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Developing an Intentional Mentoring Model for Disciple Formation at the Mayfair Church of Christ

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ABSTRACT

This doctor of ministry thesis presents the results of a project to lead a team in the development of an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at the Mayfair Church of Christ. This intervention involved the team members in a series of sessions during September and October 2013. Project sessions were designed to provide participants an intentional mentoring experience through exposure to four core practices: exploration of the biblical text, appreciative inquiry exercises, communal sharing, and prayer. Sessions were informed by (1) an understanding of discipleship as following behind Jesus and walking alongside our fellow sojourners, (2) the nature of discipleship in the Epictetus school, and (3) the witness of the Pastoral Epistles concerning the Paul-Timothy mentor-protégé relationship.

Several important insights emerged from the project evaluation. The project confirmed the viability of spiritual autobiography as a tool for disciple formation. Protégés are significantly impacted as mentors share the fullness of their sacred stories. In addition, the project identified key polarities within which the mentor-protégé relationship must operate: mythic and parabolic narration, encouragement and hard sayings, and intentional and organic interaction. The project also affirmed covenant as an essential feature of a formative mentoring relationship. Covenantal trust provides the foundation for a dynamic mentor-protégé relationship. Finally, the project identified a high level of commitment from both mentor and protégé as essential to the success of an intentional mentoring model.

Developing an Intentional Mentoring Model for
Disciple Formation at the Mayfair Church of Christ

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Jason Bybee

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This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This project addresses a need in the Mayfair Church of Christ¹ for an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation. The aim of this project was to produce a template for intergenerational mentoring through the narration of spiritual autobiography. An introduction to the project is provided in chapter 1 based on Mayfair's history, my own unique story within that history, and clarification of the project's problem, purpose, assumptions, and delimitations. Chapter 2 outlines the theological and philosophical framework of the project, with attention to a reading of the Pastoral Epistles informed by Stoic philosophy. The methodological approach to the project is delineated in chapter 3, including a description of the intervention strategy, format, model development team participants, project sessions, and evaluation methodology. An interpretation of the data based upon multiple angles of evaluation is the focus of chapter 4. The final chapter of the thesis offers conclusions and implications of the research as well as personal and theological reflections on the significance of the project.

Title of Project

The title for this project is "Developing an Intentional Mentoring Model for Disciple Formation at the Mayfair Church of Christ." The term "mentoring" captures

¹ Hereinafter labeled "Mayfair."

the relational essence of the project while the concept of “discipleship” roots the proposal in the Christian tradition. This project sought to identify an intentional and relational model of formation to supplement the emphasis on disciple formation through teaching that currently exists at Mayfair.

Description of Ministry Context

The following description of my ministry context is divided into three sections: Mayfair’s history, my own ministry at Mayfair, and the present demographics of the congregation.

Mayfair’s History

Mayfair began in 1947 as members of the Central Church of Christ in Huntsville dreamed of planting a new church in the southern part of town.² After securing property on the corner of Bob Wallace Avenue and Poincianna Street, they constructed the original church building for \$25,000. Mayfair’s first worship service was held on November 20, 1949, with approximately fifty people in attendance. A few of our current members, fondly nicknamed “the pioneers,” can still remember this day from their childhood. In the following decades, Mayfair enjoyed numerical growth consistent with that of Churches of Christ nationwide. The city of Huntsville also grew rapidly during this period as a result of the construction of the Marshall Space Flight Center, which opened in 1960.

That same year, Mayfair moved to a new facility located on Whitesburg Drive on the outskirts of Huntsville. Over five hundred people attended the first worship

² The following history of Mayfair’s origin comes from “The Mayfair Story: The First 60 Years,” a compilation of Mayfair’s oral history produced by several of Mayfair’s long-tenured families. Included as appendix B.

service in this new building. Construction on the Whitesburg property continued through 1965 to accommodate a steadily growing membership. The early 1960s were also marked by Mayfair's first venture into both stateside and international missions. In 1961, Mayfair committed to oversee the work of Dorsey and Ola Traw, missionaries in Thailand. Over the next few decades, Mayfair deployed numerous evangelistic campaigns throughout the United States while simultaneously expanding foreign mission efforts to include South Africa, Belize, Cuba, Mexico, Scotland, and Honduras.

In the late 1970s, Mayfair experienced a painful season of division.³ The elders and the preacher, a long-tenured and much beloved minister, were embroiled in some ideological differences, leading to his eventual resignation in 1978. Disgruntled members chose to leave in the wake of his resignation, a trend that continued over the course of several months. At the same time, a group of Mayfair's leaders were drawn to the rapid growth of what would later be termed "the Crossroads Movement," the movement within Churches of Christ that came to be formally recognized as the International Churches of Christ (ICOC).⁴ With its emphasis on "disciple partnering" relationships that delved deeply into one's personal life, the ICOC grew rapidly throughout the 1980s, but eventually drew outside criticism for the appearance of "cultic practices."⁵ In the late 1970s, several

³ "The Mayfair Story" makes no mention of this painful period of time.

⁴ Kevin S. Wells, "International Churches of Christ," *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 418-19. The movement also came to be known as "The Total Commitment Movement" in reference to the parallel commitment to Christ and one's teacher, or "discipler."

⁵ *Ibid.*, 418.

of Mayfair's key leaders lobbied for a similar approach to discipleship as a means of retaining our young adults.

The ICOC ideology emphasized the pairing of younger Christians with a "discipler" to serve as a spiritual supervisor, a model of discipleship based on hierarchical relationships.⁶ Clear lines of demarcation existed between disciple and teacher, such as the expectation that younger disciples should regularly confess sins to their discipler without reciprocation. In the event that the disciples were reluctant to confess, the disciplers were trained to ask a series of specific questions to elicit a confessional response.⁷ One of the hallmarks of the ICOC concept of discipleship was complete submission to the discipler.⁸ This included issues of doctrine and textual interpretation, but interviews with those who left the ICOC indicated that disciplers also frequently provided counsel on personal matters such as which school courses to take, whom to date, and whether to marry.⁹ The ICOC position of strict adherence to the counsel of one's discipler, even in these matters of opinion and judgment, was criticized as a control tactic. Later studies revealed the harmful psychological impact of these manipulations.¹⁰ When this radical ministry model failed to gain traction at Mayfair, those Crossroads advocates left Mayfair to attend another church across town. Additionally, many more families viewed these

⁶ Flavil R. Yeakley Jr., *The Discipling Dilemma* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1988), 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23-38.

events as signs of a church in crisis and withdrew membership from Mayfair, dispersing among several other congregations in Huntsville. In all, Mayfair's attendance decreased from eight hundred to approximately four hundred in a span of a few months as a result of these events.

In the wake of this splintering, many of Mayfair's younger families assumed positions of leadership vacated by those who left. Several of these persons continue to function as elders, deacons, and key opinion leaders today. In 1979, Mayfair hired Gary Bradley as the sixth preaching minister in the church's history. Bradley's pastoral presence and emphasis on unity from the pulpit were key factors in Mayfair's growth arc in the years following the split. In 1980, Mayfair hired Lee Milam to serve as youth minister to spearhead a congregational emphasis on children and teen students. In 2000, Milam transitioned out of youth ministry to serve as Mayfair's worship minister, a role he continues to fill. For over three decades, Bradley and Milam have provided Mayfair with steady ministerial leadership. By 2013, Mayfair's membership was approximately two thousand.

My Ministry at Mayfair

In 2002, my wife and I moved to Huntsville, leaving full-time congregational youth ministry in Tennessee to work in campus ministry at Madison Academy, a private K-12 Christian school. After visiting a few local churches, we placed membership at Mayfair and immediately began working with the youth ministry in a volunteer capacity. In late 2002, I was offered a part-time position in the Mayfair youth ministry to help alleviate the workload on the lone full-time youth minister. I

worked in this capacity until 2004, when I transitioned out of campus ministry to work full-time as one of Mayfair's youth ministers.

In 2006, I transitioned yet again from youth ministry into my role as Mayfair's associate minister. Weary of the pace of full-time youth ministry and the strain it put on my young family, I approached the Mayfair eldership to seek their blessing to explore full-time preaching opportunities. The elders countered with another proposal: they invited me to accept a newly formed associate minister role, working closely with Bradley. I would share preaching and pastoral responsibilities with Bradley with the understanding that I was training to "go and do likewise" at another congregation someday. In the fall of 2006, I accepted and began my work with Bradley immediately.

In the years that followed, my relationship with Bradley moved from strictly professional to deeply personal. Whereas I had always respected Bradley "from a distance," working with him on a daily basis caused my appreciation for him to grow exponentially. Bradley modeled ministerial practice for me in a variety of ways: from sermon preparation to hospital visitation to community presence to funeral protocol. Moreover, he became a "father in the faith" for me. My own father had passed away when I was very young, and Bradley, through sharing his life with me, filled a void in my life for male influence and leadership. Our relationship has developed organically over the years, yet our initial pairing was intentionally based on shared spiritual giftedness.

Free from any expectation of succession, my relationship with Bradley was non-competitive from the beginning. Over time, however, the Mayfair elders,

Bradley, and I became aware of a great degree of compatibility between us. I believe my years as Bradley's protégé uniquely positioned me to carry forward his legacy. In late 2010, the elders, Bradley, and I agreed to a transition plan according to which Bradley would eventually move into a part-time role and I would assume the majority of the preaching and pastoral responsibilities at Mayfair. In late 2013, it was determined that this transition would formally occur in July 2014.

Present Demographics

At present, the Mayfair congregation is made up of approximately two thousand members. As in most large churches, relational depth remains a perpetual challenge. Age-specific adult Sunday school classes often restrict opportunities for cross-pollination of generations. Most of Mayfair's small groups are also formed out of the Sunday school classes, making the Sunday morning worship hour the lone intergenerational connection for many in the congregation. While the common worship hour serves to form our communal identity, such gatherings fail to offer much in the way of relational interaction across generations.

A generational shift is also occurring in Mayfair's leadership. The aforementioned pulpit transition coincides with an increase in the number of young ministers on staff; our last eight ministry hires have all been under the age of thirty. In the eldership, we have had three elder "retirements"¹¹ and another elder move away to be closer to family in the past several years. We anticipate additional elder retirements in the coming years, prompting our current elders to work toward the

¹¹ I use the term "retire" rather than "resign" to avoid any sense of scandal or shame associated with the latter term. Each of these elders stepped down from their duties for health reasons.

installation of more shepherds in early 2014. In the broader congregational leadership, many long-tenured deacons have stepped down because of poor health and many key ministry and opinion leaders have passed away in the last few years.

Problem and Purpose

In a previous course assignment, I was asked to interview our key leaders with regard to our ministry of discipleship. The question I asked our leaders was, “How does Mayfair disciple her members?” The answers were varied. Due to Mayfair’s historical bias against “discipling” concepts traced back to the splintering that occurred in the 1970s, this kind of language was foreign to many of our leaders. There still exists within our older members a degree of suspicion and skepticism related to the term “discipling.” Most of their answers pointed to Mayfair’s preaching and teaching ministries as our primary attempts to disciple. In the minds of many of our leaders, discipleship was to be equated with conversion.

However, our younger staff members articulated a different perspective. For example, our youth ministry leaders, all under the age of thirty and relatively new to Mayfair, affirmed an intentional effort to disciple teens in relationship as a key component of their ministries. Prayer groups, Bible studies, retreats, and camps are staple youth ministry events aimed at creating relational proximity for our three youth ministers to disciple our teens. The youth group “Huddles” program regularly enlists two to three young married couples or young professionals to serve as small group leaders and mentors for each grade. Our younger staff members do not share the reservations of the older generation regarding “discipling.” In fact, the younger staff members see relational mentoring as a vital part of their ministry.

In my course assignment, I could identify only one current ministry aimed toward intentionally discipling our adults: our “New Beginnings” ministry. This ministry focuses on foundational Christian doctrine and practice for new adult converts. Each new Christian goes through a series of six sessions, usually taught by an elder and a staff member or Sunday school teacher. Session content includes the nature of God, the nature of man, the organization of the church, and the importance of cultivating a life of prayer and Bible study. This ministry was birthed in 2010 by one of our elders in an effort to curtail the dropout rate of our new Christians.

The primary understanding of discipleship at Mayfair is related to teaching and conversion. However, much of Mayfair’s discipling work occurs organically and assumes different language. Although none of my interviewees recognized the relationship I have enjoyed with Bradley as a “discipling” relationship, he is universally recognized as my “mentor”. This is the safe language we can use to speak of the biblical pattern of discipling. After completing the course assignment, I was able to identify a small group of older women in the congregation who seek to mentor our younger ladies intentionally. These groups meet intermittently in homes and the format is very informal. One such meeting might consist of Bible study and prayer; another might focus on the skill of making bread. This is not the product of a formal church program and there is no allocation in the budget for this ministry. It is simply an effort by the older women to mentor the younger. I would contend that the bulk of Mayfair’s “discipling” work occurs in similarly organic settings.

Therefore, the problem this project addresses is a lack of intentional mentoring relationships as a means of disciple formation at Mayfair. This problem is

an extension of a narrow understanding of discipleship as either conversion or education (or, more specifically, the immediate education of new converts). There exists no intentional systematic program to disciple our adult members beyond the orthodox principles imparted in the New Beginnings ministry. Although relational mentoring is being modeled in various segments across the congregation, these practices are not broadly understood as constitutive of disciple formation.

There are a number of immediately recognizable implications of this problem. First, the high degree of anxiety among older members with regard to the term “discipling” creates a context for Mayfair’s leaders to be closed off to the full weight of the biblical mandate to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). Although preaching and teaching gospel truths always receives priority in the biblical explication of the disciple-making process, I will argue for a more holistic understanding of discipleship as a lifelong process of following after Jesus, assuming his character as we journey (Luke 6:40). To be discipled is to be engaged in the lifelong work of formation in the image of Christ.

Another implication of the problem is related to our aging leadership. With key elders and deacons stepping down from their leadership roles in the near future, our leaders recognize that we have done very little to groom their replacements. An intentional mentoring model would help alleviate anxiety over the resignations of long-tenured leaders. Alan Hirsch correlates the cultivation of missional leaders to a church’s cultivation of disciples, noting that failure in one area necessarily affects the other.¹² In this season of transition, it would behoove us to

¹² Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006), 119.

seriously consider intentional efforts toward succession. Such an investment, according to Hirsch, is an essential component of a church's evangelistic life. No formal channels currently exist for Mayfair's more seasoned leaders to impart their practical wisdom to the next generation of leaders.

This problem also reveals a deeper theological issue. Citing his work with the International Consultation on Discipleship, Robert Webber notes that this primary understanding of discipleship as conversion is a problem in evangelical churches worldwide.¹³ Such a narrow understanding of discipleship overlooks the ongoing work of spiritual formation that follows conversion. The church has grown wider but not necessarily deeper. This assessment of the current crisis facing the evangelical church calls to mind Bonhoeffer's description of cheap grace: "Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."¹⁴ By emphasizing conversion to such a great degree, the potential exists for an unintentional devaluing of the implications of Christ's call to follow Him. To the extent this occurs, both grace and discipleship are cheapened.

The purpose of this project was to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair. My intervention consisted of assembling an intergenerational model development team¹⁵ to participate in a series of eight development sessions. The first five of these sessions engaged MDT participants in

¹³ Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 43.

¹⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 45.

¹⁵ Hereinafter designated "MDT."

exercises of Bible study, appreciative inquiry, spiritual autobiography, meaning-making, and prayer. These exercises served as a means for the MDT participants to experience intentional intergenerational mentoring relationships. The final three sessions were devoted to the development of a long-term mentoring model for Mayfair and providing feedback on the project experience.

Basic Assumptions

This thesis assumes the leadership structure and polity reflective of the Churches of Christ within the Stone-Campbell heritage.¹⁶ Mayfair is governed by her elders, or shepherds, who serve as proxies of the lordship of Christ to the flock. Though the Mayfair church affirms the office of elder as exclusively male, the Mayfair ministerial staff is made up of both men and women.

The project also assumes mentoring as an essential relational component of discipling. The argument here is not that Mayfair is not involved in discipling her members; this occurs, to a certain degree, through the aforementioned effort to preach and teach biblical truths. In this project, though, I am contending that we must supplement these efforts to disciple through teaching with an intentionally relational component. This project assumes a connection between spiritual mentoring and disciple formation.

¹⁶ For a general discussion of the roles of elders, deacons, evangelists, preachers, and the role of women in ministry, see the following articles in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*: D. Newell Williams, Paul M. Blowers, and Douglas A. Foster, "Ministry," 521-33. For the understanding of the role and function of elders, see Peter M. Morgan, "Elders, Eldership," 297-99. For 20th-century development of ministerial roles for women in Churches of Christ, see Kathy J. Pulley, "Women in Ministry", 779-80.

Finally, this project assumes the latent power of spiritual autobiography as a viable means of spiritual formation. As I will argue, Paul frequently recalls his spiritual autobiography as a way of forming those he discipled. This assumption animated the first five MDT sessions, which emphasized the narration of one's spiritual autobiography.

Delimitations

This research project occurred within and focused on the unique social and emotional system of the Mayfair Church of Christ. Implications of this research may not necessarily be transferable to another social and emotional system without appropriate modifications to fit that context. The project MDT was comprised of ministers, staff, and key mentoring practitioners within the Mayfair church. Different contexts might necessitate elder involvement in the model development stage. I deliberately chose not to involve Mayfair elders in this project, preferring instead to solicit their involvement in the future application of the completed mentoring model.

Conclusion

The concept of "discipling" is in need of redemption in my context. The division of the past has understandably created a culture of fear and suspicion at Mayfair regarding the language of "discipling" and contributed to a narrow understanding of the concept associated with conversion. This project sought to add a relational layer to the teaching-centric model of disciple formation that is prevalent at Mayfair. The relationship I have enjoyed with Bradley over the past several years has stimulated my imagination for this project. Although our

relationship has developed organically, there was also intentionality at work in our pairing. Our elders perceived in the two of us a shared gift for preaching and a ministerial sensibility; these were the prerequisites for the establishment of our working relationship. However, the formative power of our relationship was unleashed in Bradley's sharing of his spiritual autobiography. He has shared his life, his faith, his fears, and his concerns with me. In addition, he has listened as I have shared my story with him. I believe intentionally formed intergenerational mentoring groups would possess the same latent power for spiritual formation at Mayfair. This project contends that this power is unleashed through the narration of spiritual autobiography among disciples.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The ministry of Jesus can be characterized as a disciple-making ministry. In rabbinic tradition, it was common practice for aspiring pupils to select the rabbi they wanted to follow.¹ Jesus inverts this practice by turning away would-be disciples while calling some of the most unlikely candidates to follow him in his ministry. Rather than seeking out learned protégés steeped in education and training, Jesus issues his call to fishermen and tax collectors, the nondescript common people of his day. By selecting these disciples, Jesus initiates an indelible relationship with them. In accordance with the common practice of the Jewish rabbis, Jesus invites his disciples to share life with him, to live in community in order that they might learn from his example.² Such a relationship encompasses much more than the dissemination of information from teacher to student. Jesus forms his disciples through holistic life-on-life encounters: “in the context *of* life and *for* life.”³ Disciples of Jesus are transformed by their proximity to him rather than

¹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 20th anniversary edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012), 37-40.

² Hans Weder, “Disciple,” trans. Dennis Martin, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2.209.

³ Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 123. Such a relationship calls to mind the formation model of Deut. 6.

classroom lectures. As respondents to the call of Jesus, the disciples are formed through “a life relationship to him.”⁴

This “life relationship” is played out in community. The NT portrays Jesus calling individuals to follow him, although these adherents are also incorporated into the larger group of Christ followers. Relationship to Jesus is central to the call of discipleship, the wellspring from which flows the rich web of “life relationships” disciples enjoy with one another. Simply put, Jesus calls the disciples in relationship to him and in relationship to one another. In this way, discipleship flows from the two commands Jesus holds up as normative for his followers: love for God and love for neighbor (Matt 22:37-39). This sets the stage for Matthew’s closing scene, frequently referred to as “The Great Commission” (Matt 28:18-20), wherein Jesus charges his followers with the disciple-making and community-expanding mission. Matthew draws the curtain on his Gospel with the promise of Jesus: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” The promise of Christ’s presence and power serves as the animating force for his disciples as they carry out this mission of love.

At the Mayfair church, a great appreciation exists for the importance of sound biblical teaching as a means of disciple formation. Less prevalent, however, is an awareness of the communal nature of the “life relationship” Christian disciples share with one another. This chapter seeks to provide the theological underpinnings to make such an awareness manifest. The first section of the chapter offers a more

⁴ Weder, “Disciple,” 209. Weder notes the holistic nature of this manner of discipleship in the ancient world. See 208: “The disciple is not there merely to learn from the teacher but to share his whole life with him without reservation.”

robust understanding of discipleship beyond mere conversion. The second section looks to the Stoic philosophers of the late first and early second century C.E. for a more textured view of discipleship in the ancient world. Finally, an examination of the mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy, as specified in the Pastoral Epistles, will provide the primary theological foundation for the project.

Discipleship: Following Behind, Walking Beside

The NT expression for “disciple” is the Greek *mathetes*. Its usage is limited to the Gospels and Acts, primarily the Synoptics.⁵ The verb form *matheteuein* (“to make disciples”) occurs only four times in the NT (Matt 13:52; 27:57; 28:20; and Acts 14:21). An additional term, *akolouthein* (“to follow, to walk behind”), must be considered, due to its frequent usage. Discipleship is a response to the personal and radical call of Christ: “Follow me!”⁶ To walk behind Jesus is the characteristic activity of a disciple.⁷ In all, the NT contains over 260 references to “disciple,” making it the normative descriptor for followers of Christ.⁸

Conversion marks the entry point into this life relationship with Jesus. It is “de-orienting” to the way of the world and a “reorienting” to the way of Christ. In our church tradition, per our understanding of the NT witness, conversion constitutes hearing the good news of Jesus, believing in this message, repenting of

⁵ David J. Bosch, “The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20,” in *The Study of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 79. “*Mathetes* is more central in Matthew’s Gospel than in the others. It occurs seventy-three times in Matthew, forty-six times in Mark, and forty-seven times in Luke.”

