in their own ways, such as ceremonies, and (the supporting of) agroecology.

**Keywords:** Relationality, Holistically lived Spirituality, Christianity, Human-nature relationships, Anthropocentrism, Ecocentrism, Agroecology

# Samenvatting

De manier waarop mensen hun relatie met de Aarde zien, beïnvloedt de manier waarop ze haar behandelen. In Westerse landen, zoals Nederland, heerst een antropocentrisch beeld in welke de Aarde wordt gezien als iets wat is gevormd voor de mens haar eigen voordeel. Dit antropocentrische wereldbeeld wordt op verschillende manieren uitgedrukt, waaronder in de manier waarop mensen hun land bewerken. In de conventionele geïndustrialiseerde landbouw wordt de aarde bewerkt voor menselijk voordeel, en ten koste van meer-dan-menselijke Anderen. In toenemende mate leren mensen dat deze relatie met de Aarde schadelijk is en niet duurzaam op de lange termijn. Mogelijk veranderen Westerse mensen hun percepties op hun relatie met de Aarde omdat Westerse mensen en gemeenschappen, waaronder het Nederlandse Dominicanenklooster in Zwolle (DPZ), zoeken naar een andere manier om hun relatie met de Aarde te leven. In mijn onderzoek heb ik onderzocht in welke mate de leden van het DPZ hun spiritualiteit leven in relatie met de fysieke aarde en spirituele God, en hoe dit zich verhoudt tot de agro-ecologie. Om de geleefde spiritualiteit te onderzoeken heb ik etnografisch onderzoek uitgevoerd waarvoor ik participant observaties, interviews, en focusgroepen heb uitgevoerd. Hierin heb ik de participanten hun affect, cognities en gedrag onderzocht.

De bevindingen van mijn onderzoek geven een nieuw perspectief op de Christelijke mens-natuurrelaties. Ik vond dat de Paters, Lekendominicanen, Andere Bewoners, en Parochianen een doel en betekenis vinden, verbinding ervaren en transcendentie ervaren met de fysieke Aarde en de spirituele God, zowel zowel impliciet als expliciet. Ik vond dat de DPZ-geloofsgemeenschap zoekende is om in een meer wederkerige relatie met de fysieke Aarde en spirituele God te leven. De verschillende sociale groepen belichamen deze relatie op hun eigen manier, waaronder in ceremonies en (het steunen van) agro-ecologie.

**Sleutelwoorden:** Relationaliteit, Holistisch Geleefde Spiritualiteit, Christendom, Mens-natuurrelaties, Antropocentrisme, Ecocentrisme, Agro-ecologie

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# Epigraph

*Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To You, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name*

*Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and You give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and beautiful.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which You give Your creatures sustenance.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of You; through those who endure sickness and trial.*

*Happy those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing Your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them.*

*Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve Him with great humility.*

*The Canticle of the Sun by Francis of Assisi (1224). Translated by Barrett (n.d.).*

# 1. Introduction

We are currently in a global socio-ecological crisis and multiple factors are responsible for this. One of these factors is people's anthropocentric worldviews and the way in which people embody this worldview. Worldviews are the manner in which people perceive the natural world or their environment (van Egmond & de Vries, 2011; Ikeke, 2015). Humans with an anthropocentric worldview perceive themselves to be radically separated from the natural world and put themselves in a central or primary position to it (Mason, 2004). They see the world in a hierarchical order in which humans hold a coveted position (Etieyibo, 2017). Moreover, they find that only humans have an intrinsic value and that they are the only creatures that make up the moral community. The other-than-human world is often described as a system of insentient things that acts in a predictable way (ibid).

The way in which humankind perceives the world, influences their behaviour (Ikeke, 2015). Humans with an anthropocentric worldview consider themselves to be standing above the 'rest' of nature and find themselves to be the most important life form (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2001; Etieyibo, 2017). Therefore, people with an anthropocentric worldview often find that they can use the other-than-human world for their own benefits. It is through the embodiment of the anthropocentric worldview that human superiority over the other-than-human world is practised and contributes to the global crises (Ikeke, 2015).

The anthropocentric worldview is dominant in many Western people's minds and woven into their societal structures (Ikeke, 2015). Regarding this anthropocentric worldview, it is the Christian church that is claimed to be responsible for its spread (White Jr., 1967; Ikeke, 2015). White Jr. (1967) explained that the Christian church encouraged people to exploit and dominate the natural environment to serve humans' own benefit:

*“God Planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes” (White Jr., 1967, p. 1205).*

Ikeke (2015) blames the dominionistic ingrained Christian belief in which people perceive the Earth and her other-than-human entities (e.g. land, animals, water, and minerals) as things that are meant to serve humankind. The Earth and her other-than-human entities are seen as base, untapped, and contemptible resources that exist for human benefit (Mason, 2004). God, on the other hand, is considered to be exalted, glorious, desirable, and perceived to be the creator of everything and to have and maintain authority above all things and physical laws (Mason, 2004). Thus, in this Christian understanding of the cosmos, humans, God, and the Earth are perceived to be separate entities (Assmann, 2007).

It has been argued that human anthropocentric beliefs are rooted in the Biblical Creation story, such as in Genesis 1:26–29.5 (Etieyibo, 2017; Mason, 2004; White Jr., 1967). The Christian church was described as an institution that contributed to the spread of the anthropocentric worldviews through society (White Jr., 1967). One of the most influential Christian priests that is described to spread the dominionistic worldview in society was the thirteenth-century friar and priest St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 AD; Mason, 2004). St. Aquinas gained his understanding by combining sacred and secular ancient texts (e.g. Aristotle's) on dominionism (Mason & Kassam, 2021). Aquinas' ideas on dominionism have lasted in the Catholic church for at least 700 years (Mason, 2004).

It has been argued that until today, (Christian) dominionism is guiding the ideology of the industrial and business world, of which the corporate model of agriculture (Mason, 2004; Haraway, 2015). In agriculture, humans practise their anthropocentric perception through the taming, ordering, controlling, shaping, and battling of plants, and animals to 'optimally' use nature. Natural processes are occupied by man and are intensified, industrialised and mechanised for human benefits (e.g. monetary; (Mason, 2004). It is through the application of chemical fertilisers and pesticides that humans can "harness the elements of nature for the productive benefit of man" (Mason, 2004, pp. 41-42).

Industrialised agricultural practices, however, are considered a key driver of the socio-ecological crisis (Ikeke, 2015; Mason, 2004; Nyéléni, 2015). For example,

through these practices society is confronted with the last decades, humans are promoting the intensification of climate change, an increase in emissions, waste, and disposal of resources, and the prioritisation of globalised supply chains (Mason, 2004). Related to these activities, humans destroy soil fertility (e.g. Bhardwaj *et al.*, 2014), contaminate water bodies (Thompson *et al.*, 2020), and acidify oceans (Renforth & Campbell, 2021). Regarding the social impact, it is the commodification of the land that drives humans off the land through rising production costs. Seeds are taken from farmers, bred into a new variety that depends on expensive and polluting agrochemicals. Then, the seeds are sold back to the farmers, at inflated prices (Mason, 2004). Thus, intensified agroecological practices can be regarded as one of the roots of the converged crisis of food, environment, public health, and others (Nyéléni, 2015).

As described above, Christianity is blamed for the spread of dominionistic worldviews, which is through its expressions in industrialised agriculture, therefore related with the socio-ecological crisis. However, radical changes in how humans perceive their relationship with the rest of the natural world might be occurring among Christians and their faith communities (Francis, 2019). Dutch Christian farmers were found to find an intrinsic value (Duffhues, Pieper, & Ploum, 2009) and experience spirituality on the land (Nijboer, 2018). In their relationship with the Earth, mystical experiences with God were described as well. Even though these people feel these values in their work, in practising their work and surviving strategies, they are confronted with dilemma's.

Within the Christian movement, there is attention for the way in which humans relate with the physical Earth and the spiritual God as well. Namely, the current Pope Francis, one of the most influential Christian figures alive, calls on the churches to transform humanity's relationship with the natural world by recognizing the relationship between the spiritual God and the physical Earth (Francis, 2019). In contrast to the described Christian dominionistic worldviews (White Jr., 1967), the pope described that humans live in a relationship with God's other creatures:

*“We live in this common home as one human family in biodiversity with God's other creatures” (Press Vatican, 2020).*

Moreover, the pope calls for climate action in his Laudato-Si'-movement. In the Laudato Si', Pope Francis calls on 'all people of goodwill' to treat Earth with respect and reverence (Francis, 2019). After the release of the Laudato Si', many Christian groups, such as dioceses, parishes and families, responded to the Pope's call on goodwill. These Christian groups started green initiatives, such as the 'Green Bible' and the 'Green Church' (Nijboer, 2018). How these initiatives call for radical relationality and the development of ecological spirituality, however, has not been studied.

A Dutch Catholic faith community that sought to explore their spiritual relationship with the spiritual God and the physical Earth is the Dominican Priory in Zwolle (*Dominicanenklooster Zwolle*; DPZ). The DPZ's faith community sought contact with Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo, an agroecological farmer and Dominican Priest from Benin (Africa), and Wageningen University and Research (WUR) to collaborate in their quest to learn to 'dance with nature'.

As WUR-student, I decided to join the DPZ's dancing classes in order to study them for my Master's thesis. As it is unknown to what extent Western faith communities live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, I sought to overcome this *research gap*, by studying the DPZ's faith community. To do so, I have researched the following *research question* through three sub-questions:

*To what extent does the faith community of the Dominican priory in Zwolle holistically live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, and how does this relate with agroecology?*

- 1. Who are the members of the DPZ's faith community, what social groups can be distinguished, and how do these social groups relate with each other?*
- 2. How do the different social groups of the DPZ's faith community live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God?*
- 3. How does the DPZ's faith community's lived spirituality relate with agroecology?*

## 2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I have described the theoretical framework that I built for studying relationality within the DPZ's faith community. I first explore the term 'relationality' and illustrate how the physical Earth and the spiritual God(s) are perceived to be related in Indigenous non-Western and Modern Western cultures and I describe its theoretical relationship with agroecology embodiment (**Paragraph 2.1**). Secondly, I elaborate on the term 'holistically lived spirituality' and its link with relationality (**Paragraph 2.2**).

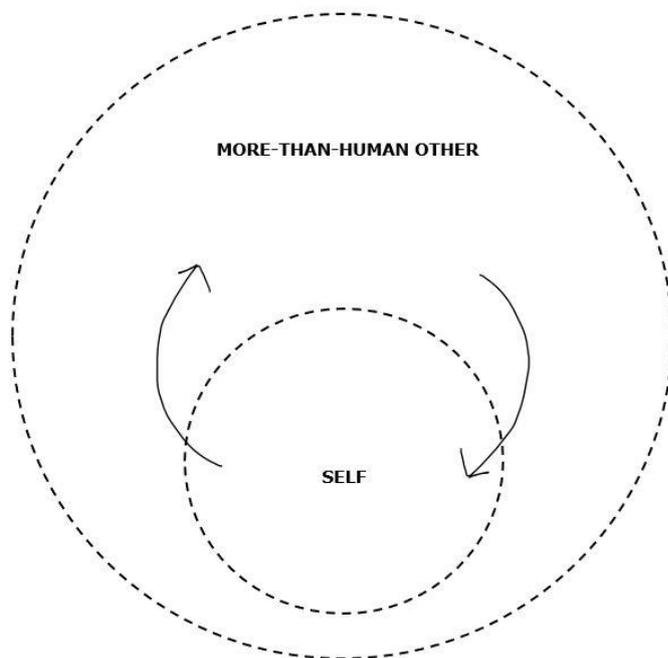
### 2.1 Relationality

Within some Indigenous cultures, Indigenous African cultures, the **principle of relationality** can be found (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Ikeke, 2015). The term 'relational' originates from the word 'to relate'. 'To relate' means 'to show or make a connection between two or more things' (Oxforddictionaries, n.d.a). Relationality has been described by multiple, mostly (African) Indigenous, scientists as a phenomenon or principle. According to them, all realities are interconnected. There is a relationality with all cosmic beings (Ikeke, 2015). In the reciprocal relationship between all beings, each being contributes to the flourishing of another (ibid).

Relationality might also be found in other cultures, such as the Western quantum physics, and the Eastern philosophy of Buddhism (Ikeke, 2015). For example, Buddhist teachings describe the connectedness and unity of all things as well (Murgatroyd, 2001). In Western quantum physics, everything in the universe is understood to be connected through vibrations, or wave patterns (Zohar, 2022). The wave patterns of every quantum particle connect distant particles non logically. Zohar (2022) therefore argues that "quantum physics tells us the entire universe is within each atom or thing" (Zohar, 2022, p.76). Thus, next to African philosophy, also Eastern Buddhism and Western quantum physics teach humankind that the lives of different entities are interdependent and that separation is an illusion (ibid).

In relational Indigenous cultures, the principle of relationality permeates people's understanding of the world. These people perceive themselves to be embedded in a more-than-human other world (*Figure 1*). For them, humans are connected with different entities, such as the Earth, humankind, God, gods and other forces. For them, all these entities in present life and sometimes life beyond are understood to possess 'spirits' and to be related (Ikeke, 2015; Mason, 2004). Relationships with all that is and exists are seen as a life force: the life of one being supports and nourishes the life of another being (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Dudgeon & Bray, 2019).

**Figure 1.** The principle of Relationality



*Note.* In relationality, the physical (human) self is related with the more-than-human other.

Two examples of relational African worldviews in which the principle of relationality can be found, are *Ubuntu* and *Ukama*. Both Ubuntu ('I am because we are') and Ukama ('I am because of the cosmos') describe that one is or can be because of

their relationship with others. Without the 'we' or the 'cosmos' the 'I' cannot be. People who live these African philosophies understand life to be inert without relationships (Ikeke, 2015).

For people with a relational worldview, an important relationship might exist between a physical and the spiritual realm (Ikeke, 2015). In their understanding of the world, humans live in a sacred universe in which there is no sharp distinction between the physical and the spiritual, the sacred or the non-sacred. Instead, the spiritual and the physical are understood to be related and seen as the same reality (ibid). The basis of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical is the notion that every creature participates in the Supreme Vital Force of a creator. (Ejeh, 2008).

People who see themselves to be related with more-than-humans often perceive the other more-than-human as their kin. This indicates that the making of persons is not solely bound to human ancestry or genealogy (Haraway, 2015). This perception is conceptualised as Kincentric Ecology (Salmón, 2000). Kin recognition with the more-than-humans is often catalysed through anthropomorphism (Veer, 2014). This is the ascription of human characteristics to other-than-human others and encourages attachment and liking (Airenti, 2015; Veer, 2014).

The way in which Indigenous people with a relational worldview understand their relationship with the Earth is described to be at the basis of their culture or existence. First of all, the land is seen as a material element which can be enjoyed freely (ibid). In line with this thought, the Earth is perceived as an entity that cannot be subjugated and reduced to an object that can be exploited for profit (Kraft, 2009). The relational understanding of people's relationship with the Earth is in contrast with the dominant Western anthropocentric schools of thought in which the Earth is perceived and used as a possession of mankind which can be used as means of production (Ikeke, 2015; Kraft, 2009).

The Indigenous people's relational understanding with the more-than-human world is often sustained and strengthened through its embodiment in their

practices in daily life and has a variety of implications (Kraft, 2009; Pyhtinen, 2006; Tynan, 2021). In a more-than-human society, the principle of relationality can be practised or embodied through moments in which people come together to foster unity in their more-than-human community. Examples of embodied relationality with a more-than-human community are prayers, sacrifices, ancestral festivals, and reverence for nature. Some people believe that if these philosophies are not embedded in their practices, it will have consequences for their lives. For example, the Earth might not give her fruits if humans do not make offerings or sacrifices for her (Ikeke, 2015).

Summarised, the ways in which humans perceive their relationship with the more-than-human world affects the way that they behave towards it (Ikeke, 2015). People with a relational worldview perceive themselves to be related with a more-than-human world (ibid). This understanding of a connected universe is sustained and strengthened through its embodiment in the lives of people in relationship with the more-than-human world.

## 2.2 Holistically lived spirituality

### 2.2.1 Spirituality

The term '**spirituality**' has a wide range of definitions and understandings (Nijboer, 2018). For some people, spirituality is similar to, or closely related with religion (Marra, 2000; Wong *et al.*, 2006, Sheldrake, 2012; Zinnbauer, 1999). For example, they may understand that spirituality is about a person directing their life to (a) God or the divine. Other people, however, understand spirituality to be different from religion (Zinnbauer *et al.*, 1999). Instead of directing their lives to (a) God, they might seek for personal transcendence and meaningfulness (*ibid.*).

A definition of spirituality that seeks to connect a relatively wide range of different understandings is given by Puchalski *et al.* (2009):

*“Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.”* (Puchalski *et al.*, 2009, p. 887).

In this definition, Puchalski *et al.* (2009) describe two main aspects of spirituality: the seeking and expression of meaning and purpose, and the experiencing of connectedness with a variety of entities such as nature and the sacred (God).

Both Nijboer (2018) and Willson (2016) work with a third aspect of spirituality; the experiencing of transcendence. Nijboer (2018) describes transcendence as a fundamental (re)orientation on someone's own existence, from the deepest being of human.

This (re)orientation of someone's existence is relevant to include in the framework of my study, as it might shed light on the way in which humans relate with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Consequently, I decided to work with a definition of spirituality that includes all three aspects, being: 1) seeking and

expressing purpose and meaning; 2) experiencing of connectedness; and 3) experiencing of transcendence. How these concepts are used in my thesis, is explained below.

The first described aspect of spirituality is the **seeking and expressing purpose and meaning** (Puchalski *et al.*, 2009; Willson, 2016). According to the dictionary, 'meaning' can be described as "the quality or sense of purpose that makes you feel that your life is valuable" (Oxforddictionaries, n.d.b). Similarly, 'purpose' is described as "meaning that is important and valuable to you" (Oxforddictionaries, n.d.c). Based on the dictionary, the concepts 'meaning' and 'purpose' seem to have some overlap in their meanings.

In the article of Reker, Peacock, & Wong, (1987), the concepts 'meaning' and 'purpose', are described to be different, but related. According to the authors, 'meaning' refers to "making sense, order, or coherence out of one's existence" (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987, p. 44), whereas 'purpose' refers to "intention, some function to be fulfilled, or goals to be achieved" (ibid). Even though the definitions of the two concepts are different, the two are described to be related. Namely, when one has a sense of meaning, they often have a purpose and strive toward one or more goals.

The second aspect of spirituality is the **experiencing of connectedness** (Puchalski, *et al.*, 2009; Willson, 2016). In the Oxford Dictionary, connectedness is described as the "feeling that you have a link with somebody/something or are part of a group" (Oxforddictionaries, n.d.d). Based on Stoll's (1989) findings, connectedness can be seen as the relationship one has with himself or with more-than-human others. Often, the experience of connectedness is related with a sense of well-being. Moreover, connectedness is found to be experienced when people actively engage with another (human) entity, activity, object, or environment. Thus, in this understanding, connectedness entails the experiencing of a relationship with another (more-than-human) entity.

