

the **Mentoring**

P

a

r

n

e

r

s

h

i

p

*A component of
First Call Theological Education*

The Mentoring Partnership

A component of First Call Theological Education

Writer: Dorothy L. Williams with Lutheran Traditions added by Keith Killinger

Editor: John L. Davis with help from Connie Leean Seraphine

© 1996 by The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Division for Ministry

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

 Context 1

 Audiences 1

 Description, Purpose and Goal 2

 Colleague Group or Mentoring Partnership? 2

 The Mentor Namesake 3

 Mentors in Scripture 4

 Mentoring in the Lutheran Tradition 4

 Types of Mentor Activity 6

 Models of Mentoring 6

 The Mentee 7

Role of the Synod Administrator 8

 Identifying Mentors 8

 Replacing a Mentor 9

 Closure in Difficult Circumstances 9

 Matching Mentoring Partners 9

 Gender Issues in Mentoring Partnerships 10

Role of the Mentor 11

 Guidelines for Meetings: Time and place 11

 Confidentiality 11

 Covenant 12

 The Initial Meeting 12

 Subsequent Meetings 12

 Evaluating the Meeting 12

 Journal-keeping 12

 For the Mentor: Working with Your Consultant 13

Training Mentors 13

Resources 15

Appendix A • Mentoring in the Lutheran Tradition 17

Appendix B • Welcome to the Mentoring Partnership 19

Appendix C • Sample Covenant A 20

 Sample Covenant B 21

Appendix D • Additional Questions for Discussion 22

Appendix E • Ministerial Identity Questions for Discussion 23

Appendix F • Evaluation—The Mentoring Partnership (form) 24

The Mentoring Partnership

A component of First Call Theological Education

Introduction

Context

The Mentoring Partnership represents one component of **First Call Theological Education (FCTE)**, recommended by The Task Force on the Study of Theological Education for Ministry and accepted by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly. FCTE is designed for pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses and diaconal ministers in their first call to public ministry following completion of their required graduate work.

The church, through this program, acknowledges that learning is a lifelong process and that the period of entry to public ministry is a period of great openness to learning. In the first call, all of the previous years of study and experience begin to coalesce and ministry begins to acquire its enduring form. It is also a period of great vulnerability, and, often, a time of isolation and discouragement that has led some first call persons to entertain serious questions about their vocation. It is important, therefore, that the church take care to walk with and support persons during this time of testing.

The First Call Program consists of four components:¹

1. Core Program: Common events designed for and by all rostered leaders in a geographical area—synod, multi-synodical, or regional.
2. Electives: Offerings directed toward areas of specific need or interest.

3. Structured reading designed to support and extend other educational components in fulfilling the overall goals of the program.
4. Participation in a peer colleague group and/or a mentoring partnership.

Both the colleague group and the mentoring partnership aim at further forming the recent graduate's ministry within the context of the practice of ministry. They provide an unparalleled opportunity for newly rostered persons to examine aloud, in the presence of persons in similar work, the day-to-day living out of their call to public service.

Audiences

This manual is written for three audiences. One audience is made up of synod administrators who initiate the program in the synod, seeking and finding partners for mentors and mentees. The outline of the synod administrator's role is found on pages 8–10. A second audience is made up of the mentors themselves who will serve the church by offering their presence to walk with a mentee through the early months of ministry. The mentor's role is described on pages 11–13. A third audience is the consultant who serves the synod by conducting the training of mentors and offering them support throughout the period of their mentorship. Consultants will need familiarity with the entire manual, but are also the particular audience for the outline of mentor training on pages 13 and 14.

¹ *First Call Theological Education: Churchwide Standards and Guidelines*. Produced by Leadership Support in the Division for Ministry of the ELCA. © 1996 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Description, Purpose, and Goal

A mentoring partnership is composed of an experienced pastor, associate in ministry, deaconess or diaconal minister paired with a person serving in his or her first call in public ministry. The purpose of the partnership is to encourage the newly called leader to reflect aloud with a mature person on the practical experiences and challenges that arise in that first call. The mentoring partners meet on a regular schedule at a mutually agreed time to engage in this reflection. Special training prepares the mentor to be of optimum assistance to the newly called leader.

Newly rostered persons, working with a mentor, can examine their unique strengths and weaknesses, their perceptions of ministry, and their hopes for their servant leadership. They can place their trust in the mentor to bring wisdom, affirmation, encouragement, and to offer alternatives for early course correction.

Frequently, the chief task of a mentor is to cast further light on a subject. Perhaps it is the light of longer experience, or of a different perspective on reality, or a different way of living out faith and vocation. Sometimes the message will be welcomed, sometimes it will be rejected, but it should always be light extended in the interest of the mentee.

The partnership should have at the outset a stated duration. The assumed period of the mentoring partnership described in these pages is about two years. There may be good reason, evident at the beginning or discovered as the relationship progresses, for altering the duration of the partnership, but an agreed-on length, tentative though it may be, should be defined at the beginning.

A mentor's intention should be—like that of a good parent—to work herself or himself out of a job. A mentor should expect eventually to become the mentee's peer rather than anticipating permanent status as mentor.

Colleague Group or Mentoring Partnership?

Membership in a mentoring partnership and in a colleague group, though they most often will represent different dynamics, will each offer particular assets and particular liabilities. It is obvious (a) that each of the types of

relationship has both advantages and disadvantages, and (b) that not many participants in this part of first call theological education will have the luxury of choice. The following paragraphs examine the assets and liabilities of each.

Individual focus

The amount of time that can be devoted to any one colleague group member's questions or challenges is limited. A group format implies a certain amount of equality in the time devoted to the concerns of each group member. In a mentoring partnership, although there may be some time spent on anecdotes about the mentor's history or current ministry, the majority of the attention is on the concerns of the mentee.

Breadth of discussion

While the mentee can expect full attention focused on her/his concerns at every session, the colleague group member gains valuable experience not available to the mentee. Simply in hearing the stories of other group members, each member becomes privy to a variety of vocational challenges beyond her or his own experience. Through hearing and reflecting on those stories, members will be gaining information about situations that may yet arise in her/his ministry, developing ways of dealing with challenges, and becoming aware of alternative ways of offering ministry.

Openness

In most groups, members arrive with varying levels of willingness to be open. While some colleague group members may be willing to share a painful experience in the first or second session, others may not feel able to share at that level until a fifth or sixth. In the conversation of a mentoring partnership, it is more likely that even the reticent person will be able to articulate real concerns, in spite of the pain, at an earlier point.

In the mentoring partnership, matters related to spiritual life are likely to be raised earlier and more easily than in the colleague group. However, in discussing details of one's own spiritual life, much depends on the willingness and skill of the mentor or colleague leader to open these subjects.

The Mentoring Partnership

Self-revelation of all kinds will be easier to manage in the mentoring partnership. It may be that the additional effort required to become self-revealing in a group would constitute an important step toward maturity. Perhaps only the mentee can know that.

Exchange of support

One of the prizes of both mentoring partnerships and colleague groups is the increase in support felt by the first call person. Someone else knows and understands what she/he is going through, extends empathy with the pain, devotes thought to solutions to the challenges, *cares*.

In the area of support, each process offers certain strengths. In the colleague group, there are more persons offering support—not only an experienced colleague who cares, but two or more beginners, like oneself. But in the mentoring partnership, there is another person experienced in ministry who has only one individual mentee on whom to focus concern, prayer, and other kinds of support.

