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# Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology

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# Effective Mentoring and Its Implications for Student Personal and Professional Development

By Julius Muthengi

## Introduction

We begin our discussion by defining the term 'mentoring'. Mentoring is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or a less knowledgeable person. Rather than providing ad hoc help or just answering occasional questions, true mentoring is about an ongoing relationship of learning, dialogue, and challenge. The person who receives mentorship may be referred to as a protégé (male), a protégée (female), an apprentice, or in recent years, a mentee.<sup>1</sup>

Mentoring is a process that always involves communication, and is therefore relational in nature. It is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge and has a social, capital, and psychosocial support element perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development.<sup>2</sup> Mentoring involves informal communication, which is normally face-to-face and which occurs over a prolonged period of time. Such communication is between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).<sup>3</sup>

Student mentoring and academic advising go hand in hand. Lecturers engage in helping their students in both learning and advising. The advising can either be geared toward enhancing the student's academics or career. In academic advising, the lecturer helps the student to become competent in his/her academic work. Research and writing are areas in which academic mentoring and student advising are also relevant. The mentor can also advise on the career prospects in the discipline the student is pursuing.

## Central Thesis

In Christian higher institutions, mentorship should essentially play a vital role. This is due to the fact that these institutions have ideals that warrant the building of strong relationships and integrity. The bulk of the ongoing academic exercises in such institutions are Christian Ministry oriented, and hence Christo-centric. The fundamental reality of Christian ministry is that all

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Bozeman and Mary K. Feeney. *Toward a Useful Theory of Mentoring: A Conceptual Analysis and Critique*. <http://aas.sagepub.com>. pp. 721-722. From: [http://www.andrews.edu/sed/leadership\\_dept/documents/toward\\_a\\_useful\\_theo.pdf](http://www.andrews.edu/sed/leadership_dept/documents/toward_a_useful_theo.pdf). Accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Bozeman and Feeney, *Toward a Useful Theory of Mentoring*, pp. 722-724.

<sup>3</sup> Bozeman and Feeney, *Toward a Useful Theory of Mentoring*, pp. 722-724.

should be to the glory of God. With this in mind, academic exercises are pursued on the premise of a balanced approach of scholarship and practical application. The spiritual element plays a key role in the scholastic endeavors and exercises in the university.

It is worth emphasizing that Christian ministry is different from other careers because among other virtues, good character, setting good moral example and role modeling are given priority. Mentorship is therefore important because of the nature of work that both the lecturers and the students do. The lecturers are practitioners in their fields of study. They not only impart knowledge, but are also expected to practice what they teach. In this respect they are involved in practical ministries. With this reality in mind, role modeling, mentoring and advising are of paramount importance.

In preparation for Christian ministry, scholarship is an area which necessitates that the university becomes a center of excellence in Christian scholarship. The spiritual dimension of scholarship cannot be ignored, since the Scriptures affirm and reaffirm the importance of study. The Apostle Paul advised young Timothy to study and show himself a workman who needed not to be ashamed, but one who rightly divides the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

### **Mentoring in Scholarship**

Mentoring is an important aspect in scholarship. This paper examines important aspects of mentorship in a scholarly environment, namely, why become a mentor, the work of a mentor, and some guidelines of mentorship. The question of why one should become a mentor is one that is often ignored by many people who aspire to be mentors. There cannot be successful mentoring if this question is not answered adequately.

### **The Reasons for Being a Mentor/Benefits of Mentoring**

In order for a mentor to fulfill the intended goal/purpose of mentoring, it must be as integral a part of the institution as teaching, research and publication. It is for the same reasons that the benefits are for both students and mentors, as it advances the scholastic discipline, ensuring the quality and commitment of the next generation of scholars.<sup>4</sup> Areas in which mentoring benefits students are as follows: supporting their advancement in research activity, conference presentations, publication, pedagogical skill, and grant writing.