The last aspect of spirituality is the **experiencing of transcendence** (Puchalski, *et al.*, 2009; Willson, 2016). According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'transcendence' is described as "the ability to go beyond the usual limits; existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level". In philosophy, the literal meaning of transcendence is 'climbing' or 'going beyond'. It is also understood as something in which a person is part of something larger than the person self (Hegel, 1949; Wilber, 1983). This 'something larger' can be multiple things, such as human beings, nature, the universe, the sacred, etcetera (Hegel, 1949; Wilber, 1983; King & Benson, 2006). Thus, in the experiencing of transcendence, people experience themselves to be part of a bigger whole.

According to Wilber (1983), (self-) transcendence is not something static, but rather a movement or process of integration and inclusion towards a position of greater wholeness. Moreover, Chandler, Holden, & Kolander (1992) identified different attributes of individuals who experience transcendence. These people, called 'transcenders', hold "a holistic perspective of the world, a natural tendency towards synergy (cooperative action), (being) intrapsychic, interpersonal, intercultural and international, (being) more consciously and deliberately metamotivated" (Chandler, Holden, & Kolander, 1992, p.168). Thus, in short, transcendence can be described as the (process towards the) experiencing of a relationship with the larger whole.

The three aspects of spirituality are found to be related with each other (Bellingham *et al.*, 1989; Willson, 2016). Transcendence motivates people in their seeking for meaning and purpose and connectedness. Therefore transcendence can be found to be related with the other aspects of spirituality, being the experiencing of connectedness and *seeking and expressing purpose and meaning* because of transcendence (King & Benson, 2006).

Moreover, Bellingham *et al.* (1989) found a relationship between connectedness and the search for meaning. Namely, the experiencing of connectedness was found to be related with the finding of (a deeper) meaning in life. A lack of

connection, on the other hand, was described as a source of estrangement, loneliness, and spiritual pain and or distress.

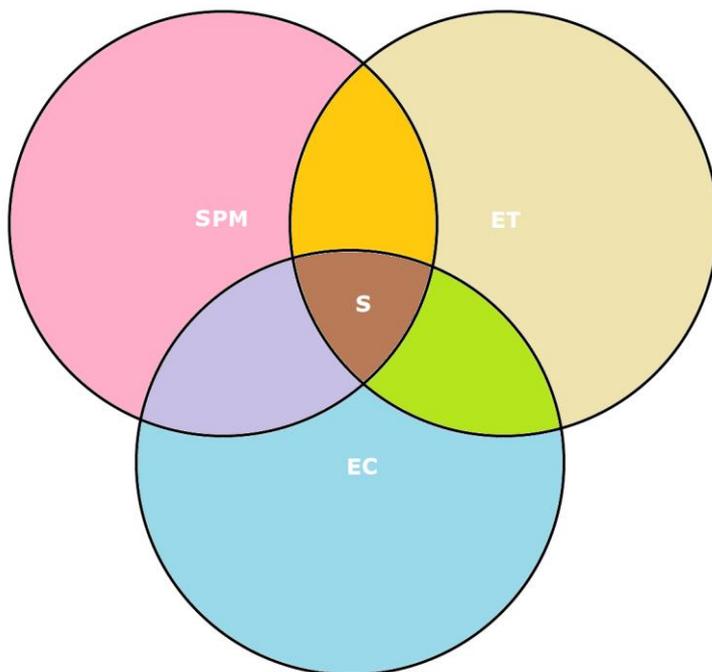
### 2.2.3 Relational spirituality

In the definition of Puchalski *et al.* (2009), humans are described to have spiritual relationships to more-than-human entities, such as nature and the sacred. It is through the linking word 'to' that I understand this definition of a spiritual relationship as one directional. As described above, however, relationships are reciprocal. Therefore, I decided to embrace the principle of relationality within the definition by explicitly acknowledging the multidimensional relatedness between different entities. To do so, I have changed the 'to'-s have with 'with'-s:

*“Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose, the way they experience their connectedness with the moment, with self, with others, with nature, and with the significant or sacred and the way they experience transcendence with the larger whole.”*

This adapted definition of spirituality (Puchalski *et al.*, 2009) now is relational because it acknowledges the relationships with the different entities. The proposed model of spirituality can be found in *Figure 2*.

**Figure 2.** Venn Diagram Spirituality



*Note.* The three related aspects of Spirituality (S; brown): Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning (SPM; red), Experiencing Transcendence (ET; yellow), and Experiencing connectedness (EC; blue).

### 2.2.3 Holistically lived spirituality

During the data analysis and the reflection upon my data, an addition to my theoretical framework emerged. Namely, when conducting my study, I understood that spirituality is lived by the DPZ's faith community by the heart, head, and hands. In the first week of my ethnographic study, this was shared multiple times by Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo. Inspired by Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo, my guest father emphasised the role of the Heart, Head, and Hands in the living of his daily life. My guest father wrote an article for the DPZ's church magazine in which he described that the Heart, Head, and Hands are important dimensions for humans that seek to live their life wholly (Appendix B), which is an aspect of spirituality (Puchalski *et al.*, 2009).

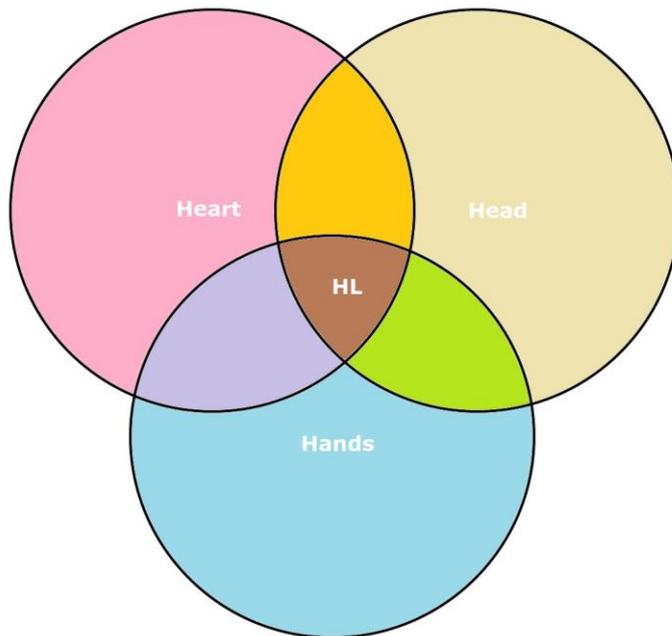
I decided to seek literature and theories that supported my findings so I could create a framework that matched with my understanding of the way in which the members of the DPZ's faith community to live their spirituality.

I found that the combination of Heart, Head and Hands have been significant in Christian circles (Kirezi & Grainger, 2018). By engaging with their heart (affect), head (cognition), and hands (behaviour), one engages with their faith holistically as a whole person (Stoudenmire *et al.*, 1985; Groome, 1998). Moreover, the head, heart, and hands are not lived in an independent but dependent way in which one enforces the other (Hollinger, 2009; Pudlas, 2007). To illustrate the relationship between the heart, head and the hands, Hollinger (2009) uses a metaphor of a symphonic concert:

*“When they join in symphonic concert together, we recognize that the head, heart, and hands are not three distinct parts, but three interacting dimensions of our whole being.”* (Hollinger, 2009, p. 32).

In my framework of 'Holistically lived spirituality', I propose that people live their spirituality holistically with their heart, head, and hands (*Figure 3*). Here, the Head-dimension refers to the engagement of the cognitive domain. People can engage cognitively through (academic) study, inquiry, the understanding of words and texts, and religious beliefs (Hodge, 2001; Singleton, 2015; Sipos *et al.*, 2008). The Heart-dimension refers to the enablement of the affective domain through emotions, feelings, values and attitudes which can be embodied in behaviours (Hodge, 2001; Singleton, 2015). Lastly, the Hands-dimension refers to the enactment of the behavioural domain through (spiritual) rituals, physical activities and practical skill development (Hodge, 2001; Singleton, 2015; Sipos *et al.*, 2008).

**Figure 3.** Venn Diagram Holistic living



*Note.* The three related dimensions of a Holistic Living (HL; brown): Heart (affect; red), Head (cognition; yellow), and Hands (behaviour; blue).

# 3. Methodology

In this chapter, I described the methodology that I used to answer the research question. Firstly, I elaborate upon the Methodological Approach (**Paragraph 3.1**). Secondly, the Preparatory Study is discussed (**Paragraph 3.2**). Thirdly, I describe the Participant Selection (**Paragraph 3.3**). Afterward, the research methods and data collection are discussed (**Paragraph 3.4**). In the fifth paragraph, the analysis of the recordings is discussed (**Paragraph 3.5**). In the last paragraph, I discussed my role as a researcher in my study (**Paragraph 3.6**).

## 3.1 Methodological approach

To study how the members of the DPZ's faith community live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, I found that a qualitative design was the best option. Namely, taking a qualitative approach has allowed me to explore and describe community members' behaviour, meanings, and experiences (Bernard, 2018a; de Vaus, 2001). When conducting qualitative research, there are some guidelines instead of rigid prescriptions that the researcher can follow (Boeijs, 2010). Based on these guidelines, I have crafted my own research design that I found to fit the research question. This research design is a combination of an ethnography and a Grounded Theory design.

Ethnographies are often used by qualitative researchers to provide an understanding of groups of people, such as (faith) communities (Barrett, 2009). In my study, I immersed myself in the DPZ's faith community's environment and observed and interpreted their behaviour and interactions in-depth (Rashid *et al.*, 2019). For one month, I lived with a guest family that is part of the DPZ's faith community. While sharing lives, I gained direct access to the culture and practices of the DPZ's faith community, and allowed me to learn first-hand about the behaviour, interactions, and spirituality.

Usually, an ethnographer spends at least a few weeks, but more likely several months in the field to embed themselves in the setting, to build trust with informants,

and gather enough observations to build up a representative picture (Barrett, 2009). In my study, I was limited to one month of ethnographic fieldwork. However, as I already was familiar with DPZ's faith community's culture through the conduction of a previous study, I had already built some trust with the informants and had already gathered some information. Moreover, to embed myself in their culture, build more trust, and prepare for the ethnographic study, I conducted a preparatory study (see paragraph 3.2).

In my exploratory study, I used **Grounded theory** to systematically generate and test the Holistic Relational Spirituality theory. Using Grounded theory, I sought to understand how the DPZ's faith community relates their spirituality with the physical Earth. I did this by shifting between the collecting of data and the analysis of the collected data. This shifting led to the emerging of insights and unanticipated refinement of the research focus and the creation of the theory (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

In qualitative case studies, one often strives for data saturation. Hereby, data is being collected until no significant new insights are obtained. As I was limited to the relatively short research period of one month of ethnographic fieldwork, there was no guarantee that I would reach data saturation. As an alternative, I sought for information richness whereby I strived for theoretical or empirical insights. A condition to reach information richness is that the case should be exemplary. As I studied the DPZ's faith community, which is an existing and concrete case, this condition has been met.

## 3.2 Preparatory study

I conducted a preparatory study in the two months before I executed the fieldwork to get acquainted with the case of the DPZ. In this preparatory study, I conducted desk research and visited the DPZ three times.

In desk research, I derived data from secondary sources to get background information of the DPZ's faith community and its members' relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. By using secondary sources, it was not

necessary to be in direct contact with the members of the faith community themselves (Green & Cohen, 2021).

The desk research involved the collecting of data from existing resources from different media such as scientific literature, internet pages (e.g. the DMV's website), Dutch newspaper articles about (Christian) spirituality (e.g. *Trouw*), and signed up for a Christian newsletter (*Nederlands Dagblad*) from which I read their daily reports. Regarding the search for scientific literature, I used the search engines Google, Google Scholar, and the digital WUR library. I searched for articles related to topics of interest such as *Religion, Spirituality, Dualism, Relationality, Christianity, Relational Learning, and Agroecology*.

Next to the desk research, I conducted three site visits to the DPZ's faith community for participatory observation. In one of these visits, I joined a workshop of Father Dr. Godfrey Nzamujo and the DPZ's understanding of relationality that was organised by the faith community and given by one of the Fathers. During the other two site visits, I joined the DPZ's church masses and informal debriefings. Aside from data collection, the site visits were also valuable for meeting people. Some people I have met during the debriefings have played a key role in the arrangement of the guest family where I could stay during the ethnographic fieldwork.

### 3.3 Participant selection

I selected participants that could clarify or deepen my understanding of the spiritual relationship the DPZ's faith community has with the physical Earth (Ishak & Bakar, 2014). In my study, there were two conditions that my participants had to meet: 1) the participant is part of the DPZ's faith community and 2) I considered the participant to have a green/environmentalist mindset, which could be reflected in green/environmental behaviours. A person was found to be part of the DPZ faith community when it was observed to be engaging actively with it. For example, by attending the Sunday church masses and/or being active at the DPZ's working groups. A person was considered to have a green mindset or practise green

behaviours when I observed that this community member sought ways to minimise harm to or benefit the environment as much as possible (Steg & Vlek, 2009). Examples of this are the minimising of energy use or reducing waste.

I used different methods to sample my participants, such as purposive sampling, and snowballing through interviewees and key informants (Bernard, 2018d). Regarding the snowballing, I asked enrolled research participants whether they knew other 'green' people within the DPZ's faith community. This question was asked after the interview was conducted. The key informants that were involved in the DPZ's faith community functioned as my primary contact people. These people facilitated access to the DPZ's faith community, assisted me in my understanding of the community, and provided me with the names of other members of the DPZ's faith community that were relevant for my study. To get a broad perspective of the DPZ's faith community, I gained information from three key informants.

## 3.4 Research methods and data collection

### 3.4.1 Research methods

The methods that I selected are participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The usage of multiple methods is also referred to as 'Triangulation' (Patton, 1999). Triangulating data is relevant to objectivity in this study in the face of my positionality throughout the research (Becker & Geer, 1957). I have elaborated upon the used methods below. A short overview of the used methods can be found in *table 1*.

### 3.4.2 Participant observations

Starting in the first week of ethnographic fieldwork, and continuing throughout my stay in Zwolle, I conducted a participatory observation at both my guest family's place and within the DPZ. In participant observation, both participation and observation in research are integrated and balance each other out (Bernard, 2018d), p. 247). The participant observations were direct and obtrusive. I have

chosen to integrate participation with observation to become familiar with the DPZ's faith community and to familiarise them with my presence (ibid). As a participant observer, I went to religious events and activities that were organised by the DPZ's faith community, such as the weekly church masses, morning prayers, and evening church choir rehearsals. I also attended the 'Grond Week' which was a thematic week about the Earth and agroecology which was organised by the DPZ. I also joined my guest parents in their daily lives, in which I had dinners together, and joined my guest father once in pollarding willows. The participant observations were obtrusive because they could detect the observation. Moreover, the faith community was familiar with my role as a student researcher and the goal of my study as this was announced by both the DPZ (e.g. on the DPZ's website) and me (e.g. when talking with people) (Bernard, 2018d).

The data I collected during the participative observation were scratch field notes and log notes (Bernard, 2018b). Scratch field notes are the quick notes that I wrote down during observations and reflections after observations, as well as after informal interviews that took place during the participative observation. In the scratch notes, my own interpretations of the relationships that I perceive between the DPZ's faith community and their relationship with the physical Earth were described. Consequently, the field notes provided me with a quick overview of participants who had an explicit relationship with the physical Earth. The log notes I took mostly functioned as a practical tool to help me with keeping track of potential participants for the interviews and focus groups. In both the scratch notes and log notes, I wrote down the location, date, and time of the observation. To the log notes, I added the personal contact information of potential participants as well. In general, participative observation provided me with information, directions, and participants for the semi-structured interviews.

### 3.4.3 Semi-structured interviews

I conducted eleven semi-structured interviews to gain more in-depth insights about the way in which the members of the DPZ's faith community live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God (Bernard,

2018c). I opted for semi-structured interviews as this design allowed me to balance the structure of standardised questions while allowing the interviewee to take the interview beyond the discussion guide creating space to explore new topics (Bernard, 2018c).

The interviews were planned at a specific time in the second, third, and fourth week of the fieldwork - when I had created a general understanding of the DPZ's faith community and their relationship with the physical Earth and spiritual God. The interviews were conducted in collaboration with a fellow Master's student from the same Master's program. As our research topics were similar, the collaboration in interviews would save people's time. These semi-structured covered a list of topics that was prepared by my fellow student and me (ibid). This list was based on the preparatory study, observations and studied literature. During the interview, multiple topics *Spirituality, Nature, Relationality, Food*, and the *DPZ's faith community* were discussed (Appendix C and D).

In general, the interviews were held two-on-one. In one case, however, we chose a two-on-two person interview as the participants preferred this. The interviews took about sixty to ninety minutes and were situated in a space that was pleasant for both the interviewees and us. Most often, this was in or around the DPZ. Two of the interviews, however, were held elsewhere in the Netherlands. These interviewees invited us over to their houses.

Before the actual interview started, we had a short informal chat with the participant, after which we informed them about our research, asked them for their consent, and started the auditive recording with our mobile phones. We started the actual interview using the premade topic list and asked mostly open-ended questions. During the interviews, I made some scratch notes that I used for follow-up questions. We were also attentive to the interviewee's emotions. For some interviewees, we touched upon sensible topics which resulted in emotional reactions. In these cases, we created some space and time to have a break and supported the participant. When all the topics were covered and there were no more questions to ask by us or the interviewee, we ended the recording and

thanked the participant with a small treat. The recordings of the interviews are a primary source of data.

### 3.4.4 Focus groups

Two focus groups were organised in the third and fourth week of the fieldwork. For focus groups, I recruited a specific group of DPZ's faith community members to participate in a group discussion that I led as a moderator. In my study, the goal of the focus groups was to understand the relationship between the DPZ's spirituality and the physical Earth better. To the focus group, I included eight participants because this group size allowed me to deepen the conversation while maintaining the group dynamics (Rabiee, 2004). Participants were drawn from the semi-structured interviews and purposive sampling. The participants that I selected were the participants that were actively seeking for how they could live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth, being seven parish members and a Lay Dominican of the DPZ's faith community. The dates, times, and preparation for the focus groups were discussed in collaboration with the participants. During the focus groups, my fellow researcher assisted me by handing out the materials and helping with the facilitation of the group discussions.

The focus groups took place in a building that was situated next to the priory and took around 90 minutes each. The setting of the DPZ suited the interviews because the interviewees are familiar with the place and they were therefore expected to feel comfortable in this setting. Before the focus groups started, we had a short informal chat with some tea and treats together with the participants. When everyone was acclimatised, I informed the participants about our research and asked them for their consent. We then started the recording with our mobile phones and began with the focus group.

The focus groups were based on the 'Reflection cards on own performance' (Gordijn *et al.*, 2018). During the two sessions, I sought the motivations, identity, beliefs, skills, and behaviours of the participants, and how this was reflected in

the context of the DPZ. In the first session, we focussed on their motivation, identity, and beliefs, while in the second session we focused on their skills and behaviours. The participants were prepared for the focus groups and asked to write their ideas down on post-its. After this, the post-its were mapped and discussed collectively. At the end of the focus groups, there was space for the participants' own reflections and additions. These reflections were the most valuable for the purpose of this study as I found that the participants' lived spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God was discussed here the most. After the discussion, we ended the session, by thanking the participants and ending the recording. The recordings are the product of the focus groups and also serve as a primary source of data for the analysis.

