

Pastor: Mentor the Young Men!

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In the fall of 1985 I arrived on the campus of The Master's College in Southern California – a 19 year old, Arminian, baptismal-regenerationalist with a rather unsanctified Christian track record.¹ Besides the zits, remarkably poor style, relational awkwardness and 6'8" frame with a paltry 185 pounds clinging to it – I did not have a lot going for me. I had not been well-taught the Word of God, I was typically self-centered and rather proud of the fact that I was not American!

But the Lord was "on the move" at The Master's College in those days and by His grace I was soon swooped up in His doings. The buzzword of the time was *discipleship*. We were told that everyone should be *discipling* someone else (of the same gender – much to the dismay of one girl I knew!) and that everyone should be *getting disciplined*. It was such a part of the campus ethos that the question, "Who is discipling you?" became as common as "What's on the exam?"

¹ That description is not meant to mock anyone's theological outlook, but if you know the doctrinal stand of The Master's College and Seminary you will understand that I did not really "fit the mold," shall we say (and you might better appreciate the humour of the event)!

Now, there are all kinds of things that can go wrong in such an environment, not the least of which is a jockeying for position to get the "A" List discipler. But with all the dangers there was immense good, at least in the life of this kid.

Patient Tim

Tim and I began meeting weekly. He was a USC grad doing a year of Bible training and I was, well, what I just said! He was the consummate cool (by 80's standards) and I was still wearing potato sack shorts. He had evangelized fellow students at USC. I had never told anyone about Jesus. He had a serious girlfriend, and I was profoundly single.

To this day, I am not sure what possessed Tim to spend time with me. (He has gone on to be a remarkably successful businessman and godly leader in his church and I would like to think that the torture I put him through is what got him there!)

Friday mornings would roll around and I would trudge up to his dorm room at 6:30AM. The time would start with teaching. At first he would teach me things he was learning from the Word or sub-

jects like humility, pride, purity, etc. Later, I would do the teaching, and Tim would evaluate. Never more than five minutes long, I still have some of those little preaching outlines.

Our time would then turn to more personal issues. Was I reading the Bible? Praying? A schedule of the past week and the week to come were presented. I even made up my first budget – how easy it was to budget when you only made \$400 a semester!

And so these times were full of Biblical, practical, and wise instruction and a thing I had not thought of much before – accountability. Now someone I respected was holding a mirror up to my life and helping me to get some things together. We only met for about 7 months, but I often wonder where my life would have gone if the Lord had not injected Tim into it.

“And They Told Two Friends...”

What Tim did with me, I soon started doing with others. Granted, much of this was still messed up with pride, self-reliance and a tendency to confuse doctrine with preference. But since 1985 there has really never been a time in my life when I was not meeting with other men, seeking to urge them on in their walk with Jesus. To my great joy, many of these men have gone on to become far better Christians than me.²

But not everyone has had this experience. I have met pastors who not only do not mentor, but who do not even build friendships. Perhaps they were not naturally *relational* growing up, went to a large university without any Christian influences, then jumped into seminary where being known for who they really were was more intimidating than a Greek final. They may

² I cannot help but think of Barnabas and Saul/Paul. Where Barnabas began as the mentor, Paul slowly took over. I see no evidence of anything but good in this.

have graduated seminary only to be picked up by a church in a denomination where pastoral fraternities were more akin to *Canadian Idol* than a brotherhood of labourers.³ When they finally made a friend in their congregation and began to open their lives, they were crushed to have that brother gossip things spoken in confidence. And so they end up like the cocooned preacher that once told me, “I *never* make friends in the church. I tried it. ONCE!” Or perhaps they decided to take on some young buck with ministry aspirations only to have him attempt a spiritual coup d’état or abandon him at the moment of greatest need. There is no question that mentoring other men is risky. Just ask Jesus.

I have two goals for this paper. The first is to win your heart to the concept of mentoring. The second is to fill your mind with lots of practical ideas on how you might do it. Thus, I will flip back and forth between Biblical instruction and personal story. For the record, I do not believe these are equally authoritative! Yet, mentoring other men has been a part of the DNA of Grace Fellowship Church. We have not always done it well, but by God’s grace we are learning and seeking ways to improve. So I hope to fill your mind with lots of examples of things we do, not because we do everything right(!), but because hearing how one church has worked out the principle of mentorship may give you ideas on how to train the young men in your context.

³ Does no one else feel that creeping competitiveness amongst pastors so ensconced in that seemingly inevitable question, “So, how big is *your* church?” Like fake-smiling contestants on sudden-death reality TV shows we jockey for position and the approval of men. I wonder if some of the “exit interviews” of these pastors might sound a lot like the jaded souls voted off the show? Maybe nobody else feels this, but I know it is an area of constant battle for my heart.

A Biblical Mandate for Training Men

Over the past few years, I have tried to discern if my desire for mentoring men is a Gospel priority or just a matter of preference – a practice so much a part of my early life that it is second-nature, like going to church on Sunday. I have had many conversations with fellow pastors who believe that discipling, mentoring, training – whatever we choose to call it – is really a matter of choice or gifting or background, not a required duty to be discharged in our ministry. However, the more I ponder this ministry and read my Bible, the more convinced I am that it is a Gospel priority for pastors to train men for the ministry and that *every pastor must, in some capacity, be involved in training the next generation of pastors.*⁴ That is a bold statement to make, but I hope to prove it to you from the Word of God.

You knew this verse was coming.

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything (2 Timothy 2:1-7).

