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A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING A MENTORING MINISTRY AT
MOUNT OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH IN KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

A PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

IN FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
CHARLES LEON WEBBER

APRIL, 2024

APPROVAL FORM

A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING A MENTORING MINISTRY AT
MOUNT OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, KINGS MOUNTAIN, NC

CHARLES LEON WEBBER

Approved by:

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I dedicate this degree to my late daughter Faith Charlette who was my heart and soul. If she had lived, I would have encouraged her to pursue her doctoral degree in her chosen field of endeavor human services; to my late mother Ruby Clark Webber, who was my first mentor, teacher, and preacher, and who invested all that she had, mind, soul, and body, into my success in life; to the late Ms. Blanche Arnold, who was my first, second, and third-grade teacher who inspired and encouraged me with remarks such as, “Boy, you sure have pretty handwriting!”

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To my wife of forty-four years, who has been with me in this pastoral ministry journey since 1983, I pay tribute. No one knows me or has shared the difficulties of my life to the extent that you have. “Thank you for giving me the space and time to do what I feel God has been leading me to do. I am grateful for your love, understanding and constant support. Simply thanking you is insufficient for who you are and who you have been to me during this time!” To your late mother Melvina Wilson Ross, who in her final days, kindly referred to me as “Professor,” I am eternally grateful for the love and support.

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring within the community of faith is a disciple-making process. Yet, research reveals bringing people together for shared learning experiences is a rarity. A four-week mentor training project at Mount Olive Baptist Church was developed to address the perceived need. Senior adult leaders received mentorship and training to engage with young adults. Although the statistical analysis was inconclusive, the project training sessions and qualitative feedback revealed positively a quest for other efforts in this direction.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the personal rationale for the ministry project, the project setting from a historical and demographic perspective, the statement of the ministry problem as the basis for the ministry project, and the project literature resources consulted.

Personal Rationale

My exposure to the idea of mentoring as a means of instruction and personal development began early in my life through participation in youth sports and in the relationships that existed with older persons such as my maternal grandfather, and from other older adults in the community and in the church. Had it not been for these early mentoring relationships, I am not certain as to how my life would have otherwise evolved.

When I initially accepted what I perceived to be a ‘calling’ from God to preach his Gospel, I was affirmed by my maternal grandfather. I sought out his counsel because he had proven himself in the past to be a wise and trustworthy advisor. My question to him was, “What would you say if I told you that I have been called to preach?” He simply said, “That is between you and the Lord!” He did not judge nor discourage me. His response was revelatory, because as a Primitive Baptist, the norm was to adhere to extreme conservative views about ministers, the role of women, and the role of music, if any, in the local church. In a subtle way, his response paralleled what he had always offered me (i.e., his love, encouragement, and support). Although my father lived with me, we never had the extensive discussions about life, religion, women, and politics that my grandfather and I had. The family dynamic and logistics made it easy for me to “go to Pa’s house” and have our front porch chats, which provided a special bond and relationship.

At that juncture, I began to question, “Why can’t this same type of relationship be developed between older and younger adult leaders in a church environment?” For example, it was Moses’ father-in-law who provided wise counsel and advice to Moses in his decision-

making process. The family dynamic is present in many smaller church settings which enhances the possibilities for implementing some type of mentoring ministry, which enables a community of faith to carry out its mission for God, including teaching the next generation about God's glory and goodness.

Project Setting

Mount Olive Baptist Church (MOBC) was the setting for this ministry project. MOBC is located in the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of Kings Mountain, North Carolina. Kings Mountain is the second-largest municipality in Cleveland County and is known as "The Historical City" based on an important Revolutionary War battle fought nearby. Kings Mountain is the home for several large manufacturing companies and a bustling downtown section. The City has gained additional notoriety as the home of the new Two Kings Casino.¹

Kings Mountain, North Carolina

Originally named White Plains, the City of Kings Mountain was chartered on February 11, 1874. The beginning of the city can be attributed to the gold rush of 1834 and the start of rail service by the Charlotte-Atlanta Airline (Southern Railway) in December of 1872. The train depot was built, and railroad officials asked Mrs. J. W. Tracey, the local postmistress, to name the new train station. She chose Kings Mountain in honor of the 1780 Revolutionary War battle fought on Kings Mountain, five miles to the southeast of the city in South Carolina.²

In 1888, brothers J. S. and W. A. Mauney formed the Kings Mountain Manufacturing Company, the city's first cotton mill. In the summer of 1900, the Bank of Kings Mountain received its national charter, becoming the first national bank to be chartered in Cleveland County.

¹ U. L. Patterson and Barry E. Hambricht, *Images of America: Shelby and Cleveland County, North Carolina* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 64.

² *Ibid.*, 65.

The battle of Kings Mountain is considered to be the turning point of the Revolutionary War. Much like the revolutionists who fought in the battle the city is named for, the people of Kings Mountain possess a hardy spirit of pride, independence, and determination.³

According to the United States Census Bureau released in the America Survey in 2020, Kings Mountain has a population of 10,800, with a median age of 41.4. The ethnic demographics of Kings Mountain, NC are White (Non-Hispanic) (65.2%), Black or African-American (non-Hispanic) (27.3%), and Hispanic or Latin (1.4%).⁴

Kings Mountain has a poverty rate of 20.6% and a median household income of \$42, 336. The percentage of persons with a minimum of a bachelor's degree is 16.3%. The major employers in Kings Mountain are Firestone Fibers and Textiles, Inc., and Pioneer Motor Bearing Corporation.⁵

Mount Olive Baptist Church

MOBC was established in 1922 under the leadership of Mr. Jerry Cassel. After discussing the increasing difficulty of walking from Compact Community to Long Branch Baptist Church in nearby Grover, NC, a series of meetings were held by a group of young men in the home of Jerry Cassel and the decision was made to build a place of worship in the Compact Community. A decision was made to call the new church Mount Olive. Rev. J. M. Lowery was called in to assist the group in organizing the church. Rev. O. C. Cassel was appointed as interim minister to conduct prayer services each Wednesday night and worship services on the first and third Sundays. Mr. J. W. Patterson and Mr. Jerry Cassel were chosen to begin negotiating to purchase land across from the Cassel home site owned by the Herndon family. The land was purchased along with trees belonging to D. C. Mauney to build the church. The group contracted with Mr. White and Mr. Gill to build the church and in March of 1923, the

³ Ibid., 65.

⁴ United States Census Bureau, "U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts: Kings Mountaincity, North Carolina," *U. S. Census Bureau Quickfacts*, accessed November 4, 2023, www.census.gov/quick/facts/fact/table/KingsMountaincitynorthcarolina/PST045222.

⁵ United States Census Bureau, 2023.

cornerstone was laid and MOBC became a reality. Rev. Lowery became the first full-time pastor in 1945.

Presently, MOBC is undergoing a transition as older members are dying and a new group and a mixture of younger and middle-aged people are being added to the fold. An example of this diversity can be evidenced in a recent baptismal service. Two of the candidates were female youth, and one was a young adult male. While the church is not growing rapidly, we are experiencing interest from new individuals, and our membership has been holding steady. In addition, the proximity of the new casino and the expected residential growth and development in the area is certain to impact our community ministry and outreach efforts.

The church has recently experienced the loss of several senior church leaders, two deacons, an associate minister, and a trustee--all within three months. Each of these leaders were exemplified the traits of being a good mentor and leader. While none of these leaders were able to share in this ministry project, I desired to train a similar group of senior leaders how to more formally engage in mentoring practices that would impact both individual and spiritual formation and transformation.

Statement of the Ministry Problem

As the pastor and leader of a local church, I desire that all seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. There is both spiritual and experiential knowledge available to the body of Christ from which to grow. It is the biblically mandated responsibility of the present generation to teach future generations about the mission of God for the church. Therefore, could a mentoring ministry project be an important necessity for the leaders and members of Mount Olive Baptist Church? Could the results of this doctoral project inspire the greater community to go in this direction?

As the community of faith, believers are to communicate and to model their faith as a statement of their mission to serve God. The relationships within the community of faith should be based on shared community, encouragement, trust, holy listening, and living out one's call to obedience to God.

Providing mutual support within communal relationships for the journeys and battles of life that is critical to personal and congregational spiritual formation and transformation. Biblically, the equipping of those who are to teach and train others is one of the primary tasks of the church, and according to the Deuteronomic narrative (Deuteronomy 3:21, 28), it is to be never-ending. “The equipping of the saints is one of the main keys to growing the kingdom of God.”⁶

This ministry project was focused on the introduction of biblically based mentoring practices designed to strengthen the intergenerational relationships between older and younger church leaders at Mount Olive Baptist Church, by engaging them in some mentoring practices and theological reflection.

Project Resources: Literature Review

There were some book resources that helped to shape my thoughts and understanding of the role of mentorship in the process of spiritual formation. I benefitted greatly from books including, *Mentoring for Spiritual Growth* by Tony Horsfal, *Shaping People Who Will Shape the World* by Martin Sanders, *Mentoring 101* by John Maxwell, *Building a Ministry of Spiritual Mentoring* Jim Grassi, *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor’s Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* by Sue Edwards, *Faith-Based Mentoring: Mission Possible* Melvin Fleming, and *Heart to Heart: A Discipleship and Mentoring Plan* by Robin Ulbricht. A complete list of literature reviews is included in the bibliography. These books were foundational in giving me a better understanding of mentoring in the spiritual formation and transformation process.

In *Building a Ministry of Spiritual Mentoring*, Jim Grassi suggests that in today’s vernacular, building disciples can be described as spiritual mentoring. Disciplining connects to persons and the struggles they face in today’s world. Leaders through the mentoring process

⁶ John Mallison, *Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders* (Clovelly Park, Australia: Australian Church Resources, 1998), 118.

need to create environments where spiritual formation can occur, and lives can be transformed.⁷

Mentoring for Spiritual Growth by Tony Horsfal concludes that spiritual mentoring is the process of one person walking with another person to deepen their knowledge of God and their relationship with God. The end goal is to become more like Jesus Christ, even though we know that we will never become 100 percent like Christ. Becoming like Christ does not mean talking in parables and doing miracles, but it means participating in the character of God and allowing that good character to be expressed in our everyday lives. The goal of spiritual mentoring is to get to a place of abiding in God. If one desires to be a good spiritual mentor, one needs to nurture the following qualities in their life: personal experience of Christ, understanding of God's ways, being in tune with the Holy Spirit, prayerfulness, experience of suffering and failure, availability to meet when needed, self-awareness, genuine love for people, confidentiality, and encouragement. One must become good at listening and asking questions to promote spiritual growth. In addition, one needs to become familiar with the Christian classics, about spiritual formation, and personally practice spiritual exercises. Horsfal recommends Ignatius of Loyola's exercises as a starting point.⁸

In *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationship with Next Generation Women*, Sue Edwards contends today's strategies for mentoring women are outdated and unusable. Our definition of mentoring is based on decades ago. Edwards suggests that younger women today would best relate to the 'woman in the mirror' than to the conjured-up perfect mentor in one's head. This book resource examines the cultural changes and fast-paced digital advancements that are helping to shape young thought and behavior but weaken the generation.⁹

⁷ Jim Grassi, *Building a Ministry of Spiritual Mentoring* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2014), 67.

⁸ Tony Horsfal, *Mentoring for Spiritual Growth* (Abingdon, England: BRF Publishing, 2008), 48.

⁹ Sue Edwards, *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2014), 64.

CHAPTER TWO

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The material in this chapter focuses on the project information, implementation, project goals, and evaluation. Specific information concerning meeting times, location, administrative procedures and the mentor covenant agreement are also included.

My Doctor of Ministry project zeroed in on bridging the intergenerational gap between young adult leaders and senior leaders by engaging them in a mentor-mentee relationship for four weeks. The project training dates were September 17th, September 24th, September 30th, and October 7th. The Experimental Group (EG-mentors) met on two Sundays immediately following the morning worship experience (11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), and on two Saturdays from (12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.), in the Fellowship Hall at Mount Olive Baptist Church. The Mentee Group (MG) met during these same periods as a group during the first hour, and then individually with an assigned mentor the second hour.

Participants were invited (See Appendix E) and, before the official start, they participated in separate informational/orientation sessions on September 15th from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. Both groups expressed excitement and anticipation for the opportunity to participate in the project training. For the sake of confidentiality, before the week one training session, each participant received a pre-numbered folder that was utilized throughout the four-week training session. In the orientation sessions, I reviewed and discussed the project goals, training, and group discussion formats, objectives, and expectations. I further informed the mentor group that this project would involve training in four mentoring skills areas designed to be spiritually formative and should result in greater community and improved relationships. The outcome would provide a greater knowledge and awareness of the role of mentoring in the church community.

Each mentor participant was provided with a covenant agreement that was signed and returned to the appointed Administrative Assistant, who served as the lead person for the collection and organizing of data (See Appendix C). This procedure eliminated me from any

possibility of bias in the data analysis at the conclusion of the project. The mentors (EG) and mentees (MG) prior to week one training session completed the appropriate pre-test survey on Sunday, September 17th (See Appendixes A and B). Prior to each of the four-week training sessions, both groups were provided refreshments prepared by the MOBC Food and Clothing Ministry.

The Experimental Group (mentors) consisted of four senior adult leaders, with varied amounts of church leadership and vocational experience. During each training session, the EG received training in mentoring skills for one hour. The EG also met with me, prior to the training sessions, in which they experienced my modeling the role to them as a Mentor. After each teaching session, they met with their assigned mentee for one hour and participated in the practice of spiritual formation through journaling of their experience.

The experimental group B (mentees/(MG) consisted of four young adult leaders with diverse backgrounds and church leadership experiences, who did not participate in the training sessions. The mentee group met for one hour each week and discussed among themselves a topic from an assigned list of topics provided to them, or they enjoyed the freedom to discuss any topic they deemed relative and appropriate. Mentors met confidentially for one hour following each training session, with their assigned mentee to discuss any mentoring question.

Each training session for Mentors (EG) began with an opening prayer led by one of the participants. Next, the teaching content was based on the biblical research for this project (See Appendix G). As indicated earlier, both groups took pre and post-tests developed through a Likert-style test to assess the impact of the training intervention (See Appendixes A and B). In addition, to provide for more qualitative data, mentors (EG) completed an evaluation of training instruction form (See Appendix F) to assess the effectiveness of the training.

The lesson content for each mentor training session was drawn from the Biblical and theological portions of this project (See CHAPTER 3). The lesson content consisted of (1) an introduction to the role of encouragement in the mentoring relationship (Deuteronomy 31:6-8, 34:9), (2) the importance of trust-building in the mentoring relationship (2 Timothy 2:1-2), (3) the importance of holy listening to discern the voice of God (1 Kings 19:19-21), and (4) the call

of God as a call to obedience (Luke 6:39-40). My desire in the training sessions was to engage senior adult leaders in theological and biblical reflection that would lead them to a greater understanding and appreciation of their roles in the mission of God for the church.

Project Goals

The overall goal of this project was to strengthen relationships between older and younger generations through a mentoring training program. What this implied was for senior adult church leaders of Mount Olive Baptist Church to develop an understanding and appreciation for the practice of mentoring in the mission of God for the church. Mentors (EG) as participants were to become aware of the impact of receiving mentorship and spiritual mentoring while engaged in spiritual formation, theological reflection, and journaling.

The training learning outcomes measured by the pre-test and post-tests were as follows:

- Define “biblical mentoring’ in relationship to disciple-making.
- Explain the background stories from the Moses-Joshua relationship from Deuteronomy 31:6-8.
- Explain the importance of encouragement in relation to the lives of the people of God.
- Explain the background story of Apostle Paul and Timothy and their mentoring relationship.
- Explain the importance of trust-building in relation to the lives of the people of God.
- Compare and contrast active listening and holy listening.
- Explain the words of Jesus in Luke 6:39-40 as a call to obedience.

Qualitative data from mentor journals, reflections made in class during weekly training sessions, and information gathered from my one-on-one weekly conversations with mentors, were all used to evaluate attainment of project goals. Quantitative data from pre and post test surveys did indicate an increase in the mean score which suggests some change in the knowledge of the independent variable mentorship and the mentoring disciplines being taught during each weekly training session.

Project Calendar

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. June 21, 2023 | Received Proposal Approval |
| 2. July 31, 2023 | Received IRB Approval |
| 3. September 14, 2023 | Week One Mentor Session |
| 4. September 15, 2023 | Orientation Sessions via Zoom with the Experimental Group and mentee group. |
| 5. September 17, 2023 | Week One: “Biblical Encouragement in the Mentoring Process.” Both groups completed the pre-test survey. |
| 6. September 21, 2023 | Week Two Mentor Sessions |
| 7. September 24, 2023 | Week Two: “Trust-building in the Mentoring Process: Paul and Timothy.” |
| 8. September 28, 2023 | Week Three Mentor Sessions |
| 9. September 30, 2023 | Week Three:” Importance of Holy Listening in the Mentoring Process.” |
| 10. October 4, 2023 | Week Four Mentor Sessions |
| 11. October 7, 2023 | Week Four: “Discerning the Call of God as a Call to Obedience.” Both groups completed the post-test survey. |

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In this chapter, a review of various Old and New Testament scriptures and the implications for mentoring in the church will be assessed. From the beginning, mentoring has been viewed by the community of faith as a vital means for instructing the next generation in the knowledge and worship of God. Biblical evidence suggests that mentoring was a way of life in the Israelite community and in the early church. Mentoring has proven to be a biblically based methodology for developing spiritual formation and discipleship.

Introduction to Biblical Mentoring

The Bible provides many examples of mentoring as a necessary function in the church setting. There, mentoring assumes the responsibility of leadership for others in helping them discern their calling from God and leading them into obedience to the call. As well stated by Jim McConnell in *The Topos of Divine Testimony*,

Jesus is once again sanctioned through divine testimony, this time through a divine voice at the time of his transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). This is significant, as Jesus has just told his disciples of his impending arrest, death, and resurrection (Luke 9:22). The divine testimony therefore serves specifically as a divine command ordering the disciples to pay attention to what Jesus is saying. This then becomes a question in the auditor's mind, 'Will the disciples indeed be obedient and faithful?' For the most part, the question will be answered negatively until the end of the Gospel. Luke 6:40 can be considered a divine imperative to be obedient and teachable.¹⁰

Modern research has revealed in many cases that younger adults are desirable for the opportunity to receive advice from older people with similar life experiences. But in many instances, there are no formal structures in place that can create a culture where mentoring and intergenerational understanding of preferences and values can take place. Neither is there an understanding or appreciation for the role of mentoring in the spiritual growth and transformation process. The theological rationale for training a small group of senior adults

¹⁰ James R. McConnell, *The Topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 121-124.

in mentoring young adult leaders to the understanding of biblical mentoring is representative in the biblical narrative.

In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 34, Moses mentors Joshua as his servant to become one of the best trained and qualified leaders for the people of Israel and to be strong and bold in leading them to the Promised Land. In the New Testament, Jesus trained his disciples to make and mentor other disciples to enter a relationship of trust and obedience to God. Paul gives directions to a younger Timothy on how to invest that which has been invested in him into the lives of other faithful people, who would be able to teach (mentor) others.

Mentoring in the Old Testament

The following pages will discuss relevant examples of mentoring in the Old Testament. These would be based on the mentoring relationships that existed between Moses and Joshua in Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 19:19-21. Psalms 145 will be examined from the context of praise and worship of God and the necessary instruction of the new and younger generations by older generations.