### 3.5 Data analysis

The analysis of my data is inspired by the Grounded Theory approach (Pandit, 1996). In my study, I moved between the analysis and the empirical data to make sure I included the different aspects that were relevant for my research. Moreover, I used the procedures of constant comparison and theoretical sensitivity to make sure I properly categorised the data in all its variations, and to allow it to turn into theory. As data-analysis is time-consuming, and I had a limited research timeframe, I started with the analysis after the completion of the fieldwork. The recordings have been analysed through transcribing, followed-up by cyclical stages of coding, writing, removing, and reading. I have elaborated upon these steps below. Moreover, an overview of the steps is presented in *Table 2*.

In the first step, my fellow researcher and I **transcribed** the interviews via the online tool OTranscribe.com. The transcription I made is an 'intelligent Verbatim Transcription'. This style allowed me to transcribe every spoken word, and to leave out moments of silence, filler words and to clean up the grammar (McMullin, 2021).

In the second step, I **coded** the typed transcripts in the qualitative data analysis software package ATLAS.Ti. The coding process involved the recognition of

important moments and the encoding of these moments, prior to a process of interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). In the coding step, a combination of both the deductive and inductive approaches have been used. Regarding deductive coding, I sought text fragments that I considered related to the aspects of spirituality. Inductive coding has been used to develop concepts, categories, and properties in the transcripts (Pandit, 1996). After deductive and inductive coding, axial coding was used. Here, connections between categories and its sub-categories were created. Lastly, selective coding was used to build a framework by integrating categories (ibid).

The third step was the selective data collection. Here, I connected the found codes by **writing** them down. I elaborated upon the core variable, its properties and its connections with the other categories (Holton, 2008). The analysis was done when I found that I had elaborated on the variables sufficiently. These clusters eventually formed the information for the results.

In the fourth step, I **removed** the categories that did not have enough supporting data. Here, I reviewed all the categories and codes and examined whether they had enough data to be solid. When I felt like that fell short, I removed them. In the last step, I **reread** the written texts and transcripts and coded them according to the found codes and structure to make the codes more solid. After one cycle of analysis, I allowed myself to move from one step to the next for all the described phases. Moreover, I contacted my guest parents if I was in need of a better understanding or new insights about the shared information.

**Table 1.** Overview research methodology.

Week 0	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Prep. Study				
	Participative Observations <i>Connecting and understanding the faith community and their spirituality</i>			
		Semi-structured Interviews <i>Gaining an in-depth understanding of the DPZ's members their personal relationships between spirituality and the physical Earth</i>		
			Focus Groups <i>Sharing relationships between the physical and the spiritual</i>	

*Note.* A preparatory study (*Prep. Study*; in light grey) was executed before the fieldwork took place (*week 0*) to become familiar with the DPZ's faith community, their spirituality, and their lived spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. The ethnographic study (in dark grey) was executed over a period of four weeks and consisted of Participative Observations, Semi-structured interviews, and Focus Groups.

**Table 2.** Overview of the iterative steps in the data analysis

Step	Description	Output
Step 1	Transcribing audio-taped interview via otranscribe.com	Transcription of interview
Step 2	Coding of first interview	Coded transcript of first interview
Step 3	Writing of document with preliminary results	Document with analysis of first interview
Step 4	Coding of interviews	Coded transcripts of the other interviews
Step 5	Adapting, expanding, and adjusting the preliminary results	Document with analysis of all the interviews
Step 6	Clustering the codes further	Document with a more concrete analysis of the interviews
Step 7	Rereading and recoding	Final Results and development of theory

## 3.6 My role as a researcher within the faith community

### 3.6.1 Positionality

When conducting ethnography, one should be aware of cultural differences. In ethnographic research, neutrality is an illusion. The thesis that you are reading now, is therefore also influenced by different actors and should be seen as a result of scientific research at a specific time and place. My research is loaded and influenced by my own positionality as well. I realised that one truth does not exist. Therefore, I found it difficult to describe research as if it is 'black on white'. To illustrate this, I decided to change the black font to grey. Still, I found it important to reflect upon my positionality.

An important difference between my own positionality and the positionality of my research population existed in the form of religion. In contrast to the members of the DPZ's faith community, I would not refer to myself as a religious person. To overcome potential biases in my understanding and writings, I thought it relevant to work from an ethnorelative perspective. Here, I tried to shift between my own (not religious) cultural background and the faith community's Dominican Catholic culture (Bennett, 2004). Moreover, I reflected upon my role as a researcher within the faith community regularly during the different phases of my study. By reflecting upon this, I was able to broaden my view. The reflections helped me to overcome some of my own dominant perceptions, observations, and understandings of the DPZ's faith community and, consequently, this influenced my findings.

During the data collection of the research, I collaborated with a fellow master's student. Her positionality is of equal importance as my own positionality and could influence this step (Bennett, 2004). She conducted her own research which also influenced the interview questions that we asked. As her interest was similar to my research, I experienced her presence in the study positively as she opened new and deepened perspectives. Thus, thanks to the collaboration, I was able to collect more relevant information.

### 3.6.2 Ethics

Researchers are often guided by research ethics. These are the moral principles that lead researchers in the conduction of their research, without deception or the intention to harm their participants knowingly or unknowingly (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). The general ethical principles that I included in the conduction of my study are informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy.

The ethnographic study I execute operates on a principle of **informed consent** (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, I have asked my participants for consent verbally, at any time of involvement, and asked them for their permission to audio record the interviews or focus groups. Informed consent was harder to realise during the observations. Nevertheless, I have sought ways to inform the DPZ's faith community with my study as much as possible. For some observations, this was possible (e.g., during workshops). During other observations (e.g. church masses) however, informed consent was harder to ask. As I do not refer to specific people or observations in my research project, I do not consider this to be unethical.

To guarantee confidentiality and privacy, I decided to anonymise the participants' names in my study (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). **Anonymisation** is important in this study because it limits the individual participants' recognition of each other. Moreover, I decided not to share thick descriptions of the participants as these descriptions do not add much to the purpose of my study and could possibly lead to their recognition and would therefore not guarantee their privacy. For example, I decided not to share with whom of the parish members my guest parents were communicating as this would harm their privacy. A last way in which I sought to guarantee the participants' privacy is by using gender neutral pronouns, 'they/them' instead of 'she/her' and 'he/him'. This was not necessary to do with the Fathers as (I assume that) they all identify as male. A gender neutral pronoun would therefore not contribute to more privacy.

It is the researcher's responsibility to take care of the research participants and work compassionately. I sought to do this by not over-researching the population (e.g. collaborating with a fellow researcher), and executing my research in collaboration with the research population. Even though my main goal to conduct this study is to graduate, I do find it important to conduct research that is reciprocally beneficial. I was therefore willing to adapt my research focus and to collide both scientific research gaps and the wishes of the faith community. The data gathering was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. To contribute to the safety of the participants of my study, I checked and behaved according to the coronavirus measures that were recommended by the Dutch Government at that time.

In return for the possibility to execute my study at the DPZ, the DPZ's faith community's openness and hospitality, I sought ways in which I could help and assist them as a participant researcher. In the priority, I did this, for example, by helping with the organisation of the Ground Week, translation of Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo's speeches, and the cooking of a dinner at the DPZ for the Fathers and the other residents. At my guest parents, I did this by sharing the household tasks (e.g. doing groceries, cooking and vacuum cleaning) and thanking them by inviting them for lunch together with my fellow researcher and her guest parents. I thanked the participants I interviewed in my research with a small treat.

## 4. Results

In this chapter, I give an introduction of the faith community (**Paragraph 4.1**) and describe their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth (**Paragraph 4.2**), and how the spirituality of the DPZ's faith community relates with agroecology (**Paragraph 4.3**). I have used different punctuation marks and text styles to make it understandable. A note that explains how to read this chapter is provided in *Box 1*.

**Box 1.** A note on how to read this chapter

### A note on how to read this chapter

This chapter is a structured mix of descriptive analysis (non-italics) with relevant significant statements from the research participants (*italics*).

Every significant statement from respondents is separated by a blank line and a tab. Careful judgement was used to correct obvious grammatical errors or repetitions that might have otherwise distracted or confused the reader.

When found necessary, I inserted non-italic texts [in parentheses] to provide clarification, context, or enhance readability. The original

Dutch transcript is sometimes added in the footnote when I considered this relevant for clarification.

## 4.1 The faith community of the Dominican Priory of Zwolle

**Figure 4.** Drawing of the Dominican Priory Zwolle



### 4.1.1 Introduction of the social groups within the DPZ's faith community

The Dominican Priory Zwolle (DPZ) is located in the city of Zwolle. From 1902 until 1965, the DPZ functioned as a training house for young students (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d.; Pierik, n.d.). The function of the priory changed in the 1960's. The number of Dominicans in training decreased, all the brother students moved to a monastery elsewhere in the Netherlands and the philosophy education disappeared from Zwolle (ibid).

In 1965, the training house became a parish; a community of Christian believers with their own church (KRO-NCRV, n.d.). One of the reasons for this was the decreasing number of friars (Father 3). As a parish, the DPZ became publicly accessible to non-friars as well. Now, the DPZ's faith community is open to everyone who is interested, both Christian believers and non-believers. Due to these changes over time, different social groups can be identified in the DPZ. I identified four different social groups that were actively involved in Dominican spirituality: **Friars**, **Lay Dominicans**, **Other Residents**, and **Parish Members**.

Of these community members, I identified some that were actively involved in green practices. My study population consisted of sixteen of these members, derived from different social groups (*Table 3*). Among eleven participants (Participant 1 to 11), I conducted a semi-structured interview and observatory research. Among seven participants (Participant 4 and 11 to 15), I conducted two Focus Groups. Lastly, among Participant 15 and 16, my guest parents, I conducted an observational study and multiple informal interviews. A more detailed description of the groups and their relationships is described in the next paragraphs.

**Table 3.** Overview of the studied members of the faith community and their social group within the DPZ.

Fathers (3)	Lay Dominicans (LD)	Other Residents (OR)	Parish Members (PM)
Participant 1 Father 1	Participant 4 Lay Dominican 1	Participant 9 Other Resident	Participant 10 Parish Member 1
Participant 2 Father 2	Participant 5 Lay Dominican 2		Participant 11 Parish Member 2
Participant 3 Father 3	Participant 6 Lay Dominican 3		Participant 12 Parish Member 3
	Participant 7 Lay Dominican 4		Participant 13 Parish Member 4
	Participant 8 Lay Dominican 5		Participant 14 Parish Member 5
			Participant 14 Parish Member 6
			Participant 15 Parish Member 7
			Participant 16 Parish Member 8

## 4.1.2 Introduction of the Fathers

Currently, the DPZ houses four Dutch senior male friars (all aged 80+ years old) who have devoted their lives to religious service. The presence of the friars can be described as the 'cement of the whole' as they have lived at the DPZ for multiple decades (Dominicanenklooster, n.d. d). Among the friars, three Fathers and one Brother can be distinguished. The religious services that Fathers can execute are different from the Brothers. Namely, Fathers can profess vows to obedience to their community, are qualified to celebrate masses, and can administer sacraments. I observed that the DPZ's Fathers were active in the organisation of other activities and events in and around the priory, such as celebrating masses, Bible study groups, workshops, and liturgical singing. Of the occupations of the fathers, it is the preaching that is at the heart of their Dominican tradition. According to Lay Dominican 4, the Dominican Tradition is about studying and standing with both feet in society.

Some of the religious services practised by the Fathers can be regarded as a 'green practice'. A green key practice that was initiated by the fathers is the Grond Project and the inviting of Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo to their priory. Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo is both a priest and agroecological farmer and shared that his agroecological practices are an expression of relationality, which he calls this 'a dance with nature' (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d.e; Eikema, 2022). In their Grond Week, the Fathers wanted to learn to 'dance with nature' as well, and invited Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo over to learn from him. Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo visited the Dutch priory in November 2021 for one week. During this week, he shared more about his knowledge of agroecology and the principle of relationality.

In my study, I researched how the fathers lived their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God by studying their vows, mass celebrations, sacraments, teachings and workshops, and liturgical songs. The one Brother was not included in my study as he was not observed to be engaging in green practices.

### 4.1.3 Introduction of the Lay Dominicans

The Dutch Dominican Lay community is an independent group within the Dominican movement (Dominicaanse Lekengemeenschap Nederland) that was founded in 1999 by and for people that want to give shape to their Dominican inspiration in their work and personal lives (Dominicanen, 2019). The goal of the DLN is to create a movement of people that want to connect to the movement of Saint Dominicus. To practise this, Lay Dominicans are active in the field of pastoral care, formation work, reflection on the faith, and social commitment (Dominicanen, 2019; Lay Dominican 1).

Within the DPZ's faith community, there are about twenty Lay Dominican members (Father 1); For my study, I interviewed five of them. The interviewed Dutch Lay Dominicans, are more diverse than the friars as they are male and female and have a broader age range (aged 45-80 years). The Lay Dominicans are involved in different voluntary-based activities in and around the priory. At the priory, they attend and contribute to the church masses and other activities that are organised by the DPZ. They do this by fulfilling different functions such as facility tasks as Parish Clerk, active roles in working groups (e.g. Green Church), assisting in the board, organising courses, and gardening work, and giving lay sermons at the DPZ.

Regarding the green practices at the DPZ, one of the Lay Dominicans is involved in sharing the link between the Bible and the physical Earth. Another one is responsible for the recycling and reusing of materials at the DPZ, such as electric materials and books. Outside the priory, the selected Lay Dominicans are involved in different green practices. One of the Lay Dominicans is involved in the Zero Waste movement in their hometown where they engage in nature maintenance, such as heather management. Moreover, multiple Lay Dominicans engage in green diets in which they seek to eat (mostly) organically and/or vegetarian food.

#### 4.1.4 Introduction of the Other Residents

It is possible for non (Lay) Dominicans to live in the DPZ as well (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d. c). In my thesis, I refer to this social group as 'Other Residents'. Other Residents are no (Lay) Dominicans, but they are interested in Dominican Spirituality. Moreover, just as the (Lay) Dominicans, the Other Residents "take care of the future of the priory as an inhabited house where religious life is given" in their own ways (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d. c). Currently, one Other Resident lives at the DPZ (aged 50 years). The Other Resident has a Northern European, non-Dutch nationality. To the DPZ's faith community, they contribute with their musical knowledge and practices (e.g. singing; Other Resident). Regarding green practices, the Other Resident was interested in Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo's understanding of relationality and actively seeking a simple lifestyle. As the one Other Resident was part of the Faith community and engaged in a green mindset, I included them in my study.

#### 4.1.5 Introduction of the Parish Members

Parish Members are the largest and most diverse group of the DPZ's faith community, consisting of children, adults and seniors and seem to have more-than-Dutch nationalities as there is also a Caribbean society within the DPZ. The Parish members engage with the faith community by attending their spiritual activities, such as masses, courses and seminars, and volunteering work. Regarding the first, the masses are weekly visited by about 400 Parish members (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d. a). Concerning the volunteering work, there are around 350 Parish Members active within the DPZ. One way to be voluntarily involved is by joining committees and/or one of the multiple working groups. At the DPZ, there are ten working groups around deaconics, which is described as "everything the church does for the outside world" (Lay Dominican 4).

The studied parish members are all Dutch, adult, and involved in different green practices. Some of them were active in the 'Grond project', others are part of the Green Church working group. The Green Church is one of the deaconic working

groups and is involved with the interpretation of the Biblical mission to do good and right for the sake of loved ones and the God that has created everything (Groene Kerken, n.d.). Most of the observed Parish Members are actively seeking ways to practise the lessons they learn at church in their daily lives and seek ways to live environmentally. For example, they recycle, reduce and reuse (their) products and materials, are conscious about their diets, eat local, organic and/or vegetarian food, contribute to nature conservation by pollarding willows, join climate strikes, or have (changed) jobs for the sake of the Earth.

#### 4.1.6 Summary of the DPZ's faith community's Social Groups

The DPZ's faith community can be divided into four social groups: 1) Fathers, 2) Lay Dominicans, 3) Other Resident(s), and 4) Parish Members. It was found that the members of the social groups fulfil different roles within the faith community and that the social groups interact with each other, participate in the faith community, and perform different green practices.

**Figure 5.** Poster at the DPZ



*Note.* Poster hanging on the wall at the DPZ. "Leer ons te dansen met de natuur" ("Teach us to dance with nature").

## 4.2 A Monastic Dance with the Sacred Earth

### 4.2.1 Holistically lived spirituality

How the DPZ dances, or lives, their spirituality with God and the physical Earth is described in this paragraph. The text is structured by the three aspects of spirituality (see Theoretical framework). These three aspects are the Seeking of Meaning and Purpose (SMP), Experiencing Connectedness (EC), and Experiencing transcendence (ET). I portrayed how these aspects of spirituality are lived through the dimensions of Affect (Heart), Cognition (Head), and Behaviour (Hands). A short overview of the results can be found in *Box 2*. Lastly, I shared how spirituality is lived by the different members of the DPZ's faith community and their social groups.

**Box 2.** Overview of the three aspects of holistically lived spirituality of DPZ's faith community in relationship with the physical Earth and spiritual God

### 1. Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning

The way the DPZ's faith community is found to seek and express purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and spiritual God and how it is holistically lived through affect, cognition, and behaviour.

### 2. Experiencing connectedness

The way the DPZ's faith community is found to experience connectedness with the physical Earth and spiritual God and holistically lived through affect, cognition, and behaviour.

### 3. Experiencing transcendence

The way the DPZ's faith community is found to experience transcendence with the physical Earth and spiritual God and how it is holistically lived through affect, cognition, and behaviour.

## 4.2.2 Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning holistically with the physical Earth and the spiritual God

### 4.2.2.1 Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through affective enablement

The way in which the members of the DPZ's faith community seek purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God occurs through different affects. I distinguished a relationship **with the physical Earth** and a relationship **with the physical Earth and God**. In the first, the affective relationship with the physical Earth was not explicitly described to be related with God or the Sacred, whereas this was the case in the latter. Concerning the relationship with the physical Earth, I found that the participants relate with the physical Earth through both positive affects (e.g. (en)joying) and negative affects (e.g. despair).

Moreover, the members of the DPZ's faith community find purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and spiritual God through positive affects (e.g. joy).

## **Physical Earth**

Firstly, the members of the faith community seek and find meaning with the Earth through **positive affects** such as (en)joying and awe. For example, Parish Member 1 shared experiencing **deep joy** when treating the Earth well. The joy experienced by Parish Member 1 can be interpreted as a meaningful affect for the participant.

*“It [treating the earth well] also gives deep joy.”* (Parish Member 1).

**Deep joy** and the value of nature was also experienced by Lay Dominican 3, when they find themselves with the physical Earth:

*“When I am in nature, I can incredibly enjoy, for example, the IJssel. Walking along the IJssel. I feel very strongly how precious it is, that landscape.”* (Lay Dominican 3).

When they are walking at the IJssel, they experience an inherent purpose with the physical Earth.