It is worth noting that experiences and networks that mentors help students to accrue are important because they improve the students' prospects for securing professional placement. The knowledge that someone is committed to their progress and can give them solid advice and advocacy,

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<sup>4</sup> The Regents of the University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/Fmentoring.pdf>. p. 6. Accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2012.

can help to lower stress and build confidence. Both constructive interaction with a mentor and participation in collective activities help the student understand his/her field of study and its practical application in real life situations. Mentors are rewarded in an abundance of ways. Students keep the academic mentor abreast of new avenues of knowledge and techniques, and apprise him/her of promising opportunities for research.<sup>5</sup>

It should be pointed out that a faculty member's reputation rests in part on the work of his or her former students, i.e. sending successful new scholars into the field increases professional stature. Furthermore networks provide enrichment in this kind of relationship. Helping students make the professional and personal connections needed to succeed will greatly extend the faculty member's circle of colleagues. Word gets around about who the best mentors are, so they are usually the most likely to recruit and retain outstanding students. It is personally satisfying to the mentors. Seeing one's students succeed can be as rewarding as a major publication or significant grant.

Effective mentoring advances the discipline because students often begin making significant contributions long before they complete their studies. Such students are more likely to have productive, distinguished, and ethical careers that reflect credit on their mentors and enrich their discipline. Effective mentoring helps to ensure the quality of research, scholarship and teaching well into the future. The significance of the above point cannot be overemphasized.

### **The Role of a Mentor**

The mentor's responsibilities extend well beyond helping students learn what is entailed in the research and writing components of the institution's curriculum. Therefore, mentors should socialize students into the culture of the discipline, clarifying and reinforcing, principally by example, what is expected of a professional scholar and practitioner.<sup>6</sup> Modeling of professional responsibility, overseeing professional development and encouraging the effective use of time are important pillars in the work of mentoring. A mentor must ensure that they are his/her priority in academic mentoring.<sup>7</sup>

The key role of a mentor is well captured in the following statement:

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<sup>5</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 8. For more details on this issue, see [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/tb\\_856/agtms-eng.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/tb_856/agtms-eng.asp). "A Guide to Mentoring Students. Treasury Board of Canada". Accessed on July 2, 2013. In this document a mentor is presented as a motivator and counselor to the students. His/her responsibilities include: helping students set long term goals and short term learning opportunities; enabling students acquire knowledge in communication, critical thinking, responsibility, flexibility and team work; helping students know their areas of strengths and weaknesses, providing guidance on academic and personal matters.

It is crucial that the mentor conscientiously act with integrity in every aspect of his or her work as teacher, researcher and author. Students must see that their mentors recognize and avoid conflicts of interest, collect and use data responsibly, fairly award authorship credit, cite source materials appropriately and use research funds ethically ... never compromising the standards that bestow validity on the discipline is essential to the profession.<sup>8</sup>

In overseeing professional development, mentors should help students to become full-fledged members of their profession and not just researchers. Mentors should work with the student in developing schedules and meeting benchmarks. Sharing techniques and practices that have been useful to others is important in mentoring. It is important however, not to insist on them, since that is not the only way to accomplish the goal. The mentor should help the student to blaze his/her own trail, and devise a plan that keeps them on it.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the role of mentor is crucial in the development of the professional and personal life journey of the students.

### **Guidelines for Mentors**

There should be clarity of communication about the mentoring relationship. Transparency about the mentor's expectations in both form and function of the relationship is important. Particular attention to boundaries, both personal and professional, and respect going both ways should be clearly stated and enacted.

Mentors should be guided by principles that enable them to effectively mentor students. Mentors should keep track of their students' progress and achievements, setting milestones and acknowledging achievements.<sup>10</sup> A mentor should let the students know that he/she wants them to succeed. Creating opportunities for them to demonstrate their competencies is of paramount importance especially where the mentor identifies the student's area of competence and gifting.

A mentor should use concrete language to critique students' work. When he/she communicates with students, the communication must be timely, clear, and above all, constructive. Critical feedback is essential; however, it will only be effective if it is positive affirmation wherever necessary, praise when deserved. Students should be encouraged to try new techniques, expand their skills, and discuss their ideas - even those they fear might seem simple or unworkable. Allowing the students to make mistakes and learn from their failures will encourage them to continue learning.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Regents, University of Michigan, *How to Mentor Students: A Guide for Faculty*. p. 9.

A mentor should provide support in times of discouragement and success. Good mentoring warrants that a mentor helps those in need of help, without necessarily being asked, wherever he/she can. It is important for the mentor to show understanding, especially when a student lags behind in their work. Gently interrogating and patiently probing, as opposed to drawing hasty conclusions and using vague generalizations, can reveal an area of need. The student is helped accordingly. A mentor should let the students know that they can interact even when their conversation is non-academic. Mentors should be approachable. A mentor should be open enough to tell students what he/she has learnt from them. This makes them realize they are potential colleagues. It is also important for mentors to involve students in professional conferences where they can present research papers. Journal editing activities and professional research opportunities can also be helpful in the professional growth of the students.