⁶ Matt 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 19:21; Mark 1:17; 2:14; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:59; 18:22; John 1:43; 21:19.

⁷ Weder, “Disciple,” 207.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

sins, confessing the lordship of Christ before others, and being baptized for the forgiveness of sin. However, conversion should also be understood within the broad sweep of the process of salvation: conversion to sanctification to glorification.⁹

Conversion, an inauguration into the kingdom of God, is the singular starting point for discipleship. Sanctification refers to the ongoing work of the Spirit to transform the disciple into the image of Christ.¹⁰ If conversion is the initial commitment one makes to “walk behind” the Master, then sanctification is the lifelong journey of transformation that occurs along the road to glory.¹¹ Becoming a disciple of Christ entails both an event and a process: conversion and sanctification.¹²

To be a disciple, then, is to follow Jesus, not merely to begin to follow Him. Perhaps a present tense definition best encapsulates the meaning: discipleship is following Jesus in order to be conformed to his image. However, this definition remains incomplete without recognition of the communal aspects of discipleship. To

⁹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 564-84.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 574, 579.

¹¹ Luke, in particular, makes use of this journey motif in his Gospel in chapters 9-19. Jesus “sets his face toward Jerusalem” (9:51), beginning his journey toward the cross. Along the way, Jesus has much to say about the nature of discipleship.

¹² See Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 235. Glasser draws this conclusion based on the broad usage of the term in the NT. “Ideally, it involves yielding oneself wholeheartedly to Jesus Christ as Lord, and this often takes place in a moment of time. . . . No one can be sure that a person has truly become a regenerated Christian just because he or she made a decision for Christ. . . . Hence, both time and active participation in church life are needed, preferably including an apprentice relationship with an older Christian. This will reveal whether or not a new pattern of decision making has truly begun to emerge.” Glasser argues for the mentoring relationship as an essential part of the discipleship process.

become a disciple of Jesus is to enter into communion with fellow disciples. It is more than individual assent to doctrine or even a “personal relationship with Jesus.” Following behind Jesus is participation in a communal identity. The NT uses the Greek term *ekklesia*, “assembly,” to describe the disciple community.¹³ Grenz argues that the church exists as a visible expression of the image of God to the world: God, as a social, relational reality, can only be properly imaged in the context of community.¹⁴ The church functions as a proleptic community, proclaiming and attempting to model the coming kingdom of God in the present age. In the Christian community, we are drawn into loving relationship with God and with one another. Discipleship is following behind Jesus and walking beside our brothers and sisters.

Community, therefore, is vital to the disciple’s identity as the locus of the sanctifying work of transformation. The early church’s practice of catechesis, an intentional process aimed at forming new converts into the image of Christ, was an effort to foster transformation in new converts.¹⁵ Drawing on the work of Hippolytus in the early third century C.E., Webber notes the rigorous nature of such post-conversion instruction and reflection.¹⁶ For two to three years, each catechumen studied with a mentor prior to the rites of enrollment and baptism. As the worshiping church observed the Eucharist, catechumens would gather with their teachers for study and reflection until they were deemed ready for

¹³ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 605-8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 652.

¹⁵ John H. Westerhoff, “Evangelism, Evangelization, and Catechesis,” *The Study of Evangelism*, 240-44.

¹⁶ Webber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism*, 43-46.

advancement. Communal recognition of a catechumen's transformation was considered vital to the process of disciple formation.

For early Christians, discipleship entailed discipline. To become a disciple is to affirm the lordship of Jesus; to be disciplined is to continue that affirmation through a life of discipline to the Lord. Walter Brueggemann writes of this life of perpetual growth through discipline:

Discipleship fundamentally entails a set of disciplines, habits, and practices that are undertaken as regular, concrete, daily practices; such daily disciplines are neither greatly exciting nor immediately productive, but like the acquiring of any new competence, discipleship requires such a regimen. . . . The church is a community engaged in disciplines that make following the master-teacher possible and sustainable.¹⁷

Discipleship, then, is best understood as following behind Jesus and walking beside our brothers and sisters, in daily practices, habits, and disciplines that proclaim the lordship of Christ. Following behind and walking beside becomes the lived story of those in a "life relationship" with Jesus. I am arguing for a greater emphasis on the importance of walking beside one another at Mayfair.

This brief sketch of the nature of discipleship will be aided by an examination of the Stoic teachings of the late first and early second century C.E. As a philosophical movement, Stoicism was a major cultural backdrop during the formative years of the early church. A few general observations related to Stoicism, followed by a deeper reflection on the teachings of Epictetus, will provide a more textured understanding of the nature of discipleship in the first century and will

¹⁷ Walter Brueggemann, "Evangelism and Discipleship: The God Who Calls, the God Who Sends," *The Study of Evangelism*, 230.

serve as a bridge to a deeper reflection on the relationship between Paul and Timothy that emerges from the Pastoral Epistles.

The Stoics: In Search of Living Ideals

Stoicism was the dominant philosophical school of thought in the centuries leading up to the birth of the Christian church.¹⁸ In the Roman Imperial period, no institutionalized Stoic school existed; instead, various teachers maintained the ethical impulse of Stoic curriculum, as philosophy became more decentralized in larger urban areas such as Rome, Athens, and Alexandria.¹⁹ In this period of time, Tarsus in Cilicia served as a major center of Stoic thought.²⁰ For centuries, some of the leading Stoic philosophers had connections to Tarsus, including Zeno of Tarsus, Antipater of Tarsus, and Zeno's teacher Chrysippus (who was the son of a Tarsian citizen). Prior to appointing him as the governor of his hometown, Augustus designated Athenodorus of Tarsus, a Stoic philosopher, to be his personal moral

¹⁸ Christopher Gill, "The School in the Roman Imperial Period," *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33. See also F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 16-17: "By the end of the first century B.C. Stoicism was without doubt the predominant philosophy among the Romans, and references to Stoic doctrines, hostile or favourable, are common in Latin literature." Stoicism continued to be a dominant influence for the first two centuries C.E., although Sandbach notes this is surmised primarily through the writings of Stoic opponents such as Plutarch, Galen, and Sextus Empiricus.

¹⁹ Gill, "School in Roman Imperial Period," 33.

²⁰ David Sedley, "The School, from Zeno to Arius Didymus," *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, 30.

counselor.²¹ Seneca would later assume a similar role under the reign of Nero, becoming an important political and philosophical figure.²²

During this period, being a Stoic teacher implied a commitment to the well-established canon of Stoic texts, particularly the works of Chrysippus.²³ Stoic philosophers often required their disciples to properly interpret these texts and to undergo formal examinations in logic. Conversance with these core writings, not mere mimicking, was requisite of the true Stoic disciple. However, such knowledge was not an end unto itself; for the Stoic, philosophical study culminated in the virtuous life. Example and character were bedrock principles of Stoic teaching. The genuine Stoic was an enlightened sage, one whose life conformed to the pattern of Stoic principles.²⁴

The Stoics should not be characterized as preachers of lofty, unattainable morality. Rather, Stoic ethical teaching aspired to embody practical, grounded ideals. The examples sought out by the Stoic disciple were those teachers who demonstrated consistency in their teaching and their pattern of life. In this way, the Stoics sought out exemplars wise in practice, not just ideals. Seneca encouraged his students to seek out living ideals as patterns for their lives. To his friend Lucilius, Seneca quoted Epicurus: “Cherish some man of high character, and keep him ever

²¹ Ibid., 31. Augustus also employed Arius Didymus in a similar role. Sedley notes that the name “Athenodorus of Tarsus” applies to two Stoic teachers. The Athenodorus written of here is distinguished as “Calvus,” also known as “son of Sandon.” This Athenodorus is to be differentiated from the Pergamum librarian.

²² Gill, “School in Roman Imperial Period,” 34.

²³ Ibid., 36.

²⁴ Ben Kimpel, *Stoic Moral Philosophies: Their Counsel for Today* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1985), 107.

before your eyes, living as if he were watching you, and ordering all your actions as if he beheld them.”²⁵ Seneca extolled the value of a “living voice and the intimacy of a common life” over against mere examination of written text, noting “the way is long if one follows precepts, but short and helpful, if one follows patterns.”²⁶ Textual study was important to Seneca, but only to the degree that it informed ethics.

In the latter half of the first century C.E., Epictetus (ca. 50-130 C.E.) trained under Musonius Rufus (ca. 30-100 C.E.), a Stoic teacher and practical ethicist.²⁷ A former slave and crippled, possibly from childhood, Epictetus was banished from Rome in the Domitian purge of philosophers in the late first century and went on to establish his own school in Nicopolis. His ethical teachings are recorded by Arrian, one of his pupils, and “constitute a major source for reconstructing Stoic patterns of education in this period.”²⁸ The teachings of Epictetus also provide a window into the discipling methods of the ancient world. These *Diatribes* were originally compiled in eight volumes, but half of these are lost. The remaining four volumes, along with the *Encheiridion* (“Handbook”), offer the modern reader a representative view of the Stoic philosophical milieu that permeated the late first and early second centuries. The life of Epictetus also provides an approximate correspondence to the period of time during which the NT was being written.²⁹

²⁵ Seneca, *Epistles*, 11, Vol. I, trans. Gummere (n.p.: Carson & Selbrede, 2011) Kindle edition, loc. 580.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6, loc. 302.

²⁷ Gill, “School in Roman Imperial Period,” 35.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁹ John Bonforte, *Epictetus: A Dialogue in Common Sense* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1974), 9.

Epictetus, much like his teacher, concerned himself with ethical teaching. In fact, so strong is the correlation between Musonius Rufus and Epictetus that the latter has been dubbed in recent times as “little more than an echo” of the former.³⁰ At one level, the description is apt, given the priority Epictetus places on example and character, twin themes that dominate the *Diatribes*. Epictetus no doubt carried the tradition forward that was entrusted to him by his teacher, and imitation was certainly a common Stoic practice. However, it would be a mistake to imply that Epictetus merely parroted the doctrine of Musonius Rufus. Repeatedly, Epictetus exhorted his pupils to digest philosophical principles rather than mimic the renowned teachers.³¹ Epictetus seems most interested in imitation of conduct, following the example of one who pursues the virtuous life.

Intrinsic to Epictetus’s teaching is the notion of progress toward the moral purpose, which in Stoic parlance amounts to living a rational, ethical life. Clarity of moral purpose distinguished the philosopher’s more learned students from their unstudied peers.³² For example, Epictetus chides one of his pupils for paying too much attention to externals (physical appearance and clothing),³³ pressing him instead to seek the inner qualities of virtue (temperance, moderation, and justice) that make one beautiful. According to Epictetus, the path to these qualities begins

³⁰ Epictetus, *Diatribes*, vol. 1, trans. Oldfather, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), viii. Volume 1 by Oldfather contains *Diatribes*, Books 1-2.

³¹ Epictetus, *Diatribes*, vol. 2, trans. Oldfather, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), *Ench.* 46.2. Volume 2 by Oldfather contains *Diatribes*, Books 3-4, and *The Encheiridion*.

³² Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.30.5-7; 3.6.5-7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.

with the mind, for rationality is humanity's prime claim to superiority in the cosmos.³⁴ Right living begins with right thinking. For Epictetus, anything other than the intentional pursuit of this moral purpose is to be counted as nothing.³⁵

Epictetus trained his protégés through a variety of instructional methods, for example, dialoguing with an ancient text such as Chrysippus, or gauging student proficiency by requiring them to interpret for themselves these same manuscripts.³⁶ Through the administration of this rigorous training regimen, Epictetus clearly stands as the mentor-teacher for his pupils. The very form of the *Diatribes*, classroom lectures to students, implies the importance of the mentor relationship with regard to training and learning in the Epictetus school. In this sense, philosophy differs little from carpentry or seamanship, only that which is learned is not a particular craft but rather a way of life that is noble and good.³⁷ In order for this learning to occur, Epictetus contends, the student must release that which he thinks he knows and willingly submit to instruction and discipline.³⁸ Protégé humility is critical to philosophical instruction.

³⁴ Ibid., 3.1.25-26.

³⁵ Ibid., 1.29.24-25; 1.30.1-4.

³⁶ Ibid., 1.10.8. Oldfather adds this note: "The passage is somewhat obscure, because the precise expression employed here occurs elsewhere only in *Ench.* 49. Apparently Epictetus read over, or made special preparation upon a certain text, before meeting his pupils. In class then he would have a pupil read and interpret an assignment, somewhat as in our 'recitation' and follow that by a reading and exposition of his own . . . which was intended to set everything straight and put on the finishing touches."

³⁷ Ibid., 2.14.9-13.

³⁸ Ibid., 2.17.1-2, 39-40.

However, for Epictetus, philosophy is more than acquiring and imparting information; it is putting this knowledge into practice through training.³⁹ Progress toward moral purpose is always aided by instruction, but ultimately becomes manifest in practice. An ethical life is the goal of education. Epictetus equates progress with intentional obedience to what has been observed and putting one's guiding principles into practice.⁴⁰ In his teaching on the rule of life, Epictetus notes that nature demands that we begin a particular endeavor by focusing on simpler matters. Students must properly master elementary concepts before moving on to more difficult principles.⁴¹ In this same chapter, Epictetus uses the example of an individual who vomits after overeating as a way of demonstrating that progress cannot be hurried.⁴² Instead, growth occurs slowly, over time, through discipline and practice. Students must learn before becoming teachers; in order to learn, pupils must commit themselves to the arduous task of training. As Epictetus tells his trainees, "Nothing great comes into being all at once."⁴³

Epictetus consistently implores his students to pursue moral purpose, not by heaping up trifling phrases but through practice and self-examination.⁴⁴ In the *Diatribes*, these "trifling phrases" escape the lips of those who mimic the teaching of

³⁹ Ibid., 2.9.13-14.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.4.18-22. See also 2.16.3-9.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1.26.1-9.

⁴² Ibid., 1.26.15-18.

⁴³ Ibid., 1.15.7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.1.29-33.

another without properly internalizing and interpreting the material on their own.⁴⁵ Freedom and autonomy emerge as principal values in the teachings of Epictetus, the former slave. Given his disdain for the mindless regurgitation and mimicry of his students,⁴⁶ it is clear that Epictetus seeks to train freethinking, autonomous practitioners whose speech matches an internalized and realized manner of life.

In one lecture, Epictetus speaks of the difficulty of achieving consistency between practice and belief. He refers to those who vacillate between identities, claiming to be “Jews” in spite of their Greek heritage.⁴⁷ The true Jew is the one who lives out his baptism, one who puts his preaching into practice. Epictetus goes on to compare himself and his students to these “counterfeit baptists”⁴⁸ whose faith appears to be only nominal. In a translation note, Oldfather explains that Epictetus is likely speaking of Christians when he refers to “the Jews,” particularly in light of the baptism comment.⁴⁹ This is speculative; Epictetus may just as likely have been referring to members of the Jewish community whose baptismal practice predated that of Christians. However, it is also worth noting that a few decades earlier, Paul implored his younger protégé Titus to join him as he wintered in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). It is possible that the church (or churches) Paul planted during this winter could have flourished in the ensuing decades to the degree that Epictetus would have known of their presence and practices. Evidence of this may also be

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.9.14-15; 3.15.10-12.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.21.1-3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.9.19-20.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.9.21.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.9, note on 272-73.

demonstrated by Epictetus's reference to "the Galilaeans" in his teachings, possibly a derisive reference to the Christians in his community.⁵⁰ Whether the "counterfeit baptists" are Jew or Christian, the point is the same: those who claim conversion apart from a life of committed conformity to the guiding principles of their faith are to be considered as nothing more than "counterfeits."

For this reason, example emerges as another major theme in Epictetus' teaching. More important than quibbling arguments, Epictetus draws his students to bear witness to their education through their actions.⁵¹ Stoic thought emphasized ethics as the proving ground for education. Student character demonstrated the efficacy of a particular philosophical school. In this way, the teacher encourages his disciples to become living examples to those around them, flesh and blood illustrations to supplement the principles that proliferate the textbooks. "This is the character I would have you assume."⁵²

Epictetus returns to this concept repeatedly throughout the *Diatribes*. In response to an eager student who wishes to leave the classroom behind to help others make progress, Epictetus offers this teaching:

What are you about? Why, have you helped yourself? But you wish to help them progress. Why, have you made progress yourself? Do you wish to help them? Then show them, by your own example, the kind of men philosophy produces, and stop talking nonsense. As you eat, help those who are eating with you; as you drink, those who are

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.7.6. N. T. Wright argues that this is indeed a reference to the Christians, although it amounts to nothing more than an aside. See N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013) n.122, Kindle edition, loc. 7521.

⁵¹ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.29.55-57.

⁵² Ibid., 1.29.57.

drinking with you; by yielding to everybody, giving place, submitting—help men in this way, and don't bespatter them with your own sputum.⁵³

Though these pupils still have much to learn, they are not to minimize the importance of their example to others. Even the routine everyday practices of eating and drinking are infused with possibility for demonstrating the kind of virtuous character produced by rigorous study. This kind of example, and not spittle-inducing monologue, is what Epictetus seeks for his protégés.

In short, Epictetus wants his apprentices to live a good story. He will make his point more explicitly elsewhere:

Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it is his pleasure that you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you; to choose it is another's.⁵⁴

This is more than resignation or fatalism; the teaching implies the autonomy of the pupil and the possibility of playing one's part poorly. Rather, Epictetus trains his students to understand their existence within the sweep of a much greater narrative, a drama authored by a higher power. To "act well the character assigned" is to freely accept one's role in the cosmic drama and to play the part with integrity. Epictetus encourages the example of a well-lived story, no matter the script.

Epictetus teaches that one's character is proven in times of adversity. "It is difficulties that show what men are."⁵⁵ Trying circumstances distinguish true

⁵³ Ibid., 3.13.22-23.

⁵⁴ Epictetus, *Ench.* 17.

⁵⁵ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.24.1.

disciples from nominal students. Epictetus goes on to equate these times of difficulty to the athlete in training for a contest.⁵⁶ In order to achieve victory, the athlete puts himself through an exacting regimen of training as he brings food, drink, practice, and sleep under discipline.⁵⁷ So, too, must the philosophy student discipline himself to the difficult work of study, trusting these habits to produce character capable of withstanding any circumstance. Habits of mind and character are formative practices for the philosopher, similar to athletic training for the Olympian.⁵⁸

Regardless of circumstance, true philosophers demonstrate consistency in both character and doctrine. Actions represent the true measure of one's philosophical outlook. Arrian reports a particularly impassioned teaching by Epictetus on this point:

Observe yourselves thus in your actions and you will find out to what sect of the philosophers you belong. . . . Who, then, is a Stoic? As we call a statue 'Pheidias' that has been fashioned according to the art of Pheidias, in that sense show me a man fashioned according to the judgments which he utters. Show me a man who though sick is happy, though condemned to exile is happy, though in disrepute is happy. Show him! By the gods, I would fain see a Stoic!⁵⁹

True Stoicism is manifest not in the recitation of particular texts or particular teachers but in a particular kind of lifestyle, a life of embodied, incarnated principles. In any season, commitment to such principles demarcates the life of the true disciple.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2.18.27-32.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 3.15.1-6; also *Ench.* 29.

⁵⁸ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.17.1-32.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 2.19.20, 23-25.

The combination of speech and example produces a credible witness to the Stoic way of life to the outsider. Epictetus teaches his protégés to commit themselves to a certain type of character and to hold unswervingly to it. As an extension of this character, he cautions them to choose their words carefully, avoiding common conversation (e.g., about gladiators, horse races, food, and drink), slander, and gossip, with the hope of winning companions to the Stoic perspective.⁶⁰ Well-chosen words may have their place, but this is always secondary to the philosopher's character. Substance trumps style. It is usually only after seeing character in action that the crowd will give the philosopher an audience for a lecture.⁶¹ To put into action that which others only speak about doing is to achieve supreme satisfaction in the Epictetus school.⁶²

Taking a cue from his teacher, Epictetus apparently made attempts to dissuade his students from pursuing the philosophical life. He equated the task of educating a class of young pupils to attempting to catch soft cheese on a fishhook.⁶³ Such rebuffing of his trainees was intended as a means of separating the committed disciple from the nominal student. Quoting Rufus, Epictetus likened the gifted student to a rock thrown into the air; no matter how high it is thrown, the stone is always drawn back at even greater velocity.⁶⁴ The form of discipleship Epictetus

⁶⁰ Epictetus, *Ench.* 33.

⁶¹ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.23.27.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3.24.111.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3.11.9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.6.10.

advances is an engagement in rigorous practice, critical self-reflection, and a life of discipline. It is not for the faint of heart, requiring more than token commitment.

Such a “count the cost” understanding of discipleship informs modern readers of the serious nature of the enterprise in the ancient world. For Epictetus, the true disciple distinguishes himself by his commitment to living out the Stoic ideals. Epictetus’s emphasis on practice, discipline, training, and example illustrates the nature of discipleship in the philosophical schools. This brief survey of the teaching of Epictetus also provides a greater understanding of Paul’s discipling methodology. As I will argue below, Paul borrows language and methodology from the philosophical training regimen, albeit for distinctly Christian purposes. To say it another way, to the degree his method is Stoic, Paul’s message is still Christ.

The Pastoral Epistles: The Power of Spiritual Autobiography

The NT affirms that a disciple is formed as he follows the example of his master (Luke 6:40). For the Christian, discipleship is an affirmation of the lordship of Christ through a life of “following behind” Jesus. Yet, the Scriptures are also replete with examples of mentors who profoundly shape the lives of their protégés by “walking beside” them: Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Mordecai and Esther, Jesus and his disciples, and, finally, Paul and Timothy.

I will argue that Paul’s method of discipling Timothy is informed to a degree by the practices of the Stoic teachers, of whom Epictetus is characteristic. What follows is a biblical theology of discipling constructed from the Pastoral Epistles to

Timothy.⁶⁵ Many of the Stoic themes and concepts expressed in the teaching of Epictetus are also represented in Paul's letter to his young disciple.⁶⁶ The relationship between Paul and Timothy that emerges from the PE provides a template for an intentional mentoring model for Mayfair.

