

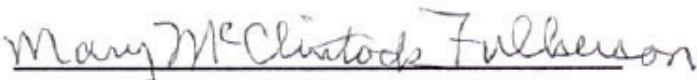
TRANSFORMATIONAL MENTORING FOR MINISTRY

By

Jennifer Lynn Graffius

Date: 3/27/2019

Approved:


Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Supervisor


William Willimon, D.Min. Director

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry
in the Divinity School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

Over and over again, research has proven that good mentors are essential for the advancement of ministers-in-training. There is significant emerging research on the life-long impact that mentoring has on individuals who are preparing for vocational ministry. This work is written to mentors of ministers-in-training. In this dissertation, I will take a deep-dive into the emerging research. Particularly noteworthy is the work of Dr. Matthew Bloom at the University of Notre Dame study, *Flourishing in Ministry*. This research has shown that mentors are one of the most important factors in the well-being of a person in ministry (especially early on in the formation of a person in ministry). Role models and mentors shape an individual's journey into ministry. In this work, I will closely examine four movements of transformational mentoring: selection, shepherding, sponsoring, and sending.

In the scriptures we are called into a new way of thinking about mentoring. I have leaned into the words of Romans 12:1-2 in this work. The Romans 12 model cautions us with “do not be conformed” and calls us instead to “be transformed.” Mentoring is not meant to be a model of duplication that leads to repetition of the same patterns. We are called to live outside of the predetermined mold and to live into transformation. Transformational Mentoring is the process of mentoring people to become that which we may not yet be able to see or know. They become more fully the person that God has created them to be, and in the process they learn to use their unique gifting in their ministry—they begin to flourish. Transformational mentoring allows an individual to fully be the person God has created them to be without the

pressure of being duplicated into a particular expected mold. When a person is being transformed, they begin to live outside of the expectations imposed upon them, and they begin to see themselves through God's lenses. For one to flourish in ministry, they must be invited into a process that allows for transformation to occur. Transformational mentoring allows God's presence and power shape a person. Thus, creating something new and beautiful and healthy and flourishing.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family.

To my parents, John and Patricia, who have believed in me, invested in me, and sacrificed so that I would have the opportunity to achieve my dreams. Thank you, mom and dad, for helping me reach for the stars.

To my siblings, Ann-Marie, Joseph, Kailyn, and my brother-in-law, Philip. For being the iron that sharpens iron in my life. You are irreplaceable.

To my niece, Adelynn, and nephew, Connor. You are a joy and delight and have given me my favorite title—Gigi.

To my grandmothers, Lorean Billodue Graffius, Annie Bracken O'Connor, and Donna Graffius. The most resilient, faithful, strong, and hilarious women I know. I am honored to share a family legacy with such amazing women.

This work is also dedicated to the mentors and mentees in my life. Thank you for teaching me what it looks like to journey with another person.

Finally, to my Duke colleagues, what an amazing journey this has been. It is a joy to forever be part of the 2015 Duke Doctor of Ministry Cohort.

*Gone are all the days of old.
Gone are all the days so cold.
Spring has come, and I can see
the blossoms now upon the trees.
God can do all things with me.
He can make it to bloom once more.
Now that spring has come
and the old has gone.
-Annie O'Connor*

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TRANSFORMATIONAL MENTORING FOR MINISTRY
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

“Ministry in the name of Jesus is too demanding for a solo performance,” asserts Will Willimon.¹ He further declares, “It is foolhardy for anyone to attempt to be a mission leader in the name of Christ without the supervision, accountability, support, advice, humor, and receptivity that characterize good mentoring.”² People need good mentors. The church needs ministers who have relationships with good mentors. What does it look like to mentor pastors-in-training for the long-haul work of ministry? How can those who are charged with raising up young leaders in the work of the ministry make a lasting impact in the lives of these ministers in training?

I am the Associate Director of the Center for Vocational Ministry at Azusa Pacific University overseeing the undergraduate and graduate ministry mentoring programs, and I am the grant director for Vocāre, a 5-Year BA to MA in Pastoral Studies degree program in the School of Theology. Azusa Pacific University (APU) is a Christian liberal arts university in southern California. Its roots are in the Free Methodist tradition, and the student body would be largely classified as evangelical Christians from free-church denominations (or non-denominations). The Center for Vocational Ministry (CVM) at APU in Azusa, CA exists to cultivate resilience in ministry students and leaders through formational resources, research, and relationships. My role in CVM consists of overseeing mentoring and helping students discern the next best steps for their call into

¹ Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byassee, and James C. Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 48.

² *Ibid.*, 49.

ministry (including making decisions about seminary and graduate school). I work closely with our students who are preparing for ministry, and ensure that we are instilling resilience practices in our students through the mentoring process.

Good mentoring produces good mentors. There is growing evidence that suggests that individuals who have been in a previous mentoring relationship, whether as a mentor or mentee, are more willing to mentor others. Those who have not been in a previous mentoring relationship report a greater sense of cost and a lower sense of benefits in mentoring others.³ While not all pastors are good mentors, there are many people who, with support and encouragement, could be good mentors. Over and over again, research has proven that good mentors are essential for the advancement of ministers-in-training.

Why Mentoring Matters

There is significant emerging research on the mentoring of individuals who are preparing for vocational ministry that we must pay attention to because good mentoring produces life-long impact. Research supports the claim that mentoring is of significant importance to the success and overall wellness of individuals who are growing in their fields of study. The study, *Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Protégés: A Meta-Analysis*, confirms the hypothesis that states, “As purposeful relationships designed to bring about individual change, growth, and development, mentoring theory suggest that mentorships should be inherently linked to career

³ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 32.

success.”⁴ This study further highlights the fact that mentoring is related to important career outcomes such as salary level, promotion rate, and job satisfaction. Carol McKeen and Merridee Bujaki describe the beneficial outcomes of mentoring as having a career or personal impact. Wanberg defines them as *distal* and *proximal* outcomes. “Career or distal benefits can be either subjective or objective. Objective career benefits include the following: more promotions, greater compensation, more career mobility, and faster advancement. Subjective career benefits include more career satisfaction, more career commitment, more career planning, more organizational socialization, more self-esteem at work, more job satisfaction, more job involvement, lower turnover intentions, more organizational power, and relational attributes described as *growth-in-connection*.”⁵

The value of mentoring is also found in studies of people preparing for vocational ministry—particularly noteworthy is the University of Notre Dame study, *Flourishing in Ministry*. This research has shown that mentors are one of the most important factors in the well-being of a person in ministry (especially early on in the formation of a person in ministry).⁶ One of the most notable insights obtained in the “becoming a pastor” (mentoring) portion of the study was the very profound and

⁴ Allen, Tammy D., Lillian T. Eby, Mark L. Poteet, Elizabeth Lentz, and Lizzette Lima. "Career Benefits Associated With Mentoring for Protégés: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89, no. 1 (2004): 127-36. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.89.1.127.

⁵ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 198.

⁶ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 32.

important way role models and mentors shape individuals' journeys into ministry.⁷ With a deeper dive into the findings on women in the emerging research from the *Flourishing in Ministry* study, it has been very clear and repeatedly emphasized that strong female exemplars have an extremely positive impact on clergy women's development as individuals and professionals.⁸

Mentoring Well

Based on experience and research, it is safe to say that mentoring is significantly important in shaping the lives of individuals who are preparing for ministry. But what are the best practices for mentoring that is transformational and how do we implement these practices? For some institutions, the response has been to implement formal mentoring programs in an attempt to obtain the potential benefits of mentoring relationships. Often these are assigned relationships and there is a sense of requirement attached to mentoring.⁹ However, more and more evidence indicates that these assigned relationships do not deliver the same benefits as the naturally occurring mentoring relationships do. The *Flourishing in Ministry* study has found that formal mentoring programs have not provided the most effective mentoring. They explain, We also find that "the best mentoring relationships seem to develop when individuals have opportunities to sense deep similarity in each other."¹⁰

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Yeagley, Manuela Casti, PhD. "Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church", 6.

⁹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

It is clear that the mentoring of pastors-in-training cannot be boiled down to one catch-all system. Mentoring is not one-size-fits-all—just as humans are not one-size-fits-all. However, there are key touchpoints in the mentoring journey that are visited and re-visited.

Flourishing in Ministry: The Four Dimensions of Flourishing in Ministry

The *Flourishing in Ministry* study is a positive psychology approach to finding insights about the positive sides of ministry. What do the ministers who are not inching toward burnout look like? How do their lives differ from those who are finding themselves in the shadow-side of ministry vocations? Dr. Matthew Bloom, lead researcher on this project, explains that wellbeing is life at its best. Making a comparison of wellness and wellbeing, Bloom asserts, “Wellness is typically used for our physical health while wellbeing is used for our psychological, social, and spiritual healthy. Wellness is about a healthy body and mind; wellbeing is about a flourishing life.”¹¹

This study takes a deep dive into wellbeing in ministry, and through the *Flourishing in Ministry* study, they have identified four major dimensions of wellbeing in ministry. These four dimensions are: Everyday Happiness, Resilience, Self-Integrity, and Thriving.¹² Happiness encompasses the emotional and subjective day-to-day lives of ministers. Physical health, stress, and emotions play into one’s everyday happiness, and it has been discovered that this everyday happiness (or unhappiness is cumulative).

¹¹ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6-7.

Resilience is how we adapt and respond to the stressors and challenges presented to us in life. It also includes our capacity to grow and develop new skills and capabilities. Self-Integrity involves our view of ourselves. It is what we believe about who we are in our whole person--physical, spiritual, emotional, social beings. What is our self-worth, and how much respect do we have for ourselves, and, thus, for others? Finally, thriving involves the meaning we experience in our lives. What kinds of connections do we maintain with other people? What believes inspire and drive us?¹³ The *Flourishing in Ministry* model looks like this:



These four dimensions and the work of the *Flourishing in Ministry* study will serve as foundational to the development of a framework for transformational mentoring.

Keeping in mind the four dimensions of *Flourishing in Ministry*, this project will seek to

¹³ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 6-7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

identify a framework for mentors of ministers-in-training and will seek to identify key practices in ushering in a lifetime of wellbeing in ministers early in their calls.

Transformation: A Biblical Framework for Mentoring

The twelfth chapter of the book of Romans provides for us some insight into what transformation should look like. Romans is a letter written to the Christians in Rome in 58 C.E. The letter itself reveals possible reasons for Paul's writing to the Roman church. Some suspect that there may be some tension between the gentile Christians and the returned Jewish Christians on the basis of Paul insisting "that the current Jewish rejection of the gospel does not imply that Israel's election is now annulled."¹⁵ The first eleven chapters of Romans make a case for God's righteous redemption of a fallen creation, and chapter twelve begins an ethical section of the epistle. Paul establishes the groundwork to make these ethical statements in the first eleven chapters. Therefore, he can urge the people to present themselves as living sacrifices to God on the basis of God's righteousness.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship." (Rom 12:1) Paul makes this bold statement after having established a case for the triumph of God's grace in the first eleven chapters of Romans. Romans 12 is an application of that great grace, which allows for transformation.

Romans 12:1-2 contrasts being conformed with being transformed.

¹⁵ *The Harper-Collins Study Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1989), 2114.

- Conformed: From Greek word συσχηματιζεσθε meaning “to be conformed to, be shaped by, live after the pattern of.”¹⁶ It is also described as “to form according to a pattern or mold, form/model after something.”¹⁷
- Transformed: From Greek μεταμορφουσθε meaning, “be changed in form, be transformed.”¹⁸ Also, “to change inwardly in fundamental character or condition, be changed, transformed.”¹⁹

Romans 12 offers us a new framework for mentoring. So much of mentoring looks and sounds something like: find someone who is doing something that you see yourself doing and become more like them. We see this model in the corporate world and in the church. We encourage people to find a mentor whose “pattern” is like the one they want to fit into. The mentor, then, becomes what Lois Zachary describes as the “sage on the stage.”²⁰ This is a conforming model of mentoring. It is a model of duplication that leads to repetition of the same patterns. To be conformed is to try to squeeze one into a pre-established mold in order to make that person take on the shape of the pattern. Mentoring with transformation in mind is mentoring people to become that which we may not be able to see or know yet. They may take on a new shape and look differently from their mentor. This is accomplished by the mentor’s role take less of a “sage on the stage” role and becoming more of a “guide on the side.” In order for

¹⁶ Bibleworks

¹⁷ Frederick William Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 979.

¹⁸ Bibleworks

¹⁹ Frederick William Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 639.

²⁰ Lois J. Zachary, The Mentors Guide (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 3.

transformation to occur, it must be understood that the mentee will not passively sit at the feet of the mentor and receive knowledge.²¹ Rather it is a partnership where the mentor facilitates the opportunity for transformation. Transformational mentoring leads to flourishing. It allows an individual to fully live into being the person God has created them to be without the pressure of being duplicated into an imposed pattern.

God's grace transforms us. However, this transformation does not begin outwardly. It begins with a renewing of our minds. It alters our perspective and changes our view. We begin to live outside of the molds society (and the church) may try to lay out for us, and we see things through God's eyes. Another way of reading verse two is, "Do not let yourselves be shaped by what everyone else does, but rather let yourselves be transformed by a whole new way of thinking, so you can discern what conforms to God's will, namely what is truly good and pleasing, and perfect."²²

In the journey into transformation, mentors walk with their mentees as they begin to identify the theology that has deeply formed them as they have grown up in the faith into new seasons where they are theologically formed by their learning and experiences. In their book *How to Think Theologically*, Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke describe this as a movement from *embedded theology* to a *deliberative theology*. Stone and Duke explain, "Christians learn what faith is all about from countless daily encounters with their Christianity—formal and informal, planned and unplanned. This understanding of faith, disseminated by the church and assimilated by its members in

²¹ Ibid.

²² Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans: Interpretation*, (Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1989), 195-196.

their daily lives, will be called embedded theology.”²³ In transformation, oftentimes the embedded theology of an individual is challenged and deepened and refined. Thus, deliberative theology emerges. Deliberative theology, according to Stone and Duke, is “the understanding of faith that emerges from a process of carefully reflecting upon embedded theological convictions. This sort of reflection is sometimes called second-order theology, in that it follows upon and looks back over the implicit understandings embedded in the life of faith.”²⁴

Speaking of a new view and perspective, the *Flourishing in Ministry* project has revealed important findings related to the actual view of women in ministry. Manuela Casti Yeagley explains that research tells us “that when young girls and boys grow up in contexts where women in positions of religious authority are uncommon, rare, or absent, they internalize an expectations that positions of leadership may be occupied by men only.”²⁵ The transformation of the views of children in the church begins very early in their developmental process. What people actually see impacts their perspective.

For one to flourish in ministry, they must be invited into a process that allows for transformation to occur. Mentoring with duplication in mind will continue to produce cookie-cutter designed pastors who eventually burn out. Transformational mentoring discards the mold and allows God’s presence and power shape a person. Thus, creating something new and beautiful and healthy and thriving.

²³ Stone, Howard W., and James O. Duke. 2013. *How to Think Theologically*. Vol. THIRD edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 20.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁵ Yeagley, Manuela Casti, PhD. "Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church, 9."

Where Are We Now?

The mentoring process begins to foster the ways of thinking, habits, knowledge and skills that will be cultivated throughout the life of the pastor-in-training. It is an invitation to the student to participate in the creative activity of God. By doing this, *Educating Clergy* explains, the formative task of the educator is “to foster the pastoral imagination, they not only advance but also embody religious knowledge; not only develop professional competency in their students but also nurture authenticity and integrity of faith or observance in religious leadership.”²⁶

The *Flourishing in Ministry* study has uncovered important factors that lead to the “darker side of life in ministry: job stress, burnout, and fatigue.” This study has also highlighted the fact that relationships significantly impact the well-being of people in ministry. These relationships have profound and lasting effects on the overall health of a pastor. Dr. Matthew Bloom, explains, “Clergy who really do work alone, without vital connections to other people, face among the most powerful challenges to sustained well-being. Our data concurs with a vast body of social science research that strongly suggests no person can withstand isolation very long without suffering serious consequences.”²⁷ This study proves that relationships significantly impact a minister’s well-being. Isolation kills flourishing in ministry. The mentoring relationship is much more than simply “hanging out” or advice-giving. It can be a primary vehicle to transform a minister’s overall flourishing throughout their life in ministry when it is done

²⁶ Charles R Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

well. Fostering an orientation toward mentoring early in minister's life is a key to setting them up for life-long flourishing in ministry.

Where We Are Heading?

Emerging work and research indicates that, just as there are factors that contribute to burnout, so, too, are there are factors that contribute to thriving in ministry. The work of Matthew Bloom, Ronald Heifetz, Peter Scazzero, and others, paint a picture of what transformation and flourishing look like. Those who are journeying closely with ministers-in-training can draw from this emerging work in order to develop a robust view of transformational mentoring.

The work of Ronald Heifetz on the Adaptive Leadership model contributes in helpful ways to an approach to mentoring for ministry that is focused on transformation. Ronald Heifetz explains, "Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive."²⁸ Heifetz, explains that the use of the adaptive leadership model helps a leader manage their perspective. He asserts, "To diagnose a system or yourself while in the midst of action requires the ability to achieve some distance from those on-the-ground events."²⁹ He continues, "We use the metaphor of 'getting on the balcony' above the 'dance floor' to depict what it means to gain the distanced perspective you need to see what is really happening."³⁰ The integration of adaptive leadership into a transformational model will offer tools for

²⁸ Heifetz, Ronald A., Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and The World*. (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14.