### **Spiritual Mentoring Model**

A spiritual mentoring model is an important component of mentoring that is relevant in the scholarship endeavours of International Leadership University, Kenya. Attraction, Relationship, Responsiveness and Accountability are aspects in which the spiritual mentoring model thrives. Attraction begins when either a mentor or mentee pays attention to the other. Spiritual mentoring begins when both the mentor and mentee are aware of themselves and are ready to accept each other the way they are.

Moreover, spiritual mentoring is understood as “a triadic relationship between mentor, mentee and the Holy Spirit, where the mentee can discover, through the already present action of God, intimacy with God, ultimate identity as a child of God and a unique voice for kingdom authority”.<sup>12</sup> The point of interaction in the relationship is the work of the Holy Spirit, the real mentor. It is similar to Paul’s statement, that he planted, Apollos watered but God gave the increase (1 Cor. 4:6). Both mentor and mentee need to be conscious of the role of the Holy Spirit and give Him room to operate in the relationship. In such a relationship a mentee is described as “one who desires spiritual growth and maturing, one who is vulnerable in sharing intimate issues of life, one who is responsive and respectful to the directives of the mentor”.<sup>13</sup> Unless a mentee has the overall goal of maturity in Christ and is willing to pay whatever price it will cost for the achievement of such a goal, the relationship cannot be sustained. Paul, who was essentially mentored by Christ like the original apostles, was focused on attaining maturity in Christ. He echoed this intense desire to know Christ and was willing to suffer any personal and earthly loss to achieve this noble goal (Phil 3:7-14). When mentees are willing to make the due sacrifices in spiritual mentoring they can be freed from “the limits of self

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<sup>12</sup> Celestin Musekura and Faustin Ntamushobora, *Mentoring: A Remedy for the Leadership Crisis in Africa*. Nairobi: ALARM, 2004, 17.

<sup>13</sup> Musekura and Ntamushobora. *Mentoring: A Remedy ...* 17.



fulfilment” and discover the joy of living for others in Christ.<sup>14</sup> It goes without saying that, a higher level of sacrifice is expected of the mentor in order to see results in his/her mentee. Paul lived at this level when he told his mentees, the Corinthians, “I will very gladly spent and be spent for you” (2 Cor 12:15). He was willing to make all the necessary sacrifices to help them mature in Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Mentoring must be nurtured through relationship building. Through the practice of friendship and hospitality, trust and intimacy in mentoring is built. Spiritual mentoring as a relationship of trust and emerging intimacy is predicated upon a friendship shared with one another and with the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup> A mentor should courageously share his/her vulnerability with the mentee by offering to discuss life experiences. Experiences both negative and positive should be shared with integrity and confidence, since trust has already been established. Hospitality marked with nurture, growth and refreshment with occasional eating together is important in this kind of mentoring.

In spiritual mentoring, it is incumbent upon the mentee to remember the importance of submissiveness. Submissiveness in spiritual mentoring is not heartless, blind obedience to the mentor, but rather to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom both the mentor and mentee are seeking to please.

Accountability plays a key role in spiritual mentoring. The mentee gives feedback of progress of growth, which would include challenges as well as triumphs. The mentor also should seek to listen to the mentee without judging, but patiently understanding and helping where needed. The mentor is expected to help and encourage the mentee without destroying the confidence bestowed upon him/her by the mentee. In light of the foregoing, mentoring, academic advising and discipleship cannot be overemphasized.

### **Biblical Mandate for Mentoring**

There is a clear biblical mandate on mentoring in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament for instance, Moses and Joshua, Samuel and the school of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, and Elisha and the sons of the prophets, illustrate successful mentorship. In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul are good examples of effective mentorship. It is beyond the scope of this paper to exegete and deeply analyze the relevant biblical passages. However, a few of these texts will be highlighted below.

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<sup>14</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006, pp. 214-216.

<sup>15</sup> Allen Haddian, *Discipleship: Helping Other Christians Grow*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1987, pp. 94-97.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Koo Yoon, *Mentoring For Effective Cross Cultural Ministry: A Case Study Among The University of Nairobi*. M.Th. Thesis, Africa International University, July 2011.