Hellenistic culture and philosophy dominated the world of the first century C.E. Tarsus was known as a hotbed of Stoic thought for centuries prior to Paul's birth. As a native of the city (Acts 22:3), it is plausible that Paul was introduced to Stoic philosophy in his youth. Even if this speculation is disregarded, by the time he visited Athens (Acts 17:18), Paul was clearly conversant with both Epicurean and Stoic schools of thought. As I will argue, Paul even framed many of his arguments in Stoic fashion. N. T. Wright makes particular note of the similarities in rhetorical style between Paul and Epictetus.⁶⁷ My claim is that Paul's method of training for discipleship is informed by the Stoic philosophy of his day, of which Epictetus is representative. Paul employs Stoic methodology as he seeks to instruct and train his

⁶⁵ The term "Pastoral Epistles" commonly refers to the NT epistles 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. The focus of this paper, however, is the relationship between Paul and Timothy, thus the designation "the Pastoral Epistles to Timothy." Hereinafter, these works will be referred to as "PE."

⁶⁶ I assume Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. For a substantial treatment of the argument for Pauline authorship, see Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 20-40; and Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians, vol. I* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), Kindle edition, loc. 507-770, who argues for a "voice of Paul, hand of Luke" compositional motif. For an alternative view, see Jouette M. Bassler, *Abindgon New Testament Commentaries: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), Kindle edition, 17-21; and M. Eugene Boring and Fred B. Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 655-56.

⁶⁷ N. T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 4. See also Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, loc. 6827-6928.

protégés, but his aim is altogether different: rather than pursuing moral purpose or logic, Paul seeks to apprentice younger believers in the way of Jesus.

The teachings of Epictetus and Paul share an overt emphasis on conduct. Christian ethics is at the heart of the PE, particularly the call to holiness pertaining to matters of dress (1 Tim 2:9-10), speech (1 Tim 5:13), interpersonal relationships (2 Tim 3:5), and reverent worship (1 Tim 2:1-15).⁶⁸ Paul's opponents in the PE are those who claim to be spiritually knowledgeable, yet their actions betray this contention; as noted above, Epictetus is particularly scathing in his indictment of such hypocritical behavior. These are not trivial matters for Paul, either. Rather, they are intrinsic to the gospel.

The PE are unusual NT documents in that they are addressed to individual recipients, young men that Paul calls his beloved children in the faith.⁶⁹ Paul's relationship to Timothy can be traced back to Paul's visit to Lystra during the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14, ca. 45-48 C.E.). The crowds in Lystra initially receive Paul and Barnabas as gods, but when the evangelists rebuff their praise, the angry mob moves to stone them. It is possible that Timothy witnessed these events personally. Presumably, some of Timothy's family members were converted as a result of Paul's efforts to establish a church in Lystra. Whether Timothy was included in these initial converts is the subject of much speculation.

During the second missionary journey (ca. 49-50 C.E.), Paul visits Lystra again and Timothy is mentioned for the first time in Acts (Acts 16:1). Upon Paul's

⁶⁸ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 48.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Sacra Pagina: Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 5.

return, the disciples speak highly of Timothy, the son of a Jewish Christian mother and a Greek (presumably non-believing) father. Based upon the commendation of the Christian community, Paul intentionally selects Timothy as his protégé: “Paul wanted this man to go with him,” (Acts 16:3). He circumcises Timothy, and for the next two decades, this young disciple is Paul’s most constant missionary companion.⁷⁰ Over this period, Paul and Timothy establish churches in Philippi (Acts 16:11-38), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), and Berea (Acts 17:10-15). In addition to serving as Paul’s frequent emissary to the churches, Timothy also assumes pastoral leadership responsibilities to the churches in Ephesus and Corinth.

Timothy is mentioned in every NT Pauline letter with the exception of Galatians, Ephesians, and Titus.⁷¹ Paul uses a variety of terms in reference to Timothy, ranging from the functional “coworker” (Rom 16:21; 1 Thess 3:12) to the theological “servant of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:1) to the familial “brother” (2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 3:2; Phlm. 1) and “child” or “son” (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2).⁷² Paul uses the term for “child” (*teknon*) in each of the salutations in the PE, referring to both Timothy and Titus as true children in the faith (1 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4). The term “faith” at 1 Tim 1:2 is lacking the definite article in Greek, necessitating an interpretation.⁷³ Either Paul means that Timothy became his son by faith (instrumental usage) or he is arguing that faith is the mode of existence that

⁷⁰ Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Interpretation: Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 4.

⁷¹ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 32.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷³ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 64.

defines his relationship with Timothy. Either interpretation seems plausible. In Stoic usage, to refer to “genuine” or “true” character was to speak of ideals being embodied in practice.⁷⁴ Paul is bestowing high praise on his protégés by underscoring their integrity and conformity to the way of Christ and, to a lesser degree, to his own manner of life.

Paul frequently uses language of fictive kinship to speak of the network of faith communities he has established and served. However, the language Paul reserves for Timothy indicates an intimacy and a relational depth that is unique in the Pauline catalog. At 1 Cor 4:17, Paul commends Timothy to the Corinthians as a beloved son, faithful to the Lord. “He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.” Timothy is an incarnation of Paul’s way of life and teaching, a living ideal among the Corinthians. In a similar text, Paul promises to send Timothy to the Christians in Philippi, saying, “I have no one else like him. . . . because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (Phil 2:20, 22).

At 2 Tim 1:2, Paul again refers to Timothy as “beloved child.” *Teknon* is often used to describe a biological child, and Paul’s usage of the term indicates in the strongest language the depth of his affection for Timothy. In the PE, Paul qualifies his terminology to indicate the expression is metaphorical (1 Tim 1:2, “in [the] faith”; “beloved” in 2 Tim 1:2), perhaps to avoid any confusion regarding his

⁷⁴ Kimpel, *Stoic Moral Philosophies*, 107.

relationship to Eunice and Lois. Nevertheless, the implication is clear: the relationship is one of spiritual parentage for Paul.⁷⁵

The familial language Paul employs indicates more than a shared faith with Timothy; a clear teacher-disciple relationship emerges wherein Timothy stands as Paul's representative to the believers.⁷⁶ Paul's use of this kinship language, along with his allusion to Lois and Eunice at 2 Tim 1:5, is consonant with his conception of the church as the household of God as found elsewhere in the PE (1 Tim 3:15).⁷⁷ In the household of God, the older generation provides leadership for the young through instruction in the Scriptures and relational mentoring. Based upon the NT witness, it seems clear that Paul takes his household responsibilities seriously, serving as a mentor to Timothy and Titus.⁷⁸

Fiore argues that 2 Timothy functions as a "last will and testament" for Paul and follows the pattern of Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders at Acts 20:17-38.⁷⁹ In the Acts discourse, Paul affirms his manner of life before the Ephesians, entrusts authority to the elders, warns of imminent threats to the

⁷⁵ Fiore argues that Paul's usage here indicates Paul played a direct role in Timothy's conversion: "Since Paul uses 'child' (*teknon*) for his converts (the Corinthians, 1 Cor 4:17; the Galatians, Gal 4:19; Onesimus, Phlm 10; the Philippians, Phil 2:22; and Timothy), it would have been on his first journey through Lystra (Acts 13:8-20) that he converted Timothy." Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 32.

⁷⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 45.

⁷⁷ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 140; 2 Tim 2:20 may also fit within this framework.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

community, and alludes to his impending death.⁸⁰ Each of these themes receives treatment in 2 Timothy, with the primary difference being Paul's audience: rather than addressing a plurality of elders, he directs these statements to his young protégé, Timothy. In both instances, Paul urges his successors to imitate his example in his absence.⁸¹

Paul's emphasis on imitation and example parallels the similar themes found in Stoic teaching. Paul frequently exhorts the recipients of his correspondence to follow his example.⁸² On occasion, he praises churches for imitating the righteous example of other congregations (1 Thess 1:6). At Phil 2, Paul offers a succession of examples of sacrifice for the community's consideration.⁸³ These examples include Christ (2:6-11), Paul (2:12-18), Timothy (2:19-24), and Epaphroditus (2:25-30). Paul's understanding of the Christian experience is this: "following behind" Jesus by patterning one's life on faithful models of Christian practice.

The emphasis on example continues through the PE. At 1 Tim 1:12-17, Paul narrates his story in two distinct chapters. He characterizes his life prior to knowing

⁸⁰ Robert W. Wall, "The Acts of the Apostles," *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, vol. 10* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 281-85. Wall refers to this as a "speech of succession," the seeds of which Paul will more fully develop by the time he writes 2 Timothy. See 285, "Both in what he assumes and by what he says, Paul supplies the church of every age with the essential role model and curriculum for a course in leadership training."

⁸¹ See Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to Lead: Paul's Letters to Timothy for a New Day* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), Kindle edition, loc. 4103: "If the use of personal example is an important convention in a speech of succession (e.g., Acts 20:18b-21), we would expect to find its use in a letter of succession as well: the imitation of the apostle's past practices and core beliefs is the imperative of a future succession."

⁸² 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6.

⁸³ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 16.

Christ as blasphemous, violent, full of ignorance and unbelief, the worst of sinners (1:13, 15-16). Paul's transformation occurs as he encounters the grace of Jesus. He describes his life as Christ's disciple as a life of strength; the Lord has found Paul faithful and has appointed him to meaningful service in the kingdom (1:12). Paul goes on to identify the reason this mercy was extended to him: in order for Christ Jesus to demonstrate his patience through Paul, "an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life" (1:16). Paul holds himself up as the model of a sinner converted to Christ.

The Greek word used for "example" (*hypotyposin*) occurs only here and in 2 Tim 1:13.⁸⁴ Another possible translation is "prototype"; Paul sees himself as the archetype for the redeemed sinner.⁸⁵ Despite his heinous past, Paul received mercy in order to stand as an example of the Lord's patience. At other points in the Pauline writings, the apostle will appeal to his own example as worthy of imitation. The emphasis here is not on Paul's exemplary character but on the noble conduct of Christ, who freely pours out grace on Paul. As Luke Timothy Johnson notes, this use of the model motif is unexpected.⁸⁶

Christopher Hutson argues for an understanding of the PE as a training regimen for shaping young disciples to carry forward the Pauline tradition.⁸⁷ In

⁸⁴ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), Kindle edition, loc. 19311.

⁸⁵ See Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 77; also Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 48, 51.

⁸⁶ Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates*, 122.

⁸⁷ Christopher R. Hutson, "My True Child: The Rhetoric of Youth in the Pastoral Epistles" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1998), 324-70.

particular, Hutson notes that 1 Tim 3:14-4:16 “contains the language of the philosophical training regimen in high concentration.”⁸⁸ Paul affirms the presence of false teachers and hypocritical liars who will plague the flock as the Spirit foretold (4:1-2). As a counter to the heretical asceticism put forward by these opponents, Paul reminds Timothy to be a good minister (*diakonos*) by continuing in the training he has received and the truth he has followed, paralleling Stoic emphasis on learning and training. Paul seems less interested in a systematic deconstruction of the arguments of these false teachers; instead, he focuses on “what a positive presentation of the gospel by Timothy, both in his life and from his lips, should look like.”⁸⁹ Paul emphasizes this kind of “lived manifestation of beliefs” throughout the PE.⁹⁰ In essence, Paul is saying, “Live a good story. Show them what a good servant looks like.” Rather than spraying them with his spittle, Timothy must trust that his example is sufficient to fight the good fight against these foes. Paul’s younger disciple is to be a living ideal embedded within the Christian community, a direct counter to the false teachers through the power of his example.

Paul continues to borrow the language of philosophical training regimen, particularly at 1 Tim 4:7b-16.⁹¹ He uses an athletic metaphor as a standard illustration: physical training may have limited value, but training in godliness endures (1 Tim 4:7-8). “Godliness” (*eusebia*) was a word with significant Hellenistic

⁸⁸ Ibid., 325.

⁸⁹ Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies*, loc. 3357.

⁹⁰ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 45. See Paul’s repeated exhortations to the community at 1 Tim 3:2, 7, 10; 5:14; 6:1, 14.

⁹¹ Hutson, “True Child,” 327.

currency, connoting an attitude of respect toward a wide variety of persons and systems such as government, ancestors, Caesar, and the gods.⁹² The term was especially significant in the Artemis cult at Ephesus, used in conjunction with the concept of epiphany to infuse the term with mystical and religious qualities.⁹³ Paul's usage, however, seems most closely to align with that of Hellenistic Judaism. *Eusebia* occurs 59 times in the LXX and is used in Prov 1:7; Isa 11:2, and 33:6 to translate "the fear of the LORD," an expression that captures both informed awareness and behavioral conformity.⁹⁴ Hutson proposes "exercise for Christlikeness" as a better translation based on Paul's usage of *eusebia* in the PE.⁹⁵ This distinctly Christocentric emphasis is an essential departure from Stoic thought. Paul is saying more than simply "Live a good story." To exercise for Christlikeness is to "live a Good News story."

The implication is clear: the life of piety is the training Timothy should pursue. Paul exhorts Timothy to practice the way of Christ, allowing this character to form his behavior. Understood as training, the pursuit of *eusebia* cannot be a passive endeavor, but requires strenuous work.⁹⁶ Formation in the image of Christ requires discipline of mind and conduct. Just as Epictetus will later dissuade physical exertion that keeps one from the pursuit of philosophy (*Diatr.* 3.22.1, 3, 16),

⁹² Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, loc. 3651.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, loc. 3651.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, loc. 3651-3720.

⁹⁵ Hutson, "True Child," 330. See 1 Tim 2:2-6; 3:16; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:3; 3:12.

⁹⁶ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 92-93.

Paul's argument is in favor of rigorous training in godliness.⁹⁷ Paul borrows athletic imagery again at 2 Tim 2:5: only the rule-following athlete is honored with the victor's crown. Fiore argues for yet another connection with Epictetus here.⁹⁸ Paul uses the sporting illustration to conjure up an end-times image of hope: the crown of life (see also 2 Tim 4:8). Victory through obedience to the rules places emphasis on orthopraxy (practice) over orthodoxy (teaching),⁹⁹ although the PE will argue for both. Yet once again, the concept of example brims to the surface.

Another parallel to Stoic teaching is found at 1 Tim 4:12, "Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity." Paul emphasizes the importance for Timothy, in a position of leadership, to model consistency in his speech and his way of life. In both Greek and Jewish moral training, speech and conduct comprised the most observable areas of one's life.¹⁰⁰ In opposition to the hypocrites at 4:2 (calling to mind Epictetus' commentary regarding "counterfeit baptists"), Timothy is commanded to demonstrate congruence of word and deed. Like his teacher, Timothy is to stand as a "moral and theological exemplar" in his community.¹⁰¹

Paul uses *hypotyposin* again at 2 Tim 1:13, this time as encouragement for Timothy to be faithful to Paul's teaching. "What you heard from me, keep as the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 93. Though Paul and Epictetus would differ on their respective *telos*, their commitment to their ideals is similarly resolute.

⁹⁸ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 148. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.20.7-8.

⁹⁹ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 153.

¹⁰⁰ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, loc. 6127.

¹⁰¹ Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies*, loc. 3391.

pattern (*hypotyposin*) of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.” In 1 Tim, Paul presented himself as a prototype of Christ’s redemptive reach to reconcile sinners (1:16). Here Paul presents himself as a model of apostolic teaching and conduct.¹⁰² Just as Timothy has seen this teaching modeled in the life of Paul, now he must stand as the example to the faithful community. Much like Epictetus will, Paul is pushing his younger disciple to consider the power of his example.

Like his Stoic counterparts, Paul also stresses the importance of practice to his disciples. At 1 Tim 4:13, Paul gives Timothy a set of disciplines to put into practice: “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, and to teaching.” The verb “devote” (*proseche*), also translated “give attention to,” was very much a part of the vocabulary of Stoic training, and Paul’s usage in the PE emphasizes the persistent study of a true disciple.¹⁰³ This text has often been understood and translated within an overarching public, “church order” reading of the PE. However, the words “public” and “Scripture” are lacking in the Greek text, making Wright’s recent translation preferable to the translation cited above: “Until I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to teaching.”¹⁰⁴ Yet even this translation fails to account for the definite articles in the text; literally, Paul calls Timothy to give attention to “the reading, the exhortation, the teaching.” To what reading, exhortation, and teaching does Paul refer?

¹⁰² Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 6.

¹⁰³ Hutson, “True Child,” 328. See Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.12.

¹⁰⁴ N. T. Wright, *The Kingdom New Testament: A Contemporary Translation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), 428.

Hutson contends for a reading of the PE that is informed by the philosophical training regimen, particularly with regard to this section of instruction.¹⁰⁵ As noted above, the inclusion of the words “public” and “Scripture” stems from an interpretive assumption that Paul’s primary concern is to instruct his younger protégé in the way of church order. However, an alternative understanding, informed by the philosophical regimen of the day, is equally possible. Although “reading” (*anagnosis*) can convey either public or private activity, the use of the definite article suggests a specific body of material Timothy is to study.¹⁰⁶ This parallels the expectation for philosophy students to engage in rigorous independent reading apart from the classroom recitation of their teacher.¹⁰⁷ Seneca was known to send Lucilius copies of texts, marked with notes for him to search through and pore over.¹⁰⁸ Paul, in his final days, asks for his scrolls and parchments (2 Tim 4:13), suggesting that even the mentor must continue his studies throughout his life.¹⁰⁹ As Timothy’s model, Paul encourages imitation in a life of study.

The only text specifically identified in the PE is the reference to the “holy Scriptures” at 2 Tim 3:15.¹¹⁰ These are the Jewish Scriptures, which Timothy has been exposed to since infancy, and Paul may be encouraging his young protégé to continue to reflect on them. It is also possible that Paul is referring to a collection of

¹⁰⁵ Hutson, “True Child,” 332-35.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 332-33.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 332.

¹⁰⁸ Seneca, *Ep.* 6, loc. 293.

¹⁰⁹ Hutson, “True Child,” 300.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 299.

Christian writings, perhaps even his own letters (as in 2 Pet 3:15-16). In either case, Paul urges Timothy to give attention to “the reading” in his personal time of study. “The exhortation” may refer either to specific entreaties of Paul (as in 1:3 or 2:1) or the charge of the elders at his ordination (4:14).¹¹¹ “The teaching” seems to point to the apostolic tradition passed down from Paul to Timothy, that which Timothy has heard from Paul and is to entrust to those who will faithfully transmit it to future generations.¹¹² The “trustworthy sayings” of the PE, while not exhaustive, appear to bear witness to the content of this tradition.¹¹³ Understood this way, Paul stands as a parallel to the Stoic teacher, at least with regard to his methodology: assigning texts to his younger student, requiring disciplined reflection and discussion to be moderated upon his arrival. This is the regimen of discipleship Paul espouses.

The next two verses (4:14-15) share a form of *meletao* (“to give attention to” or “to practice,”). At 4:14, Paul warns Timothy against failing to put into practice (*amelei*) the gift that came to him through the laying on of hands. The inner gift requires practical exercise, an outworking in disciplined measures, in order to be most fully realized.¹¹⁴ At 4:15, a related verb is employed in a positive sense: Practice (*meleta*) these matters, give attention to them, that everyone may see your progress. The progress Paul speaks of is spiritual maturity: Timothy is to be an example of steady growth in conformity to the image of Christ.¹¹⁵ This is the key

¹¹¹ Ibid., 333.

¹¹² Ibid., 333. See 2 Tim. 2:2.

¹¹³ 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11. See also Titus 3:8.

¹¹⁴ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 96.

¹¹⁵ Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies*, loc. 3424.

difference between Paul and his Stoic contemporaries. Despite similar points of emphasis and shared terminology, Christianity and Stoicism operate with fundamentally different worldviews.¹¹⁶ Paul's worldview is shaped by his life relationship to Jesus. For Paul, to be "in Christ" is "to be living in the suddenly erupting new act of a much longer drama, the story of the one God, his people and the world," which reaches its climax in Jesus.¹¹⁷ Paul readily imports philosophic methodology for training disciples, but his aim remains thoroughly Christian. Epictetus's primary concern is that his pupils pursue moral purpose; Paul, however, advocates a regimen of exercise for Christlikeness. For both, progress is achieved only through practice.

Paul elaborates on this regimen toward Christlikeness at 2 Tim 1:5-6. He recalls Timothy's lineage of faith, including the instruction of Lois and Eunice as well as the gift Paul imparted to his young protégé through the laying on of hands. Paul then uses a vivid image to express Timothy's role as steward of these gifts: Timothy is to "fan into flame the gift of God" (1:6). Again, the spiritual life of discipleship is not a passive experience, but an involved, rigorous life of effort and practice. Dallas Willard has summarized this well: "Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning."¹¹⁸ *Anazopyro* ("fan into flame") is found only here in the NT.¹¹⁹ However, Seneca uses this language to describe humanity's unrealized goodness made

¹¹⁶ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 354-69.

¹¹⁷ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Kindle edition, loc. 12867. See the lengthier discussion at loc. 12853-958.

¹¹⁸ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006), 34.

¹¹⁹ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 136.

manifest through heeding advice and wise counsel.¹²⁰ In the same way, Timothy is to put forth the effort necessary to bring to maturity the gifts latent in him since his ordination.¹²¹ Spiritual maturity is achieved through stewarding God's gifts with effort. This is the practice Paul encourages Timothy to undertake.

At 2 Tim 3:1-9, Paul details the actions of the "Jannes and Jambres" (1:8) of the last days, those who oppose truth, pursue wickedness, and love pleasure rather than God. In particular, Paul criticizes these opponents as those who are "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (3:7). Intellectual study, like physical exercise, possesses value, but apart from corresponding actions, such effort is fruitless. The actions of these depraved rivals belie their claims to knowledge.¹²² Once again, a parallel can be drawn between these and Epictetus's, "counterfeit baptists," whose professions and practice contradict.