Affirmation is a particularly valued kind of support. The appreciation of the mentee for the mentor and the encouragement of the mentor for the mentee probably will be exchanged earlier and more frequently in the mentoring partnership than in the typical colleague group.

However, in the group, when this affirmation comes, it comes not from a single source, but from several.

One of the more powerful kinds of support is *gift-giving*. More of that is likely to be present in a mentoring partnership. For instance, the mentor may provide books or other resources to the mentee in response to certain challenges. Some colleague leaders may carry on the same kind of lending-library activity, but questions of equity tend to arise and inhibit this form of generosity.

Durability

Testimony of those who have observed both colleguing and mentoring is that colleague groups tend to be more durable. Many people take the promise to attend a group of persons more seriously than an appointment with one person. Rescheduling with a mentoring partner is easier,

and, with some mentoring partnerships, has ended in rescheduling the partnership out of existence. Further, discomfort with a mentoring partner tends toward dissolution of the partnership, while some discomfort with a colleague leader is more easily borne if the colleague group otherwise satisfies the need for nurture and support.

Situations clearly recommending the mentoring partnership:

1. Geographical isolation
2. Insufficient numbers of newly rostered persons to form a colleague group
3. Special contexts for ministry such as a new pastorate following a period of congregational conflict which invites continuous monitoring; planting new congregations; and launching a new type of ministry (e.g., a street ministry where none has existed before).

The Mentor Namesake

The word “mentor” originates with the role of a character in Greek mythology. Mentor, an Ithacan noble, was chosen by Odysseus to take charge of his household while Odysseus went off to the Trojan War. One major role entrusted to Mentor was the education of Odysseus’ son, Telemachus.² “Mentor...was an old friend of Odysseus to whom he had given the stewardship of his house when he left for Troy.”³

Several references to Mentor are not about Mentor the person, but about the goddess Athena *assuming the likeness* of Mentor in order to issue the instruction or guidance she wanted to convey. It is easy, in fact, to see Mentor as more of a role than a person; frequent mention of him is made as his likeness is assumed by Athena. It is not too much of a stretch to believe that ability as mentor connotes not an inborn identity, but an identity that one acquires—a set of qualities and skills that one develops, as Athena “assumes the likeness” of Mentor.

² Crowell's *Handbook of Classical Mythology*, pp. 374–375.

³ *Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Greece*, p. 362

Mentors in Scripture

The Scriptures are alive with stories of positive, supportive, one-to-one relationships. Some are pairings of older with younger, some of similar age, experienced with inexperienced, male with male, female with female, as well as assorted pairs of mixed gender.

Perhaps the most obvious set of instances pairs Jesus with a whole host of persons who followed him to learn from observing and listening. But there are many other pairs in Scripture—pairs made up of imperfect, sometimes perplexed, often vulnerable people who nevertheless derived help and encouragement from one another.

The relationship of the prophet **Elijah** and the younger **Elisha** is one of the clearest older-to-younger, experienced-to-inexperienced pairings in the Old Testament. The relationship was explicitly understood by the two as a kind of prophet-in-training period for Elisha. The older chose the younger by placement of his mantle (a kind of cape, and the origin of “passing the mantle” in both religious and secular usage). The younger learned, as traditional apprentices do, by hanging around the experienced one, fetching and carrying, and closely observing the elder. Another Old Testament example is found in the relationship of the elderly **Eli** and the young **Samuel**.

During **Mary’s** extended visit to her cousin **Elizabeth**, these two pregnant women had time to puzzle together and to marvel over the strangeness of their experiences. Perhaps they also gave one another support with which to counter the suspicions that some of the neighbors may have been whispering to one another behind their hands.

The apostle **Paul** had a succession of traveling companions who watched and learned as they spent months together in daily contact. **Silas**, **Barnabas** and **Mark** all at one time or another traveled with Paul. Paul appears to have been the senior member in these partnerships, although some see evidence of Barnabas’ influence on Paul’s thinking.⁴ Roles shifted, however, when Paul rejected Mark as companion. Barnabas, choosing to part with Paul and travel with Mark, then began to serve as mentor.

In Paul’s second letter to **Timothy** a single verse refers to a pair of important mentoring relationships. Each represents association over many years, offering illustration of an intergenerational and female-to-male mentoring relationship. “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother **Lois** and your mother **Eunice** and now, I am sure, lives in you.”⁵

The relationship of **Philip** and the **Ethiopian eunuch**⁶ describes a clear—though brief—mentoring relationship. Philip, motivated by an angelic nudge, offered help: “Do you understand what you are reading?” The Ethiopian, eager for the proffered help, invited Philip to join him in his carriage for an extended session as they rode toward Gaza. Their discussion concluded with a baptism and a joyful parting, each of them likely a somewhat changed person.

Mary and **Martha** were probably sisters, certainly part of the same household, of which Martha appears to have been head. But at least once the learning seemed, with the help of a comment from Jesus, to have traveled from the lesser—**Mary**—to the elder—**Martha**.

These instances serve to illustrate the varieties of mentoring relationships—persons dealing with their vulnerabilities, their questions, their conveying of the word of the Lord and their offering of the light that was in them.

Mentoring in the Lutheran Tradition

Mentors in church history

Church history since the New Testament is replete with examples of mentors and mentees. Ambrose of Milan and Monica can both be cited for the roles they played in bringing Augustine to faith and encouraging his development as a Christian and as a Church leader. One can hardly mention John of the Cross without acknowledging the deeply influential role played in his life’s vocation by Teresa of Avila. Ignatius of Loyola’s zeal for the Church stands behind the prodigious missionary labors of Francis Xavier. William Farel assiduously challenged, cajoled and en-

⁴ Achtemeier, Paul J., et al. *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, p. 94.

⁵ 2 Timothy 1:5 NRSV

⁶ Acts 8:26–39

The Mentoring Partnership

treated a reluctant John Calvin to abandon his bookish ivory-tower plans for the real world of a Geneva on the threshold of reform—with enormous consequences for the subsequent course of church history.

Lutherans, too, have numerous instances of mentoring partnerships. For the purposes of this paper we will limit ourselves to some examples from the beginnings of the Reformation, and from the early history of Lutheranism in this country.

Mentoring in the Reformation Era

In his later years Luther traced some of the roots of the Reformation movement to elements of the mentoring relationship between Johann von Staupitz and himself. As Augustinian vicar-general of Germany, he was Luther's superior in the monastic order. Staupitz was frequently Luther's confessor and spiritual advisor, and he played a direct role in establishing the direction that Luther's life and ministry would eventually take. It was he who authorized Luther's preparation for the priesthood and later ordered him to begin preparations for the doctorate. Brushing aside Luther's objections that his health was not equal to the strain of doctoral study, Staupitz commented that even if Luther did die early God could always use another good advisor in heaven. Staupitz subsequently appointed Luther to succeed him as lecturer in Bible at the University of Wittenberg—a decision fraught with significance for the history of the Western Church. It was at a time when Luther was beset by questions and wracked by doubts. As a lecturer in Bible he was forced to "search the Scripture," wrestle with them and ultimately be changed by them. (See Appendix A for more details on this mentoring relationship.)

Luther would later become a mentor himself. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment in this role was his recruitment of Philipp Melanchthon to the evangelical cause at Wittenberg. During the critical early years of the Reformation Luther was successful in convincing Melanchthon to abandon Aristotle and classical philosophy in favor of a strongly biblical basis for the teaching and doing of theology. Though Melanchthon would later return in large

part to his classical humanistic roots, by that time the foundations for the reformation had already been laid by him in such masterful works as the *Augsburg Confession* and its *Apology* (highly praised by Luther).