Moses and Joshua (mentor and mentee) aptly illustrate a successful mentoring partnership. Moses demonstrated the wisdom of a mentor by deciding to delegate an important task (Exodus 17:9). He placed one of his soldiers, Joshua, in command of a battle against the Amalekites over a water dispute. In making this decision, Moses demonstrated trust in Joshua's leadership potential. He opened the way for an ongoing relationship and teamwork. This was the first time Moses (mentor) asked someone else to lead an attack, one of many that Joshua (his mentee) would command.<sup>17</sup>

Moses continued to offer Joshua opportunities to develop, which included being among the 12 spies (Numbers 13:8) and at the special tent of meeting (Exodus 33:11). Moses affirmed his mentee by commissioning Joshua in the presence of the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 31:7-8). He gave Joshua public recognition for the lessons he learned.<sup>18</sup>

It is fitting to get an overview of the relationship between Moses and Joshua, in order to gain a further understanding of that mentorship. Before the assignment to smite the Amalekites, Joshua was unknown in the Biblical account and this becomes his first mention in the Pentateuch.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the manner in which he is introduced suggests that both Moses and the people were already familiar with him. Or how could Moses tell him to choose men and lead them in the war against Amalek unless Joshua was fairly trusted by him as well as the men he was asked to select? For Joshua to obey Moses as he did and for the people to obey Joshua in turn, confirms the assumption that his mentoring relationship with Moses had been going on for a while. In Moses and Joshua we see a mentorship initiated in the Old Testament whose purpose was service oriented.<sup>20</sup>

Hull gives us much insight into what he refers to as 'the concept of Moses and Joshua' contending that it was the premier mentoring relationship in the history of Israel. He affirms that their relationship lasted the longest, manifesting itself in five characteristics in which humans need to grow and develop.<sup>21</sup> First is in relationship to nurture which is depicted by Moses taking Joshua as his aide when he went up to the mountain to meet God. In fact this appears to be the beginning of their interaction and Joshua's service by Moses' side. The uniqueness of this longevity, which spanned more than thirty years, may be telling in the length of time it takes to train effective leaders. A second characteristic is apprenticeship for competence. By being with Moses,

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<sup>17</sup> Enrichment Journal.ag.org / Moses and Joshua Succession. Accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

<sup>18</sup> www.scottwood.org. Sons of the Prophets/html Accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Elwell. ed., *Baker Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2005, p. 52.

<sup>20</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: Discipleship in Steps of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992, p. 68.

<sup>21</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, pp. 56-57.

Joshua was exposed to many personal and organizational crises through which he observed and learned how to lead difficult people in challenging times. It is interesting to note that Joshua was exposed to Moses' weaknesses, strengths, doubts, anger, and cries. Accountability for tasks was the third characteristic. The task of leading Israel into the land involved much administration that rested mainly on Joshua who came to be known as Moses' servant. A fourth characteristic is submission for shaping. Though Joshua faced much pressure from the people to go along with them and dissent, he chose to be faithful both to God and Moses. Notable times were: when Aaron and Miriam rose up against Moses, when the people demanded meat rather than manna, and when the ten spies rebelled against going into the land. Finally, the fifth characteristic is 'wisdom for decision making.' Joshua was chosen by God but trained by Moses. He learned much wisdom from Moses and God that he used to lead the children of Israel to the land of Promise.

Joshua's relationship with Moses as a mentee was long stretched and etched in running many errands as his minister. It was mentoring through being with God in communion, both on the mountain and in the tent (Exodus 24:13-14; 32:17-18; 33:11), leading Israel to war, being part of the spies to survey the land among other things.

The prophet Samuel organized the prophets into a society for common instruction and edification. He established schools for the prophets, where men were trained in things pertaining to holy office; the students were called the sons of the prophets. Samuel was the leader of the school in Ramah (1 Samuel 19:20). From the description of the school of prophets, mentorship took centre stage where Samuel mentored the young men who came to study in the school of prophets.<sup>22</sup>

Elijah is another biblical example of mentorship. The narrative found in 2 Kings 2:1-11 illustrates this fact. From the narrative, Elijah the mentor and Elisha the mentee had a good relationship in which Elisha admired Elijah and wanted to inherit his mantle. The trust and goodwill that Elijah had towards Elisha warranted him to ask what he could do for him. A good mentor is honest, and does not hide the truth. This aspect comes out clearly in the narrative, when Elisha sought the double portion of Elijah's power. Elijah acknowledged that it was a difficult thing he was asked; nonetheless, he did not become evasive nor did he hide the truth as he knew it.