I sometimes wonder if our love of conferences and books about ministry has resulted in neglect for the pastoral theology of the Book. Paul wrote two letters to Tim-

⁴ As will become evident, I do not believe that mentoring is to be restricted to men aspiring to the office of elder, but that activity must take priority.

othy and one to Titus that are a gift to every pastor until the Lord returns. These letters lay out an entire job description (with qualifications!) for the man of God. That observation alone says something. These are *mentoring books*... full of data meant to do the very thing that Paul instructed Timothy to do in the passage just read. It is a non-negotiable duty of every pastor to “entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” a certain body of Truth.

Let me make four brief observations from this passage.

Takes Grace

Notice first of all, that mentoring requires grace. “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus...” The illustrations that Paul chooses at the end of this paragraph only confirm this. Soldiers, athletes and farmers spend huge amounts of time in preparation for their respective battles, races and harvests. Soldiers that go AWOL, athletes that fudge training and farmers that neglect seeding and weeding, will not do well in the end. If you think over what Paul writes, you will observe that training men to take in the Gospel will cost large amounts of time and effort. And that requires grace because most of us shy away from that kind of long-term hard work.

But God gives grace to the humble! There is abundant grace for you to train faithful men. This moves the entire activity away from egotistic cloning into dependant, Spirit-empowered serving. We need strength for this duty, and God will provide it. This foundation must be squarely in place if we are going to accomplish any spiritual good in the life of a brother.

Takes Active Impartation

Let me be clear that this duty of “entrusting” is far more than preaching one sermon a week. It is more than preaching two sermons a week! It is even more than going “old-school” and preaching 2 sermons and a prayer-meeting-mediation per week. The charge of Paul to Timothy is for this young pastor to duplicate what his mentor did with him. Timothy was to entrust something. Precisely, he was to entrust “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses.”

You have probably heard it said, that the word “entrust” (Gk., *paratithemi*) means “to deposit for safekeeping.” It is to give something to another for them to take care of it. It is a commitment. When I die, my will entrusts my minor children to a faithful relative. I give them not only my kids, but the authority to dispose of all my earthly belongings in a manner that will protect, benefit and love my children. Yet, my written will is not enough for this to become a reality. I must ensure that these sponsors are willing and able to take on this duty, that they understand my requests. And, of course, I must die.

If a pastor vests his fulfillment of this “entrusting” ministry into his pulpit alone, he is dreaming. How many of you have drifted already through this boring presentation? Think of how many words you have said that well-intentioned members of your church have completely ignored! Minds wander, misunderstandings persist and men nod in agreement to doctrines they completely dismiss once they really understand them.

The only way to *entrust* is to be so involved in a man’s life that you really know what he believes.

Without going into a long defense, I will suggest that what Timothy had “heard” in public proclamation and that which other faithful witnesses confirmed as true was “the Gospel.”⁵ So, Paul gravely commits the Gospel to Timothy for him to protect and teach. But Timothy is expressly commanded to protect it *by* further publicizing it and stitching it into the warp and woof of a certain group of men. The Gospel is not to be hidden in a handkerchief, but invested in men. It is not to be kept buried for safe-keeping, but

worked into the lives of living, breathing, dying men. The once-delivered Word of God must be made alive in the hearts of men so that it does not become a museum piece, visible but ignored. And you cannot judge your success in this endeavour until you are personally involved in a

man’s life.

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Takes Identification

Paul’s instructions demand selectivity. Mentoring is not done with a shotgun, but a rifle. And not every man is a target. Timothy is instructed by Paul to look for two characteristics in the men in Ephesus: faithful and able to teach. The subjects of our entrustment cannot be chosen by ballot or availability. They must be men we

⁵ By “Gospel” here I am referring not only to the Good News of salvation in Jesus alone for all who repent of sin and put faith in Him alone for salvation, but to the entire body of Truth delivered once for all to the saints. Sometimes referred to as “the faith,” this Truth has been collected into the 66 books of the Bible. There is much literature on what Paul meant by the phrase for which I commend you to the commentaries.

seek out because we observe them living a faithful life and because they show genuine promise for being able to teach. This does not mean that non-teachers cannot grasp the Gospel! Rather, it is a command to make sure that whatever church you are at, you are actively training the men who can teach.

Sometimes our churches have “scholastic” men who have no teaching gift. They are great receptors to our pontifications and we may be tempted to spend our mentoring time with them. In fact, the men who *are able* to teach may rub us the wrong way (“I’m not sure he really grasps the finer details of justification by grace through faith”) and our response may be to avoid them. Brothers, teachers are going to teach! Make sure they are teaching the right stuff.⁶

Takes a Toll

Good soldiers die in battle. Amazing athletes suffer career-ending injuries. Hard-working farmers lose crops. Not every pastor is going to have a 100% success rate in his mentoring. The Apostle Paul is prototypical in this regard. Throughout the course of his public ministry he mentors John Mark, Timothy, Titus, Demas, Silas, Aquila, Luke, Crescens, Epaphroditus, Onesimus and others. Beyond mere names, this is a list of evangelists, church planters, elders, Bible authors, missionaries and *traitors*.

There is great risk in investing your life in another man. Two men I have had mentoring relationships with have aban-

⁶ Paul told the Ephesian elders: “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears” (Acts 20:29-31). It is your responsibility to guard the sheep now and prepare them for the future. Paul’s emotional admonishment was taking place “from the pulpit” and also from house to house... he was mentoring.

doned the faith and fallen into horrible sin. One man jeopardized my reputation by attributing statements to me that I never made (and kindly emailed them to most evangelical leaders where I lived). Another man got so angry at me for addressing flagrant sin in his life that for a time I feared significant physical harm. Besides this, men don’t show up for meetings, make you look bad in public when they fail, offend your family, eat your food, and forget to thank you. And I wonder, just wonder, if it is a fear of these kinds of inconveniences that causes some pastors to “do ministry” rather than “reproduce it?”⁷

Relational discomfort and being sinned against are no excuse for neglecting our duties. Further, I am going to suggest that Nike is right – no pain, no gain... therefore, *just do it!* Brothers, very little ministry is clean! But the rewards of this one are great! Which of us does not long to write with a gleaming smile, “I am pleased to commend to you, Timothy. ‘I have no one like him!’”