A second example of positive affect that I found to be experienced by the participants, is **aweing**. Lay Dominican 3 shares a nature experience in which they describe the “incredibly beautiful” landscapes of New Zealand:

*“New Zealand is an incredibly beautiful country where all the landscapes of the world can be found: tropical, winters, mountains, coasts... incredible coasts everywhere, very special nature.”* (Lay Dominican 3)

In the above excerpt it is evident how Lay Dominican 3 experiences being **grateful** for the landscape of New Zealand by acknowledging the landscape of New Zealand.

*“New Zealand really is a country to be incredibly grateful for.”* (Lay Dominican 3).

Even though Lay Dominican 3 uses the landscape of the faraway New Zealand, he also shared that these feelings are not bound to that or another specific environment:

*“It [feelings of awe and gratefulness] could also be in a forest, on Schiermonnikoog; it could be anywhere.”* (Lay Dominican 3).

A worth mentioning aspect of positive affect which relates the members of the DPZ' faith community with the Earth is **caring**, an affect closely linked with the senses/feeling of concern and interest:

*“Care for the earth is an important theme to me, care for the soil.”* (Lay Dominican 1).

It is the caring, a feeling of concern, for the Earth that is found to be important for Lay Dominican 1 and can therefore be understood to be purposeful for the participant.

I also found that the members of the DPZ's faith community lack to find and experience purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through **negative affects**. Some of the members of the faith community shared that they experience these affects when they are uncertain of how to practise their purpose or when they observe other people living inconsistently with their own ideals. Two examples of negative affects are illustrated below. In the first, Lay Dominican 4 described experiencing a **feeling of despair** as they informed me about their concerns regarding the physical Earth:

*“I'm also worried about it [the Earth]. Sometimes I don't know what to do with those worries.”* (Lay Dominican 4).

In this quote I understand Lay Dominican 4 cares about the Earth and they are unsure how to act upon those feelings, resulting in negative affects such as the feeling of despair.

In the second quote, Lay Dominican 2 shares how green behaviour at the DPZ is one of his primary concerns. Lay Dominican 2 describes **feeling annoyed** by the

energy wasting habits, which can be understood as the absence of green behaviour:

*“I am very happy that they are now looking at how energy can be saved with the renovation because I am really annoyed seeing how the energy is wasted here [at the DPZ].”* (Lay Dominican 2).

Here, Lay Dominican 2 describes a feeling of annoyance when one is wasting, taking more than they need, from the Earth. This wasting behaviour is opposed to his green purpose; taking care of the Earth.

When the participants shared experiences of negative affects, it also became apparent that these feelings urged them towards a change of behaviour and cognition. Specifically, it was through these feelings that the DPZ’s faith community members felt motivated to learn more about green behaviours to overcome these feelings (Lay Dominican 4).

## With the physical Earth and spiritual God

As mentioned above, purpose and meaning were also found with the physical earth in relationship with the spiritual God through **positive affect**. In the interview with Lay Dominican 3 this relationship with the Earth and God was described through **enjoying** a natural landscape. Moreover, it is through the enjoying of the landscape that he experiences its intrinsic value for which he is **thankful** to God:

*“I will not fall to my knees and shout ‘thank God’, but inside, there is the realisation that we got it and that we should be careful with it.”* (Lay Dominican 3).

Father 2 expressed his thankfulness for the physical Earth as well. He explains he experiences this thankfulness through the eyes of God, ‘Grazia’:

*“If you look at those [material things] with the eyes of God, Grazia, then you say, ‘yes that’s nice, that is very beautiful, thank you dear God’.* (Father 2).

When looking through the eyes of God, Father 2 shares his appreciation of the physical Earth as he finds it to be intrinsically valuable and beautiful. The relationship is reciprocal as he expresses his gratitude for the Earth with the spiritual God. Thus, it can be identified that one finds purpose with the physical Earth by thanking the spiritual God.

## Summary

In short, seeking and expressing purpose and meaning with the physical Earth occurs through affect. Relationships that were identified through affect are relationships with the Earth and relationships with the Earth and God. Within the relationship with the Earth, different affects were identified which can be described as positive and negative affects. Positive affects were experienced when the participants were outside, or when they could act upon their knowledge. Negative affects were experienced when one did not know how to act or were not able to act meaningfully with the physical Earth. The observed affective relationship was found to be mostly present among the Lay Dominicans.

#### 4.2.2.2 Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through cognitive engagement

I identified that the members of the DPZ's faith community seek and express purpose and meaning in relationship **with the physical Earth** and in relationship **with the physical Earth and the spiritual God**. The different social groups engaged in this relationship in different ways. For example, I identified that the Fathers mostly found meaning in biblical texts and religious figures, whereas the Parish Members found purpose and meaning through the church masses and lectures organised by the Fathers. In the paragraphs below I have elaborated upon this.

##### **With the physical Earth and the spiritual God**

Firstly, I found that the participants are seeking/finding meaning with the physical Earth and God through their **understanding of the Bible**. In their understanding of the Bible, the Fathers and some of the Lay Dominicans found a meaning in how the Earth could or should be treated (e.g. Father 2 and Lay Dominican 5). By carefully reading the Bible, Father 2 described the physical Earth as a gift from God (Father 2):

*“To describe that, but it [the Bible] is actually to make you aware that all of creation -that nature, your life, being human- is given to you. That it is a gift.” (Father 2).*

Thus, through the engagement with the Bible, the participants understand that the Earth and their own lives can be understood as a gift from God. Due to this understanding the faith community was led to believe in the importance of taking care of the physical Earth.

Next to the Bible, the DPZ's faith community engages with other religious texts to understand their relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God as well. Interestingly, Laudato Si (see Introduction), was not mentioned. Below I present some examples that were shared by the participants in the conducted interviews. The first example is an **understanding of Psalm 65 (box 3)**, which is a religious

song format by Father 1. According to Father 1, this Psalm is about the treatment of the Earth:

*“A beautiful Psalm [65] that was about the treatment of the Earth.”* (Father 1).

Through his understanding of Psalm 65, Father 1 makes the link between the Earth and God. In this Psalm, spiritual characteristics are ascribed to the physical Earth (e.g. ‘the streams of God’) which indicates a relationship between the Earth and the Spiritual. Through the Father’s conception of the Earth being a holy entity, he finds that she should be treated well.

**Box 3.** Quoted fragment Psalm 65 by Father 1

*“Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come. [...]. Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple. You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations. Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy. You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.”*

*(Father 1)*

Lay Dominican 1 also described the physical Earth as a holy entity through his interpretation of the Bible. In his **understanding of Exodus 3:5**, the ground on

which Moses is standing, is described to be holy. This is how the Lay Dominican sees the Physical Earth as well, like holy ground:

*“There is a scripture, God says to Moses: ‘go no further; the ground on which you stand is holy ground’. And I think that's how we should approach Earth: like holy ground.”* (Lay Dominican 1).

Referring to Moses in Exodus 3:5, Lay Dominican 1 attributed holy characteristics to the physical Earth. Similar to the understanding of Father 1, the Earth is considered holy, and it is the holiness that makes it meaningful.

Alongside the religious texts, it is by **reflecting upon the Dominican vow of poverty and sobriety** through which the DPZ faith community finds a meaning with the Earth. Father 2 can be found to find meaning in serving the world around him, which he also describes to be Creation:

*“As Dominican, at some point, you also take a vow of poverty and sobriety. Yes, my life is not about making as much money as possible or making a career; you make yourself available. In a dignified word: you serve the community, people who come to you or where you go, you serve the world around you, Creation.”* (Father 2).

Father 2 shares that he, as a Dominican, has taken a vow of poverty and sobriety. For him, this means that he should serve, instead of taking from Creation. In Creation, the physical Earth and the spiritual God can be found to be related. I would argue that it is through the practising upon his vows, that the father finds a purpose in his relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God.

### **With the physical Earth**

Meaning and purpose in relationship with the physical Earth was found through different kinds of cognitive engagement, both within the Christian tradition and outside the Christian tradition. Within the Christian tradition, the DPZ's faith community members engaged with the physical Earth by reflecting upon the Dominican identity and their understanding of religious figures.

Regarding the first, some of the participants underlined the preaching identity of the Catholic Dominican order. Lay Dominican 3 reflects upon the DPZ's identity as a faith community and compares the latter with the identity of a farming community. He finds purpose in **learning about (local) food and its production.**

*“I think it is and will continue to be, a kind of wake-up call. A wake-up call for how important it is to pay attention to what you eat, where you get it from, how it is produced, how you deal with the earth and the soil and the fruits of the earth.” (Lay Dominican 3)”*

In this quote, Lay Dominican 3 explains that the relationship with the physical Earth is a mental issue at the DPZ. They find purpose in the mental wake-up call in which they learn more about the Earth through food related choices and practices.

Similarly, the Parish Members described that they found meaning and purpose in taking care of the Earth through the understanding of Religious figures, such as Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo. During his lecture, Godfrey explained the principle of relationality by sharing his agroecological practices in Africa. Both Parish member 5 and Lay Dominican 2 seem to have found a purpose with the physical Earth through their **Understanding of Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo.** Both members of the DPZ's faith community mentioned that Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo has raised awareness and has given them new knowledge about the Earth which has changed their behaviour:

*“There are things that we choose very consciously. And thanks to Father Godfrey, I have become even more aware” (Parish Member 5).*

Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo has provided Parish Member 5 knowledge. One of the things Parish Member has become more conscious about is their behaviour and that they can do more than changing their groceries shopping behaviour:

*“Just look at how the farmers around here are doing. Even though I already shop in stores where people have contact with the region, you can also do it a little better. I*

*have thought of that, and I think that is very important.”* (Parish Member 5, Reflection Group 2).

During the Grond week (see Introduction of the Fathers), the theme week in which the DPZ’s faith community sought a new ‘ground’ for their relationship with the physical Earth, there were multiple activities organised in which knowledge about physical Earth was shared. One of these activities was a workshop on the resilience of organic food, in comparison to nonorganic food. This was exemplified by demonstrating the results of a cucumber test<sup>1</sup>. The **understanding of the resilience of (organic) food** of this test has inspired Parish Member 1 and contributed to their understanding of their relationship with the physical Earth. Consequently, the Parish member shared that they were inspired to pay more attention to food and their eating choices:

*“I still find that cucumber test startling. I thought: we could do a lot more things with this, with things from biology, from ecology”* (Parish Member 1).

Parish Member 1 understands that the organically grown cucumber is more resilient than the non-organic cucumber. It is through this understanding in which Parish Member 1 finds a meaning.

Outside the Christian tradition, I also found that one of the participants described how they seek for a meaning in their **understanding of the Earth through reflecting upon podcast named *Plant***:

*“I also listen to “Plant” [a podcast] because that also helps me to think about it: how do I actually think about that?”* (Lay Dominican 4).

Through the understanding of the information shared in the podcast, the participant thinks about the Earth differently.

## Summary

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<sup>1</sup> Test on differences in resilience of an organic versus nonorganic cucumber that was shown during the workshop. Hereby, it was visually demonstrated that the organic cucumber is more resilient and self-healing than the nonorganic cucumber.

In short, the DPZ's faith community seeks purpose and meaning with the physical Earth, and with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through cognitive engagement. The faith community engages with the Earth and God through their understanding of the Bible, religious songs, and the vow of poverty and sobriety of the Dominican identity. Regarding the relationship with the Earth, engagement occurred through the learning about (local) and organic food and its production, and the understanding Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo, and the podcast *Plant*. Concerning the described social groups, it was found that the Fathers and Lay Dominicans engage their relationship mostly through their understandings of the Bible and Christian figures, whereas the Parish Members can be described to gain this understanding through their understanding of the lectures, workshops and provided by the DPZ, and a podcast that they have found themselves.

#### 4.2.2.3. Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning with the physical Earth through behavioural enactment

The way in which the members of the DPZ's faith community seek purpose and meaning with the physical Earth occurs through different behaviours. I found that the participants find a purpose and meaning in their relationship **with the Earth**. A purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, however, could not be found. Moreover, the behavioural relationships with the Earth were mostly found to be unrelated to the Christian tradition. Examples of these are namely in (changing) **shopping behaviour**. The social groups among that were identified to find purpose and meaning with the physical Earth are the Parish Members and Lay Dominicans.

Regarding the consuming behaviour, meaning and purpose with the physical Earth is found in the protection of it through (changing) shopping behaviour. I found that Lay Dominican 2 shared to find meaning with the physical Earth through **purchasing organic products**:

*“When I cook, and other things, I buy from the organic store. [...]. Yes, to protect the Earth, no chemicals, that is the sole reason” (Lay Dominican 2).*

Most often, organic products are grown without chemicals. By purchasing organic products, Lay Dominican 2 therefore attempts to contribute to his goal in protecting the Earth. Another way in which a purpose is found is by **reducing plastics** in shopping behaviour:

*“[Parish Member 2’ partner] is the one who does the shopping, she is mad about all the plastic [she questions] 'how can I get rid of those plastic wrappings?’ ” (Parish Member 2).*

Parish Member 2 shares that they and their partner are actively limiting plastic wrappings when doing groceries shopping. As they consider it to be an action that is done in the right direction, the reduction of their waste can be considered to be meaningful to participants.

Moreover, Parish Member 11 described finding meaning in their relationship with the Earth when **donating money to environmental causes** that contribute to the wellbeing of the Earth:

*“We donate money to various environmental clubs [...]. That is very important to me too; supporting the right clubs that do the job that you cannot do.” (Parish Member 2).*

It is through the practice of donating money that Parish Member 2 seeks to give something to the Earth; by supporting environmental causes.

Lastly, people described **struggling** with their purposeful behaviours related with the Earth. For example, Lay Dominican 4 mentioned that they find it difficult to treat the Earth well:

*“I think we should handle it [the Earth] well, but I find it difficult to put that into practice” (Lay Dominican 4).*

Thus, even though the participants have a green mindset, they are not always able to practise upon this. Thus, there might be an obstacle which hinders the members of the DPZ to practise their relationship with the Earth.

## **With the physical Earth and the spiritual God**

Lay Dominican 1 perceives the Earth as a holy entity. This perception leads them in finding purpose in the process of **picking cigarette butts**:

“This [God represented in the Earth] means that you should clean up every cigarette butt on the ground. Well, I do this when I have the chance.” (Lay Dominican 1).

Thus, in this quote it is apparent that the representation of God in the physical Earth, urges Lay Dominican 1 to pick up trash from her. It is in the practising of these green practices that they find a purpose.

### **Summary**

In short, the Parish Members and the Lay Dominicans find meaning in their relationship through their behaviours with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Specifically, through purchasing organic products, reducing waste, donating money to environmental causes, and picking up cigarette butts. Even though most participants described finding a meaning through their behaviour, they sometimes do not know how to act meaningfully.

#### 4.2.2.4 Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God holistically

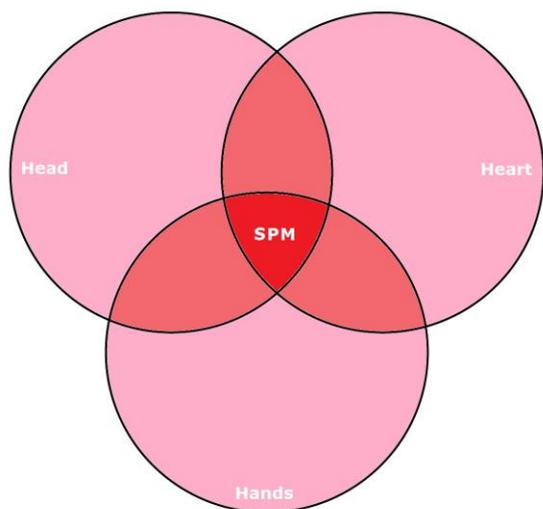
The affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of seeking purpose and meaning with the physical Earth and the spiritual God were found to be interrelated. I observed that people were experiencing positive affects when they knew how to and were able to treat the Earth well. However, some participants experienced negative affects when they could not return something to the physical Earth.

That the three dimensions of holistically lived spirituality are found to be related to each other, can be illustrated with the following quote:

*“Creation can also be called sacred, in its totality. So, deal with it that way. I think that's the most important message. There is a scripture, God says to Moses: ‘go no further; the ground on which you stand is holy ground’. And I think that's how we should approach Earth: like holy ground.” (Lay Dominican 1).*

In this quote, Lay Dominican shares his understanding of a holy scripture. According to them, the Earth is described to be holy in this part of the scripture. The perception of the Earth as an holy entity encourages Lay Dominican to take care of the Earth. Consequently, I conclude that the faith community of the DPZ holistically seeks purpose and meaning in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their Heart, Head and Hands (*Figure 6; Table 4*).

**Figure 6.** Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning (SPM) with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through the Heart, Head and Hands



**Table 4.** Seeking and expressing purpose and meaning (SPM) with the physical Earth (E) and the spiritual God (G) with Heart, Head and Hands

	<b>Heart</b> Affective enablements (feelings, emotions of...)		<b>Head</b> Cognitive engagements (understandings, reflections of...)		<b>Hands</b> Behavioural enactments (practices of...)	
	E	E + G	E	E + G	E	E + G
<b>SPM</b>	Enjoying Awing Caring Thankfulness Feeling despair Feeling annoyed	Enjoying Thankfulness	(Local) food and its production Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo Resilience of (organic) food Podcast <i>Plant</i>	Bible Psalm 65 Dominican identity Vow of poverty and sobriety	Buying organic products Reducing waste Donating money to environmental cause	Picking up cigarette butts

### 4.2.3. Experiencing connectedness holistically with the physical Earth and the spiritual God

#### 4.2.3.1. Experiencing connectedness with the physical Earth through affective enablement

My research depicts how the members of the DPZ's faith community experience connectedness **with the physical Earth** through affect. An affective relationship with the physical Earth and God, however, could not be identified. Connectedness with the physical Earth was experienced through an affective family bond, a feeling of kinship.

Firstly, a member of the faith community who is found to experience a connection with the physical Earth is Parish Member 3. This participant explained this feeling of connectedness using their understanding of the Canticle of the Sun, a Christian Song by Saint Francis of Assisi (see *Epigraph*). In this song, other-than-human entities, such as the Sun and the Earth, are described to be Brothers and Sisters (e.g. sister Mother Earth and Brother Fire). Parish Member 3 described that they first found the description of other-than-human entities as kin was strange to them. However, now they can gradually sing the song with their heart and can thus be understood to **feel a relationship of kin** with the physical Earth:

*"I notice that I can gradually sing it [The Canticle of the Sun] a bit with my heart. Because I have always been like, 'Well, brother and sister, let's just be normal; That feeling'. [...]. Yes, that might not be such a bad idea after all."* Parish Member 3, Preparatory study).

Even though the participant describes that their thinking intermingled with their feelings, Parish Member 3 described to feel a connection of kinship with the Earth.

Father 3 elaborated on the human connectedness with the Earth. He shared that this connection is similar to the connectedness one has with their siblings, through their **bond**. A bond is a relationship that is focused on emotions, such as compassion, envy, and hate (Bank & Kahn, 1997). In a bond type of relationship,

relationships are built upon mutual affects, that can be positive or negative. Father 3 described the bond that humans have to have with the Earth:

*“Brothers and sisters can argue a lot, just because the bond is so important. Well, so is this bond with the Earth. You have to have a connection with it”* (Father 3, Preparatory study).