The willingness of Elisha to follow Elijah serves as a good illustration of how a mentee should respond. Elisha was humble enough to follow Elijah wherever he went. He was patient enough not to give up or grumble. Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's spirit after he was taken up to heaven. Elisha became a mentor to the sons of the prophets. His relationship with the sons of the prophets reveals another characteristic of mentors. The narrative

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<sup>22</sup> [www.scottwood.org.Sons of the Prophets/html](http://www.scottwood.org.Sons of the Prophets/html).

in 2 Kings 6:1-7 reveals Elisha's caring attitude towards the sons of the prophets. His willingness to accompany them to the Jordan portrays him as a mentor who was willing to identify with his mentees.<sup>23</sup>

The eventual recovery of the ax head upon its fall into the river continues to portray him as a caring mentor. Upon the cry of one of the sons of the prophets about the axe head falling in the river, Elisha was alive to the fact that the loss of the axe would have negative ramifications. He had to act and save the situation. It therefore follows that good mentors are those who identify with their mentees.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the supreme model of mentoring. He mentored the twelve apostles who would later become great evangelists. He appointed them so that they might be with Him, and then go out to preach. He (being divine) and they (being frail and weak men) shows he had trusted them to do the work he had ordained for them to do. Their spending time with Him would make them knowledgeable and efficient. Christ mentored and taught by example, hence being very efficient. He believed in them in that there is nothing He withheld from them that would help them to become efficient and competent servants of God.

Let us look at some specific cases that show the mentorship of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though the relationship of Moses and Joshua is taken to be the premier mentoring relationship in the history of Israel, the one of Jesus Christ and His apostles exceeds any in the entire biblical and human history. The Lord's Prayer, the washing of the apostles' feet, the feeding of the five thousand and the sending of the seventy (two) are just few of the numerous mentoring incidents.

Concerning prayer the Lord taught both by example and word. What we refer to as the 'Lord's Prayer' cannot suffice to demonstrate Jesus' mentorship in the area of prayer. However, together with Jesus' prayer for the church in John 17, it gives us a relatively large portion of writing to learn from. The Lord's Prayer recorded in Matthew 6:5-13 and Luke 11:1-13 should be studied together due to their complementary nature. From Luke's account we can deduce that either the disciples were with Jesus as He prayed or they found Him praying, prompting them to ask Him to teach them to pray. Jesus mentored them by praying with them. It was from His practical example of praying that He was able to teach them the theory or theology of prayer.

The prayer contains two parts: the form of prayer and aids to faith in God that lead to perseverance in prayer.<sup>24</sup> Prayer as a form is what Jesus taught His disciples, including the prayer format that comprises general headings under which all special petitions may be comprehended. In this case Jesus

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<sup>23</sup> This is inferred from 2 Kings 2:1-11.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Balmain Bruce. *The Training of the Twelve*. Connecticut: Keats Publishing, Inc., 1979, pp. 55-68.

was mentoring them into the major aspects of what should constitute their prayers. He actually gave them a framework. This is important in mentoring where the mentor can set both theoretical and practical teaching, sharing certain frameworks or parameters as to what his/her mentee should do. When it comes to aids to faith Jesus set the stage by emphasizing the Father's willingness and commitment to answer prayer. In the Luke account of the Lord's Prayer Jesus used the analogy of the son asking for bread, fish or an egg from his earthy father. The earthy father's readiness to give what his son asked is compared to our heavenly Fathers' willingness and generosity in granting His children's requests. Leaving aside the Lord's prayer, other areas in prayer in which the Lord mentored the disciples was when He showed them the need to pray before choosing leaders (Lk. 6:12-13); asking the disciples Peter, John, and James to accompany Him for an overnight prayer meeting on the mountain where He was transfigured (Lk.9:28-32); and taking the disciples to pray with Him as He faced His greatest hour of temptation in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-44). In reference to the prayers on the Mount and in the garden the attendance of Jesus' three confidants, Peter, James, and John, significantly points to the similarity of the two occasions in their focus on the cross. Jesus took the three that He might not be altogether "destitute of the company and kindly sympathy" as He walked through the valley of the shadow of death and felt the horror and loneliness of the situation.<sup>25</sup>