Examples of Mentoring Relationships

Before considering the actual practice of mentoring, take a moment with me to scan over the testaments and observe how often this discipleship takes place.

Moses/Joshua

“Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth” eventually became the leader-replacement of his mas-

⁷ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Revell, 1988), 104. Or is it that we are so concerned for our own reputation (pride) that we will not risk putting a man we are training into visible, responsible positions because we might end up looking bad? Brothers, I suggest we examine our hearts to ensure that things like guarding our pulpit are done correctly. We Reformed types can overcorrect in this regard and even deceive ourselves. If we have preached well our sheep will know error when fed it and will also understand that inexperienced men will require a little latitude as they earn their stripes.

ter. Moses took Joshua and made him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation while Eleazar “laid his hands on him and commissioned him as the Lord directed through Moses.”

Years later it would be written of Joshua: “Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses” (Joshua 11:15). Here is a remarkable mentoring relationship. Without becoming a Moses clone, Joshua fulfilled all that Moses asked of him, to the glory of God.

Elijah/Elisha

Although their relationship appears to be a little weird (can anyone explain to me why Elijah kept trying to ditch Elisha?), there is no question that a form of discipleship existed. It appears that Elisha had followed and learned from Elijah for many years. The idiom, “passing the mantle” originated from this event and expresses the idea of taking an office or message from another and discharging it yourself.⁸

Jehoiada/Joash

“In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. And Jehoash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him” (2 Kings 12:1-2).

“But Jehoiada grew old and full of days, and died. He was 130 years old at his death. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he

had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house” (2 Chronicles 24:15-16).

Jehoiada proved a good mentor in life, but Joash was not a good disciple. Shortly after his mentor's death, Joash fell into grave sin capped off by the murder of Jehoiada's son!

Paul/Timothy

There may not be a more detailed Biblical mentoring relationship than this one. We will examine it in greater detail further on.

Jesus / The Twelve

Here the master mentor teaches by example and precept what it means to train other men. This example, too, will receive greater examination in a moment.

Discipling Defined and Described

For the sake of this paper, what I intend by the words mentoring, discipling and

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training another man is the long-term, full-orbed process of imparting to another man the faith, helping him to grow in his cross-centered sanctification and

teaching him the art of Christian pastoral ministry. I do not believe that mentoring is to be restricted to men aspiring to the office of elder, though that activity must take priority. Personally, I have discipled all kinds of men in our church, but if I am not mentoring my potential replacement, I am not fulfilling 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

Imparting the Faith

As Paul made clear to Timothy, there is a body of doctrine that every undershepherd of Christ's flock must know and understand. This requires, first of all, that we know what we believe and are able to defend it from the Word. It also requires that we are able to articulate it. But as I have already stressed, we must not deceive ourselves that proclamation *alone* is

⁸ Not to be confused with “dropping the baton,” a.k.a. the 2008 US Olympic Track and Field Team.

what Paul was getting at in this description of discipleship. Not only must these men know the facts of the Gospel, the Gospel must own them.

Richard Baxter touched on this in *The Reformed Pastor* when he wrote: "We must study how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick..."⁹ True mentoring involves everything from working on projects together to reading specific books. In all of this, the wise mentor will be seeking to inject truth.

For instance, you may learn a great deal about how a man handles opposition by the way he responds to losing in sports, being the brunt of a joke, or the manner in which he survives finals week. By carefully observing how he lives, you will gain insight into what he really believes. So, does he nod in agreement to the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty? Wonderful! Then why does he pout off the rink, clench his teeth through the joke and melt down during finals? If I am going to entrust to him the truth of divine sovereignty, I must address these patterns of behaviour as being rooted in a misapprehension or lack of faith in the Sovereign God.

Helping His Sanctification

Paul David Tripp once wrote: "My self-perception is as accurate as a carnival mirror. If I am going to see myself clearly, I need you to hold the mirror of God's Word in front of me."¹⁰ The carnival mirrors we peer into work in reverse. They take our eye-beam sin and make it appear as a speck, and they distort grace into something akin to a nice shirt we picked out. None of us are exempt from this disfigured self-analysis. Therefore, the wise

man will seek out others to lovingly observe patterns in his life that are out of step with the Gospel. The pastor who practices this discipline will have an avenue into other men's lives as he mentors them.

Stuart Olyott once mentioned that he thought it very arrogant of some pastors to critique an aspiring preacher's sermon at length while making it clear no one dare sniff around his own. One of the most effective ways to train men in preaching can be to have them evaluate your sermons week by week – with you. It will do great things for your humility, it will make them willing for similar critique and you might end up a better preacher and pastor!

That being said, the mentor cannot excuse himself from speaking loving observations of areas that need change into the life of the man he trains. I knew one situation where a young seminary graduate had taken an associate position at a fine church. The folks of that church were dying under his preaching. It was, by all accounts, quite miserable. Boring, fuzzy, self-congratulatory, and regularly missing the entire point of the passage. But no one was telling him! Now what possible good is that? More than likely he sensed the disapproval and tried even harder to please men which at best resulted in man-pleasing and at worst developed all kinds of nasty public-speaking habits!

Again it caused me to wonder if some of our reticence to address sin in a brother is not a result of our own "bob and weave" as we attempt to cover up our own sin. Godly men have tender consciences, and perhaps it feels unbearable to address sin in another that you know is in you. The cure for this is not to avoid mentoring! The solution is to humble yourself, confess your sin and open your life up to the men who need training.

⁹ Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1974), 145.

¹⁰ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002), 54.