²⁹ Ibid., 7.

³⁰ Ibid.

students to manage change in their own lives and ministries and will offer key resources as they lead in various ministry settings.

While adaptive leadership offers a helpful framework for assessing leadership, one cannot stop here to navigate the challenges that today's leaders will face. Dave Odom of Duke's Leadership Education Institute explains that transformative leadership is what is needed for today's leaders. In explaining what it means to be transformative, he asserts, "Mindsets are the default patterns of thinking we use to interpret the world, frame situations, contextualize relationships and respond to leadership challenges. These mindsets emerge from our experiences, but they also are shaped by the activities in which we engage, which establish our habits. A mindset that works well for us at one point in our lives may serve us poorly in another."³¹ Habits, Odom explains, are key to transformative leadership. Mentoring is the starting point for the cultivation of habits leading to flourishing in the life of a person preparing for ministry.

The value of mentoring is also found in studies of people preparing for vocational ministry—particularly noteworthy is the University of Notre Dame study, *Flourishing in Ministry*. This research has shown that mentors are one of the most important factors in the well-being of a person in ministry (especially early on in the formation of a person in ministry).³² One of the most notable insights obtained in the

³¹ Odom, David. https://www.faithandleadership.com/content/dave-odom-habits-are-key-transformative-leadership?utm_source=conceptpage&utm_medium=principle&utm_campaign=transformativeleadership

³² *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 32.

“becoming a pastor” (mentoring) portion of the study was the very profound and important way role models and mentors shape individuals’ journeys into ministry.³³ Mentors help their mentees develop positive images of the pastor they can become (ideal possible selves).³⁴ Mentors share from their own life experiences and become on-going wise guides. As time goes on, it is not unusual for a mentor-mentee relationship to develop into friendship. Another point of significant importance is the positive influence of strong, positive friendships with other pastors. Bloom asserts, “So far, all the data tell us that relationships among pastors are vitally important for clergy well-being.”³⁵

The emerging research on thriving in ministry sets the table for the development of a robust and transformational framework for mentoring ministers-in-training. So, how do we do this? How do we become mentors who are not satisfied with duplication models that promote mass production of the same kind of leader? Rather, how do we prepare our rising leaders for the long-haul work of ministry in Christ’s church?

Mentoring is our participation in God’s transformative work. The approach to transformational mentoring involves four key coordinates: Selection, Shepherding, Sponsoring, and Sending. These four aspects of transformational mentoring may be visited and revisited in a mentoring relationship. They are key to the ushering in of transformation in the life of a minister-in-training.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Mentoring Defined and Refined

The term *mentor* dates back to Greek mythology. The story of Mentor appears in Homer's *The Odyssey* from around 800 BC. Mentor was the faithful companion of Odysseus, the King of Ithaca. Odysseus was heading out to the Trojan Wars. So, before he left, he instructed Mentor to stay in Ithaca and to be fully in charge of the royal household. Part of these duties included raising King Odysseus' son, Telemachus. Mentor was charged with the responsibility of preparing Telemachus to take over the throne when the time came. "This meant that Mentor had to be a father figure, a teacher, a role model, an approachable counsellor, a trusted adviser, a challenger, an encourager, among other things, to the young Telemachus in order that he become, in time, a wise and good ruler," explains Carter and Caldwell in their book *The Return of the Mentor*.³⁶ There were times in Greek mythology where Athene, the Goddess of Wisdom, would assume the form of Mentor. So, the attributes of mother and wisdom should also be ascribed to Mentor.³⁷ Mentor's role was to journey with Telemachus as he grew from boyhood to the throne.

It is worth noting that while the term *mentor* emerges from Greek mythology, however, we see evidence of mentoring relationships long before 800 BC. Biblical figures such as Moses and Joshua and Elijah and Elisha are clearly in mentoring relationships. These are relationships where a wise guide is walking along a young protégé, guiding them into the next steps of their life...and of their calls. The term

³⁶ Carter, Earl M. A., and Brian Caldwell. *The return of the mentor: strategies for workplace learning*. (London: Falmer Press, 1993), 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

protégé emerged from the protective aspect of the role of Mentor. Protégé is from the French word *protéger* which means to protect. Throughout the centuries, protection and development have been at the core of what has been meant by mentoring.

Dr. J. Robert Clinton has done a significant amount of writing about mentoring and leadership. In his work, he explores the various stages of becoming a leader. Clinton has identified these stages through careful observation of scripture and of people, noting that titles do not necessarily determine actual leadership growth, and the stages of becoming a leader are not necessarily dependent upon chronological age. Clinton dives into these stages highlighting the processes an individual must go through in order to truly develop as a leader.

Similar to the findings in the *Flourishing in Ministry* study, woven throughout Clinton's work is an emphasis on the importance of mentoring. Clinton defines mentoring as, "A special kind of divine contact process item that refers to the process where a person with a serving, giving, encouraging attitude (the mentor) sees leadership potential in a still-to-be developed person (the protégé) and is able to promote or otherwise significantly influence the protégé toward the realization of potential."³⁸ There are definite potential benefits to being a mentor—learning, increased job performance, personal satisfaction and gratification. But there are also costs involved in

³⁸ J. Robert Clinton and Richard W. Clinton, *The Mentor Handbook: Detailed Guidelines and Helps for Christian Mentors and Mentorees*, (Altadena, CA: Barnabus Publishers, 1991), 248.

mentoring—it can drain time and energy and poor mentees can reflect negatively on the mentor.³⁹

It should be noted that mentoring does not come naturally for everyone. Not every professional who is good at their job will make an inherently good mentor. Mentors need to be grown and nurtured. Those who have been mentored tend to have more of an inclination to be a mentor. Daniel B. Turban and Melissa K. Lee explain, “Some evidence suggests that individuals who have been in mentoring relationships, either as protégés or as mentors, are more willing to serve as mentors than are individuals who have never been in mentoring relationships. More specifically, individuals who have never been in mentoring relationships report greater costs and fewer benefits or such relationships than do individuals who have experience as mentors or protégés.”⁴⁰ The more people are mentored, the more willing they seem to be to mentor others.

The mentoring process requires significant patience and a willingness to walk alongside a person who may not get things right on the first try. Mentoring is a commitment to journey through the terrain of life with another person, even when progress is not as fast as we may hope.

We see the power of mentoring behavior being modeled by Jesus in the scriptures. Take, for example, the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. Not much is told in the

³⁹ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 23.

⁴⁰ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 32.

Bible about this route of travel. We know it was about seven miles from Jerusalem. The town of Emmaus received its name from the hot springs that were there. Two men were walking in the evening from Jerusalem to Emmaus shortly after they have been told the Lord has risen. We are told that these men are disciples and one of them is named Cleopas. Their journey to Emmaus was filled with doubt. The two disciples talked about the women who had reported that Jesus was risen. This text says that the women's words "struck them as nonsense, and they didn't believe them." The word was out that Jesus had risen, but that just seemed impossible.

So, when Jesus joins the disciples on the road to Emmaus, they just did not recognize him, even though he was standing there in flesh and blood right in front of them. We don't know why his physical appearance didn't warrant recognition - the text doesn't tell us why. But what we do know is that he walked and talked with them, even taught and interpreted the Scriptures for them. But it wasn't until they were at table with him, that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

Pope Francis explains God's patience in one of his sermons, "

Let us think too of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: their sad faces, their barren journey, their despair. But Jesus does not abandon them: he walks beside them, and not only that! Patiently he explains the Scriptures which spoke of him, and he stays to share a meal with them. This is God's way of doing things: he is not impatient like us, who often want everything all at once, even in our dealings with other people. God is patient with us because he loves us, and those who love are able to understand, to hope, to inspire confidence..."⁴¹

⁴¹ Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2014), kindle location 173 of 1726.

Mentoring another person is a special gift requiring a posture of humility and patience—reflecting Christ’s relationship with us. The power of this posture modeled to us is profound. It makes a lasting impact.

There are a number of mentoring models suggested in the literature. Many authors have focused on the development of pastoral leaders from a more practical perspective. In the article, “Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry,” Scott Douglas emphasizes the importance of the mentoring relationship in people preparing for pastoral ministry. Drawing from a larger study, Douglas highlights seven themes that emerged for how “high-performing churches” can identify, train, and retain effective associate pastors. These seven themes are: emphasis on character, priority of the family, real friendship, pre-emptive hiring practices, freedom and flexibility, non-formal pattern of leadership development, and legacy.⁴² While Keith Anderson and Randy Reese outline their Model of Spiritual Mentoring which offers six distinctives of spiritual mentoring. The movements of their model of spiritual mentoring are: attraction, relationship, responsiveness, accountability, and empowerment.⁴³

The book *Educating Clergy*, refers to mentoring more in terms of *formation*.⁴⁴ There is a general recognition of the importance for clergy to be able to understand social and cultural contexts, and that in order for clergy to be able to deal with the

⁴² Douglas, Scott M. “Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry.” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* Volume 8 Number 2 (Fall 2014): 84.

⁴³ Anderson, Keith, and Randy D. Reese. *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

⁴⁴ Charles R Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 11.

challenges they will face, they will need to be not just technical experts but more holistically engaged. “That requires a more conscious involvement in the social networks of meaning and connection in people’s lives,” explains William M. Sullivan.⁴⁵ Holistic engagement is vital not only for the training season of the life of clergy, but developing these skills is essential for longevity in the pastoral vocation.

Carson Pue suggests that there is a matrix and flow to mentoring.⁴⁶ At the center of the matrix is self-awareness. The flow consists of four parts in a circle. The four parts are: freeing up, visioneering, implementing, and sustaining. Freeing up is about satisfying needs. The visioneering piece of the matrix consists of discovering purpose. Implementing is being purposeful and actually putting into practice those visions that have been discovered. Finally, sustaining is the realizing of purpose. This is a cyclical process, and at the core comes growth and learning about oneself.

Author and Pastor, Peter Scazzero, asserts that what matters most in the development of a leader is the formation of the inner life. This approach is distinctive from the more external development models offered in other work because it aligns with the Romans 12 model of being “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Scazzero’s model of leadership development is: facing your shadow, lead out of marriage or singleness, slowing down for union with God, and practicing Sabbath. He

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Pue, Carson. *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 13.

asserts, “What we do matters. Who we are matters much more.”⁴⁷ If we are going to mentor pastors in training into a life of transformation and flourishing, it has to begin with a deep internal work in a person. This work does not stop throughout the life of the pastor. It is a life-long process of renewal and transformation.

⁴⁷ Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 12.

CHAPTER TWO SELECTION: ADJUSTING OUR LENSES

Mentoring is a process of helping a person to see the gifts, the talents, the potential that are already within them. There is so much to be discovered within an individual. But sometimes that potential is difficult to see right away. We have an (often unspoken) pre-determined criteria for what a person with potential looks like. We say yes to mentoring those who meet these standards. We invest in those who seem to be what we are looking for. This is mentoring for duplication. However, we are not establishing mentoring frameworks within the church and Christian higher education that empower all people to reach their full potential. Transformational mentoring which leads to flourishing in ministry begins with a shift in the mentors' lenses for identifying potential leaders. This process is wrapped up in spiritual discernment, wisdom, grace, and the desire to usher in transformation rather than duplication. Prince Rivers explains, "Wisdom is not something we cling to and hoard as if it is a finite resource. The wisdom we have is meant to be shared. It is not ours alone. It belongs to the church. This is what I think about when I consider the importance of receiving and being a mentor."⁴⁸

David Anointed as King

Pre-determined ideas (prejudices, perhaps?) of who should be selected for leadership training have long been part of the human story. Let us look to the scriptures to begin. "Appoint us a king to judge us like all the other nations have," the elders of

⁴⁸ Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byassee, and James C. Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 7.

Israel demanded (1 Sam 8:5 CEB). The people of Israel desperately wanted a king to rule over them because that is what they saw as the standard for powerful people. A king is what they got. King Saul looked the part. In his appearance and in the way he carried himself, he communicated leader. The people of Israel were certain that he would fulfill the part. However, within eight chapters of the book of 1 Samuel (1 Sam 8-16), it becomes clear that Saul was far from the great king Israel had hoped for. He was moody and unpredictable and not inclined to follow all of God's instructions. God rejects Saul, and sends Samuel out again to anoint the next king of Israel.

Hesitantly, for fear of what Saul may be inclined to do, Samuel set out with a horn of oil and a heifer to anoint the next king. "Samuel recognizes the ominous nature of the venture (1 Sam 8:2a). It is hazardous to anoint a king where there already is a king! There is no vacancy in the office."⁴⁹ God instructed Samuel to go to Jesse of Bethlehem because the next king would be among Jesse's sons (1 Sam 16:1). The sons of Jesse lined up in front of Samuel. One by one, Samuel looked at each of the sons, wondering which one will be the next king. Would it be Eliab, Abinadab, or Shammah? Would it be the tall one or the one who appeared to be the strongest? After all, a king had to look a certain way in order to command respect and for people to follow him. But as the sons stood before Samuel, the word of the LORD came to Samuel saying, "Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven't selected him. God

⁴⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 1 and 2 Samuel* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 121.

doesn't look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart" (1 Sam 16:7).

When Samuel reached the end of the line of the sons, he had not yet heard a confirmation from the Lord. So, he asked, "Is that all of your boys?" (1 Sam 16:11) Jesse answered, "There is still the youngest one, but he's out keeping the sheep" (1 Sam 16:11). The youngest one was not even a contender for the position of king in the minds of Samuel or Jesse or the brothers or anybody else there that day. This was the young kid with no experience other than the daily task of an ignoble vocation—tending to the sheep. He did not look the way that a king was supposed to look. He did not strike his father or anybody else as the next leader of Israel.

They called for David, he was likely covered in the dirt and muck from the fields, red from the sun beating down on him. Though he did not appear at all to be "kingly", when he stood in front of Samuel, the LORD said, "That's the one. Go anoint him" (1 Sam 16: 12). God chose a shepherd from the fields to rule as king over Israel. "The anointed one is qualified by his "right heart." That was what God was looking for. David's physical appearance, by Yahweh's stern standards, is irrelevant."⁵⁰

We have pre-determined criteria for what makes a great leader. These bias are shaped by our upbringing, by our theological positions, and by our experiences to name a few. But we see in scripture a call to see things through a new lens. We are invited into a new kingdom where "the least of these" becomes king, and God calls those who may have been written-off as unqualified to become the leader of everything.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 123.

Transformation allows God's work to create something new while duplication seeks to shape a person into a mold that already exists—even if that mold does not fit.

The literature is clear—mentoring is key to the success of a person in training. Good mentoring continues to have a positive impact on an individual as they journey into their professional life making the selection process in which mentors choose which emerging leaders even more significant. How should a mentor determine who should be mentored? Is it solely based on chemistry and the likeability of the potential mentee? Mentors must be carefully aware of the ideas they have formed of what a leader does and does not look like so as not to be driven by biases in mentee selection. This, too, must be taken into consideration as theological institutions establish formal mentoring programs. There are key components of a mentoring program that can have a transformative impact on the future of a mentee.

Are all things equal? Barriers to Flourishing

We know the benefits of mentoring. People with good mentors, on average, get better jobs, obtain more promotions, and have greater job satisfaction. But how do mentors more fully tap into the potential of all people rather than keeping the pool from which they draw very small and consistently homogenous? How do we move away from this model of duplication to a focus on transformation? As we explore these questions, it becomes necessary to confront some of the barriers to flourishing.

What to do with women with a sense of call into ministry is a growing topic for formal and informal mentoring programs. The evangelical culture has been shaped by

thoughts that mixed gender mentoring relationships may be inappropriate, or complicated at best.

In the Spring of 2017, a report emerged that Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence, does not ever dine alone with a woman who is not his wife. This practice is known in evangelical circles as “The Billy Graham Rule.” In an effort to avoid sexual immorality, Billy Graham vowed never to travel, meet, or eat alone with a woman who was not his wife. This “rule” was established by Billy Graham and several of his close associates one night in Modesto, California. There Graham and his ministry partners pledged among themselves “to avoid any situation that would have even the appearance of compromise or suspicion.”⁵¹ As Graham saw it, they were accepting the Apostle Paul’s mandate to the young pastor Timothy as their own. They were determined to “Flee...youthful lusts.”⁵²

Birthered from pure desires and good intentions, this rule seemed to be an appropriate safeguard for these young pastors. However, as this has become a more commonly accepted way of conducting business in the church, it has proven to be, a barrier to women’s access to leadership. In settings where this rule continues to be part of the institutional practices, the doors are closed to women who are looking to advance their careers. This rule has kept women out of the inner circles of leadership.

A Harvard Business review article titled, *The Men Who Mentor Women*, explores the positive impact cross-gender mentoring has had on corporations. The article names

⁵¹ Billy Graham, *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*(New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 128.

⁵² *Ibid.*

mentoring as the most impactful activity for increasing diversity and inclusion at work. “Receiving mentorship from senior males can increase compensation and career progress satisfaction for women, particularly for those working in male-dominated industries.”⁵³ This article continues to explain that “male champions” have learned that gender inclusiveness means involving both men and women in advancing women’s leadership. “Although many organizations have attempted to fight gender bias by focusing on women – offering training programs or networking groups specifically for them — the leaders we interviewed realized that any solutions that involve only 50% of the human population are likely to have limited success.”⁵⁴

Transformational mentoring invites us to mentor beyond the lines that divide us. A “learner-centered paradigm” there is a move away from “the more traditional authoritarian teacher-dependent student-suppliant paradigm, where the passive mentee sits at the feet of the master and receives knowledge.”⁵⁵ Transformational mentoring invites the mentee into the learning process. “Instead of being mentor driven, with the mentor taking full responsibility for the mentee’s learning, the mentee learns to share responsibility for the learning setting, priorities, learning, and resources and becomes increasingly self-directed.”⁵⁶ Transformational mentoring unlocks potential. It is bigger than the mentor or the mentee. It taps into the possibilities and helps the mentee to see that much more is possible.