Humility was a great characteristic of Jesus Christ that He also wanted to form in His disciples. Among the many ways Jesus taught this noble virtue was His washing the feet of His disciples recorded in only one gospel, John 13:1-20. He demonstrated humility by proceeding to wash the feet of the disciples which was, in the mind of the apostles, especially Peter, a very condescending act not befitting their master. Jesus used the act to mentor His disciples in the area of servant hood. He taught the virtues of meekness and brotherly kindness by precept and example, by symbolic act, and added word of interpretation.<sup>26</sup> He mentored them into servant hood by becoming the menial of the household and became a pattern of humility requiring His disciples to copy Him. The act of taking the basin and towel as a king and proceeding to wash the lowly feet of the disciples was a unique mentorship lesson of humility that mere human words could not communicate.

The feeding of the 'five thousand plus' multitude is one case that presents to us an insight into the way Jesus mentored His disciples as it relates to miracles. Considering that the story is among the few miracles recorded in all the four gospel accounts (Matt. 14:14-21; Mk. 6:34-44; Lk. 9: 11-17; Jn. 6:5-15), its importance cannot be overstated. Our interest is in how the incident is used as a lesson in mentoring.

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<sup>25</sup> Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 192.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, pp. 341-355.

In the first place Jesus shows concern for the multitudes and wants to pass the same concern to the apostles. The level that Jesus involved the disciples in the matter was very high. He told them He did not want to send the people away hungry lest they faint. Ngewa notes that Jesus involved two of His disciples, Philip and Andrew, by asking them to do something. The failure of the two to get a solution did not make Jesus expel them from the school of discipleship.<sup>27</sup> Jesus' deep concern for the multitude's physical needs as opposed to the disciples' insensitivity was in itself a mentoring lesson in attitude. What is needed so much to bring change in life is change of attitude, which we may refer to as a mental shift. For Jesus, attitude shift was the paradigm that he desired His disciples to experience.

As Jesus challenged them to do something their faith awoke and they began to think. One of the apostles, Andrew, discovered a young boy with five loaves of bread and two fishes. Jesus further mentored them by receiving the food and presenting it to the Father in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing. To the disciples Jesus was telling them that whatever they possess, it must be surrendered to God thankfully. Having blessed the food He further mentored them by allowing them to serve the people. Surprisingly to them all, the more than five thousand people ate and were filled with twelve baskets remaining. Interestingly, Jesus still continued His mentorship by asking the disciples to collect the remains so that nothing is wasted, thus emphasizing the need for good stewardship. The fact that the disciples were involved in the collecting of the twelve baskets serves as a clue that they were involved in the distribution".<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the greatest mentoring lesson is revealed in the Johannine account where Jesus escaped from the crowd when they wanted to make Him their king rather than waiting on God's appointment. Whereas the crowd's focus was on a physical, earthly kingdom, Jesus understood that "the timing of His rule was not to be dictated by human beings but appointed by God".<sup>29</sup> The message was that disciples should not let mankind glorify *them* as a result of the miracles or works that God does through them. An example of this lesson learned well is when Peter and Paul in separate incidents rebuked individuals who wanted to glorify them (Acts 3; 10; 14).<sup>30</sup>

The Apostle Paul illustrates the importance of mentorship. Having succeeded in planting churches, Paul believed that these churches needed leaders who were to continue with the work he had started. From him, mentorship and the principle of multiplication are well illustrated.

Among the apostles Paul is outstanding in the matter of mentorship. We cannot say that the other Early Church apostles and leaders were not involved

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<sup>27</sup> Samuel M. Ngewa, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary for Pastors, Teachers, and Preachers*. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 2003, pp. 102-104.

<sup>28</sup> Ngewa, *The Gospel of John*, p. 103.

<sup>29</sup> Ngewa, *The Gospel of John*, p. 101.