Timothy stands as a direct contrast to these hypocrites. "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings," (2 Tim 3:10-11a). The verb in this sentence, a form of *parakolouthein*, from the root *akolouthein* ("to follow"), is best understood between the polarities of the literal "follow behind" and the figurative "pay attention, follow with the mind."¹²³ The usage here suggests the actions of one who has carefully

¹²⁰ Seneca, *Epistles*, 94, vol. 3, trans. Gummere (n.p.: Carson & Selbrede, 2011), Kindle edition, loc. 231.

¹²¹ In fact, Paul's charge to Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God" is precisely the kind of advice Seneca refers to, advice that stirs honorable seeds to growth.

¹²² Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 167.

¹²³ Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates*, 88.

investigated and taken up Paul's teaching and way of life.¹²⁴ This is the meaning Luke employs at Luke 1:3 to describe his thorough examination of the Christ story. Paul also used *parakolouthein* in his earlier admonition to Timothy to be a good minister at 1 Tim 4:6: "the good teaching you have followed." Paul praises Timothy as the faithful contrast model against those who have not followed the truth.

A connection between knowledge and discipleship emerges based on Paul's usage of *parakolouthein*. As noted above, *parakolouthein* is one of the primary words to describe the activity of the disciple in the NT. Epictetus uses the same word to distinguish between students capable of advancing in philosophy and those who could not.¹²⁵ True disciples are those whose lifestyles reflect their master's teaching. Even more, these disciples carefully examine the teacher's way of life before adopting it for their own. Such an exhortation fits not only within Paul's schema in the PE, but as a foundation for the entire Pauline canon. Paul writes to motivate the disciple community of the first century to follow Jesus more deeply, and his own example ("Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ," 1 Cor 11:1) is often his primary appeal.

Paul claims Timothy has fully followed his teaching and way of life. Such commitment is possible only through intimate knowledge of one's life, witnessing faith in action. To follow is to know intimately. This underscores the relational connection of the mentor-protégé motif. Timothy has gained more than abstract, theoretical knowledge from Paul; he has been instructed in the practice of life as a

¹²⁴ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 230.

¹²⁵ Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 164. See Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.12.33; 2.24.19.

follower of Jesus.¹²⁶ Paul has invested his life in this young disciple, embedding his teaching, his faith, his purpose, even his way of life in Timothy. For Timothy, this is an embodied education, practical wisdom in the flesh. This kind of close relationship between disciple and master is implied by the Stoic use of *parakoloutheo*.¹²⁷

“Teaching” in the singular is a reference to the Pauline apostolic tradition. By contrast, Paul reserves the plural usage (“teachings”) to refer to the heretical positions of his opponents.¹²⁸ Throughout the PE, Paul has spoken of Timothy’s “entrusting,” which implies a sense of stewardship to the authoritative *didaskalia* (“teaching”). Timothy received Paul’s apostolic instruction as a means of fighting the good fight against false teachers (1 Tim 1:18). Paul sprinkles his “trustworthy sayings” throughout the PE, statements that are held up as orthodoxy for the young Timothy.¹²⁹ Interestingly, these creedal statements are not explained in the PE, but are assumed as previously assimilated information for the reader.¹³⁰ Hutson notes the soteriological and christological content of the “trustworthy sayings” as “short-hand references to *dogmata*” that Paul seeks to apply rather than explain.¹³¹ Timothy is to entrust the apostolic teaching to qualified teachers, ensuring a line of

¹²⁶ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 231.

¹²⁷ Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies*, loc. 4721.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, loc. 4731.

¹²⁹ 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11.

¹³⁰ Hutson, “True Child,” 303-4.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 304.

doctrinal security (2 Tim 2:2), a command that echoes the chain of instruction suggested at 2 Tim 1:3-5.¹³²

However, Paul's mentoring of Timothy extends beyond teaching. Though teaching comes first in the list at 3:10, conduct receives the lengthier treatment.¹³³ Paul appeals to his "way of life" (*agoge*), and the remainder of the list is a specification of this manner of life.¹³⁴ Paul covers the full scope of his spiritual autobiography, calling to mind both positive (purpose, faith, patience, love) and more challenging aspects (endurance, persecutions, sufferings). In so doing, Paul taps into his shared history with Timothy, possibly taking his pupil back to his earliest memories of Paul's stoning in Lystra (Acts 14:19).¹³⁵ In following the example of his mentor, Timothy is to recall Paul's autobiography as a template for his own life in Christ.¹³⁶

The dual concepts of persecution and suffering receive the most attention in the pericope. Timothy was certainly no stranger to suffering and persecutions as Paul's traveling partner. If participation in Paul's way of life is to continue for Timothy, so too will persecutions. Paul elaborates: "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (3:12). Paul is reminding his protégé that the pattern still holds; his current Roman imprisonment "is simply a

¹³² Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 152. This chain of instruction includes the ancestors, Paul, Lois, Eunice, and Timothy.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 168-69.

¹³⁵ Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, 166.

¹³⁶ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, loc. 10499.

matter of consistency.”¹³⁷ As a model for Timothy, Paul’s autobiography serves to give meaning to Timothy’s experience of adversity as he joins Paul in suffering for the gospel (1:8).

In contrast to those who are “always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth” (3:7), Timothy is to continue in his learning, trusting his education because of his knowledge of those who instructed him (3:14). The initial appeal to remember the Scriptures is not on the basis of their inspiration. One might expect Paul to say, “Continue in what you have learned, for it comes from the God-breathed Scriptures,” a sentiment expressed later at 3:16. Instead, at 3:14 Paul emphatically underscores the reliable nature of the personal sources of instruction in Timothy’s life: Lois, Eunice, and himself.¹³⁸ In essence, Timothy is told to trust the teaching because he can trust the teachers. This sort of validation of a position on the basis of character was a common means of evaluating a truth claim in Paul’s day¹³⁹ and once again underscores the relational essence of the discipling relationship. “Following after” and “walking alongside” are, in the end, relational descriptors.

At this point we find in Timothy an example of Christian discipleship that extends well beyond the point of initial conversion. Timothy’s mother and grandmother are credited with instructing him in the Scriptures in his early years (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5). Although Timothy is identified as a disciple in Acts 16:1, indicating his conversion has already occurred prior to his commendation to Paul,

¹³⁷ Ibid., loc. 10559.

¹³⁸ Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170.

¹³⁹ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, loc. 10676.

his training is still incomplete at this point in his life. Timothy has received education and training sufficient for conversion in his younger years, but his formative relationship with Paul has not yet occurred. He has not yet become who he will become. Paul's mentoring influence, expressed as "teaching" and "way of life" at 2 Tim 3:10, will be integral to Timothy's ongoing maturation as a disciple of Jesus.

Second Timothy 3:14-16 affirms that the Scriptures are foundational to this kind of disciple formation. In particular, Scripture is a tool for "training in righteousness" (3:16). The word "training" (*paideia*) implies education or discipline that results in attaining the virtues.¹⁴⁰ Character is to be developed in order that the man or woman of God might be thoroughly equipped for good works. Certainly the Scriptures are trustworthy because they are "breathed out" by God, but the relational lens of 3:14 should inform a reading of 3:16 as well. In the household of God (1 Tim 3:15), trusted examples whose teaching and way of life demonstrate congruency serve as living ideals, embodiments of God-breathed Scripture for the younger generation. Mentors are those who train the ones they "walk alongside" by virtue of the character formed in them through their "following after" Jesus. These relationships of mutual "following after" Jesus are the aim of this project.

Conclusion

Discipleship, in a broad sense, is a relational act of "following behind," enjoying a life relationship to Jesus. However, discipleship is also a "walking beside," a journey with fellow Christ followers. Disciples of Stoic philosophers sought to follow in the steps of their teachers, imitating their examples as "living ideals." Like

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., loc. 10855.

Epictetus, Paul is pushing his protégé to a life of principled practice. Paul clearly borrows the discipling methods and language of the philosophical training regimen. However, Paul's discipleship training is focused not on moral purpose or "godliness" in the civic sense as the Stoics advocated. Instead, Paul advocates exercise in Christlikeness, a following after Jesus that also forms in the pattern of Jesus. As Wright notes, Paul and Epictetus may have understood their vocations similarly, but with distinctly different messages.¹⁴¹ Paul repeatedly appeals to his spiritual autobiography, a shared history with Timothy, as a foundational component of their relationship. Such deep relational knowledge provides the context for the mentor-protégé bond to flourish. In relationship, Paul offers his own example as a living ideal of following behind Jesus, the Master Teacher.

The purpose of this project was to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair. Methodology for this project is delineated in the following chapter. My proposal is best understood as a complement to Mayfair's current discipling work. As noted above, disciple formation through teaching is commonplace at Mayfair. My project attempted to augment our strong history of teaching with a relational component of autobiographical narration. Grounded in the theological rationale of Paul's mentoring of Timothy, the following intervention aims to make manifest a model for intentional mentoring relationships to exist more fully at Mayfair.

¹⁴¹ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, loc. 6921.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this project was to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at the Mayfair Church. In my context, the dominant understanding of discipleship is related to conversion: discipleship as event in the life of the individual believer. This project aimed to enrich this understanding by additionally emphasizing discipleship as a communal process, an act of following behind and walking beside. My intervention strategy involved drawing together a model development team (MDT) to experience intentional mentoring exercises in order to prompt reflection toward the creation of a working model for Mayfair. This chapter specifies the intervention strategy, format, participants, project sessions, and methods of evaluation.

Intervention Strategy

In *The Forgotten Ways*, Alan Hirsch proposes a missional ecclesiology centered on what he calls “Apostolic Genius,” the latent potencies of the gospel found in every Christian and church.¹ One of the essential factors in apostolic genius is an emphasis on disciple making. Hirsch contrasts the Greco-Roman model of disciple development in the academy with the Hebraic practice.² He generalizes that

¹ Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 24-26.

² *Ibid.*, 120-25.

the Hellenistic model of formation was overly concerned with the transmission of conceptual knowledge from teacher to student.³ As noted above, this assumes that right thinking will lead to right behavior, that we can “think our way into a new way of acting.”⁴ According to Hirsch, this is the great failure of the Western church with regard to discipleship: our model has been heavily shaped by the Greek concept of knowledge while overlooking more Hebraic practices of formation.

Hirsch explains the Hebraic view of discipleship, practiced by Jesus, as a life-on-life encounter between mentor and student. This view is based on the Hebrew concept of knowledge, which emphasized concrete examples over abstraction, wisdom grounded in experience, and the interconnectedness of all things under the sovereign rule of God.⁵ By “doing life together” with his disciples, Jesus models the exemplary life for them; he stands as the ultimate “living ideal” for his followers.

The founding of the whole Christian movement, the most significant religious movement in history . . . was initiated through the simple acts of Jesus investing his life and embedding his teachings in his followers and developing them into authentic disciples.⁶

Simply put, Christian disciples are formed through a life relationship to Jesus.

³ Ibid., 121-22. Hirsch’s generalization overlooks the emphasis on ethics and practice in the pedagogy of Epictetus, as demonstrated in chapter 2. See Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, loc. 7031: “The *praxis* of the first-century philosophers was, at its heart, the study, teaching, development and living out of the great traditions they inherited. We must never think of the ancient philosophers as working out schemes of ideas detached from everyday life. Philosophy, in the ancient world, was ‘everyday life’, lived, reflected upon and interpreted in this or that way.”

⁴ Ibid., 122.

⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁶ Ibid., 102.

Hirsch identifies several reasons the Western church has lost its emphasis on discipleship.⁷ First, the disciple-making process has fundamentally been reduced to an intellectual enterprise. Mental assent to a predetermined set of propositional truths is often all that this form of discipleship entails. In addition, discipleship in the West has suffered due to a persistent form of cultural Christianity and the pervasive effects of consumerism. In an effort to be “seeker sensitive,” the church has consistently lowered the bar on discipleship, a departure from the catechesis of the early church.

As a counter to this, Hirsch highlights the work of Neil Cole of Church Multiplication Associates (CMA). Reflecting on a six-year period in which CMA helped start nearly eight hundred churches around the world, Cole cogently expresses the CMA ideology: “We want to lower the bar of how church is done and raise the bar of what it means to be a disciple.”⁸ CMA leadership noted that discipleship was “too easy” in many of their churches, so they countered by emphasizing simple church and radical discipleship. With a renewed commitment to discipling people more fully, the CMA team developed the concept of Life Transformation Groups (LTGs), a small group disciple-formation program that came to be used in CMA churches across the globe. Groups are non-coed, consisting of two or three people who meet regularly for spiritual nourishment. LTGs involve four “staple” components: Scripture, storytelling, personal accountability, and prayer.⁹ In

⁷ Ibid., 104.

⁸ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), Kindle edition, loc. 525

⁹ Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 105.

the CMA churches, these LTGs create the context in which people can spiritually invest in one another.

Hirsch lauds the LTG program as an essential component of CMA's incredible growth and as a practical, reproducible discipling tool.¹⁰ As I sought to craft intervention sessions that were both practical and reproducible, I was drawn to the staple components of the LTG model. I chose to use these staple components as a template for my MDT sessions, changing the accountability portion to a time of communal meaning-making while retaining the other three elements. Cole's description of the context of "easy discipleship" that gave rise to the LTG model parallels my context at Mayfair to a large degree. In my context, we tend to think of discipleship as primarily an intellectual enterprise. Our narrow understanding of discipleship through teaching has restricted it primarily to the arena of conversion with little acknowledgement of its place within the framework of sanctification established above. I believe the time to be right for us to "raise the bar" on discipleship at Mayfair. There are certain "latent potencies" that need to be unleashed by creating the context for a more Hebraic, relational, life-on-life approach to discipling to exist at Mayfair.

Using the LTG model as a template, I chose to draw together MDT participants for a series of sessions to experience intentional mentoring practices. These practices loosely adhere to the LTG staples: a teaching concept based on Scripture, an appreciative interview as a means of storytelling, stewardship of story through communal meaning-making, and a time of prayer. These practices also

¹⁰ Ibid., 105.

correlate to the model of discipleship training Paul employed in his relationship with Timothy as delineated above. Timothy is commanded to continue to exercise himself in both the holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15-16) and the Pauline tradition (2 Tim 3:10); he is reminded of Paul's spiritual autobiography, much of which he experienced firsthand as Paul's constant missionary companion (Phil 2:20-22; 1 Tim 1:12-16; 2 Tim 3:10-11); Timothy remains a faithful steward of Paul's "story" (2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2; 3:10); and prayer is one of the hallmark practices of this relationship (2 Tim 1:3). My aim was to lead the MDT participants through a series of sessions following this structure, allowing them to experience some intentional mentoring practices as material for reflection toward the development of a similar formation model at Mayfair.

Format

This project is a qualitative research project. "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world."¹¹ Qualitative researchers recognize their embedded position within a particular field of study. Researchers become a part of the environment, seeking to interpret these surroundings from this situated vantage point by making observations of the meaning people bring to particular phenomena.¹²

Denzin and Lincoln use the metaphors of quilt making, montage, and jazz improvisation to describe the work of qualitative researchers.¹³ The quilt maker, or

¹¹ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

bricoleur, employs various tools and techniques and pieces together different fabrics in search of composite interpretation. In artistic montage, differing images are juxtaposed to create a view of the whole. The genius of jazz lies in its improvisation as various sounds blend together and overlap to create a masterwork. The work of qualitative researchers is similar in many regards: they improvise, wielding a variety of different tools to create snapshots of a given environment in search of a broader view.

The intervention put forward here is also a form of participant action research, combining action research with the participation of the researcher. Action research specifies the participation of the observer in facilitating the goals of those persons being researched.¹⁴ Such research becomes participatory when “the researcher also seeks to participate with those being researched and to recruit the researched into the process of research design and conduct.”¹⁵ As a researcher, I was greatly interested in the perspectives of the model development team participants, but as a member of this team, I was equally concerned with the creation of a sustainable mentoring model for Mayfair.

The intervention employed a purposive sample group to create the intentional mentoring model. “Purposive samples select people who have awareness of the situation and meet the criteria and attributes that are essential to

¹⁴ Matthew David and Carole D. Sutton, *Social Research: The Basics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004), 30.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

[their] research.”¹⁶ The selection of the MDT participants fit with these criteria. Each participant was a key stakeholder at Mayfair, either as a staff member or an opinion leader. MDT participants also exemplified the capacity to mentor others on the basis of their spiritual maturity and previous mentoring work within the congregation.

Description of Participants

MDT participants were selected on the basis of the following criteria. First, participants needed to demonstrate a capacity to develop others spiritually. In my estimation, these are individuals who have something to offer to a younger mentor based on their “following behind” relationship to Jesus. I chose individuals who, in my opinion, possess heightened spiritual maturity, sensibility, and wisdom. I also chose individuals currently engaged in the work of disciple formation. I deliberately looked to the practicing examples in our midst, those men and women who actively provide mentorship to younger members of our community. Finally, I believe the MDT participants are generally regarded as some of our living ideals at Mayfair, representing the household of God at its best. As project leader, I made the final decisions as to the composition of the MDT.

The MDT was comprised of seventeen people, including me. Ten group members were male; seven were female. Twelve MDT participants were members of the Mayfair ministry staff. The other five MDT members were made up of some of the women engaged in the quarterly mentoring groups at Mayfair and the wife of one of our ministers who previously served as a youth ministry intern at Mayfair.

¹⁶ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 83.

I served as the project leader for the MDT and, as anticipated, the MDT participants functioned well in relation to my leadership. On the Mayfair staff, I serve as one of our staff leaders, routinely running staff meetings and providing leadership to a variety of projects. I also have strong relationships with each of the women involved in the quarterly mentoring groups. All MDT participants entered into covenant with regard to project expectations.¹⁷ Covenant expectations were discussed with each MDT participant prior to the intervention. Covenant documents were distributed, signed, and returned at the beginning of the first session.

Description of Project Sessions

MDT sessions were designed in three major segments: Sessions 1-5 were structured to correspond loosely to the LTG model specified above, providing MDT participants an opportunity to experience intentional mentoring practices. Sessions 6 and 7 were devoted to the construction of a mentoring model for Mayfair based on the experiences of the previous five sessions. A final session offered MDT participants the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the completed model.

Sessions 1-5 followed the same general outline, comprised of four major elements: teaching content, appreciative interviews, meaning-making, and prayer. Teaching content was designed to allow an exploration of the biblical paradigm of mentoring, particularly the relationship between Paul and Timothy. The teaching content in these sessions was derived from the concepts put forward at 2 Tim 3:10-11. Any mentoring model at Mayfair needs to consist of a significant teaching

¹⁷ Appendix C.

component, which corresponds to the emphasis the PE place on the importance of teachers and mentors to the younger disciples.

Appreciative inquiry is a social change method grounded in the theory of the latent power of positive questions. One of the major tenets of appreciative inquiry is that “human organizing and change at its best is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation.”¹⁸ Affirmative questions elicit an organization’s best experiences, memories, and hopes, providing the greatest potential for organizational change. Such questions also provide a means for people to tell their stories and to hear the stories of others. Given Mayfair’s history and the negative connotation of the term “discipling,” Appreciative inquiry offers a possible path toward cultivating positive feelings and experiences related to mentoring as a viable means of disciple formation. The appreciative inquiry form of engagement put forward here is more specifically a core group inquiry, utilizing a small group of people who are representative of the Mayfair congregation.¹⁹

Sessions 1-5 included a significant appreciative interview component. In groups that are not familiar with appreciative inquiry, designing meetings “as an enactment of the desired future state” can be a helpful strategy.²⁰ Following the teaching concept, MDT participants paired together for an appreciative inquiry exercise. In these one-on-one groups, MDT participants responded to a question or

¹⁸ Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2010), 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., 38-40.

²⁰ Ibid., 116.

inquisitive statement relative to the teaching concept. Participants practiced sharing and active listening with fifteen minutes allotted for participants to share, followed by a reciprocal period for their partner to share. These appreciative interviews served to prompt participants to narrate a portion of their spiritual autobiography. I am convinced this is where some of the greatest power lies for spiritual formation.

At the conclusion of the appreciative interviews, the MDT reconvened as a group for a time of communal meaning-making. Participants were given the opportunity to affirm their partner by sharing appropriate portions of their story with the group. This exercise was intended to broaden the act of autobiographical narration by sharing these stories with the larger group and providing an opportunity for communal affirmation and reflection. These practices were also designed to help form a group narrative consistent with the “follow behind, walk beside” model of discipleship put forward in chapter 2. The MDT sessions concluded with prayer, either corporately or partner-to-partner.

Session 1 introduced the purpose of the project and established the pattern for the next four sessions. I explained the project’s genesis as the result of a previous course assignment. In seeking to identify our practice of forming disciples at Mayfair, I identified a core understanding of discipleship as conversion through education. I explained the project as an attempt to supplement this essential component of discipleship with an intentionally relational element. The teaching content for this session was derived from an examination of the biblical usage of the term “disciple,” the Stoic emphasis on “living ideals,” and a review of Paul’s relationship with Timothy. Using 2 Tim 3:10 as a reference point, MDT participants

engaged in an appreciative interview by responding to the following inquisitive statement: “Tell me about one of the most positive spiritual influences in your life. Why was that person so special to you?” Each of the first five sessions ended the same way: following the appreciative interviews, MDT participants shared their responses with the group (meaning-making) and concluded with prayer.

Session 2 began with a brief review of the introductory material from the previous session. I led the group through a brief description of the early church’s practice of catechesis as an entrée to the training language of 1 Tim 4:11-16. We noted the high concentration of training regimen language in the text. I briefly reviewed the Stoic emphasis on lifelong adherence to ancient texts, drawing a parallel to Paul’s exhortation to Timothy. Following this text and 2 Tim 3:10 (“my teaching”), the following inquisitive statement framed appreciative interviews: “Which Bible story or character is most meaningful to you?” MDT participants were encouraged to bring an artifact representative of this teaching or Bible character as an aid to discussion.

Session 3 focused on the language of fictive kinship Paul uses in the PE and the narration of spiritual autobiography found at 1 Tim 1:12-17. In examining the relationship between Paul and Timothy, we concluded that shared faith provided the context for this mutually beneficial relationship to exist. We related this to 2 Tim 3:10 and Paul’s reminder that Timothy has followed Paul’s life of faith (“my faith”). For the appreciative interviews, participants were asked to share a portion of their faith story, either conversion or another formative experience.