But Luther was not just a theological mentor for Melanchthon. He also kept a watchful eye over Melanchthon's life as a young professor in the university at Wittenberg. Luther prevented his younger colleague from being overburdened with work, proposed pay increases for him and even counseled marriage to a Wittenberg girl. This was done with an eye to encouraging Melanchthon to "put down roots" and develop into the gifted university professor he showed promise of becoming.⁷ (See Appendix A for more details on this mentoring relationship.)

Mentoring in the beginnings of American Lutheranism

Just as Lutheran history in the reformation is firmly rooted in mentoring relationships, so is its development in America. Writing his history of Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1995, Abdel Ross Wentz noted that "for nearly two-thirds of her history in this country the Lutheran Church was without any theological seminary."⁸ At first the assorted Lutherans in America depended upon the Church in their homelands such as Holland, Sweden and Germany to supply them with clergy. But this homeland source proved unreliable at best, and at worst it pointed to disinterest in the needs of the Lutheran expatriates.

Thus, when necessity forced the church in the New World to undertake its own training of clergy for American pulpits and parishes, this training was almost purely a one-on-one mentoring relationship of an experienced pastor grooming a candidate for the ministerial task. At first this seems to have involved "putting finishing touches" on candidates' theological education that had begun in Europe. For example, two catechists sent from Halle along with Pastor Brunnholtz in 1745 to assist Muhlenberg in ministering to the far-flung Lutherans in Pennsylvania had already completed most of their theological education. But

⁷ Clyde Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer*. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1958, 24. Cf. Brecht, p. 281.

⁸ Abdel Ross Wentz, *Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary*. Volume One: History 1826–1965. "Published by the Authority of the Directors," n.d. 1.

three years would pass before the first of them was ordained. To Wentz this suggests that they probably worked with Muhlenberg in what was basically a “mentoring” process, being supervised, trained and advised by him especially in the “practical” areas of ministry before they were considered ready for ordination.⁹

But merely completing theological training that had been given primarily in Europe would not suffice for the needs of the Lutherans in America. The demand remained for a genuinely “homegrown” clergy. Muhlenberg had dreams of establishing an American seminary, but during his lifetime and for two generations afterward his dreams remained just that. In the absence of a seminary or university for the training of new pastors, Muhlenberg took on the task himself, identifying potential candidates for the ministry and personally teaching and guiding them in their preparation. (See Appendix A for more details.)

Types of Mentor Activity

There are several identifiable modes in which a mentor may interact with the mentee. Norman Cohen’s helpful book *Mentoring Adult Learners*¹⁰ outlines six of them. They are:

1. Relationship Emphasis, to establish *trust*
2. Information Emphasis, to offer tailored *advice*
3. Facilitative Focus, to introduce *alternatives*
4. Confrontive Focus, to *challenge*
5. Mentor Model, to *motivate*
6. Mentee Vision, to encourage *initiative*.

Sometimes the best mentoring activity implies the mentor’s simply listening. At other times the activity of choice is to help the mentee think through a variety of possible options. During a given mentoring session a mentor may employ several of the listed activities without consciously identifying them. However, it is sometimes useful

in reviewing a session to reflect on the variety of ways available for mentors to deal with the matters the mentee brings for discussion.

Models of Mentoring

Three models of mentoring¹¹ have been identified by Sue Setzer and Jean Bozeman in their observation of several already-existing clergy mentoring partnerships in the Synod of Virginia. While these are not rigid categories, and mentoring relationships may assume the characteristics of each, they are presented as discrete images to make them more readily identifiable.

(a) **Classic Mentor.** This relationship closely parallels that of Mentor and the young Telemachus, described in Greek mythology. The mentor is older, has years of experience and the mentee is quite young, just starting out. It is assumed by both that there will be instruction and advice passing from the mentor to the mentee. There is a distinct and mutually acknowledged teacher-learner, superior-subordinate relationship in the partnership. In this model, all six of the activities mentioned in the section above would probably come into play.

(b) **Mentoring Friend.** This style is characterized by mutuality and equality. Each assumes that he or she will have influence on the other, and there is no acceptance of a superior-subordinate relationship. The focus of the relationship is mutually shared—the concerns of both are considered equally appropriate for discussion. Such relationships tend to be more personal and social than professional in nature. Periods of disciplined reflection or serious questioning of the other’s assumptions and behavior are rare in this model. This style of mentoring would put strong emphasis on the development of trust and rarely if ever suggest that the mentor confront, offer advice, or try to expand the mentee’s vision.

(c) **Collegial Mentoring Partnership.** This approach to mentoring blends the strengths of the classic mentor and the colleague leader¹² model and is the model preferred in FCTE mentoring partnerships. While the colle-

¹¹ Setzer, Sue. Correspondence with Dr. John Davis and Dr. William Behrens. December 5, 1995.

¹² The Colleague Program, a group process developed for both newly rostered and experienced rostered persons, was developed 1991 through 1995 by the North Central Career Development Center in cooperation with the Division for Ministry, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

⁹ Wentz, 23.

¹⁰ Cohen, Norman H. *Mentoring Adult Learners: A guide for educators and trainers*. © 1995 by Norman H. Cohen. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company.

The Mentoring Partnership

gial mentor maintains clear role boundaries that acknowledge his or her significantly greater experience, emphasis is placed on respecting the mentee as a colleague, a partner in ministry with gifts to share. Meetings become a safe haven where the mentee can trust that the collegial mentor will put the learner's concerns first in a disciplined manner. The collegial mentoring relationship is friendly, but a mutual friendship is not nurtured. For example, confrontation, or its gentler sibling, challenge, does not always feel like nurturing, but is often experienced as strongly supportive. In this model the mentoring activity might include several of the six types of activity mentioned on the previous page, but will emphasize development of trust and de-emphasize the power disparity between mentor and mentee.

As is true of leaders in the colleague groups, the mentor is encouraged not to play the role of "answer person" but of helping the mentee reflect on situations by asking questions, offering alternatives, and making suggestions. "Mentoring is not giving the person everything on a silver platter, but is a way to be present, to enable, to support, and to answer questions that arise. Mentoring is 'walking with' someone who is engaged in a process."¹³ While the mentoring partnership typically results in the learning of both participants, the central focus is on encouragement and empowerment of the mentee.

The Mentee

By the time they become mentees, first call persons have traveled a long preparatory road to public service in ministry. It is natural that, after the long years of study and preparation, they will feel fully prepared for whatever tests and challenges public ministry may offer. But one of the gravest hazards of the early years of ministry is the Lone Ranger mindset. All of us, especially when setting out on a new endeavor, need close relationships with at least one person who is prepared to encourage, to redirect, to challenge, to invigorate, and—sometimes—to restrain us. The synod's support of the mentoring partnership should reinforce the understanding that, throughout all of life, we need the support of others.

The agenda of the mentoring relationship should be left in the hands of the mentee. The mentor may want to make suggestions if mentoring conversations seem to be focusing on too narrow a slice of ministry, but, generally speaking, the mentee is expected to present her or his questions rather than waiting for the mentor to set the agenda.

Mentors may ask the mentee to keep, between sessions, lists of matters such as the following:

- *Plans to be formulated*
- *Decisions to be made*
- *Problems occurring or anticipated*
- *Progress points to reflect about*
- *Requests for prayer*

It is expected that the mentee will voice appreciation for the mentor, particularly in recognition of specific learnings or abilities traceable to the mentoring partnership. It is, further, the responsibility of the mentee to say so when she/he perceives the mentor trying to influence a behavior the mentee at that time does not want to consider changing.