In this quote, Father 3 describes the importance of an (affective) bond with the physical Earth. Even though the Father described the importance of this bond, he did not elaborate upon this feeling further.

## **Summary**

In short, some of the members of the DPZ’s faith community were found to experience connectedness with the physical Earth through affect, which is experienced through a bond or kinship with the physical Earth.

### 4.2.3.2. Experiencing connectedness with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through cognitive engagement

I came across that the participants experience connectedness **with the physical Earth and God** and **with the physical Earth** through cognitive engagement as well. Moreover, I found that the different social groups gain these understandings by a variety of sources. I clarified the found cognitive relationships in the next paragraphs.

#### **With the physical Earth and the spiritual God**

The members of the DPZ’s faith community are found to experience connectedness through their' **understanding of the Bible**:

*“I especially know the Bible, when it is about nature, in the way Godfrey describes it: everything is connected, so everything is God's creation.”* (Other Resident).

In this understanding of the Bible, everything in nature is understood to be connected with each other. This 'everything' was then understood to be 'God's

creation'. This implies that the Other Resident understands humans to be connected with the physical Earth through God's creation.

Father 2 derived similar understandings from the Bible in which everything is described as God's Creation:

*"It [the Bible] is actually to make you aware that all of Creation - nature, your life, your human being- is given to you."*

In Father 2's understanding, the Earth is found to be a sacred gift from God. Moreover, for Father 2, this connectivity means that the Earth should be handled with care as well:

*"That that is a gift, and that you have to handle it nicely, good and wisely. Also with your body, with your health, with nature and the climate. We have forgotten that, have we not?" (Father 2).*

Thus, the Bible teaches the Father about human connectedness with the Earth through God. Through the understanding of the Earth as God's creation, he finds creation should be treated well.

Next to the Bible, it is through the **understanding of Other Christian Scriptures** through which the DPZ's faith community understands to be connected with the physical Earth. Lay Dominican 1 refers to the mediaeval Dominican Eckhart:

*"I think it is fantastic when a mediaeval Dominican like Eckhart, says that God is represented in everything." (Lay Dominican 1).*

Lay Dominican 1 shares his excitement about the presence of God in everything, of which in the physical Earth. It is through this presence of the divine in everything which connects the physical Earth with the spiritual God.

## With the physical Earth

The connectedness with the physical Earth is experienced through the understanding of Church Songs, ceremonial activities, and the practices of religious figures.

Regarding the **Church Songs**, the DPZ's faith community understands their connectedness with the Earth as well. Father 3 describes this understanding through The Canticle of the Sun, by Francis of Assisi. As discussed earlier, the Canticle of the Sun describes a (human) kinship with Mother Earth.

*“[to me the song means] a brother-sister relationship. This is a spirituality in which you are not the steward or commercial owner of the Earth, but you are in a relationship. [...]. There is reciprocity in it.”* (Father 3, Preparatory study).

In the Father's understanding of the song, he understands to be in an equal and reciprocal connection with the physical Earth.

The Canticle of the Sun, also affected Parish Member 2. The song reminded them about their experiences in Latin America. They shared his understanding of how Latin Americans relate with the Earth differently than people do 'here', which I understand to be the DPZ, or in Western Cultures in general:

*“Madre Tierra is very important in Latin America. Madre Tierra is much more honoured, also in the practice of their lives. I think that is different from here, where we are making a mess of it sometimes.”* (Parish Member 2, Preparatory study).

It is the honouring of the 'Mother Earth' that is done differently in the Western lives. Instead of honouring it in their daily lives, Western people are making a mess of their relationship with the Earth.

Even though Parish Member 2 describes the lack of honouring of the Earth in the Western culture, I identified some ceremonial activities that took place at the DMZ that were meant to honour the Earth. One of the celebrations that is organised by the DPZ is **Thanksgiving** for the crops and labour (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d. b). I was told that the day of Thanksgiving used to be a Protestant tradition, however,

the DPZ also embraced this tradition last spring (March 2021). It is through this celebration that the DPZ attempts to draw attention to the ecological and agrarian crisis. On their website, they highlight their worries and questions:

*“It [the Thanksgiving celebration] confronts us with questions about the way in which we get our food and which price is paid by humans, animals, and the soil in the name of the endless growth.” (Dominicanen Zwolle, n.d. b.)*

This message of the DPZ has also reached their Parish Members. For example, Parish Member 1 reflected upon the Thanksgiving Celebration in the interview.

They described that it was through this celebration that the Parish Member became more aware of her physical connection with the products of the local physical Earth. For example, Parish Member 1 described that they have learned more about the richness of food that can be found in the environment close by:

*“You learn [in the] Thanksgiving celebration, that there is enough, you can also do it with what is available here, and that is also good...” (Parish Member 1)*

Thus, during the Thanksgiving celebration, the participant learned that the available local food suffices their needs. Moreover, the Thanksgiving celebration has opened their eyes to discover more of the richness in their environment:

*“... And can you discover the richness of there a little better? Because sometimes you do not discover what is close to home and what grows, and you become aware of how it grows in the ground and how it seeks connections in the ground.” (Parish Member 1).*

The parish member shares their awareness of how plants grow on the Earth and how it seeks connections.

Lastly, I discovered how some of the participants were seeking for connections with the Earth. Father 3 describes the search of a connectedness with the Earth, as a community as a quest. He gained an understanding of what this would look like through **reflecting on Religious figures’ practices**. More specifically, he gained inspiration from Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo his Songhai Centre:

*“I think what we have in mind is a way of life: more connected to nature, more community building. That is what Songhai does.” (Father 3).*

Father 3 uses the Songhai Centre as an example of how he pictures the way of living. In this way of living, humans live in a community with each other and with the Earth. Moreover, for Father 3, connectedness means the focus on collaboration with each other, instead of individual growth:

*“There you see in concrete terms that people live with nature, with each other. Where it is not about ‘how can I enrich myself and how do I get the most to me’, but in collaboration with each other.” (Father 3).*

Thus, the practices of religious figures are a source of inspiration for Father 3 and give him a concrete example of a connected community. In this connected community, humans live in collaboration with the Earth.

## **Summary**

In short, connectedness with the physical Earth is experienced through cognitive engagement. I identified that the participants engaged in a relationship with both the Earth and God and Earth. Regarding the relationship with the Earth and God, cognitive engagement occurred through the understanding of the Bible and other religious scriptures. Concerning the relationship with the Earth, engagement occurred through the understanding of the Canticle of the Sun, the Thanksgiving Celebration at the DPZ, and the reflection upon religious figures. Regarding cognitive engagement, I found that the Fathers mostly gained their cognitive understanding through biblical texts and religious figures, whereas the Parish Members gained their understanding through the church masses and lectures organised by the Fathers.

### 4.2.3.3 Experiencing connectedness with the physical Earth through Behavioural enactment

The DPZ’s faith community was found to experience connectedness with the physical Earth through different behaviours. However, I was not able to identify

Connectedness with the Earth and God through the participants' behaviours. The behavioural relationships that I identified were found to be related to different contexts, both inside and outside the DPZ's church.

Within the context of the DPZ's church, the connectedness with the physical Earth was sought through the **DPZ's events related with the Earth**. As described earlier, the DPZ had organised the Grond Week. During this week, special attention was put in the seeking of connections with the Earth. Namely, priority described to seek for new ground for their relationship with each other and the Earth (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d.d):

*“Grond; A total program from studying to hoeing. Looking for a new ground for our relationships with each other and nature.”* (Dominicanenzwolle, n.d.d).

The Grond Week was organised by the Program Group, which consisted of multiple members of the DPZ faith community, such as Parish Member 1 and Father 1 (Father 1). From Wednesday until Sunday, the Program group had organised multiple activities such as a workshop 'Living Food', Thanksgiving Celebration, a lecture by Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo and a Christian Dutch Farmer, and an Eucharistic celebration by Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo and Father 1. These activities were accessible for people within and outside the faith community.

The Fathers described that they are Dominican preachers who live in the city of Zwolle and do not work with their hands with the physical Earth literally. However, there are other ways in which they seek connections with the Earth. One of these ways is through making connections with people that work with their hands and with the soil. For example, Father 1, seeks to facilitate connections with the physical Earth through **connecting with farmers**:

*“For me, a fact that we cannot ignore is that we are going to put together a really tough working group with the Green Church and perhaps also with expert assistance from De Kas van Kaat and others.”* (Father 1).

Thus, by networking with farmers that relate with the physical Earth, such as the farmers from the Kas van Kaat (an Agroecological plant nursery, shop, and lunch cafe), Father 1 can be found to connect with the Earth indirectly.

There are also direct ways in which the Fathers relate, or could relate, with the physical Earth directly. Even though the Fathers share that they do not work with their hands with the Earth literally, they shared some other ways in which they practise their connection with the Earth. Father 1 argues that there would be a potential in practising this relationship in their **Sermons**.

*“In sermons, we often have a theme from human to human. The relationships between humans are well-covered. But the relationship with the Earth... that could be something more.” (Father 1).*

Even though Father 1 argues that sermons could be a way to cover the humans-physical Earth connectedness, the covering of this human-other-than-human relationship could be practised more often. Thus, sermons could potentially be a practice in which connectedness between humans and the physical Earth could be sought.

Outside of the DPZ, connectedness with the physical Earth is also experienced. For example, Parish Member 6 described how they experience connectedness with the Earth through **practising of outdoor yoga** and **outdoor education**:

*“I went into nature with so many people, taught yoga outside, talked about nature, beauty, and connection. It is mainly a connection between humans and nature.” (Parish Member 6, Focus Group 2).*

Thus, connection with the Earth can be found to be experienced by the Parish Member through their direct interaction with it through outdoor yoga and outdoor education

## **Summary**

In short, the DPZ’s faith community experiences and seeks for connectedness with the physical Earth through the practising of outdoor yoga and teaching. Within the

DPZ, I found that this connection with the physical Earth was sought and facilitated through the organisation of events in which the community seeks to connect with local farmers. Potentially, the fathers could connect with the physical Earth through their sermons. Interestingly, a relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through behavioural enactment was not found.

#### 4.2.3.4 Experiencing connectedness with the physical Earth holistically

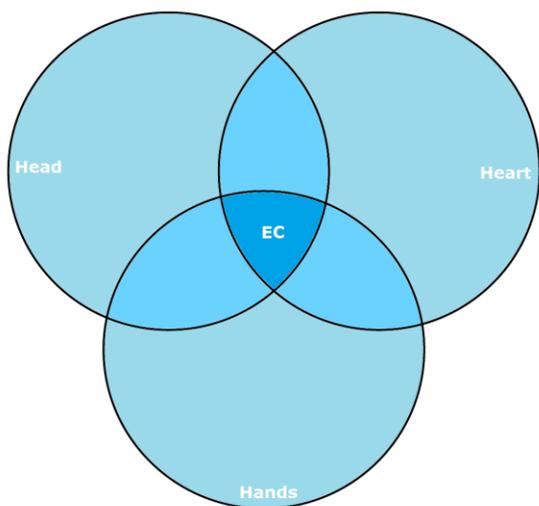
The affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of the seeking of purpose and meaning with the physical Earth are found to be interrelated. I found that people who understood themselves to be connected with the (sacred) Earth, experienced a positive affect and were seeking ways to practise upon it. How the three dimensions relate with each other can be illustrated with the following quote by Lay Dominican 1:

*“I think it is fantastic when a mediaeval Dominican like Eckhart, for example, says that God is represented in everything. [...] Then, I think: if that is the case, then it also means that you have to deal with it very responsibly. That also means that for every cigarette butt that is on the floor, you actually have to clean it up. Well, if I have the chance, I will do it.”* (Lay Dominican 1).

In this quote, the understanding of the participant’s connectedness with the Earth becomes apparent. Firstly, the Lay Dominican understands that God is represented in everything. Consequently, they act upon this by treating the Earth responsibly and pick up cigarette butts when they have the chance.

Thus, the faith community of the DPZ holistically experiences connectedness with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their Heart, Head, and Hands (*Figure 7; Table 5*).

**Figure 7.** Experiencing connectedness (EC) with the physical Earth (E) and the spiritual God (G) through the Head, Heart, and Hands



**Table 5.** Experiencing connectedness (EC) with the physical Earth and the spiritual God with Heart, Head and Hands

	<b>Heart</b> Affective enablements (feelings, emotions of...)		<b>Head</b> Cognitive engagements (understandings, reflections of...)		<b>Hands</b> Behavioural enactments (practices of...)	
	E	E + G	E	E + G	E	E + G
<b>EC</b>	Bond of kinship	n.i.	Saint's Francis' Canticle of the Sun  Thanksgiving celebration  Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo	Bible  (Sermons, potentially)	Organising Earth-related events  Connecting with farmers  Outdoor yoga  Outdoor education  (Sermons, potentially)	n.i.

*Note.* n.i stands for not identified in my study

## 4.2.4 Experiencing transcendence holistically with the physical Earth and the spiritual God

### 4.2.4.1 Experiencing transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through affective enablement

#### **With the physical Earth and the spiritual God**

I found one way in which a member of the DPZ's faith community experienced transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through affect. This is the affect of a **faithful relational attitude**:

*"Grace, God's spirit, working and love, they do not detract nature. [...]. Your attitude of faith does not detract you from nature and your body, but it makes it better, it makes it more beautiful." (Father 2).*

In this quote, the feeling of love within the faithful attitude is described to be part of nature. Love, as a part of nature, contributes to the creation of a better and more beautiful whole, instead of detracting from each other. Thus, humans, the Earth and God can be described to transcend with each other

#### **Summary**

In short, one of the members of the DPZ's faith community can be described to experience transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God explicitly through a relational faithful attitude. It is through this attitude that God, the Earth, and humans transcend with each other and are more beautiful together.

### 4.2.4.2 Experiencing transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through cognitive engagement

The DPZ's faith community was found to experience transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through cognitive engagement and the physical Earth. Moreover, I found that the different social groups experience

transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through cognitive engagement differently. I elaborated upon this below.

### **With the physical Earth and the spiritual God**

Firstly, the DPZ's faith community experiences transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their understanding of the Bible. In the understanding of the DPZ's faith community's members, these three different Biblica books (Old Testament, the New Testament and Leviticus) tell a different story about the way in which humans relate with the physical Earth. A reciprocal relationship between humans and the physical Earth was found by the fathers to be described in the latter book.

Secondly, transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God was described by Father 2 through his understanding of a Latin sentence "*Gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit*" by Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican theologian and the Patron of the DPZ. In the understanding of this sentence by **Thomas Aquinas**, that transcendence with the Earth and the spiritual God can be identified. Namely, Father 2 explains that faith does not detract one from the physical, which implies a human transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God:

*"Your faith, your attitude of faith, does not detract from your nature and your body and around you, but it makes it better, it makes it more beautiful."* (Father 2).

The spiritual Faith is not separate from the physical (human) body or the physical Earth. The spiritual and the physical are together and enhance each other, instead of detracting each other. Faith alleviates with the Earth. Thus, based on this understanding, of Thomas Aquinas, the spiritual and the physical transcend with each other.

Next to the understanding of Thomas Aquinas, the parish members of the DPZ's faith community also understand to be transcending with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their **reflecting upon the Christian Dominionistic Cosmvision** in which humans perceive themselves to be the masters of nature.

Parish Member describes the anthropocentric relationship that Christians used to be known, however they doubt whether this perception:

*“It was always said that people are the crown of creation. The question is, of course, whether that is such a smart formulation.”* (Parish Member 4, Lesson of Godfrey).

Parish Member 4 doubts whether humans are the ‘crown of creation’ is still an accurate understanding, even though it has ‘always’ been perceived that way. By saying this, the Parish Member doubts whether humans are dominionists of creation, the God’s created Earth. This statement opens space for a different Christian perspective on the human-God-Earth relationship.

A similar reflection of the dominionistic relationship with the physical Earth can be understood to be described by Parish Member 2. It is through their **Understanding of a Monastic Teaching** by the Fathers that the participant reflects on the human-Earth relationship of mastery. Alternatively, the participant describes a more equal relationship in which humans are next to nature:

*“What [Father 3] teaches: yes, man is not above nature, but man is next to nature.”* (Parish Member 2, Focus Group 1).

It is the participants’ shift in understanding that humans are no masters of the Earth but equals which implies the human transcendence with the physical Earth.

### **With the physical Earth**

The DPZ’s faith community can be described to experience transcendence with the physical Earth through cognitive engagement as well. Participants gained this engagement within the context of the Christian tradition.

Father 3 describes that the Christian tradition has often been portrayed to promote human-nature relationship of mastery. However, he shares, this has not always been the case. According to him, one of the people that understands the Earth to be relational with humans is **Saint Francis of Assisi**. Father 3 illustrates this with Assisi’s Canticle of the Sun. Father 3 highlights the aspect of the song in which

the Earth is described as a relative, a mother or a sister. He describes this relationship between the Earth and human as a fundamental relationship between:

*“In Christianity, I have to tell you honestly: there are few who have seen that so fundamentally [relational]. The only one in history has been Francis of Assisi, with his Sun song that addresses the Earth as mother, or as sister, brother sun, sister moon, the Earth as a mother or sister, he also sees that fundamental relationship.”*  
(Father 3).

It is through this fundamental relationship in which humans and the Earth are considered related, that Father 3 understands that humans transcend with the Earth.

The fundamental relationship that Father 3 describes can also be found in his **understanding of the Second Creation story**. In his understanding of the second Creation story, human (“Adam”) was made of the Earth (“Adama”). According to Father 3, the piece of the Earth that was needed to create the human was taken apart not for final separation, but for the two to become involved again. Thus, in Father 3’s understanding of the Second Creation Story, humans and the Earth are related because they share the same origin; the Earth itself.

In his **understanding of Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo’s lecture** at the DPZ, the father he understands that humans transcend with the physical Earth as well. Namely, Father 3 described that humans are related with the physical Earth by their origin: which Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo calls “fundamental relationality”:

*“He [Godfrey] talked about the ecosystem, not in terms of ‘how can you reduce emissions a bit’, but he went a little deeper: he was looking for a foundation. It’s not just about preventing the disaster, it’s about an attitude to life. An attitude in which you live more connected with nature.”* (Father 3).

Thus, it is through Father 3’s understanding of Dr. Father Godfrey’s explanation of the ecosystem through which Father 3 understands that humankind transcends with the physical Earth.

## Summary

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The members of the DPZ's faith community experience transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, and with the physical Earth through cognitive engagement. Regarding the relationship with both the physical Earth and the spiritual God, transcendence was experienced through reflecting upon the Christian tradition, the understanding of Christian figures, and the monastic teachings. Concerning the second, transcendence was experienced through the understanding of the Bible, monastic lectures, and church songs. Moreover, the Fathers can be described to mostly experience transcendence with the physical Earth through their understanding of biblical texts and religious figures, whereas the Parish Members gained their understanding through the church masses and lectures organised by the Fathers.

#### 4.2.4.3 Experiencing transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through behavioural enactment

The members of the DPZ's faith community can be described to experience transcendence with the physical Earth through their behavioural enactment with it. I identified one statement in which this experience became apparent. Here, the Other Resident described his **practice of zen meditation**.