Session 4 emphasized another facet of 2 Tim 3:10: Paul's use of the terms "patience" and "endurance." The teaching content for this session distinguished between these terms. I noted that "patience" implies a sense of restraint, often in relationship to others; on the other hand, "endurance" is a more circumstantial term, with the meaning "bearing up under trials." This set the stage for a particularly powerful time of sharing, as participants responded to the inquisitive statement, "Share a time when you learned the value of spiritual patience or spiritual endurance." Given the deeply personal nature of such an inquisitive statement, the ensuing time of sharing and meaning-making was especially poignant.

Session 5 focused on a final element of 2 Tim 3:10: "my love." The teaching content of this session noted the special relationship of love that existed between Paul and Timothy, using 2 Tim 1:2 and 1 Cor 4:17 as key texts. Participants shared stories of influential models of God's love over the course of their lives during the appreciative interviews. For this session, participants were also encouraged to bring an artifact that represented the love of God to them in a meaningful way.

Sessions 6 and 7 were devoted to model construction. MDT participants reflected on the experiences of previous sessions, analyzing both strengths and weaknesses. Session 6 focused on identifying formative concepts and distinguishing these from concepts that needed improvement. A series of questions aided in the assembly of these reflections: Which components do we keep? Which components do we jettison? Which components do we revise? Which components do we add? Model construction began in session 6 and continued through session 7. Session 7 was a pivot toward questions of application: How can this model be best applied in

our context? Consideration was given to content, number, and order of proposed model sessions. Session 8 included a brief review of the completed model and a questionnaire for MDT participants to complete.

The project consisted of eight sessions, scheduled to range in length from sixty to ninety minutes.²¹ MDT sessions took place on Monday mornings during the months of September and October 2013. The MDT sessions convened in lieu of the weekly Mayfair staff meetings. In order to accommodate this schedule change, additional staff meetings were arranged as needed at alternate times during the week. MDT sessions convened at the Mayfair church building in the large conference room to accommodate the seventeen members of the MDT. This space is comfortable, containing ample chairs and couches, but also conducive for planning with a dry erase board and audio and video capability. Coffee and light refreshments were provided each week to create a hospitable environment, particularly for non-staff members unaccustomed to meeting regularly in this space.

Evaluation Methodology

Qualitative research methods emphasize personal experience as a viable and valuable source of knowledge. Rather than claiming empirical objectivity, qualitative projects seek clarity through corroboration of multiple perspectives and data sets. Such a multi-methods approach is properly understood as “a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry.”²² This approach, also

²¹ Handouts for all sessions are included as appendix G.

²² Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5.

known as triangulation, is “an attempt to get the best of all the available options.”²³ I evaluated the data of my project by bringing the following frames into dialogue with one another: my perspective, as detailed through field notes and aided by a participant observer, Brenda Neidert, an administrative assistant on our ministry staff; the perspective of the MDT participants, as yielded by a questionnaire administered during the final MDT session; and the perspective of an outside independent expert, Dr. Earl Lavender, professor of Bible and the founding director of the Institute for Christian Spirituality at Lipscomb University.

Field Notes and Participant Observer

Descriptive observational data created by the researcher are known as “field notes.”²⁴ The significance of these field notes is predicated on the notion that the researcher is the primary data collection agent in qualitative projects. Field notes offer the researcher a way of organizing observations and understandings.²⁵ I recorded field notes prior to and following each MDT session using a two-column format.²⁶ The first column was used to record field notes during the MDT sessions; the second column provides room for initial reactions, thoughts, and observations. Brenda Neidert, an administrative assistant on the Mayfair staff, served as my participant observer to record field notes during the MDT sessions. Neidert has extensive shorthand experience and has also served as participant observer on

²³ David and Sutton, *Social Research*, 45.

²⁴ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), 124. For the merits of observational data, see 124-26.

²⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 181.

²⁶ A sample two-column observation sheet is included as appendix D.

previous qualitative research projects. I reviewed all protocols with her prior to the first MDT session. In addition, I recorded my own observations during the appreciative interviews and meaning-making portions of each MDT meeting. Following each session, I converted her handwritten field notes and my observations into a digital file that became a data set for the project.

My field notes selectively focused on the appreciative interview and meaning-making portions of the MDT sessions. Although a variety of observations were made during the project, I was especially interested in assessing the level of sharing that occurred in these pairings during the MDT sessions. Teaching content and prayer, as they were not the primary emphases of the intervention, received less treatment in the field notes although any pertinent observations from these portions of the sessions were also recorded.

Protocol for field note observation included attention to a number of issues.²⁷ Given Mayfair's history, I made special note of comments or attitudes (either positive or negative) toward matters of "discipling," "discipleship," and "mentoring."²⁸ I was also interested in observing the level of interactivity between MDT partners during the appreciative interviews. Is each group participating? Are there any emotional responses, such as crying, that occur in any of the groups? Partner responses to such phenomena were recorded in the field notes. My participant observer was also instructed to note non-verbal patterns and communication among MDT participants.

²⁷ Appendix E.

²⁸ I was interested to see if MDT participants would identify these terms as inflammatory or scandalous.

Questionnaire

I distributed a questionnaire to the MDT participants in the final session.²⁹ The purpose of this questionnaire was to provide MDT participants the opportunity to assess the mentoring model created in the project sessions and identify potential points of application. This questionnaire was intentionally open-ended to provide greater clarity on the perspective of the participant.³⁰ The questionnaire consisted of the following questions:

1. How would you evaluate the intentional mentoring model we have constructed? Describe what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this intentional mentoring model.
2. What are the key ingredients that will make this intentional mentoring model successful at Mayfair? In your estimation, is this intentional mentoring model missing any of these key ingredients?
3. How and where should this intentional mentoring model be applied at Mayfair? Should the model be applied within the construct of an existing ministry model (such as small groups or youth ministry) or would it be best applied through the creation of an entirely new ministry area (such as a mentoring ministry)?
4. In your opinion, is this intentional mentoring model a useful tool for forming disciples in relationship?

Independent Expert

Lavender provided the final frame of feedback as an outside perspective. Lavender is a professor in the Lipscomb College of Bible and Ministry as well as the founding director of the Institute for Christian Spirituality. He is also the author of numerous texts and commentaries focused on spiritual formation and meditative practices. In addition to these qualifications, Lavender is a regular guest speaker at Mayfair and has knowledge of Mayfair's history based on his consulting work with

²⁹ Appendix F.

³⁰ Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*, 28-30.

the congregation dating to 2008. Lavender proved to be ideally suited to provide an expert assessment of the effectiveness of the project. I sent Lavender a copy of the completed project proposal along with a brief review of the MDT sessions and the research that informed them. Lavender's review of the proposed mentoring model is included in the appendices.³¹

Data Analysis

I repeatedly analyzed the data in an effort to identify emerging themes and patterns. Coding is the first step in organizing data along a particular set of interpretations.³² I followed the two-phase process of qualitative analytic coding as suggested by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw: open coding as a means of initially categorizing the data from the field notes and focused coding that analyzes data through the lens of the prime categories.³³ In the open coding, I recorded my interpretations of the data in the margin of the field notes documents. At this stage of the process, Emerson, Fritz, and Shaw encourage ethnographers to ask a series of questions such as:

- How do members talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on? What assumptions are they making?
- What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes? Why did I include them?
- How is what is going on here similar to, or different from, other incidents or events recorded elsewhere in the field notes?³⁴

³¹ Appendix L.

³² Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 517.

³³ Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 171-99.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

These questions proved helpful in the creation of my protocol for coding the field notes.³⁵ The protocol questions guided the open coding process and yielded answers that were interpreted as an initial coding scheme. New themes and broader categories emerged through the focused coding process, leading to a more refined coding scheme that is included as an appendix.³⁶ This coding scheme was also used as a lens for interpreting the questionnaire responses. The coding results of the questionnaire responses are included as an appendix.³⁷

In addition to looking for themes, data analysis is concerned with identifying silences and slippages. Silences emerge in response to the question, “What is left unsaid that needs to be examined?”³⁸ Slippages refer to inconsistencies that emerge from the data. In my analysis, I attempted to account for both silences and slippages throughout my interpretation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation in my context. In order to achieve this purpose, I set forth a biblical theology of discipleship, informed primarily by Paul’s mentoring of Timothy in the PE, as a template for similar relationships to exist at Mayfair. For my intervention, I led the MDT through a series of sessions comprised of teaching content, appreciative interviews, meaning-making, and prayer. These sessions provided an opportunity for MDT participants to experience an intentional

³⁵ Appendix I.

³⁶ Appendix J.

³⁷ Appendix K.

³⁸ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 200.

mentoring model and served as the essential foundation for the construction of a similar relational model for Mayfair. The qualitative methods set forth here served as a way of analyzing the effectiveness of this project.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The MDT sessions were designed to lead participants in intentional mentoring practices as a basis for constructing a feasible model for Mayfair. At the conclusion of the intervention, the MDT produced a proposal for an intentional mentoring model to be applied in the formation of disciples at Mayfair.¹ I set out to evaluate the collected data of the intervention through a triangulating approach, looking for themes, slippage, and silences. This act of triangulation was applied to the three frames of analysis: field notes, representing my perspective as researcher; the MDT questionnaire, representing the insider angle of the project; and the review of the completed model by Lavender, which represents the analysis of an outside interpretation. This chapter contains a description of the results of this analytic process as well as an interpretation of these findings.

In my original concept, I wanted the appreciative interview pairs to remain consistent for the duration of the project. However, this quickly proved difficult. One MDT member withdrew from the project after the initial session, citing anxiety over sharing in front of the group and an inability to properly communicate such strong emotion in a group setting. It is worth noting that in the only session this individual attended, this participant wept when speaking of the spiritual influence of a recently

¹ Appendix H.

deceased mother-in-law. I assured the participant that all MDT members were free to withdraw from the project at any time for any reason whatsoever. However, the departure of this participant impacted my group numbers and pairings, making it impossible for at least one other participant to have a consistent partner for the duration of the project. In addition, the Monday morning meeting time became problematic for some of our ministers who, on different occasions, were called away to tend to urgent pastoral responsibilities. Finally, sickness and unforeseen family emergencies impacted the attendance of other MDT participants. Overall, attendance was very good for the MDT sessions, but these factors created inconsistency in the group pairings from week to week.

Description of Results

Field Notes

For each of the MDT sessions, Brenda Neidert functioned as a participant observer, recording handwritten field notes. Following each session, I transferred these handwritten notes (along with my own observations) into a digital data set. At the conclusion of the intervention, I began the process of coding the field notes.² Protocol for coding involved the open and focused coding process explained in the previous chapter.³ The following questions provided an evaluative lens for my coding of the field data: (1) How do MDT participants conceptualize an intentional mentoring model in terms of essential components? (2) How do MDT participants

² Coding is the interpretive act of organizing field data by themes and categories. See D. Soyini Madison, *Critical Ethnography* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), 43-49.

³ Appendix I.

conceptualize the ideal mentor? (3) How do MDT participants conceptualize the ideal protégé?⁴ (4) How do MDT participants understand the power of their spiritual autobiography? (5) How do MDT sessions provide the opportunity for participants to be formed by the narration of spiritual autobiography? These questions yielded themes that have been arranged in a coding scheme.⁵

Story and Spiritual Autobiography

The most repeated theme throughout the intervention sessions pertained to the concept of story as a way of understanding our lives. In the first session, I spoke of the project's genesis as emerging from within my own story: as a response to a previous class assignment that prompted deep reflection regarding the formative nature of my relationship with Bradley. Through the sharing of his spiritual autobiography, Bradley has mentored me in the faith. I stated the project's purpose to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation as an extension of my desire for more of these types of relationships to exist at Mayfair. Throughout the MDT sessions, participants adopted this same language of story in their sharing.

In general, MDT participants were eager to share their stories with one another. In the initial session, participants entered into covenant, agreeing to respect one another by being good stewards of each other's stories. In the following weeks, MDT participants spoke of the "trust in the room" and the "safe environment" that enabled "walls to come down" as we shared the intimate details

⁴ Although the neologism "mentee" appears frequently in mentoring literature, this construction is grammatically spurious. There is no verb "ment" from which the word "mentee" might be derived. I am using the term "protégé" in place of "mentee."

⁵ Appendix J.

of our stories. Over the course of our first five sessions, participants discussed issues such as the death of loved ones, financial struggle, sexual temptation, infertility, premature births of babies, near-death experiences, doubt, rejection, marital struggles, and questioning the existence of God. Furthermore, MDT participants appeared to be very aware of the unique nature of their individual stories as well as the stories of others. Not only were participants enthusiastic about sharing their stories; they were also eager to hear from their partners each week. MDT participants naturally embodied inviting postures and affirmative responses (head nods, verbal cues) throughout the sharing exercises. At our final meeting, several participants commented on how much they would miss this weekly time of conversation and prayer.

At a few points, however, MDT participants expressed reluctance over divulging some of the more painful portions of their stories. One participant in particular, in our final session, remarked that she really had no desire to participate after the first session, given the open nature of our sharing times. She stated, "I only kept coming because I wanted to help you graduate!" However, she used this statement as a springboard to a powerful reflection: in the end, she came to recognize the value of her own story and the need to be formed in community with fellow believers. More than any other participant, she was brought to tears in four of the first five MDT sessions. As noted above, between the first and second meetings, another MDT participant chose to withdraw from the group, citing discomfort with sharing during the communal meaning-making portion of our session. At other points, my field notes reflect nonverbal communication that indicated discomfort

during portions of the group sharing exercises.⁶ For instance, one participant demonstrated visible signs of anxiety and embarrassment as her partner shared her heartbreaking story of infertility with the group during the meaning-making time. Despite this perceived anxiety, this MDT member continued to participate for the duration of the intervention.

Though participants demonstrated an awareness of the unique nature of their individual stories, a parallel thread emerged regarding the universal nature of God's story. Frequently throughout the MDT sessions, participants commented on the commonalities of their stories. One young participant reflected on growing up with an absentee, work-obsessed father; his partner for that session, one of our more seasoned participants, related her story of growing up with an alcoholic father who abandoned his wife and young daughters. In another pairing, both participants came to realize that they had participated in the same Bible study at the same church years before they knew one another. This connection was discovered as both participants unknowingly came to our MDT session to discuss the same event that occurred many years ago during a particularly formative season in each of their lives. Every week, new commonalities emerged: shared mentors, similar experiences losing loved ones to illness, and parallel tales of family dysfunction and pain. These uncovered commonalities prompted one participant to exclaim, "It's as if we all share a common narrator!"

The data point to an understanding among MDT participants regarding story as a tool for discipleship. In our final session, one participant stated, "This project

⁶ Such nonverbal cues included flushed face, squirming in seat, and avoiding eye contact with fellow group members.

helped me think about and shape my story and it helps me think about how I can use it in my ministry.” In another session, a different participant mentioned the power of his wife’s example: “In a lot of ways, her story has disciplined me.” This understanding is closely tied to the relational nature of discipleship put forward earlier: following behind Jesus, walking beside our brothers and sisters. By sharing our stories with those we walk beside, we allow these stories to form us more fully into the image of a Christ-follower. To put it differently, it seems we learn how to follow Jesus more fully through the stories of our fellow brothers and sisters.

MDT participants demonstrated conversance in speaking of their individual stories as “gospel stories” that display the transformative power of God. One participant, in recounting the experience of being abandoned by her fiancé, spoke of her encounter with God in the John 11 narrative of the raising of Lazarus. “This was the greatest epiphany I’ve ever had! God raised me from the dead! He really did go before me and plant this deep root of hope based on the resurrection during this barren season in my life.” Other participants voiced stories of redemption from issues such as depression and grief, stories that demonstrate God’s strength made known in weakness. After sharing an especially powerful story with his partner, one participant exclaimed, “Now that’s a gospel story!”

Many of the stories shared in the MDT sessions operated in tension between the polarities of adversity and hope, stability and disruption. In one of the most touching moments of the MDT sessions, one participant shared her painful memories of the days immediately following Mayfair’s splintering in 1978, comparing it to the loss of her first grandchild. In my years at Mayfair, this marks

one of the few times our splintering has been mentioned in a group setting by someone other than me. This participant noted the loss of her mentors in the wake of the split; she recalled the feeling of having her “idyllic utopia” church experience wrecked as some of her most important spiritual influences decided to leave and worship elsewhere. “It felt like somebody had pulled our anchor up.” However, she looked back on this as a seminal moment of faith formation in her walk of discipleship. In a private conversation, this participant recalled the “healing” that began shortly after Bradley came to work at Mayfair in 1979. Though Mayfair lived through this painful season of splintering, losing half its membership and crushing the spirits of those who chose to remain, God remained faithful, writing new chapters of growth and harmony in Mayfair’s story in the decades that followed.

After recounting this narrative, she compared this experience with the tragic loss of her first grandchild and namesake just days before her scheduled birth. The participant reflected openly about the great blessing she has experienced in the sixteen years since the child’s passing. She called it “a defining moment” in her walk with Christ as she felt God come near in her time of great pain. She also referred to this experience as “my greatest sadness and my greatest blessing.” Though she said she grieves the loss of this grandchild daily, she noted this experience has helped her know the true meaning of faith. Her hope in heaven has been further galvanized by the concrete promise of spending eternity with the granddaughter she has never met. At the peak of her reflection, this participant raised her voice and declared that she does not have to worry whether her grandchild is in heaven: “It’s not, ‘Will I get that or not?’ I’ve got that! That will be there for me!”

This participant narrated the aftermath of her granddaughter's death as "a Mayfair story." As news of the child's death spread, Mayfair members flooded the hospital waiting room, prompting hospital employees to ask, "Who are all these people? They can't *all* be family!" In those critical hours and days, Mayfair members walked alongside the family and gradually began to share their own stories of loss, particularly those who had previously lost children pre-term. This participant described the strength she drew from hearing these stories, many of which she had never heard despite worshipping with these "heroes of faith" for many years. She related the faithful walk of a good friend who covenanted to pray and fast for the family each month until the participant's daughter bore her next child, a journey of faith that lasted for fifteen months. Tearfully, as she concluded her testimony to the MDT, she proclaimed, "Mayfair told her story that day. These people loved us through our darkest hour."

Examples and Living Ideals

Another prominent theme in the field notes is the idea of mentors as examples and living ideals. In the introductory session, I presented the Stoic principle of seeking out living ideals for emulation and laid this alongside the example language Paul uses in the PE. Participants built upon this concept throughout the MDT sessions, using the terms interchangeably. One MDT participant coined a phrase early in our sessions that became another way of referring to our mentors: "windows through which we see Jesus more clearly."

MDT participants frequently referred to the example of others in their lives, including their fellow MDT members. In our first session, one participant gushed

over being paired with her partner that day, calling her a “living ideal at Mayfair” and citing that she had “always wanted to be mentored” by her. A different participant recalled the special relationship he shared with another MDT member, his former youth minister. This protégé described how he felt “chosen” when his youth minister invested time in him at this critical point in his life. This example has been formative as this young man is now one of our most skilled disciplers, pouring himself into the lives of our college students.

The character of these examples was the topic of much discussion in the MDT sessions. We agreed that there is an inherent appeal to these mentors that emerges from their life example; this is why protégés willingly follow them. As we explored this further, the key concepts of humility and spiritual maturity surfaced as essential mentoring qualities. The MDT universally agreed humility is a quality our younger generation respects and responds to in a mentor. One participant remarked, “It’s not like you can advertise for mentors in the bulletin. The people who would respond are probably the people you *don’t* want!” In alluding to the idea of mentors as windows through which we see Jesus, one MDT participant brought up the example of John the Baptist at John 3:30, “He must increase, I must decrease.” John’s ministry of reminding people to look past him to see Jesus provides us a template for the humility necessary for the best mentoring to take place.

Likewise, the MDT emphasized spiritual maturity as another necessary mentoring quality. In the model construction phase of the intervention, the MDT concluded that mentors should be selected carefully on the basis of criteria to include spiritual maturity. In the words of one MDT participant, failure in this

regard could be “spiritually toxic” to potential protégés. MDT participants agreed that mentors should exemplify the best qualities of the household of God. One participant told the story of when her granddaughter left her favorite sweatshirt at the participant’s house after spending the night. After washing and folding the shirt, the grandmother returned it to the child, only to have the granddaughter joyfully exclaim, “Oh, I love this! It smells like Grammy’s house!” Our MDT participant then reflexively asked herself, “Do I smell like God? Have I been spending time with him so his aroma follows me?” This became a helpful way of framing our discussion about spiritual maturity.

Encouragement and Hard Sayings

The field notes helped clarify a point of tension demonstrated in the best mentors: the tension between encouragement and hard sayings. Repeatedly, MDT participants equated encouragement with the embodiment of God’s love. On numerous occasions, this language was used to describe a particularly encouraging presence in one’s life: a surrogate grandmother, a spouse, a student-teaching supervisor, a parent. In one of our latter sessions, I asked the group to list qualities the ideal mentor should possess; encouragement was the first trait to be mentioned. In addition, MDT participants regularly practiced giving encouragement to one another. As noted above, MDT participants overwhelmingly demonstrated encouragement both verbally and nonverbally as they listened to one another. During the meaning-making sessions, participants routinely praised their partners for the courage to share their stories or the faithfulness they demonstrated throughout their lives.

As a balance to words of encouragement, MDT participants also identified the importance of true mentors speaking hard truth into the lives of their protégés. The best mentors invest heavily in their protégés so they can speak credibly when the time arises for correction and rebuke. An MDT participant recalled with great clarity the moment his college minister began a conversation by praising him for being a great leader. Then came the punch: “The problem is that you’re constantly leading people in the wrong direction.” Another participant spoke of a hard saying delivered by her husband as she wrestled with forgiving their adult son. With gentleness in his voice, he said to her, “I love you and I want to go to heaven with you, but if you don’t learn how to forgive, I’m afraid you won’t end up there.” Although she certainly did not want to hear these words at the time, she pointed back to them in our session as the moment when she began to release her long-held feelings of anger and bitterness. Telling the truth in a spirit of love (Eph. 4:15) is a hallmark of Christian mentorship. The best mentors strike a balance between words of encouragement and hard words of rebuke and admonishment.