<sup>30</sup> This inferred from Acts 3; 10; 14.

in mentoring ministries. What we need to acknowledge is that based on the New Testament records there is much evidence that links Paul and other disciples in some prolonged mentorship relationship. The reason may be because more than half of the book of Acts gives the account of Paul's church planting ministry and a substantial part of the New Testament Epistles are credited to Pauline authorship. It is still safe to assume other apostles like Peter, John, and James whom even Paul acknowledged as pillars of the Jewish wing of the church (Gal. 2:7-9), must have been involved in mentoring. No wonder people like Barnabas, Silas, and the seven leaders of Acts 6:1-6 are among notable products of such a relationship.<sup>31</sup>

Let us now examine Paul's mentor-mentee relationship with Timothy. Readers are for the first time introduced to Timothy in the Bible in Acts 16:1-3 when he joined Paul and his team that comprised of Silas and the writer of Acts who refers to himself and the team as "we" (Acts 16:10). As Joshua was Moses' most distinct mentee, so does Timothy appear to be Paul's supreme protégé. This is evidenced by the special language Paul uses to refer to him such as 'my own son', 'my true son', 'and my dearly beloved son' (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2). The relationship between the two reflects vast differences in terms of age and Christian life experience with Paul being at the far end of the continuum. Yet the level of transparency, submissiveness, parenthood, brotherhood, and comradeship experienced in this relationship is outstanding in mentorship.

Many scholars believe that Timothy was Paul's son in the faith based on the probability of his conversion during Paul's first missionary journey and his consequent mentoring that began to take shape when Paul recruited him in Acts 16:1-6.<sup>32</sup> This hypothesis notes that when Paul recruited him he already had a good testimony among the brethren in Lystra where Paul had formerly planted a church (Acts 14:21-23). If this hypothesis is correct, we then have a situation where Paul selects one of his earlier converts who has a good testimony to begin a mentoring relationship. The idea of Timothy being a son to Paul in faith is reinforced by Paul's constant reference to him as his 'son'. Besides conversion, the matter of sonship was taken a notch higher when Paul assumed the responsibility of fatherhood in terms of nurture that included tender care and "special discipleship".<sup>33</sup>

Timothy's acceptance of Paul's invitation to mentorship and his submission to Paul's request to circumcise him because of the Jews (Acts 16:3) marked the beginning of their long journey. Timothy had passed what could be considered as the first test where he was saying he was not going to live for himself but for others who are represented as "the Jews" for whose

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<sup>31</sup> This is inferred from Gal. 2:7-9 and Acts 6:1-6.

<sup>32</sup> Elwell, *Baker Commentary on the Bible*, p. 908.

<sup>33</sup> Ajith Fernando, *Leadership Lifestyle: A Study of 1 Timothy*. Wheaton: Living Studies, 1985, pp. 13-15.

sake he was circumcised. This was a mental cultural shift manifested in a physical 'cut'. In cross-cultural interactions we refer to this as contextualization. Needless to say, as subsequent accounts in Acts (17:14-15; 18:5 19:22; 20:4) and Pauline Epistles show, Timothy adapted well and this mentorship climaxed in Paul saying that he had no one like him (Phil 2:20).

Paul's mentoring of Timothy was mainly done through the setting of travelling together not only with him but with a team that Paul led. This is proved by Paul's charge to Timothy to commit to faithful men the things that he had heard from him among many *witnesses* (2 Tim 2:2). These witnesses are likely to be members of this team that accompanied Paul and were taught by him. This preparation was done over a long period through Timothy's intimate contact with Paul in which he was able to observe "Paul's life at close quarters" as Paul later noted (2 Tim 3:10).<sup>34</sup> The intimacy that characterized this mentoring is the price of deep ministry in which Paul made himself vulnerable to Timothy through Paul's exposure. The mentorship involved a gradual handing over of some of Paul's ministry. Apart from the regular traveling and ministering together especially in the second missionary journey, Paul left him with Silas to complete the work in Berea (Acts 17:14). Later on Paul sent Timothy on numerous missions where he represented him (1 Cor 4:17; Phil. 2:19-23). Finally, at the sunset of his ministry he charged Timothy for ministry (1 Tim. 5:21; 6:13-17; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

### **Mentoring and the Principle of Multiplication**

The apostle Paul illustrates mentoring and the principle of multiplication very well. His charge to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2) corroborates this fact. In this verse, Paul is charging Timothy to transmit what he has taught him to men of integrity. Timothy is given a charge that he should continue teaching what he has received from Paul. The men, who are to receive the teachings, are to continue teaching to others. The passage demonstrates that mentoring should have a multiplication and multi-generational effect component in order for it to be both effective and complete.