Deuteronomy 31:6-8

One of the more vivid examples of biblical mentoring can be found in Deuteronomy 31:6-8 where Moses transfers his leadership of the Israelite people on to Joshua his protégé.' F. E. Freeks says, "Mentoring is a form of teaching, and its approach is uncovered in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 3:28, 31:17, 34:8-12, 1 Kings 2:1-9, 2 Kings 2:9, 2 Chronicles 2:10-15, Exodus 4:228-31, 18:14-26, Numbers 27:18). God called Moses to transfer his mentoring spirit as the leader of Israel to Joshua. While the major versions of the Bible do not use the term

mentor, Moses demonstrates the attributes of a leader as Joshua's mentor."¹¹ D. C. Murchison and D. K. Thompson writing in *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* say, "Moses is paradigmatic of the Old Testament mentor. He was in relationship with his follower Joshua. Moses had a personal relationship with God, and he was successful in mentoring and encouraging Joshua to follow God's teachings, accomplish God's plans and move the people toward maturity in God."

Walter Brueggemann writing in *Mentoring in the Old Testament* writes the following concerning the relationship between Moses and Joshua:

The most interesting part of the relationship is the way in which Moses takes care to fully authorize Joshua to carry on his work. He changes Joshua's name; this gives him a new identity in the tradition (Numbers 13:16). He authorizes him to be shepherd of the sheep laying hands on him (Deuteronomy 34:9) which notes that Joshua is full of the spirit of wisdom, surely a result of having been with Moses for so long. The specificity of mentoring is evident in accent points. On the one hand, Moses charges Joshua with a mission to complete the transition into the new land. 'Be strong and bold, for you shall bring the Israelites into the land that I promised them, 'I will be with you.'¹²

Brueggemann continues by suggesting that the entire narrative process of this text demonstrates the way in which Joshua is prepared for his new leadership role. Through this relationship in which Joshua serves as a devoted assistant, he is functioning as an understudy into the vision of Moses as to what can be done and what must be done. By doing this, Moses is effectively molding Joshua for the difficulties and challenges which are certain to come.¹³

In further definition of the mentoring relationship between Moses and Joshua, R. D.

¹¹ Fazel E. Freeks, "Old Testament Figures as Possible Current Mentors: Exploratory Pastoral-Theological Reflection," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* Vol 30, No. 2, (2016): 236.

¹² Walter Brueggemann, "Mentoring in the Old Testament," in *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans's Publishing Company, 2018), 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

Moore makes the following observation:

There was a distinctive relationship between Moses and Joshua. Joshua learned a lot from Moses during his time as Israel's leader. Joshua observed many things that Moses did and how he approached God. Joshua was Moses' servant because he was the only one permitted to go up with Moses to the mountain of God (Exodus 24:13). Moses mentored Joshua, as first his servant, to become one of the best trained and qualified leaders for the people of Israel to lead them to the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 31:1-8, 34:9).¹⁴

In addition, Moore's remarks help to illustrate the importance of succession planning in the mentoring relationship to ensure organizational survival and in the case of Israel, the continuity of the covenant. Why is succession planning important and why is it necessary? Duane Garrett writing in *The Theology of Work Bible Commentary* makes the following observation:

Notice that Joshua is not a capricious, last-minute choice. Under the Lord's direction, Moses has long been preparing Joshua to succeed him. Very early on the Lord refers to Joshua as Moses' "assistant." Moses had noticed Joshua's military capability not long after the departure from Egypt, and over time delegated leadership of the army to him (Deut. 31:3). Moses observed that Joshua was able to see things from God's perspective and was willing to risk his own safety to stand up for what was right (Num. 14:5-10). Moses had trained Joshua in statecraft in the incident with the kings of the Amorites (Deut. 3:21). Praying to God on Joshua's behalf was an important element of Moses' training regimen (Deut. 3:28). By the time Joshua takes over from Moses, he is fully prepared for leadership, and the people are fully prepared to follow him (Deut. 34:9).¹⁵

Another important aspect of this passage centers on the assurance and encouragement Moses shares with Joshua and the people. It is the same assurances that Yahweh had given to Moses. Providing support and encouragement in the mentoring relationship for the journeys and battles of life that lay ahead are vital components of the spiritual mentoring relationship. Patrick Miller suggests that:

The community is first given divine assurance they will not be abandoned and that the Lord will go with them (v. 3). The first word is not an appointment of a new leader but the Lord's own assurance that the primary pattern of the past will continue. God will be there with you and will deliver you. Overcoming anxiety and fear are found first in the

¹⁴ R. D. Moore, "The Prophet as Mentor: A Crucial Facet of the Biblical Presentations of Moses, Elijah, and Isaiah," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* vol 15, No. 2 (2007): 155.

¹⁵ Duane Garrett, "Genesis Through Deuteronomy," in *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, vol 1, (Cambridge, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), 184.

realization of the Lord's powerful presence with the people. Where the sense of the presence of God in the ongoing life of the people is real, fear about what will happen to us, can be set aside.¹⁶

It can be noted that the sharing of mentoring resources from Moses to Joshua was a necessary component for the continuation of the covenant relationship with Yahweh and the survivability of the Israelite community. Moses exhorts Joshua and the Israelite community in two instances to "be strong and bold" (31:6-7).¹⁷ The community of faith could take confidence and assurance in knowing that God's presence would be with new leadership in carrying out the responsibilities that lay ahead. Charles Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison conclude that "God through the relationship between Moses and Joshua had a strategy for the continuation of his cause. God had guided Moses in leading his people out of Egypt and Moses was intentional in his selection of Joshua to lead Israel into the promised land. At the command of God, Joshua had already been ordained by Moses before Eleazar and the congregation as the next leader of Israel."¹⁸

Pfeiffer and Harrington conclude further:

In Deuteronomy 31:6-8, we can note that the emphasis is on the importance of conquering one's personal fears before being able to conquer or possess, in the case of Joshua and Israel, it was the land promised to them by Yahweh. Moses was preparing Joshua and Israel to enter a land of uncertainty, a land that was occupied by a tremendous enemy. God had already promised the land to Israel (Deuteronomy 1:8) and he had pronounced judgment upon the Canaanites who were occupying the land (Deuteronomy 7:2). Moses' emphasis on fearlessness and courage are in part due to the previous generation's refusal to enter the land because of fear. Opportunity now knocks for Joshua and the Israelites after forty years of wilderness wandering. If change and transformation were to take place strength and courage were needed and not fear or dread of confrontation. In the same manner, modern-day readers can be encouraged and empowered to seize spiritual opportunities without being afraid of the arrows that fly by day or the terror that walks in the night.¹⁹

¹⁶ Patrick Miller, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, vol 10, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 217.

¹⁷ All scripture will be from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁸ Charles Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison, The Book of Joshua in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, vol 1, (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1962), 207.

¹⁹ Ibid, 208.

John Mallison would conclude that “permeating all our mentoring will be a spirit of encouragement. The equipping of leaders is one of our prime tasks and is never-ending. Indeed, it is one of the main keys to growing the kingdom of God. We all affirm every sincere effort to bring people to God. Even when we must be firm, it will be with grace so that our mentees are always left with hope.”²⁰

Moses’ exhortation to Joshua and Israel to be courageous and fearless in the face of oppositional forces and realities continued an established model of existence for Israel based on Yahweh’s continual presence and provision. Moses both modeled and taught the behavior he sought and expected Joshua to exhibit. In this relationship, I see there are five dynamics of spiritual mentoring on display: attraction, relationship, accountability, teachability, and empowerment. Moses had many opportunities to develop a close relationship with Joshua. Joshua was accountable to Moses in the same manner as Moses had been accountable to Yahweh. Joshua was teachable and reachable. Through his own modeling and instruction of Yahweh’s commands, Moses was able to empower Joshua with the necessary resources to ensure his and Israel’s success. It is a model that should be emulated by future generations of mentors and mentees.

1 Kings 19:19-21

Another compelling example of biblical mentoring can be found in the 1 Kings 19:19-21 when Elijah throws his mantle, symbolic of his prophetic office, upon the young Elisha. Steven Halloway says that in this narrative, “Elijah now carries out his assignment by finding Elisha, a young farmer of substance, throws on him his own hairy mantle, thought to be invested with great power. Elisha correctly recognizes that this is a call to service and ask

²⁰ Mallison, 14.

permission to take leave of his parents.”²¹ Walter Brueggemann suggests that “the narrative encounter between Elijah and Elisha can be further illustrated by the three-fold use of the term ‘follow,’ (*regel*) in verse twenty. Elisha becomes Elijah’s aide (mentee), like Moses and Joshua. Elijah gives no instruction or command. ‘Follow’ surely means to be in the company of and under the instruction (mentoring) of Elijah.”²²

The use of the word ‘follow’ is thematic throughout the Bible. Jesus tells all to “take up your cross and follow me” (Matthew 8:22). Elisha tells Elijah, ‘I will follow you.’ If one wishes to become a disciple of Jesus, one must be willing to forsake all and to become a daily cross-bearers. William Nicolls adds:

Elijah found him in the heritage of his fathers, plowing the rich level land with twelve yokes of oxen. Eleven were with his servants, and he himself guided the twelfth. Elijah must have felt the youth would have to make a great sacrifice, if he left all this, father and mother and home and lands to become the disciple (attendant) of a wild, wandering, and persecuted prophet. He would say nothing to him. He merely left the high road and passed over unto him as he plowed his fields. Reaching him he took of his shaggy garment of skin, which, in imitation of him, becomes in after years the normal garb of prophets, and flings it over Elisha’s shoulders. This apparently was all the anointing requisite, such as come from the Spirit of God. The act had a two-fold symbolism: it meant that adoption of Elisha by Elijah to be his ‘mantle-kind,’ his ‘spiritual son, his mantle and it must have been a distinct call to the prophetic office.”²³

In addition, 1 Kings 19:19-21 helps to demonstrate the importance of mentoring as a methodology for the continuance of the teachings of Yahweh and the prophetic office. Elijah’s action in the text help to illustrate the confidence and assurance that a younger person was ready

²¹ Steven Holloway, “1 Kings,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 69-87.

²² Walter Brueggemann, “1 Kings,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*, vol 2, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 928.

²³ William Nicolls, 1 Kings,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: Zondervan Publishers, 1998), 927.

to assume the new office. While not obvious in 1 Kings 19:19-21, but however in other texts such as 2 Kings 2:1-12, it is apparent that Elijah spent a considerable amount of time mentoring Elisha and preparing him for his new assignment. Charles Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison state the following:

Elijah cast his mantle over him, a symbolic act of signifying that the power and authority of Elijah, the retiring prophet, were about to rest upon the younger prophet. We may wonder at Elijah's tough response, 'Go back again! What have I done to you, to a seemingly reasonable request until we recall that oriental farewells can sometime occupy days and even weeks. The final command given on Horeb to Elijah was now completed. It provided for the continuation of the prophetic ministry in the person of Elisha, son of Shaphat, after the assumption of Elijah.²⁴

While the mentoring relationship between Elijah and Elisha is a brief one in comparison to others that have been forged over a longer period, the principles of commitment and trust in a mentoring relationships are apparent. This level of commitment continues until the final episode of Elijah's life (2 Kings 2: 1-12). Brueggemann further elaborates on this level of commitment when he states the following:

In this narrative, Elisha promises three times that 'I will not leave you' (2:2, 2:4, 2:9). He is totally committed to Elijah. He then asks from Elijah 'a double portion of your spirit' (2:9). We are not told that he received it until the next paragraph, when his companion observed his mighty act and drew the conclusion 'the spirit of Elijah rests (*nuwach*) on Elisha' (2:15). This is all accomplished in the narrative without any utterance by Elijah except his quite enigmatic statement about bequeathing his spirit to Elisha. Clearly Elijah has mentored Elisha by his presence, his courage, and his performance. By being so clearly committed to him, Elisha inherits his transformative capacity. The mentor has given his disciple a capacity to continue his subversive work which is detailed in the narrative that follows.²⁵

²⁴ Charles Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: The Southwestern Company, 1962), 386.

²⁵ Walter Brueggemann, "Mentoring in the Old Testament," in *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans's Publishing Company, 2018), 128.

In this passage we have both a preparation and an invitation. The invitation is synonymous to Jesus's invitation to all to 'come, follow me.' In his first encounter with Elijah, Elisha is willing to forsake all and follow Elijah. Elisha then slaughters his oxen, uses the wood for the roasting of the flesh and proceeds to share the meal with others in the community. Then he goes with Elijah as his assistant (19:21).

Furthermore, the level of Elisha's commitment was so great that in 2 Kings 2:6-7, when Elijah told Elisha to "Stay here, for the Lord has told me to go to the Jordan River," Elisha replies, "I will never leave you," so they went together. Many biblical scholars contend Elisha served Elijah for six years before he was ushered into leaving. Elijah told Elisha on three occasions to 'stay behind' but each time his loyal assistant refused to leave his mentor. While the other prophets looked on from a distance, Elisha wanted to get a clear picture of what God was about to do in his mentor's life. Consequently, those observing from a distance did not receive a double portion, only Elisha who had persevered through it all.

In the text, Elijah places the cloak on Elisha's shoulder but his time to officially assume the mantle of the prophet had not arrived. Only after Elisha had proven himself to be an accountable mentee did Elijah leave him his cloak as symbolic of the transfer of the prophetic office. It was now time for the younger man to fulfill the divine mandate for his own life. The impact that Elijah had on Elisha can be evidenced by Elisha's mourning at Elijah's departure. Elisha disappears from the scene until Elijah is translated into heaven.

J. Gordon Miller suggests that two facts stand out in the dialogue between Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kings 2:

First, the prophets call Elijah, Elisha's mentor, implying that Elisha is a servant to Elijah. Secondly, Elisha is closely related to his mentor and cannot stand the thought of breaking

that relationship. Accountability and friendship build the strongest of mentoring relationships. Elisha had been able to walk along with and beside Elijah and to view his ministry. Elijah's example is a reminder to mentors everywhere that spiritual growth is not a routine event. In 2 Kings, Elijah responds to Elisha's request for a double portion of his spirit. 'If you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not' (2:10). The prophet's spirit gave other prophets the power to prophecy the mind and feelings of God. Elisha asks for the power to be God's messenger.²⁶

In summation, one of the greatest benefits derived from an effective mentoring relationship is the empowering of a mentee through sharing spiritual resources. Devotion and friendship combine with a desire to minister in the power of God's Spirit to build a great mentored follower. Accountability and faithfulness also helped to transform Elisha into a great mentor for the prophetic community.

Psalms 145:4

There is general agreement among Christians that no other book of the Bible is as cherished and inspiring than the Book of Psalms. Psalms has been an integral part of the worship of the church throughout its history. For example, Psalms 23 is read more often at funerals than any other individual passage of scripture. It has personally been a source of comfort and encouragement throughout my ministry. The imagery and eloquence of the Psalms have enabled many a believer to navigate through times of difficulty and challenge.

The present text speaks of the importance of each generation's responsibility to instruct (mentor) the next generation. Each generation has the duty of commending the works of God to the next generation continually. This task of instructing the next generation is to be accomplished not only in words but also by example (modeling). One distinct lesson from this passage of scripture is that mentorship does not work only through the communication of words,

²⁶ J. Gordon Miller, *Biblical Perspectives on Aging: God and the Elderly 2nd Ed.* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2008), 24-25.

but the more successful mentors are those who lead by example. Those mentors who engage themselves in the most effective mentoring practices are the ones who are the most influential. In some circles, what is being ascribed to Psalms 145:4 is what can be called ‘parental mentoring.’ Certainly, for me personally, my mother has been the greatest mentor and influencer in my life who both taught and modeled godly behavior.

Warren Wiersbe suggests:

The overall theme of this text is that God is king. The Psalmist pledges lifelong commitment to the praise of God for his self-revelation. In verse three, the greatness of God’s power and greatness can be compared to modern man’s awe of our vast universe. The soloist in this Song of David understands the importance of handing down freshly to each generation of his people what has been handed down to him. What is to be accounted for is God’s regal work in creation and redemption. Continuing this heritage and tradition of worship and praise of God is obligatory in nature.²⁷

Regarding the superscription of Psalms 145 as a psalm of praise (*tehillah*), Tucker and Grant argue, “This superscription is unique to this Psalm. Its appearance in verse one creates an ‘*inclusio*’ with the final verse where the word appears once more, ‘the praise (*tehillah*) of the Lord.’ The kingship of Yahweh remains the dominant theme throughout the Psalms and constitutes a theological claim that merits the praise of the people.”²⁸

According to Dennis Tucker and James A. Grant:

Psalms 145:4 is part of the acrostic structure of all of Psalms 145. This particular structure appears to have been chosen by the author to appropriate his theological intentions. He takes the time to highlight the comprehensive nature of the poem and its claims concerning the kingship of God. This capricious nature of Psalms 145 is symbolized by the repeated use of the word ‘all’ (*koe*). It is repeated seventeen times and refers to God and to God’s actions (10, 13a, 13d, 17). This poem celebrates all that God has done and continues to do for all his people. From beginning to end, this psalm celebrates Yahweh God as divine king, and the repeated reference to “all” serves to amplify that claim. “The Lord is good to all” (145:9). ‘All your works shall give thanks to you’ (145:10).²⁹

²⁷ Warren Wiersbe, “Old Testament, the Psalms,” in *Wiersbe Bible Commentary* (Colorado Springs: David Cook Publishers, 2007), 1046.

²⁸ W. Dennis Tucker and James A. Grant, “Psalms,” in *The New International Version Application Commentary*, vol 2. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Publishers, 2008), 870-871.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 870-871.

Tucker and Grant further suggest,

In addition to the repeated use of ‘all,’ terms associated with praise appear with continuous regularity in Psalms 145. The frequency of these terms appearing in the first half of the poem is stunning. Verses 1b, 2a/b, 3a, 4a/b, 5b, 6a/b, 7a/b, 10a/b, 11a/b, and 12a, all contain vocabulary of praise. The theme also reappears twice in the final verse of Psalms 145 (21a/b). The poet employs a variety of Hebrew terms in the eighteen occasions, each referring to ‘praising, speaking, or singing praise.’ Those involved in the act of praising and confessing included ‘the generations.’³⁰

Psalms 145:4-9, speaks of the ceaseless teachings about God that are derived from the gracious instruction of the new and younger generations by older generations. Kenneth Barker and R. Kohlenberger suggest,

This process of transmitting God’s saving grace and power from one generation (*dowr*) to another is to be narrative concerning God’s mighty acts (*alilah*) and God’s power of deliverance. The works of God are reflective of his might, his glory, and his awesomeness, his perfection, his compassion. ‘He is gracious and compassionate; he is slow to anger and rich in love’ (Joel 2:13). God’s kingship is magnificent and beneficent and magnifies his acts of redemption. He is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.³¹

Walter Brueggeman writing in *The Psalms, The Life of Faith*, makes the following assertions regarding Psalms 105 and Psalms 145:4-6:

When one becomes specific, God’s wondrous acts are of two kinds. First, these acts are God’s historical interventions whereby this covenanted community of promise comes to exist. That is the subject of Psalms 105. Israel recites its memory of how it came to be, a gift from this sovereign You. Second, Yahweh govern the world, creation, to bring light out of darkness, life out of chaos, and food in the face of hunger. That is the subject of Psalms 145:4-6. These two themes, Israel’s miraculous life and creation’s miraculous function, together constitute God’ wondrous deeds. The term ‘wondrous’ (*niplaot*) might be variously rendered as ‘impossible,’ ‘difficulty,’ ‘miraculous,’ or ‘inexplicable.’ Yahweh is known and is named as one who commits creative, healing, and transformative acts.³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Kenneth Barker, Jr., and R. Kohlenberger, III, “Old Testament,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2001), 832.

³² Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms, and the Life of Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 49.

In summation, every generation of God's people is indebted to the next. Every generation of believers must leave its mark on the community of faith. Psalms 145:4 reminds us of the necessity to praise God continually and to entrust this tradition of the praise of Yahweh to each succeeding generation. God's works of goodness and his acts of grace are cause for our continual praise and worship. His glory and majesty are to be recognized and through praise and worship, communicated from generation to generation.

Mentoring in the New Testament

In this section, several New Testament scriptures from both the Gospels and the letters of Paul will be reviewed. These selected scriptures will be examined in the context of the call of God to obedience, reflection on biblical mentoring and New Testament images of the church as the basis for mentoring.

In the tradition of early Church Fathers, we notice Ambrose passing on to Augustine a great spiritual heritage of obedience to God and adherence to God's word. From one of Augustine's *Sermon*, it can be observed: "Obedience as a gospel virtue consists in listening and doing the will of God, in imitation of the Lord Jesus. 'Look at your Lord.' 'Look at your heart.' 'Look at the Model of your life.' 'Contemplate your Redeemer, Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass by me.' In this way, he shows his human will but immediately he brings down his resistance to obedience. 'However, not my will but yours be done.' In the same way, ought you to obey the voice of God."³³

I concur with the idea that in conjunction with discerning and answering the call of God

³³ Augustinian Australians, "Life of Augustine," *Augnet*, 2013, accessed January 6, 2024. www.augnet.org/in/orderofAugustine/community/3111-obedience.

is the command to be obedient to that call. I believe that if modern church leaders are willing to participate in the biblical mentoring process, they will grow in the life-long journey of spiritual formation, development, and discipleship, and in their relationship of trust, obedience, and the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

John Mallison in, *Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders*, suggests, “Mentoring has always been a part of the fabric of society. Parents mentor their children while leaders mentor other leaders. Mentoring is a recent term, especially in Christian circles, but what it seeks to describe has been the focus of the Christian community since its inception.”³⁴

Mallison continues, “Fundamental to the mission of God for the church is the teaching and instructing of the next generation in the understanding of divine truth through encouragement and sound instruction based on the word of God. Jesus with his disciples provides for us the prime mentoring model. Mentoring is a critical component of the overall process of disciple-making. In Matthew 18:19-20 the ‘Great Commission,’ disciple-making is what Jesus commands his disciples to do.”³⁵

I agree with Mallison that many local church congregations need to recapture the basics of sound biblical teaching, disciplining, and spiritual formation. I believe in many instances the teaching moments in the church have not had equal footing with the preaching moment. As one can see with Jesus, as our model, teaching and preaching are vitally important and necessary. Mentoring is a function of teaching.

³⁴ Mallison, 18.

³⁵ Ibid., 19.

Furthermore, Jim Putnam and Booby Harrington suggest, “Entering into relationships to help people trust and follow Jesus includes the full process from conversion to multiplication. Biblical disciple-making was the original intent of Jesus when he gave this command.”³⁶

Therefore, an important fact for the church to consider today is that mentoring is a biblically based methodology and practice that is a vital component of the overall missional process of spiritual formation and discipleship. We are reminded in the Gospels that “Jesus went throughout all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23).³⁷ While preaching is principal in communicating the gospel, and “teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20a), mentoring is equally important to one’s spiritual development and transformation and is necessary. The principles of mentoring can be useful in helping to address the lack of teaching through one-on-one instruction and nurturing.

No one would deny that a New Testament perspective on the church, as a community and as image-bearers of Christ, are wounded and flawed, and as the children of God, we are a long way from home. However, we have the grace, hope, and promises of God. Our God-given vision is about possibilities, what may be, not what is. As the people of God, we need to be more greatly locked into this vision. It is about realities that can be visualized and apprehended by faith. The good news is that life can begin again. God’s call is to actualize through the Spirit that which is already within us, Christ, the new creation, as Paul says, “So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation, everything old has passed away, see, everything has become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). To that end, we learn from the wise from the past, “Two are better than one,

³⁶ Jim Putnam and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift: Five Steps to Help Your Church Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Nashville: Zondervan Press, 2017), 13.

³⁷ All Scripture is from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Reflections on Biblical Mentoring

The following will focus on an examination of the role of mentoring within the community of faith, the origin of the term “mentor,” and how the word has been used in several modern Bible paraphrases. In addition, a review of how the practice of mentoring has impacted the Christian community will be assessed.

Mallison asserts that, “Mentoring was a way of life in Bible times. Some of the more prominent relationships were Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha, David and Jonathan, and Paul and Timothy. Jesus with his disciples provides our prime mentoring model.”³⁸ Christian mentoring is a relationship that typically takes place within the context of the word of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit, who is the master teacher and who “teaches us all things.” Mallison concludes, “What mentoring seeks to describe has been the focus of the Christian community from its beginning. Paul sums it up well in his letters to Timothy and Titus. It involves developing disciples through encouragement and sound instruction based on God’s word (Titus 2:6, 15) and the formation of leaders (2 Timothy 2:2).”³⁹

The roles of a mentor may change over time and may even overlap with one another. Important roles of a Christian mentor involve coaching, counseling, disciplining, teaching, spiritually guiding, modeling, and encouraging. Examples of these roles can be seen in various biblical texts. “To *equip* the saints for the work of ministry, for *building up* the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12); “It is he whom we *proclaim*, warning everyone and *teaching* everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone matures in Christ” (Colossians 1:28); “Anxiety weighs

³⁸ Mallison, 42.

³⁹ Ibid., 42.

down the human heart, but a good word *cheers* it up; The righteous gives *good advice* to friends” (Proverbs 12:”25-26); and as Paul says, “we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and *encourage* you for the sake of your faith” (1 Thessalonians 3:2-23).

Jan M. Bremmer helps with the understanding that a key to how mentoring occurs within the context of the community of faith is to examine the origin of the word *mentor*. The origin of the term *mentor* is associated with the time of Homer, in whose ‘Odyssey’ mentor is the trusted friend of Odysseus who is left in charge of the household during Odysseus’ absence. The French (1749) and English (1750) usages of the word *mentor* are derived from the original Greek word ‘*mentopas*’ going back through Latin to a Greek name that becomes a common noun meaning ‘*wise counselor*.’⁴⁰

An example of this can be found in Romans 11:34 in the Common English Bible (CEB) where the word *mentor* instead of *counselor* is used. “Who has known the Lord’s mind? Or who has been his *mentor*.” Another example can be found in the Voice (VOICE) Bible in Acts 8:31, where the word ‘*mentor*’ is used instead of ‘*guide*’ as in ‘*guidance counselor*.’ As it reads, “The Ethiopian said: ‘How can I understand it unless I have a mentor?’ Then he invited Philip to sit in the chariot.” Bremmer concludes, “Mentor is an appropriate name for such a person (counselor) because it meant ‘*advisor*’ in Greek and came from the Indo-European root word ‘*men*’ meaning ‘to think.’”⁴¹

One of the many benefits of counseling is to inspire and to cause one to think. Jethro both inspired Moses and caused him to think about the alternatives before him and to make a wise decision. In a mentoring relationship, a good mentor inspires and advises one to think about choices and consequences. There is a sense in which this is what God does for us continuously. “The counsel (mentoring) of the Lord stands forever” (Psalms 33:11). God is our ultimate

⁴⁰Jan M. Bremmer, *A Brief History of the Study of Greek Mythology*, ed. Ken Dowden and Neil Livingstone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 525-47.

⁴¹ Ibid., 525-47.

counselor, the *'Mighty Counselor.'* The verb 'counsel' in Psalms 33:11 means 'to give advice.'"⁴²

In a recent Lifeway Staff article, "Have a Mentor: Be a Mentor-The Biblical Model of Mentoring," the following is asserted, "According to our research, sixty-eight percent of church, and forty-five percent of unchurched young adults identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences was especially important. After considering these statistics, some conclusions were made. One conclusion was that young adults place heavy value on connecting with people who have more life experience than they do. Some would call this mentoring or cross-generational ministry. The bottom line is that they want to learn from someone else's experiences."⁴³ Connection in church life matters.

Further examination of the Jethro-Moses mentoring relationship can be found in Exodus 18:19 where Jethro advises and counsels Moses: "Now listen to me, I will give you counsel and God be with you." While Moses took heed to his father-in-law's counsel and advice, the writer of Proverbs laments the fact that, "I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors" (5:13). Vine, Unger, and White say, "The words 'teachers' and 'instructors' in the text are derived from the Hebrew word 'yara' which means 'to direct, instruct, lay and to teach.'"⁴⁴ The NRSV uses 'teachers and instructors' while the Message paraphrases 'mentors and teachers.' Whether teacher, instructor, or mentor, I see each as exemplary of a close relationship with another. A relationship in which mutual trust, spiritual formation, and discipleship can be fostered.

The continuation of the idea of mentor as counselor and advisor can be seen in the

⁴² W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr. "Old and New Testament Words," in *The Vines Complete Expository Dictionary*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 132.

⁴³ Lifeway Staff, "Have a Mentor: Be a Mentor-The Biblical Model of Mentoring," Lifeway, Lifeway Christian Resources, January 8, 2014, Accessed June 24, 2021, www.lifeway.com/articles/biblical-model-of-mentoring.

⁴⁴ Vine, Unger, and White, Jr., 132.

New Testament where Paul advises the young Timothy, “I am giving you these instructions, Timothy my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you so that by following them you may fight the good fight” (1Timothy 1:18).

In Greek, the noun ‘*sumboulos*’ is used to describe one who is a ‘counselor.’ As it reads, “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor” (Romans 11:34)? Noting again, in the Common English Bible (CEB), the word ‘counselor’ is translated ‘mentor.’ The verb ‘*bouleu*’ is used to describe the act of ‘taking counsel,’ or ‘to resolve’ a matter (Acts 5:33, 27:39). Another verb, ‘*sumbouleuo*’ is used in the active voice to describe one who ‘advises, counsels or gives counsel’ (John 18:14, Revelation 3:18).⁴⁵

In the church setting, and in taking on the responsibility of leading others into a deeper relationship in the understanding of God’s call, a mentor often assumes the role of teacher or instructor. For example, in 1 Timothy 3:2, we see the apostle Paul reminding Timothy that a *bishop*, ‘*episkopos*,’ or overseer, one who looks after the affairs of the church, should “be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt *teacher*.” In several modern translations, we can find instances where the translators used the word ‘mentor’ instead of ‘teacher’ or ‘instructor.’

Sue Edwards writing in *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor’s Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* makes the following observation regarding the mandate to teach younger women, “The Christian community has long valued mentoring as a means to pass on the faith from one generation to the next. Christian women in particular seek to carry out the mandate of Titus 2:2-3 and mentor in order to *teach* and train younger women in their midst. ‘Tell the older women to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. Likewise, tell the older woman to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to *teach* what is good.’”⁴⁶ I validate Edwards’ analysis based on how women's mentorship takes place in my own church setting.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Sue Edwards, *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor’s Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2014), 31.

Furthermore, in many instances, it appears the practice of mentoring was more visible in previous generations to a greater extent than it is today. Some of this may be attributed to the influence of modern culture upon the church, where everything is acceptable and there are no absolutes. I believe in many instances, there is a great need for the church to return and to recapture the biblical teachings and instructions found in Titus 2. It would have a tremendous impact on both the biological family and the church as a family.

Paul reminds the Galatians, “Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher” (Galatians 6:6). In the Voice Bible Translation, the word ‘teacher’ is rendered ‘mentor.’ In James 5:10-11 we read, “The prophets who declared the word of the Lord are your role models, my brothers, and sisters, for what it means to live patiently in the face of suffering” (VBT). In the *Message*, “Who spoke in the name of the Lord” is paraphrased into a single word “mentors.” Also, in Titus 2:4 where we read, “So that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,” *the Message* paraphrases, “That way they can mentor young women to love their husbands and children.” The word ‘teach’ is found in the preceding verse, “they are to teach what is good” (V. 3).

As Christians, we are to take heed of wise counsel and listen to one another so that we may all grow in Christ. In this process, the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide in learning and obeying God’s word. “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will *teach* you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).

Images of the Church as a Basis for Mentoring

In this section, an examination of the various images of the New Testament church as the basis for mentoring will be explored. Included in this examination is the image of the church as the body of Christ, as servant of God, as the family of God, and as the community of faith.

The Church as the Body of Christ

The church is the body of Christ for the fulfillment of his earthly ministry. The church as the body of Christ embraces the idea of unity of faith and purpose. As the body of Christ, the

church is a connection of interdependent parts. This image of the church as the body of Christ can be noted in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, "But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:18-21).

The image of the church is that of a human body equipped with many individual parts. This is a strong image in that it is a portrait of church unity with Christ, as illustrated by Paul's words, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers, all things have been created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:15-16).

Robert J. Banks in *Paul's Idea of Community: Spirit and Culture in Early House Churches* suggests, "The image of the church as the body of Christ is primarily a Pauline assertion as found in Ephesians 4:16. 'From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.'⁴⁷ Banks continues to assert, "Paul's description of the body of Christ is that of mutual dependence and service of members one with another within the body. Paul interjects the image of family into this description by suggesting that members should primarily regard one another as family. He encourages those in his churches to 'work, especially for those of the family of faith'⁴⁸.

I can see where one could perhaps examine Paul's use of the word 'knit' as relational, a description also found between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 18. It was love that 'knitted' their relationship, 'soul to soul.' One can also understand this imagery as descriptive of family, as many pieces of yarn that are knitted together to make one piece.

⁴⁷ Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: Spirit and Culture in Early House Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Publishing, 2020), 43.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 45.

Mentoring has proven to be an excellent methodology for ‘knitting together’ older and younger persons in trusting, caring, encouraging, and spiritually formative relationships. Mentor and mentee must be-in-agreement, knit together, in the direction and shape their relationship will seek to evolve.

Robert Banks adds,

In addition to ‘*oikeioi*,’ Paul uses several terms to refer to the Christian community. For example, ‘*oikonomos*’ (steward), which he uses of himself and other apostles, has its origins in the one who looked out after a household’s business affairs. This is similar to the origin of the word ‘Mentor’ who as the wise and trusted friend of Ulysses was the one that was left as the steward and guardian of his household while he fought for ten years in the Trojan War (Ephesians 2:18-19). Paul also uses ‘*doulos*,’ (slave) and ‘*hyperetes*,’ (servant) to describe the type of behavior that should govern the relationship between Christians in the same manner as his own behavior toward them (1 Corinthians 4:1). However, Paul’s use of the word ‘*adelphoi*,’ (brethren) is his favorite. It can be found 120 times in Paul’s Epistles. It is similar to or modern use of the word ‘*guys*’ that is often used to refer to both males and females. Paul uses ‘*adelphoi*’ to clearly express the relationship that exists between Christians.⁴⁹

I believe concludingly that Paul’s use of family imagery in describing the church body could be traced back to Deuteronomy where the family was responsible for the teaching and instruction of children. Families are inherently biologically connected, but for Paul there is a spiritual family of which we are part of, and the mechanisms of the biological family dynamic can be paralleled. Each family member bears a certain responsibility for the other, to the extent possible. We are born into another family as believers, and it is through mentoring that the commandments and teachings of God can be communicated to the next generation. The difficulty is in creating a spiritual family dynamic that can function as the members of our biological bodies function. While mentoring is not a ‘cure-all,’ it has proven to be an effective tool in the building up and edifying of the body, the family of believers.

The Church as Community

J. Robert Clinton in *Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, asserts,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.

The image of the church as both a community of faith and a community of believers implies there is something in common. A common faith and unity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “We declare to you that we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). This fellowship of community makes sharing and communicating with one another as *‘koinonia.’* The primary components of *‘koinonia’* are unity and love for one another. The Church is a community with one another and love for one another.⁵⁰

Clinton continues, “In a real sense, the church is a community where members are engaged in spiritual formation. Biblical mentoring also concerns itself with making the most of God’s grace by helping one another to recognize and respond to God’s call to serve him through the gifts fruits, and graces imparted by the Holy Spirit. Paul encourages Timothy not only to enable others but to raise up leaders.”⁵¹ Clinton cites Paul’s words, “And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrusts to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 Timothy 2:2).⁵²

Clinton adds, “It is within the confines of a church community where one is able to find their purpose and calling in life. Spiritual formation occurs in the community and allows a member to both carry and be carried. The community’s lifeline is that of acceptance and gratitude where members are nurtured and in turn, are nurturing. The church is the place where communications and fellowship can take place in multiple forms.”⁵³

I believe that the church as a community is representative of the work of Christ in the world, his hands, his feet, his body, an extension of his incarnation. Paul uses the metaphor of ‘ambassadors for Christ’ in the world as his ministers in the ministry of reconciliation. Paul writes, “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat

⁵⁰ J. Robert Clinton, *Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 1992), 41.

⁵¹ Ibid., 42.

⁵² Ibid., 43.

⁵³ Ibid.

you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). I further believe that as ambassadors for Christ, we are to carry out the mission of God for his church. The mission of God for the church includes the teaching and instructing of future generations in the ways and attributes of God. Mentoring relationships can help foster and create nurturing and caring relationships that are conducive to a mutual learning and spiritually formative environment.

With Julie Gorman, in *Community That is Christian: A Handbook on Small Group*, I endorse the communal role of mutual learning,

True community arises out of a realization that God has placed us and held us together as he wants. This community is not because we are so likable or because we share in a common task or bring special abilities to the group. God reveals himself in the world. The community becomes God’s nurturing, caring, revealing, supportive means of displaying himself as a personal, relational being in our culture. Living in community requires envisioning and cultivating responses of mutuality and service.⁵⁴

The Church as Family

The idea of the church as the family of God can be found in the Old Testament narrative, where Israel is referred to as ‘the house of God,’ or as the ‘family of God.’ A nation grown from the family of Jacob and nurtured through the same. God is spoken of in the Old Testament as Father of the house of Israel: “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting” (Isaiah 5:7a); and “He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God” (Psalms 98:3). God is Father to all who believe in Him.

C. E Gunton, in *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*, observes the following, “The family, ‘*patria*,’ is a New Testament word used to describe relationships. ‘From whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name’ (Ephesians 3:15) The word ‘*patria*’ is generally used to describe the people who are spiritually connected to God. He is Father and all believers are his children.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Julie Gorman, *Community That is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 14.

⁵⁵ Colin E. Gunton, *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*, (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, Ltd., 1989), 123.

Gunton continues,

God as Creator is the one who both makes men holy and through whom men are made holy into the family of God. The author of Hebrews says, ‘It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified, all have one Father’ (Hebrews 2:10-11) and ‘Christ, however, was faithful over God’s house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm to the confidence and the pride that belongs to hope’” (Hebrews 3:6).⁵⁶

I endorse Collin Gunton’s conclusion, “The church as a family provides the environment for spiritual development and transformation. The church is the place where the kinship, priesthood, and prophetic work of Jesus is appropriated.”⁵⁷

I believe that underlining the notion of the church as family is an understanding of a sharing of faith and life together. The church as the family can also be descriptive of the disciplining (teaching) and shepherding (nurturing) that leads to a deeper faith and trust in God as Father. The church as a family in community is that agency that helps to encourage one another toward love for God and our fellow persons and charitable deeds.