Questionnaire

At the final MDT session, I distributed a questionnaire for participants to provide feedback regarding the completed model. This questionnaire represents the insider data stream in my qualitative analysis. The responses from these questionnaires were coded in the same fashion as the field notes, producing a final coding scheme for the questionnaire that corresponds to the coding scheme for the field notes.⁷ The following themes emerged from an analysis of the data.

⁷ Appendix K.

Model Logistics

A primary theme in the questionnaire responses was a concern for the logistics of the mentoring model. In particular, questionnaire responses repeatedly emphasized logistical matters as potential points of weakness. For example, in the model construction sessions, MDT participants collectively concluded that the ideal group size, at least in early iterations of this model, should be no greater than ten participants, allowing five distinct one-on-one pairings. Although this point is clearly specified in the final model, seven respondents addressed this matter in their responses, noting that failure to adhere to this logistical detail could be detrimental to the success of the model.

Session length was a closely related logistical concern. Due to the size of the MDT and the nature of our discussions, MDT sessions routinely eclipsed the ninety-minute mark, with one session lasting two full hours. This was largely due to my underestimating the amount of time needed for the communal meaning-making portion of our meetings. As a courtesy to my participants, I always acknowledged the fact that we had surpassed our allotted time and allowed group members to leave if they needed to honor prior commitments. Only one participant chose to leave before our session concluded; in this specific case, he had received a call that his children were ill. Otherwise, MDT participants chose to stay for the duration of the meetings, despite the fact that we routinely exceeded our allotted time.

Though MDT participants graciously gave of their time to be a part of our sessions, they also recognized the importance of stricter time parameters for the application of the model in the greater life of the church. One participant noted that

a two-hour weekly commitment, even for a six-week period of time, would give most people pause. Another participant responded that although a lengthier initial session might be palatable, “subsequent sessions would probably not need to go beyond one hour.” However, a minority of MDT participants expressed a divergent view. One participant noted: “Perhaps the time commitment could be construed as a weakness, but I personally do not see it that way. The benefits . . . far outweighed any negatives.”

MDT participants identified the mentor-selection component as one of the greatest strengths of the model. In keeping with the practices common to the philosophical schools, our proposed model allows for protégés to identify the “living ideals” at Mayfair who could serve as potential mentors. Applying appreciative inquiry theory to the mentor selection process elicits Mayfair’s best experiences, memories, and hopes. The mentor selection process modifies the initial question of the 4-D cycle of appreciative inquiry.⁸ Rather than asking, “What gives life?” the mentoring model put forward here asks, “Who gives life?” Potential mentors are identified on the basis of protégé answers to the following questions: “If you could spend time with an older brother or sister here at Mayfair, who would it be? Whom do you respect? From whom would you like to learn, someone who you believe could help you grow spiritually?” One MDT participant, a young lady representative of the generation we would be seeking to mentor, noted the strength of this part of the model: “The younger side of the pair has the opportunity to choose who their mentor will be or at least express the type of person they are hoping to learn from.”

⁸ Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*, 6-9.

Intentional and Organic Polarity

Another theme present in the responses pertained to the balance between intentionality and organic encounters within the mentoring model. Based on the logistical emphasis of the questionnaire responses, participants clearly see the benefit of intentionality with regard to model structure and content. MDT participants understood the initial session with the identified mentors as an essential, intentional way of training mentors prior to the sessions with their protégés. Questionnaire responses frequently cited the “flow” of the sessions from week to week as a strength of our MDT sessions. Session content was derived from 2 Tim 3:10, yet I intentionally arranged the material to allow for a progression of experience. Sessions 1 and 2 emphasized the narratives of influence and Scripture and provided a relational foundation for more in-depth sharing in the ensuing weeks as we shared stories of faith, endurance, and love in sessions 3-5. These final sessions contained some of the most passionate and heartfelt testimonies of the intervention, experiences that were made possible by the intentional structuring of content. MDT participants demonstrated an awareness of this level of intentionality in both the field notes and the questionnaire responses. One participant noted that the intentional organization of content gave MDT participants “a history with one another” in the early sessions that allowed greater “credibility, which led to vulnerability” in the times of sharing.

This intentionality in structure must also allow for the relationship between mentor and protégé to develop organically. An appreciative question provided a weekly prompt for sharing, but participants still exercised discretion regarding the

disclosure of their personal stories. Such responses must come naturally and unforced. One participant noted, “Although the model content is certainly ‘church-appropriate,’ the conversations would need to feel natural, a part of everyday life, not just an isolated church event.” Another participant commented on the balance between intentional content and organic conversations represented in the model: “It provided the right amount of guidance and freedom so that each person knew what direction to take in choosing what stories to share, but never felt restricted.” She further linked the intentional structure of the intervention with the raw, honest stories her fellow participants shared: “The progression of the topics for each week also seemed to guide us into a deeper place of vulnerability, which was beneficial for those who aren’t typically as willing to open up and share.” MDT participants overwhelmingly commended the intentionality of the intervention’s content and structure as integral to the construction of the final model.

The questionnaire responses revealed a perceived weakness in the proposed model: the lack of an accountability mechanism to ensure that mentoring pairings continue to meet. In the proposed model, mentor pairings participate in a six-week series of sessions similar to the MDT sessions of the intervention. At the conclusion of this six-week series, mentors and protégés covenant to walk together for the next year, agreeing to meet together at least once a month in less formal environments, such as meeting for coffee or gathering their families together for a meal. The model suggests that the structure of these meetings be determined by each mentor-protégé pairing. The stated goal of these monthly meetings is to create increased

relational proximity in order for the narration of spiritual autobiography to continue between mentor and protégé.

Several MDT participants noted the lack of a formal accountability mechanism as the model's prime weakness. Participants noted "the potential for the relationship to wane if there is not some method of establishing accountability." MDT members demonstrated an awareness of the model series of sessions as a practical tool to help in the initial process of mentoring but also identified the lack of follow up as a significant deficiency. Though the model was designed to allow for the relationship between mentor and protégé to develop organically in the months following the series of sessions, MDT participants viewed this as a segment of the model that would benefit from greater intentionality. One participant suggested a revision to include the development of curriculum for mentors and protégés to use in scheduled monthly meetings. This material could serve as fodder for one-on-one mentor-protégé sessions, with regularly scheduled communal meetings for discussion, encouragement, and accountability.

Commitment of Mentor and Protégé

MDT participants identified a high level of commitment from both mentor and protégé as an essential quality of a successful mentoring model. Though other aspects of either the mentor or protégé were not articulated as thoroughly in the questionnaire as in the field notes (such as the concepts of ethos, spiritual maturity, living ideals), deep commitment by both parties was cited in numerous responses. Both mentor and protégé must possess an initial desire to participate in and commit to this program. Intrinsic to this commitment is the concept of covenant. Over half of

the MDT participants cited covenant in relationship as an essential component of this model; and each response referred to the safe, trusting environment in which our sharing and listening practices occurred, a result of the covenant we entered into at our initial meeting.

Covenantal commitment on the part of the participants provides a safeguard against some of the logistical challenges inherent to these types of meetings. MDT participants voiced a strong belief that overt emphasis of covenantal commitment would ensure greater mentor and protégé participation in all model sessions as well as providing motivation for mentoring to continue beyond the six-week series. One participant suggested pairing mentors and protégés with pre-existing relationships as a possible means of facilitating greater levels of commitment from both parties. When possible, such pairings could possess a great degree of “latent potency” for spiritual formation.

Independent Expert

At the conclusion of the MDT sessions, I sent a copy of the completed model to Dr. Earl Lavender, professor in the Lipscomb College of Bible and Ministry. Lavender also serves as the founding director of Lipscomb’s Institute for Christian Spirituality. His assessment of the model supplies the third frame of analysis in this qualitative research project, the outside perspective. Due to Lavender’s recovery from surgery as well as other time constraints, I arranged to speak with him via teleconference. I recorded his reflections and compiled them as a data file.⁹

⁹ Appendix L.

Lavender's overall assessment of the model was positive. Noting the emphasis on intentional spiritual narration, he described the model as "a highly effective tool to help spiritually form persons in relationship." By Lavender's definition, spiritual formation occurs when people understand their individual stories in view of God's macro-story. Lavender pointed to the model's "appreciation of story, community, and personhood" as essential determiners of spiritual formation. Lavender also considered the model to be a natural extension of the undergirding research. Noting the connectivity to the Pauline model of spiritual narration and the importance of example, he remarked, "Your process has been shaped by your research." He was complimentary of the model's use of both the Stoic and PE material.

Lavender pointed to the emphasis on narrative leadership and appreciative inquiry as major strengths of the model. "There is something intrinsically biblical about this process you've engaged in." Lavender commented on the fact that God does not approach humanity "with a set of answers in Scripture" as the blueprint for understanding reality. Instead, God offers us a "rich and compelling narrative" by which we come to know him and discover the ultimate meaning of our lives. "Your project exercises narrative leadership by entreating participants to understand themselves and their stories in light of the ultimate reality of God's story."

Lavender cited the appreciative interviews as the fulcrum for spiritual growth in the mentoring model. He commented on a similar practice of appreciative inquiry he employs in interactions with his protégés. The responses these questions elicit are often raw and unfiltered, yet they also form a hopeful narrative with

potency to form persons in community. This prompted a particularly insightful reflection by Lavender:

Growth can only start when you're working out of who you are. A lot of spiritual formation processes don't work because they're imposed from outside yet they never connect to your story. Formation can't take place because the process is external to the person. Your model, however, allows spiritual formation to occur from the inside out. You're asking people to draw their story closer to God's story. This is essential in guiding spiritually formative practices. You're teaching people to engage in these practices, not simply because the Bible says so, but because these practices help us understand who we are and who God is. That's spiritual formation.

In Lavender's estimation, the appreciative interviews function as the starting point, the "working out of who [we] are" in the model. This type of "inside out" spiritual formation is much more likely to resonate because it emerges from the soil of the participants' life story and, in particular, their faith story.

Lavender pointed to two primary concerns with the model: first, the importance of maintaining a balance between intentionality and an organic interaction between mentor and protégé; and second, mentor-protégé commitment. He cautioned that the younger generations are far more likely to reject the model if they perceive it to be too forced or over-programmed. Although the model allows for significant organic growth to occur in the unscheduled, non-programmatic meetings that extend beyond the initial series of sessions, Lavender cautioned against an over-programmatic approach. Lavender also cited tepid participant commitment as another factor that could derail the model's implementation.

In considering application, Lavender argued for the use of this model as a potential wholesale revision of our education program. Rather than continuing to disseminate information ("People can get information anywhere these days."), the

application of this model in our education program holds the potential to transform the classroom into a spiritual formation lab. Instead of information, people are in need of practical wisdom and life skills, all of which points to the need for mentorship. Lavender drew a correlation between the degree of spiritual formation that occurs in a place and the number of times we say to one another, "Tell me your story." By telling these stories faithfully, we are formed as a community of disciples.

Lavender made a final observation concerning the application of this model. Although the model specifically focuses on mentoring, he remarked that the model could also easily be applied in a variety of other contexts, such as peer-to-peer relationships or between marriage partners. He noted that the issue of generational differentiation is not essential to his understanding of mentoring. Although he mentors a number of students and younger disciples each year (and benefits tremendously from the experience), Lavender spoke of them not as protégés or apprentices, but as friends.

Interpretation of Results

Upon completing the analysis of the data from the field notes, the questionnaire, and the report from the independent expert, I sought to bring these three frames into dialogue with one another. This dialogical process yielded a particular interpretation of the data. In ascribing significance to these data, I offer the following explanations, conclusions, and assessments of the project's results.

I began my analysis by reading through the field note data in search of prominent themes. These themes came to the forefront quickly: the power of story as a tool for spiritual formation, the relational awareness of discipleship as a

practice of “following behind and walking beside,” and covenantal commitment as a framing exercise for the entire project. In particular, there emerged essential qualities and functioning pertaining to both mentor and protégé: matters of character related to the “being” of the mentor and protégé, and matters of practice or “doing,” actions that the model requires of both parties. These essential principles are reflected in the coding scheme for the field notes.

In my estimation, the project was successful in creating a venue for narration of spiritual autobiography to occur. The appreciative interviews successfully drew out participants’ formative experiences as narratives from which we might benefit spiritually. The level of sharing exceeded my expectations; MDT participants demonstrated a tremendous degree of candor in sharing stories of joy, doubt, pain, redemption, and struggle. Moreover, the project validated spiritual autobiography as a viable tool for disciple formation, as evidenced in both the questionnaire responses and Lavender’s reflection. With Paul’s practice of autobiographical narration from the PE as a framing lens, MDT participants spoke frequently of their own stories as “gospel stories.” I attribute this to the covenant commitment that undergirded the project. By entering into covenant, participants were bound to one another and to God to treat these stories as great treasures. Moreover, entering into covenant with one another created a communal narrative, a story within which our MDT sessions could take place. Following an especially moving testimony, another MDT participant began telling her story by saying, “Well, my story is really boring compared to that one!” We all laughed together, but we also communally affirmed our sister by saying, “In the kingdom of God, there are no insignificant stories!” This

was an important moment for the MDT as we acknowledged that each story plays a part in the work of formation.

The project also succeeded in establishing the relational essence of discipleship as a counter to the information-centric culture of discipling at Mayfair. Our working definition of discipleship (“following behind Jesus, walking alongside brothers and sisters”) was represented frequently in both the field notes and the questionnaire responses. In the first MDT session, I asked participants to help me define discipleship. One participant, one of our older group members, said, “I think discipleship is really an individual, intuitive thing.” Over the course of my teaching, I acknowledged both a vertical and a horizontal dimension as we worked toward the following behind and walking beside motif. Such an understanding enabled this participant to tap into her previous experiences in community such as Bible studies and prayer groups, identifying them as locations for discipling to occur in her life. At the end of the project, this participant was able to identify the model’s relational emphasis as one of its strengths. As Lavender’s responses noted, this model holds great potential to transform our culture by bringing this relational understanding of discipleship alongside our rich tradition of education.

I also found evidence that understanding of the relational essence of discipleship extended beyond the MDT sessions. Both our high school and college ministries have already adopted the MDT content and format for recent class and small group series in their ministry programming. For a recent service project, one of our Sunday school classes, made up mostly of older members, invited the young married couples to share in a meal and small group mentoring through storytelling.

On a more personal level, I reached out to one of the MDT participants on Thanksgiving Day, a young man I have discipled for the past several years. I sent him a text message, expressing my thankfulness for his presence on our ministry staff and in my life. His reply indicated that the following behind and walking beside motif has become a controlling metaphor in his understanding of discipleship: “Thanks for letting me learn from you and walk beside you in ministry. More than that, thanks for letting me follow you as you follow Jesus. Love you too, my brother.” The idea of the “life relationship to Jesus” resonated as one of the essential principles from the intervention data.

However, the analysis revealed much more than essential qualities or principles intrinsic to a successful model. The data also pointed to lively tensions present in our sessions, polarities that emerged either in our language or in the practices of the MDT sessions. These polarities manifested themselves to a certain degree in every meeting, in the field notes, in the participant questionnaire, and in Lavender’s reflections. Some of the most powerful moments of the project intervention took place in the dynamic tension between these polarities.

For example, the data indicated the narratives that were shared in the MDT sessions operated within the tension of what John Dominic Crossan refers to as “myth and parable.”¹⁰ Crossan uses myth not in the sense of a story that is untrue; rather, he utilizes the term in reference to narratives of reconciliation and mediation. These mythic tales create in us the belief that redemption of seemingly

¹⁰ John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* (Salem, OR: Polebridge, 1988), 31-45.

irreconcilable circumstances is possible. Parables, on the other hand, introduce that which is irreconcilable. Parable is comprised of contradiction, even disruption. In this understanding, parabolic stories confound and defy our expectation for a “happily ever after” ending. According to Crossan, parable and myth are binary opposites; every story takes place within these twin polarities. Borrowing Crossan’s language, I have represented one of the polarities emerging from the data as the polarity between mythic and parabolic narration.

MDT sessions were peppered with both mythic and parabolic narration. Given our long history as a community devoted to the ideals of peace and unity, I was not surprised that mythic narration was the more dominant expression. The extremely emotional testimony of the participant who compared Mayfair’s split to the loss of her first grandchild is an example of this kind of redemptive narration. Both individual narratives share the same arc: *homeostasis* disrupted by loss culminating in healing and new life. However, it is the parabolic qualities of this narrative that augment the magnitude of this story. As I mentioned above, in my history at Mayfair this is one of the few occasions our split has been mentioned in a group setting. There is no reconciling this parabolic portion of Mayfair’s story. Likewise, the loss of a child is a narrative that dare not be trivialized by reductive attempts at mythologizing; there are simply no words. Yet this MDT participant has found a redemptive way to understand her story, and her mythic narration is actually authenticated by her acknowledgement of the parabolic.

Holding these polarities in tension could become a transformative practice for Mayfair. However, this would amount to a significant shift in culture, and in a

large church with a deeply ingrained proclivity toward the mythic, it would be wise to heed the advice of Epictetus once again: “Nothing great comes into being all at once.”¹¹ During the appreciative interview portion of one session, an MDT participant exclaimed to his partner, “God just doesn’t answer my prayers the way I want Him to answer them.” Struck by this parabolic statement, I recorded it in my notes and eagerly awaited the communal sharing portion of our session. I hoped this participant’s partner would articulate this honest assessment of struggling with God in prayer. Instead, the partner offered the group a benign and vague assessment of the “issues” and the “heavy burden” this man carried with no mention of the prayer comment. This could have been a simple oversight, but I believe it may also have been a case of selective avoidance of the parabolic. Despite our predilection for the mediation inherent to myth, I believe authentic expressions of both polarities are essential to any discipling method, particularly a mentoring model.

Another fascinating polarity emerged contrasting the importance of intentionality, at least as it pertains to logistical matters of content, structure, and format, with organic, natural interactions between mentor and protégé. Repeatedly throughout the sessions, participants commented on the helpfulness of following 2 Tim 3:10 as a basis for our appreciative interviews. Yet quite often these appreciative interviews took on a life of their own, veering and careening across various topics and experiences in a stream-of-consciousness fashion. Allowing participants the latitude to “stray from the script” gave the ensuing conversations an unforced feeling and created greater rapport between partners. This aligns with

¹¹ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.15.7.

Lavender's caution against the perception of a decidedly programmatic approach on the part of the younger generation.

Participant feedback regarding the need for an accountability mechanism in the mentoring model further demonstrates the tension presented by this dichotomy. It also calls for reflexivity as I evaluate my own leadership in this project. Though I believed the current configuration of the model was discussed sufficiently in our model construction sessions, the questionnaire responses indicate otherwise. The initial series of sessions with mentors and protégés was designed to give intentional structure to these developing relationships, giving way to a more open, less programmatic approach in the ensuing months. Yet several questionnaire responses indicated the need for greater accountability and "follow up." In the view of these MDT participants, the model needs to be even more intentionally structured at this point. However, Lavender advised erring on the side of the organic to avoid the accusation of being over-programmatic. It seems as if striking the balance between these two polarities may prove to be one of the greatest challenges in the earliest iterations of the model application.

Another polarity that emerged was the interplay between the desire to be mentored and the need to become a mentor to a younger disciple. Prior to the beginning of our fifth session, as we were waiting for all MDT members to arrive, one of our older participants was telling me how much he had benefitted from the meetings. He commented that the appreciative interviews had forced him to reflect on his life story, saying, "I've buried all my Pauls. They're gone. So I have to ask myself: is it time for me to look for another Paul or should I just try to find a

Timothy I can influence?" I replied, "I think you should do both." Mentor and protégé are not mutually exclusive categories. Rather, most of us wear both hats simultaneously, formed by the examples of our mentors as we in turn stand as living ideals to our protégés.

The understanding I distill from comments such as this one (and numerous others in the data) is that mentoring and discipling are best imagined as a lifelong stream, a relational current of following behind and walking beside. Our location in this stream is determined by our proximity to Jesus, or to put it another way, our spiritual maturity. Yet our location in the stream of faith is also determined by our proximity to others, both those "farther ahead" and "farther behind" us.

Interestingly, some of the oldest MDT participants voiced the strongest desire to be mentored. Several of these same individuals bemoaned the loss of key mentors in their lives and the void that exists in their absence. Mentorship occurs when those who are ahead of us in the stream of faith invest in and impact our lives. We are mentored as we see Jesus more clearly through these windows, these living ideals. However, biblical mentorship and discipling necessitates a posture of looking behind as well, a reaching back to impact the life of a younger disciple behind us in the stream of faith. We recall once again the image of Timothy, taking that which he has learned from Paul and imparting it to reliable men capable of teaching others (2 Tim 2:2).

Although we simultaneously play the role of both mentor and protégé in the relational stream of discipleship, the data point to a fundamental difference in the two: protégés must have a desire to be mentored, whereas the best mentors may be

somewhat reluctant to serve. Each of the three frames of analysis identified protégé desire to be mentored as a bedrock principle for success.¹² The problem, as Lavender noted, is that the people in our churches who are most in need of mentoring will rarely step forward to receive it. Yet without the awareness of one's need for mentorship, the model fails. In the case of the mentors, a desire to participate is obviously essential, but this impulse must be mitigated by humility. Mentor candidates must be spiritually mature enough to have something to offer potential protégés, but they must wear this spirituality modestly, not merely desiring the ego stroke of adoring pupils. Our group discussed at length the need to avoid such spiritually toxic influences when selecting mentor candidates. Humility animates both the ideal mentors and the ideal protégés. Potential protégés must be humble enough to accept the mentorship of others; potential mentors must be willing to offer their stories and counsel with similar humility.