Teaching the How of Ministry

Where would we be without 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and books like, *The Christian Ministry*,¹¹ and *Lectures to My Students*?¹² These are wonderful resources and I am sure you have a bookshelf more. Yet, pastoral ministry is something far better caught than taught. And really, both are needed.

Howard Hendricks once outlined the discipling methodology of Jesus in 6 parts:

1. Tell them what.
2. Tell them why.
3. Show them how.
4. Do it with them.
5. Let them do it.
6. Deploy them.¹³

Take, for example, preaching, from the Gospel of Mark.

1. *Tell them what.* “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’” (1:14-15).
2. *Tell them why.* “And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men’” (1:17).
3. *Show them how.* “And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons” (1:39).
4. *Do it with them.* “And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed

twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.” (2:13-15).

5. *Let them do it.* “And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught” (6:7, 30).
6. *Deploy them.* “And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation’” (16:15).

I would suggest that every aspect of pastoral ministry could be entrusted in a similar way. Evangelism, funerals, elder visits, counseling, childcare, prayer, hospital visits – the good mentor understands that he must both instruct in these things and model them. That will mean the inconvenience of bringing another body along and teaching what you are doing. It will eventually mean standing back and letting him do it (and later offering encouragement and correction). And finally, it will mean letting him go in your stead.

But you will notice that there is an order to this. Jesus did not send out the Twelve forty-three days into his public ministry! Deployment must come last. I have watched too many pastors act like getting somebody to cover you for your vacation is mentoring. That is not mentoring. That is unfair.

Paul’s example agrees with this. Timothy traveled with Paul for some time before being left in one church. (Think of the sermons he heard and persecutions he witnessed.) The same was true with Titus. We read of Demas in good stead long before we read of his denial of the faith. Aquila was sewing leather with Paul in Corinth all day before he was explaining the word of God more accurately to Apol-

¹¹ Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1959). First published in 1830.

¹² C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1881).

¹³ This model was adapted and expanded by Bill Hull in his 1988 book, *The Disciple Making Pastor*.

los in Ephesus. Men must first understand the message and know why it is crucial before they can begin to minister.

And once their ministry begins, it ought to be under the loving eye of a brother who will help along the way. What a day it must have been in the life of Titus to get that letter! Imagine the feelings of confidence bolstered, the faith affirmed, the selection of elders strengthened, and the desires to preach Christ impassioned! I mean, who can read Titus 3 today without a fire being kindled – how much more if it was addressed to you personally?¹⁴

Show them how. Do it with them. Let them do it. Deploy them. Both Jesus and Paul seemed to follow this simple model.

Interlude: The Place of the Seminary

Full disclosure: I went to a seminary. In a very kind providence, I even graduated from it. Not only that, I spent many years teaching at a seminary here in Toronto. I believe in the seminary.

What I do not support, however, is the notion of “seminary alone.” Having been on both sides of the lectern, I can confidently say that 99.99% of men in seminary will experience significant failure apart from a mentoring rela-

¹⁴ One of my deepest joys in ministry has been privilege of acting as a sounding board to young men starting out in their own churches. I do not have all the answers, but I know that talking things out with a man further down the road can be a great help. I often recall my many phone calls to my father-in-law while in my first year of pastoring. One of my favourites was when I called to complain about someone’s hurtful comments about me. Dad said, “Well, get a tough skin and keep a tender heart.” That was it! I wanted to whine and get sympathy and he had the nerve to tell me to man up! I guess that is why I love him so much.

tionship with a local church pastor. How much heartache in our churches could be avoided if our pastors were actively mentoring their replacements! You all know the story of the wet-behind-the-ears graduate who splits a church over infralapsarianism in his third month of ministry. The idealism of the classroom can be a horrible model for real, live ministry.

The seminary can offer things I never could. My abilities in Hebrew have, shall we say, declined over the years. My time to research doctrinal aberrations is extremely limited. I cannot read only the latest theological journals for I have to save some reading time to understand the scope of this world. I love Biblical Theology, but if required to train the next generation of pastors on my own, we would

soon have a church of confusion. I need help.

The most effective means of help in this regard is the academy, IF (and that “IF” is big on purpose) that institution has two things in place: orthodoxy, and a love for the church. My own view is that seminary ought to be reserved for in-

doctrination, not “show me the options and let me pick” confusion. Thus, you need to send your men to those schools that know their doctrine, support it in practice and teach it. But the other necessary factor is that the institution has a genuine love for the local church – and that love must be reflected in how it operates. I love schools like The Master’s Seminary and Toronto Baptist Seminary that elevate local church membership and ministry to a requirement for seminary attendance. May their tribe prosper. And may more seminaries be quick to organize their

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-Paul David Tripp

schedules, requirements, and curriculum in a way that serves the church, rather than just expecting the church to serve them.

The Practice of Mentoring

Exposure, practice and responsibility. Those are three big ideas that need to be present in a mentoring structure.

Exposure

I recall reading a book on hospital visitation. It was very helpful. And by the end I dreaded making my first visit. Even though I “knew” what to do and say, I had no idea what it “looked like.” That first summer of my pastoral ministry I went with my father-in-law for an afternoon of visitation. I learned more in those few hours than 23 books or lectures could have taught me. I was a sponge!

Now, this was not some pre-arranged training exercise.... this was just Dad saying, “Hey, would you like to go with me to visit some folks?” In the car I jumped. But I learned great things about being purposeful, asking hard questions, showing love, praying well, reading the Scriptures, looking in eyes, staying focused on the cross, and not getting freaked out by smells and sounds. And that was just one afternoon!

Probably the foundational way we serve men training for ministry is to expose them to the life of the church. We invite men to our elders’ meetings. We take them on elder visits. We go with them to the nursing home. We talk about (appropriate) matters going on in the life of the church. We make it our goal for the man we have sent out as pastor that has a good feel for the nitty gritty of local church life.