Exploring further, Robert Banks states,

Paul’s terminology has its basis in the relationship that exists between Christ and God. In a unique sense, Jesus is God’s Son, and through his identification with and his actions on behalf of human beings, they are able to ‘receive adoption as children’ (Galatians 4:4-5, 1 Thessalonian 1:10). ‘God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts’ so that, along with Jesus, we are able to address God in the most intimate terms as Abba! Father!’” (Galatians 4:6). This means that we are ‘joint heirs’ with Christ in the promises and provisions of the Father. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14, KJV). We are Christ’s ‘brethren’ as it relates to our spiritual relationship with God as our Father and Jesus as the Son.⁵⁸

The metaphor of the family was an important one to Paul. Paralleling the household

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Robert J. Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community: Spirit and Culture in Early House Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Publishing, 2020), 44.

context of community gatherings, we have the use of household language to describe the relations between members. This is what the homes of its members provided as the most conducive atmosphere in which they could give expression to the bond they had in common. Banks further suggests, “The word, ‘*koinonia*,’ frequently mistranslated ‘fellowship’ occupies a large place in many popular discussions of Paul’s understanding of community. Paul uses the verb ‘*koinoneo*’ five times with the meaning either of ‘having a share’ in some common activity or of ‘making a contribution in a financial or other way. *Koinonia* itself occurs thirteen times as a form of participation in some common activity or object.”⁵⁹ It appears that Paul’s use of the word ‘*koinonia*’ places emphasis on member participation alongside one another in community and sharing relationships.

The Church as Servant

Banks identifies that the New Testament words ‘*doulos*’ and ‘*diakonos*’ are descriptive of the church as servant. ‘*Doulos*’ speaks of voluntary obligation. Paul states “I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification” (Romans 6:19).

Stanley Grenz, in *Theology for the Community of Christ* asserts, “As servants, members offer themselves for the care and well-being of the body. The concept of ‘steward’ (*oikoumous*), suggests a servant who administers a household. Luke 12:42- ‘And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time?’ The church as a servant is illustrative of living in someone else’s house.”⁶⁰

I endorse Grenz’s rendition, “The church exists as a servant to Christ in the world to

⁵⁹ Ibid., 124.

⁶⁰ Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 57.

carry out the ‘*missio deo*’ of Christ, to minister the word, the sacraments, and the temporal activities of the church.”⁶¹

The Trinity as an Example of Mentoring

In this section an exploration of the Trinity and the trinitarian relationship in comparison to the mentor-mentee and Holy Spirit relationship within the context of Christian community will be reviewed.

The image of the church that is most reflective of its character is that of the Trinity or Triune God. The three persons of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, speak and relate to one another. An example of this relationship can be seen in Genesis, “Then God said, Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; Then the Lord God said, ‘See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ (1:26, 3:22). However, not all scholars agree that this is a reference to the Trinity.

Ted Peters, in *God-The World’s Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era*, asserts, “An example of the interrelatedness of the Godhead can be seen in Matthew 3:16-17. ‘And when Jesus had been baptized, and just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’”⁶²

Peters further suggests, “The early church fathers through various creeds attempted to refine this notion. For example, the Nicene writers believed that God is a being that exists in a relationship, but it is an internal or immanent relationship within the divine reality itself. There is both sociality and community. The Father is ever generating the Son, and the Spirit is ever

⁶¹ Ibid., 57.

⁶² Ted Peters, *God-The World’s Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 128.

proceeding in a never-ending perichoresis,”⁶³ a view that underscores the need for interdependence as illustrated by mentoring.

Peter continues,

Perichoresis is a term that is descriptive of the sharing and expressing of the same essence. The three persons of the Trinity condition and permeate one another in what is called a ‘dynamic mutuality.’ The inner being of God-the immanent Trinity has a life of its own, principal to and independent of the creation of the world. Perichoresis is terminology that was first used by the early church fathers as an attempt to convey the relationship of God and humanity as partners in one body with several parts working in unity. It is further descriptive of three persons working in a community to create a common synergy. It implies the connection of things by causation. This type of relationship can be seen in the wisdom literature reference to bees and ants. For example, in Proverbs 30:25 we read, ‘The ants are a people without strength, yet they provide their food in the summer.’⁶⁴

The Trinity in its functionality is representative of the ideal life and community. Peters further asserts: “God expressed the church from the time of creation. The Triune God has expressed the element of community by the declaration ‘Let us.’ The love sought by the church community has already been expressed by the Trinity. God is the transcendent One who has become one within humanity in the person of Jesus Christ and through whose Spirit we and the whole cosmos are being brought.”⁶⁵

One may conclude that in the same manner as the Trinity is one, such should be the nature of our relationships in the body of Christ. There is one God, one Father, one Son, one baptism and one Holy Ghost. While we are many members, there is only one body. Indeed, the ultimate purpose of mentoring is to help bridge relationship gaps and increase our “oneness” as the church in community. Just as the Trinity functions as one, as the body of Christ, we are to function as one, as ‘co-laborers’ together with Christ in the mission of God for his church.

Dennis M. Doyle in *Communion Ecclesiology* observes the following, “God is in

⁶³ Ibid., 129.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 132.

relationship with himself, with the cosmos and with humanity. That is why we speak of the communion ecclesiology which focuses on relationships among the persons of the Trinity, human beings, and the church in particular. It is the relationship based on love that is to be shared in the community. To live in a Christian community is to share in the life and love of the three persons of God.”⁶⁶

Jesus and the Disciples as Prime Mentoring Example

Robert E. Coleman in *The Master Plan of Evangelism* asserts, “The relationship between Jesus and his disciples provides the only perfect model of mentoring from which to direct all other mentoring under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁷ For example, in Mark 3:13-14 reads, “He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him; And he appointed twelve, whom he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message.” Jesus appointed, selected, and chose the Twelve that they might be with him. He demonstrated to his disciples how to please the Father and to serve and honor him such that others would choose to do likewise.

I agree with Coleman because I see Jesus doing those things that are essential to an effective mentoring relationship. He modeled the same behavior he expected of his disciples. They were able to walk and talk with Jesus. He taught them to have the same relationship among themselves such as he and the father. Conceptually, mentoring is walking in a relationship with another for the learning of skills (disciple-making), developing an ability (evangelizing), and deepening one’s spiritual formation. I believe that radiating out of all Jesus did in mentoring his disciples was his demonstration of ‘*agape*’ love. The following verses from John’s Gospel highlight Jesus’ love in action: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you; These things I command

⁶⁶ Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 132.

⁶⁷ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revel Publishing, 2010), 27.

you, that ye love one another; By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples (mentees), if you have love, one for another” (John 15:16-17, 13:35, KJV).

The one who loves as Christ did is the one fit for evangelism. Coleman further asserts, “Christ’s evangelistic strategy was to train individuals that would impact the world after his departure. It all started with Jesus calling a few men to follow him. This revealed immediately the direction his evangelistic strategy would take. Men were to be his method of winning the world to God.”⁶⁸ Teachability, honesty, vulnerability, and compassion go a long way when reaching out to others in love.

In conclusion, there is a great deal to be learned from Jesus’ approach to mentoring his disciples. Jesus was intentional in the selection of his disciples. The church should also be intentional in its selection of those who will be chosen to lead and mentor others. Mentors and mentees should be teachable, honest, sincere, open about shortcomings and failures, and be willing to perhaps be ‘broken’ to be made over.

For the church to have an impact on the world today, there must be time allotted for the training and development of church leaders, I agree with Coleman as he elaborates, “Training leaders will require more concentration of time and talent on fewer people in the church while not neglecting the passion for the world. The church then is to follow the footsteps of Jesus, using his method of mentoring and discipleship to successfully impact the world.”⁶⁹

In the corporate world and in human resources, there is something known as ‘failure to train.’ Businesses and companies can be hit with large penalties if an event occurs and it is determined that the fault was a result of a failure to train. In conjunction with any training, the person trained must be able to transfer those skills into his or her job performance. The church has a responsibility to train each succeeding generation in the ways of God. The writer of Proverbs reminds us “To train up a child in the way he should go”

⁶⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

(22:6). Jesus reminds us to “teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have told you” (22:6). As we seek to mentor one another in the church, we should endeavor to allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our paths.

D. Michael Crow in *Multiplying Jesus’ Disciples* claims that “Jesus did not only call the Twelve to discipleship but also to mentoring based upon Christ’s call of the Twelve as recorded in Mark 3:13-15 and Luke 6:12-13.”⁷⁰ Crow mentions eight dynamics to the process of selecting the Twelve.

First, there were large groups that followed Jesus creating what is called wedged, follower-initiated discipleship. Secondly, Jesus spends an entire night in prayer seeking God diligently about who his mentees should be. The third dynamic of Jesus’ selection process in his mentoring methodology was personal affinity, followed by prayer. Fourth, Jesus initiated the call to mentorship, “when the day came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them (Luke 6:13). Fifth, the disciples accepted the invitation of Jesus. They were not forced into a mentor-mentee relationship. Sixth, as the Twelve responded to the call to mentorship, Jesus formalized this mentoring relationship. Specific individuals were selected and given specific roles and responsibilities. Seventh, an intensified relational network was the immediate context of mentoring. Jesus took the disciples everywhere with him. They were rarely alone from this point forward. The eighth and final part of the selection process was to send the disciples out at times to practice what he had taught them.”⁷¹

Crow believes Jesus’ proposal is about mentoring others. In his words, “Jesus approves them to be sent out to preach and exorcise demons. At times he sent them out two by two to minister, at other times they served with him, for example, in the feeding of the thousands. active ministry responsibility was the larger context for mentoring. Christ called the disciples to

⁷⁰ D. Michael Crow, “Multiplying Jesus Disciples: Designing a Reproducible Mentoring System-A Case Study,” *Missiology: An International Review* 35, no. 1 (2008): 106.

⁷¹ Ibid.

a journey of mentorship.”⁷²

Crow’s dynamics are critical for mentoring in today’s church. All believers should have a sense of calling in their lives that would create a ‘follower-initiated discipleship.’ Jesus simply asks that we ‘follow him.’ In addition, we too are to pray without ceasing, especially when we are selecting those who will lead others. Persons should not feel forced into entering mentoring relationships but should sense a calling to mentor. As with Jesus and his disciples, the first step in successful mentoring is forming a good friendship. Authentic friendships are sometimes hard to find, but when we do, we “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15, KJV). To me this is the process of growing in our relationship with Christ and with one another.

Mentoring and the Early Church Theologians

In this section a review of three early church theologians, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan, and Augustine, and their mentoring practices will be discussed. Each theologian’s model of mentoring and their significance within the community of faith will also be discussed.

Thomas Currie, writing in *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, suggests the following concerning some of the early church theologians:

Theologians and pastors depend upon friends. Not all mentors are friends and certainly not all friends are mentors. But the best mentors in the field of study and teaching and ministry are often those friends and peers who share in the joys and burdens of this work and who are able to suggest, question, and even inspire their colleagues. The list is long of pastors and theologians who recount their friendship with others as the source and strength of their own work. One thinks of the Cappadocian fathers, Basil, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus; or Augustine and his friends Alypius and Simplicianus; or Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon; or Calvin and Bucer and Fare and Beza; or more recently Karl Barth and his friend Eduard Thurneysen. Stanley Hauerwas even writes that the truth of Christian convictions cannot “be isolated from what is necessary to sustain friendships that are truthful.”⁷³

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Thomas W. Currie, in *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives: Theological-Pastoral Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2018), 35-42.

According to one of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's students, Ebergard Bethge, it is said, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer mentored in an underground theological school in Nazi Germany. He had composed a course of study and prayer that inspired his students to develop and nurture friendships and relationships within the group context and to discover spiritual resources within themselves which they had never previously suspected."⁷⁴ Thomas Currie identifies this as a key element in mentoring. "Theologians and pastors in this context, he writes, rendered years to being mentored and to mentoring others, learning to ask questions they had not considered important before, discovering questions that question their own firmly held certainties."⁷⁵

Cyprian of Carthage Mentoring Practices

E. Glenn Hinson makes the following observation of Cyprian of Carthage. "As a theologian, Cyprian cannot be ranked alongside his mentor Tertullian or his Eastern contemporary Origen, but he merits comment for his ecclesiastical leadership and views about the unity of the church."⁷⁶ After his installation as Bishop of Carthage in 248-249, he began to mentor his clergy by modeling the work of ministry and by inviting them to minister at increasing levels of responsibility which in turn led to their development as spiritual leaders. Cyprian desired to share and delegate the responsibility of ministry. He went beyond the simple involvement of the clergy in ministry by releasing them to do what was normally his work. Hinson further asserts, "Cyprian believed unity in the church would be achieved through the common bond of all the people, both clergy and laity, with the bishop. Like Ignatius of Antioch, Cyprian insisted that anyone who was not with the bishop was not in the church. Yet he never acted without consulting the community on important matters."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁶ E. Glenn Hinson, *The Early Church: Origins to the Dawn of the Middle Ages* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 193.42

⁷⁷ Ibid., 194.

Edward L. Smither suggests, “The evidence that Cyprian delegated every role as Bishop to the presbyter is an example of his releasing them to minister. Through releasing his clergy to minister with authority and responsibility, Cyprian effectively mentored them in their overall development as spiritual leaders. The evidence of Cyprian’s relationship and dealings with his clergy in Carthage and beyond support the claim that he was purposely involved in mentoring and developing spiritual leaders.”⁷⁸

The forms of mentoring which could be observed in Cyprian’s life include the involvement of the clergy, participation in church councils, resourcing the clergy through letters and books, and through discipling the clergy⁷⁹. Smither further contends, “Cyprian consistently mentored and led his men in the context of a group. Though disciplined initially by Caecilian, he continued to be a disciple and learner throughout his life and ministry. While modeling the work of ministry, he deliberately involved his clergy in ministry with increasing levels of responsibility. Cyprian influenced church councils and had a mentoring influence on the African bishops.”⁸⁰

It can be noted here that the mentoring experience with my former pastor shares some of the same aspects as those displayed in the life of Cyprian and his mentees. My pastor continually allowed me to serve in various aspects of the church ministry until I was prepared for the diaconship. Prior to serving as a deacon, I had opportunity to serve as a layperson to serve in varying aspects of ministry such as music ministry, outreach missions, and church administration. In these areas of ministry was always an older and wise advisor available to assist me in the fulfillment of my various duties. Reflecting upon this time in my life, I can now fully recognize and appreciate the mentoring resources provided for me in my personal

⁷⁸ Edward L. Smither, *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville: Academic Press, 2008), 12-24.

⁷⁹ For an extensive treatment, see *Cyprian, The Complete Works of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, ed. Philip Campbell (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing and Manufacturing, 2013).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

spiritual formation.

Ambrose's Mentoring Practices

Ambrose was born in Treir (modern Germany). He as the son of a prefect and he received his liberal arts education, specializing in law. He was appointed as Governor of Aemitria-Ligueria in northern Italy in 370. He served as the Bishop of Milan until his death in 397. Smither concludes, "Ambrose's actions toward the clergy reveal an important quality of mentoring. In varying contexts, the following forms of mentoring have been noted in Ambrose. They include involvement of the clergy in ministry, participation in church councils, letters and books. Ambrose entrusted his clergy with responsibilities in some of the more basic tasks of ministry and in doing so, he mentored them toward their development as spiritual leaders."⁸¹ Furthermore, Smither notes,

As Ambrose sought to instill sound doctrine in the clergy, his influence with church councils was used as a form of mentoring the clergy toward the preferred results. About writing of letters, it was customary practice in Ambrose's day to have newly appointed bishops to write existing bishops announcing their ordination while making a declaration of orthodoxy. Ambrose enjoyed a mentoring influence over those who had worked with him in Milan, notably, Claterna, Verna, Piacenza, and Vercelli. 144"⁸²

It is evidenced that most Ambrose's mentoring letters were devoted to answering theological questions from the clergy.⁸³ Although he employed the services of a stenographer by the name of Paulinus, Ambrose wrote many of his books by his own hand. Smither suggests that "structured with precepts heavily supported by Scriptural exegesis and principles from the saints of Scripture, Ambrose's intent was to teach you, my children."⁸⁴

Ambrose's mentoring practices included the involvement of clergy in ministry, the

⁸¹ Ibid., 71-89.

⁸² Ibid., 230-239.

⁸³ For an extensive study, see Boniface Ramsey, *Ambrose* (Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 1997).

⁸⁴ Ibid., 190.

teaching and sharing of sound doctrine, participation in church councils and by resourcing clergy with letters and books. Ambrose's contention was that being a disciple was to be one who was imitated. He invited men to join in his work and he maintained a father-son relationship with many of his men.⁸⁵

Ambrose's involvement of clergy in ministry reminds me of how my former pastor purchased minister manuals for all his deacons and how he was intentional in including us in the pastoral ministries of the church. My pastor allowed us to grow and develop as ministers, not as deacons in the sense of occupying some ecclesiastical position but as ministers of the gospel. I recalled many years ago how he once during morning services asked all for all ministers in the congregation to stand. In response, only the licensed preachers stood up! It was a glaring demonstration of how misguided many are in some churches and how these churches have seemingly lost focus on their missional mandate while focusing on budgets and buildings. Regrettably, many in the church do not see themselves as ministers but as members. This type of thinking does not lend itself well to the "*Missio Dei*" of the church! However, In addition, it is not enough for the church to provide mentees with a lot of mentoring resources, but what is more important is that all believers need to have an adequate understanding of who Jesus is and a willingness and a devotion to communicate and to be a witness to this spiritual heritage from generation to generation.

In reflecting on personal mentoring experiences, I recall how my service in the pastoral ministries was greatly enhanced through observation of my pastor witnessing and modeling mentoring to others. An example of this was that while I had no previous formal training in conducting a funeral service, by observing my pastor and following his suggestion to read Herschel Hobbs Ministers Manual, enabled me to humbly conduct my first three funeral services.

Augustine's Mentoring Practices

⁸⁵ Ibid., 190.

Smither asserts, “When considering Augustine’s principles of mentoring, one must do so considering the early church model. By doing so, one may conclude that his principles of mentoring were consistent, through varying degrees, with this model.”⁸⁶ Augustine’s principles of mentoring included the group context, the mentor as a disciple, selection, nature of the mentor-disciple relationship, sound doctrine and modeling, and releasing and resourcing ministers. Smither contends, “Augustine’s legacy not only impacted the church in the generation following his death, but as well down to the present day. As a mentor of spiritual leaders, Augustine believed that it was important that the group (like Bonhoeffer) live together not just merely in proximity but through sharing common life. The group in the monastery was a model for the church. The church like the monastery could also be a community built on Christian friendship, having one heart and one mind.”⁸⁷

The concept of community life and life together is central to Augustine’s thought.⁸⁸ Smither further suggests:

Augustine’s predisposition with a kind of friendship that matures into a commitment to Trinitarian community within the context of the group is evidenced in his mentoring of spiritual leaders. He believed that life lived together, and spiritual progress were aided by the reality of Christian friendship. Augustine’s ministry of mentoring spiritual leaders was clearly characterized by the necessity of the group context. His idea of community which followed the rule of the apostles and actively served the needs of the church bore resemblance to the missionary band mentored by Paul as well as the *mathetai* who apprenticed under Jesus.⁸⁹

According to Smither, “For those who want to mentor spiritual leaders, especially those pursuing authenticity and longing to practice what they preach, Augustine’s ministry is an example of a fifth-century mentor for the twenty-first century. It is Augustine who said that a

⁸⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 127-132.

⁸⁸For further treatment, see Matthew Levering, *The Theology of Augustine: An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

minister should always be a student in the School of Christ, and the sweetness of it should excite us to learn while the necessities of charity should force us to teach.”⁹⁰

Reflections on the Call to Mentorship

In this section, a discussion of mentorship in the context of the call of God as a call to be an encourager, to be a trust-builder, to discern what holy listening is, and understanding the call of God as a call to obedience, will be the focus.