⁵³ Anna Marie Valerio and Katina Sawyer, Harvard Business Review, *The Men Who Mentor Women*, December 7, 2016, 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵⁵ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

In her report “Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church”, Manuela Casti Yeagley of the *Flourishing in Ministry* study recounts a visit to Protestant chapel on a small island in northern Michigan.

She explains, that she visited this chapel “whose windows magnificently narrated how the island had been evangelized by its first Christian pioneers. Quite predictably, the devout characters celebrated in that luminous storybook were exclusively male.” She continues, “Who is included and who is excluded in the representation of a story matters. That stained glass window points out something beyond itself. It teaches the faithful not only about what *should* be considered as honorable and worthy, but also about *who* embodies the characteristics of a church leader (Pitkin 1967; Lombardo and Meier 2016).⁵⁷

We cannot underestimate the power of young people seeing leaders that look like them—what Dr. Matthew Bloom refers to as “possible ideal selves.”⁵⁸ The opportunity for young girls to see women in leadership roles opens up their imaginations for who they could become. Knoll and Bolin explain in their book *She Preached the Word: Women’s Ordination in Modern America*, young girls “are more responsive to the roles being modeled by the adult women in their lives. If they see women in positions of leadership, influence, and authority, it shows young girls that these things are part of the acceptable female gender role that they then feel empowered to internalize and imitate.”⁵⁹ But Manuela Casti Yeagley explains, “Only 11% of the pastors leading a Christian congregation in contemporary America are women (Chaves and Eagle 2015). Many of them work in secondary positions; a disproportionately large number is

⁵⁷ Yeagley, Manuela Casti, PhD. “Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church,” 4.

⁵⁸ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 32.

⁵⁹ Knoll, Benjamin R., and Cammie Jo Bolin. *She Preached the Word: Women’s Ordination in Modern America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018, 125.

assigned to small and often isolated congregations. Women's place in the 'stained glass window' of their denominations remains marginal at best."⁶⁰

Barriers to flourishing are created when access to mentors is limited by regulations on the interaction of men and women and by the disproportionate number of females in high-ranking positions who can become potential mentors. Manuela Casti Yeagly, a Research Assistant Professor for the *Flourishing in Ministry* study, explains in a report on The Impact of Female Representation in the Church, "For women who explore their calling in an environment where female exemplars are absent or very limited, and men represent the majority, the struggle to imagine themselves as pastors may be particularly challenging. Such a situation represents an implicit inconsistency between being a female individual and a congregational leader."⁶¹ It becomes an uphill battle when one does not even have the vision in mind for who she may become as a leader, and this is often compounded by the fact that when she does begin to see herself as something more, a woman is often not given access to key leadership.

Women are more likely than men to be in cross-gender relationships if they wish to grow in their career or vocation. The reality is, too, that there are a number of challenges to cross-gender relationships. Ragins and Kram explain, "Cross-Gender mentoring relationships face numerous challenges—both in reality in the perceptions of those relationships by others. These challenges include the absence of role-modeling, intimacy concerns, gender stereotyping that limits individual growth, public scrutiny of

⁶⁰ Yeagly, Manuela Casti, PhD. "Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church," 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

the relationship, and possible peer resentment.”⁶² In many ways, it may seem easier, more convenient, or even more appropriate for people not to enter into cross-gender mentoring relationships because these relationships can be more difficult to manage. Ragins noted that “compared to cross-gender mentoring relationships, same-gender mentoring relationships between people who are presumed to be heterosexual by others are less susceptible to sexual innuendoes and rumors and have less potential to develop into romantic relationships.”⁶³ These presumptions are not necessarily unfounded, as Ragin and Kram explain, “Fett and Newton (1985) found that sexual tension was an issue in cross-gender relationships and that 10% of their cross-gender pairs had been romantically involved. Bowen (1985) found that jealous spouses and resentful coworkers were a problem. Ragins and Cotton (1991) found women more likely to report that they hesitated to initiate a cross-gender mentoring relationship for fear this would be misconstrued as a sexual advance by the mentor or others.”⁶⁴

A policy of “no cross-gender mentoring relationships” is not the solution that is most beneficial to men and women. While it is important to realistically approach the potential challenges, it is also essential to lean into the possibilities. A framework of duplication perpetuates rules that limit people from becoming all they are called to be. Transformational mentoring allows ministers-in-training to believe that there is a better way to do this.

⁶² Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 205.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 205.

Former US president Jimmy Carter writes in his book *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* about a time he was first conscious of segregation. He narrates an instance where his African American friends paused to let him go first through a gate because he was white. Compelled by this experience he writes, “Not yet seriously question or rejected by many secular and religious leaders is a parallel dependence on selected verses of scripture to justify a belief that, even or especially in the eyes of God, women and girls are inferior to their husbands and brothers.”⁶⁵ This book makes a strong case for the fact that the fight for equal rights for women still exists, and he is in strong support of the push for equality in all circles including religious circles. Karen Longman and Patricia Anderson note this book in their article “Women in Leadership—The Future of Christian Higher Education” explaining that “though the subtitle of Carter’s book may seem unrelated to the topic of women in leadership in Christian higher education, the undervaluation of the talents and gifts of women results in nearly half of the potential human population remaining largely untapped in most parts of the world.”⁶⁶

The argument over equality for women in theological circles comes in all shapes and sizes. In his article “Are Women Passive? What History Says about Gender, Sexuality, and Christian Ministry,” Jason Eden challenges the argument that women are biologically passive, and, thus, inferior leaders. It points to some of the arguments in

⁶⁵ Carter, Jimmy. *A call to action: women, religion, violence, and power*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 13.

⁶⁶ Longman, Karen A., and Patricia S. Anderson. "Women in Leadership: The Future of Christian Higher Education." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no. 1-2 (2016): 25.

modern and ancient societies that have attempted to reinforce this stereotype and offers the opinion that these stereotypes are in fact unfounded. Eden calls egalitarians to be relentless in disproving these harmful stereotypes.

Nicola Hoggard Creegan and Christine Pohl further support this claim that a deep inequality in theological circles still exist. They speak of their time at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary explaining, "In some environments, it is almost impossible for a woman to express her views in a straightforward manner without being perceived as inappropriately aggressive and assertive. Several women spoke of the social forces within evangelicalism that discourage women from "growing up" or taking on roles of responsibility and leadership in which they function as full adults."⁶⁷ These social forces are having a significant impact on the identity formation of women. Longman and Anderson explain that the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) collectively serve a student body that is 60% female, and a 2015 study revealed that only 20% of all senior leadership roles (of Vice President or higher) are held by women and women hold only 30% of any particular leadership role.⁶⁸

Research has shown the importance of people having exposure to possible ideal selves. Knoll and Bolin describe a recent study that examined the impact of visual female leadership on a group of university students in Switzerland.

About 150 students (both male and female) were asked to give a speech related to student fees at their institution. Researchers randomly assigned these

⁶⁷ Creegan, Nicola Hoggard., and Christine D. Pohl. *Living on the boundaries: evangelical women, feminism, and the theological academy*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 78.

⁶⁸ Longman, Karen A., and Patricia S. Anderson. "Women in Leadership: The Future of Christian Higher Education." *Christian Higher Education* 15, no. 1-2 (2016): 24.

students to four different groups. For one group, the researchers displayed a photograph of Bill Clinton on the back wall of the auditorium, large enough so that the students giving the speeches could see it clearly. Another group of students saw a large photograph of Hillary Clinton and another of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, while no photograph was displayed for the last group. Afterward, audience members as well as participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the speeches, including on aspects such as how well the speakers articulated their messages and the effectiveness of their body language. Female participants were rated higher on their speeches by both themselves and their audience when they had seen prominent images of Hillary Clinton and Angela Merkel at the back of the auditorium, but not Bill Clinton or a blank wall. The researchers concluded that this shows the importance of prominent female role models in boosting confidence and leadership skills for young women (Latu et al. 2013).⁶⁹

Women in leadership encourage and empower other women in leadership. Their mere presence is empowering to the generations following them. Seeing other women in leadership roles begins to give vision to the possibilities of what one might become. But the starting point is the recognition that all things are not equal between men and women. Potential mentors must be aware of these and seek transformation of the barriers that exist. This starts by a willingness to see things differently.

Transformational mentoring calls all people to break through the barriers that stand between their potential and the actual use of their skills, talents, and gifts. As we explore the particular barriers faced by women, it is apparent that mentors can be particularly helpful to women overcoming barriers to the advancement in their career that are unique to their gender. As Ragins and Kram explain, “A trusted guide, sponsor, and interpreter—a mentor—is critical to (a) assisting women in decoding the masculine culture in organizations, (b) promoting women’s successful functioning and

⁶⁹ Knoll, Benjamin R., and Cammie Jo Bolin. *She Preached the Word: Women’s Ordination in Modern America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018, 125.

advancement in organizations, and (c) enhancing women’s feelings of safety and belonging in such an environment.”⁷⁰ A good mentor will act in the person’s best interest and will truly care that the mentee’s sense of worth is affirmed. This breaks through feelings of isolation and disconnection.

How do we select mentees?

“A recent meta-analysis confirmed earlier qualitative reviews by finding that mentoring relationships are related to both objective and subjective measures of career success (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). More specifically, mentored versus non-mentored individuals reported higher compensation, more promotions, and greater career satisfaction, career commitment, and job satisfaction (Allen, et al., 2004).”⁷¹ Knowing, then, the value of mentoring relationships, we must be conscious of the ways in which we go about selecting a mentee. Mentee selection primarily happens by one of four ways: mentoring initiated by the mentee, mentoring initiated by the mentor, mentors/mentees are assigned to one another, sometimes a mentoring relationship just happens. In ministry, these relationships should be entered into prayerfully, with intentionality, and there should be a baseline chemistry.

Dr. Matthew Bloom of the *Flourishing in Ministry* study explains, “Flourishing requires positive relationships. We need people who can help us deal with the ups and downs of work life.”⁷² Flourishing ministers have positive connections. These positive

⁷⁰ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 198.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷² *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 33.

connections consist of including mutual care and compassion, emotional support, and unconditional acceptance. Bloom explains, “In a positive relationship we feel accepted for who we are, supported in the triumphs and sorrows of our life, and encouraged to grow and develop our fullest capabilities. When we have positive relationships, we can be our authentic selves, sharing our deepest concerns, fears and weaknesses, and feeling supported and uplifted as we strive to live a life of meaning and purpose.”⁷³

Good mentoring relationships foster positive connections. Both the mentor and mentee will share aspects of their lives, both personal and professional. It is important that both the mentor and mentee have a healthy level of trust in one another in order for the relationship to grow.

Research has shown that men and women may have differing perspectives and priorities when it comes to mentoring relationships. It is important to realize that there are different lenses through which the topic is viewed. “For example, a masculine model of mentoring considers the relationship from an instrumental perspective—what the relationship can do—while a feminine model of mentoring looks at the relationship from an affective or relational point of view—what the relationship can be.”⁷⁴ Knowing this, it is important to recognize that the expectations of what a successful mentoring relationship looks like will change. Ragins and Verbos (2007) described mentoring in relational, rather than instrumental, terms. They explain, “In these terms, outcomes involving ‘mutual growth, learning and development in personal, professional and

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 199.

career domains' are envisaged. They suggested that the traditional approach to mentoring research ignores the reciprocal nature of mentoring relationships and 'takes a hierarchical and perhaps stereotypically masculine approach to the relationship,' which does not address relational outcomes or processes."⁷⁵ This is important to note as one considers who to mentor. One who prioritizes relationship over function does not mean that one is less of a leader or has lesser potential than the other.

Whether looking at mentor/mentee initiated mentoring or formal mentoring programs, it is very important to recognize that many things have impacted our perception on mentee selection. Research by Ragins and Kram explains, "Better understanding of how protégé and mentor personality characteristics influence mentoring relationship success can help organizations better utilize formal mentoring relationships."⁷⁶ Because of the known benefits of mentoring, many organizations have introduced formal mentoring programs where mentors and mentees are assigned to each other. The hope is to harness the potential benefits of mentoring relationships through assignment. However, there is significant evidence that indicates that the mentees in these formal programs "typically do not receive the same benefits as employees who become involved in naturally occurring, informal mentoring relationships."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁷ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 22.

In considering the mentoring of ministers-in-training, whether formal mentoring programs in denominations, organizations, or in theological institutions, it is important not to assign mentors and mentees to each other arbitrarily. Rather, these formal programs are an opportunity to instill in mentors and mentees the selection skills that will set them up for a transformational mentoring experience. It is important to give mentors and mentees the evaluative language in order to assess fit in a mentoring relationship. While naturally occurring, informal mentoring relationships seem to offer more benefits to mentees, in formal mentoring situations, we must leverage the opportunity to facilitate organic experiences. For example, if either the mentee or mentor or both do not “feel” the mentoring relationship is working, are there options for other mentors available the mentee (either through self-selection or provided by the institution)?

Findings on Men and Women in Mentoring Relationships

Researchers have examined the mentoring functions provided to mentees by male and female mentors. The findings seem to imply that male and female mentors provide similar functions to those they are mentoring, but there are other results worth noting when considering the mentoring relationship between men and women.

Ragins & McFarlin (1990) noted evidence that protégés perceive that male mentors bring more power to the relationship. Dreher and Cox (1996) found that protégés with female mentors or mentors of color earn less money than those with white male mentors. The greater organizational power that men have means that male mentors are better able to provide more positive career outcomes and career development functions. Corroborating this, Ragins and Cotton (1999) found that protégés with histories of male mentors received more financial compensation than those with histories of female mentors. Ragins (1999) suggested that because women define themselves in terms of

interdependent relationships, female mentors may provide more psychosocial mentoring functions than do male mentors.⁷⁸

These findings seem to point to the benefit of one having a constellation of mentors rather than just one mentor. A constellation of mentors provides a rich balance to the mentee. So, in considering who to select as a mentee, a good question to ask is: What does this person's mentoring constellation look like? Are they already engaged in other relationships similar to the potential mentor?

Some research points to a preference in mentees for mentors of the same gender. Although, as Ragins and Kram point out, "this preference may not be consistent across genders; for example, men may seek male mentors to a greater extent than women seek female mentors."⁷⁹ There are interesting findings pointing to the differences in experience that men and women have in mentoring relationships:

Burke and McKeen (1995) found that women who did not have male mentors did not express a preference for female mentors, nor did they see problems with male mentors. However, women who had actually experienced having male mentors reported more concerns. For example, O'Neill (2002) suggested that women's greater participation in cross-gender relationships may provide them with qualitatively different mentoring experiences than those of their male colleagues. Participants in such cross-gender relationships may assume more sex-stereotypical roles. Since women are more likely than men to be in cross-gender mentoring relationships and these are more difficult to manage than same-gender mentoring relationships, this contributes to an unlevelled playing field for managerial and professional women, making advancement even more difficult.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid., 201-202.

⁷⁹ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 205-206.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

The gender of mentors and mentees seems to impact the experience one has in a mentoring relationship. Research has also shown that mentoring relationships consisting of a male mentor and a male mentee, more than any other combinations, lead to higher financial compensation. While male mentees with female mentors reported the most dissatisfaction with their mentors than in any other combination. "Further, male protégés with female mentors were less likely than protégés in all other combinations to report that their mentors provided challenging assignments and exposure to the organization."⁸¹ Female mentees were more likely to report engaging in after-work activities when they had female mentors than when they had male mentors.

Manuela Casti Yeagley explains in her findings on the impact of Women in Ministry on the Church that representation impacts how we view leadership. The roles people are placed in, the ways leaders in churches and organizations are spoken of, the opportunities extended to them, all of these things make visible who embodies the characteristics of a leader.⁸² In considering the selection of mentees, it is vital that this be taken into consideration. In what ways have the non-verbal visuals of an organization communicated who should be mentored and who the best mentors are? There is a cost, a risk, to entering into a mentoring relationship. Perhaps there have not been enough risks taken in cross gender mentoring. As Ragins and Kram explain, "During the *initiation stage* of an informal mentoring relationship, typically one of the

⁸¹ Ibid., 206.

⁸² Yeagley, Manuela Casti, PhD. "Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church, 5

two parties (i.e., the potential protégé or mentor) initiates a contact with the other person in an effort to generate a mentoring relationship. Since a mentoring relationship can be seen a social exchange relationship, we expect that both parties will consider the benefits and costs of getting involved in such a relationship.”⁸³

Creating a Culture, Not Boundaries

“Culture is rooted in behavior based on shared values, assumptions, and practices and processes, all of which live within a mentoring culture.”⁸⁴ The culture of an organization has a profound impact on people, processes, and practices. As we consider the mentee selection process, perhaps we would be better served to discuss culture rather than boundaries. As Lois Zachary explains, “A mentoring culture helps people meet adaptive challenges (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002); it facilitates new learning and organizational resiliency in the face of rapid change.”⁸⁵ This mentoring culture must be modeled by mentors who have been mentored themselves, who are willing to risk to enter into potentially complicated relationships, and who are willing to see other perspectives. Lois Zachary expands on the influence of culture on human behavior:

The impact of culture is omnipresent; it has both a conscious and an unconscious influence on human behavior (Kotter, 1996; Schein, 1992, 1999; Galpin, 1996; Phelan, 1996). It influences what and how individuals think (their assumptions and mental models), what they say (their philosophy and values), and what they do (their behavior). Similarly, an organization has a culture that influences closely held assumptions about the organization and the people within it, values,

⁸³ Ibid., 37.