Practice

It terrifies some guys, but I think there is a place for role-playing. In my pastoral

theology courses I taught at TBS, I would have the fellows chair a member meeting and assign someone in the class to be a rabble-rouser. This was, quite frankly, rather fun. But it also had a purpose. It is one thing for them to listen to me talk about what to do – it is another to have to do it on the fly in front of their peers! Some brothers dive-bombed. Some exposed their anger. Some melted in the conflict. And this was just 8-12 guys role-playing in a classroom for a few minutes! There are many duties of pastoral ministry that can be “acted out” with evaluation. This gives a man an opportunity to practice what he *might* do or say in a situation, and a chance for the mentor to give him feedback on everything from vocabulary to body language.

In almost every group of men I have mentored I have made teaching one another a major component. A few weeks ago a pastor told me of his first church experience. He had been called to a very fine work having preached a whopping 4 sermons in his life. Four! It is a wonder both church and pastor survived! Anyway, there is much that can be learned by preaching a 5 minute exposition of a particular passage. I require an outline, illustrations, application to the group being taught and a thorough explanation of the word, phrase or verse. Often, we take the list of elder qualifications found in 1 Timothy and have each man preach one of them in order. I have lost count of how many times I have heard these phrases and words taught... yet not once have I not learned something.

Once a fellow preaches, we evaluate his ministry as a group. We always list what we appreciated first, then maybe add one or two suggestions or corrections. You have to teach your men how to do this. Build some camaraderie among

them and watch them cheer each other on as they improve by God's grace.¹⁵

Responsibility

You cannot judge a man's faithfulness if he has nothing at which to fail. If you don't believe in leaving room for men to make mistakes, you had better read the Gospels again.¹⁶ Actually, you had better have your wife describe your first few years of pastoring to you again!

The collective wisdom of elders is needed in matters like this, but mentors need to find places for their men to prove themselves. Where and how that proving takes place will vary by church, circumstance, availability, gifting, trust, past patterns, and a host of other factors. Regardless, a man is not being "entrusted" with your car if you keep the keys. This is where the risk factor enters and where most of us get the jitters. Let him preach? In the morning service? Yes! And let him run some important ministry, too. There are few better teachers than Mr. Failure. Nothing teaches the value of something like breaking it. Thankfully, almost everything in the church that breaks can be fixed by God's grace. And a man who fails miserably will learn deep lessons that last a lifetime.

More Practical Suggestions

Have a Plan

Historically this has been a weak spot for Grace Fellowship Church. We have been

¹⁵ Fellows soon figure out that the better your sermon was, the more correction you are likely to hear! Each man must be taken into account for where he is in life and practice. There are times that standing in front of 4-8 guys and speaking for 5 minutes is the most terrifying experience a man has ever had! You need to be gentle and encouraging in such a situation. Then there are some with the gift of the gab that stand and talk without restraint. Let's just say they will receive a slightly different evaluation...

¹⁶ Just trace out the life of Peter for one source of many failures. Yet all those blunders and outbursts were used of the Lord to make Peter a pillar of the church!

working hard to lay out a plan for training the typical seminary student. After this, we hope to expand that plan to include other men who have finished seminary or because of station in life have no intention of attending. Plans are just that, and quite subject to the will of the Lord. But just having a guy "attend" our church and while away his "ministry hours" teaching the grade two class or running the overhead projector is not really preparing him for ministry. He needs planned exposure, practice and responsibility.

Work as a Group

Every year I have men that want to meet with me one-on-one. That sounds great until there are 2 or 3 of them and you have to arrange times and schedules. Typically, I pick a day that works for me, then invite all who can make it. Inevitably this cuts some guys out. I have no great solution to offer for that.¹⁷

¹⁷ Unless, of course, I take Carl Trueman's advice and not even start meeting. I love a lot of what Trueman has to say, but I am afraid I have to disagree with his solution to the following danger. On the Reformation21 blog in August he posted an article decrying this type of group discipleship. "The request was simple: would I be willing to meet with a particular group of students every two weeks in a local bar or restaurant to talk theology? My answer was straightforward and immediate: no. I would, I said, be happy to meet for a drink or meal with any student to chat about theology; but I did not want to make it a regular or formal arrangement. My reason? That is how partisan thinking is born. That is how theological groupies emerge. That is how cults of personality are brought into being. I knew exactly where it would lead: I would try to impress students with my intellectual swagger; they would try to mimic me; and round and round it would go, to the point where other professors, students, groups etc would be routinely dismissed, lampooned, and denigrated in a manner that made us feel good about ourselves and Team Trueman would come to consider itself the best thing since sliced bread. I would give them a tidbit of theological gossip, make them feel they had the inside scoop on something or someone; they would reciprocate with suitable acts of obeisance and worship; and so on and on the merry dance would go. Well, so sorry, but I was not going to go there."

Groups also increase the effectiveness of the time. One of the dangers of mentoring (as will be discussed below) is that you might create clones. While in *my* case that may not be a bad thing, clones of *you* might ruin the church! Working in groups lets other leaders have input, balances some of your extreme statements, qualifies your observations and helps develop camaraderie.

Interlude: Camaraderie

My seminary Greek professor once opined: "Pastors are the most insecure men in the world." I laughed at him. "They sure don't appear that way in their pulpits," I thought. And that part of my observation was correct.

Then I entered the ministry. I could not believe how socially awkward and relationally distant so many pastors were! And through the years I have observed this phenomenon again and again. While it is true some self-centered men find life in hearing their voice thunder from a pulpit, I think many pastors are more frightened than self-centered. In a strange way, the pulpit can be a very safe place to hide.