The Bible teaches us, “Where there is no counsel, the people fail; But in the multitude of counselors, there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). I believe this text helps to emphasize the importance of Godly advice and counseling in one’s spiritual development and transformation. Godly, biblical mentoring can play a key role in strengthening our relationships with God and with one another. Godly mentoring is a tool to help strengthen relationships within the community. Mentoring involves the ‘doing’ of ministry. As B. A. Williams suggests, “Throughout the history of the church, mentoring relationships have played a crucial role in developing and passing the faith from one generation to the next. Mentors not only help to clarify the call of God in the protégé’s lives but also develop the inner character and spiritual depth of other protégé.’ The people of God have always continued in this tradition by engaging in some form of mentoring to prepare godly servant-leaders for the community of their generation.”⁹¹ I agree with Williams that effective spiritual mentoring is essential in disciple-making and spiritual formation processes. However, its importance has perhaps been undervalued in many instances in the local church.

It appears that in the history of the church mentorship was a treasured endeavor. Williams continues, “Augustine in the fourth and fifth century Africa, Catherine of Siena in twelfth-century Italy, John Newton in the eighteenth-century England, and Dietrich

⁹⁰ Ibid., 225.

⁹¹ B. A. Williams, *The Porter’s Ribs: Mentoring for Pastor Formation* (Vancouver: Regents College Publishing, 2005), 189.

Bonhoeffer in twentieth-century Germany. As a result of the mentoring efforts of these men and women, each generation lived out the biblical truth that healthy, obedient congregations can produce in chain reaction daughter, grand-daughter, and great-granddaughter churches”⁹²

J. P. O’Connor adds, “In the context of Christianity, mentoring has been identified as a trident relationship between mentor, mentee, and the Holy Spirit, where the mentee can discern the already present action of God, intimacy with God, ultimate identity as a child of God and a unique voice for understanding responsibility.”⁹³ I agree with O’Connor in his description of mentoring as a trident relationship between mentor, mentee, and the Holy Spirit. This description reminds one of the Trinity and the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the supreme example of the relationship that should exist between believers in the community. Mentoring has proven to be a vital element in strengthening community.

The process of mentoring is a powerful motif for reflecting on the reasons for carrying out this methodology. First, teaching participants about the importance of encouragement in the mentoring process is necessary and can be done by pointing to examples such as that of Moses and Paul. Also, there is the necessity of trust-building in the mentor relationship which requires time and investment. Third, it is clear from scripture that holy listening is necessary to discern the voice of God as one mentors another. If one is going to be a good mentor, one must be attentive to the voice of God as was Jesus. “But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4b, KJV). Leaders need also to instruct participants about the importance of responding to the call of God as a call to obedience to his commands. We are called to both the hearing and the doing of his commands. These elements will be reflected further as follows.

The Call to Encouragement

In the closing chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses gives his final counsel to the Levitical priests, the Levites, and Joshua. The writer of Deuteronomy 31:6-7 reminds Joshua

⁹² Ibid., 189.

⁹³ J. P. O’Connor, *Reproducible Pastoral Training: Church Planting Guidelines from the Teachings of George Patterson* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2006), 317.

on two separate occasions to ‘be strong and of good courage.’ Does this text imply that it takes courage to serve God and to do his will, especially in challenging times?

Samuel Ngewa writing in the *Africa Bible Commentary* states:

Moses final words are addressed to the people (31:1-6), to the priests (31:9-13), and Joshua (31:7-8). He addresses Joshua specifically and he is told to ‘be strong and resolute (31:8, 23). This is an encouragement that is repeated several times (31:8, 23; Joshua 1:6-9, 18), suggesting the difficulty of the task he faced. His sense of confidence is the fact that God had granted them the land (31:7) and to be with him at all times (31:8). Christ made a similar promise to all believers when he commanded them for this task, which was not merely to occupy a country, but to go into all the world (Matthew 28:20).⁹⁴

All people need encouragement, but certainly young adult leaders do. They are trying to navigate the waters of life and explore the frontiers of uncertainty while pursuing a relationship with Christ Jesus.

Duane Garrett, in *The Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, states, “Any organization, be it a nation, a school, a church, or a business, will be in confusion if the matter of legitimate succession is unclear or unresolved.”⁹⁵ A mentoring plan that includes encouraging younger leaders to aspire for senior leadership roles can be a powerful tool in the local church’s spiritual toolbox.

Garrett continues, “Notice that Joshua is not a capricious, last-minute choice. Under the Lord’s direction, Moses has long been preparing Joshua to succeed him. As early as Deuteronomy 1:38, the Lord refers to Joshua as Moses’s assistant. Praying to God on Joshua’s behalf was an essential element of Moses’s training regimen. By the time Joshua takes over from Moses, he is fully prepared for leadership, and the people are fully prepared to follow him (Deuteronomy 31:9).”⁹⁶ Allowing young adult leaders to be trained in the spiritual disciplines

⁹⁴ Samuel Ngewa, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Africa Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: Zondervan Publishers, 2006), 209.

⁹⁵ Duane Garrett, “Romans Through Revelation,” in *The Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 28.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

through a mentoring ministry can be a source of encouragement and strength for their journey ahead.

Jeff Chapman, in *Helping Young Adults Discern Christian Self-Actualization Through the Work of Those Gone Before*, asserts:

The whole time Joshua had spent with Moses was time to converse with him, and often was the first to hear God's revelation to the people through Moses. After all those years, forty years in the wilderness as Moses's lieutenant, God deemed that Joshua was ready to take up the mantle of leading all the Israelites across the Jordan River into the promised land (Deuteronomy 31:7-8, 14, 23, 34:9). Joshua was ready because he knew the value of listening closely to the guidance of an older, wiser, more experienced person. The relationship between Moses and Joshua helps to demonstrate the validity and applicability of an older person's life wisdom to a younger person's success.⁹⁷

As the teaching sessions for this project were being developed, an older leader being an encourager to a younger leader was considered to be one of the key mentoring skills for training purposes. By understanding the role and importance of biblical encouragement in the mentoring relationship, Mentors in training would have an opportunity to engage in some real-world application of this mentoring skill during the time spent weekly with their assigned mentee.

'To encourage' comes from the same root word '*paraklete*,' which is used to describe the Holy Spirit. The Supreme Encourager is the Holy Spirit. When we encourage another, we share in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Why is encouragement such a principal factor in the mentoring process? In the words of Apostle Paul, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Throughout the Bible, we can see how the community of faith was instructed to encourage one another. Encouragement is necessary for our walk with the Lord. Jesus told his disciples that they would experience trouble in the world, but for them to 'take courage' in the fact that he had overcome the world (John 16:33b). If encouragement was important to Jesus, it

⁹⁷ Jeff Chapman, *Helping Young Adults to Discern Christian Self-Actualization Through the Work of Those Gone Before* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Bethel University, 2016), 67.

should be to all Christians as well. Jesus' forecasting of trouble to come was always tempered with a word of encouragement. Encouragement makes it easier for us to maintain in this fallen world. Encouragement makes it easier to obey the commandments of God, and encouragement helps us to experience the abundant life (John 10:10).

I agree with John Mallison who states, "Mentors must be encouragers. If a mentee goes away discouraged, we have failed. There should always be a positive and helpful outcome. There will be times when we will speak firmly or reprimand, but it must always be from the gospel perspective of hope."⁹⁸

The Call to Trust-Building

Equally important as encouragement is to the mentoring relationship is the principle of trust-building. As a mentor and church leader, it can be challenging at times to provide counsel for a younger person. The goal, despite its difficulty, should be to sincerely become an encouraging and empowering spiritual advisor, however challenging the circumstances may be. Without the element of trust, a younger mentee may not feel safe in sharing their thoughts, experiences, and feelings. This creates a barrier to effective communication that will be difficult to overcome. The primary problem identified in this project stems in part from a lack of good positive communication on an ongoing basis. This barrier can create a situation where a younger person is not benefitting from the guidance, support, and experience a wise older counsel could give.

Tania Deso, in *Effective Ways to Build Trust in a Mentoring Relationship*, suggests simple steps to building trust. Step one is understanding the why of it all. In other words,

⁹⁸ Mallison, 123.

Knowing the why can be inspirational in sustaining the mentoring relationship.

Secondly, she talks about how aligning on rules of engagement and establishing in advance the desired culture of mentoring relationship are crucial to creating a psychologically safe environment. The third step is to set clear goals. Mentors and mentees should have a discussion as to what the desired achievements are to be. Mentors can play a critical role in helping mentees to clarify and prioritize spiritual goals, determine steps, set timelines, determine measures of progress, and mark the same progress. Finally, Deso suggests being intentional in how you show up. There are certain behaviors that mentors should continue to model to aid in building trust in the mentoring relationship. Active listening (holistic listening) allows mentees to be able to reveal themselves safely, be approachable, vulnerable, and sharing, challenging mentees to develop their perceptions.⁹⁹

I believe that Deso's four steps are fundamental to the mentoring relationship. They are basic in nature yet critical to establishing a sound basis for actual mentoring to occur. These steps provide a structure through which potential risks in the relationship can be minimized. Deso seems to be suggesting that one should be careful and prayerful about their commitment to the mentoring relationship. If there is any amount of unwillingness on the part of either mentor or mentee, it can drastically impact the relationship. I agree with Deso that taking these steps on the front end of the relationship can improve the chances of a successful relationship. We cannot engage in pointless work when people's souls and spiritual lives are at stake. We can examine the models of Jesus and Paul who were both very selective in the choosing of their mentees.

When one examines the Paul-Timothy relationship, it can be seen that the two had spent

⁹⁹ Tania Deso, Effective Ways to Build Trust in a Mentoring Relationship, *Mentorship Moments*, 2024, accessed January 14, 03, www.mentorshipmoments.com/blog/4-effective-ways-to-build-trust-in-a-mentoring-relationship.

a considerable amount of time together. As a result of their accumulated shared experiences, a mutual trust was developed. An example of Paul's trust in Timothy is, "You then my son, be strong in the grace that is Christ Jesus, and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). An additional example of the trust between Paul and Timothy can be found in Corinth. The church at Corinth was a church in crisis mode. It was a church that was dealing with a multiplicity of issues. Among the many issues facing the church at Corinth were incest, political strife, socioeconomic division, and other extreme behavior. Despite these problems facing the church in Corinth, it is the young Timothy that Paul sent to this church. "For this reason, I Paul sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful (trustworthy) in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Corinthians 4:17).¹⁰⁰

Through their shared experiences, Paul confidently passes on, like Moses and Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha, the spiritual task of ministry to Timothy. They had built so much trust over time, Paul guides the young Timothy along the way, and Paul now sends Timothy to troubleshoot this church. A church that Paul nonetheless loved but it had issues.

I believe that the overarching goal of the mentoring relationship in the church setting is the passing on of spiritual resources to the next generation, not haphazardly, but intentionally and prayerfully, and over an extended period, in which trust is built.

The Call to Holy Listening

One of the primary Christian disciplines is that of holy listening. We listen to scripture, to sermons, to hymns, and we listen for the voice of the lord in our prayers, in silence, and in the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

practice of other spiritual disciplines. We listen to one another's stories, confessions, struggles, and testimonies. Holy listening in practice may appear to be simple, but it is also powerful. Holy listening is a way in which we can focus our attention and practice the art of listening well. Although somewhat like active listening, holy listening is not the same. In an active listening scenario there is a desire to fully understand and to help others feel they are being heard. In holy listening, however, the goal is really to listen in a way that creates a holy space for someone's story to fully evolve such that they can be more in touch with what God is doing in their life.

Douglas Steere suggests, "In the process of holy listening we are invited to listen to another person in the way we listen to scripture. To listen to another's soul in a condition of disclosure and discovery may be the greatest service that any hearer performs for another. God is revealed to us in the stories of scripture and in the stories of the community of faith. When we gain the ability to listen to another person deeply, we begin to notice the presence of God in other people's stories."¹⁰¹

During the training session on this topic, it was interesting to see the amazement on the faces of the mentors when they practiced holy listening. It was a moving moment, in fact, two minutes, albeit a moment.

I further learned from Steere's elaboration,

Have you sat with a friend and in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation, the talk took a new turn and you both listened vividly to the other and to something that was emerging in your visit? You found yourselves saying things that astonished you and finally, you stopped talking and there was an immense naturalness about the long silent pause that followed. In the silence interval, you were possessed by what you have

¹⁰¹ Douglas Steere, *Gleaning: A Random Honor*, (Nashville: Upper Room Publishers, 1986), 83.

discovered together and after that has happened to you, you know that when you come out of such an experience, there is a memory of rapture and a feeling of having touched holy ground.¹⁰²

Every generation of believers needs to be able to practice holy listening so that the powerful stories of how God has been with his people and has intervened in the life of the community can be passed on from generation to generation.

In 2 Kings 19:19-21, the story of Elijah and Elisha where Elijah throws his mantle upon Elisha symbolizes the transfer of his prophetic office. Steven Holloway says, “Elijah now carries out his assignment by finding Elisha, a young farmer of some substance and throwing his hairy mantle, thought to be invested with great power.”¹⁰³

Holloway continues,

On the way to Damascus, God had instructed Elijah to ‘do himself a favor, make a holy friend, anoint your successor Elisha, the son of Shaphat as a prophet to take your place. Elijah listened to the voice of God and set out from his encounter with God to find the young Elisha plowing in the fields. Although the Elijah -Elisha relationship was brief, God had glimpsed something in this young man that no one else had seen. Elisha demonstrated the courage to discern the voice of God and accept the prophetic call. For nearly a decade, the two were bound in a holy friendship. Their relationship existed long enough for Elijah to become Elisha’s spiritual father and for Elisha to understand and to take on the heavy mantle of the prophet. When Elisha witnessed Elijah’s fiery chariot ride into heaven, it was God’s sign of assurance to Elisha that all would be well. It was the listening to a still small voice that Elijah experienced when he needed God’s assurance at Mount Horeb.¹⁰⁴

I believe just the act of listening, deeply listening, to the proclaimed truth of another can be a powerful act that can open us up to our own stories, to the presence of God, and to the ways in which God is calling us. And in the call of God, we need to understand that with the

¹⁰² Ibid., 84.

¹⁰³ Steven Holloway, “I Kings,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, Volume 4, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 78.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

call comes the responsibility to be obedient to the call. Elijah heard the voice of God and was obedient to that voice in his selection of Elisha. Elisha demonstrated holy listening when he responded to the call to follow Elijah without hesitation. God had spoken to both of their lives and they heeded the clarion call. In hearing the call, James reminds us that with the hearing there must be a doing, an obedience to the intent of the call (James 2:22-25).

The Call to Obedience

In Luke 6:40 we have the scene where Jesus is instructing the disciples regarding the importance of understanding and knowing that a disciple is molded in the manner of his teacher. It is therefore essential to choose the right teacher. John T. Carroll says, “A call to bear one’s cross as part of following Jesus is a call to be submissive and obedient to his authority. When Jesus calls us to self-denial and cross-bearing, he is calling us to disown the self and give total allegiance to him.”¹⁰⁵

The disciple is not above his master, but every one that is perfect should be as his master” (Luke 6:40, KJV). As Jesus was obedient in all things pertaining to the Father, we are to do likewise. “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8, KJV).

Carroll continues,

Jesus’ goal as a teacher was to mold and mentor his followers into faithful and obedient disciples. In Luke 9:28-36, Jesus is being sanctioned by divine testimony to the Mount of Transfiguration. This is important because Jesus has just shared with his disciples his impending arrest, death, and resurrection. Jesus modeled obedience in responding to the divine command, which also ordered the disciples to pay attention to whatever Jesus said. Jesus’ model of mentorship can be seen in the call to Andrew and Peter. They recognized Jesus as a rabbi, teacher, and understood they were giving up something for better than what they had. This is what made it easy for them to drop what they were doing and in obedience answer the call to follow Jesus.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ John T. Carroll, “Book of Luke,” in *Luke: A Commentary*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 169.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

One's intentional search for God strengthens obedience, which is more valuable than just doing a task for its own sake. Saul sacrificed to God and was condemned for it because he was disobedient. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22, KJV). If mentors or mentees are simply offering themselves to service to sacrifice on behalf of the pastor, rather than serving out of obedience to God's call on their lives, they will be wasting their time. "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

When examining the response of the rich, young, ruler in Matthew 19:16-26 to Jesus' command to go and sell all that he possessed, give it to the poor, take up his cross, and follow Jesus, he could not follow Jesus. To this, Dietrich Bonhoeffer asserts, "It is true that the demands of Jesus are definite enough, but I have to remember that he never expects us to take his commands legalistically. What he really expects me to have is faith. Jesus may have said 'Sell thy goods,' but what he meant is, do not take it to be a matter of consequence to you that you have outward prosperity; rather keep your goods quietly, having them as if you had them not. Let not your heart be your goods. We are excusing ourselves from single-minded obedience in faith."¹⁰⁷

The rich young ruler chose to go away from Jesus because he was disobedient. He responded to Jesus' call negatively through his disobedience. Bonhoeffer continues, "Because he would not obey, he could not believe. In this, the young ruler went away from Jesus and indeed this honesty had more promise than any apparent communion with Jesus based on dishonesty.

Reflecting on obedience, or not, leads to key questions: Are we honest with Jesus in our response to his commands? Are we in our disobedience still attempting to commune with God? Are we worse off than the rich, young, ruler? I would contend that a good and faithful mentor is one who out of a sense of calling responds to that call to serve others through mentoring relationships based on the spiritual disciplines found in the scriptures. Again, Jesus is our model, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being

¹⁰⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Work* (Nashville: Fortress Press, 2003), 79-80.

made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:8-9. KJV).

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL EVALUATION

This chapter will discuss and examine the critical evaluation aspect of the ministry project, inclusive of quantitative and qualitative information concerning the knowledge of mentoring in the church setting. Quantitative data was accessed through the use of a pre-test and post-test survey instrument designed separately for both mentors and mentees. Additional qualitative data for the mentor group was accessed through mentor journals, reflection and comments made during the training sessions.

The stated goal of this project was to strengthen relationships between older and younger generations through a mentoring training program. There were two groups that participated: an experimental group A(mentors) and experimental group B (mentees). I hypothesized that the experimental group A (mentors) would have a deeper understanding of the role of mentoring in the church because they would engage in the training sessions and one-hour weekly counseling-sessions with their appointed mentees as compared to the experimental group B (mentees), which only participated in four weekly one-hour coaching sessions with their assigned mentor. I also engaged in weekly individual sessions with each mentor. These sessions were conducted Thursdays through the use of Zoom, cell phone or and in-person, whatever was the most convenient means of communication. Mentors also had informal time with each other prior to and immediately following each training session.

The evaluation of each group came through a pre-and post-mentoring survey (See Appendixes A and B). The survey acquired quantitative data. It was designed to measure the level of understanding and acceptance of mentoring in the church setting. The quantitative data was used to evaluate the impact of the training intervention on participant understanding (See Table 1).

Qualitative data was collected from experimental group A in the form of a completed journal recorded weekly and from comments made during the training sessions (See Appendix D). The following overview will reveal the findings from the collected data.

Evaluation Instruments

I created all evaluation instruments, and Dr. David Carscaddon, from the School of Psychology and Counseling at Gardner-Webb University, compiled the necessary test results to retrieve the outcome from data collected from the two groups. Participants responded to questions that were measured by a ten-point Likert scale.