⁸⁴ Lois J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organizations Guide* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 7.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 9.

and practices and process. Yet most organizations and their leaders remain unconscious of its powerful and dominant influence.”⁸⁶

A culture focused on building relationships that lead to mentoring will allow for the flourishing of mentoring relationships to occur. It seems that we have invested more in telling mentors and mentees in theological circles what not to do rather than investing in creating a mentoring culture. For example, many mentoring programs believe that only men can mentor men and women mentor women without taking into account other factors such as common interests/expertise, similar cultural backgrounds, etc. What would happen if our energies were diverted away from “what not to do” and shifted toward the building of a healthy mentoring culture?

Know Thyself

One of the four quadrants of the *Flourishing in Ministry* model is self-integrity. Dr. Matthew Bloom explains, “Part of having self-integrity is knowing ourselves well and, on balance, feeling good about who we are.”⁸⁷ It is important that to feel respected by others and, in turn, offer respect to others. Self-integrity impacts the way we think about who we are and how we fit into the world around us. One who has a clear identity knows and claims their strengths, talents, and skills, and has the capacity to face their weaknesses as well. Bloom asserts, “Self-integrity is being truthful to ourselves

⁸⁶ Lois J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organizations Guide* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 15.

⁸⁷ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 24.

and prudent, wise, discerning, knowledgeable, judicious, sensible toward others.”⁸⁸ The mentor’s selection process is one that should begin with one’s own clear self-integrity.

Lois Zachary reinforces this notion of self-integrity saying, “In order to lay a solid foundation for building an effective learning relationship, mentors must have a clear understanding of their own personal journey.”⁸⁹ Without an awareness of one’s own journey, mentors will run the risk of failing to differentiate between self and other in a mentoring relationship. This is one way to perpetuate the duplication mentoring model. What is at stake when one has not clearly understood one’s own journey is the “mentee ends up front and center on the mentor’s stage rather than on his or her own.”⁹⁰

Self-Awareness Exercises

There are a number of ways to self-reflect on your own journey. Lois Zachary suggests constructing your journey timeline into adulthood. On this timeline, the mentor should highlight significant life events that have been most influential—milestones, transitions, obstacles, opportunities, unexpected delights.⁹¹ After the mentor has created their timeline, they are invited to reflect on several questions: What were your mentors like? At what point in your journey did they come into your life? What were those experiences like? What wisdom have you gained from your

⁸⁸ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 26-27.

⁸⁹ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

mentors? What did you learn about being a mentor? What did you learn about being a mentee?⁹²

Pete Scazzero acknowledges that there are a number of issues that are important to develop and transform in the inner life of a leader, and in this case, a mentor. However, he focuses on four things that he has identified as foundational. According to Scazzero, to lead from a deep and transformed inner life, you must: Face Your Shadow, Lead out of your marriage/singleness, slow down for loving union, and practice Sabbath delight.⁹³

Scazzero explains that there are four pathways to facing your shadow. The first way is by taming your feelings by naming your feelings. Journaling is helpful in expressing what is going on inside of a person. Another useful exercise in facing your shadow is using a genogram to explore the impact of your past. “A genogram is a visual tool to document the history and dynamics of our family relationships, and their impact on us, over three to four generations. Constructing a genogram helps us examine unhealthy patterns from the past that we bring into our present leadership as well as our relationship to Christ and others,” Scazzero explains.⁹⁴ A third pathway to face your shadow is identifying the negative scripts handed down to you. This is an internalized message from the past that shapes how we consciously and unconsciously behave.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid., 11.

⁹³ Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 48.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 72.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 75.

Finally a fourth pathway of facing our shadows is to seek out feedback from trustworthy sources. These sources may be therapists, spiritual directors, trusted colleagues, and mentors.⁹⁶

These various approaches to self-awareness can be summed up in four questions. To create self-awareness, the mentor should begin by processing some of the following questions:

- 1) What opportunities have made a difference in my life? Who are some of the mentors in my life who have made an impact on me?
- 2) Are there things in my genogram that may impact how I interact with my mentees?
- 3) What obstacles have I faced in my journey?
- 4) What feelings am I having that may impact how I interact with my mentee?

Self-awareness leads to clear self-integrity. The *Flourishing in Ministry* project points out that self-integrity frees people “to be at their best, helps them to develop and sustain strong and positive relationships, promotes adaptability, and increases resilience.”⁹⁷ When a mentor knows themselves, they will be better equipped to walk with a mentee through the terrain of vocational discernment without projecting onto the mentee. Self-awareness is essential for transformational mentoring. Mentors become more aware of their pre-existing assumptions. In becoming aware of assumptions, individuals with clear self-integrity can then face, and even challenge some of those assumptions. Lois Zachary explains, “The learning that results from increased understanding enables learners to let go of the self-limiting and unrealistic assumptions

⁹⁶ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁷ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 26-27.

holding them back and transform their thinking into new and more productive action and behavior.”⁹⁸

Transformational mentee selection begins with healthy mentors. These mentors are going through their own process of self-awareness which leads to the development of a true and accurate self-integrity. In whatever way the mentoring relationship is initiated, the self-aware mentor will be able to discern whether or not to move forward in mentoring the mentee. Transformational mentors are then able to offer opportunities for mentoring to those who may not at first appear to be likely candidates. Transformational mentors are able to see, with sober perspective, the potential in each mentee. Transformational mentors are prepared to journey with mentees into the transformative work of the Holy Spirit without imposing upon mentees a mindset of duplication.

Called to be a Mentor: A Sermon on Mentoring

Called to be a Mentor

1 Samuel 3: 1-10

Mentor. It is a word we use a lot in our society. It is a term commonly used in the church as we talk about training people up in the ways of the Lord. I work at Azusa Pacific University in the Center for Vocational Ministry, and part of what I do is I oversee the mentoring for all ministry-focused students. So, I work closely with the Discipleship Ministries teams. I’m also writing a dissertation on mentoring. So, very rarely does a day go by that I do not use the word mentoring.

⁹⁸ Lois J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organizations Guide* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 225.

About a year ago, when I was sitting down to do some work on my dissertation, a thought occurred to me that I actually had no idea where this term came from! So, I set out to figure that out...and I want to tell you about it today.

The term mentor dates back to Greek mythology. The story of Mentor appears in Homer's *The Odyssey* from around 800 BC. Mentor was the faithful companion of Odysseus, the King of Ithaca. Odysseus was heading out to the Trojan Wars. So, before he left, he instructed Mentor to stay in Ithaca and to be fully in charge of the royal household. Part of these duties included raising King Odysseus' son, Telemachus.

Mentor was charged with the responsibility of preparing Telemachus to take over the throne when the time came. Mentor had to be a father figure, a teacher, a role model, an approachable counsellor, a trusted adviser, a challenger, an encourager, among other things, to the young Telemachus. In doing this, Mentor was training Telemachus to become a wise and good ruler. Mentor's role was to journey with Telemachus as he grew from boyhood to the throne.

So, the term mentor emerges from Greek mythology, however, we see evidence of mentoring relationships long before 800 BC. Biblical figures such as Moses and Joshua and Elijah and Elisha are clearly in mentoring relationships. These are relationships where a wise guide is walking alongside a young protégé, guiding them into the next steps of their life...and of their calls.

We have just completed our journey through the book of Acts. In the "Break Out" series through the book of Acts we see the Holy Spirit at work in the church. Things are moving and shaking. The church is a movement—something that is alive.

Today we're going to go a little farther back in history to the book of Samuel in the Old Testament. And there we will see the mentoring relationship between the Priest Eli and the boy Samuel. This was a time when the traditions of temple worship were a way of life for God's people. It was a time long before Jesus walked the earth. The children of Israel closely followed their worship traditions...and, it was a time when God seemed to be pretty silent.

Worship was more of a routine than anything. The expectation of God doing anything different or exciting were very low...and everyone, including the church workers...just went about the routines they've known all their lives. And it is in this setting that a prophet is called.

Read 1 Samuel 3: 1-10

I love the story of Samuel's call. Here we have this young boy who never had a real say in what was going to happen to him. His mother, Hannah, promised him to the Lord before she was even pregnant with him. She wanted a child so badly, but it didn't seem like it was ever going to happen. All she wanted was to give birth to a bouncing baby boy. She promised God that if he'd answer her prayer, that child would be given back in service to the Lord for all of the days of his life. When Hannah's prayer for a son was answered, she followed through with her end of the deal...and when Samuel was weaned, she brought him to the temple to live and be mentored by Eli the priest.

The text explains that the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli, the priest. Eli was his mentor, teaching Samuel the Priestly duties. All of this taking place during a time when the word of the Lord was rare and visions were not widespread. So,

basically, if we were going to summarize the setting of this story, we have a young guy who was dropped off at church by his mom...he's living and working in the church...and it's not even an exciting church...it's a place where everyone is just going through the motions. God was silent. Things were pretty much routine.

So, Eli the priest is mentoring this young boy in this religious climate—a climate that has all the opposite things a “good church” should have...and God it is here that God is up to something. We wonder if Samuel will run away from the temple, or worse, run from his faith, never to return...or if temple membership will decline so much that Samuel and Eli are forced out of a job. But God chooses this exact moment to speak to a kid...and it's the kid's mentor who helps him understand what is happening.

It was a night just like any other night for Samuel and Eli. These two ministers in the temple went through their bedtime routines...Eli went to his room...and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. This was the routine. This is what they did every evening when it was time to go to bed.

And it didn't seem out of the ordinary for Samuel to hear someone calling for him as he was getting ready for bed. That happened sometimes.

So, someone calls out, “Samuel, Samuel.” Figuring it could only be Eli calling for him, Samuel goes to find out what he wants. “Here I am, you called me” Samuel says to Eli. And Eli, in the fateful words of every youth pastor or youth leader who wants to go to sleep, says, “I didn't call you. Go back to bed!”

Samuel heads back to bed only to be awakened again by someone calling, “Samuel!” So, he gets up again and goes to Eli, “Here I am, for you called me.” And again, Eli tells him that he didn’t call him and sends Samuel back to bed.

A third time Samuel is lying in bed and hears, “Samuel!” Samuel must be wondering where Eli got this sudden comedic urge to call him all night and then have nothing to say—was his mentor pranking him? But he still gets up and says, “Here I am, you called me.”

Now, if I was in Eli’s shoes, I would be getting pretty irritated at this point. I would wonder just how long this was going to go on...

I am convinced that Eli is the first youth pastor recorded in the Bible...I’ve done youth ministry. I can totally relate to Eli’s experience here. He’s trying to go to sleep and this kid he’s mentoring keeps running into his room and waking him up...and Eli’s laying there trying to figure out if this is some kind of joke or if it’s something more serious than that...because sometimes students are hard to read. And you don’t want to fall for one of their pranks...but if it’s serious, you want to respond...So, often, the youth pastor will just lay there and think...if that kid comes back again, I will try to figure out what’s really going on.

Mentoring is a self-giving call. The stories you gather from investing in other people’s lives is simply astounding. It is some of the best and the worst of life. And a lot of this stuff you just can’t make up. Father Greg Boyle, the founder of Homeboy industries tells the most amazing stories of his experiences of mentoring gang members. In the beginning of a chapter on gladness from his book *Tattoos on the Heart*, he writes,

“What the American poet William Carlos Williams said of poetry could well be applied to the living of our lives: “If it ain’t pleasure, it ain’t a poem.” My director of novices, Leo Rock, used to say, “God created us—because he thought we’d enjoy it.”

We try to find a way, then, to hold our fingertips gently to the pulse of God. We watch as our hearts begin to beat as one with the One who delights in our being. Then what do we do? We exhale that same spirit of delight into the world and hope for poetry.

I remember being invited to an early-morning radio show, in Spanish. It’s in-studio and covers nearly two hours of the drive to work, 7 to 9am. Callers ask me about gangs, and often enough, mothers seek advice about their wayward children. As we near the 9 o’clock hour, they take another call. “Tenemos una llamada de Filiberto, de Downey.”

I think—Filiberto is not that common a name, and I have a worker named Fili who also lives in Downey. The voice booms into the studio.

“Hey, yeah, G, it’s me, Fili...Yeah...well, I’m not feelin’ so good...so I’m just callin’ to let ya know—I won’t be coming into work today.”

Fili has chosen a radio call-in show to call in sick.

“Um...okay...Fili,” I say, stunned. “Uh, hope you feel better.”

As I drive home after the show, replaying Fili’s call over and over in my head, I steep in the utter fullness of not wanting to have anyone else’s life but my own.

So, we return to Samuel and Eli. Eli is lying there wondering what’s going on with Samuel, and Samuel is in his room trying to get to sleep. Well, it just takes a few minutes of this exchange for Eli to realize that Samuel is not playing games. On the third round of this back and forth exchange, Eli realizes that something is actually happening. Right in the middle of their church routine...in the middle of their life routines...God was calling the boy. It wasn’t what either one of them was expecting.

But Eli remembers...it’s been a while since he’s heard God’s voice, but he remembers what it sounded like...and it was there that he knew that God was calling the boy. So, Eli tells Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”” So, Samuel goes back to bed. Sure enough God calls again...and this time Samuel knows what to say, “Speak, Lord, I am listening.”

As we read on in this chapter, we find out that God calls Samuel to speak some really hard words to Eli...it was a message of destruction to Eli's household. God instructs Samuel to relay this message to his mentor...and when God finishes talking to Samuel, Samuel was not on a "spiritual high." He was scared. He lay awake in his bed until the morning trying to figure out how he was going to do what God just called him to.

I wonder if Eli laid awake that night too...wondering what God was saying to his young mentee. Praying for him as he responded to God's call...thinking of the right questions to ask him in the morning over breakfast.

When morning came, Eli called to Samuel, "Well, what did God say to you? Share everything! Don't leave out a detail!"

I think 1 Samuel 3:18 is the most beautiful picture of a mentoring relationship. It says, "So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then Eli said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him."

This is a relationship filled with trust. Trust in one another and trust in the Lord. If I were to sum up what it means to be a Christian mentor, I would sum it up in this passage. God does not just call us and leave us to figure things out on our own. First and foremost, GOD IS WITH US IN OUR CALLS. God equips us to do exactly what he is calling us to do. And secondly, God calls people to walk beside us in our calls.

Samuel's call story was just the beginning of him becoming familiar with hearing God's voice. Samuel became a great prophet to the people of Israel. But Eli didn't know that he was training a great prophet. This was a kid that was dropped off at the temple

by his mom. A kid that Eli was training and mentoring...not knowing exactly what would become of him.

This story is full of surprises. God speaks when people expect God to be silent. God messes up Samuel's and Eli's bedtime routine. Samuel doesn't even recognize God's call at first and God uses Samuel's mentor to help him identify God's voice. God calls this young boy to be a prophet to his people...Nothing in this story goes as planned...and that is the beauty of mentoring people...it's messy...sometimes it comes with unexpected surprises and disrupts our routines. And a good mentor keeps journeying with that person. Asking questions...listening with their mentee...offering wisdom...praying with them...encouraging...loving.

This is how Jesus is with us. Jesus has offered us an example of what it looks like to walk with people. I love the opening to one of the first sermons preached by Pope Francis in his first year of being the Pope. He writes:

What a beautiful truth of faith this is for our lives: the mercy of God! God's love for us is so great, so deep; it is an unfailing love, one which always takes us by the hand and supports us, lifts us up and leads us on.

In the Gospel of John, the apostle Thomas personally experiences this mercy of God. Which has a concrete face: the face of Jesus, the risen Jesus. Thomas does not believe it when the other apostles tell him: 'We have seen the Lord.' It isn't enough for him that Jesus had foretold it, promised it: 'On the third day I will rise.' He wants to see, he wants to put his hand in the place of the nails and in Jesus' side.

And how does Jesus react? With patience: Jesus does not abandon Thomas in his stubborn unbelief; he gives him a week's time, he does not close the door, he waits. And Thomas acknowledges his own poverty, his little faith. 'My Lord and my God!' With this simple yet faith-filled invocation, he responds to Jesus' patience. He lets himself be enveloped by divine mercy; he sees it before his eyes in the wounds of Christ's hands and feet and in his open side, and he discovers trust: he is a new man, no longer an unbeliever, but a believer.

Let us also remember Peter: three times he denied Jesus, precisely when he should have been closet to him; and when he hits rock bottom he meets the

gaze of Jesus who patiently, wordlessly, says to him: 'Peter, don't be afraid of your weakness, trust in me.' Peter understands, he feels the loving gaze of Jesus and he weeps. How beautiful is this gaze of Jesus—how much tenderness is there! Brothers and Sisters, let us never lose trust in the patience and mercy of God!

Let us think too of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: their sad faces, their barren journey, their despair. But Jesus doesn't abandon them: he walks beside them, and not only that! Patiently, he explains the Scriptures which spoke of him, and he stays to share a meal with them. This is God's way of doing things: he is not impatient like us, who often want everything all at once, even in our dealings with other people.