Can I take a moment, brothers, to urge you to make a friend? If you do not have deep fellowship in your life, I assure you there are huge areas of neglect that require your personal attention. This pressure to "be something" in the ministry has driven some men right out of it. Others just slip into a world of quiet study or personal hobbies or become disgruntled recipients of abuse and so much of it is because they do not know how to relate.

<http://www.reformation21.org/counterpoints/wages-of-spin/the-day-they-tried-to-recruit-me.php> accessed September 18, 2008. While I think he insightfully points out some very real dangers, I also think his solution is shortsighted. We can mentor men in groups, but rightly guard against a hint of this kind of sin.

It behooves us to include training in relationships in our training for the ministry. That is why I love the Toronto Pastors Fellowship and FRPS before that. That is why I required my seminary students to attend these meetings and am asking the ones I mentor now to help serve at these meetings, because I want them to develop comrades – other pastors who know and love them and "have their back;" men who will surround them with encouragement and stand in the path of their pride. Such friends are worth more than gold.¹⁸

Open Your Life

"We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not restricted

by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also" (2 Corinthians 6:11-13).

Paul wrote Romans 7 ("I do not do what I want to do!"). He also regularly shared his personal testimony of conversion which included sentences like: Acts 26: 9-11 "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury

You cannot judge a man's faithfulness if he has nothing at which to fail.

¹⁸ I emphasize "other pastors" since I think that 99% of the time, only other pastors and elders really understand the demands and temptations of the ministry. I have good friends who are not in ministry and who are remarkably used of God in my life for encouragement and rebuke. But there is a shared understanding of fellow pastors that cannot, in my experience, be duplicated. Having healthy, non-surfacey relationships with other pastors will bless your life, marriage, family and church.

against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

My point is that Paul was open with his life. He let others see what was there, confessed sin, sought repentance and described his suffering. A good mentor will bring men into his life and even invite their critique and help.

Here again I am certain there will be degrees of relationship with different men. Some men you train are not going to be automatic “pals.” Others will be dear friends. How much time you have with them and your respective ages and stations in life will all affect how open your life is to one another. But as a general principle, it ought to be our joy to open our hearts to our brothers and invite them into our personal world.

Share the Load

More than likely you are not the only one who can train men in your church. The first order ought to be to train other men who will in turn train more men. And this further exposure will help guard against the cult of personality worship or some of the other dangers listed below.

The Dangers of Mentoring and Discipling

Creating Mini-mes

This is a genuine concern and often the first one listed. I have wondered if it was a fear of just this that caused Martyn Lloyd-Jones to choose *not* to mentor other men?¹⁹ So aware of the strength of his own personality, I can picture him reasoning that it would be unfair to mentor a man of lesser fortitude. How thankful I

¹⁹ Some will undoubtedly argue that The Westminster Fellowship provided a level of mentoring which I would not deny. But I see no evidence that MLJ took one or several men “under his wing” to specifically train for future pastoral ministry. Again, none of this is intended to criticize the Doctor! He is a personal hero to me. But no mere man has had a perfect ministry.

am for MLJ’s remarkable ministry, but if there was any fault to it, it could be seen in the massive doctrinal shift made by the church within a decade of his retirement. Like C.H. Spurgeon, MLJ had not trained up a replacement under him. And just as the Metropolitan Tabernacle quickly faded into a mere shadow of what it was, so Westminster Chapel atrophied into an almost unrecognizable form.²⁰ What if these powerful personalities and remarkable preachers had mentored a group of men beneath them? Only the Lord knows where those churches would be today.

So, I want to suggest that we must guard against such personality worship, but not to the neglect of our duty to train faithful men. A steady attack on our pride will go a long way in helping to do this, as will sharing the mentoring load. Having our wives around as we hold forth on various issues will also help to keep us in check!

Control

You are not Jesus. And even then, consider how much freedom and latitude he permitted his disciples. If there is a danger for the one being mentored to try and “become” his mentor, there is an equal (greater?) danger for the one mentoring to try and make his disciple “in his own image.” We face the same temptation in parenting, trying to force our children to be us (or what we imagine we are!). And just as children often grow flustered and rebellious in that kind of home, so your suffocated disciples will look to bolt from the household of faith.

It is important to learn the difference between instruction in Truth and offering personal opinion on a matter. I shiver at some of the things I can remember saying

²⁰

http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_detail.php?2576 for the cutting Banner of Truth article by Iain Murray entitled, “‘Openness to the Holy Spirit’: How Westminster Chapel Was Turned Around”

with Gospel authority over the years. We need to be men that keep the real Gospel central in all of life, and that includes training.

Practitioners of "Doing"

One of the areas I am trying to correct in my mentoring is spending too much time on the how of ministry. There is so little training in this area that I find it tempting to only talk about that, but we are called first and foremost to entrust the faith into the hands of faithful men. We need men who will keep the *faith*, not the *pastoral practice* entrusted to them. There are different ways to stumble into the swamp of pragmatism.

Conclusion: A Word of Encouragement

Spending time with a brother to entrust the Gospel to him is never a waste of time. Not many of us will have the joy of watching man after man enter the ministry. Some of us may spend hours with a man only to have the whole thing end in apparent failure. Others will lose money, time, books and sleep from mentoring.

But, in the end, we are called to shepherd the flock of God that is among us,

exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have us; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in our charge, but being examples to the flock. And we are called to not shrink from declaring to our men anything that is profitable, teaching them in public and from house to house, testifying to them of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And we must be prepared to suffer and that for years as we do not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And we know that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

So I urge you all, brothers. Mentor the young men. Train up your replacements. Give your energy and time and money to that which yields eternal rewards. And lay down your head at the end of your ministry able to thank God for a quiver full of Timothy's, sons in the faith, comrades in the Gospel, men of whom you can say, "I have none like them."