*"I also did Zen meditation in the abbey for a long time, and that is where you come to realise that everything is just the same, everything is just one. It is hard to explain."*  
(Other Resident).

Through practising zen-meditation, the Other resident experiences being part of everything - which possibly also includes the Earth and the spiritual God. To be part of something larger, which is 'everything', characterises transcendence.

## Summary

In short, the experience of transcendence with the physical Earth through behaviour has been identified by one of the participants. By practising Zen meditation, the Other Resident experiences being part of everything, which is transcendence.

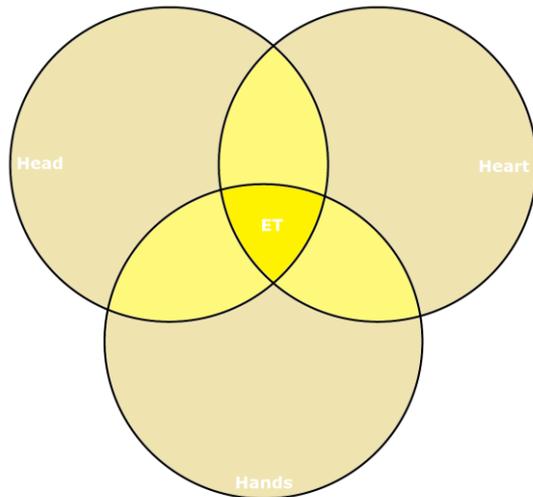
### 4.2.4.4 Experiencing transcendence with the physical Earth holistically

The affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of experiencing transcendence with the physical Earth are found to be interrelated. I found that living in transcendence with the Earth is an attitude to life that has an affective and cognitive component and is related with behaviour. How the three dimensions relate with each other can be illustrated with the following quote by Father 3:

*“He [Godfrey] talked about the ecosystem, not in terms of ‘how can you reduce emissions a bit’, but he went a little deeper: he was looking for a foundation. [...] It's about an attitude to life. An attitude in which you live more connected with nature. In which you treat the earth, the plants, the animals as if it were your home in which you live. That means a back-and-forth relationality. You give something to the earth and to the animals. And the animals give something of you. It is reciprocity.” (Father 3).*

In this quote, Father 3 first describes his understanding of Dr. Father Godfrey's talk about the ecosystem. Father 3 understood that Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo talked about an attitude towards life in which humans live in a reciprocal relationship with the physical Earth. Upon this attitude can be practised, for example, through agroecology. Here, humans give something to the Earth and the Earth gives something to them. Thus, the faith community of the DPZ experiences transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their Heart, Head, and Hands (*Figure 8; Table 6*).

**Figure 8.** Experiencing transcendence (ET) with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through the Head, Heart, and Hands



**Table 6.** Experiencing transcendence (ET) with the physical Earth (E) and the spiritual God (G) with Heart, Head and Hands

	<b>Heart</b> Affective enablements (feelings, emotions of...)		<b>Head</b> Cognitive engagements (understandings, reflections of...)		<b>Hands</b> Behavioural enactments (practices of...)	
	E	E + G	E	E + G	E	E + G
<b>ET</b>	Relational attitude	Faithful relational attitude	Saint's Francis' Canticle of the Sun  Second Creation story  Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo's lecture on agroecology	Thomas Aquinas' <i>Gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit</i>  Monastic Teaching of the Fathers  Christian Dominionism  Relational cosmivision	n.i.	Zen meditation

*Note.* n.i stands for not identified in my study

## 4.2.5 Weaving the aspects of holistically lived spirituality together

In the paragraphs above, I have explored the different aspects of spirituality and how it is holistically lived through its affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. In this paragraph, I have woven spiritual elements together by describing the relationships that I found in the Preparatory Study, Interviews, and Focus Groups.

### 4.2.5.1 Purpose and Meaning with Connectedness

The aspects of **finding purpose and meaning** and **experiencing connectedness** with the physical Earth and spiritual God found to be related in the DPZ's faith community. Namely, the faith community finds meaning through their experienced connectedness with the physical Earth and spiritual God, and the other way round. That the two aspects of spirituality are related with each other can be illustrated with the following quote by Father 2. In this quote, he first describes his understanding of the Bible. In the understanding of the Earth as a gift from God, a meaning is found:

*“It [the Bible] is actually to make you aware that all of Creation; that nature, your life, is your human being, that that is given to you. That that is a gift, and that you have to handle it nicely, good, and wisely. Also with your body, with your health, with nature and the climate” (Father 2).*

It is the connectedness between human-Earth-God through which a meaning is found. Consequently, this means that one should take care of it as well.

### 4.2.5.2 Connectedness with Transcendence

The aspects **experiencing connectedness** and **experiencing transcendence** with the physical Earth and spiritual God were found to be related as well. This can be illustrated with the following quote by Father 3. In this quote the Father a fundamental humans-Earth relationship which he relates to the connection of kinship with the Earth:

*“In Christianity, I have to tell you honestly: there are few who have seen that so fundamentally [relational]. The only one in history has been Francis of Assisi, with his Sun song that addresses the Earth as mother, or as sister, brother Sun, sister Moon, the Earth as a mother or sister, he also sees that fundamental relationship.”* (Father 3).

It is the understanding of connectedness with the Earth that makes him reflect upon the deeper, fundamental, relationship he has with her. Thus, it is through the connectedness with the Earth through which the participant understands to transcend with her.

#### 4.2.5.3 Transcendence with Purpose and Meaning

The **aspects experiencing transcendence** and **finding purpose and meaning** with the physical Earth and the spiritual God were found to be related at the DPZ’s faith community. Namely, the faith community experiences transcendence with the physical Earth through the found purpose and meaning, and finds purpose and meaning in their transcendence with the physical Earth. That the two aspects are related with each other can be illustrated with the following quote by Father 2. Father 2 finds a meaning in the fundamental humans-Earth relationship:

*“Grace, God’s spirit, working and love, they do not detract nature. [...]. Your attitude of faith does not detract you from nature and your body, but it makes it better, it makes it more beautiful.”* (Father 2).

Here, Father 2 describes a human-God-Earth transcendence. He finds a meaning in this transcendence as these three entities are found to be better and more beautiful as a whole.

#### 4.2.5.4 Purpose and meaning with Connectedness and Transcendence

The three aspects of spirituality were found to be related at the DPZ’s faith community. These three aspects are related to each other and can be illustrated with the following quote by Father 3. He describes a fundamental humans-Earth relationship which found to be related to the finding of a purpose and meaning in the reciprocal connection between humans and the physical Earth:

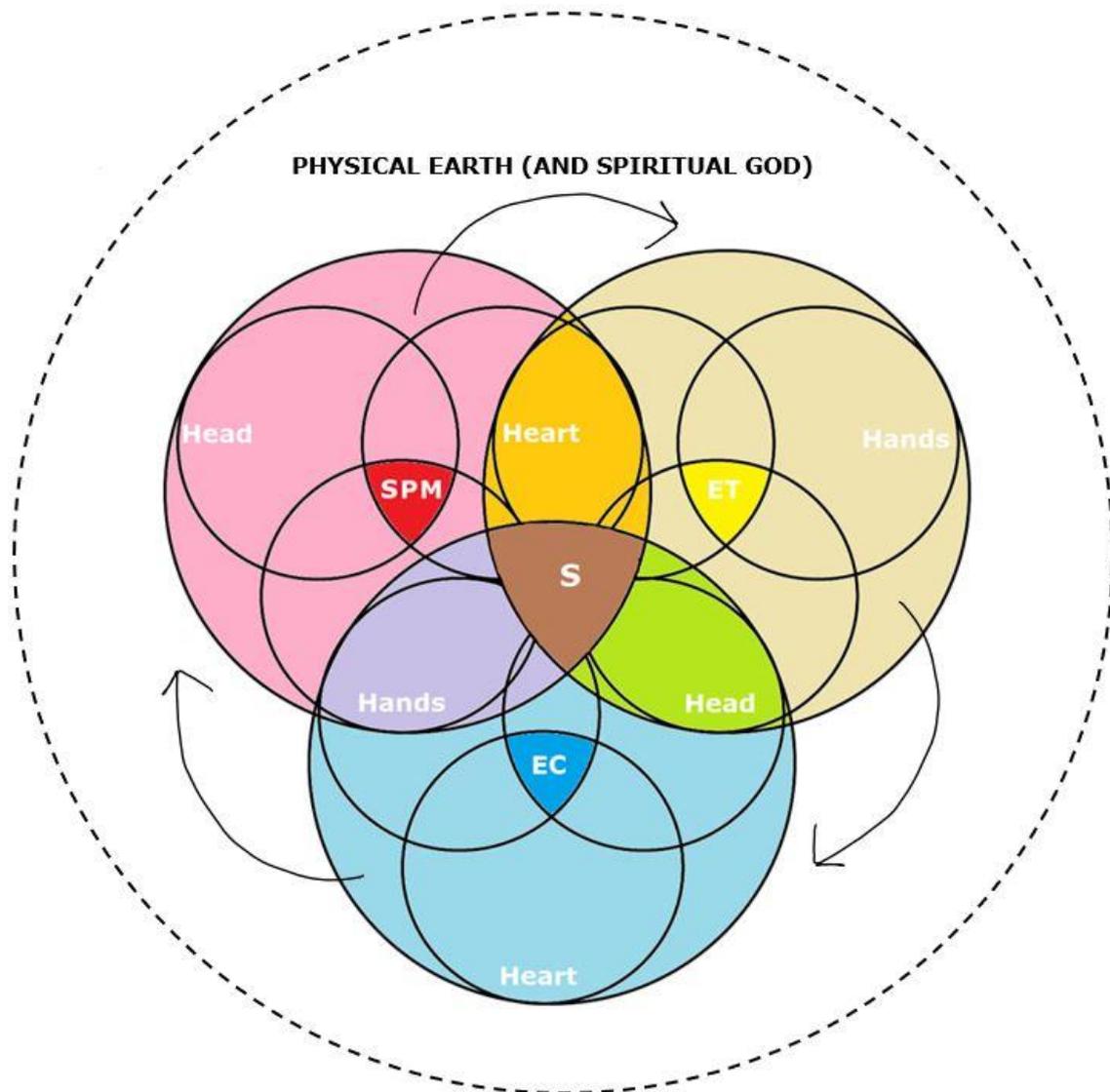
*“He [Godfrey] talked about the ecosystem, not in terms of ‘how can you reduce emissions a bit’, but he went a little deeper: he was looking for a foundation. It’s not just about preventing the disaster, it’s about an attitude to life. An attitude in which you live more connected with nature. In which you treat the earth, the plants, the animals as if it were your home in which you live. [...]. You give something to the earth and to the animals. And the animals give something to you. It is reciprocity.”*  
(Father 3).

In this quote, transcendence is described in the fundamental human-Earth relationship. As humans are part of the Earth, they are also more connected with it, which is reflected in the treatment of the Earth. A purpose is found in this reciprocal relationship.

#### 4.2.5.5 Summary Holistically lived spirituality

Summarised, the described spirituality of the members of the DKZ faith community, can be described in the three interrelated elements: 1) the seeking of purpose and meaning, 2) the experience of connectedness, and 3) the experience of transcendence). These three aspects are holistically lived in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through affect (heart), cognition (head), and behaviour (hands). A visual model that summarises the aspects of spirituality and how it is holistically lived in relationship with the physical Earth (and the spiritual God) is presented in *Figure 9*.

**Figure 9.** Venn diagram Holistically lived spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God



*Note.* The DPZ’s faith community’s members’ holistically lived Spirituality (S; brown) consist of the dimensions seeking and expressing purpose and meaning (SPM; red), Experiencing transcendence (ET; yellow), and Experiencing connectedness (EC; blue) and are found to be lived through the interrelated dimensions of the Heart (Affect), Head (Cognition), and Hands (Behaviour) in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. ‘And spiritual God’ is placed between brackets because the lived spiritual relationship with the physical Earth was not always lived in relationship with the spiritual God.

### 3.4. Holistically lived spirituality and its relationship with agroecology

In the previous paragraphs, it is described how the DMZ's faith community lives their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and spiritual God. I found that the faith community finds purpose and meaning, and experiences connectedness and transcendence with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. How this lived spirituality relates with agroecology can be explained with a quote from Father 3. In this quote, he shares his understanding of Dr. Father Godfrey Nzamujo practices in agroecology:

*“He [Godfrey] talked about the ecosystem, not in terms of ‘how can you reduce emissions a bit’, but he went a little deeper: he was looking for a foundation. It's not just about preventing the disaster, it's about an attitude to life... (Father 3).”*

Thus, Father 3 shared he understood how agroecology was not solely an environmentally sustainable way of farming, but also an expression of a deeper foundation, or what he defined as ‘an attitude to life’. His spirituality can be described to relate with this fundamental attitude as he explained what this foundation or attitude to life meant to him. It is an attitude in which humans live in reciprocity with nature:

*“...An attitude in which you live more connected with nature. In which you treat the earth, the plants, the animals as if it were your home in which you live. [...]. You give something to the earth and to the animals. And the animals give something to you. It is reciprocity.” (Father 3).*

Thus, in my understanding, the faith community perceives an expression of a reciprocal relationship between them and the physical Earth in agroecology. As the faith community was found to seek purpose and meaning, connection and transcendence in reciprocity with the physical Earth (and the spiritual God), their spirituality can be related with agroecology as well.

# 5. Discussion

In this chapter, the theoretical approach, methodology, and results are discussed. Firstly, describe my reflections on the methodology (**Paragraph 5.1**). Secondly, I conceptualise how the DPZ's faith community lives their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, and how this relates with agroecology (**Paragraph 5.2**). Thirdly, I describe my reflections on my study by sharing how I have interpreted the results, discuss its implications and acknowledge its limitations, and I make some recommendations for future studies (**Paragraph 5.3**).

## 5.1 Reflection on the Methodology

In this paragraph, I describe my assessment of the quality of the methodology. In there, I have reflected upon my positionality in the study, the selected case and the participant sample, and the used research methods.

### 5.1.1 Positionality

My positionality in the study is one of the factors that has influenced my study the most and my reflection upon this has brought and taught me a lot. During my research, I figured that my own non-religious positionality shaped the research that I was executing. I learned that, to be able to understand, and write about my understanding of, the members of the DPZ's faith community, I had to broaden my own perspectives. If I wanted to understand the DPZ's faith community's spiritual perspective on life, I had to open up my Western scientific thinking. Moreover, if I wanted to understand the DPZ's faith community better, I had to trust my own feelings and intuition more. I decided to go on a mental adventure and to walk a path that was out of my comfort zone.

One of the things I encountered on my path was a deity that played an important role in the DPZ's faith community's life. I found that in my research that seeks to understand the DPZ's whole life, this deity should be included as well. It was only

at a later stage in my study that I became aware of this connectedness of God in the faith community's life. However, as I became aware of my own positionality later, it had already left some traces in the research design and the interview guideline. It was through the execution of my study, in which I continuously engaged with the DPZ's spirituality, that I became more aware of my positionality in my study. I found that I had to open up for spirituality and give a voice to God in science by rewriting my text.

The adventurous path turned out to be a wobbly road which made me feel uncomfortable and insecure about my work and reflect upon life in general. I reflected upon my own relationship with the physical Earth and realised that I might be more thankful for it as well. The DPZ's faith community and the book *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Wall Kimmerer (2013) have helped me with this.

I figured that other people's positionalities influenced my thesis as well. For example, when I talked to human others, which were not related to the DPZ's faith community, I experienced that people could not always relate with my topic, found it vague, or did not understand it. I was able to regain energy and motivation when I went through my data again and thought about and talked to the passionate, warm, and generous people I have met at the DPZ. I realised that, even though my research might seem strange to others, I want to make the DPZ's inspiring voice heard. Still, in the middle of this all, I felt like a ball that was ping-ponging between different worlds/

### 5.1.2. Quality of the selected case and participant sample

The selected case of the DPZ's faith community has brought me a lot of new insights in how a Western faith community lives their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. The fact that the DPZ had taken the initiative in approaching the WUR to study their relationship with the Earth and the spiritual God facilitated my study as we were seeking for the same thing: a dance with nature.

The choice to sample different people within the different social groups turned out to provide me with a broader picture of how the members of the DPZ's faith community lives their spirituality (see paragraph 5.3). As I was still learning new things and meeting new people at the end of the research, I expect that a larger sample size would have provided me with a more elaborate understanding of this relationship. For example, during the execution of the last focus group, I learned new ways of how spirituality was lived by some members of the faith community (e.g. through outdoor yoga activities). By increasing the participant sample, I could have enriched my study.

### 5.1.3 Quality of research methods

In my study, I conducted a preparatory study and an ethnographic fieldwork in which I used three different qualitative research methods: participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. I have discussed the quality of these research methods below.

Firstly, the preparatory research turned out to be essential for the actual conduction of the rest of my study. Namely, it was during the visits that I met the people who have hosted me during my fieldwork. Thanks to the preparatory study, I was able to conduct this ethnographic study. Moreover, the data that I collected during the preparatory visits turned out to be relevant to answer my research question as well. In one of the site visits, the topic human-nature kinship was discussed. Thus, the preparatory study was an important facilitator of the further execution of my study.

Secondly, I have conducted multiple participant observations and had informal interviews with the members of the DPZ's faith community. The participatory aspect of the interviews was well-chosen as it allowed me to connect with the DPZ's faith community more easily and to get an idea of their spiritual lives. The participant observations resulted in the acquisition of a lot of data that started to become more coherent after time. The notes I took during and after the participant observations tended to be influenced by my own positionality (see paragraph

5.1.3). Namely, at the beginning of my study, I tended to focus on the faith community's relationship with the Earth, whereby I left out its relatedness with the spiritual God. In hindsight, the quality of the observations might have been more information rich if I was more aware of my positionality and its influence on my perceptions and behaviour before. The main function of the observations, however, was to find relevant participants for the semi-structured interview and to inform these interviews. As I did find suitable and relevant participants and I learned a lot from them in the interviews, I consider the participant observations a valuable method.

Thirdly, I derived most of the information from the semi-structured interviews. These interviews have been influenced by my positionality. Even though I was not fully aware of the influence of my own positionality at the beginning of the interviews, the semi-structured design of the questionnaire helped me to overcome my positionality. I did not ask my interviewees how this spiritual relationship is lived in relationship with the spiritual God. However, the semi-structured character of the questionnaire allowed the participants to talk about how they experienced their relationship with the Earth, in which God was often included.

The last research method I had used were the focus groups. In contrast to the semi-structured interviews, the focus groups provided me with only a limited number of new insights to answer the research question. In hindsight, this might be related to my positionality again. In contrast to the semi-structured interviews, I had used quite a structured focus group. Even though this was planned out well, it did not allow me to capture the lived spiritual relationship of the DPZ's faith community members. This might be caused by my focus on the faith community's members' personal values and behaviours, instead of these values and behaviours in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Moreover, most of the relevant information was shared by the faith community's members at the end of the sessions when there was time and space for an open discussion. Even though the focus groups were not as informative as they could have been, they did turn out to be valuable for the DPZ's faith community. Namely, through the

organisation of the focus groups, I was able to bring together a group of like-minded and like-seeking DPZ's faith community members. After the focus group, I was told by some participants that this connection has contributed and motivated them to collectively seek to live their spirituality more in relationship with both human and more-than-human entities.