God is patient with us because he loves us, and those who love are able to understand, to hope, to inspire confidence; they do not give up, they do not burn bridges, they are able to forgive. Let us remember this in our lives as Christians: God always waits for us, even when we have left him behind! He is never far from us, and if we return to him, he is ready to embrace us.

Sometimes God calls us to do tough things...things we don't feel prepared for.

Often we feel like the least likely candidate for God to call...but God still calls us. And God places people in our path to walk alongside us. People who know what God's voice sounds like. People who will listen with us when we aren't sure what to do. People who encourage us and pray for us and cook for us and cry with us. Mentors.

Is God calling you to be a mentor? Could God be calling you to journey beside somebody while God grows them into the person He is calling them to be? God calls regular, ordinary people—people who have low expectations of God... people who are too young...people who are too old...those who are afraid...when we start talking about the Spirit breaking out in the church, who knows what God can do when we say yes to being the people God has made us to be. I know there are mentors here among us at Glenkirk.

We need mentors to rise up here because I believe that, just like in the days of Samuel, there are young prophets, teachers, pastors, leaders growing up right around

us. We have young people sitting with us today who God is in the process of calling—right now. And we need to be ready to train them up in the ways of the Lord and walk with them and help them to hear God's voice.

What is God calling you to do today? Remember, God not only calls us, but God equips us to pursue his call...and God never ever leaves us alone in that Call. God is patient with us because he loves us. He is never far from us, and he doesn't stop calling us. Let us pray.

CHAPTER THREE SHEPHERDING: FAITHFULLY JOURNEYING WITH MENTEES

Much of mentoring for ministry is shepherding. It is an exercise in patience—a long, slow walk leading to transformation. Mentoring is the sharing of the journey. We get on the road, and we have an idea of where we are going, but we don't necessarily know what the journey is going to look like. Getting from point A to point B is not always as clear as it seems like it should be. But just as a shepherd cares for their sheep, so a mentor cares for their protégé. It is a relationship that is established and cultivated over time.

Mentors offer their mentees an opportunity to see themselves. Sometimes mentees are invited to see aspects of themselves for the first time. Other times, mentors are challenged to identify and address key factors that continue to be repeated in the life of a mentee in order that they might overcome these barriers to success. Mentors, while walking along-side their mentees, help them change themselves or their behaviors that may be inhibiting their success. Mentors help mentees develop new social networks, navigate sticky situations, and develop approaches that can lead to positive outcomes in the life of the mentee. Mentors also help their mentees theologically reflect on their journey. The way into ministry cannot be completed without deep theological work. All of this is done through shepherding.

Mentoring is Shepherding

Grasping the full impact of the image of shepherd is challenging when one is not familiar with the technicalities of this vocation. I grew up in suburban Los Angeles. We

are far from a horticultural society. So, all of this sheep-talk is quite fascinating. Let us first dive deeper into this image before correlating the work of shepherds and mentors.

I remember a time when I was a camp counselor at a Christian camp in Ireland during my high school years. At this camp, there was a teaching time for the children to learn about Jesus. While I was in the Bible teaching time with a group of 10 year-olds, the woman teaching was teaching a powerful lesson on the Good Shepherd. Everyone was really engaged. I felt myself leaning in to hear more as she animatedly told the story of the Good Shepherd. I looked around the room and everyone else was leaning in too...except for one boy. He grew more and more fidgety as the teaching went on. I wasn't sure what was going on with him. He just couldn't sit still, and he seemed a bit irritated. So, as the lesson came to a close, the teacher says, "So, God is our Good Shepherd and we are his sheep. Isn't that lovely?"

The boy, totally disgusted at this point, stands up and says, "No. I don't want to be a sheep. Sheep are stuuuuuppiidd!!!"

I later found out that his family owned a farm, and he had already spent much of his life taking care of the hundreds of sheep owned by his parents. He knew the challenges and work that goes into sheep care, and he wasn't about to think of himself as one of these animals that he tended to. He made it abundantly clear that he was not a sheep.

The pastures of the rolling green hills of Ireland might seem fairly remote, but these images of shepherd and sheep still carry an impact for mentoring, as they did for ancient Israel. The more this image is expounded upon, the more it makes sense that

this was the image Jesus chose to use for his relationship with people. And, furthermore, it is an image that can be translated into the work of a mentor. John chapter 10 beginning in verse 11 introduces us to the Good Shepherd,

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”⁹⁹

“Shepherding” may be the most often mentioned vocation in the Bible. Among the noteworthy shepherds were Abel, Abraham, Moses, and David. The first people to hear the good news of Christ’s birth announced to them—shepherds. It is truly amazing that so many key shepherds appear in the scriptures because the history of this vocation is quite unimpressive. Shepherding comes across as a pretty low-brow, rough occupation. It was not one of those lines of work that people aspired to go into. Most people, who became shepherds, did so, often, by default. Shepherds were uneducated and known to be pretty unrefined tough guys. And not only that, in parts of the Old Testament, Jeremiah and Ezekiel predominantly, there is talk of what bad shepherds looked like.

⁹⁹ NRSV

Ezekiel 34 explains that the shepherds tended to themselves. These self-centered shepherds did not take care of the flock. Instead, they drank the milk, wore the wool, and slaughtered the fat animals all for themselves. They did not strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, bring back the strays, or seek out the lost. They just did not care. They stressed out the sheep—using force on them and ruling them with injustice. The bad shepherds left the sheep on their own, and without a shepherd the flock was scattered and became prey for all of the wild animals.¹⁰⁰ These images shaped the thoughts and feelings people had about shepherds.

Yet despite the cultural history of shepherding in the Middle East, it is interesting that some of the people most dearly loved and highlighted by the scriptures were shepherds. The work performed by these shepherds offers for us an image of the work of a mentor. Mentoring is not glamorous work. Mentoring, like shepherding, requires a willingness to enter into the messy places of life.

Mentoring is a form of shepherding people. Sheep need a good shepherd. The same can be said of ministers-in-training. They need good mentors—leaders who are committed to walking with them for the long haul. Good shepherds pay careful attention to the flock and, in their care, the flock would increase in number.¹⁰¹ To do this, shepherds had to know their flocks well. They needed to know the birth circumstances, health history, eating habits, and other idiosyncrasies of each sheep in

¹⁰⁰ Ezekiel 34

¹⁰¹ Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 152.

the flock.¹⁰² Good mentors do the same with their mentees. They get to know their mentees well. Good mentors get to know the history of their mentee. They spend time making sure they understand the “stuff” their mentee is working through. They journey with them while their mentees gain confidence and experience to grow into the minister God is calling them to be.

Mentor is not meant to be a self-serving work. One must not go into mentoring for personal gain or recognition. It is very important for a mentor to have addressed enough of one’s own history and motivation to know that they are mentoring for the purpose of helping another person. One must not try to fill a void in one’s own life by mentoring another person. Mentoring is a commitment to being with the mentee through the various stages of life—the good, the bad, the messy.

Sheep have the reputation of not being the brightest animals. Some may even say that sheep are stupid. However, research does not necessarily paint sheep in this light. Sheep have been described as "defenseless, wary, tight-flocking, visual, wool-covered ruminants with 'follower-type' tendencies." Sheep are strongly social animals. They require the presence of at least 4 or 5 sheep. When they are grazing, they maintain eye contact with each other. They ruminate, chewing their food over and over again. For sheep, rumination can take several hours a day. If sheep get upset, they can’t eat, and they can become unruly. If sheep are upset, their daily rumination activities are thrown off.

¹⁰² Ibid., 57.

Sheep are also a prey species making them vulnerable to predators. If they perceive a threat, the sheep is likely to run away.¹⁰³ That is why there is a very tight bond between the shepherd and sheep. Shepherds spend day and night with the sheep. Good shepherds know their sheep—recognizing each one. They know the sheep’s needs and peculiarities and habits. The shepherd schleps through muddy fields and braves the elements to make sure the sheep are cared for—leading them to places to eat and drink, guiding them away from the things that will harm them, and searching for them when they have gotten lost.

Ministers-in-training, like sheep, can be “defenseless, wary, tight-flocking, visual, ruminators with 'follower-type' tendencies.”¹⁰⁴ They are easily spooked by the challenges that come up in life, and can be vulnerable to all kinds of things. When they are afraid or confused about the things happening around them, they want to ruminate—to process it with trusted guides. Jesus uses this shepherd-sheep metaphor to paint for us a beautiful picture of mentor-mentee relationships. Jesus models, throughout the gospels, how he expects his sheep to be treated.

It is important to note that the best shepherd is Jesus. This text definitively points to him as the ultimate shepherd. The one who will lay down his life for the sheep. Five times in these 8 verses Jesus uses the phrase, “lays down his life.” The

¹⁰³ <http://animalscience.ag.utk.edu/sheep/pdf/AppliedSheepBehavior-WWG-2-04.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ <http://animalscience.ag.utk.edu/sheep/pdf/AppliedSheepBehavior-WWG-2-04.pdf>

essence of what makes Jesus the best Shepherd is this—his willingness to sacrifice himself for the well-being of his sheep. And not only that, this same Good Shepherd who is willing to lay down his life for the sheep, also has the power to take up his life again. Not even death can separate the Good Shepherd from his sheep. He is the good shepherd who can say to his people, “The present may not look very good right now, but don’t you doubt for one second that there is a powerful hope here because of the resurrection.” God is faithful to God’s people.

Mentoring requires a recognition that mentees will stray. They will get scared sometimes. They will ruminate. They will follow the crowd. Good shepherds, good mentors, understand that those they are leading will not always get things right the first or second or third time, but the care and guidance they offer helps to lead to smoother paths, greener pastures, stiller waters. Mentors join in the growth process of mentees—listening as they process their learning experiences, sharing wisdom, and celebrating with them as they grow and learn more about their vocation.

The Emotional Health of the Mentor

Because mentoring as shepherding can be taxing on the mentor, it is of vital importance that the mentor is self-aware and emotionally healthy. The best mentors are those who have engaged in self-reflection because healthy self-reflection leads to healthy self-awareness. Lois Zachary explains, “Mentors are an amalgamation of their life experiences and need to be aware of the major events that have influenced them. By becoming a student of their own journey, mentors are better able to understand its

flow and pattern.”¹⁰⁵ It is a journey into healthy self-awareness, but it is the only way to effectively lead people in healthy ways.

In his book *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Pastor Peter Scazzero explains that the journey into becoming an emotionally healthy leader is no small task. It forces a person to confront some of the shadow sides of oneself. He assures the reader that they will likely face confusion, fear, and grief.¹⁰⁶ He explains,

“Your fears might take the form of whispers from that accusing and self-protective voice inside you: you don’t know what you’re doing. Do you realize what could happen if you take this road? Okay, sure, you can try to be emotionally healthy, but no one will respect you, and the church will shrink to nothing. Why should you try to do leadership this way? Other leaders aren’t and they seem to be doing just fine! Face it: this isn’t going to work for you. You don’t have time for this right now. Try it later, when things settle down.”¹⁰⁷

Before a mentor is able to truly journey with another person, they must be self-aware. This is key in being an effective leader is first facing yourself. Pastors are in the health and wholeness business, and you cannot be a source of healing if you are not being healed yourself.

You are a person before you are a pastor. Your person is the key tool God uses for building the kingdom. God is as interested in what you are becoming as in what you are doing. If we do not allow God to transform our brokenness, we will transmit it to the people we are leading. Therefore, we must become well-acquainted with ourselves.

“As Christian leaders, we have a whole host of limits—human limits, personal limits,

¹⁰⁵ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 8.

¹⁰⁶ Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 43.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

team limits, and ministry and organizational limits,” writes Pete Scazzero, “As human beings, we are creatures who must routinely face up to any host of limits, some mild and some extreme.”¹⁰⁸ We must know our strengths, our weaknesses, our vulnerabilities. And we must address these things as we recognize them.

Deep self-awareness enables the mentor to be present with the mentee on the journey without inserting oneself inappropriately into the mentee’s process. Lois Zachary has identified three steps in the journey observation process. Step one is self-awareness. Self-awareness is triggered by self-reflection.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, it is important to understand the mentee’s journey. Do not assume what the mentee’s history and experience is, but rather engage the mentee in a discussion of a particular experience to avoid what Zachary refers to as “the cloning trap.” Thirdly, gain perspective. This is an opportunity to look again at your own journey and that of the mentee.¹¹⁰ Ronald Heifetz would describe this as stepping into the balcony.

“The practice of leadership, like the practice of medicine, involves two core processes: diagnosis first and then action,” writes Ronald Heifetz.¹¹¹ The process of diagnosis and action requires collecting data. The problem needs to be identified (What is happening?). The question “Why is it happening?” needs to be examined and interpreted. Finally, potential actions steps can be taken after the first two questions

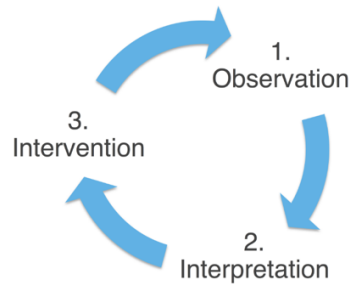
¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 185.

¹⁰⁹ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 6.

are processed. This is what Heifetz would refer to as the “What next?” question.¹¹² The process of diagnosis and action looks like this:



It is important, however, to be aware that in most organizations, there is pressure to solve problems and move to action quickly.¹¹³ This does not always produce the best outcome. Taking time to diagnose what is truly going on can ultimately produce the best outcomes. Heifetz explains, “To diagnose a system or yourself while in the midst of action requires the ability to achieve some distance from those on-the-ground events. We use the metaphor of ‘getting on the balcony’ above the ‘dance floor’ to depict what it means to gain the distanced perspective you need to see what is really happening.”¹¹⁴ If a leader spends all of their time on the dance floor, they know what is going on in the middle of all of the action. But there is also the potential to get swept up in the music and the excitement. If one steps into the balcony, they have a wider perspective. They can see what is happening on the dance floor, but they can also see what is happening in the corners of the room. Who is engaged in the action? Who is not engaged? What is happening outside of the middle of the dancefloor? But one cannot spend all their

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

time in the balcony either. Good leaders move back and forth between the balcony and the dance floor. Within this movement between the dancefloor and the balcony, the mentor must be deeply in tune with the work of the Holy Spirit. This is an opportunity to evaluate whether one is living into being shaped by the pattern of the world (Rom 12:2) or if they are in the process of being transformed by asking questions like: Where is God speaking and what is God saying? Am I following God's lead or am I trying to build something on my own? How are my own desires and aspirations impacting my work? How can I better follow God's lead?

Self-awareness is an opportunity to move back and forth between the dance floor and the balcony of one's own life. In order to accurately diagnose how one is doing, in order to identify blind spots and bias, in order to gain perspective on how one is doing, there must be constant self-awareness work happening. Good shepherds are able to differentiate themselves from sheep, while at the same time, they enter into the lives of the sheep.

Positive Connections

The *Flourishing in Ministry* study emphasizes the importance of positive connections. Positive connections are identified as a key element in the thriving quadrant of the *Flourishing in Ministry* model. People need to feel "connected to others in bonds of care, respect, and love," explains Dr. Matthew Bloom.¹¹⁵ Humans are fundamentally social beings. This does not stop being the case when one becomes a

¹¹⁵ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 32.

minister either. People need positive connections in order to thrive. These connections consist of mutual care and compassion, emotional support, and unconditional acceptance. It is the sharing of life together.

Dr. Elaine Heath, former Dean of the Divinity School at Duke University, writes,

“Deep mentoring in the way of Jesus requires doing life together. In the process of life, with all its ups and downs, old wounds surface. Bigotries rear their ugly heads. Petty grievances, jealousies, insecurities, and ambitions all come to the table. So do gifts, graces, talents, insights. Vocation emerges. Doing life together provides the best possible environment for a mentee to learn to do their inner work as well as their outer work so that they can live into their God-given identity and vocation with integrity.”¹¹⁶

This insight into mentoring has come to Heath through experiences she has had in her own relationships with mentors. In her chapter “Three Practices,” Heath reflects on the three most important practices she learned from her mentor, which she now uses when mentoring others.¹¹⁷ These practices are:

1. Build genuine friendship where you “do life together in community.” This creates depth in the mentoring relationship.
2. Provide opportunities to work together. When the mentee works with the mentor as an apprentice, the stage is set for the mentor to call forth, affirm, and empower the gifts of the mentee.
3. Cultivate the spiritual life of the mentee through example and shared theological reflection.

Positive relationships are key to good mentoring relationships. We see this reflected in the image of the Good Shepherd. We see this reflected in research and in the experiences of those engaged in mentoring. Relationships have transformational impact as two people grow and learn from one another.

¹¹⁶ Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byassee, and James C. Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 26.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

Theological Reflection

The work of the mentor as shepherd is not simply tending to the emotional and psychological needs of the mentee. It is a deeply theological process. In fact, the theological work can be described as the key to unlocking transformation. As ministers-in-training grow and gain experience, the embedded theology that has significantly shaped them as a person and minister can be challenged. It may change. It may deepen. The mentor has the privilege of walking alongside the mentee in this process.

As the mentor journeys with the mentee, it is important to take time to talk about the embedded theology of the mentee. The following questions and exercises may help stir key conversations and help shed light on the embedded theology of the mentee:

- Tell me about what church was like for you growing up?
- Draw a map of your faith journey
- What were some of the essential beliefs and practices in your worshipping community growing up?