I have argued for an understanding of mentoring and discipling as occurring within a relational stream, yet an important clarification must be made. The project aims to produce an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair. This necessitates an understanding of mentoring as merely one of the ways disciples are formed in community. Discipling encompasses a broad arena; there are a myriad of ways in which one can be discipled and by a variety of persons at that. The data point to a host of discipling relationships in the lives of the MDT participants: spouses, siblings, co-workers and friends were all mentioned as relationships that

¹² This was also demonstrated in the case of the MDT participant who withdrew after the initial session. Her desire to participate was outweighed by her anxiety with regard to sharing in such a large group setting.

enhanced another's ability to follow behind Jesus. Yet not all of these relationships should be understood as mentoring relationships. As a subcategory of discipling, mentoring occurs when a more seasoned believer covenants to become an example by walking beside a younger believer in the stream of faith. As I have argued here, one of the ways this occurs is through the sharing of spiritual autobiography. Examples become mentors when they share their story.

Conclusion

The triangulation of data reveals an overall positive assessment of the mentoring model created by the MDT. Emphasis of story, progression of sessions, and sensitivity to the tension between intentional and organic polarities were all cited frequently as strengths. Primary points of concern that emerged are related to participant commitment and the lack of an accountability instrument following the initial series of sessions. The data point to important systemic and interpersonal polarities that an intentional mentoring model must maintain. Concluding reflections and interpretations of the project are included in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This thesis project focused on the creation of an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at the Mayfair Church of Christ. I wanted to supplement an emphasis on disciple formation through teaching in my context by introducing a mentoring program. The intervention consisted of a series of sessions intended to lead participants in exercises of biblical teaching, appreciative interviews, listening, meaning-making, and prayer. These practices were then evaluated for consideration in the construction of an intentional mentoring model for application at Mayfair. This final chapter allows space for conclusions regarding the project, including matters of applicability and reflexivity as well as reflections regarding the ecclesial and theological significance of the project. The conclusions offered here are put forward provisionally as my interpretations as the project researcher.

Conclusions

Based on the data, I conclude that the intervention succeeded in creating an intentional mentoring model that will bear much spiritual fruit at Mayfair. The PE content provided a biblical template from which to operate, a necessary component of any successful model in my context. The corresponding appreciative interviews created avenues for the narration of spiritual autobiography, the locus of transformative power in the project. These sacred stories were potent to contribute

to the work of discipleship in the lives of MDT participants. In the final model put forward by the MDT, these practices are viable tools for mentoring to be applied in intentional pairings.

A mentoring model should be rooted in the broad sphere of a ministry of discipleship, a ministry that should encompass all that we do at Mayfair. Several MDT participants commented on the viability of the mentoring model to help produce a widespread culture of disciple formation through relationship in our church community. Although much of the mentoring model put forward here is concerned with “doing,” the primary focus remains “being.” The essential question for the project is “What kinds of disciples are formed by participation in this model?” As important as matters of process are to the success of the project, the answer to the question is directly correlated to the quality of mentors recruited to the project. Identifying these living ideals at Mayfair becomes a communal enterprise in this model as protégés provide the names of respected potential mentors. This practice accords with the tradition in the philosophical schools, in which students selected philosophers under whom to train. Moreover, such a publicly recognized life of ethos is commended in the PE as Timothy is commanded to set an example of godliness for the believers (1 Tim 4:8, 12). What kinds of disciples did Timothy’s ministry form? We can only attempt an answer by looking to the model, in this instance the PE, and the character Timothy is commanded to embody within his community.

The PE also point to an important omission in the mentoring model put forward here. The model lacks a final “go and do likewise” component wherein the

protégés, at the completion of their year of mentorship, reach back to mentor a younger disciple in the stream of faith. This final imperative for protégés is the ultimate expression of the model as an intentional mentoring model. In this way, the project truly becomes a means of training others to take up the work of mentoring and prompts another essential question: “What kinds of mentors are formed by participation in this model?” This is the true discipleship question. The proposed model will be successful only to the degree that it encourages people to follow behind Jesus more fully and equips them to walk beside younger believers to mentor them in the faith.

This model proposes a narrative approach to disciple formation. We should tell our stories and we should tell them in their mythic and parabolic fullness. However, a complimentary second action is also required; we should listen. To listen is to invest and mentors may make no greater investment than when they listen quietly and nod their head affirmatively. Anderson and Reese note in *Spiritual Mentoring*, “The curriculum for the school of spiritual mentoring is the unfolding story of life as the [protégé] lives it.”¹ This curriculum remains inaccessible without willing protégés and listening mentors. The web of connectivity demonstrated in the MDT pairings emerged only through a reciprocal process of sharing and listening, which I believe to be the work of the Holy Spirit. These were the transformative moments in our MDT sessions.

¹ Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1999), 40.

I believe similar transformational experiences will be manifest in the application of this model at Mayfair. The project successfully demonstrated the latent potencies of spiritual narration and listening. Again, Anderson and Reese address the transformative nature of such encounters:

The gift of mentoring helps transform mere chronology into sacred story, mere biography into spiritual autobiography. Spiritual mentoring is part of the rediscovery of storytelling in the life of the soul. It seems that the church has sometimes lost its love of stories and substituted instead a love of ideas. Mentoring moves us back to 'The Story' as a way to remember the stories of our own lives.²

Repeatedly, the stories of MDT participants were framed as "sacred stories" either in their own narration or the narration of their partner in the meaning-making portion of the sessions. I believe the model put forward here and the spiritual narration it elicits will move us toward a "rediscovery of storytelling" as a necessary complement to our love of ideas and teaching.

Trustworthiness

This mentoring model holds potential for a variety of applications at Mayfair. The MDT noted the potential for a marriage mentoring application of the model curriculum. Rather than one-on-one pairings, this application could easily utilize older couples as "living ideals" to mentor younger husbands and wives. In addition, the Mayfair elders have expressed a desire to invest more time in mentoring and encouraging the younger men of the congregation. This model opens up a practical way forward for these essential interactions. Our children's minister noted the potential of using the model to pair his more seasoned deacons with their younger

² Ibid., 41.

and less experienced counterparts. As noted above, aspects of the MDT model have been implemented recently in both youth and college ministry programming.

Any suggestions regarding the application of this model in another context are tenuous. This mentoring model was designed as a response to a particularly information-centric approach to disciple formation in my community of faith. Yet some recommendations can be reasonably made. I believe the concepts of covenant and appreciative interviews to be essential to the application of this model in another community of faith. The covenant agreement solidified the commitment level of the participants and created the context of faith and trust essential to meaningful spiritual narration. If the ultimate goal of an intentional mentoring model is to create intergenerational relationships of fictive kinship in the vein of Paul and Timothy, I believe this can be achieved only through a foundational covenantal understanding. The appreciative interviews proved to be helpful tools in calling forth positive stories of hope and endurance in the MDT sessions. Given the emerging field of appreciative inquiry studies, it seems reasonable that this portion of the model would prove applicable in a host of contexts.³

Additionally, I believe the project's emphasis on autobiographical narration has implications for enhancing relationships in the marketplace. In an overworked, frenetic society where productivity and profit have become the primary barometers of one's worth, the simple act of storytelling possesses transformative potential. By

³ For example, although Whitney and Trosten-Bloom are primarily concerned with organizational change in business, their incorporation of positive psychology and social constructionist thought finds resonance across a spate of disciplines and utilizations. See Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*, xi.

sharing our stories and listening to others, we might recover a sense of the sacredness of what it means to be human and find ourselves delivered from some of the systemic trappings of our commerce-centric culture.

Intergenerational applications of this model, albeit modified, could prove viable in a variety of workplace settings. For instance, more experienced educators could use appreciative interview skills as a means of mentoring young or inexperienced teachers. Some employers may envision a skill-based application, pairing a particularly adept employee with a younger protégé. Different criteria would be needed in the selection of these mentors, such as particular occupational proficiencies. Even in a marketplace setting, I would argue for humility as an essential mentor quality in order to ensure receptivity on the part of the protégé.

The triangulation of data explained in the previous chapter is an attempt to present a more holistic and complex representation of the data, often referred to as a “thick interpretation.”⁴ The emerging interpretation is offered here as simply one understanding, my view as researcher. As a means of enhancing this interpretation, I implemented a process of member checking.⁵ This involved phone calls and personal conversations with MDT participants to verify their comments or my tentative findings. In several private interviews, MDT participants expanded on their reflections, giving more nuanced explanations of the perspectives articulated in the MDT sessions.

⁴ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72, 195-96.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 221-22.

This intervention prompted me to reflect on the nature of my leadership in the MDT sessions. Clearly a sizeable segment of MDT participants identified the lack of an intentional accountability mechanism as a prime weakness of the model. Were these participants attempting to voice these concerns in the model development phase? In consulting the field notes, I found one instance of a participant who voiced a concern over needing greater accountability in the model during the model construction session. Yet my response indicates a failure to fully appreciate her comment. I frequently exert a leadership style that is both authoritative and utilitarian. I pride myself on getting the job done. However, in an effort to demonstrate pragmatic leadership, I failed to truly listen to the concerns of this MDT participant.

Moreover, several MDT participants shared this view of the model as expressed in the questionnaire. This realization raises more questions about the leadership I exercised in the MDT sessions. Either MDT participants were attempting to voice these concerns and I failed to acknowledge them or participants recognized this inherent weakness yet did not feel comfortable verbalizing this observation. Either way, I must consider the implications of these possibilities as it pertains to my leadership. I entered the intervention confident of my ability to demonstrate the leadership necessary for this project to succeed in my context. However, these reflections serve as a reminder of the essential relationship between listening and leading.

The honest level of sharing that occurred among MDT participants throughout the project touched me. I was moved to tears on several occasions as my

co-workers and friends narrated their experiences of faith and adversity, joy and sorrow. These stories became discipling tools in my life as they inspired me to follow Jesus more fully and walk beside my brothers and sisters more faithfully. I was also moved by the amount of time our MDT participants willingly sacrificed to be a part of this project. As noted above, sessions routinely surpassed the allotted time, yet participants invariably demonstrated an eagerness to continue sharing and listening. I am grateful to serve alongside women and men who believed in this project and covenanted to see it to fruition.

I also experienced frustration at times during the intervention. I was disappointed when one of my MDT participants chose to withdraw from the project after the initial session. Although I understood the reason for the withdrawal, the absence of this participant disrupted my goal of consistent pairings for the duration of the MDT sessions. I was also particularly stung by the comment one participant made near the end of the MDT sessions: "I only kept coming because I wanted to help you graduate!" Although I appreciate this degree of honesty, I also hoped the project would carry greater value for participants beyond simply helping me meet an academic requirement. This serves as a reminder that others may not share my interest in developing an intentional mentoring model. Perhaps I never convinced her of the project's value beyond the academic level. These frustrations impacted me as a researcher and no doubt affected the interpretive process.

Significance and Implications

The change this project will implement at Mayfair can be sustained beyond the scope of the project as language of discipleship and mentorship become more

commonplace. The project revealed that relational mentoring is taking place to a greater degree than I had formerly realized. Giving voice to this experience is a means of normalizing the understanding of discipleship put forward here. The future applications of this model mentioned above will continue to recruit people of ethos and influence, which will help further validate the proposal as a viable ministry. As program protégés become mentors to others, the multiplication of ministry will gradually impact our entire congregational body. This is an act of discipleship, starting out small but slowly creating a culture of transformation.

This project has carried tremendous personal significance for me. As I stated at the outset, this project was borne out of the relationship I enjoy with Bradley and a desire to replicate this type of relational mentoring across the body at Mayfair. This intervention presented a unique opportunity for me to demonstrate leadership in my community while also acknowledging Bradley's contribution to my life and to the life of the congregation as he prepares for retirement. The project took on greater significance as I prepared to launch my intervention. Alan Shates, my father-in-law and one of my living ideals, passed away after a long battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease). His death certainly impacted my engagement with the project in ways I do not fully understand. The examples of these men were ever present in my mind and heart throughout the project.

In this respect, the project capacitated within me a greater awareness of my story, my spiritual autobiography that is being written in this particular season. Conversance with my own sacred story guided the project from genesis to implementation. The relational nature of the project also cultivated in me a greater

respect and appreciation for the MDT participants and their stories. I selected these men and women on the basis of their spiritual maturity, their ongoing role as practitioners in the field of mentoring, and their capacity to contribute to the project. By the conclusion of the MDT sessions, I felt I knew them at a much deeper level. I knew their stories, both parabolic and mythic, and these stories helped form us as a community.

Professionally, I walk away from this project with a heightened awareness of the power of dialogue. Much of our congregational life takes place in the realm of monologue, perhaps too much. However, the true fulcrum for transformation in the MDT sessions (and subsequently, the proposed model) was more dialogical. In reflecting over the MDT sessions, the teaching content portions were not always dynamic. At times, I could feel the MDT's attention beginning to wane. Yet the appreciative interviews and meaning-making portions were always lively, engaging, and participatory. This project assumes the "latent potencies" of spiritual narration and sharing in community. There are implications for this in regard to my ministry of preaching and teaching.

At the conclusion of this project, I also walk away with greater confidence in my pastoral sensibilities, at least in regard to my understanding of Mayfair and the requirements of leadership in this context. This project has validated my assumption that we need an intentional mentoring model as a compliment to our longstanding practice of disciple formation through teaching. Although this kind of relational mentoring appears to be taking place organically and more frequently than I initially recognized, I am greatly encouraged by the sense that momentum for

an intentional mentoring model is already accruing at Mayfair. The project has fitted me with “ears to hear” the communal pleadings for this kind of ministry across the generational span at Mayfair.

The model put forward here succeeds in identifying living ideals at Mayfair through a generative process of dialogue and appreciative inquiry as potential protégés share in the process of selecting potential mentors. The model carries the same dialogical and inquiry-based principles forward to create a context for these living ideals to share their experiences with their protégés. By creating a context of proximity for these two groups to dialogue, with an emphasis on both parabolic and mythic narration, the project supplements our prevailing concept of unity at Mayfair. Such narration, as demonstrated in the MDT sessions, balances an appreciation of the unique nature of individual story with recognition of the universal nature of God’s story. Despite the variances in our stories, the MDT repeatedly returned to a core principle in our communal time of interpretation: “It’s as if we share a common narrator!” The model proposed here attempts to capture this same sense of unity in diversity.

Next steps at Mayfair could include working toward an extended curriculum for mentors and protégés to work through during their year of walking together as a way of addressing the need for greater accountability and structure. This will require some thought; although I want to honor the critique of the MDT, I am also cognizant of Lavender’s caution against an over-programmatic approach. While I want to remain sensitive to maintaining an organic level of interaction between mentor and protégé, perhaps the PE material could be used as a training guide for

future meetings. Another option is to encourage pairings to engage in specific prayer exercises; sharing prayer requests together is another means of eliciting one's story. A final option might include inviting mentors and protégés into a generative process of discovery and construction by asking them to outline the issues they would like to discuss as they move forward together.

A few additional questions remain outstanding. How will the congregation at large receive the model? How will we manage the inevitable feelings of resentment and jealousy when potential mentors or protégés are not initially selected for participation? Which deacons or ministry leaders can be recruited to faithfully implement this new ministry as I seek to balance my current responsibilities?

Further questions remain pertaining to my leadership. Although my feelings are generally positive with regard to my leadership as it was demonstrated throughout this project, the data cautions against overconfidence. Am I demonstrating a willingness to truly listen to the opinions of those around me? Is my leadership dialogical? What am I choosing not to hear in this moment? Such questions will prove helpful to ground me in humility as I seek to demonstrate pastoral leadership at Mayfair in the years to come.

The emphasis on relationship and dialogue reflects the theological underpinnings of the research. As a social, relational reality, God exists in triune communion: God is one, yet God is three; God is expressed as a diversity of persons, yet God is also expressed as a singular unity.⁶ As such, God can only be imaged in

⁶ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 85-86.

community, in particular the confessing Christian community.⁷ The project's resonance is rooted in an impulse to be known in relationship, a hallmark of God's image in humanity. The community that emerges from this mentoring model should more fully express the same sense of diversity and unity that exists within the triune God. In short, the people of God image God through communion.

In the participant questionnaire, one respondent suggested beginning the initial session between mentors and protégés with a fellowship meal. He suggested a similar time of breaking bread and sharing at the conclusion of the one-year mentoring journey to also include a final word of blessing from the Mayfair shepherds. This is perhaps the most biblical counter to the information-centric model of discipleship. Although this study has drawn from the PE as the primary biblical source, the metaphor of table remains central to the understanding of discipleship in the NT. The seeds of this were latent in our MDT sessions; light refreshments and coffee were served at each gathering. These simple elements became transformative emblems, representative of the deeper communion we were entering into each week. Framing the project as a space for table allows for project participation to be understood as an act of communion.

My wife, Sunny, baked homemade cinnamon rolls as refreshments for the third MDT session. At one level, these delicious pastries simply helped create the kind of welcoming environment I was hoping for as the MDT gathered that morning. The smell of warm cinnamon rolls and fresh coffee fostered a hospitable setting; participants gathered around the room's conference table to partake and fellowship.

⁷ Ibid., 652.

However, the cinnamon rolls also represented an artifact expressive of the power of mentoring. Sunny has been a part of the ladies mentoring group I mentioned earlier, the group of older women who meet periodically to mentor the younger. Part of the appeal of these sessions is their diversity: one meeting might focus on Bible study techniques while another takes place in the kitchen as the ladies swap recipes and share stories. At one of these gatherings, Sunny learned the art of making homemade bread and cinnamon rolls from Christy, a sweet, godly woman who also participated in my MDT sessions. Several months later, using Christy's recipe, Sunny prepared these cinnamon rolls for the group. As MDT participants were served plates of piping hot cinnamon rolls, they began to thank Christy, assuming that she brought them. When Christy remarked that Sunny had, in fact, made the cinnamon rolls, MDT participants were amazed that my wife was able to duplicate Christy's recipe to perfection. Of course, my children and I can attest that Sunny has put Christy's recipe into practice around our home quite a bit in the last few months, for which we are especially grateful!

This concluding narrative captures the relational essence of this project. A recipe is only as good as the degree to which it produces communion. The same holds true for the intentional mentoring recipe put forward here. In the development of a mentoring model, we have been intentionally seeking greater communion. This impulse bears the image of the communion-seeking triune God. The mentor-protégé relationship of sharing, listening, and relating is just one of the communion-seeking relationships that permeate the body of Christ.

Conclusion

This thesis describes my doctor of ministry project focused on the development of an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair. Through this project, I sought to tap into the power of spiritual autobiography as a way of producing formation. This project is also a piece of a larger discussion on the nature of biblical discipleship. The ongoing story of discipleship put forward here is a story of following behind Jesus and walking beside our fellow sisters and brothers. The MDT group reflected on these concepts over the course of our eight sessions. These sessions were designed to allow MDT participants to experience practices of sharing and listening centered around 2 Tim 3:10 as a possible template for an intentional mentoring model at Mayfair. MDT participants voiced a concern for even greater intentionality to be demonstrated in the yearlong mentor-protégé pairings in the model's ultimate application. Nevertheless, the results indicate that the purposes of the project were achieved.

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APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-4920 • Fax 325-674-6785



August 20, 2013

Mr. Jason Bybee
1095 Carl T. Jones Dr.
Huntsville, AL 35802

Dear Mr. Bybee,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Developing An Intentional Mentoring Model for Disciple Formation at the Mayfair Church of Christ" has been approved for a period of one year (IRB # 13-067).

If this project is continued beyond a one-year period, you need to submit an additional request for review. Please notify this office when you have completed your study.

If any problems develop with the study, please inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs promptly.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Billingsley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mark Billingsley, M. A.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

cc: Dr. Carson Reed

APPENDIX B

“THE MAYFAIR STORY: THE FIRST SIXTY YEARS”

Written in 2009

The Mayfair story began in 1947 when the Central Church of Christ chose to expand their mission efforts into a new part of South Huntsville. Two lots in the Mayfair subdivision on the corner of Bob Wallace Avenue and Poincianna Street were purchased and the building was constructed for \$25,000.

The first service was held on November 20, 1949, with about fifty people in attendance. Jack Duncan was the first minister and preached Mayfair’s first sermon. He was succeeded by O.D. Johns and Everette Alexander. In September of 1955, the first elders and deacons were selected. Russelle Bailey, Herbert Crowson, Henry Jones, and Robert Smith served as elders along with Al Bryan, Raymond Buford, Walden Smith, and Tillman Williams who served as deacons. Elizabeth Williams served as the first church secretary.

Shortly thereafter, Bill Wardlaw became the minister that would lead Mayfair into its next home. By this time, the church had grown to the point that a new building was needed and farm land used to grow cotton was purchased on the outskirts of town on Whitesburg Drive. The elders and deacons had the foresight to recognize this area as a prime location based on Huntsville’s projected growth. Our city was being tapped to play an integral part in America’s space mission. The projected growth meant souls to be saved and Mayfair positioned itself to serve and share God’s word.

In 1960, the first phase of the new Mayfair Church of Christ facility was completed. There were five hundred twelve people in attendance at the first worship service in the new building. Soon after moving to the new facility, Brother Paul Hunton served as minister, later resigning to become principal of Madison Academy. He was succeeded by Bob Anderson, who served as minister for thirteen years. In April 1965, Mayfair’s facility was completed.

During this decade, the foreign and stateside missions realized exponential growth as Mayfair Church of Christ made its mark on the world to the glory of God. Dorsey and Ola Traw began their ministry in Thailand in 1961 and are still serving the Lord in that capacity today. Numerous souls have been saved and the Lord’s church has grown significantly in Thailand because of the Traw’s dedicated leadership.

In the early 1970s, Mayfair's youth ministry was established and has grown tremendously over the years, serving as a model for other churches across the nation. Youth Missions also began during this decade to supplement the steadily growing foreign missions program for which Mayfair was known.

The 1970s saw Mayfair continuing to spread God's word to the four corners of the earth. Peter and Cathy Manuel began their mission work in Cape Town, South Africa, supported by the Mayfair congregation. Since that time, the gospel has been spread to thousands living in the country of South Africa, where the Manuels are still serving today.

The Mayfair Child Development Center opened in 1975 to serve as an outreach program to the community by supplying quality daycare, preschool and kindergarten programs. The MCDC provides a healthy, safe environment that promotes the physical, social, cognitive, and spiritual development of young children. The Family Life Center was added in 1978. This center houses a large fellowship hall, adult classrooms, and the church office.