A handout for the mentee which presents these expectations is found in Appendix B.

The synod may offer as formal programs either the mentoring partnership or membership in a colleague group. The colleague group manuals suggest that group members may want to find a mentor, as well, to seek relationship on an informal basis. If the synod is able to offer individuals both kinds of support, (colleague group *and* mentor relationship), the colleague group should always be considered as primary.

¹³ Hagedorn, John. PhD. Paper written for mentor program of American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

Role of the Synod Administrator

The synod administrator's responsibilities in arranging mentoring partnerships bear some similarities to those connected with the colleague program. In fact, it is suggested that the launch of both programs (see "Colleague Program Review and Orientation" in the Colleague 1 Synod Handbook, pages 7 and 8) be arranged to occur immediately following one another, which makes for economy in use of the consultant's time and travel.

As is true in the Colleague Program, the recommendation for Mentoring Partnerships is that the synod administrator carry out the tasks necessary to get the individual mentoring partnerships started, and then to step out of the information loop, assured that any further advisory and support activities will be conducted by the consultant.

Given below are the expectations of the synod administrator in forming mentoring partnerships.

1. Make contact with an authorized Mentoring Partnership consultant¹⁴ to execute a contract and to set a date for mentor training.
2. Develop a list of newly ordained and newly certified persons and make a tentative selection of those who are more likely candidates for a Mentoring Partnership.
3. After a study of "Identifying Mentors," (next column) and after conversation with the consultant, select potential mentors.
4. Notify newly rostered persons of their choice of colleague groups or mentoring partnerships. (Optional) Ask those choosing mentoring partnerships to name two or three persons whom they would choose as mentor, and, further, to name the qualities that identify those persons as good mentors.
5. With the consultant, plan the training of mentors and (if desired) the first meetings of the mentoring partnerships.
6. Invite potential mentors and mentees to the training session.
7. Assist the consultant in holding the training session and first partnership meetings.
8. Be available for conversation with the consultant in case of unusual circumstances arising in connection with the partnerships.
9. Be in touch with the consultant for mid-course and end-of-period report on the health and progress of the mentoring partnerships.

Identifying Mentors

Potential mentors should be chosen from among those who demonstrate these characteristics:

- *Firm grounding in faith, though she/he also knows what it is to doubt*
- *Secure sense of self—no need to be seen as constantly in charge*
- *Readiness to hear and entertain another's point of view*
- *Experience of some successes in ministry and willingness to talk about any failures*
- *Ability to reflect theologically about events, both alone and with another*
- *Demonstration of a generous spirit*
- *Ability to keep confidences*
- *Perceptive observation of human nature, while offering the benefit of the doubt*
- *Demonstration of caring*
- *Eagerness to invest in the coming generation in public ministry*

Training is recommended for all who wish to act as mentor. The training should be offered under the sponsorship of the synod and conducted by a consultant who is certified by the Division for Ministry as a trainer of mentors.

¹⁴ Ask for a list of trained Mentoring Partnership consultants from the Division for Ministry, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631.

The Mentoring Partnership

The training will focus on the development of the following attributes as mentors prepare to assume this important role:

- *Listening stance. Prepared to hear on a deep level what the mentee is saying.*
- *Disciplined reluctance to offer instant solutions, but, instead, to develop the skill of asking questions: How else might you have handled that? What are some other realistic options?*
- *Willingness, in matters of minor importance, to encourage—even when complete success of the described plan seems unlikely. “Try it out. See how it goes. I’ll want to hear about it when we meet again.”*
- *Careful attention to the mentee’s self-care, especially as related to use of time and maintenance of spiritual health.*

Replacing a Mentor

If illness or relocation to a new ministry prevent a mentor from continuing in the mentoring partnership, both the synod and the mentee should be consulted before any other steps are taken. If the mentee prefers not to have the mentor replaced, those wishes should be respected. The mentor (if the situation permits) should also be consulted as to her/his judgment on the mentee’s continued need for a mentoring partnership or readiness to continue without one. If the mentor recommends to the synod that a new mentoring relationship be offered, advice of the outgoing mentor should be made available to the incoming mentor.

If at all possible, the mentor should hold a final face-to-face meeting with the mentee. At this important time of closure, the mentor will explain the situation, tie up loose ends of the relationship and open a time for mutual affirmations and expressions of continued mutual concern.

If a second mentor is not chosen, consideration might be given to having a mentee join with an existing colleague group. Such an option should be contingent on agreement of the group as well as the mentee.

Closure in Difficult Circumstances

It is possible that mentor and mentee might be joined in what one or the other of them experiences as a dissonant relationship: the partnership just is not working. That relationship should be concluded, if possible, with a face-to-face meeting, together with the synod administrator or someone the administrator appoints, sharing as much honesty as each can bear to express about the relationship. Emphasis should be on what each appreciates about the other, without completely submerging the elements that lead to the end of the partnership. (An exception to this face-to-face closure meeting is presented if sexual boundaries have been transgressed. In such a case, the consultant or a psychotherapist should be consulted about closure.)

Matching Mentoring Partners

There are several methods of matching mentors with mentees. In some cases geographical proximity will be the deciding factor. Some synod administrators will want to designate the mentoring pair. But in some cases the supply and location of both mentors and mentees will leave room for choice. These options are possible:

Self-nominated mentors. Some synod administrators may issue an invitation to apply for mentorship to anyone who wishes to be a mentor. The synod will reserve the possibility of accepting or rejecting applicants for training by the consultant.

Mentees choose. There is evidence that allowing the mentee choice of mentor holds the greatest promise of developing a good mentoring partnership. Some synods may prepare a list of potential mentors and offer to each first call person two or three names of potential mentors, allowing the mentee to designate a preference. Other synods may not prepare a list, but ask potential mentees to name three persons in ministry who would make a desirable mentor, naming the qualities perceived in each that commend that choice. If the synod administrator finds that none of the named three is available, the list of desired qualities will give guidance in choosing other possible mentors.

Train and assign mentors to particular mentees.

Other systems have decided to name mentors and to assign each mentor to a particular mentee. "Assignment has been the responsibility of the Membership Committee [of the AAPC] and they make the first move toward the person. If the person does not want to be mentored, that is allowed, but the mentor does explain to the person why the process will be helpful for the person. Openness and support are the major concepts. Mentors are not evaluators, ones who criticize, or controllers in the negative sense of those words."¹⁵

Gender Issues in Mentoring Partnerships

A glance at most synods' roster lists reveals that many of the experienced pastors available as mentors will be male and that many mentees will be female. Therefore, issues related to gender must be considered. In early trials of mentoring partnerships, some have paired a older male mentor with a younger female mentee. Mentors in some of these partnerships have acknowledged some ambiguity in the relationship, both as related to role expectations and to relational parameters.

There are no doubt other reasons for the ambiguity, both more individual and more subtle than will be discussed here. However, rehearsal of some of the more prominent reasons will serve to illustrate the potential challenges.

Power of sexual attraction. As most adults can testify, when they are speaking honestly, feelings are very powerful. In the long list of emotional pulls and pushes, sexual attraction is one of the most powerful—strong when it is first consciously recognized, and even stronger when the mind is encouraged to dwell on it.

Prohibition of talk about sexual attraction. Curiously, until recently, the power of sexual attraction has been intensified by the unspoken societal—and, even more, the churchly—prohibition against open, honest admission of the frequency and strength of its existence.