To determine the reliability of the pre-post-test surveys for both groups, and whether there was a significant difference between the pre and post-tests, I utilized Cronbach's α (Cronbach's Alpha), which is a measure of internal consistency to show how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is a measure of scale reliability. A "high" value for alpha does not imply that the measure is unidimensional. Cronbach's alpha can be written as a function of the number of test items and the average inter-correlation among the items. While Cronbach's is a reliability test, it is not a test of validity. Results from the pre-test survey indicated a Cronbach's α of 0.543 (See Table 1). If the value of Cronbach's Alpha is within the range of 0.60 to 0.80, it means that the value of Cronbach's Alpha is moderate and acceptable. Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1.0 with higher values denoting increased reliability. The criterion for an acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficient is debated in the literature, but conservatively, any alpha coefficient below .75 is concerning. Therefore, the data results here suggest that some of the mentor pre-post-test survey questions negatively correlated (i.e., not meaningful), while others were positively correlated (i.e., somewhat meaningful), as explained below.

Table 1: Unidimensional Reliability
Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.543

The following items correlated negatively with the scale:

Pre-Question 2, “The Christian church has a role and a responsibility to instruct future generations;”

Pre-Question 3, “Parental mentors are expected to be instructors in the body of Christ;”

Pre-Question 6, “Mentoring in the church is a waste of time;”

Pre-Question 8, “Most people understand that obedience through mentorship between older and younger people is a mandate;”

Pre-Question 9, “Younger people today place heavy value on connecting with older, wiser people.”

The following items correlated positively perfectly:

Pre-Question 1, “Younger believers in the church can benefit from having an older mentor;” and Pre-Question 11, “Mentoring is unimportant.”

From this positive and negative correlation, I understand those survey questions, which correlated negatively, in fact measured the opposite of the intended result. They were not sufficient to what I was trying to measure.

The post-mentor survey resulted in a negative Cronbach’s alpha score of 1.281 (See Table 2). Negative Cronbach’s alpha means that there is inconsistent coding or a mixture of items that measure different dimensions. This results in a negative inter-item correlation. In the case of a negative Cronbach’s alpha, factor analysis can be utilized to check the factorial structure and correlations between the extended factors to assist in determining the validity of the survey questions. Again, Cronbach’s alpha is a measurement of reliability rather than validity. Because the post-instrument was the same as the pre-test, the negative score confirmed the pre-test conclusion (i.e., the survey instrument may not have been as stable or trustworthy as desired, however, the score does not necessarily indicate that the measure was not valid). It does suggest, however, for this study, that a review of the qualitative data from the training sessions and journalling activity be given greater consideration.

**Table 2: Unidimensional Reliability
Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

	Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate		-1.281

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's α

The following items in the post-survey correlated negatively with the scale:

Post Question 1, “Younger believers in the church can benefit from having an older mentor;”

Post Question 2, “The Christian church has a role and a responsibility to instruct future generations;”

Post Question 3, “Parental mentors are expected to be instructors in the body of Christ;”

Post Question 6, “Mentoring is a waste of time;”

Post Question 7, “In biblical narratives there is a leadership mantle to be passed on to younger generations.”

Variables Post Questions 6 through 11 correlated positively:

Post Question 6, “A waste of time;”

Post Question 7, “In biblical narratives there is a leadership mantle to be passed on to younger generations, correlated perfectly;”

Post Question 10, “Younger believers in the church can benefit from having an older mentor;”

Post Question 11, “Mentoring is unimportant.”

I understand this positive and negative correlation of post-survey questions, like results from the pre-survey indicates consistency and inconsistency as previously stated. Therefore, certain statistical assumptions cannot be made regarding the results.

Likewise, Post Questions 5 and 12 correlated positively, which means that they were consistent in the measurement of a similar variable (See below).

Post Question 5, “Young people can benefit from having an older mentor outside of the family;”

Post Question 12, “It is important for younger people to have a trusting relationship with an older member of the church.”

The descriptive statistics (See Table 3), with means and standard deviations for experimental group A (mentors), is an eleven-point difference from the pre- to the post-test, and the means of the post-test was greater than the pre-test. This suggests that the project

training affected this group to an extent. However, this may not be a reliable assumption given Cronbach's alpha scores. I still believe strengthening the instrument would have provided a clear result to the actual benefit of the training in the lives of the participants.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Pre-Post Mentor Scores

Descriptive Statistics

	Pre Mentor Total	Post Mentor Total
Mean	87.250	98.250
Std. Deviation	12.121	5.909
Minimum	75.000	90.000
Maximum	100.000	104.000

In the Shapiro-Wilks Test for Normality if the value of (P) is greater than 0.05, the data is normal. The result here was 0.692, which might indicate some level of normality (See Tables 4 and 5)

Table 4: Assumption Checks

Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)

		W	p
Pre Mentor Total	- Post Mentor Total	0.946	0.692

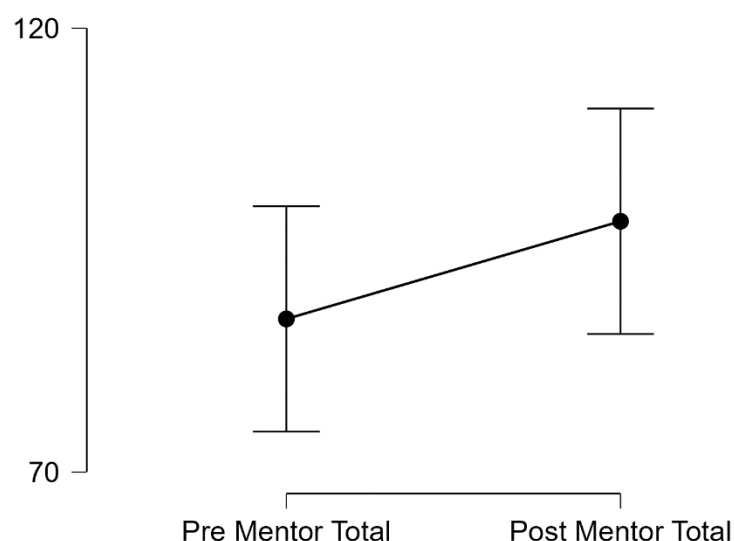
Table 5: Descriptives

	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation
Pre Mentor Total	4	87.250	12.121	6.060	0.139
Post Mentor Total	4	98.250	5.909	2.955	0.060

The error bar graphs (See Graph 1) gives a picture of the group means, and what is referred to as the standard error of the mean. The clear and dark circles are the means for experimental group A pre and post-test results, and the extending lines represent all the possible means I would get if I were to repeat this study. The pre-and post-means for experimental group A indicate a significant difference between the pre and post-test results.

Graph 1: Descriptives Plots

Pre-Mentor Total - Post-Mentor Total



The Paired Samples T-test (See Table 6) was used to determine whether the experimental group A (mentors) pre and post-test scores were significantly different. This Test procedure compares the means of two variables for a single group. The procedure computes the differences between the values of the two variables for each case and tests whether the average differs from zero. The results show real differences from pre- to post-test means, suggesting a difference in the understanding and perception of mentoring in the church setting due to the training program. The P value of 0.146 is slightly greater than the standard-significance level of 0.05, indicating that one could accept the null hypothesis (i.e., no relationship between pre and post results) and that the difference assessed by the Paired-Samples T-test offers a more positive perception. It appears that the practical aspect of the training had an influence on the survey results. On Table 6 there is a mention to Cohen's d (-0.975), which might indicate that additional mentor training and practice over an extended time could

make a significant difference.

Table 6: Paired Samples T-Test Paired Samples T-Test

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	P	Mean Difference	95% CI for Mean Difference		Cohen's d
						Lower	Upper	
Pre Mentor Total	- Post Mentor Total	-1.950	3	0.146	-11.000	-28.956	6.956	-0.975

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was used to determine the reliability and consistency (See Tables 7 and 8) of pre and post-test surveys for the experimental group B (mentees). The results revealed that the survey used in this study for mentees was moderately stable and trustworthy. Therefore, one could argue that the measure was valid, with the noted exceptions. Statistically speaking, this means the results of the survey do not allow one to make assumptions that may be applied to other populations.

Table 7: Pre-Mentee Unidimensional Reliability

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.845
95% CI lower bound	-0.354
95% CI upper bound	0.990

Note. **Variables** Pre-Question 4: Learning to listen for the voice of God and to the instruction of an experienced older person are important to my spiritual development, and Pre-Question 8: Having an older person in my life as a wise counselor is important to my spiritual formation. correlated perfectly.

Table 8: Post Mentee Unidimensional Reliability

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.706
95% CI lower bound	-0.927
95% CI upper bound	0.975

The following items correlated negatively with the scale: Post Question 1: Developing relationships in the church between younger and older members is essential, Post Question 2: Younger people today do not need an Apostle Paul in their lives. Post Question 10: In the church, today's young people place a heavy value on connecting with older, wiser people. **Variables** Post Question 7: Biblical teachings are critical to my understanding of obedience, and Post Question 9, Trusting an older person in a mentoring relationship is comfortable for me

As a result, if one considers the pre-post mentee survey results, one notices that the scores were more positive than negative, suggesting that the mentee instrument was stronger when compared to the mentor's. As a result, the quantitative data from the mentee survey evaluation can be considered more reliable and usable.

One final observation is recorded on the Paired Samples T-test (See Table 9) utilized with mentees. The P value of 0.657 was greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, rendering the acceptance of the null hypothesis, that the post-test yielded different results from the pre-test.

Table 9: Paired Samples T-Test

Paired Samples T-Test

Measure 1	Measure 2	T	df	p	Mean Difference
Pre-Mentee Total	- Post Mentee Total	0.491	3	0.657	3.250

Also, the Shapiro-Wilk Test (See Table 10) for normality was greater than 0.05, indicating the data results were normal (i.e., a dependable positive result).

**Table 10: Assumption Checks
Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)**

		W	P
Pre-Mentee Total	- Post Mentee Total	0.861	0.265

Perceptions of Mentoring

In this section, a review of the mentor comments made during weekly training sessions will be the focus. Mentors were encouraged to ask relevant questions, engage their peers in thoughtful discussions, and to reflectively respond to questions being asked by the training facilitator as a means for better understanding of the mentoring practices being discussed during each weekly training session.

The mentor training sessions included an opportunity for participants to reflect on the training sessions and one-hour mentor sessions with an assigned mentee. In addition, I addressed their perceptions in our weekly individual encounters (i.e., my meeting with each mentor). Also, mentor journals were utilized to capture participants' thoughts and perceptions during the four weeks. One of the questions asked during the first training session was recalling the last time they were on the receiving end of encouragement. Participant responses were: "A few days ago," "Forty-five minutes ago," "Encouragement is a necessity, especially when dealing with young adult single mothers who are serving in the church."

On the question of the need for a mentoring ministry, responses were:

“Developing encouraging relationships can be difficult but they are needed in the church;”
 “This mentor-mentee relationship is much needed in the church;”
 “I am glad that we are doing this (mentor training), we have been needing to come together and work together for a long time;”
 “Are we going to try to implement this in the church for other people?”

All responses were positive in nature. There were no negative comments surrounding the question of the need for a mentoring ministry and the importance of encouragement in the mentoring relationship.

The experimental group A reflections from week two on the question of trust-building in relationships were:

“You have to give them (a person who has disappointed you in a relationship) a chance to redeem themselves, and it is (trust-building) hard when you are just getting to know someone;”
 “I refer to Psalms 37:3, 5 (NKJV), ‘Trust in the Lord and do good; Commit your ways to the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass;’”
 “Building trust makes understanding what drives another person and what they are enthusiastic about;”
 “No! I feel like we have lost a generation, not many young adults are connected to the church because of how they feel they are going to be treated” (by older leaders);
 “Younger leaders feel like older leaders are holding them back;”
 “There is also a lack of trust in many families that are hurting amid sorrow;”
 “We need training on how to trust and work with one another;”
 “Trust is important to being a mentor and investing in a mentee;”
 “Trust involves listening to what others say and helping them to explain their feelings in a supportive way.”

These affirmations tell me there is a strong need for a mentoring training program that will bring young and older adults together to help build community and create an atmosphere for spiritual growth and development.

The experimental A group had the following responses when reflecting on the training session on “holy listening”: “It’s (holy listening) hearing from the Spirit;” and
 “We pray and we read the scriptures, then we wait on a response from the Lord.”

During this session, we did an exercise in practicing holy listening for two minutes,

Participant responses were:

- “For the first time in my life I felt like someone was really listening to me and was concerned about me;”
- “This is amazing! I heard and learned more than normal;”
- “It (holy listening) really works;”
- “I tuned out everything and was able to hear differently;”
- “I understood better, and I could really get into the other person.”

I see these responses as an indication of the need to train leaders further in developing their ‘holy listening’ skills to assist them in becoming even more effective mentors to others. A ‘failure to communicate’ is often the basis of discontent and friction between groups of people.

The experimental A group responded and reflected as follows to the question on the call of God as a call to obedience:

- “We listen but are we really hearing the voice of God?”
- “We are a divided church, like our divided nation, and we do not listen to God or one another, we really need to learn how to do so;”
- “We need to bring it all to the table, have open discussions with God and each other so we can really hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches;”
- “Do we really believe all that God says to us in the Bible? If we do, we need to obey his commandments, those between us and God and between one another;”
- “We believe, and we want to be obedient to God’s call on our life, but we are not Jesus;”
- “We are not perfect, and we need each other to help the other in being obedient to God’s call.”

For me, these types of responses reveal that much study and prayer are needed concerning understanding one’s call to obedience. There is a perception in some churches that when the reference to ‘call’ is made, it is in the context of preaching and or pastoring. Therefore, there is often a lack of understanding or emphasis placed on calling as it relates to others in the congregation. But to all believers, Peter declares, “That you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who ‘called’ you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). In his appeal to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 4:1-2, Paul writes, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the ‘calling’ to which you have been ‘called,’ with all humility and

relentless, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”

Overall, participants were very favorable to the idea of a mentoring ministry in the church and expressed the need for the same. They expressed a clearer understanding of encouragement and trust-building than that of holy listening and the call to obedience. They developed a better understanding of mentoring in the church setting from week one to week four; however, as perceived through the statistical results, more extended mentor training with practical learning activities are needed.

Evaluations of Facilitator

Each mentor completed a teaching evaluation after following the week four session (See Appendix E). An average score value was determined from the completed teaching evaluations based on a ten-point scale (See Appendix F). The evaluations generated quantitative data using a ten-point Likert scale. These evaluations rated my performance in several areas: the training sessions, my role as instructor/facilitator, and the materials utilized. Overall, the instructor ratings and feedback were positive in all areas. However, on question 4:4, “This material was new to me,” two participants indicated in the negative. Time was a factor in limiting additional responses from participants. Additional quantitative data could have been generated from weekly training evaluations versus one overall evaluation of training. My concentration was on ensuring all training material was covered and participants were adequately exposed to the mentoring principles. Future training sessions will allow me to provide adequate time for more participant commentary and practical exercises. An area of concern for the mentor group was that the weekly journalling activity needed additional emphasis to generate more in-depth reflections on training topics and mentee sessions. My goal was for participants to really

think about what they were doing and why they were doing it. A brief introduction in writing reflectively could have addressed this desired outcome.

Project's Strengths and Weaknesses

The primary strength of this project is the recognition of the need for such a project to exist. The project's design and implementation proved the need is great for an intentional mentoring ministry in the local church. The analysis of participant understanding and appreciation for mentoring in the church prior to training, and at the conclusion of training, showed measurable differences. Statistically, however, the reliability of any difference is challenged based on the low single dimensionality score of some survey questions. However, qualitative data indicate both an awareness of the need for, and an acceptance of the concept of a mentoring ministry in the local church.

A weakness that I was able to observe following the conclusion of the project was in the design of the mentor pre-post survey. I should have obtained from an additional source the review of the survey questions to ensure they measured one dimension, mentorship, and not only its understanding and acceptance. Several of the questions on the Likert scale seemed to be connected to the general subject of mentoring, and thus were valid, but dimensions were not reliable measures of the same dimension, which allowed participants to be able to adjust their answers based on what they perceived was a desired response from years of service in the church or secular vocations, instead of an accurate choice as it relates to an understanding of the role of mentorship in the disciple-making process. I believe that more than four weeks of training are necessary for participants to develop a deeper understanding of the biblical rationale for mentorship.

An additional area of weakness I was able to observe was the number of participants selected for the project. The greater the number of participants in a sample, the lower the margin of error in the applicability of test results as compared to a smaller population. I should have been more persuasive in inviting additional leaders, especially those who expressed concerns about such things as ‘the generational divide,’ to participate in the project.

Reflecting further after the completion of the project, I realize that some mentoring disciplines, such as ‘holy listening’ and ‘discerning call,’ require a greater investment of time from both instructor and participant. While being an encourager and building trusting relationships are disciplines that can be applied to both secular and spiritual realms, these mentioned disciplines are spiritual disciplines and are matters of the heart, mind, and soul, requiring an adequate investment of time and training. However, from the material that was presented, and from reading participant journals, the opportunity for spiritual formation and development were possible to a certain extent. Additional training in these practices will be a movement in the right direction.

An additional area of concern was the writing skills of some of the participants. I made the mistake of assuming rather than assuring the participant’s ability to journal, which is an ability that not all have acquired on their own. This is completely my fault. I should have provided guidance. As previously stated, it would have been beneficial to have exposed all participants to a basic session on writing reflectively. I believe this would have enhanced the quality of participant journaling and provided substantive qualitative data from which reasonable assumptions could be made. I failed to ask the basic questions, “Have you ever been asked to write reflectively?” “Do you understand what writing reflectively entails?” This could have been addressed more critically during my sessions with mentors. During the meetings with mentors, I

was more focused on generalities than on specifics.

Personally, the process of mentorship has made me more keenly aware of my own weaknesses as a mentor/pastor. I do very well encouraging others, I work hard at building trusting relationships, however, I have not sufficiently or more intentionally invested into the lives of those whom I lead in the spiritual disciplines of holy listening and responding to the call of God as a call to obedience. This project has made me more keenly aware of the importance and necessity of mentorship in the disciple-making process and the *Missio Dei*. This project has given me a greater understanding and a deeper appreciation for Jesus' model of mentorship. He is our example in all things—that of our being mentored and in the mentoring of others.

My goal and my sincere desire were to develop a project that would bring awareness to the need to teach and train each and subsequent generations in the ways of God and to bridge generational gaps through a ministry of mentorship. I believe, as evident from the participants' verbal and written comments, that mentors and mentees are capable of understanding and appreciating the value and importance of mentorship in the local church setting. This experience reinforced to me that further attention and training in mentor-mentee relationships and acquisition of skills and information would be beneficial throughout the church family.

My plans are initially to introduce intentional mentorship training for all senior and young adult leaders for the purposes of spiritual formation and strengthening understanding of the role and importance of mentorship in the disciple-making process. It is hoped that from this effort, all leaders will become committed to assisting in introducing the concept of mentoring to all church members. I plan to further engage myself in the understanding of mentorship by reading additional literature, monitoring websites devoted to mentorship, and

attending mentoring conferences or workshops. This will enhance both personal and corporate spiritual development and formation.

An outgrowth of this project is the creation of the MOBC New Member/Convert Academy. Previously I was responsible for teaching all new members and new converts' classes. However, with this new Academy, I will provide general instruction and the curriculum while my three associate ministers will serve as instructors for these new classes. Two of my associate ministers were mentors in this project. One minister is also a Gardner-Webb Divinity School graduate with a concentration in Christian Education. Her training and experience will enhance the Academy's potential for success. I will be entrusting to them as Paul did with Timothy, this ministry while they invest in others through teaching in the Academy.