Frequently Asked Questions:

What if there are no interested men?

Pray for them. Few things enliven a church like a group of eager young men pursuing the ministry! If there are no men desirous for future pastoring, start training the men you do have in some of the ways described above. My experience and observation has been that young men looking for a mentor will hunt you down if they see you are already mentoring.

What if I don't know what to talk about with them?

A great place to begin is in the reading of a book together. I have read through Owen's *Sin and Temptation* many times with small groups of men. And if you read in the original version, there will be lots of opportunities to stop and ask, "What was that?" Just reading is incomplete though. I would suggest you need to open your life and discuss how what you are reading has played out in your life.

What if a man fails?

The more you build openness into your relationship the easier it will be to deal with failure. I once had a young man fail badly in a ministry. I had to take him out that week and tell him because he did not realize how bad it was! We had been developing a good friendship that enabled that conversation to go a little easier than had we never spoken of those things before. You will be glad to know that he made a full recovery!

Don't people feel weird having you over with some guy sitting there watching?

Maybe. But if they do they don't ever tell me. I ask folks when I arrange in-home meetings if I can bring a man with me. For hospital visits and the like, I just take them along. I think most people are rather encouraged that they get to be a part of a man's training.

What if there is no seminary within one hundred miles of our church?

Be happy! No, if you are not blessed to have young, future pastors around, then your mentoring needs to be with the men you do have. I like to think to myself, could the church move on as normal if I died tomorrow? Obviously, God's church will survive regardless of my mentoring, but have I done all I can to ensure the ongoing shepherding of God's people?

Appendix A:

Internship at Grace Fellowship Church

Making Mentoring More Deliberate at Grace Fellowship Church

Semester One

- Student meets weekly with PWM
- He should become a member of GFC over this semester
- He should be at as many church events as possible to become known right away by our people
- PWM will meet weekly with him to get to know him and instruct in the core values of GFC
- Reading: sections of *Sin and Temptation*, *Living the Cross-Centered Life*, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

Semesters Two Through Six

These tracks are not in any particular order but will vary depending on need, maturity, and a host of other factors. There will also be some overlap over the years. For instance, a man may continue attending elder meetings even while working in a different track.

Deacon track

- Student attends all deacons meetings as an observer
- One deacon will regularly meet with student through semester
- Student will be assigned closed-ended projects by the deacons
- Reading: *Ministers of Mercy* by Alexander Strauch

Elder track

- Student attends all elders meetings as an observer (and will be asked to remove himself during sensitive discussions)
- One elder will regularly meet with student through semester
- Reading: *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch

Worship track

- Student will attend weekly band practices
- Lead worshipper will meet with student to instruct in planning and leading corporate worship
- Reading: *Worship Matters* by Bob Kauflin and chapter one from *Worship by the Book* (Carson et.al.)

Pastoral Assistant track

- Student will meet with Julian weekly and be instructed in how to assist a leader (since we believe that good followers make great leaders)
- Student will be assigned some mundane, 'unseen' jobs in the church
- Reading: *Humility* by CJ Mahaney and PWM's class notes on Leadership

Observation Track

- Last semester in the three year track
- All students finishing up their mentoring with us would meet together with PWM in a group again
- This would be time for reflection, Pastoral theology 2, whatever else PWM needs to address in each of these guys' lives
- This season will also include being assigned to attend various ministries in the church that the student has not been involved with.
- This track is more open-ended to allow for distinct training of each man
- Reading: Each man will begin self-examination in the qualifications for eldership. So he will read our church statements concerning these as well as sections from *Lectures to My Students*, *The Christian Ministry* and other articles.

Summer Internship Track

- Each summer GFC tries to provide a paid summer internship that includes ministering in a needed area of the church that corresponds to the intern's gifting and maturity.
- Students need to apply for this as soon as possible and preferably no later than February 1.

What we expect from students in the mentoring program

- He will make an official application to the elders in writing stating that he has read this outline and agrees in principle with its intention.
- As a member of GFC he agrees to attend both Sunday services, Wednesday GraceNight and a Truth Application Group (TAG).
- The student also agrees to meet regularly with his mentor as described above.

What the student should expect from GFC

- To serve in a healthy church environment that welcomes the training of future elders
- We will do our best to provide as much real-life training in ministry as possible.
- We will work with the seminary to try and accommodate ministry requirements including preaching.
- We will speak directly into his life
- We will do all we can to help move a man along to the office of elder. (Although we make absolutely no guarantees in this regard! God makes and gives elders, not us.)

Appendix B:

Internship at Capitol Hill Baptist Church

[This material is taken directly from the CHBC website. Don Carson has said on several occasions that he views this model as one of the best in the world. You will find it is entirely different than what we are doing. - PWM]

What do you get when you drop six budding theologians into the perfect church, and attempt to grow their preaching, teaching, and other ministry gifts by plunging them headlong into practical and theological training? We aren't really sure. You will have to check with some other church.

Nothing fancy happens in the Capitol Hill Baptist Church (CHBC) pastoral internship program. We simply want to unveil regular, day-to-day ministerial life and provide men aspiring to be pastors with an ecclesiological and pastoral grid for doing the work of ministry. How should the church be organized? Who should lead the church? Does the Bible discuss church membership? How does church polity affect the functionality of the local church? In addition to observing church life today, CHBC interns will spend much of their time engaging in conversation with great pastors and theologians from the past.

Through these conversations and their interaction with our church's life, interns will discover that we believe God's church is the main sounding board of the gospel, but a sounding board that's largely ignored in Christian circles today. Not only that, they will consider what it means to build a church, not according to the latest cultural waves or "whatever works," but according to all that the Bible says about our life together as the local church. Praise God that his Word is not silent on matters of ecclesiology and pastoring.