The right to privacy. The right of clergy to privacy is seldom questioned. Clergy regularly deal with some of the most deeply affecting circumstances of the human experience.

They are, therefore, sometimes legitimately involved in closed-door sessions when in conversation with parishioners. Further, parts of their regular practices (personal devotions, meditation, preparation for teaching, speech and sermon preparation) require solitude. It is seductively easy for clergy to enlarge that legitimate right to privacy to cover encounters of a sexual nature.¹⁶

Perception of authority. Though it is difficult for many clergy to acknowledge it ("After all, I'm just an ordinary person who has been called and/or ordained"), the perception of authority in the position means that most people defer to the judgment of experienced pastors and other rostered persons. Thus, they hesitate to question signals that, in another context, might raise questions in their minds.

Because of their long history as lay persons, mentees, too, are likely to assume a relatively submissive posture vis a vis the perceived authority. Clergy themselves are likely to underestimate the power they wield, and to assume the presence of a fully mutual relationship that is not present in the mind of the mentee.

Presentation of vulnerability. One of the expectations of mentees is that they will be honest in their meetings with their mentors. One natural outgrowth of honesty in that context is that the mentee will be asking serious questions, confessing failures—showing vulnerability. Where the person with lesser power shows appropriate vulnerability, the power-carrier, in some instances, has perceived and confused the attractiveness of the vulnerability with invitation to sexual intimacy.¹⁷

Persistence of early parent-child interactions. One of the near-universal early experiences between males and females is the parent-child experience. One place where things can go wrong between an authority-figure male mentor and the female mentee is at the point where the male—possibly unconsciously—takes the role of protector. As protector, he tends to shield the mentee from experiences that might hurt, but that might also be a rich source of learning. An opposite distortion of appropriate

¹⁶ Carlson, Robert J. "Battling sexual indiscretion" *Ministry*, January 1987 p. 5

¹⁷ Gilmore, Martha and Justus, Emma J. "Daring to be intimate: Male supervisors working with female supervisees in theological field education." *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry*, Vol 7, 1993, p. 210.

¹⁵ Hagedorn, John, PhD. Paper written for mentor program of American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

The Mentoring Partnership

mentor-mentee relationship occurs when the authority-figure male assumes the role of the child and casts the female in the role of mother-substitute, expecting her to listen, sympathize, understand, and soothe.¹⁸

How can a mentor deal with these daunting possibilities? (a) Because many of these issues derive much of their effect from being unacknowledged, one sensible thing to do is to acknowledge to oneself that they are present. (b) The prohibition of talk about sexual attraction argues powerfully for mentors having a place to talk about their current concerns related to the issue with someone knowledgeable and trusted, but outside the jurisdiction of the church. Such a person may be the consultant who conducted the training in mentoring partnerships, a group of peers, or a psychotherapist. (c) Further, it is well to recognize that some of these challenges can also occur when the mentor is female and mentee is male, or in same-gender relationships. (d) Be assured that in the majority of mentoring relationships described here, the relationship will stay steadily on the rails and prove to be an unmixed blessing to both mentor and mentee.

Role of the Mentor

Guidelines for Meetings: Time and place

There should be regular meetings during the year in a mentoring partnership. Duration of the meetings is largely up to the participants. If they are geographically close, 1½ to 2 hours twice a month may work well. If other constrictions develop, the meetings may be less frequent but longer.

It is likely that in the early part of a new assignment the mentee will want to meet more frequently than will be desirable later. One mentoring model used in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod¹⁹ specifies monthly meetings during the first six months, every two months in the second six months, and in the second and final year the suggestion is a meeting every three months.

The exact duration and frequency of mentoring meetings is largely up to the mentoring pair.

The normal length of a mentoring relationship should be about two years.

The place of the meeting should be physically comfortable, where both participants are protected from interruptions by persons or by phone. Many prefer meeting on neutral ground—neither the mentor's nor the mentee's home turf. Space in a nearby retreat center or a room in a neighboring parish would work well.

One exception to the "not home turf" rule may be if the pair, at any time in their association, wish to visit each other's parishes²⁰ to gain clearer understanding of their work. The length of these meetings will need to be extended.

A few mentoring pairs have met at a restaurant over breakfast or lunch for a 1½ to 2 hour session. This setting may work well for some. However, there is reasonable likelihood of a parishioner stopping by for a chat and disrupting the agenda of the mentoring partners. There is also the possibility that the emotional heavy weather that a mentee needs to deal with will be stifled or derailed in a public setting. If, in spite of these cautions, the pair decides to meet in a restaurant, they should decide early whether each will handle her/his own bill or whether they alternate in picking up the check. It is not recommended that the mentor routinely handle the restaurant check.

Confidentiality

It goes almost—but not quite—without saying that the relationship can have maximal usefulness only in the context of each being able to trust that their conversations will be absolutely confidential. Only if each is entirely sure that their conversations are not being conveyed to anyone else can they relax and devote their minds fully to what they are learning about and from each other. The necessity of having to be careful what one says is a damper on any meaningful conversation.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 207–208.

¹⁹ From the outline of a mentoring model used by Lutheran Counseling and Family Services, 1101 SE University Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55414, 1995. p. 3.

²⁰ Kohler, Robert, Affleck, Bert, and Larsen, Ellis. *A Manual for Counseling Elders: Building a Covenantal Relationship with Probationers and Local Pastors*. Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275-0133, 1995. p. 60.

Covenant

A written covenant forms an important foundation for the relationship. The covenant should cover matters such as are presented in the two samples in Appendix C, and should be crafted and signed by the end of the mentoring partners' second session.

The Initial Meeting

The principal purpose of the first meeting is to begin to get acquainted. Experience indicates that the relationship must have some basis in mutual acquaintance, understanding, and trust before either partner is ready to speak with openness and candor about subjects that may be difficult to discuss. An introductory exchange could be based on these topics:

- *Personal history*
- *Family of origin*
- *Present family/living situation*
- *Educational pursuits*
- *Faith journey*
- *Form in which the call to public ministry appeared and how it has been affirmed.*
- *Mentor and mentee's sharing of their own perceived strengths and weaknesses.*

Subsequent Meetings

Meetings should begin and end with prayer. The prayers of confession, petition, and intercession that can be offered in the context of the mentoring partnership often prove to be a rich source of support for both members.

The agenda should focus primarily on what the mentee is experiencing in the ministry setting—the triumphs, the failures, the questions. This focus does not mean that the mentor never asks questions, however. An observant mentor may see a pattern emerging in the stories the mentee is telling and will want to ask questions related to that emerging pattern.

Any of the following topics are legitimate for mentoring partners to discuss. These are only a few suggestions:

- *Interpersonal relationships—staff, lay leaders, parishioners, family, or friends*

- *Parish conflict*
- *Sexual boundaries*
- *Time allocation*
- *Stress management*
- *Spiritual enrichment*
- *Matters of confidentiality*

Other topics for mentoring conversations appear in Appendices D and E.

Evaluating the Meeting

Regular evaluation of the progress of the partnership is essential. Before the closure of each session, the partners should spend five or ten minutes dealing honestly, on the spot, with their perceptions of the meeting they are now concluding. One or two questions such as the following will serve to open the conversation.