As the conversations and reflections move forward, the following questions and exercises may help mentees see where their deliberative theology is emerging:

- In what ways have you changed theologically since you have answered the call into vocational ministry?
- What has surprised you about your theology thus far?

- What do you think you will be like ten years from now? How is what is happening with you right now moving you toward that image of yourself in ten years?

Unlocking Potential

Shepherding is a specific aspect of transformational mentoring. Coaching, counseling, teaching, and discipleship are aspects of leadership development. However, shepherding goes deeper than that. Shepherding involves a deep investment into the spiritual journey of a minister-in-training. Leighton Ford refers to this as “spiritual mentoring.” He writes, “The focus of spiritual mentoring, however, is to help people to pay attention to what God is doing in their lives, and to respond. It is not ‘directing’ others in the sense of imposing an agenda on them and telling them what to do. Rather it is the companionship of a friend, who listens deeply, who may point out what God is doing and help them to discern God’s agenda.”¹¹⁸

I remember sitting with a ministry student I was mentoring one afternoon. We had only met a couple of times, but I knew her well enough that I thought I had an idea of what the conversation would likely entail—we would laugh and probably be a bit sarcastic before we had a few minutes of serious conversation about her ministry internship. I expected a pretty “straightforward” mentoring session. But on that day, she was just different. She seemed to not be herself. “Are you doing ok today?” I asked her. She shrugged, “Yeah, I guess.” “You guess?” I replied. She began to tear up, and she was one of those students who didn’t tend to cry. For the next hour, she began to

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 70.

outline for me her deep struggle with an eating disorder. She had been in a class that triggered something in her, and she came face to face with the fact that she was hurting herself. She wanted to share this deep personal struggle with me that day.

It was the beginning of a long road of recovery for her, and it has become part of the mentoring journey that she and I share. It was as if she said to me that day, “This is too heavy for me to carry alone. Will you help me?” I wasn’t expecting anorexia recovery to become part of the journey that she and I would share, but as she has grown into her call into ministry, she has deeply recognized that she needs help with this part of her story. We’ve spent many days talking about her broken relationship with food and how that will impact her life and ministry. Together we walk this journey, and I have the joy of sharing in her recovery as she also embraces God’s call on her life.

“The practice of mentoring is not merely an end in itself, two persons celebrating how fortunate they are to have found each other,” writes Jeremy Troxler, “Mentoring happens when two persons empower each other to more deeply trust in the faithfulness of their common Lord.”¹¹⁹ A mentor as a shepherd points the mentee toward God, trusting that God is already at work in that person. Good mentors help mentees identify the work God is already doing in their lives.

Jeremy Troxler tells a story from Henri Nouwen’s *Genesee Diary*,

After leading a prayer retreat for a group of college students, Henri Nouwen wondered in his diary what he really had to offer such bright young people. “The remarks by the students about prayer were beautiful and full of meaning. Only They themselves did not know it,” he wrote. “When I went home last night, I thought, ‘What do I have to say to these men and women who are so earnest in their search for God and live such good lives?’...But Henri Nouwen records a

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

moment of insight in his diary. “I realized,” he wrote, “that the only thing I have to do is say loudly what they already know in their hearts so that they can recognize it as really theirs and affirm it in gratitude.”¹²⁰

Transformational mentors get to know their mentees—their strengths, weaknesses, idiosyncrasies. Mentees may wander, and mentors help guide them back to the path. Good mentors listen with their mentees and point them toward the voice of the one calling them—helping them to identify when the wrong voices are calling out to them or when the voice of God is clearly calling and they aren’t listening. Mentors as shepherds help unlock potential.

Listen Together

On another day, I was sitting in my office replying to a text message on my phone when I looked up and saw Emily¹²¹ standing in my doorway. Emily emailed me the day before explaining that she was feeling so lost because her fiancé had just broken up with her. There she stood in the doorway to my office, blank-faced and pale. “Would you like to come in and talk?” I asked her. She simply nodded her head and burst into tears. I ushered her into my office and just let her sit there sobbing. At first she couldn’t get any words out. It seemed she could only form tears. There were no words. Finally, after a few minutes, she blurts out, “It’s over. There is no going back. It’s done, and I feel so, so lost.” This seemed to be a pretty normal reaction to the ending of an engagement. I fully expected to talk about her broken heart and let Emily continue to cry until she felt a little better. But what happened next, I didn’t expect.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 7-8.

¹²¹ Name has been changed to protect student’s identity

She turned her wrist over and showed me a large, open wound. “I burned myself with a lighter last night. I just couldn’t take the pain, and I burned myself last night.” She thought that her heart might hurt a little less if she had some physical pain to go along with it.

In both the case with the student disclosing an eating disorder and in the case of Emily, there are some immediate physical and psychological issues that must be addressed before anything else happens. In both of these cases, the appropriate specialists were called in to respond to the immediate needs. Working with a team of key professionals, triage happened. But what is the role of the mentor moving forward? What does it look like to continue with transformational mentoring? Both of these women shared these deep personal pieces of their story in a mentoring session. Both of these women felt safe enough to welcome their mentor into more of their story than what was at the surface. Transformational mentoring goes beyond the obvious or the superficial and dives deep into people’s personal stories. Shepherding allows the mentor and mentee to face and journey through the terrain of life together, all the while, listening for the voice of God in those different places. In the depths of life, we find pain, sadness, secrets, brokenness, but therein also lies joys, hopes, dreams, strength. Transformational mentors are not afraid to go there.

Empowering

Good mentors empower their mentees to live out the faith, they provide opportunities to practice, and they offer helpful feedback on how the practice is going. Youth ministry experts, Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster have proposed a simple

partnership teaching model for empowering young people for ministry that can be easily adapted for use in a transformational mentoring relationship to help a mentee refine a particular pastoral skill:

1. I do it, you watch.
2. I do it, you help.
3. You do it, I help.
4. You do it, I watch.
5. You do it, I move on to something else.¹²²

It is not the mentee alone who should be learning in the mentoring process. The mentor, too, engages in learning. Together, the mentor and mentee grow as they experience life together. “When Aristotle reflected upon the necessary qualities of the teacher, he stressed not only self-knowledge but also that a teacher must be willing to be taught. Mentoring is a process of *mutual* growth, a give-and-take conversation in which one of the most important qualities of the mentor is an *eagerness to grow, to learn, and to be assessed by a younger protégé*. Mentoring is more a relationship than a role with preconceived duties, a mutually enriching educational journey.”¹²³ Trust is built as the mentor and mentee engage in learning together.

To describe the role of social support in well-being, Dr. Matthew Bloom of the *Flourishing in Ministry* study uses the metaphor of the theater. He points to three stages to frame the emerging insights on social support in flourishing in ministry—the front stage, the back stage, and off-stage.¹²⁴ Bloom explains, “The front stage is where

¹²² Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byassee, and James C. Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 13.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹²⁴ The Stages of Ministry: Research Insights from the *Flourishing in Ministry* Project. Matthew Bloom, July 2017, 1.

the performance happens. The back stage is the place to support and nurture great front stage performances. And the off-stage is a place to step away from performance roles and engage in other parts of life.”¹²⁵ Research has shown that the development of a good back stage is particularly difficult for solo pastors. Many pastors struggle to have a back stage at all.¹²⁶ Isolation is one of the great barriers to flourishing in ministry. In transformational mentoring, shepherding nurtures the development of the back stage of the minister-in-training.

According to the *Flourishing in Ministry* study, there are three main characteristics of a good back stage:

1. It provides a place to review and work on front stage performance and to rehearse future performances
2. It is a place that provides support and care.
3. It provides a place to process, confront, deal with the inevitable stresses, challenges, and failures that are experienced on the front stage.¹²⁷

A good backstage requires an environment of trust because, here, the “actors” do not have to use their speaking lines or remain in character. They can “let down the mask” and begin to process how the performance is going. In the backstage, the mentor as shepherd walks through the work of the frontstage, listening and offering feedback to the “performer.”

According to Bloom, having the right people in one’s back stage is of enormous importance. He explains that the back stage may not be the best place for significant others. “Family and friends can be helpful, but most important are similar others,

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 7.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 4.

people who have experienced the front stage and, ideally, people who have filled similar roles themselves.”¹²⁸ Similar others play a significant role in the back stage of a minister because they have walked in similar roles. They have the capacity to empathize with the minister and offer feedback that can truly help. They understand the nuances of the role because they have been there. Mentors in the role of shepherd are wise guides to the minister. Bloom describes wise guides as having “their own repertoire of effective problem-solving strategies to share and their own experiences from which other actors might learn. They can inspire hope and help other actors find again the meaning and purpose of their front stage...Wise guides are friends and companions, caregivers and care receivers, fellow travelers on a journey through life.”¹²⁹

Early on in their vocational journey, ministers-in-training must begin to see the importance of building relationships. The mentor as shepherd is the beginning of the life-long work of fostering similar other relationships. Isolation in ministry begins to impede flourishing. Isolation is often the foundation of deeper problems that emerge in the life of a minister. Will Willimon in his chapter “The Gifts of Mentors in Ministry” writes, “The director of our clergy psychological support services told me that she has never had a clergyperson lapse into clergy misconduct who was not also a lonely person. A clergy person without friends is not only on ethically dangerous ground (Aristotle defines an immoral person as a person without friends, a detached individual who lacks anyone to correct him) but also a pastor who lacks the resources necessary to grow as a

¹²⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 6.

pastor.”¹³⁰ This is why the image of shepherd for mentoring is profoundly important. It connects people to one another. A good shepherd walks with people—through all of the terrain of life—the mountaintops and the valleys. Sometimes for a long period of time, other times for just a moment.

There was a story in the Los Angeles news a couple of years back that captured my attention.¹³¹ Jay Schaefer, a plumber, was driving his truck home from work one afternoon. At first he saw a bicycle parked on a Hollywood Freeway overpass. Then he realized that there was a girl perched on an outside ledge. Then he saw the rush of Friday afternoon traffic below.

He whipped a U-turn, leaped from his truck, wrapped his arms around the girl and secured himself and the girl on the ledge of the freeway. He held onto the girl for dear life.

"I asked her if she was OK," he explained. "She said, no, she wanted to die.

"Then I said, 'Let me help you, I'll do anything to help you.'"

She told him she was 16, pregnant, with nowhere to live.

"Nobody loves me," she told him.

Jay Schaefer was a father of 4 daughters.

¹³⁰ Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byassee, and James C. Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 53.

¹³¹ <http://www.whittierdailynews.com/20121228/passing-driver-in-north-hollywood-comes-to-rescue-of-girl-ready-to-jump-from-170-freeway-overpass>

"Look, you can't do this," he recalls saying back to her—his strong arms wrapped around her...holding her back from falling off the edge. "I've got you," he said. And He continued to hold on to her.

Others joined the effort and called 911 and the police and fire department came. They closed all lanes of traffic on the freeway below her and about two dozen Los Angeles firefighters arrived, parked an apparatus beneath the overpass, then extended a ladder over Jay and the stricken girl, eventually pulling the two of them to safety.

Mentors shepherd people. When a mentee is stressed, scared, confused...when they wonder if they have come to the end of the road...good mentors point them toward the best shepherd. God does not let go. God shepherds us. The BEST shepherd cares for us, protects us, leads us.

CHAPTER FOUR SPONSORING: THE RISK OF BEING A MENTOR

(Admired Leaders) “do everything they can to imprint their ‘goodness’ onto others in ways that make them feel like fuller versions of themselves. Put another way, the best leaders practice a form of leadership that is less about creating followers and more about creating other leaders.” –Anthony Tjan, *Harvard Business Review*

The work of the sponsor in mentoring is the ushering in of transformation. At the point of sponsoring, mentees have some experience. They have learned by watching their mentors and practicing with their mentors near them, but they are ready for the next step. The sponsor is a risk-taker, knowing that advocating for a mentee may put one’s reputation at risk. However, they are willing to risk because they believe in the mentee enough to advocate for them.

As a sponsor, the mentor leverages their power and experience to help a mentee take the next step in their call and vocation. Sponsors may offer advice or help a mentee find their directions, but the primary role is to develop the mentee as a leader. Sylvia Ann Hewlett describes a sponsor saying, “A sponsor sees furthering your career as an important investment in his or her *own* career, organization, or vision.”¹³² Sponsoring brings to the surface the investment the mentor and mentee have made in one another. Sponsorship recognizes that the mentee has done the important work needed to get to the next level. A sponsor helps the mentee take the next step into becoming a transformed leader. Hewlett further asserts, “Sponsorship isn’t favoritism or politics; it doesn’t rig the game. On the contrary, it ensures you get what you’ve

¹³² Hewlett, Sylvia Ann. (*Forget a Mentor*) *Find a Sponsor: The New Way to Fast-track Your Career*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013, 20.

worked for and deserve. Sponsorship is the mechanism by which people of vision attain their goals..."¹³³ Sponsors are catalysts in the transformation of people. As Hewlett describes, "Everyone who has realized an amazing vision or exerts remarkable influence can and will point to a series of sponsors, powerful individuals who helped pull them up or fund their ventures or clear a path forward. There are no exceptions."¹³⁴

There are three main characteristics of sponsorship. First of all, sponsors go out on a limb for their protégé. They are willing to "stick their neck out there" for the protégé because they believe in them and trust that they will rise to the occasion giving the opportunity. Secondly, when they send their protégé into uncharted waters, a sponsor provides just enough support to keep the protégé afloat. They do not hover over them, holding their hand the whole way, but they also do not abandon their protégé. They are there to offer support while the protégé does the work. Finally, sponsors act as a shield so that the protégé can take the risks the assignment demands. Sponsors do everything within their power to ensure that the protégé is a success.¹³⁵ Sponsors use their power for the good of the mentee. Sylvia Ann Hewlett further outlines the work of the sponsor:

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 29-30.

What is a Sponsor?

Delivers high-octane advocacy

A sponsor is a senior leader who, at minimum:

- Believes in me and goes out on a limb on my behalf
- Advocates for my next promotion
- Provides “air cover” so I can take risks

And comes though on at least two of the following fronts:

- Expands my perception of what I can do
- Makes connections to senior leaders
- Promotes my visibility
- Provides stretch opportunities
- Gives advice on “presentation of self”
- Makes connections to clients/customers
- Gives honest/critical feedback on skill gaps¹³⁶

Pastor Pete Scazzero writes about the importance of really processing one’s power. This is not necessarily something that is commonly advocated for in Christian circles, but it is essential in considering one’s role as mentor. In describing what “Christian” power is, he writes, “The most elegantly simple description of power I know is this: *power is the capacity to influence.*”¹³⁷ He continues by quoting author Richard Gula:

[Power] is what enables us to make things happen or not. In this sense, everyone has power, but we do not all have it to the same degree. Power as influence is always relative to our resources. One of the most important self-

¹³⁶ Ibid., 30.

¹³⁷ Pete Scazzero, 242.

examinations we can do is to name our sources of power, for we are most at risk of ethical misconduct when we minimize or ignore our power.¹³⁸

The mentor as sponsor has spent time in self-examination and has evaluated the amount of power they possess. They have also decided to use that power for the good of the mentee. In considering the impact of power, Ragins and Kram have found that the rank of the mentor in the field affects the type of help that is received by the person they are mentoring. The more senior ranking, the more instrumental help the mentor provides to the mentee.¹³⁹

The mentor as a sponsor is not just about training a mentee for the acquisition of job skills. Rather, it is a deep investment in the life of the mentee. In his article "What the Best Mentors Do," Anthony K. Tjan pushes mentors to adopt a philosophy focused more on the development of leaders rather than the development of followers. "All too often, mentorship can evolve into a 'check the box' procedure instead of something authentic and relationship-based," he asserts.¹⁴⁰ According to Tjan, bearing in mind these principles, mentoring will become more effective. The things the best mentors do are: 1) They focus on helping shape the other person's character, values, self-awareness, empathy, capacity for respect. 2) They are givers of energy, not takers of it. 3) They are selflessly committed to the best interest of colleagues and employees. And 4.) They avoid overriding the dreams of their mentees.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 207-208.

¹⁴⁰ Tjan, Anthony K. "What the Best Mentors Do." *Harvard Business Review*, February 27, 2017.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Sponsoring places high value on other people. It is an act of leveraging one's power for the good of another. This requires great wisdom, self-awareness and care. "Your mentee might come to you with some off-the-wall ideas or seemingly unrealistic ambitions," Tjan writes, "You might be tempted to help them think more realistically, but mentors need to be givers of energy, not takers of it."¹⁴² Good sponsors take time to think with their mentees about why an idea might work before dissecting it for why it will not work. "Each time you hear a new idea," writes Tjan, "see if it is possible for you to spend 24 seconds, 24 minutes, or a day thinking about all the reasons that the idea is good before you criticize any aspect of it. It has been said that the world prefers conventional failure over unconventional success; good mentors should encourage exploration of the latter."¹⁴³

Ultimately, a good sponsor helps a person develop their leadership in a way that allows them to become more fully themselves. Dr. Matthew Bloom explains, "A piece of advice that is often given to people new to a job is 'fake it until you make it.' This may not be good advice if faking it means we are trying to act in ways that are contrary to our identity. Of course, in some new situations we have to figure out how to do things—that is learning, not faking it."¹⁴⁴ A sponsor helps a young leader be true to themselves. Sponsorship does not focus on what a leader "should" look like (duplication). Rather, sponsorship calls out all of the qualities that are uniquely inside of

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 26.

a person and puts them to work (transformation). Bloom continues, “To flourish we need to feel we can be our true selves in the important domains of life, including work. When we fake it, we rarely feel good. When we can be true to ourselves, we feel honest and natural.”¹⁴⁵ When one is true to oneself, the doors of transformation are open wide.