## 5.2 Reflection on the Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework, I discuss two concepts: relationality, and holistically lived spirituality. In my study, I combined these two to study how the members of the DPZ's faith community live their spirituality in relationship with both the physical Earth and the spiritual God. I conceptualised the DPZ's spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God and defined these here. Moreover, these theories have helped me to get to the results. Below, I have discussed the most interesting concepts that support the theory of Holistically Lived Spirituality and how it is lived in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God.

Firstly, regarding the relationality with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, I found that the DPZ's faith community lives their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, and the physical Earth. In the first relationship, an explicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God was identified. In the second, an explicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth is described, but the explicit spiritual relationship with the spiritual God has not been described. As these two ways of relating are different, I refer to these relationships as explicit relational spirituality and implicit relational spirituality (Nijboer, 2018). **Explicit relational spirituality** is characterised by the explicit verbal experienced relationship between humans, the spiritual God, and the physical Earth. Here, the spiritual and the physical are explicitly related. In the **implicit relational spirituality**, a relationship between the physical Earth and the spiritual God is not explicitly verbally described.

Secondly, I found that the DPZ's faith community experiences a relationship of kinship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. The experienced kinship is

similar to the Indigenous understanding of **Kincentric ecology** (Salmón, 2000). In kincentric ecology, other-than-human entities can be related with human entities regardless of their ancestry or genealogy (Haraway, 2015). In my study, the members of the DPZ's faith community relate with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through such a Kinship. Within the found explicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, I found that the members of the DPZ's faith community ascribed characteristics of God or the sacred to other-than-God entities. This is what I describe as '**theomorphism**'. Similar to anthropomorphism, theomorphism might act as a catalyst which relates humans with the physical Earth and the spiritual God (Veer, 2014).

Lastly, the attitude of the members of the DPZ's faith community towards the physical Earth in relationship with the spiritual God can be conceptualised. In contrast to an anthropocentric attitude in which humans perceive themselves to be the masters over the rest of nature with a desire to tame this, I found a more **ecocentric attitude** (Gagnon Thompson & Barton, 1994). Here, the Earth in relationship with the spiritual God is valued for her own sake, instead of valued for its material and physical benefits for humankind. This valuation of nature for her own sake is also known as **Intrinsic values**. (Chan, *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, I also found that the physical Earth brought the faith community joy, which can be understood as an **Instrumental value** of the physical Earth. In addition to the intrinsic values and the instrumental values, I found that the participants considered their lived relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God meaningful and satisfying. These values can be described as relational values (Chan *et al.*, 2016). **Relational values** are derivatives of relationships and responsibilities to others, instead of being present in them.

## 5.3 Reflection on the Results

In the reflection on the results, I explain and interpret the results of my study in the context of my thesis question and the theoretical framework. Here, I discuss the implications of my study, acknowledge its limitations, and I share my recommendations for future research.

### 5.3.1 Interpretation of the results

As I described in the result section, the members of the DPZ's faith community were found to live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God in a both implicit and explicit way. In this relationship, the anthropocentric relationship with the Earth is overcome (Ikeke, 2015; White Jr., 1967). Instead, the faith community values the Earth (in relationship with the spiritual God) and experiences her as kin. Moreover, a spiritual relationship could also be identified in agroecology as this can be considered an expression of relational Human-God-Earth living. Thus, the holistically lived spirituality of the members of the DPZ's faith community offers a new and more hopeful Christian perspective and dissenting voice to the dominionistic Christian worldview described by White (1967).

I found that the different social groups live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth differently from the holistic perspective. In general, the Fathers were found to engage in an explicit and implicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their understanding of sacred texts and religious figures. The Fathers behaviourally enact upon their spirituality through their teachings and the organising of workshops at the DPZ. These teachings and workshops are the sources of knowledge from which the Parish Members gain their understanding of their relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. The DPZ's faith community can be regarded as a learning community in which worldviews are shared and discussed.

The faith community was seeking for ways in which they can practise their relationship with the more-than-human world more. Instead of solely taking her

fruits, some members of the DPZ's faith community found it their moral duty to give something of value back to her (Kimmerer, 2013). The members of the DPZ's faith community sought for ways to embody these acts of reciprocity, such as gratitude, ceremony, land stewardship and everyday acts of practical reference (ibid). Through these practices, the members of the DPZ's faith community sought to give something valuable to support the more-than-human world in their own ways (Toledo, 2022; Kimmerer, 2013). The fathers of the DPZ's faith community, for example, embodied relationality in their workshops and ceremonies. Ceremonies can bridge the distance between humans and more-than-humans (Tynan, 2021). It is through these ceremonies that the fathers guided their parish members in their search for more-than-human relationships.

It is also through the fostering of tangible relationships with the physical Earth in agroecology through which the faith community seeks to embody relationality. (Toledo, 2022; Wezel *et al.*, 2009). In line with relationality, a relational cosmivision lies underneath the science, movement, and practices of agroecology in which a Human-God-Earth relationship is acknowledged (Nyéléni, 2015; Toledo, 2022). Agroecology might therefore be an expression of a lived spiritual relationship with the physical Earth (and the spiritual God).

### 5.3.2 Discussion of the implications

In this paragraph, I discuss the implications of my study in the context of my thesis question and literature review. The implications for academic theory, the DPZ's faith community and myself are described. First, I share the implication of the model that I have created to study spirituality holistically. Within the framework of spirituality, I studied the inter-related aspects of affects, cognitions, and behaviours. Studying the relationship holistically, allowed me to find a more complete picture of how the members of the DPZ's faith community live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Thus, by using this framework the role of cognition, affect, and behaviour are valued and acknowledged which might be relevant for academic theory.

A second implication of my study for academic theory is the way that Christian faith communities relate with the physical Earth. In contrast to White Jr. (1967), I found that the members of the DPZ's faith community value the relationship that they have with the physical Earth. These relational values are (sought to) be embodied in the members of the community in their daily lives. The embodiment could contribute to achieving social-ecological relationships and might welcome more meaningful lives for present and future generations (Chan *et al.*, 2016). By regarding non-humans as kinfolk and acknowledging the relationality, the relationship between human and more-than-human is valued and perceived to be more significant (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, pp. 183). The perception of the more-than-human as kinfolk, influences the way that they behave towards it (Ikeke, 2015). The DPZ's faith community was found to practise and seek for relational spiritual practices within and outside the DPZ's faith community. As the DPZ's church is responsible for facilitating these relationships, the church could be regarded as a school for the teaching of sustainability values (Singleton, 2015).

A third implication of my study is the acknowledgement of religious Christian knowledge as a type of knowledge in the natural and social sciences. Most of the studied members of the DPZ's faith community gain understanding of, and value their relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their understanding of religious texts and figures. Religious texts are a source of wisdom for the DPZ's faith community that teaches its members about their relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Thus, explicit spirituality plays a central role in people's lives and the decisions they make. Religious knowledge plays an important role (Tarusarira, 2017). An implication of my study is that explicit spiritual knowledge is acknowledged in the context of the socio-ecological crisis.

Regarding the implications for the DPZ, I found that the Fathers and Lay Dominicans in the DPZ's faith community play an important role in the sharing of their explicit spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Most of the Parish Members' understanding of this relationship was gained during the Fathers' and Lay Dominicans' practices, such as their workshops during

the Grond week. But, if the DPZ's faith community wants to keep their explicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, I think this 'theme' should be woven into their daily practices. The implication for the DPZ is similar to an implication of my study in my own life. My research has made me more conscious about my own (perceived) relationship with more-than-human others. I find it important to actively seek for ways in which I can embody this (e.g. by attentively being more grateful for the Earth) in my daily (working) life.

### 5.3.3 Acknowledging of the limitations

This study has some limitations. In this paragraph, I describe three limitations that I consider to be the main limitations. The first limitation is the lack of previous research studies in the studied area; how (religious) people holistically live their spirituality in relationship with more-than-human entities. The lack of previous studies on this topic resulted in the absence of a theoretical framework and model that I could use in my study and that could support my research findings. Consequently, the theory and model that I created to study my topic might not be robust. Thus, it is the lack of support of previous studies that has limited my research.

When looking at the findings of the different aspects of holistically lived spirituality, one can see that most of the findings are related to the cognitive domain. Relatively speaking, there falls a shortage in the affective domain. Even though it might be possible that this domain is indeed to a lesser extent present in the faith community, it might also be the result of a limitation of the chosen research method. In my study, I opted for a report of emotion in which the participant's studied emotions were distant in time from the actual experienced emotion (Robinson & Clore, 2002). This might have influenced my study because people's emotions are often short-term and, if they have not reflected upon these, it might be hard to recall them. Therefore, in an interview setting, it might be hard for the participants to recall their affects if one has not been attentively aware of these. Thus, a limitation of my study might be related with the chosen research methodology.

A third limitation might be the minimal attention I gave to the role of context of place in people's lived spiritual relationship with God and the Earth. Context of place is related with deeper reflection, sense of belonging and body/sensory stimulation with the environment (Singleton, 2015). It might therefore be that the context of place plays a catalysing role in people's lived spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God as well. In this study, however, I only paid a minimal attention to the role of context of place. For example, the role of context of place was discussed when the participants described a spiritual experience at a concrete location. Therefore, the minimal presence of context of place might have limited the exploration of people's relationships with the physical Earth and the spiritual God.

#### 5.3.4 Recommendations for future research

In this last paragraph, I share the main recommendations for future research that seek to overcome the limitations of my study that I described above. These recommendations are some practical actions and ideas for follow-up studies.

To overcome the first limitation of the study, the first recommendation for future research is to conduct **more studies** in this field of research. I would recommend fellow and future researchers to study how other (faith) communities live their spirituality in relationship with more-than-human entities (e.g. the physical Earth and the spiritual God). By contemplating on how humans live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, intangible perspectives and understandings could be acknowledged. By studying a larger group of people, more perspectives on people's spiritual lives could be identified, shared, and acknowledged. Consequently, 'new' ways of knowing and relating might be identified which contribute to a more sustainable future (Ikeke, 2015).

Secondly, I would recommend future researchers to use an additional method that allows them to measure the affective dimension of people's relationship with more-than-humans more adequately. A way to do so could be done by using

(online) self-reports. In **self-reports**, participants can describe their affects in a close distance to the relevant experience (Robinson & Clore, 2002). By using self-reports, affective information can be measured that would otherwise be difficult to recall.

The last recommendation for future research is to explore the role of **context of place** in people's lived spirituality in relationship with God and the Earth (Singleton, 2015). As described before, context of place is described to be a catalyst for deep engagement with the environment. It might be that the context of place plays a role in catalysing people's engagement with God and the Earth as well. Human's relationship with God and the Earth might therefore be understood better if the role of context of place is included in its research. This could be done by examining the role of context of place in the lived affective, cognitive, and behavioural domains of spirituality in relationship with more-than-humans.

## 6. Conclusion

In this thesis, I explored to what extent the members of the Dominican Priory in Zwolle live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, and how this relates with agroecology. I researched this by executing an ethnographic study of the DPZ's faith community. The main research question was *"To what extent does the faith community of the Dominican priory in Zwolle live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God and how does this relate to agroecology?"*.

Firstly, it was found that the members of the DPZ's faith community live their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God with their heart, head, and hands. Moreover, this relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God was found to be lived both implicitly and explicitly. The different social groups - the Fathers, Other Residents, Lay Dominicans, and Parish Members- embodied, and/or sought for ways to embody this relationship in different ways.

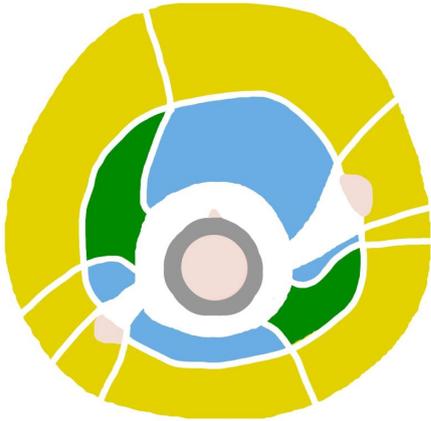
Regarding the affective aspect of spirituality, the participants related with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through positive emotions, such as joy, awe, and love. Negative affects were found to be experienced by some of the Parish Members when they did not know how to take care of her well. Concerning the cognitive aspect of spirituality, a general trend was identified within the social groups that distinguishes these from each other. Namely, the Fathers, the Other Resident, and some of the Lay Dominicans, were found to engage in this relationship through their reflections and their understanding of the Bible and other (Christian) religious figures. The Parish Members, however, were found to engage in this cognitive domain mostly through their understanding of the activities that were organised by the Fathers, such as their workshops during the Grond Week. For them, other sources of information than DPZ's sources provided them with information about their relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God as well.

Moreover, it was found that each member of the DPZ's faith community had their own way to enact with the physical Earth, and the spiritual God. Even though there is some variety, some overlap in trends could also be recognised among the different social groups. The Fathers were found to enact upon their spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God through their sermons and the organising of workshops (which are also a source of cognitive engagement for the Parish Members). The Parish Members, however, were found to lack an enactment upon their explicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. The Parish Members were found, however, to enact upon their implicit spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God (e.g., through shopping organic products).

The way in which the DPZ's faith community lives their spirituality in relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God was then conceptualised based on the identified kinship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. Here, humans, Earth and God were described to be related through a family bond and origin. In this relationship, geomorphic characteristics of and deity were ascribed to the Earth. Moreover, an overall ecocentric attitude has been identified in which a relational value was ascribed to the relationship with the physical Earth and spiritual God. These findings offer a different perspective on the anthropocentric Christian human-nature relationship. In the described spiritual relationship with the physical Earth and the spiritual God, the DPZ's faith community can be understood to value agroecology.

In short, the framework of holistically lived spirituality has shed light on how the members of the DPZ's faith community relate with the physical Earth and the spiritual God. It is through the valuation of and the seeking for reciprocity in their relationship with the more-than-human world, that the DPZ's faith community learns to dance with the sacred Earth (*Figure 9*). Future studies would be needed to further explore and understand how other (faith) communities live their spirituality in relationship with more-than-human entities.

**Figure 10.** A monastic dance with the sacred Earth



*Note:* From a bird's eye view

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Dr. Father Godfrey's dance with the Earth

### *A Connected Universe*

**16-01-2022**

### *A Dynamic Unity*

*For Father Richard Rohr, the Universal Christ reveals a united and connected universe full of God's presence:*

Please do not think me a heretic, but it is formally incorrect to say “Jesus is God,” as most Christians glibly do. For Christians, the Trinity is God, and Jesus is a third something—the union of “very God” with “very human.” This dynamic unity makes Jesus the Exemplar, pledge, and guarantee, the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). Recognizing this means there is much less need to “prove” that Jesus is God (which of itself asks nothing of us). *Our true and deep need is to experience the same unitive mystery in ourselves and in all of creation—“through him, and with him, and in him” as we pray in the Great Amen of the Eucharist. This is how Jesus “saves” us and what salvation finally means. The spiritual and the material are one.*

There were clear statements in the New Testament about the cosmic meaning to Christ [1], and the communities taught by Paul and John were initially overwhelmed by this message. In the early Christian era, only some few Eastern Fathers (such as Origen of Alexandria and Maximus the Confessor) cared to notice that the Christ was clearly something older, larger, and different than Jesus himself. *They mystically saw that Jesus is the union of human and divine in space and time, and the Christ is*

*the eternal union of matter and Spirit beyond time.* But the later centuries tended to lose this mystical element in favor of dualistic Christianity. We lost our foundational paradigm for connecting all opposites.

Since we could not overcome the split between the spiritual and the material within ourselves, how could we then possibly overcome it for the rest of creation? The polluted earth, extinct and endangered species, tortured animals, nonstop wars, and constant religious conflicts have been the result. Yet Jesus the Christ has still planted within creation a cosmic hope, and we cannot help but see it in so many unexplainable and wonderful events and people.

For some Christians, the split is overcome in the person of Jesus. But for more and more people, union with the divine is first experienced through “the Universal Christ”—in nature, in moments of pure love, silence, inner or outer music, with animals, or a primal sense of awe. Why? Because creation itself is the first incarnation of Christ, the primary and foundational “Bible” that reveals the path to God.

Our encounter with the eternal Christ mystery started about 13.8 billion years ago in an event we now call the “Big Bang.” God has overflowed into visible Reality and revealed God’s self in trilobites, giant flightless birds, jellyfish, pterodactyls, and thousands of species that humans have never once seen. But God did. And that was already more than enough meaning and glory.

## ***A Connected Universe***

**17-01-2022**

### ***Restoring Relationships***

*In his 1967 Christmas sermon on peace and nonviolence, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stressed the interrelatedness of Earth, nations, and all life:*

Now, let me suggest first that, if we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. . . . We must develop a world perspective. No individual can live alone; no nation can live alone, and as long as we try, the more we are going to have war in this world. . . .

It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality. [1]

*Writer Victoria Loorz, co-founder of the “Wild Church Network,” believes religion’s true purpose is to restore our relationships with each other and the earth:*

The word *religion*, at its roots, means *re*, “again,” and *ligios*, “connection,” like ligaments. Religion is meant to offer us support to *connect again* what has been separated. Apparently we need constant reminders to continually reconnect with the fullness of life, the whole, the holy. What we’ve created is more like *disligion*: disconnection from people and species unlike us. When religion loses its purpose and colludes with the forces of separation instead, it becomes irrelevant and even irreverent. . . .

*Loorz seeks to encourage people towards deeper love by encountering the Holy outdoors:*

The new story is emerging, and I cannot pretend to know all the layers. Yet one aspect that seems essential relates to the worldview of belonging—a way of being human that acts as if we belong to a community larger than our own family, race, class, and culture, and larger even than our own species. The apocalyptic unveiling happening in our world right now makes it difficult even for those who have been sheltered in privilege to look away from the reality, both tragic and beautiful, that we are all deeply interconnected. Humans, trees, oceans, deer, viruses, bees. God.

Many people, whether they go to church regularly or avoid it, feel closest to God while they are in nature. Even a simple gaze at a full moon can be a spiritual experience if you are mindful enough. And a glorious sunset can summon hallelujahs from deep in your soul. Humans are made to engage in life-affirming conversation with the whole, holy web of life. . . .

Mystical experience in nature—those moments when you sense your interconnection with all things—are more than just interesting encounters. They are invitations into relationship. Beyond caring for creation or stewarding Earth’s “resources,” it is entering into an actual relationship with particular places and beings of the living world that can provide an embodied, rooted foundation for transformation. The global shift necessary to actually survive the crises we’ve created depends on a deep inner change. [2]

## ***A Connected Universe***

***18–01-2022***

### ***We Are the Earth***

*Buddhist monk and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh describes our inherent connection to the Earth and how that understanding can shift our behavior:*

At this very moment, the Earth is above you, below you, all around you, and even inside you. The Earth is everywhere. You may be used to thinking of the Earth as only the ground beneath your feet. But the water, the sea, the sky, and everything around us comes from the Earth. Everything outside us and everything inside us comes from the Earth. We often forget that the planet we are living on has given us all the elements that make up our bodies. The water in our flesh, our bones, and all the microscopic cells inside our bodies all come from the Earth and are part of the Earth. The Earth is not just the environment we live in. We are the Earth and we are always carrying her within us.