- *To what extent have you felt heard today?*
- *How has the balance of "air time" worked out: what percentage of the time did each of us hold the floor?*
- *Where was our major focus at this meeting?*
- *How helpful (to the mentee) was today's conversation?*
- *What did each of us learn today?*
- *What evidence did we note of a "rush to judgment" on the other's suggestion or action?*
- *What would have made our exchange more helpful?*

Journal-keeping

In addition to the shared oral evaluation, at the end of each mentoring session each of the partners is encouraged to keep a journal. Include topics discussed, matters of focus, whether either of you dominated the conversation, and anything else that seems relevant. While the notes belong to the person who made them and need not be shown to the partner, they can be orally reviewed at the next session or at the end of each six-month period. Over a period of time, looking back at the notes will give a sense of how the relationship is moving.

For the Mentor: Working with Your Consultant

Much of the effectiveness of your mentoring partnership depends on the qualities and skills you possess—or acquire—and bring to the relationship. The person best equipped to help you acquire or update your skills as a mentor is the consultant who works on behalf of your synod administrator to assist you in a variety of ways in setting your mentee on a sound footing in her or his first call. You can anticipate receiving the following kinds of support.

1. The consultant conducts your initial training for leading a mentoring partnership.
2. The consultant observes part of your first conversation with your mentee. Following that meeting, the consultant will give you (and other mentors trained with you) specific feedback on your exchange with your mentee(s).
3. The consultant is available throughout the duration of your mentoring partnership to answer your questions, suggest alternatives dealing with your concerns, and stay in touch with you periodically to see how things are going.
4. After you have been meeting with your mentee for about six months it is a good time to evaluate the partnership. Photocopy the questionnaire on the following page, stamp an envelope addressed to your consultant, and give both questionnaire and envelope to your mentee. Ask your partner to complete the questionnaire and mail it to the consultant. The consultant will then offer feedback to you based on your mentee's report as a means to strengthen your mentoring skills.
5. After your relationship with your mentee has formally ended, your synod administrator may invite you to attend an upcoming training session for mentors. At that time you may be asked to offer your learnings in the mentoring experience for those who are just beginning their ministry as mentors.

Training Mentors

A period of about four hours should be allowed for mentor training if several people are to be trained. Even with only one or two to be trained, the work should take between two and three hours. Given below is a suggested sequence. (Two and a half hours are allowed in the design below, without use of the video.)

Purpose of the training:

- (a) To call forth the group's collective experience and wisdom on the work of a mentor; and
- (b) To orient new mentors to the context provided by this system.

Welcome, self-introductions and devotions

(10 minutes)

Welcome the group, ask each for name, place of service, and length of time in ministry. Lead devotions, perhaps centering on scriptural accounts of one of the mentoring relationships mentioned on page 4.

Attributes of mentors (5 minutes)

As you think about mentors in general, what do you think they do? What is their purpose? (List attributes and activities on newsprint or note pad.)

Experience with mentors (1 hour)

If the group is large, form groups of no more than 3 for this exercise.

Ask each to think about all the mentors they remember having in high school, college, seminary, and in ministry. Ask each to choose the two or three most influential. Tell who these mentors were. Include:

- *settings where mentoring occurred*
- *attitude or stance of mentor toward mentee*
- *frequency of contact*
- *helpful and unhelpful aspects of relationship*

(List the helpful and unhelpful aspects of relationship on newsprint or note pad. Compare these lists with the "mentors in general" list developed earlier.)

Types and models of mentoring relationship

(10 minutes) pp. 6–7

Briefly describe activities and the three models. Convey the expectation that the third (collegial) will be most prominent in their relationship. Ask: Among your mentors, have you encountered one of the third type (collegial)? Tell a little about what made the relationship collegial. Ask: What pleases you about being named as a mentor?

(Optional) Mentoring video (About 1 hour)

Show either of the videotapes mentioned in the list of resources and discuss their relationship to the present task. (See notes on the videos in Resources, p. 15.)

Identify expectations of mentors (10 minutes) p. 9

Ask: What attributes from this list do you expect to have to make a conscious effort to develop?

Expectations of mentee (5 minutes)

Add to the list of matters to discuss on page 7, if additions arise during the discussion. Note that “Welcome to the Mentoring Partnership,” Appendix B, is to be photocopied for the mentee.

Gender issues (10 minutes) pp. 10–11

Present the material given in the manual and ask for their reaction to this potential pitfall.

Guidelines for meetings and Covenant

(15 minutes) p. 11–12

Make a straightforward presentation of material. Entertain questions as they arise. Emphasize the value of journaling for both mentor and mentee.

Expectations for work with the consultant

(10 minutes) p. 13

Discuss the potential for additional learning in this interactive process with a trained consultant.

Evaluating the meeting (10 minutes)

Lead a conversation evaluating the training session about to be completed. This also illustrates how mentors should evaluate their sessions with mentees. Suggested opening: “This session has been intended not so much to teach as to (a) call forth our collective experience and wisdom on

the work of a mentor and to (b) orient you to the context provided by this process. As you think ahead to working with your mentee, how would you evaluate the usefulness of each of those parts of our session? What are your suggestions for support from me or from each other as you begin your work? What suggestions do you have for me as I lead sessions like this one for other people preparing to serve as mentors?”

Closing (5 minutes)

Close the session leading in prayer for the mentors in the coming relationship, or inviting their prayers for each other.

Resources

Videos

Kosberg, Rev. Jerry M. *Mentoring: Sharing the Journey*. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Department of Leadership Ministry, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295, ©1995. Study guide included with video.

This video accompanies an eight-session course on the ministry of mentoring. It illustrates the elements of mentoring by following an experienced hiker with an experienced one. Each session offers illustration of one element of mentoring. Segment 2, for example, outlines what is required of the learner and of the mentor. Expected of learner: Application, Reflection, Admiration, Responsibility, Commitment, and Accountability. Expected of the mentor: Maturity, Compassion, Commitment, Respect, Reflection, and Rejoicing. Other sessions deal with the importance of Support, Creating Distance, Nurturing the Vision, and the Ongoing Journey.

There is great clarity in this video about mentoring. Its clarity is its strongest point. But clarity very often comes at the price of reduced subtlety. The video pairs a very young, rookie climber with a lifelong hiker who has made this particular climb many times. There is an obvious disparity of age, experience and knowledge. Collegiality is absent. The elder teaches, encourages, helps, while the learner follows directions and suggestions and is properly grateful. At the end of the climb one gathers the impression, against the evidence of life experience, that the younger is now prepared for a lifetime of successful climbing. Recommended, but with caution about this illustration of a marked power difference between mentor and mentee.

New Pastors' Mentor Program. Stån Menking, Director, Mentor Program, Perkins School of Theology, Office of Continuing Education, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275-0133.

This 21-minute video describes varieties of sustenance available in a long-term mentor relationship. It covers a two-year program, with two weeks per year on site with Perkins Instructors and mentors. The video describes the challenges of present-day ministry (e.g.,

the pastor not as solo leader but as participant in shared leadership), the integration of "cerebral education" into action as pastor and leader. It mentions the program's specific concentration on preaching, worship, nurture, administration, evangelism, social action, church growth, demographics and leadership styles. It also includes information about the visit of mentors to the mentee pastors in their current parish. ("My mentor saw some things I hadn't seen—some good things, some that need more work.") Participants speak of such benefits as growth through the program in their personal spiritual life, in changed attitudes toward ministry, and in a widened vision of the church.

The Perkins program is more comparable to the ELCA's full First Call Theological Education program than to the more specifically focused mentoring partnerships described in this document. However, this introductory presentation does a good job of covering a variety of topics relevant to the needs of ELCA's first call rostered leaders.