Personal and Professional Growth

Strengthening the relationships between older and younger leaders at Mount Olive Baptist Church through the implementation of a mentoring ministry has been quite an experience. Time spent in the development of training materials and references required considerable effort on my part. Between the confines of the Dover Library, Cleveland County Library, Mauney Library, and my 'man cave' at home, the Lord has been faithful. Often in our Christian pilgrimage, we find ourselves feeling fully prepared for the road ahead. However, we soon discover how woefully deficient we sometimes are for what lies ahead. It is at times such as this that we understand our own weakness and God's strength.

Through the implementation of this mentoring project, I was compelled to research and develop a framework from which senior church leadership and young adult leadership could engage in mentoring disciplines that would lead to spiritual growth and transformation. All the literature that I was able to read and reference, in addition

scriptural readings, offered meaningful insight into this research project.

In a practical sense, and as pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church, this project provided an opportunity for me to continue to teach church leadership about the need to build the church community so that all may “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). This framework allowed me to engage in my passion for mentoring, while helping to equip others who have accepted the call to obedience in Christ. I am inspired by Paul’s words, “And what you have heard from me through many witnesses, entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 Timothy 2:2).

From a personal standpoint, I have obtained longsuffering and endurance because of this research study. It has caused me to spend many late nights, long afternoons, and early mornings researching and pursuing the Word of God for spiritual truth and insight into mentoring in the church. Although this journey has been extremely challenging, given my other engagements as a husband, pastor, council member, adjunct instructor, and board member, I have experienced both the patience and power of a loving God. Throughout this journey, I have been constantly reminded by the Holy Spirit that God is with me. I have learned even more how to listen for the voice of God through the Holy Spirit: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).

Genuine and lasting spiritual transformation must first take place within us as individuals. I can genuinely say that the development of this Doctor of Ministry Project has caused me to grow and develop as a person, preacher, teacher, servant-leader, and Christian brother. An intentional mentoring ministry in the church is both biblical and practical.

“Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you, and remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The last chapter of the ministry project analysis and report will include brief summaries of each previous chapter and an overall summation. The purpose and aim of this ministry project were to develop a strategy to help strengthen inter-generational relationships at Mount Olive Baptist Church through the implementation of a mentoring ministry training program (mentorship).

This ministry project was conceived from the belief that mentoring is a biblically essential element of the overall disciple-making process, and that it is in concert with the Word of God. Therefore, the desired outcome of the Mount Olive Baptist Church's mentor training program was to help mentors see the task of mentoring younger generations as an act of obedience, illustrated in biblical stories and observed in historical personalities. The idea would become a reality through study and practice. Through trust-building, being an encourager, holy listening, and discerning one's call as a call to obedience in Christ, senior leaders as mentors to younger leaders would grow in their spiritual transformation.

In chapter one, following a brief introduction, the personal rationale for this ministry project, the statement of the specific problem to be addressed, the physical location and setting for the project, and the project resources available to support the conduct of the ministry, were communicated and elaborated upon in detail.

In chapter two, a complete and detailed project description was stated. Included in the

detailed project description were the ministry project goals, and a project calendar. In addition, detailed summaries of each weekly training session were outlined. Weekly discussion topics included, Week one, being an encourager, week two, building trusting relationships, week three, discerning holy listening, and week four, the call of God as the call to obedience, and

In chapter three, the biblical and theological rationale for the project were communicated in detail. This was accomplished through an introduction to biblical mentoring in both the Old and New Testaments, images of the church as the basis for mentoring, including the images of community, the body of Christ, and as family. In addition, an examination of the Trinity as an example of mentoring, the early church theologians, and reflections on the call to mentorship were included.

In chapter four, the critical evaluation portion of the project, including a description of quantitative and qualitative data, was discussed and explained. Included in the critical evaluation were the evaluation statistical instruments, mentor perceptions of mentoring, evaluation of the facilitator, the project strengths, and weaknesses, and expected personal and professional growth.

As a result of the spiritual and biblical methodologies, strategies, and processes that were researched, the mentor training offered basic disciplines needed for an effective ministry. As the community surrounding the church continues to expand and to grow, so must the church of God. Many times, Jesus explained to his disciples that what was happening in the natural realm was a metaphor for what was happening in the spiritual realm. The church must allow the Holy Spirit to do its work in us so that we can do the work of ministry inside and outside of the walls of the church. The Holy Spirit teaches us, transforms us, and cause us to also be able to “turn the world upside down” for the Lord.

Future Project Plans

It is an utmost expectation on my part that upon completion of the Doctor of Ministry degree, this training project can be implemented as a continuing education requirement in the church for all current church leaders and aspiring church leaders. If this is accomplished, it will prove to be transformative and healing for our congregation and community. It is desirable of both mentors and mentees that they will allow the Holy Spirit to bring about this desire in their life. Furthermore, participants have the potential to share and practice what they learned from each lesson. If church leadership can grow beyond occupying a position to becoming servant-leaders who mentor and share spiritual resources with others, the application of this project can extend throughout the congregation. They can help spread mentorship as a discipleship model for the entire congregation.

The concepts and material learned during this project can be shared and expressed to others. The training developed by this project will take the place of our traditional monthly leader's training. This project training is very timely, in that we currently have no particular leadership training focus and will become a part of the continuing education church curriculum. This training also has the potential to be exported beyond the confines of Mount Olive Baptist Church to others who can benefit.

Developing a Training Program for the Mentoring Ministry

Based on the results of this project's planning and implementation, a mentoring training program for all church leaders is a necessity. Further training in biblical mentoring is essential for those who are committed to growing as an encourager, a trust-builder, a holy listener, and an

obedient servant to the call of God in their life. This training has brought attention and awareness to Mount Olive that in our effort to teach the next generation and make disciples, to carry out the mission of God for his church, we must be obedient to God's commands. "Obedience is greater than sacrifice." In the process of learning to discern our calling from God as a call to obedience, people can develop, experience spiritual growth, and learn to share spiritual resources with one another through the continuous working of the Holy Spirit.

Connection with Lifelong Learning Goals

When I initially enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry degree program, I established some lifelong goals, to preach and teach more faithfully and confidently, to take care of my body which is the "temple of the Holy Spirit," and to learn how to theologically lead people during times of crisis. Throughout all that has confronted me in developing this project, I understand that learning more about God and being spiritually transformed, are lifetime endeavors.

Through research for this project, I have been able to expand my body of knowledge and understanding of the role of mentoring in the life of the church. I have been surprisingly amazed at the amount of biblical and non-biblical materials available on the subject mentoring and mentorship. One of my lifelong learning goals dealt with the development of a teaching and preaching series from the Old Testament that would help to encourage and awaken members of Mount Olive to the relevance and applicability to our twenty-first-century church context.

A slogan that I have often heard used in the secular context is, "You be the change that you wish to see." Another is, "If it is to be, it's up to me." I more fully understand and embrace the meaning of these two slogans and that it is not about my teaching or my instruction of a group of leaders, but it is about my own life and discipleship. Jesus modeled the behavior he

desired from his disciples and so should we. Throughout this research project, I have learned that the most effective mentor teaching is that which is modeled.

The scriptures teach us about the grace of God, a grace that works with us through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Our salvation and our spiritual formation are to be accomplished through God's grace, rather than through our own efforts to bring about change. I have learned that his grace is indeed "sufficient" for the task and the time. The times when it has taken me a week to write a five-page section of my paper, and I cannot seem to find my way or the right words to say. The times when I wanted to give up and say, "no mas," "no mas." Then I call to remember, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As a result of this ministry project, I understand more that it is God's Holy Spirit that brings about spiritual transformation. My mind, my soul, and my understanding have all been transformed because of this project. I have discovered that I am a long way from home and I need the transforming power of God to help me to help his church make it through our wilderness of generational and other divisional forces which come against the body of Christ. Spiritual transformation is needed to hear and discern more clearly the voice of God and to "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches" (Revelation 2:29).

Spiritual transformation is indeed a lifelong process and I need to learn to trust God more and to allow his will to be accomplished in my life so that I can share his goodness through being a mentor to others along the way. "Because no prophecy ever came by human will, but people moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21).

APPENDIX A

Pre-Post Mentor Survey

Please circle your age: 40-45 y/o; 55-65 y/o; 65-80 y/o; 80+

Please circle your gender: Male Female

Date: _____ Circle One: **Pre-Test** **Post-Test**

Please circle the number that most clearly reflects your experience. (SD) Strongly Disagree, (D) Disagree, (N) Neutral, (A) Agree, or (SA) Strongly Agree

1. Younger believers in the church can benefit from having an older mentor.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

2. The Christian church has a role and a responsibility to instruct future generations.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

3. Parental mentors are expected to be instructors in the body of Christ.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

4. I am spiritually prepared to walk side by side in an encouraging relationship with a younger person.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

5. Young people can benefit from having an older mentor outside of the family.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

6. A mentoring ministry in the church is a waste of time.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

7. In biblical narratives there is a leadership mantle to be passed on to younger generations.

1	2	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

8. Most people understand that obedience through mentorship between older and younger people is a mandate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

9. Younger people today place heavy value on connecting with older, wiser people.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

10. Holy listening means I am comfortable with my ability to listen to other generations in the church.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

11. Mentoring in the church today is unimportant because through social media younger persons can learn about Christ on their own.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

12. It is important for younger people to have a trusting relationship with an older member of the church.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

APPENDIX B

Pre-Post Mentee Survey

Please circle your age: 18-25 y/o; 25-40 y/o; 40-45+ y/o.

Please circle your gender: Male Female

Date: _____ Circle One: **Pre-Test** **Post-Test**

Please circle the number that most clearly reflects your experience. (SD) Strongly Disagree, (D) Disagree, (N) Neutral, (A) Agree, or (SA) Strongly Agree

1. Developing relationships in the church between younger and older members is essential.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

2. Younger people today do not need an Apostle Paul in their lives.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

3. Young people today need encouragement from an older mentor to grow in their faith.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

4. Learning to listen for the voice of God and to the instruction of an experienced older person are important to my spiritual development.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

5. I am spiritually prepared to assume a leadership role in the church.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

6. Because of technology younger people can learn on their own so having a mentoring ministry is a waste of time.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

7. Biblical teachings are critical to my understanding of obedience.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

8. Having an older person in my life as a wise counselor is important to my spiritual formation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

9. Trusting an older person in a mentoring relationship is comfortable for me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

10. In the church, today's young people place a heavy value on connecting with older, wiser people.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

APPENDIX C
MENTOR COVENANT LETTER

Dear _____:

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in the experimental group for the ministry project entitled: A Strategy for Developing a Mentoring Ministry at Mount Olive Baptist Kings Mountain, N. C.” This is a project that seeks to evaluate the potential for a church-wide mentoring ministry. As a covenant participant, you will be asked to pray for and support this project as the Lord leads you. Therefore, I seek to enter a covenant relationship with you as we embark upon this journey of faith together.

This project will be conducted over five weeks on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 2:30 starting September 14, 2023, and ending October 7, 2023. Your involvement is appreciated and valued and is important to the success of this project. You will be asked to think critically about our church, community, and this ministry project.

As a covenant participant:

1. I pledge to participate in all training sessions.
2. Complete five weekly journal entries and reflections.
3. Meet with a mentee for one hour each week.
4. Participate in discussions concerning session topics as led by the Holy Spirit.
5. Learn while having fun!

I _____ will agree to enter a covenant with Pastor Charles Webber to assist in the successful implementation of “A Strategy for Developing a Mentoring Ministry at Mount Olive Baptist Kings Mountain, N. C.

In His Care,

Pastor Webber

APPENDIX D

Mentor Weekly Journal Scoring Rubric

1. The mentor completes the spiritual reflection journal from weekly meetings with a mentee and weekly mentor training sessions.

Yes____**Somewhat**____**No**_____

2. The mentor clearly, honestly, and appropriately articulates a personal experience or example related to the time spent with his/her mentee or otherwise provides evidence of personal reflection upon the particulars of his/her life. The mentor provides some concrete, detailed, and appropriate images or examples found to be significant.

Yes____**Somewhat**____**No**__

3. The Mentor provides specific reference to one of the scriptural passages discussed in weekly training sessions.

Yes____ **Somewhat**_____**No**_____

4. The Mentor articulates a personal response to and/or interpretation of one of the scriptural passages discussed in weekly training; Mentor clearly, honestly, and appropriately articulates personal feelings and insights from reflection and/or Scripture.

Yes____**Somewhat**____ **No**__

5. The Mentor clearly, honestly, and appropriately responds to key journal prompts in the weekly training sessions in a thorough and thoughtful manner.

Yes__ **Somewhat** __ **No**__

Mentor Name: _____

Notes: _____

APPENDIX E

Letter of Welcome

Greetings!

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in the experimental group for the ministry project entitled: A Strategy for Developing a Mentoring Ministry at Mount Olive Baptist Kings Mountain, N. C.” This is a project that seeks to evaluate the potential for a church-wide mentoring ministry. As a covenant participant, you will be asked to pray for and support this project as the Lord leads you. Therefore, I seek to enter a covenant relationship with you as we embark upon this journey of faith together.

This project will be conducted over a four-week period on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 2:00 starting September 14, 2023, and ending October 7, 2023. Your involvement is appreciated and valued and is important to the success of this project. You will be asked to think critically about our church, community, and this ministry project. As an active participant, you are expected to participate in all training sessions, complete five weekly journal entries and reflections, meet with your assigned mentee for one hour each week, participate in discussions concerning session topics as led by the Holy Spirit, and learn while having fun and fellowship.

Although you have been selected to participate, please pray as to what God would have you to receive and give through this four-week experience. Please feel free to fully express yourself through your weekly journals. Your identity will be completely confidential. Following each training session, you will have the opportunity to share with your mentee and gain insight from them and grow your relationship.

Your honest thoughts and reflections are necessary and important to your spiritual formation. You will have the opportunity to evaluate both me and the training sessions. Please feel free to critique as you deem necessary. Seek to hear the voice of God as you process through the next four weeks!

Blessings and Peace!

Charles L. Webber

APPENDIX F:

Training Sessions Facilitator Evaluation

Instructions: Please answer all questions and circle the number that best describes your opinion using the following scale: SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), N (neutral/no opinion), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree). Any comments will be kept confidential.

1. The topic of the session was clearly defined.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

2. The questions asked during the session were thought-provoking.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

3. The material presented was clear and understandable.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

4. The material presented was new to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

5. The methods used to present the material were current and up to date.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

6. The materials were relevant to the practice of mentoring.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

7. I have a better understanding of mentoring in the church after this session.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

8. The materials and information shared with the group will be helpful as I work with my mentee.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

9. I had the freedom to share my opinion and thoughts with the other mentors.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

10. This session was worth the time I spent attending and participating.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

11. The reflection questions used in the mentee discussions were valuable to my spiritual formation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

12. I received timely feedback each week from Pastor Webber on my questions and concerns as a mentor.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

13. Pastor Webber provided appropriate guidance and support during each week of training.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

APPENDIX G

TRAINING SESSIONS

Week One Training Session: Encouragement in the Mentoring Process (September 17, 2023)

The lesson aim was to relate the background stories of Moses-Joshua from Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and early church fathers Ambrose and Augustine; understand the importance of encouragement in relation to the lives of God's people; Be able to reflect upon the benefits of encouragement in the mentoring relationship. I opened the session by asking, "When was the last time someone really encouraged you?"

(1) One participant responded, "Just a few minutes ago."

(2) Another participant responded, "When I was a member of the church choir."

I then gave them the operating definition of biblical encouragement. I explained that it is the act of imparting courage, peace, and hope to someone who is facing hardship or doubt. It is based on the Word of God, which provides uplifting scriptures and promises to those who seek refuge in Him. It is also spiritual and Christ-centered, as it points out the evidence of the grace and work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life and reminds them of the love and sympathy of Jesus.

We then explored Deuteronomy 31:6-"Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." The purpose of this passage was to emphasize to mentors the way in which Moses and Joshua interrelated to one another especially how Moses encouraged Joshua.

I explained that the most interesting part of the relationship between Moses and Joshua is the way in which Moses authorizes Joshua to carry on his work. Joshua was an understudy to Moses and served as a devoted assistant and was able to observe many things that Moses did and how he approached God. Praying to God on Joshua's behalf was an essential element of Moses' training regimen (Deuteronomy 3:28). A vital component of the Deuteronomic text is the assurance and encouragement Moses shares with Joshua and the people. Providing support and encouragement in the mentoring relationship for the journeys and battles of life that lay ahead are vital components of the spiritual mentoring relationship.

We then explored a thought from John Mallison that describes the importance of encouragement in the mentoring process and how it helps us to reaffirm every sincere effort to bring people to God. "Moses' exhortation to Joshua reminds all believers of the importance of being courageous and fearless when facing opposition."¹⁰⁸

We then examined the relationship between early church theologians Ambrose and Augustine. The purpose behind this exploration was to demonstrate how mentoring existed in the early church. Ambrose shared with Augustine the truths of Christianity so that he would accept it and he served as a role model for him to emulate. Ambrose further encouraged Augustine by demonstrating how to approach the Bible in spiritual terms and he helped Augustine work through the Bible stories that were challenging to understand and accept. I explained how this relationship can serve as a role model for other mentoring relationships.

We closed out this session by exploring the values of Biblical encouragement. God's love for us is unconditional and our love for one another should be unconditional. The value of stewardship helps to explain God's unconditional love for us and our need to love others. It is always our responsibility to appreciate the lives of others and what God can do through others by

¹⁰⁸ John Mallison, *Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders*, (Clovelly Park: Aus: Australian Church Resources, 1998), 107.

way of encouragement. The value of empowerment says despite being stained by sin, we always have the chance to be better individuals; we must strive to “do good unto all persons, especially those of the household of faith.” I continued to explain that the value of empathy acknowledges God’s forgiveness of our sins that we are constantly committing, and that we should also learn to forgive others. Learn to have a heart that encourages because we too are also sinners. The value of discipleship requires us to learn to spread the message of the love of God to the next generation of his people. As the people of God, the value of teaches us that we must always be united, despite our many differences and inter-generational variances.

After the lesson, participants were asked to briefly define biblical encouragement based on what had been shared in the training session.

- (1) One participant noted, “It is supporting and helping another person the way they did it in the Bible.”
- (2) Another participant responded, “People seemed to follow god and were obedient to him more in the Bible days than now; to me it boils down to trusting and supporting one another.”
- (3) A participant said, “It seems to me it is hearing what God wants you to do and then sharing that in an encouraging way with another person.”
- (4) One participant stated, “It is working together with people and sharing whatever you can with them in the Lord. That is how you encourage somebody. Moses and Joshua, and Paul and Timothy worked together.”

I then thanked each one for their responses and I told them those were some good answers. Following the training session, participants were reminded to complete their journal entries and to share their learning experiences with their assigned mentees. I asked for a volunteer to give us a closing prayer. Following prayer and after completing any required paperwork for the administrative assistant, participants were treated to some refreshments.

Week Two Training Session: Building Trusting Relationships in the Mentoring Process

(September 24, 2023)

While the experimental group was transitioning from morning worship services to the training session, they completed any necessary paperwork and enjoyed available snacks. Today's lesson topic focused on "Building Trusting Relationships in the Mentoring Process." I began this session by explaining what today's learning objectives were: 1) relate the background story of Paul and Timothy by examining 2 Timothy 2:1-2, 2) examine the trust-building model principles found in Nehemiah chapters 2-4, 3) understand the importance of trust-building in relation to the lives of God's people, and 4) be able to reflect upon the benefits of trust-building in the mentoring relationship. Following an opening prayer, I asked the question, "What is meant by trust-building?"