Internship Structure and Work

We offer the internship program to six men twice a year. It lasts approximately five months, and occurs from January to May as well as from August to December. A man must have completed his undergraduate degree, but beyond that our interns have consisted of everything from young men just out of college to senior pastors on sabbatical.

Due to the shortness of the internship program, men coming from outside of CHBC should not expect to use it to help them answer the question, "Am I called to the ministry?" Five months is not enough time to confirm someone's ministerial qualifications. Instead, we view the church sending a man into the program as bearing that responsibility. Moreover, CHBC does not build ministry on interns (teaching publicly, leading small groups, etc.), and men should not expect the internship to be a time where their gifts are tested.

The bulk of the intern's office time will be spent reading over 5000 pages of text, writing about one hundred papers (5 per week), and discussing those papers. While the list of books is constantly updated, here is a general guide to the books that are covered:

- *When People are Big and God is Small*, Ed Welch (To be read before the internship)
- *Theology of the Reformers*, Timothy George
- *The Reformation*, T.M. Lindsay
- "Church History Lectures," delivered by Michael Lawrence
- "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" (sermon), Harry Emerson Fosdick

- “Christianity and Race Prejudice” (sermon), Francis Grimke
- *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* (booklet), Mark Dever
- *Called to the Ministry*, Edmund Clowney
- *Display of God’s Glory* (booklet), Mark Dever
- *The Reformation of the Church*, Iain Murray
- *The Christian Ministry*, Charles Bridges
- *The Bruised Reed*, Richard Sibbes
- *Polity*, Mark Dever ed.
- *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, Mark Dever
- *Worship by the Book*, Don Carson
- *The Deliberate Church*, Mark Dever and Paul Alexander
- “Ecclesiology” chapter by Mark Dever in *A Theology for the Church*, edited by Danny Akin
- *By Whose Authority?* (booklet) Mark Dever
- *Give Praise to God*, edited by Phil Ryken et al
- *Engaging with God*, Eugene Peterson
- *The Worship of the American Puritans*, Horton Davies
- *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, Don Carson
- Two or three additional books to be selected by Mark Dever during the internship

Every week, Senior Pastor Mark Dever reads the reflection papers written in response to the above reading. All the interns and most of the pastoral staff then join him for three hours on Thursday morning to discuss and defend their papers. Pastor Dever will highlight a number of aspects from those papers and allows the interns to critically discuss the matters among themselves and present pastoral staff.

Additionally, each intern is required to complete three sermon comparisons, each of which involves comparing two, pre-approved sermons based on the same biblical text.

Who is Eligible?

We welcome applications from men who are interested in pastoral ministry and who are able to affirm the CHBC church covenant and statement of faith. Six men a semester are invited to participate. Housing is normally provided for single men or married men with no children. Interns will also receive a \$1200/month stipend for food and miscellaneous expenses. We do not provide health insurance.

All housing is in close proximity to the church, therefore no vehicle is necessary during the program (though parking is provided for those with a car). Also, the DC Metro system offers easy access to most parts of the city.

What Does an Interns Typical Week Look Like?

In addition to the reading and writing assignments mentioned above, the intern’s week includes mandatory attendance at staff meetings, theology breakfasts, elders meetings, all public services of the church, staff prayer times, intern discussions, weddings, wedding rehearsals, funerals, weekly service reviews, intern accountability and supervision times, and any spontaneous meetings that arise in the course of a week. Interns can expect to serve once a week in children’s ministry administration as well as general office administration. Interns will also travel together to at least one of Mark Dever’s non-local speaking engagements during the course of the program.

Additionally, we ask interns to schedule one-on-one lunches with each church elder, deacon, staff member, and church officer. Interns also have the opportunity to schedule lunches with new and old members of the church. These lunches provide the interns with an opportunity to learn about various aspects of the church's history and life.

We also ask interns to become members of the church during the time of their internship in order to best fold them into the life of the congregation. (Yet we do have a "no-dating" policy—the folding only goes so far during these five months!)

Lastly, we ask each intern to be an active member of a small group.

Is the Internship for You?

If you believe this internship would benefit your development as a minister, we encourage you to submit an application! The form is available on this website and contains further instructions. Due to the large number of applications, we cannot guarantee either acceptance or your first choice of program dates. If you are flexible about what start-dates work for you, please indicate this on your application. Acceptance decisions are usually announced two months prior to the program's commencement.

FAQs

Logistics

Are internships offered in the summer? Currently, we offer internships for the Spring (January to May) and the Fall (August to December).

Can I be married and do an internship? Housing for married interns is hard to get in DC. That being said, you can always apply for the internship.

Can I get seminary credit for doing the internship? Certain seminaries have offered credit hours to those who have finished the internship program. Since it is the seminary's decision, check with them first.

I'm not sure I want to be a pastor. Can I still do the internship? We encourage those who are seriously considering or currently in pastoral ministry to apply for the program.

Applying

How early should I apply? Try to apply at least a year in advance. Spaces are limited so getting your application in early is wise.

Is CHBC able to provide internships for women? Because the internship is for those interested in pastoral ministry, we do not provide internships for women.

Where should I be in my education before doing the internship? Intern candidates are college graduates. Past interns have applied before, during, and after their theological education.

What if English is not my first language- can I still be an intern? Yes. Please contact Michael Lawrence at (202)543-6111 for more information.

During the Internship

Is a stipend provided for interns? A stipend of \$1200 a month plus housing is provided.

Will I be able to work while doing the internship? By providing a stipend and housing, interns are freed up from working outside of the church and can spend their time learning about and observing the church.

Where does vacation fit in with the internship? Outside of government holidays, no vacation is provided.

How are interns involved in the church? Interns are involved in various ministries of the church. However, no specific ministry will be built on an intern. Much of what interns do involves reading, writing and observing the daily ministry of CHBC.