Books

Cohen, Norman H. *Mentoring Adult Learners: A guide for educators and trainers*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1995.

The persons for which this book is primarily intended are mentors serving mentees in graduate school. Secondly, it is intended for mentors of persons working or intending to work in business or in government. While the illustrations given are not directly relevant to the work of the clergy, the book offers ample explanation of the six modes of mentoring listed at the outset: (1) Relationship emphasis, to establish *trust*, (2) Information emphasis to offer tailored *advice*, (3) Facilitative focus to introduce *alternatives*, (4) Confrontive focus, to *challenge*, (5) Mentor model, to *motivate*, and (6) Mentee vision, to encourage *initiative*.

The book includes a questionnaire that the reader may complete and self-score to discover her/his chief mentoring skills. It further includes ample discussion

of each of the six kinds of mentor activity in an effort to increase the skill level of the mentor. Highly recommended.

Engstrom, Ted W., with Norman B. Rohrer. *The Fine Art of Mentoring: Passing on to Others What God Has Given To You*. Brentwood, Tennessee: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1989.

As a prolific editor who has written from an evangelical perspective for several decades, Dr. Engstrom draws on assorted biblical passages, historic references, and personal reminiscences to develop a mentoring portrait. This sketching is representative of the classic model of mentoring described on pages 6 and 7. Although one chapter focuses upon "Women as Mentors," his frequent use of masculine images and idioms is likely to be problematic for many readers.

Sellner, Edward. *Mentoring: The Ministry of Spiritual Kinship*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1990.

This paperback edition accents the themes of mutuality, reciprocation, and soul friendship within the mentoring relationship by citing the writings of a diverse company of spiritual guides. Most frequently quoted are the reflections of C.S. Lewis to document the calling of spiritual mentorship: "helping others to discern their vocations, acknowledge their gifts and shape their dreams."

Thistlewaite, Susan B. and Cairns, George F. eds. *Beyond Theological Tourism: Mentoring as a Grassroots Approach to Theological Education*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994.

Though the learning context occurs prior to the framework of those engaged in "first call to public ministry," these eleven articles, written by theological educators based in Chicago, contain applicable insights for mentors and mentees living and ministering within urban settings. The definition of mentorship is broadened to include residents of oppressed communities. Equal importance is placed on the mentoring partnership being understood as a dialogical, transformational process.

Appendix A

Mentoring in the Lutheran Tradition

Luther and Staupitz

In this recent biography of Luther, Martin Brecht remarks, “Luther was apparently indebted to Staupitz for one of the first important alterations to the concept of Christ that was so central in his piety and theology.”²¹ In 1515 Luther the priest was overcome with horror as he participated in a procession with the communion host at the *Corpus Christi* celebration. His sheer physical proximity to the presence of Christ in the consecrated host unnerved him, for at this time his conception of Christ was essentially that of the eschatological judge. “Afterward I made confession to Dr. Staupitz,” Luther later recalled, “and he said to me, ‘Your thought is not of Christ [i.e., not the true conception of Christ]’.”²² Then Staupitz showed Luther how his mental picture of Christ was completely backward. According to Brecht, Staupitz “taught Luther to look at Christ in a new way, as the suffering one who is one with us. This is precisely why Luther later could claim that Staupitz had begun the new teaching [of the Gospel].”²³

Of course, in spite of Luther’s often extravagant praise of Staupitz it is evident that this mentor did not have all the answers that Luther needed. In fact, Staupitz repeatedly found it almost impossible to understand the basis or the extent of Luther’s *Anfechtungen*, or to enter into his thought processes. Yet by his own witness that repeatedly pointed to Jesus Christ, by his admittedly incomplete explications of the Gospel, and by his directing of Luther’s attention to the Scriptures, Staupitz was able to least to point his mentee in the directions where answers and new avenues for exploration could be found.²⁴

While Luther’s mentoring relationship with Melancthon is perhaps the best known and most far-reaching in its significance, he is also well known for his relationship with students at the University of Wittenberg, numbers of whom regularly crowded around the dinner table in his house, engaging in discussions and question-and-answer sessions on a variety of topics. As the volumes of *Tischreden* reveal, it was in this setting that they gleaned insights and opinions from Luther, many of them having to do with practical situations and instances of casuistry. In these “Table Talks” Luther drew on his own experience as well as the experiences of others to show how the Evangelical faith affected all areas of ministry and life.

Luther and Melancthon

Luther was lavish in his praise of Melancthon, and took great pride in the latter’s accomplishments. Yet he did not try to turn Melancthon into a clone of himself. Instead he recognized his associate’s distinctive gifts and culti-

²¹ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483–152*. Translated by James L. Schaaf. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, p. 79.

²² Table Talk #137; LW 54:19.

²³ Brecht, 79. cf. Table Talk #526; LW 54:97.

²⁴ In his *Table Talk*, Luther tells of a time when Staupitz’ responses based on an erroneous diagnosis was nevertheless received by Luther in his own situation as helpful and healing. Table Talk #518; LW 54:94–95.

vated them, acknowledging that Melanchthon was the wise and peaceful King Solomon to his own warlike King David. Even in later years when others attacked Melanchthon for allegedly holding divergent views on such core issues as synergism and the Lord's Supper, Luther continued to openly support Melanchthon. Luther expressed his confidence that Melanchthon remained true to the Faith, even if the language he used was different from Luther's own.

Muhlenberg and Mentoring

Referring to Muhlenberg's "mentoring" of potential clergy candidates, Abdel Ross Wentz writes,

As a rule he took the theological students into his own home where he maintained and taught them and where they had access to his library. Under his supervision they helped to catechize the children, to visit the sick and to give instruction in the schools. Sometimes they read sermons for the congregations and occasionally they officiated at funerals. Meanwhile they "read theology" under the busy preceptor until they were supposed to be ready to appear before the Synod for examination.²⁵

Muhlenberg was not alone in training new pastors by such a mentoring process. One of his own sons, Peter, began his studies at Halle, but completed them under the aegis of the Swedish Lutheran Provost Charles Magnus Wrangel in Philadelphia.²⁶ Peter Muhlenberg was only one of several candidates whom Wrangel tutored and mentored into the ministry. According to Wentz, other Lutheran pastors similarly added the personal training of ministerial candidates to their already heavy ministerial burdens.²⁷ Even though the demands on these colonial pastors already were almost overwhelming, the training and leadership they gave to their mentees was in no way minimal or slap-dash. One need only read about the examination that William Kurtz underwent in 1760—*extempore* translations from Greek and Hebrew to Latin, exegetical and dogmatic essays as well as questions of a "practical" nature—to realize that these candidates were well-prepared indeed.²⁸

Obviously there had to be more behind the mentoring and training efforts of these teaching pastors than simply the meeting of a logistical need for clergy. There also had to be a genuine commitment to the Office of the Ministry and a burning desire to "hand on" the *art* as well as the science of the Holy Ministry. There had been, similarly, a deep abiding love for Christ that Staupitz sought to transmit to Luther, just as the latter's excitement for the Gospel infected his younger colleague, Philipp Melanchthon.

It was this love for, and commitment to, the Church and its people that these mentors sought to communicate to their mentees. Just so, it is the passion for the ministry that lies at the heart of the fruitful mentoring relationship.

²⁵ Wentz, 23. See also Muhlenberg's own reports of taking one Jacobus van Buschkerk under his wing (acceding to request by the young man's father) and instructing him. *Journal of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*. Translated by Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. In Three Volumes. Philadelphia: Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, and Muhlenberg Press, 1942, 1:422, 426ff.