- (1) One participant responded, "Doing the right thing when you are dealing with people."
- (2) One participant said, "It is a hard thing to do (build trust), even sometimes in the church."
- (3) One participant responded, "You have to be up front with people or they want believe in you."

I began our discussion by sharing that trust-building is the activity of developing and strengthening the relationship between people so that they can work more effectively as leaders. Trust is what makes leadership possible. To be effective in ministry, a younger person needs to be able to trust senior leadership. Yet, trust is not easily obtained. It is what one receives from healthy leadership over a period of time. Even if you are in a church culture currently low on trust, you can make a difference starting in your corner of the congregation! n. As the senior leader, you have substantial influence in creating and developing trust with your mentee.

I explained that research has demonstrated ways mentors can establish trust with a mentee. Trust in a mentor/mentee relationship plays a key role in the success of the mentorship experience and can also have an impact on the long-term success of the church! Until we have a relationship that is rooted in trust, we cannot have an open and honest discussion about the

challenges that face the church and the people of God in the twenty-first century.

I asked the question again, “How do you build trust? I explained that we can begin by sharing our past. It is important that we take the time to share their story and life experiences during the first meeting. Tell your history and background of working in the church; Talk about a specific mentoring experience, whether that involves another person you’ve helped or a personal experience you had with a mentor when you were just starting out in the church. It is also important to understand your mentee’s background. How long have they been serving in the church? What are their short-term and long-term goals? What makes them passionate about serving the Lord? What is their understanding of the mission of God for the church? Another important way to build trust is to establish confidentiality right away. Many young adult mentees may be leery about sharing their ideas with other people, so make sure it is clear that what’s discussed in your meetings is confidential. And if you have information about the mentee that you would like to share with someone else—say, if you would like to make a referral or request advice from another person, let your mentee know about it first, and make sure they are comfortable with potentially involving a third party.

I further explained that it is also important that as the mentor, take the initiative to contact your mentee for updates. It not only shows the mentee that you have a true interest in helping them succeed, but helps to ensure they are staying on track. If your mentee contacts you with an issue, be sure to provide timely feedback. The longer it takes you as a mentor to respond, the more the mentee will begin to doubt whether the question is worth asking. Assure them their questions and concerns are valid. Also, be a good coach. Remember that you are there to provide encouragement and guidance, not just revealing all your personal experiences. It’s not

enough to simply advise a younger leader but at times, learn side by side with them. Much like a coach, you should look to help shape the spiritual training and development of your mentee around their spiritual gifts and abilities. Often mentees are pictured as miniature versions of their mentor. However, many times your stories will differ from those of the mentee you are assisting. It is more helpful to the trust-building process to acknowledge your differences. Often differences in education, gender, and race can make a mentee reluctant to open up. I read a quote from Anthony Hughes, “Great mentors are made by great mentees—they are the yin to each other’s yang.” Keep in mind that especially at first, it is not uncommon for a mentee to resist your guidance or go against your suggestions. If they go against your guidance and succeed, let them know that sometimes it is good to go with their instincts. If they go against your guidance and fail, let them know that it is also part of the process.”¹⁰⁹

We then explored the 2 Timothy 2:1-2 text, “You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.” I explained that Timothy appears in the New Testament as perhaps Paul’s most trusted assistant. Writing to Timothy years later, Paul remains impressed with the women of Timothy’s family, recognizing in them their sincere and abiding faith (2 Timothy 1:5). This, no doubt, further enabled Paul to trust in the young Timothy. Paul saw something in this young man of deep value for the preaching of the gospel. Sometimes in the church, there is a level of trust in a younger person that can develop from knowing that person’s family and spiritual history. I further explained

I explained further that Paul carefully selected Timothy to work with him in the ministry, equipped him for ministerial tasks, empowered him for success, employed him in a

¹⁰⁹ Anthony Hughes, “*Eight Ways Mentors Can Establish Trust*,” JumpStart, Inc. Blog, April 13, 2013, Accessed: September 17, 2013, www.jumpstartinc.org/8-ways-mentors-establish-trust/

challenging work environment and communicated to Timothy the value of their relationship. By doing these things, the level of trust between the two increased. Timothy is clearly an inheritor along with the others whom Paul engaged in ministry, of the mantle of Paul.

I asked the participants the question, “Why did Paul trust Timothy?”

- (1) One participant said, “It was because Paul was led by the Spirit to do so.”
- (2) One participant noted, “Paul must have known something about Timothy beforehand.”

I explained that Paul was indeed impressed with Timothy’s excellent reputation and presence and asked him to join in his mission. Paul’s awareness of both Timothy’s personality and the nature of ministry gave him the assurance that Timothy was well-suited for serving as a witness to God’s kingdom.

I introduced to the group the five keys to developing trust based on the Nehemiah model.¹¹⁰ I explained the five keys to developing trust based on the Old Testament account of Nehemiah. Nehemiah secured the help of King Xerxes, and he followed God’s directions to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem which had laid waste for many years. The first key is to face reality. As leaders, it is extremely important that we deal with what is happening in the life of the church and not what we wish were happening. The first step toward becoming a trustworthy leader is to have and share an objective view of the facts. We must resist tangling up the facts with our ego. When leaders face reality and say what everyone knows but does not want to publicly acknowledge, we demonstrate a commitment to truth and instill confidence in our leadership. Second key is to seek the Lord. When Nehemiah received the terrible news about the condition of the wall of Jerusalem and the defenseless state of the Israelites, he was greatly distressed. He cried, mourned, fasted, and prayed for days, seeking God’s direction. He engaged in self-reflection, confession, and prepared an action plan. I then asked the participants, “When is the last time that you cried, mourned, fasted for some time, seeking to hear from the Lord?”

- (1) One participant stated, “I have cried but I haven’t done well in those other areas.”

¹¹⁰ Carolyn Taketa. *Five Essentials to Building Trust in Your Ministry*, Christianity Today, November 17, 2016. Accessed January 8, 2023, www.cchristianitytoday.com/women-leaders/2016/november/fiveessentials-to-build-trust-on-your-ministry-team

- (2) One participant stated. “We all (leaders) need to do more than just pray, we need to practice fasting more often.”

The third key to trust-building in Nehemiah is to align with the church’s vision.

Nehemiah knew he needed the king’s help to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem. As the king’s cupbearer, Nehemiah had access to the king and some sort of relationship developed. Over time, he built a close trusting relationship. Nehemiah humbly and boldly asked for the king’s favor and made clear and specific requests that were granted. I asked the question, “Have you served the church in a way that builds trust? Responses were generally a “Yes, I try to.” I explained that a safe way to do so is to align your goals to the greater vision of the church. Too often, some leader’s goals and the church’s goals; are not the same. Remember you are part of a larger team and being an effective team player means you adopt the greater church vision and align your area of ministry with it. This must be communicated clearly and consistently to your mentee. Be willing to share and discuss your vision with your mentee!

I explained, just as Paul did for Timothy, the fourth step involves investing in your mentee. After Nehemiah assembled a team to work on the wall, he was strategic in assigning different families and tribes to build various sections of the wall. Nehemiah knew their names, and family histories, and was clear about who was doing what. Each mentee has a unique set of strengths, weaknesses, skills, and temperament. If you as a mentor, want to help develop a strong mentee, you must spend some time getting to know them. You may not like your mentee and they may not like you, but as their mentor, you are obligated to invest in them. You can do this by giving honest, helpful feedback and providing resources for them to grow in their spiritual formation and development.

I further explained that the fifth and last step in the Nehemiah model is being a giver. Nehemiah pointed out that for 12 years, he and his men did not use the official food allowance,

demand land, or take advantage of the people in any way. Instead, they devoted themselves to working on the wall along with everyone else. Nehemiah also fed hundreds of people every day from his own resources to help lessen the burden on the people. In addition, be a humble, compassionate, and sacrificing leader who loved the Lord. Nehemiah gave generously of himself because he had reverence for God and a higher calling that dictated his behavior. We, like Nehemiah, have been called of God to be givers. Christ calls us to be givers—those who tend to the needs of others above our own. A giver leads by example, humbly rolling up their sleeves and doing whatever needs to be done to accomplish the goal. A senior leader who consistently serves others builds trust and helps to develop a mentee who can become an effective leader I concluded by asking a participant to read Acts 20:35. “In all this, I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

After the lesson participants were asked “What did you gain most from today’s session?”

- (1) One participant said, “If we all (leaders) would get on the same page as Nehemiah and Israel, we could build our new church sanctuary.”
- (2) One participant stated, “This is something all our church leaders and members need to know and understand. We need to come together.”

I closed with prayer and reminded participants to make sure any needed paperwork for the administrative assistant was completed and to make themselves welcome to the refreshments.

Week Three Training Session: Understanding Holy Listening in the Mentoring Process

(September 30, 2023)

While the experimental group (mentors) were gathering themselves, fellowshiping, and preparing for today's session, I asked for a volunteer to lead us in prayer. Prayer was offered and I introduced the learning objectives for this session: 1) To understand the basics of Holy Listening as a spiritual resource; 2) to develop an understanding of holy listening through practice; 3) to demonstrate how holy listening is connected to the Christian concept of calling through an examination of the Elijah-Elisha relationship; 4) to learn how to use holy listening as a tool to hear God's voice in the church community and in one's own discernment of calling. Before giving an overview of holy listening, I asked the following question: "What do you think holy listening is?"

- (1) One participant responded, "It is trying to hear what God has to say."
- (2) One participant stated, "It is having an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to a person."
- (3) One participant stated, "It is being able to hear the Holy Spirit when speaking."
- (4) One participant noted, "We must be holy ourselves in order to be able to hear holy."

Before discussing the overview, I thanked participants for their responses. The purpose for the question was to serve as a lead-in to the overview of holy listening. I explained that it is considered by some that the primary Christian spiritual practice is listening. For example, we listen to scripture, to sermons, to hymns. We listen for the voice of God in prayer, in silence, in spiritual practices. We listen to other Christians' stories, confessions, struggles, joys, and

testimonies. Holy Listening in a practical sense, may be considered extremely simple, but it is also extremely powerful. It is a way for us to focus our attention and practice the art of listening well. It is similar to active listening, but not the same. In active listening, we seek to fully understand and help the other person feel heard. In Holy listening the goal is really to listen in a way that creates a holy space for someone's story to fully emerge so that they can be more in touch with how God is working in their life.

I then introduced participants to the practice of holy listening by listing measures that mentors can engage in as a way of improving their holy listening abilities. Holy listening is quite different from everyday listening, where often we listen to what is being said only enough to form a response. Holy listening invites us to slow down, take a look around, and create space between us to speak the truths of our lives aloud to one another. We focus on the speaker, as the listener practices a disciplined posture of care, hospitality, relaxed awareness, and attentiveness. We are invited to "listen to another person in the way we listen to scripture."

I then introduced the following quote from Douglas Steere concerning the sacredness of the practice of holy listening: "To 'listen' another's soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another. Every generation of believers needs to be able to practice holy listening so that the powerful stories of how God has intervened in the church community's lives can be passed on from generation to generation."¹¹¹ I explained the primary purpose for the mentoring ministry was to help bridge the gap between generations in the church. We can learn though holy listening more clearly the

¹¹¹ Douglas Steere, *Gleaning: A Random Honor*, (Nashville: Upper Room Publishers, 1986), 80-84.

stories of God as revealed to us through his Word. When we develop holy listening ability, it opens new worlds of understanding and communication. We begin to do something that is phenomenal, we may begin to notice the presence of God in other people's stories as well as our own.

I then asked participants the following reflection question: "When have you experienced this kind of listening?"

(1) One participant stated, "It is hard to get people to stop and take the time to listen."

(2) One participant noted, "We talk at people, not talk to them, let alone listen to them."

(3) One participant noted, "To have a close friend who seems to care enough to listen."

We then explored holy listening in the Elijah-Elisha mentoring relationship. I explained that Elijah was the mentor of Elisha. Elijah asked Elisha what would he have him do for him before he was taken away. Elisha stated he wanted a double portion of Elijah's spirit. They made a deal that if Elisha saw Elijah being taken away, then he could indeed receive the double portion. Elisha witnessed this miraculous, supernatural event, and the prophetic mantle of Elijah and a double portion of his spirit fell on Elisha. As a result, he did twice as many miracles as Elijah thus confirming the oath/promise. On the way to Damascus, God instructed Elijah, "Do yourself a favor. Make a holy friend, anoint your successor, Elisha, the son of Shapat as a prophet to take your place." So, the prophet Elijah listened to the voice of God and set out from there and found the young Elisha out plowing the field on his parents' farm. God had glimpsed something in the young Elisha that no one had seen before. Elisha had the courage to discern and listen to the voice of God and accept the prophet's call. For a decade, Elijah, and Elisha

were bound together in holy friendship. It was long enough for Elijah to become Elisha's spiritual father and for Elisha to understand and take on the heavy mantle of the prophet.

I explained further that it can be understood Elijah's fiery chariot ride to heaven was God's sign of assurance to the young Elisha that all would be well. It was the experience of holy listening, the "still, small voice" that Elijah experienced when he needed God's assurance on Mount Horeb. Elijah's departure in the fiery chariot could have been a major spectacle admired by thousands, but instead, only one person was present to see Elijah's brilliant ascension and that was Elisha. Fifty prophets standing on the other side of the Jordan River, no doubt saw the whirlwind, but only Elisha saw the fiery chariot that carried his mentor Elijah away. It was that last image of the prophet that gave young Elisha the courage and strength to take up the mantle of Elijah, and trust that he could move forward and now part the water of the River Jordan as his mentor had done. Sometimes the gifts of holy friends and holy listening are often personal, and private.

We then engaged in a practical holy listening learning activity and I asked participants to pair up with one another. One would talk while the other listened. The one listening was to not interfere, stop, ask questions, etc., but were to simply listen attentively for two minutes. another participant and to decide who would be speaking and who would listen. For two minutes they were to just listen. Decide who will share first, and who will share second. Once we begin, you will have 2 minutes in silence to think, and then 2 minutes each to share a story based on a prompt I gave them. "Give your full attention. Pretend that you have all the time in the world

even though you only have 2 minutes.” The one who was speaking was asked to be sincere. I then gave them the following prompt: Tell a story about a time when someone took you or your gifts seriously? We then took a one-minute break while the participants reversed their roles. I reminded the second participants they had two minutes as well to tell their story. After this brief learning activity, I asked, “How did that feel?” “What about it was hard?” “How did it feel to be the one listened to?” “How did it feel to speak without interruption?” “How did it feel to talk about your gifts? Was it hard? Easy? “Why don’t we normally listen like this?” “How do you think our relationships and church community might be different if members listened to each other in this way?

- (1) One participant stated, “This (practicing holy listening) makes a big difference. It makes you feel like you are worth something to another.”
- (2) One participant said, “You can really tell the difference. It helped me to focus on the other person more.”
- (3) One participant noted, “I have never done anything like this before but I know one thing, it made me feel different about myself and the other person.”

In concluding this session, I repeated the quote from Douglass Steere: “To ‘listen’ another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another. Just the act of listening, deeply listening, to the proclaimed truth of another can be a powerful act—and can open us up to our own stories, to the presence of God, and to the ways in which God is calling us.”¹¹² I closed out the session with prayer and thanked everyone for engaging themselves in the practice of holy listening to not forget to check with the administrative assistant to sign any paperwork and to grab some refreshments.

¹¹² Ibid, 84.

Week Four Training Session: Understanding and Discerning the Call to Obedience

(October 7, 2023)

I opened this session as always, with a prayer and thanks to each participant for their involvement in this project. This is week four and I reiterated to them how important they were to the success of this effort at Mount Olive. I explained that the session goals were 1) to consider the calling of God to discipleship as a call to obedience; 2) to investigate the words of Jesus in Luke 6:40 as a call to obedience; 3) to understand the calling of the Twelve in Luke-Acts as a call to obedience, and 4) to examine the relationship between mentorship and discipleship.

We then explored the words of Jesus found in Luke 6:40: “A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. I explained that Jesus made it clear that a disciple is molded into the image of his teacher, and it is necessary to pick the right teacher. A call to bear one’s cross as part of following Jesus, then, is a call to be as submitted to Christ. Therefore, when Jesus calls us to self-denial and cross-bearing, he is claiming authority. Our following of Christ means our disowning of self and giving allegiance and obedience to him instead. I further explained that Jesus’ goal as a teacher was not his own self-promotion, but He was focused on molding and mentoring his followers into faithful and obedient disciples. We follow: The call of Christ to Peter and Andrew his brother was “follow me” (Matthew 4:19). This is the same appeal made to James, and to John. A faithful disciple follows the one who is disciplining. As spiritual disciples who call ourselves Christians, we are to follow Christ. The Call is to “Come” to obedience. Jesus says for us to “Follow me,” to ministry-” I will make you fishers of people.”

I explained that as part of our commitment to the call to obedience in Christ is to train and to teach others. Jesus taught his disciples to become mentors to others like he was to them. We learned earlier that this principle was passed on by Paul to his young mentee Timothy. “And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able

to teach others as well” (2 Timothy 2:2). We are called to be the disciples of Jesus, so let him mentor each of us, mold us, and make you what He wants us to be, and then pass it on to the next generation. Then pass it on.

We then did an exploration into Luke chapter nine where I explained that Jesus has once again has sanctioned through divine testimony, this time through a divine voice (holy listening) at the time of His transfiguration (28-36). This is important because Jesus has just told His disciples of His coming arrest, death, and resurrection (9:2). The divine testimony serves to demonstrate approval of Jesus’ obedience to God’s plans for His future. This testimony also serves as a divine command, ordering the disciples to pay attention to what Jesus is saying. The question then and the question now for modern disciples is, will we indeed be obedient and faithful to our Teacher (Holy Spirit) also? “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Revelation 2:29).

I then asked participants the question: “How does a person learn to live this kind of obedient life?”

- (1) One responded, “By staying in God’s word each and every day and meditating over it.”
- (2) Another participant stated, “It is hard to do really, but being around the right people and growing in the understanding of the Word is a big help.”
- (3) One participant noted, “We can do all things through Christ; the key is knowing and doing what God ask us to do.”
- (4) Another participant added, “When it comes down to it, if you want to, with God’s help you can live (obediently).”

I closed the session out by reminding participants that as mentors, we need to examine our own lives to make certain that we are trying to live as obediently as we can. As mentors, there is no authority on anyone’s part to teach another what you are not conforming to yourself. Jesus was our prime example of mentoring. He modeled the behavior he sought from his disciples. As Christians, we learn from other Christian examples, making it necessary for us to

model what is right. We are called to discipleship, and mentoring is a means by which we can be taught and then be able to teach others. I asked a volunteer to read Luke 6:40 again: “A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher.” I then thanked each participant for their time and efforts in making this project possible. Are there any closing comments or questions?

- (1) One participant noted, “I have really enjoyed this; when will we get another opportunity to do this (training) again?”
- (2) Another participant noted, “All church leaders need to take part in something like this; it would really help our church.”
- (3) One participant stated, “This should be mandatory for all leaders and then for the church as well.”
- (4) One participant concluded, “I just hope that I can remember to do all of this; I need to see this over and over again.”

I then asked for a volunteer to lead us in prayer and to bless our refreshments. I wished all well in their final session with their mentees.

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