### **Personal Examples of Mentoring at International Leadership University**

I started my teaching ministry at International Leadership University (ILU), formerly Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST) in November 2000. During the last thirteen years, I have taught courses as well as mentored students from various parts of Africa. Over this period, I have mentored students both in formal as well as informal settings. The following examples illustrate my commitment to effective student mentoring in Christian higher education. These examples (limited to two due to lack of space) relate to specific students I have mentored over the years, though their names are not revealed for purposes of confidentiality. Thus, only designations appear in

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<sup>34</sup> Fernando, *Leadership Lifestyle: A Study of 1 Timothy*, pp. 19-22.



examples cited below. These examples are particularly significant because my mentoring experience with these students has been the longest.

MN took four of my courses. During this time, we developed a close personal relationship. On numerous occasions, this student would follow me after class and raise further issues for clarification. Often he asked me to look at a rough draft of his research paper in order to get my feedback before he finalized it. I did my best to help wherever I could and consequently he produced a relevant and acceptable paper of good quality. During his time as a student, MN consulted me on academic, professional, ministry and personal issues. On several occasions, this student and others in the department of Missions interacted with me on how to plan mission conferences, designate themes for such occasions as well as identify possible qualified speakers. For over six years, I have involved MN in various research projects, ranging from updating several of my courses, research on relevant topics, and so on. In addition, we have on numerous occasions discussed current relevant social and theological issues in Africa. Since I believe that iron sharpens iron, I have initiated dialogue and discussion with MN on key issues in Intercultural and Theological Studies. Sometimes, I prepared an outline of these issues and asked for his feedback the same before finalizing the table of contents.

OP has been my mentee for approximately ten years. He took over four courses from me in biblical studies and intercultural studies. Of special significance is that one semester, OP was the only student who registered for one of my courses. I was therefore, privileged to teach him alone for fifteen weeks. He always submitted his assignments on time, which was impressive. This student consulted me in academic, personal and ministry related matters. Since his graduation several years ago, OP has been a close friend and colleague. In addition, like OP above, this man has worked closely with me in updating several of my courses under my supervision. We have also worked on several research projects. One major research project is currently ongoing, in which this gentleman has been working as my research assistant. For the last two years, we have been meeting once a month for updates on the progress made. This man indeed, has been continued to gain more skills in research development and I am privileged to be his mentor!

### **Summary and Recommendations**

The paper sought to address the issue of mentoring and student advising. At the outset, key concepts were defined, namely, mentoring, roles and the work of mentors. The context of mentoring and student advising was considered, owing to the fact that most student advising is in the context of a scholarly environment, where students are engaged in rigorous academic exercises. The introduction dealt with definition of a mentor and what he/she does. The central thesis of the paper was highlighted. The thesis is that of mentoring students' personal, academic and professional development in a Christian university. The essence of the paper was highlighted in the central

thesis section. Mentoring in scholarship section had three components, which included the question of why one should become a mentor, the work of a mentor and guidelines for mentoring. These helped in relating mentorship in the context of scholarship.

The spiritual mentoring models section formed another part of the paper. Four important aspects that give life to spiritual mentoring were highlighted, albeit not in elaborate details. Attraction, relationship, responsiveness, and accountability formed the bulk that would buttress spiritual mentoring models.

Old and New Testament examples of mentoring were used to corroborate the Biblical mandate of mentoring. In The New Testament section, the examples of the supreme mentorship of Christ and the apostle Paul were treated specifically in the section about mentoring and the principle of multiplication. Personal examples of mentoring at International Leadership University by the author were also highlighted.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations in this paper will be based on the context of Christian higher education. The institutions in this category are involved in the task of teaching and training transformational leaders whose distinction and hallmark is integrity. This calls for thorough preparation through scholarship, research and practical application.

In light of the foregoing analysis, some recommendations are in order:

1. Students should be encouraged to participate in paper presentations and the university should consider setting a time where students from various departments would present papers for critique and further research.
2. Mentors should encourage their students to do scholarly outreach projects in the areas where the university is involved. It could be in organization of seminars and public lectures in areas of public interest.
3. Spiritual mentoring should go a notch higher where interaction is in not only discipleship and ministry setups, but also in fomenting of relationships that go beyond the university and academic environment.
4. Academic advising in thesis topic identification should be encouraged as early as possible. Academic mentors should encourage dialogue on possible areas of thesis research. The early identification is to enable research in new, unexplored areas that are related to the discipline the student is studying.

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