Cultivating Growth and Thriving

The work of Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton coincides with the insights offered by Anthony K. Tjan. Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton have identified several of the important ways mentors help those they are leading. First of all, mentors give to their mentees. Mentors give advice, information and research, finances, and the freedom to emerge as a leader even beyond the level of the mentor. Secondly, mentors are willing to put their reputation on the line for a mentee. They will be an advocate to help a mentee move forward. Thirdly, mentors model aspects of leadership to challenge mentees to move toward them. Fourthly, mentors direct mentees toward resources that will further develop the mentee. Finally, mentors will invite mentees to co-minister with them so that they can learn and grow.¹⁴⁶ “Mentoring is a relational process in which a mentor, who knows or has experienced something, transfers that something to a mentee, at an appropriate time and manner, so that it facilitates development or empowerment,” explain Stanley and Clinton.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴⁶ Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert. Clinton, *Connecting the Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993), 39-40.

¹⁴⁷ Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert. Clinton, *Connecting the Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993), 38.

The mentor as sponsor continues to cultivate growth in the mentee. Mentors allow for the cultivation of growth by creating environments that are incubators for growth. Lois Zachary explains, “Mentors manage the relationship and support learning by creating a learning environment and building and maintaining the relationship. They maintain momentum by providing appropriate levels of challenge, monitoring the process, and evaluating progress. And they maintain momentum by providing vision, fostering reflection, and encouraging personal benchmarking against desired learning outcomes.”¹⁴⁸ Sponsoring is providing enough support, challenge, and vision to move the mentee into the next steps of their call and vocation. Sponsoring also allows for the development of a robust meaning system for the mentee.

Thriving is another key piece of the *Flourishing in Ministry* model. The roots of the term thriving emerge from the fourth century BCE where Aristotle formally studied *eudaimonia*. Eudaimonia literally means having a good indwelling spirit or living a meaningful and purposeful life.¹⁴⁹ Thriving has been and remains a subject of much research, but there are at least three elements that have consistently been included in thriving: 1.) a strong meaning system, 2.) purpose in life, and 3.) positive connections.¹⁵⁰ It is the work of the mentor to help the mentee identify the aspects of their meaning system. What are the values that provide structure to the life of the mentee? What do they really believe? And how are they contributing to their goals and

¹⁴⁸ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012, 117.

¹⁴⁹ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 27.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

aspirations? What is giving them purpose? How connected are they to relationships that will foster this purpose.

Sponsoring is much more than simply helping a mentee acquire job skills and employment. Sponsoring is equipping the mentee with the tools they need to know themselves, connecting them with the relationships and resources needed to accomplish their goals, and journeying with them as they seek to live meaningful and purposeful lives. Sponsors help connect mentees to something bigger and more important beyond themselves.

Bloom points out, “Researchers have consistently found that a strong and clear understanding of what is meaning and important in life is one of the most powerful predictors of health, longevity, and happiness.”¹⁵¹

The Myth of “Bloom Where You Are Planted”

In the *Flourishing in Ministry* study, an interesting insight emerged regarding the perception women often have of themselves. Sponsors should be aware of this in seeking to develop women leaders. In her work on the impact of female representation in the church, Manuela Casti Yeagley of the *Flourishing in Ministry* project highlights an important insight regarding women in ministry emerging from the research. Yeagley notes that women, even after they have achieved success as ministers, often struggle with self-doubt and “a false understanding of the notions of humility and

¹⁵¹ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 30.

servanthood.”¹⁵² This study has found a that females in ministry tend to perceive ambition and a desire to “climb the ladder” as negative. True servants do not seek to push themselves forward. “In our study, this reluctance was a recurrent attitude among clergy women interviewees. Female pastors never spoke about ‘climbing the ladder,’ or wanting a more visible and prestigious position. On the other hand, a significant percentage of their male peers openly spoke about these objectives as perfectly normal and legitimate aspirations, and planned their trajectories accordingly.”¹⁵³

Sponsors should be careful not to perpetuate the “bloom where you are planted” mentality. Rather, sponsors offer women a wider view of their potential and opportunities to rise to the occasion.

A Constellation of Mentoring Relationships

It is not reasonable to expect any one mentor to be everything to one mentee. The role complexity of a mentor is too great to expect one person to be able to cover every aspect of mentoring. Therefore, it is good practice to encourage a mentee to develop a “constellation” of mentoring relationships.¹⁵⁴ This is a team of people who will provide leadership support for the journey. When mentees are faced with day-to-day decisions, crossroads, or challenges, they can turn to one or several of their team members for support. This constellation is comprised of a variety of leaders—and these

¹⁵² Yeagley, Manuela Casti, PhD. "Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church", 10.

¹⁵³ Yeagley, Manuela Casti, PhD. "Pointing Out the Road: The Impact of Female Representation in the Church", 10.

¹⁵⁴ Belle Rose. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 23.

people may not even know they are part of a person's mentoring constellation. These leaders may be figures in history, a relative that is no longer around, somebody that the mentee admires but has never met, a person they meet with on a regular basis. Some define this constellation as one's mentoring, or personal, board of directors.

Revisiting the *Flourishing in Ministry* study's image of a theater to describe the role of social support in well-being, the building of a mentoring constellation early in the life of a minister-in-training begins to establish a strong infrastructure for a minister's backstage. Many pastors, especially solo pastors have a weak to non-existent backstage. This is detrimental to flourishing because, as Dr. Matthew Bloom explains, "A good back stage is completely separate from the front stage: other actors are present but the audience is not. Here actors can step out of character without fear of disrupting the performance or unsettling their audience. It is where actions, ideas, and facts that should be suppressed on the front stage can be shared."¹⁵⁵

The constellation of mentors, or one's personal board of directors, begins to cultivate the positive connections needed in the life of a person in ministry. It is forming within the pastor-in-training a habit of having a network of trusted advisors who are invited to speak into their life. Bloom explains, "When we have positive relationships, we can be our authentic selves, sharing our deepest concerns, fears and weaknesses, and feeling supported and uplifted as we strive to live a life of meaning and purpose."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Matthew Bloom, Ph.D. "The Stages of Ministry: Research Insights from the Flourishing in Ministry Project." July 2017, 3-4. workwellresearch.com.

¹⁵⁶ *Flourishing in Ministry*, (Creative Commons, Attribution Non-commercial, 2016), 32.

Roles in the Constellation of Mentoring

Since we have identified that it is very unlikely that one mentor can fulfill all of the mentoring one needs. It is essential to identify key roles and functions most people need. It is likely that a mentor can fulfill one or more of the functions for a mentee. For Stanley and Clinton, the functions consist of: discipler, spiritual guide, coach, counselor, teacher, sponsor, model (contemporary and historical).¹⁵⁷ Others suggest the roles of connector, clarifier, counselor, challenger, coach, confidante, and comptroller. For Stanley and Clinton, the roles are grouped into three categories: intensive, occasional, and passive. They see these groups functioning on a continuum with the discipler, spiritual guide, and coach in the intensive category. People in these roles in the life of a mentee are much more deliberate and involved in the person's life.¹⁵⁸ Whereas the contemporary and historical models are in a much more passive and less deliberate category.

“Apart from this kind of conceptual breakthrough, a problem exists.” Stanley and Clinton explain, “There aren't enough ideal mentors who can do it all. But lots of people can fulfill one or more of the mentoring functions. All you need to do is identify the specific area of mentoring you need and that should enable you to answer the question, “Who can mentor me?”¹⁵⁹ In transformational mentoring, the mentor must recognize that they will likely not be an ideal mentor. Therefore, identifying that which they do

¹⁵⁷ Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert. Clinton, *Connecting the Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993), 42.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

well is the first step to being a good mentor. The question they should ask, then, is:

Who can I mentor?

The work of sponsorship can be summed up in The Message's interpretation of Romans 12:1-2,

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Sponsors seek, not to duplicate cookie-cutter leaders, but to identify the gifts, talent, and potential that exists in the individual and develop those things they have identified. As God transforms the leader, sponsors advocate for the emerging leader and leverage their power to make room for them.

CHAPTER FIVE
SENDING: WHEN SEASONS CHANGE

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NRSV)

The 1998 hit song “Closing Time” by Semisonic reminds us that “every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” This is true of mentoring relationships. They run their course. They change and transform. Seasons change, and a time will come when the mentee is ready to be sent. Rather than letting this come as a shock to the mentee (or the mentor). It is very important to take time along the way to evaluate where the relationship is at and if it is time to send the mentee. Lois Zachary explains, “The time to agree on the process for coming to closure is when the mentoring partnership agreement is first negotiated. It is essential to plan the process of coming to closure and consider how it will play out when the closure is anticipated as well as when it is not.”¹⁶⁰ Keeping in mind that mentoring relationships change and

¹⁶⁰ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 151.

transform and come to an end, it is helpful to begin talking about this from the very beginning. In formal and informal mentoring relationships, open and honest dialogue from the very start of the relationship will guide the relationship and offer tangible evidence to evaluate along the way. The following questions may be helpful in establishing a well-defined relationship.

Questions for Starting a New Mentoring Relationship

- What do you hope to learn/gain from our time together?
- What will our meetings consist of?
- How often will we meet?
- What do you expect of me?
- What do I expect of you?
- How will we know that we have met our goals?
- What should we do if we decide to stop meeting before one of us believes we have met our goals?

These questions allow for the mentor and the mentee to start with the end in sight. It is important to openly talk about the fact that seasons change. As transformation occurs, we should expect change. This should not come as a surprise to the mentor or the mentee. Lois Zachary speaks to this as she explains, “Coming to closure presents the greatest challenge for mentoring partners, for many reasons. Ending a relationship is often beset with anxiety, resentment, or surprise. It is difficult to plan for closure because relationships can end earlier or last longer than

anticipated.”¹⁶¹ However, keeping an open dialogue and regularly checking in on how the mentoring relationship is doing can help ease some of the anxiety, resentment, or surprise in the long run. Coming to closure does not happen immediately. It is an evolving process. Knowing this, the mentor begins to plant the seeds for closure in the very beginning of the mentoring process. Together, the mentor and mentee can establish an agreement in their partnership and that agreement includes a plan for closure.

Getting on the Balcony

Throughout the mentoring relationship, the questions first addressed at the beginning of the relationship should be revisited again and again. Just as when one is selecting, shepherding, and sponsoring, so too, in the sending of mentoring, the mentor needs to get on the balcony to accurately assess and diagnose where the relationship is at before action is taken. This process of data collection must be made by both spending time on “the dance floor” where the mentor can assess what is happening from up close and stepping away into the balcony to evaluate the relationship from a wider perspective. Potential actions steps can be taken after this data collection and assessment has happened.

Lois Zachary suggests some signals that it may be time for closure in a mentoring relationship. Some of these signals (to name a few) are:¹⁶²

- Feelings of boredom or thinking about other things when meeting with a mentee

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 145.

¹⁶² Ibid., 150.

- Begrudging the time required to spend with the mentee and feeling like there are other more pressing matters to attend to
- The mentee seems to be hanging on and will not let go
- The mentor has run out of the things to talk about with the mentee
- There has been a constant breach of confidence or the mentee listens to advice or counsel but does not follow through
- The mentor and mentee have been meeting for many months and there does not seem to be any progress being made
- The mentor consistently feels drained after meeting with the mentee
- The relationship seems to be a one-way relationship

When a mentor is experiencing these signals, it is time to take a step back and evaluate the situation. It may be time to begin the sending process.

The conversation around closure should not be avoided, even if it is uncomfortable. Zachary explains, “Closure always has an emotional component: discomfort, anxiety, fear, disappointment, relief, grief, fear of separation, joy, or excitement. Acknowledging these emotions and moving on is an expected part of the separation process. Dealing with them takes more time than most people anticipate.”¹⁶³ It is the responsibility of the mentor to address closure and to model healthy ways to navigate the subject. Lois Zachary advises, “An indispensable part of the experience of coming to closure is bringing the relationship to a learning conclusion: a highly focused conversation about specific learning that has taken place during and as

¹⁶³ Ibid., 146.

a result of the mentoring relationship. It is a blameless, no-fault (Murray, 1991), reflective conversation about both the process and the content of the learning.”¹⁶⁴

Two and a half years ago, my home church went through a deeply painful split. There was significant division between the board of elders and the senior pastor at the time. The senior pastor, after negotiating a generous severance from the church, found a loop hole in his terms of leaving and managed to start a new church two miles down the road from the existing church while also collecting severance pay from my home church. This was a devastating time for this church. They were faced with the task of finding a transitional pastor in the midst of profound hurt and heartbreak.

In the search process, the church found Pastor Tim. Pastor Tim was a quiet, grounded leader. He began as transitional pastor of this broken-hearted church during the advent season of 2016. Tim walked with the elders through this crisis. He preached sermons reminding the congregation that God was not finished with them. He gathered the church leaders together to talk about the mission and vision of the church. He helped the church remember why they first existed and challenged them to look ahead toward what God was doing among them now.

While this period of transition was happening, the church also began the process of searching for a new, permanent senior pastor. Many wondered if Tim was the right choice to be the next senior pastor. But, through discernment on both Tim’s part and the church’s part, Tim did not become a candidate for the position. The church found a new candidate for the position. His name...was Tim. As they introduced the new Tim to

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 152.

the congregation, many jokingly referred to the transitional pastor as “First Timothy” and the new pastor as “Second Timothy.” Transitional Pastor Tim uncomfortably laughed for the first couple of time this was said.

In his final sermon as transitional pastor, Tim offered a sending sermon to the congregation. In this sermon, he revisited the goals the congregation made with him when he first started. He had an insert in the church bulletin outlining these goals. “We did it,” he said to the congregation as he walked through the ways they together, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, accomplished many of the things they set out to accomplish. He ended by saying, “Now, I know we have joked about First and Second Timothy over these weeks, but I want you to know that after today, there is no First or Second Timothy. There is only one Tim, and he’s your pastor. I have spoken with him, and I think you have chosen a really, really good pastor. So, after today, I am going to take a step back. I may see some of you at denominational meetings, but I will not be in touch with you. You need time to get to know and love your new pastor. It has been a great joy for me to be your pastor over these two years. I expect that Tim will love you deeply, and I want you to love him.”

This was a healthy sending. It did not brush things under the rug, but it addressed what leaving would look like. It was clear. It was full of love and care for the people. And it was an ending that was necessary. With transformation rather than duplication as the goal, change is inevitable. This is not something to be feared. Rather it is something to be celebrated. In transformational mentoring, a new season should be viewed less as an ending and more as a sending.

Throughout scripture, we see that people are sent out from one assignment to another. In transformational mentoring, sending is a success story. Consider Jesus when he was preparing to leave the disciples to ascend into heaven. In Matthew 28:16-20 he commissions the disciples,

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son 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."

Jesus work as God incarnate was complete. He spent three years of his ministry investing in his disciples and now they were ready to carry on that good work. They may not have felt prepared for this. In fact, things may have felt like they were falling apart. But Jesus knew it was time. So, he left them with commissioning words and a reminder that they were ready to step into that great commission.

Sermon: A Sending Church Acts 13:1-3

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

In today's text, we find ourselves today in Antioch.

"The Jewish Christians who evangelized Antioch do not seem to have gone any farther. But the work they started gathered strength quickly and became the base from

which the Gospel went forth to the west and north.”¹⁶⁵ Much less information is given about the Antioch Church than about the church in Jerusalem. What really stands out, though, is its willingness to pour its life into the task of carrying the message to the regions beyond.

As the Jerusalem church had done practically all the evangelism attempted thus far, the Antioch church was destined to have the same role in the establishing of churches (largely Gentile) in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia. But whereas the outreach of the Jerusalem church experienced persecution and the dispersal of its people at times, this was not part of the launch of the church from Antioch.

Another characteristic that stands out in the church at Antioch is the leading of the Spirit and the responsiveness of the entire church toward the prompting of the Spirit’s leading.

Acts 13 covers a mission trip that Barnabus and Saul are led on to spread the gospel throughout this region. Today’s text gives the account of the launching of Barnabus and Saul into this mission that would further spread the gospel into the ends of the earth. And that is where we will focus this morning.

I was the Director of Student Ministries at a Presbyterian church for 5 years. Part of the job consists of planning and implementing an annual mission trip for the students. In 2007, we took the students to Mississippi to do hurricane Katrina relief.

¹⁶⁵ Everett Falconer Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 201.

Those students worked really hard. We were doing roofing projects in Mississippi in July. It was intense. We sweat all day long and then we would return back to the little camp we were staying at. In the evenings we would gather for worship and prayer and to debrief the day. That year, we didn't have a musician on the team. So, we brought an iPod for our time of singing and one of our leaders led the students in what we affectionately began referring to as iPod worship.

On the night before we went home, we decided that we would spend some time during worship washing each other's feet and praying over each other. We determined, too, that we would end by sharing in communion. Well, the day had been incredibly long and when it came time to prepare for worship, the leaders and I realized that nobody had thought to purchase communion elements. So, we began looking for what we could muster up to use for communion. We found some left over Wonder bread from our lunches that day and some Kool Aid (which was there because some of the guys were trying to dye their hair with it).