²⁶ Wentz, p. 25.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁸ *Journals*, 450f.

Appendix B

Welcome to the Mentoring Partnership

You have covered a long road to public service in ministry. It is natural after the long years of study and preparation that you will feel fully prepared for whatever tests and challenges public ministry may offer. But one of the gravest hazards of the early years of ministry is the Lone Ranger mindset. All of us, especially when setting out on a new endeavor, need close relationships with at least one person who is knowledgeably prepared to encourage, to redirect, to challenge, to invigorate, and—sometimes—to restrain us. In providing this mentoring partnership for you, your synod is conveying the understanding that, throughout all of life, we need the support of others.

Your mentor, above all else, is expected to be support for you. What use you make of the relationship with your mentor is largely up to you—the agenda for the mentoring relationship is in your hands. Rather than waiting for the mentor to present an agenda when you meet, present your own questions. You may want to know why something you tried fell on its face. You may wonder how a person with longer experience than your own might approach a current situation in your ministry. Reflecting on your ministry with your mentor is what the mentoring partnership is about. In preparation for your mentoring sessions, it may help to keep notes such as these:

- *Plans to be formulated*
- *Decisions to be made*
- *Problems you anticipate*
- *Progress points to reflect about*
- *Requests for prayer*

It is your responsibility to say so when you think your mentor is suggesting a change you do not want to make. It is also expected that, from time to time, you will express appreciation for your mentor's help, particularly in recognition of specific learnings traceable to the mentoring partnership.

May God walk beside you and your mentor as you initiate this mentoring relationship.

Appendix C

Sample Covenant A²⁹

Mentor: _____

Mentee: _____

After seeking the Lord's guidance and confident of God's blessing on our sharing of ourselves with each other, we agree to enter into a mentoring relationship.

For the Mentee:

I wish to grow in the following areas of my life:

I want to be held accountable in the following ways:

I commit myself to sharing my learnings and my struggles in regular meetings. We will meet on (describe meeting schedule):

For the Mentor:

I will guide and encourage you in the following ways:

I will hold you up to your own standards in the following ways:

I will share my own reflection and growth with you in regular meetings. We will meet on (describe meeting schedule):

For both:

This mentoring relationship will last until:

We will evaluate this relationship:

When _____

How _____

As Christians, we will respect one another, pray for one another and keep our relationship with Christ at the center of all we do.

We will end this relationship by: (describe the process)

Mentee _____

Date _____

Mentor _____

Date _____

²⁹ Modified from Kosberg, Jerry M. *An Eight-Session Course on the Ministry of Mentoring*, © 1995 by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Department of Leadership Ministry, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 83122-7295.

The Mentoring Partnership

Sample Covenant B³⁰

Covenant of a Mentor Partnership

I declare my intention to be a faithful participant with my mentoring partner in our mutual sharing.

As a faithful participant I will attend all of our meetings as scheduled. If an emergency should prevent my attending, I will notify my mentoring partner immediately.

I will recognize that the central purpose of our covenantal partnership is to engage in disciplined reflection on the mentee's questions, challenges, and joys in ministry, but will not exclude reflection on the mentor's current experiences.

I will hold confidential all that occurs in our meetings, even from those whom I feel I can trust.

I will communicate honestly about myself and my experiences in ministry, even those which seem like failures, recognizing that through sharing these stories, we can most readily explore and enlarge our understanding of ministry within the context of our own human strengths and weaknesses.

I will demonstrate respect for my mentoring partner by letting her/him see me as I am, not solely as I would like to be.

I will seek opportunities to affirm and support my partner, to listen carefully to her/his experiences and reflections, and to hold her/him accountable when requested to do so.

I will recognize the presence of God with us in all of our doings—

- in our struggles and perplexities
- in our joy and laughter
- in our times of worship, and
- whenever we meet to search for ways to enhance ministry in our part of God's world.

Mentee _____ Date _____

Mentor _____ Date _____

³⁰ Modified from sample covenant given in *The Colleague Program I: Leader's Manual*, ©1995 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, p. 30.

Appendix D

Additional
Questions for
Discussion³¹

- A. To what did you feel called when you experienced the call to ministry? How has your understanding of that call changed? What is the source of the change? What are you doing to nourish your call?
- B. How do you deal with the day-to-day disappointments, doubts, and uncertainties of ministry?
- C. What are you doing to keep yourself spiritually alive?
- D. When, if ever, do you identify a connection between your own ministry and some biblical event or person? Describe a recent instance.
- E. Who among the laity serve as your mentors in the faith? Which lay persons form a part of your personal support network?
- F. How do you reflect theologically on the everyday incidents of ministry? Examples?
- G. What are your goals for your spiritual growth?
- H. In what ways do churchwide statements influence your ministry?

³¹ Questions A through H are adapted from Kohler, Robert, Affleck, Bert, and Larsen, Ellis. *A Manual for Counseling Elders: Building a Covenantal Relationship with Probationers and Local Pastors*. Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275-0133, 1995, pp. 30, 32, 34, 38.

Each of the following questions is related to the subject of Ministerial Identity, which will be dealt with in other sections of the First Call Program. They may or may not be relevant in any particular mentoring partnership. However, if they are helpful...

Appendix E

Ministerial Identity Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways recently have you been aware of God's grace working in your life and ministry?
2. In what ways do you see yourself as living in a stream of contact with your own past history, the present, and the future?
3. How does your congregation (or other situation of service) affirm you in your call to ministry?
4. Who among your peers offers you what you interpret as affirmation of your ministry?
5. Who among your elders in the faith—people you've known in the past or elders in the faith—support and confirm your sense of fitness for ministry?
6. What kind of spiritual disciplines do you live by now? What disciplines do you want to acquire?
7. How do you relate your ministry to the theological traditions of the church?
8. How have you seen, in hindsight, that you have grown through the struggles and suffering you have experienced? Do you see anything of that kind occurring in your life now?
9. How has your own view of yourself developed from the time you first began to think of being in public ministry until now? What kind of further development would you expect?

Appendix F

Evaluation — The Mentoring Partnership

(Six-month form — to be completed by the mentee)

You should receive this form when your sessions with your mentor have been continuing for about six months. Your mentor should give you the name and address of the consultant who was responsible for her/his training. When this form has been completed, please mail it to the consultant. Your responses will help the consultant to work with your mentor in sharpening her/his mentoring skills.

What is your mentor's name? _____

Your responses will be interpreted as follows:

- 5 = Highest possible degree
- 4 = Highly
- 3 = About average
- 2 = Somewhat
- 1 = Minimally

1. To what degree do you see your mentor as a person of faith?	5	4	3	2	1
2. To what degree do you see your mentor as bearing witness to the church's confessions?	5	4	3	2	1
3. To what degree has your mentor increased your tendency to think theologically about your experience of ministry?	5	4	3	2	1
4. To what degree do you now view your ministry differently as a result of your meetings with your mentor?	5	4	3	2	1
Please cite one or more examples: (use more paper if necessary)					
5. To what degree does your mentor increase your confidence in your ability to carry out your own public ministry?	5	4	3	2	1
6. To what degree does your mentor expect no more of you than of her- or himself?	5	4	3	2	1
7. To what degree have you felt your mentor's respect for you as a person?	5	4	3	2	1
8. To what degree has your mentor expressed confidence in your ministry skills?	5	4	3	2	1
9. If you met someone who is seeking a mentoring partner would you recommend your mentor?	5	4	3	2	1

Please add any comments that you think would be helpful to your mentor's consultant.