Realizing this, we can see that the Earth is truly alive. We are a living, breathing manifestation of this beautiful and generous planet. Knowing this, we can begin to transform our relationship to the Earth. We can begin to walk differently and to care for her differently. We will fall completely in love with the Earth. When we are in love with someone or something, there is no separation between ourselves and the person or thing we love. We do whatever we can for them and this brings us great joy and nourishment. That is the relationship each of us can have with the Earth. That is the relationship each of us must have with the Earth if the Earth is to survive, and if we are to survive as well.

If we think about the Earth as just the environment around us, we experience ourselves and the Earth as separate entities. We may see the planet only in terms of what it can do for us. We need to recognize that the planet and the people on it are ultimately one and the same. . . .

*Hanh recognizes that our false notion of separateness from the Earth not only creates physical harm but emotional harm as well:*

A lot of our fear, hatred, anger, and feelings of separation and alienation come from the idea that we are separate from the planet. We see ourselves as the center of the universe and are concerned primarily with our own personal survival. If we care about the health and well-being of the planet, we do so for our own sake. We want the air to be clean enough for us to breathe. We want the water to be clear enough so that we have something to drink. But we need to do more than use recycled products or donate money to environmental groups. We have to change our whole relationship with the Earth.

## ***A Connected Universe***

**19-01-2022**

### ***Everything Is Connected***

*Richard recalls a nature documentary [1] that he watched which revealed the perils and promises of our connected universe:*

The world of ecology is so exciting because we're recognizing from all of the scientific disciplines that the entire nature of the biological and physical universe is absolutely relational. We've discovered that when we change one factor, everything changes. I was watching a show on birds recently, and I learned about red knots that migrate annually all the way from Tierra del Fuego to certain Arctic islands north of Hudson Bay. Thousands of miles! I said to myself, "Wouldn't they be happier if they did not do that every year?" But no, this is their destiny, to fly north some 9,000 miles each season. They stop in the middle of their journey on particular beaches along the Delaware Bay. There they always ate the recently-laid, protein-rich eggs of horseshoe crabs. Those eggs would give them enough energy to get all the way to the Arctic.

Well, we good Americans decided that horseshoe crabs were sort of ugly and not very useful for many things, but they do make excellent bait and attract eels and conch in great numbers. So we started using them for fish bait and killing these crabs indiscriminately. It took about ten years to recognize that the beautiful red knot might soon be extinct! So researchers observed and studied, and they found multiple possible answers, such as climate change, along with coastal development. But you have probably guessed one of the main reasons: we were killing the shorebirds' life source. As soon as horseshoe crabs were more protected against use as bait, we saw a return of the lovely little red knot. The birds again had available protein they could

eat on the shores of New Jersey and make it all the way to the Arctic. But it's going to take, apparently, several decades for them to be fully restored.

Now this example might seem like such a simple, unimportant thing. And yet a spiritual seer, one we would call a mystic, would recognize that God did not create horseshoe crabs or red knots for no reason. They are a part of the entire ecology or spiritual plan. I just offer this as one little example of the ecologically-interconnected and interpenetrating world that we're all a part of. But we have to be curious to see it!

This is a differently-shaped universe than many of us thought—and leads to a very differently-shaped spirituality. As Bill Plotkin says, spirituality becomes a “sinking back into the source of everything.” [2] We're already there, but we haven't been trained to see ourselves there. This is in fact the “new cosmology” through which we have to be retrained to see the world. Suddenly we realize, of course, that God is not “out there,” but God is in all, through all, and with all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

## Geloven met hoofd, hart en handen

Naar aanleiding van het bezoek van  
father Godfrey Nzamujo November 2021

--- Gert Jan van Rhijn, lid Groene Kerk

**In november 2021 was father  
Godfrey Nzamujo een week in het  
Dominicanenklooster en mocht ik  
hem ook persoonlijk ontmoeten.**

'Radicale verbondenheid'. Een belangrijk begrip bij Godfrey is radicale verbondenheid. Die verbondenheid is zowel met ons-zelf: met hoofd, hart en handen, maar ook met de ander. Die ander ontmoeten we zowel binnen als buiten onze kerkgemeenschap, maar is ook de natuur, de hele schepping en met God. Naast agrarisch ondernemer is Godfrey dominicaan en gaat hij voor in zijn parochie. Hierdoor is hij voor mij een voorbeeld hoe je als gehele mens je leven kan leiden.

Aan Godfrey heb ik de veronderstelling voorgelegd dat als wij de handen en voeten van Christus zijn, dan zouden die geoefend moeten zijn om iets van zijn werkelijkheid zichtbaar te maken. Godfrey bevestigde mij in de overtuiging dat we als mensen naast het ervaren en bezingen van Gods aanwezigheid, het opdoen van inzichten ook vaardigheden ons eigen kunnen maken om 'het zout der aarde' te kunnen zijn. Deze vaardigheden zouden buiten de viering en ook buiten de kerk opgedaan kunnen worden. Zo heeft father Godfrey in Amerika meerder studies gedaan om terug in Afrika zich

Godfrey Nzamujo (Kano, 1950) is een Nigeriaanse theoloog (dominicaan), filosoof en ingenieur en stichter van het "Sanghaï Centre" in Benin. Godfrey Nzamujo's principe was: "De enige manier om armoede te bestrijden is om de arme mens in een actieve schepper om te vormen."

te richten op het ontwikkelen en stimuleren van de landbouw. Zijn initiatieven zijn een voorbeeld voor andere landen. Naar het opdoen van vaardigheden zou in de viering verwezen kunnen worden, bijvoorbeeld bij de mededelingen. Hierdoor wordt de relatie gelegd met de mogelijkheden voor ons leven buiten de viering en hoe je dat kunt vormgeven. Het oefenen van hoofd, hart en handen ligt naar mijn mening in het verlengde van de dominicaanse traditie van "Contemplare et praedicare" en inspireerde mij om hierover iets te vertellen.



Radical verbondenheid is: Zwolse watervlooiën, gevangen door studenten Amy en Anouck die met father Godfrey Nzamujo meegegaan zijn naar Benin. Ze doen het daar goed!

## Appendix C: Research Guideline Fathers

### Interview Paters - updatet

#### Introductie onderzoek:

- Spiritualiteit
- Verbintenis natuur
  - o Wat is natuur voor hem
  - o Link met spiritualiteit
- Gemeenschap
- Godfrey ervaring

#### Consent:

Mogen we dit gesprek opnemen?

Mogen we de informatie, verzameld in dit gesprek, gebruiken voor ons masteronderzoek?

#### Onderwerpen:

##### Spiritualiteit

- Wat is de relatie tussen religie en spiritualiteit volgens hem?
- Wat is Dominicaanse spiritualiteit?
- Wat is zijn spiritualiteit?
- Definitie spiritualiteit:

*Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred. (Puchalski et al, 2009, p.887)*

- o Horizontaal: richt zich op de verbondenheid tussen de mens en de natuur, de kosmos en de medemens.
- o Verticaal: verbeeldt de verbondenheid tussen het immanente (het diepste wezen van de mens) en het transcendente (het hogere)
- o Dynamisch: vertegenwoordigt aspecten die te maken met hebben met een vorm van zelftranscendentie die aanzet tot beweging, dynamiek en actie. Aspecten binnen deze dimensie willen iets voor de dag brengen, vertegenwoordigen een 'gang' een gaan voor iets, of de blik gericht houden op iets (een uitdaging).
- Welke waarden, vanuit zijn spiritualiteit, zijn voor hem belangrijk?
- Hoe is hij bezig met zijn spiritualiteit? (handen, hoofd, hart?)

##### Godfrey

- Is hij tot nieuwe inzichten gekomen?
- Wat heeft de week hem opgeleverd?
- In hoeverre herkent hij zich in de radicale relationaliteit van Godfrey?
- Godfrey was bezig met het hoofd, de handen en het hart. In hoeverre is Broeder X hiermee bezig?

#### Natuur

- Wat is natuur voor hem?
- Hoe gaat hij met de natuur om?
- Hoe voelt hij zich verbonden met de natuur?
- Wat is de link tussen zijn spiritualiteit en de natuur?

#### Voedsel

- Wat is de waarde van voedsel in zijn leven?
  - o Biologisch?
  - o Mee bezig zijn? (Praktisch of met bepaalde keuzes maken)

#### Gemeenschap

- Hoe ervaart u de verbondenheid in het klooster en met de mensen in de kerk?
- Welke waarden zijn belangrijk in het verbonden voelen met anderen?
  - o Delen van normen en waarden/ samen (geloof) praktiseren/ vertrouwen/ wederkerigheid
  - o Wat zegt zijn geloof over het samen leven met de ander?
- Hoe is de relatie tussen kerk en maatschappij?
- "Wat denkt u dat de rol van het klooster/de gemeenschap kan zijn voor een verandering naar agro-ecologie?"

#### Overig

- Welke spirituele leiders inspireren hem en waarom (bijv. Thomas van Aquino)?

# Appendix D: Research Guideline Lay Dominicans, Other Residents, Parish Members

## Interview Lekendominicanen + Bewoners DMZ + Parochianen

### Introductie onderzoek:

- Spiritualiteit
- Verbintenis natuur
  - o Wat is natuur voor hem
  - o Link met spiritualiteit
- Gemeenschap
- (Godfrey Ervaring)

### Consent:

- Mogen we dit gesprek opnemen?
- Mogen we de informatie, verzameld in dit gesprek, gebruiken voor ons masteronderzoek?

### Onderwerpen:

#### Achtergrond info

- Wie is de participant en waar houdt hij/zij zich mee bezig?
- Rol binnen Dominicanenklooster
- Wat zijn bezigheden buiten het Dominicanenklooster?

#### Spiritualiteit

- Wat is de relatie tussen religie en spiritualiteit volgens hem?
- Wat is Dominicaanse spiritualiteit?
- Wat is zijn spiritualiteit?
- Definitie spiritualiteit:

*Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred. (Puchalski et al, 2009, p.887)*

- o Horizontaal: richt zich op de verbondenheid tussen de mens en de natuur, de kosmos en de medemens.
- o Verticaal: verbeeldt de verbondenheid tussen het immanente (het diepste wezen van de mens) en het transcendente (het hogere)
- o Dynamisch: vertegenwoordigt aspecten die te maken met hebben met een vorm van zelftranscendentie die aanzet tot beweging, dynamiek en actie. Aspecten binnen deze dimensie willen iets voor de dag brengen, vertegenwoordigen een 'gang' een gaan voor iets, of de blik gericht houden op iets (een uitdaging).
- Welke waarden, vanuit zijn spiritualiteit, zijn voor hem belangrijk?
- Hoe is hij bezig met zijn spiritualiteit/waarden? (handen, hoofd, hart?)

#### Godfrey

- Is hij ervan op de hoogte dat Godfrey is geweest?

[Zo ja, stel onderstaande vragen, zo niet ga door met een ander onderwerp]

- Is hij tot nieuwe inzichten gekomen?
- In hoeverre herkent hij zich in de radicale relationaliteit van Godfrey?
- Godfrey was bezig met het hoofd, de handen en het hart. In hoeverre is hij hiermee bezig?

#### Natuur

- Wat is natuur voor hem?
- Hoe gaat hij met de natuur om?
- Hoe voelt hij zich verbonden met de natuur?
- Wat is de link tussen zijn spiritualiteit en de natuur?
- Wat is, volgens zijn opvatting, de algemene boodschap van de Bijbel over de aarde?

#### Voedsel

- Wat is de waarde van voedsel in uw leven?
- Spiritualiteit en voedsel
  - o Biologisch?
  - o Mee bezig zijn? (Praktisch of met bepaalde keuzes maken)

#### Gemeenschap

- Hoe ervaart u de verbondenheid in het klooster en met de mensen in de kerk?
- Welke waarden zijn belangrijk in het verbonden voelen met anderen? /Wat voor waarden delen de mensen in de kerk, naast de liefde voor God?
  - o Delen van normen en waarden/ samen (geloof)
  - o Gedrag: De wil om te helpen en mee te doen/ praktiseren/ vertrouwen/ wederkerigheid/Gevoel van erbij horen
  - o Wat zegt zijn geloof over het samen leven met de ander?
- Hoe is de relatie tussen kerk en maatschappij?
- Wat is de rol van de lekenmonnik voor de verandering naar duurzame landbouw?
- "Wat denkt u dat de rol van het klooster/de gemeenschap kan zijn voor een verandering naar duurzame landbouw?"
- Hoe is de sociale cohesie gecreëerd in de kerk?

#### Overig

- Welke spirituele leiders inspireren hem en waarom (bijv. Thomas van Aquino)?

## Appendix E: Emails of correspondence - Focus Group 1

Beste deelnemer,

Zoals besproken zal komende **vrijdag 19 november, 10.00 uur** de eerste reflectiegroep plaatsvinden in de **Grote Zaal op de 1e verdieping van de Kloosterpoort**. Welkom, leuk en fijn dat u er ook bij bent! Vanaf 9.45 uur staat de koffie/thee voor u klaar.

Het doel van de reflectiegroepen is om te onderzoeken hoe de dominicaanse spiritualiteit zich verhoudt tot agro-ecologie. We zullen de komende twee weken kijken naar uw persoonlijke en gedeelde waarden en hoe deze tot expressie (kunnen) worden gebracht in het dominicanenklooster. In de eerste week zal er wat meer de focus liggen op waarden, en in de tweede week wat meer op de expressies hiervan.

Zoals eerder benoemd, zou het fijn zijn als u zou willen nadenken over een aantal vragen ter voorbereiding van deze bijeenkomst. Deze voorbereidingsvragen kunt u vinden in de bijlage. De vragen lijken groot, maar pak vooral de tijd die u hiervoor heeft en aan wilt besteden. Een kortere tijd en korte(re) antwoorden zijn zeker ook welkom, en de beschreven hulpvragen zijn enkel bedoeld als richtlijn. Tijdens de bijeenkomst zal u worden gevraagd uw antwoorden (beknopt) te delen met de andere aanwezigen.

Tijdens de bijeenkomsten houd ik mij aan de huidige coronamaatregelen. Praktisch betekent dit dat in de ruimte waar wij zitten maximaal 12 mensen aanwezig zullen zijn. Aan u zou ik willen vragen om in de wandelgangen een mondkapje te dragen en uw corona QR-code mee te nemen. Zo houden we het veilig voor elkaar. Daarnaast wil ik u erop attenderen dat de bijeenkomsten auditief worden opgenomen voor mijn onderzoek. Vanzelfsprekend worden uw gegevens worden vertrouwelijk en anoniem verwerkt.

Graag zie ik u vrijdag. Mocht u vragen hebben, laat het mij weten! U kunt reageren op deze mail of een appje/berichtje sturen.

Hartelijke groeten,

Anouck Fietje

062362669

## Appendix F: Emails of correspondence - Focus Group 2

Beste allemaal,

Zoals besproken zal komende **vrijdag 26 november, 10.00 uur** de tweede reflectiegroep plaatsvinden in de **Grote Zaal op de 1e verdieping van de Kloosterpoort**. Vanaf 9.45 uur staat de koffie/thee wederom voor u klaar.

In de bijlage kunnen jullie de voorbereiding vinden. Het zou fijn zijn als jullie hier de tijd weer voor zouden willen nemen hiernaar te kijken. Mocht het lukken, dan zou het fijn zijn als jullie de uitwerking deze keer van tevoren naar mij zouden mailen. Mochten jullie de uitwerking van de vorige reflectiegroep nog hebben, dan ontvang ik deze ook graag!

Tot slot wil ik nog een keer benadrukken dat we ons tijdens de bijeenkomst weer zullen houden aan de coronamaatregelen. Net als de vorige betekent dit dat wij in een ruimte zitten waar maximaal 12 mensen aanwezig zullen zijn. Aan u zou ik willen vragen om in de wandelgangen een mondkapje te dragen en uw corona QR-code mee te nemen. Daarnaast wil ik u erop attenderen dat de bijeenkomsten auditief worden opgenomen voor mijn onderzoek. Vanzelfsprekend worden uw gegevens worden vertrouwelijk en anoniem verwerkt.

Graag zie ik u vrijdag. Mocht u vragen hebben, laat het mij weten! U kunt reageren op deze mail of een appje/berichtje sturen.

Hartelijke groeten,

Anouck Fietje



## Appendix G: Preparation Focus Group Participants - Focus Group 1

### **Vorbereiding reflectiegroep 19 november**

#### **1. Motivaties: wat zijn mijn drijfveren?**

- Hulpvraag 1: *wat is betekenisvol voor mij?*
- Hulpvraag 2: *wat motiveert mij?*
- Hulpvraag 3: *wat wil ik bereiken in het leven?*

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#### **2. Identiteit: wie ben ik en wat is typisch mij?**

- Hulpvraag 1: *wanneer en in welke momenten kan ik het meest mijzelf zijn?*
- Hulpvraag 2: *wat zijn mijn persoonlijke eigenschappen?*
- Hulpvraag 3: *hoe geef ik een expressie aan mijn drijfveren?*

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#### **3. Overtuigingen en assumpties: waarom doe ik wat ik doe? Welke waarden die belangrijk voor mijzelf zijn, vind ik terug in het klooster/-gemeenschap?**

- Hulpvraag 1: *wat vind ik belangrijk in het leven?*
- Hulpvraag 2: *welke waarden beïnvloeden mijn gedrag?*
- Hulpvraag 3: *wat zijn mijn verwachtingen in het leven?*

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## Appendix H: Preparation Focus Group Participants - Focus Group 2

### Vorbereiding reflectiegroep 26 november

De gevonden waarden (verbinding, rechtvaardigheid, vertrouwen & openheid, zorg en geloof) koppelen aan onderstaande vragen over vaardigheden, gedrag en omgeving.

#### 1. Vaardigheden: welke vaardigheden heb ik? Hoe presteer ik?

- Hulpvraag 1: *welke vaardigheden gebruik ik?*
  - Hulpvraag 2: *welke kennis gebruik ik?*
  - Hulpvraag 3: *wat zijn mijn kwaliteiten?*
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#### 2. Gedrag: wat zie ik mijzelf doen?

- Hulpvraag 1: *welke acties onderneem ik?*
  - Hulpvraag 2: *wat is typisch mijn gedrag?*
  - Hulpvraag 3: *hoe werk ik samen met anderen? En, hoe geef ik de samenwerking vorm?*
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#### 3. Omgeving: hoe reageer ik op anderen? Hoe vind ik de vaardigheden en gedragingen die belangrijk voor mijzelf zijn terug in het klooster/-gemeenschap?

- Hulpvraag 1: *welke omstandigheden zijn uitdagend voor mij?*
  - Hulpvraag 2: *Welke vaardigheden en gedragingen vind ik terug in het klooster/-gemeenschap?*
  - Hulpvraag 3: *Welke verwachtingen heb ik van het klooster/-gemeenschap?*
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