So, we prepared for worship...it was iPod worship with Wonder bread and Kool Aid communion. Not exactly the stuff that amazing worship services are made of... But I will tell you, that evening was one of the most profound moments of worship I have experienced in all of my years of ministry. As the iPod played, and students and leaders took communion, I realized that tears were running down the faces of almost everyone there.

That night, several students stood up in worship and committed their lives to the service of God's kingdom. One of our students committed her life to Christ for the first

time. That night we were in awe of what the Spirit could do through Wonder bread and Kool Aid.

There is a quote from the Calvin Worship Institute that hung in my office all of the years I was the Director of Chapel at Fuller Seminary. It says,

“In worship, God speaks and God listens. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God challenges us, comforts us, and awakens us. And by the prompting of the Holy Spirit we listen and then respond with praise, confession, petition, testimony, and dedication.”¹⁶⁶

Worship is powerful. We ought to expect something when we worship together.

We Gather in Worship

In Acts 13:1 we see that the leadership group of the new Christian church in Antioch was as diverse as the church itself. We are told that the church was served by prophets and teachers from all over the region: ‘Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul’.

This list of names represents a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. Barnabas, who is mentioned first, was a Jewish man from Cyprus, who had sold his property and given the proceeds to the church in Jerusalem (4:36-37). He had been sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem church in order to establish a relationship with the new believers (11:22- 23). Simeon is a Jewish name, while the nickname Niger is Latin and means black or dark-complexioned. Lucius was a very common Latin name in the Roman world, and Luke tells us that he was from Cyrene, a city on the northern coast of Africa.

¹⁶⁶ "Calvin College." So You've Been Asked to Plan Worship. Accessed January 02, 2019. <https://worship.calvin.edu/>.

The next name in the list is Manaen, which is the Greek version of the Hebrew Menahem meaning *comforter*. According to Luke, Manaen had been brought up with Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, the ruler of Galilee during Jesus' ministry (not to be confused with the Herod that Betsy spoke of last week). The last person that Luke mentions is Saul, a Jew from Tarsus, who has been recruited as an assistant and brought to Antioch by Barnabas (9:11; 11:25-26).¹⁶⁷

As we step into the text for today, we get an account of the call and commissioning of Saul and Barnabas as the first missionaries of the Antiochene church (13:2-3). This church became not only the sponsoring church for their missionary activities but also the church model that the two missionaries sought to replicate in other cities of the Roman Empire.

Antioch was a sending church. People from all around gathered there regularly for worship...expecting that the Holy Spirit would move among them as they gathered. People were sent there to be part of the ministry that was happening there... the Holy Spirit was at work.

We Listen in Worship

We see in this text that they were gathered together and worshiping and fasting. They were listening. They were in communion with God and seeking the next steps for

¹⁶⁷ Thorsten Prill, "Migration, Mission and the Multi-ethnic Church," Academia.edu - Share Research, , accessed January 02, 2019, http://www.academia.edu/18748552/Migration_Mission_and_the_Multi-ethnic_Church.

their mission. There is something very important about this posture they have taken. The church at Antioch was growing. It was on the way to becoming a second major center of the Christian faith after Jerusalem itself, and its leadership team was pretty well known, with Barnabus and Saul among them. Things were moving and shaking among the Gentiles. The gospel was going out to people and lives were being changed.

And what were the leaders doing? They were listening. We get a fascinating glimpse into their regular devotional life. The leaders were gathered together. These diverse people—each with their own stories and backgrounds—were gathered together in worship.

The unifying factor was the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was powerfully at work in their lives...and in the life of the church at Antioch. Suddenly people who typically wouldn't be gathering in the same space became brothers and sisters. God was doing something. And they knew that if this thing was going to continue, they had to pay attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes “seeking God’s will” can sound more like informing God of our own will...we pray, your will be done...but our prayers may sound more like “I’d sure like it if you would do this because this is what I really want.” Or maybe we pray wondering if God is really there. Do we really have God’s attention?

A pastor tells a story of a 5-yr-old who said grace at family dinner one night. "Dear God, thank you for these pancakes."

When he finished his prayer, his parents looked curiously at him and asked him why he thanked God for pancakes when they were having chicken.

He smiled and said, "I thought I'd see if He was paying attention tonight."

Friends, God is paying attention.

We see that as those who were gathered in that place worshiped and listened, the Holy Spirit moved among them...but, what is really interesting to me here is, the word they heard might not have been exactly what they were expecting...

I will not even pretend to imply that there is a certain formula to get God to act in the way we expect God to act in the church. Scripture does not promise that if we fast and pray, God will do what we want God to do. I can say that the church is called to be committed to prayer, to preach and teach, to worship. And in doing so, we invite God's will to be done...trusting in our Sovereign God to act according to his will.

As the people in Acts 13 listened, it became clear that two of their main leaders were needed elsewhere. This must have come as a bit of a surprise...but there are those times when you have been praying and waiting on God, when a new and unexpected word comes and you have no other choice but to obey...

Which leads me to a third aspect of worship. Responding.

We Respond in Worship

In our text today, when the Holy Spirit made it clear that Barnabus and Paul were to be sent out, I love the response. They laid hands on them and sent them out. The response was immediate and deliberate. The Holy Spirit said go, and they obeyed.

They could have looked around at one another after sensing that the Spirit had directed Paul and Barnabus to go and said, "Well, that sounds awesome. Why don't we

table that idea until the next time we are together and see if we still think that is a good idea.”

That is not what happened. They were so plugged in to the work of the Spirit through gathering together regularly for worship and prayer...they had been listening and fasting...because of this, they knew when the Spirit was speaking and they knew that they needed to respond.

We are still called to this today. Worship is not a mundane, routine ritual that we participate in to be good people. This joining together as Christians is a powerful act that can be life-changing. When we are gathered together, often, we are called to respond.

We are Sent in Worship

Each week we end our worship services with a sending—a benediction or a blessing. For Paul and Barnabus in Acts 13, it was a literal sending. They were sent out into a missionary journey that was about to turn the world upside down for the gospel. They were sent out by the prompting of the Spirit, and with the laying on of hands of the church. Antioch was a sending church—a mother church, if you will. A church where the people were sensitive to the movement of the Spirit. A church where that sensitivity was nurtured by the way the leaders acted and the way the people responded.

As we look at this short passage of Acts 13, we, too, are challenged to assume a posture of listening to the Spirit. The challenge in most of life is that we have an idea of how we think things should go. I wonder if the leaders gathered at Antioch expected

that the Spirit would send out their key leaders into a huge mission rather than keeping them at the church to grow the community there. I wonder, today, if we need to spend more time listening to where the Spirit is leading us and be ready to respond if our courses are altered.

What if, like on that Mississippi mission trip, we are saying something to God like, “This is just not going to work. We don’t have the right elements for a proper worship service. And God is saying, “I’m going to use Wonder bread and Kool-Aid. Yeah...I know it’s not the usual stuff we use for this sort of thing...but this table that has been set is just right for me. I can use these elements here to impact lives.”

What if God’s plan looks different than our plans?

The whole point of what is happening here in Acts 13 is God is taking these hanging pieces—people who have no business being together, regions of the world that weren’t “chosen”, a young church that didn’t have all of its structures in place—and God is weaving together a beautiful tapestry that will spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. And when the tapestry is turned around, what people will see is the power of the Holy Spirit at work.

That is what I want to be a part of. I want to participate in the work God is doing in the world. I don’t just want to invite God to participate in my work—thinking that we need a dash of the Holy Spirit in our plans...when in all actuality, we get to be participants in the work the Holy Spirit is already doing in the world.

What is the Holy Spirit stirring in you? What is the Holy Spirit stirring in this church?

As I close today, I want to turn to the words of the mother of countless orphans from the slums of Calcutta. This prayer of response to the Great Commission was offered by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. These are powerful words that I want to offer today, and you may want to make them your prayer too. Would you join me in prayer...

"Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go.

Flood my soul with your Spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that my life may only be a radiance of yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me, that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus.

Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as you shine; so to shine as to be a light to others."

Amen.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

The emerging research from the *Flourishing in Ministry* study has set the table for the development of a robust and transformational framework for mentoring ministers-in-training. Drawing from key aspects of well-being in ministry, we can develop ways to better mentor ministers-in-training by recognizing that selection, shepherding, sponsoring, and sending are key touchpoints in transformational mentoring. We should no longer be satisfied with duplication models of mentoring that promote mass production of the same kinds of minister. Rather, transformational mentors prepare rising leaders for the long-haul work of ministry in Christ's church through the development of the gifts each individual possesses. The church needs ministers who have been transformed into flourishing leaders who have the energy and joy to lead Christ's church.

Transformational Mentoring is our opportunity to participate in the Holy Spirit's radical and transformative work. Selection, Shepherding, Sponsoring, and Sending may be visited and revisited in a mentoring relationship. They are key to the ushering in of transformation in the life of a minister-in-training. Mentoring with transformation in mind is mentoring people to become that which we may not be able to see or know just yet. Mentees may take on a new shape and look differently from their mentor, and that is the goal. In order for transformation to occur, it must be understood that the mentee will not simply sit at the feet of the mentor and receive knowledge.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentors Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2012), 7.

Transformational mentoring is a partnership where the mentor facilitates the opportunity for a deep spiritual work to happen. Transformational mentoring leads to flourishing. It allows an individual to fully live into being the person God has created them to be without the pressure of being duplicated into an imposed pattern.

Transformational mentoring is not done systematically. Selection, shepherding, sponsoring, and sending are touchpoints along the way allow space for the work of the Holy Spirit which leads to transformation. It is clear that the mentoring of pastors-in-training cannot be boiled down to one catch-all system. Mentoring is not one-size-fits-all—just as humans are not one-size-fits-all.

Transformational mentoring is individualized without being individualistic. It is self-sacrificing. It opens the doors of the community wider. It does not duplicate one kind of leader. Rather, it draws from within the person, the God-given leadership qualities that make that leader unique. In transformational mentoring, the mentor works with those qualities to help usher in the new thing that God is doing in the life of their mentee.

Selection: See with Your Heart

When I was in college, I was a student leader in the new student orientation program at my university. I was among the hundred or so sophomore students who worked to welcome new students to campus at the start of the academic year. We went through an intense training program which included a week-long trip of service to the inner-city in San Francisco, CA.

After a week of serving in soup kitchens, playing with children in after-school programs, learning about social services for the homeless, we gathered in the basement of the dormitory we had been staying in for a closing worship service. We shared stories of how a week in the city changed our perspectives. We shared about the people we met throughout the week and how their stories impacted our stories. There was so much laughter and many tears. At the end of the service, the Director of Orientation programs pulled out a big box, and in that box were heart-shaped sunglasses—enough for each of us. As he handed a pair of sunglasses to each person on that trip, he explained, “Don’t forget to see with your heart. Always see with your heart.”

I still have that pair of sunglasses. They stand in my office as a reminder that vision is so much deeper than what we see on the surface. As mentors, we must be able to see potential in people and recognize that potential is not always see on first glance. We must see with our hearts. We must trust the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing mentees into our lives.

We must also remember that mentoring is a process of helping a person to see the gifts, the talents, the potential that exist within them. There is so much to be discovered within an individual, and sometimes that potential is difficult to see right away. We have an (often unspoken) pre-determined criteria for who we want to mentor, and we invest in those who seem to be what we are looking for. This is mentoring for duplication. However, when we do this, we are not establishing

mentoring frameworks within the church and Christian higher education that empower all people to reach their full potential.

Transformational mentoring adjusts the lenses through which we identify potential leaders. Spiritual discernment, time on the balcony and the dance floor, wisdom, grace, and the desire to usher in transformation rather than duplication guide the view of the transformational mentor.

Shepherding: Journeying Together

Shepherding is where the mentor really rolls up their sleeves and enters into the deep work of journeying with a minister-in-training. This deep work can only happen as the mentor, themselves, participates in a journey of their own personal emotional health. Healthy self-awareness is essential in shepherding because it enables the mentor to be present with the mentee on the journey without inserting oneself inappropriately into the mentee's process. If one has not done the deep work, there is a risk of projecting the mentor's own "stuff" onto the mentee. Deep self-awareness gives rich perspective. The mentee's progress depends on the perspective that can be offered through shepherding.

This process of journeying with a mentee also allows for the early fostering of positive connections—a piece that is essential in flourishing in ministry. Ministers need positive connections in order to truly flourish in ministry. These connections consist of mutual care and compassion, emotional support, and unconditional acceptance. Good shepherding models these elements and invites the mentee to live more fully into who they are. We see the very best kind of relationship reflected in the image of the Good

Shepherd. Transformational mentors should seek to be examples of good shepherds to their mentees.

All of this cannot be done without the incorporation of deep theological reflection. This work is a deeply spiritual and theological journey. It is a time of profound transformation as the mentee confronts the theological perspectives that have shaped them throughout their lives (embedded theology) and moves toward a deliberative theology. This move is transformative as the mentee may for the first time see things through new lenses. The mentor is in this process with their mentee—offering support, encouragement, wisdom, and presence.

Shepherding unlocks the potential of the mentee. Mentors as shepherds walk beside mentees. They get to know their mentees—their strengths, weaknesses. In shepherding, the mentor and mentee become well-acquainted with each other. The mentor is given permission to speak into the life of the mentee because deep trust has been established. As the mentor speaks into the life of the mentee, they call out the gifts and name them. As shepherds, mentors begin to invite the mentees into more responsibility in the gifts they have. They may challenge the mentee to take steps they have not taken before or to try something they may be afraid to try. Here in the safety of the relationship, mentors challenge the mentees to grow and discover what is inside of them. Shepherding involves listening together and the mentor empowering the mentee to do more than they think they can.

Sponsoring: Transformation Ushered In

Sponsoring is the catalyst for transformation. Mentees learn by watching their mentors and practicing alongside their mentors, but sponsoring identifies a readiness for the next step. The sponsor is a risk-taker, knowing that advocating for a mentee may put one's reputation at risk, but recognizing that the mentee has developed enough skills and is ready to take a big step. As a sponsor, the mentor leverages their power and experience to help a mentee take the next step in their call and vocation.

Sponsoring brings to the surface the investment the mentor and mentee have made in one another. It recognizes that the mentee has done the important work needed to get to the next level, and the sponsor helps the mentee get there.

Sponsorship allows a person to transform into a fuller version of themselves. become more fully themselves. Sponsorship does not impose a leadership mold upon a minister-in-training (duplication). Rather, sponsorship allows for the gifts inside of a person to emerge and blossom and be put to work (transformation). The well-being of a minister depends on that person being satisfied with themselves. When one is true to oneself, transformation into the next level of leadership is possible.

Sending: Change Makes Way for New Beginnings

So much of the journey into flourishing involves being honest with oneself and with the people with whom one is in close relationships. Mentoring relationships change. There are many reasons they change. Some mentoring relationships grow into friendships. Other times, goals are accomplished and the mentee has learned all there

is to learn from a mentee. Sometimes two people grow apart and decide to part ways. Change is not meant to be feared. It should be faced.

Throughout the mentoring relationship the mentor needs to spend time “on the dance floor” and “on the balcony” to accurately assess and diagnose how the mentoring relationship is doing. This is a process of collecting data on the mentoring relationship and making the best decisions for the future of the mentoring relationship. Potential actions steps can be taken after this data collection and assessment has happened. Sometimes in this process, it becomes apparent that it is time for sending.

Sending is the recognition that the season has changed. It is vital that the mentee address this when the season has changed. Sometimes this happens naturally, such as when a student is graduating from an academic program or when a person takes a new ministry position in a different geographic location. When it becomes apparent that the season has changed, it is the mentor’s work as a sender to talk with the mentee about what change will look like. Will there be a formal, ceremonial time to end the season? Will a conversation and renegotiation of the relationship be the way to send the mentee?

Sending is does not have to be the severing of a relationship. It is healthy and part of the mentoring process. It is important to talk about sending throughout the mentoring relationship. This prepares the mentee for the possibility that change may happen, and that is not something to be feared. In fact, sending can be viewed as a continuation of the mentoring relationship.

Final Things

Mentoring is key in a minister's well-being. Mentoring allows for deep relationships to grow and develop over time. It provides space for positive connections with wise guides early on in the journey of a minister-in-training. Also, Mentoring is cyclical. Good mentoring produces good mentors. Individuals who have been in a previous mentoring relationship, whether as a mentor or mentee, are more willing to mentor others. This is so important as we have discovered more and more the detrimental impact of isolation in ministry. A mentoring culture fosters community and calls people out of isolation.

In Romans 12, we are called into a new way of thinking about mentoring. This model cautions us with "do not be conformed" and calls us "but be transformed." Mentoring is not meant to be a model of duplication that leads to repetition of the same patterns. To be conformed is to try to squeeze one into a pre-determined mold in order to make that person look a certain way. Transformational Mentoring is the process of mentoring people to become that which we may not yet be able to see or know. They become more fully the person that God has created them to be, and in the process they learn to use their unique gifting in their ministry. Transformational mentoring leads to flourishing. It allows an individual to fully live into being the person God has created them to be without the pressure of being duplicated into a certain mold.

Transformation begins with a renewing of our minds. It alters our perspective and changes our view. We begin to live outside of the expectations imposed upon us by society (and the church), and we see things through God's lenses. For one to flourish in

ministry, they must be invited into a process that allows for transformation to occur. Mentoring with duplication in mind will continue to produce cookie-cutter designed pastors who are not fully living into all they are called to be. Transformational mentoring discards the mold and allows God's presence and power shape a person. Thus, creating something new and beautiful and healthy and flourishing.

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