In 1979, Mayfair was blessed to have Gary Bradley come to serve as our minister. What a wonderful way to close out this decade! The 1970s led up to the 1980s with Mayfair and the Lord's church worldwide growing and expanding and spreading the gospel to so many. It is still true that the sun, on its daily journey, never sets on Mayfair's mission outreach.

The decade of the 1980s continued to show the need for growth, outreach, and service. The ministry program was developed and implemented and has grown to over eighty ministries serving in all areas from building security, to Internet ministry, to disaster relief. The television ministry "Abundant Living" was begun and has reached thousands of people in the Tennessee Valley of the last twenty years.

The "Mayfair Cares" motto was seen throughout these years as the church reached out to so many in our community during times of need. In 1982, Mayfair donated land just west of the church building to be used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to build a retirement apartment complex to serve the aging in our community. Mayfair Towers has been a very positive outreach providing care for hundreds of elderly people.

Toward the middle of this decade, Mayfair was faced with the possibility of expansion once again. In 1987, the addition to the auditorium was completed with additional classroom space beneath. This was soon filled to capacity with congregational growth maintaining a rapid rate. In 1989, a deadly tornado came within five hundred yards of our property, killing nineteen people and devastating the surrounding area. Mayfair responded with emergency relief and support for the community for which it cares so much.

With the decade of the 1990s came many changes in the makeup of our nation as well as the world. The Cold War ended, communism fell, and doors to Russia and other countries that had once been closed tightly were now open. Mayfair continued to expand its outreach in every way, both stateside and foreign, to the glory of God. In 1995, Mayfair's involvement in Huntsville's Inner City began. As a result, the Inner City Church of Christ was established with great success. With support of other area churches, Jesus is being taught to the hurting of Huntsville.

In 1996, Mayfair had begun to have three morning worship services to try and alleviate the crowding in the auditorium during Sunday morning worship. A research committee was established to study the feasibility of adding on to the current building or looking for property to purchase for a new building.

The decision was made to buy twenty-five acres in beautiful Jones Valley just over the hill from Whitesburg. By 1995, the funds for the purchase were secured and the land was bought. In 1997, the Vision 2000 campaign began with great success. The design for the building was completed and on March 7, 1999, Groundbreaking Day was held with many members and dignitaries in attendance. The construction of the new facility was completed and Mayfair made her exodus over the hill to Jones Valley in the fall of 2000.

Mayfair has come so far with God's help in serving and reaching the world with the message of Christ. Her new facility marks a renewed commitment to the Tennessee Valley and the world that, with God's continued guidance, we will continue to be a servant minded family of God.

People in Huntsville, Belize, Mexico, and all over the world are the reasons to keep our light shining for Christ in Jones Valley. Because of the vision of a handful of faithful Christians sixty years ago, Mayfair lives on to reach the lost. May God continue to bless this great church so that for generations to come, God's name will be glorified.

APPENDIX C

COVENANT PARTICIPATION DOCUMENT

This project entails exercises in mentoring as a means of forming disciples more fully into the image of Christ. Your participation is voluntary. Should you choose to participate, however, you are asked to enter into covenant with your fellow Model Development Team (MDT) members. This covenant includes the following tenets:

- **Attendance** – To the best of your ability, you will commit to being present at all MDT sessions. Unless an emergency arises, please honor your fellow MDT participants by attending all sessions.
- **Respect for persons** – MDT participants honor their fellow participants as God’s image-bearing creation through respect of individual personhood. You will not be ridiculed, ostracized, stereotyped, or mistreated because of your participation in this project. In similar fashion, you should seek to honor your covenant partners in a way that respects the image of God in him/her.
- **Honest participation** – Your participation is key to the nature of this qualitative research project. You will not be expected to share anything that you don’t feel comfortable sharing. At the same time, your honest participation will make invaluable contributions to the collaborative nature of this project. As you deem appropriate, please engage these exercises with a desire to represent your “true self” and to see the “true selves” of fellow participants.
- **Desire to grow in faith** – Although our sessions will convene to pursue the goals of the project, the primary aim of our MDT sessions is to draw participants into a deeper communion with God and one another. Covenant partners agree to engage this project primarily from a posture of faith development.

By including my signature on this document, I hereby covenant together with my fellow MDT participants in the pursuit of these tenets and the objectives of the MDT sessions:

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D
FIELD NOTE WORKSHEET

Date:

Time:

Field Notes	Initial Observations

Miscellaneous notes:

APPENDIX E

PROTOCOL FOR FIELD OBSERVATION

1. Instructions for Participant Observer:
 - a. Record in shorthand in the “Field Notes” column. Use initials to abbreviate for participants.
 - b. You’re not a courtroom stenographer. Don’t try to capture each word that is spoken.
 - c. Instead, think of yourself as an investigative reporter. What data is emerging here?
 - d. Record details; be descriptive and deep.
 - e. Avoid language that makes judgments about behaviors.
 - f. Listen for verbal communication. What is being said? What isn’t being said?
 - g. Look for non-verbal communication. What is being communicated non-verbally?

2. Attention to the following matters:
 - a. Comments or attitudes (positive or negative) toward matters of “discipling”, “discipleship”, and “mentoring”. Listen for anxiety, excitement, resistance, etc. when these words are used.
 - b. Level of interactivity between MDT partners during appreciative interviews.
 - c. Emotional responses during appreciative interviews.
 - d. Group and individual responses during meaning-making reporting.
 - e. Emotional responses during meaning-making reporting.

3. Any other observations you feel are noteworthy. Include these in the “Miscellaneous Notes” section.

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your participation in the Model Development phase of this project! Your contributions will be invaluable to the development of an intentional mentoring model here at Mayfair.

Please take a few moments to complete the following questionnaire. Reflect over the MDT sessions and provide your honest feedback to the following questions:

1. How would you evaluate the intentional mentoring model we have constructed? Describe what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this intentional mentoring model.

2. What are the key ingredients that will make this intentional mentoring model successful at Mayfair? In your estimation, is this intentional mentoring model missing any of these key ingredients?

3. How and where should this intentional mentoring model be applied at Mayfair? Should the model be applied within the construct of an existing ministry model (such as small groups or youth ministry) or would it be best applied through the creation of an entirely new ministry area (such as a mentoring ministry)?

4. In your opinion, is this intentional mentoring model a useful tool for forming disciples in relationship?

APPENDIX G

SESSION HANDOUTS

MDT Session 1 – Sept. 3, 2013 – 9:00am

- I. Welcome
- II. Forms
 - a. Informed Consent
 - b. Covenant Participation
- III. Participant Observer
 - a. Brenda Neidert – “my eyes and ears”
 - b. In the publication of this data, anonymity will be ensured.
- IV. Project
 - a. Purpose: to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair
 - b. Previous project: identify what we’re doing to disciple people
 - c. Answer: most of our identifiable discipling work is teaching. Discipling understood primarily as conversion.
 - d. Relational component missing
 - e. Anxiety over Mayfair’s past – Boston Movement/Crossroads Movement in the 70s was just coming to prominence when Mayfair experienced her split.
- V. Disciple
 - a. The Biblical term for a follower of Jesus.
 - i. In NT, the word “Christian” is used 3x; “disciple”, over 260.
 - ii. Disciple – follower, one who follows behind.
 - b. Although we follow Jesus, we are also called into these “one another” relationships. We are formed by the people we journey with:
 - i. Moses and Joshua
 - ii. Ruth and Naomi
 - iii. Elijah and Elisha
 - iv. Esther and Mordecai
 - v. Paul and Timothy
 - c. Discipleship: following behind Jesus and walking alongside brothers and sisters along the way.
- VI. Project – How can we create these kinds of relationships at Mayfair? Intergenerational, dialogical, mentoring relationships.
- VII. Early church – practice of catechesis (teaching). Practice of study and mentoring that encompassed 2-3 years; rigorous post-conversion instruction and reflection.

- VIII. Greek Moral philosophers of first two centuries C. E.
 - a. Seneca
 - b. Epictetus
 - c. Advocated the following principles to their disciples:
 - i. “Living ideals” – finding examples of individuals who lived out their commitments and philosophical principles; more than just “lip service.”
 - ii. Practice – the philosophical life is made manifest through daily, concrete practices. Not just high-minded abstract philosophy.
 - iii. Study – reviewing the ancient texts
- IX. Paul and Timothy in the Pastoral Epistles (I & II Tim.)
 - a. Paul disciplines Timothy in much the same manner. Acts 17 – Paul is conversant with Stoicism; also grew up in Tarsus, hotbed of Stoicism.
 - b. Language of fictive kinship: “my beloved child” (2 Tim 1:2); “my son in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2).
 - c. Example – 1 Tim 1:12-17 – Paul narrates his story in two distinct chapters. Paul as a prototype of the redeemed sinner.
 - d. Training – 1 Tim 4:11-16 – high concentration of philosophical training regimen language. 4:6 – Show them what a good servant looks like.
- X. 2 Tim 3:10
 - a. “You, however, know...” – verb is *parakolouthēin*, “to follow”. Common word used in NT to describe the activity of disciples.
 - b. My teaching
 - c. My way of life
 - d. My purpose
 - e. My faith
 - f. My patience
 - g. My love
 - h. My endurance and persecutions...
 - i. Paul is narrating his spiritual autobiography for Timothy
- XI. Appreciative inquiry – Appreciation (recognition, valuing); Inquiry (exploration, discovery).
 - a. Appreciative inquiry is a social change method grounded in the theory of the latent power of positive questions. Human organizing and change at its best is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation.
- XII. Appreciative interviews
 - a. Sharing and active listening
 - b. Each partner has a time to share and a time to listen
 - c. Inquisitive statement: “Tell me about one of the most positive spiritual influences in your life. Why was that person so special in your life?”
- XIII. Meaning-making
- XIV. Next week: Paul’s statement regarding, “My teaching.”

- a. Bring an artifact that is representative of an especially meaningful Bible story or character.

MDT Session 2 – Sept. 9, 2013 – 9:00am

- I. Welcome / Introduction
- II. Project
 - a. Purpose: to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair
 - b. Emphasize the importance of relationship in discipling
- III. Review: Disciple
 - a. The Biblical term for a follower of Jesus – one who “follows behind”
 - b. Although we follow Jesus, we are also called into these “one another” relationships. We are formed by the people we journey with:
 - c. Discipleship: following behind Jesus and walking alongside brothers and sisters along the way.
- IV. Early church – practice of catechesis (teaching). Practice of study and mentoring that encompassed 2-3 years; rigorous post-conversion instruction and reflection.
- V. Paul and Timothy in the Pastoral Epistles (I & II Tim.)
 - a. Training – 1 Tim 4:11-16 – high concentration of philosophical training regimen language.
 - i. 4:6 – Show them what a good servant looks like.
 - ii. 4:8 – Physical training; common Stoic metaphor for training / advancement
 - iii. 4:12 – Emphasis on example; Stoic “living ideal”
 - iv. 4:14 – “Until I come, devote yourself to the *public reading of Scripture*, to preaching, and to teaching.”
 1. Always assumed that Paul is teaching Timothy the proper function of the minister with regard to corporate assembly & worship.
 2. In Greek text, the words “public” and “of Scripture” are not present. Literally, the text reads, “Devote yourself to reading, preaching, and teaching.”
 3. Stoic philosophers emphasized the importance of lifelong learning through reading the ancient texts of Chryssipus, other “founding fathers” of Stoicism
 4. Paul is encouraging Timothy to continue to devote himself to study, reflecting on the same Scriptures that have made him wise for salvation (2 Tim 3:16)
 5. Even toward the end of his life, Paul will model this for Timothy: “When you come, bring the cloak I left with Carpus at Troas, *and my scrolls, especially the parchments*,” (2 Tim 4:13). Scrolls & parchments – the copies of the Scriptures. Paul continues to study.
 - v. Teaching is part of the Stoic philosophical training regimen that Paul emphasizes in his discipling of Timothy.
- VI. Grounding text for project: 2 Tim 3:10

- a. "You, however, know me all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings..."
 - b. Today's emphasis: teaching. Mentors must be capable of spiritually forming through teaching.
- VII. Appreciative interviews
- a. Sharing and active listening
 - b. Each partner has a time to share and a time to listen
 - c. Inquisitive statement: "Which Bible story or character is most meaningful to you?" MDT participants have brought an artifact that represents this teaching from Scripture. Use your artifact to explain the teaching.
- VIII. Meaning-making
- IX. Prayer
- X. Next week: Paul's statement regarding, "My faith."
- a. Come prepared to share your "conversion" story. How did you come to faith?

MDT Session 3 – Sept. 16, 2013 – 9:00am

- I. Welcome / Introduction
- II. A Mentoring “Artifact”: Cinnamon rolls!
- III. Project
 - a. Purpose: to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair.
 - b. Emphasize the importance of relationship in discipling
- IV. Review
 - a. Week 1 – Disciple: the Biblical term for a follower of Jesus
 - i. One who “follows behind” Jesus
 - ii. One who “walks alongside” fellow disciples
 - b. Week 2 – 2 Tim 3:10 – Teaching
 - i. Early church practice of *catechesis*
 - ii. Training language in Pastoral Epistles – Paul borrows heavily from the Stoic philosophers
 - iii. 1 Tim 4:14 – “Until I come, devote yourself to the *public reading of Scripture*, to preaching, and to teaching.”
 1. The words “public” and “Scripture” are not in the original Greek.
 2. Paul is encouraging Timothy to devote himself to studying the Scriptures, the ancient teachings; perhaps the apostolic teaching as well.
- V. This week, we emphasize another facet of 2 Tim 3:10 – “my faith”
 - a. Timothy is known to Paul as “my true child in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2)
 - b. The relationship is one of spiritual parentage: Paul’s faith has been an integral part in Timothy’s development
 - c. Language of fictive kinship indicates the depth of relationship
 - i. Paul – single; no children
 - ii. Timothy – Greek father; presumably not a believer
 - iii. Mutual faith provides context for mutually beneficial relationship
 - d. 1 Tim 1:12-17 – Paul narrates his spiritual autobiography in two distinct chapters:
 - i. “Formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent” (v13); “acted ignorantly in unbelief” (v13); chief of sinners (v15)
 - ii. “But I received mercy...and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (v13-14)
 - iii. Paul narrates his “faith story” as a means of instructing and discipling his young protégé Timothy.
 - iv. This is similar to Paul’s statements in 2 Tim 3:10ff as Paul recounts his spiritual story in his correspondence with Timothy
 - v. Also matches the record in Acts where Paul shares his spiritual autobiography in Acts 22 and 26.

- VI. Appreciative interviews
 - a. Sharing and active listening
 - b. Inquisitive statement: "Share part of your faith story with your partner."
- VII. Meaning-making
- VIII. Prayer
- IX. Next week: we continue to use 2 Tim 3:10 to guide our discussion. Paul tells Timothy that he has followed / known "my patience". Next week, come prepared to discuss a time when you learned the value of spiritual patience, "waiting on the Lord", etc.

MDT Session 4 – Sept. 23, 2013 – 9:00am

- I. Welcome / Introduction
- II. Project
 - a. Purpose: to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair
 - b. Emphasize the importance of relationship in discipling
- III. Review
 - a. Week 1 – Disciple: the Biblical term for a follower of Jesus
 - i. One who “follows behind” Jesus
 - ii. One who “walks alongside” fellow disciples
 - iii. We shared some of our primary spiritual influences
 - b. Week 2 – 2 Tim 3:10 – “My Teaching”
 - i. As part of his training regimen, Timothy is instructed by the Apostle Paul to devote himself “to the reading, to preaching, and to teaching,” (1 Tim 4:14)
 - ii. “The reading” is likely a reference to Scripture; could also be a reference to a collection of Paul’s teaching
 - iii. We shared some of our favorite teachings / Bible characters
 - c. Week 3 – 2 Tim 3:10 – “My Faith”
 - i. 1 Tim 1:12-17 – Paul narrates his spiritual autobiography in two distinct chapters: before and after knowing Christ
 - ii. Consistent with the testimony in the book of Acts: Paul is consistently “telling his story” --- see Acts 22 & 26
 - iii. We shared a portion of our “faith story”, either our initial conversion story or a more recent experience that contributed to our spiritual formation
- IV. This week, we emphasize another facet of 2 Tim 3:10 – “my patience” and “my endurance”
 - a. The Greek word for “patience” in the text is *makrothymia*; longsuffering, patient, implying the quality of a person who has the power to avenge himself, yet refrains from doing so.
 - b. Later in the same verse, Paul talks about his “endurance” using the Greek word *hypomone*. Uses this term as an entrée to remind Timothy of the persecutions and sufferings he experienced at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (stoned, driven out of town, etc.)
 - c. *Makrothymia* is patience with respect to persons – more of a relational term. Used often of God to describe His merciful patience toward us.
 - d. *Hypomone* is bearing up under trials – more circumstantial. *Hypomone* is associated with hope and refers to that quality of character that does not allow one to surrender to circumstances.
 - e. In recounting his story to Timothy, Paul uses both terms:
 - i. “My patience” – Paul’s interactions with others – not always the most patient. See Acts 15 – Paul separates from Barnabas over John Mark. By the time Paul writes 2 Timothy, the virtue

of patience has been formed more fully in him. He is able to commend himself as an example of patience to the younger Timothy.

- ii. “My endurance” – Paul’s resilience in dealing with adversity, persecution, and suffering. See 2 Cor 11:23-27, “Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one – I am talking like a madman – with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

f. These two concepts are built into Paul’s reflection in 2 Tim 3:10.

V. Appreciative interviews

- a. Sharing and active listening
- b. Inquisitive statement: “Share a time when you learned the value of spiritual patience, either in dealing with others (*makrothymia*) or in the face of challenging circumstances which required you to demonstrate endurance (*hypomone*). In other words, share a time when you learned how to wait on the Lord; or share a time in your life when you learned the value of endurance.”

VI. Meaning-making

VII. Prayer

VIII. Next week: we continue to use 2 Tim 3:10 to guide our discussion. Paul tells Timothy that he has followed / known “my love”. Next week, come prepared to talk about:

- a. An individual who has modeled the love of God for you
- b. Or, if you’re feeling creative, you can bring an artifact that expresses God’s love to you in a powerful way

MDT Session 5 – Sept. 30, 2013 – 9:00am

- I. Welcome / Introduction
- II. Project
 - a. Purpose: to develop an intentional mentoring model for disciple formation at Mayfair
 - b. Emphasize the importance of relationship in discipling
- III. Review
 - a. Week 1 – Disciple: the Biblical term for a follower of Jesus
 - i. One who “follows behind” Jesus
 - ii. One who “walks alongside” fellow disciples
 - iii. We shared some of our primary spiritual influences
 - b. Week 2 – 2 Tim 3:10 – “My Teaching”
 - i. As part of his training regimen, Timothy is instructed by the Apostle Paul to devote himself “to the reading, to preaching, and to teaching,” (1 Tim 4:14)
 - ii. “The reading” is likely a reference to Scripture; could also be a reference to a collection of Paul’s teaching
 - iii. We shared some of our favorite teachings / Bible characters
 - c. Week 3 – 2 Tim 3:10 – “My Faith”
 - i. 1 Tim 1:12-17 – Paul narrates his spiritual autobiography in two distinct chapters: before and after knowing Christ
 - ii. Consistent with the testimony in the book of Acts: Paul is consistently “telling his story” --- see Acts 22 & 26
 - iii. We shared a portion of our “faith story”, either our initial conversion story or a more recent experience that contributed to our spiritual formation
 - d. Week 4 – 2 Tim 3:10 – “My patience / endurance”
 - i. The Greek word for patience is often used with respect to persons – more of a relational term. Used often of God to describe His merciful patience toward us.
 - ii. The word for endurance is often used to describe bearing up under trials – more of a circumstantial descriptor.
 - iii. In recounting his story to Timothy, Paul uses both terms:
- IV. Today, we look at one final component of 2 Tim 3:10 – “my love”
 - a. Paul’s relationship with Timothy is characterized as a relationship of love.
 - i. 2 Tim 1:2, Paul refers to Timothy as “beloved child.”
 - 1. Paul – no biological children
 - 2. Timothy – earthly father presumably not a believer
 - 3. Relationship is a mutual experience of love of God and love for others. Formative for both.
 - ii. 1 Cor 4:17, Paul commends Timothy to the Corinthians as a beloved son, faithful to the Lord. “He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.”

1. Timothy is an incarnation of Paul's way of life and teaching, a living ideal among the Corinthians.
 2. This way of life is characterized by the term *agape*, the distinctly Christian love for God mixed with love for others.
 - iii. In his final days, Paul calls for Timothy, his beloved child in the faith to join him prior to his departure (2 Tim 4:9). As his earthly life draws to a close, Paul wants to be in the presence of his beloved disciple, his son in the faith.
- b. "How do you know you are loved?"
- V. Appreciative interviews
- a. Sharing and active listening
 - b. Inquisitive statement: "Share about an individual who has modeled the love of God for you. Or share with your partner an artifact that expresses God's love to you in a powerful way."
- VI. Meaning-making
- VII. Prayer
- VIII. Schedule for the next few weeks:
- a. Next Monday, Oct. 7th: NO MEETING
 - b. Monday, Oct. 14th: NO MEETING (Columbus Day)
 - i. Instead, MDT will meet on Tuesday, Oct. 15th at 9:00am.
 - c. Monday, Oct. 21st: regularly scheduled meeting time (9:00am)
 - d. Monday, Oct. 28th: final meeting (9:00am)

MDT Model Construction – Part 1 Review

Important factors we discussed last week:

1. **Covenant** – important factor in creating an environment of trust.
2. **Group dynamic** – closed set. Small, controlled group setting helped make this work. Question: How do we replicate this in a mentoring model for the congregation?
3. **Group size** – Ideal size would be no more than 15; 10 might be the target number. Too many decreases the intimate setting; logistically, creates problems.
4. **Time** – major issue. Our sessions lasted for 2 hours on many weeks. Impractical for a long-term model for the congregation. Time and group size are interrelated points.
5. **Intentionality** – Group was formed intentionally; perhaps follow the same model moving forward.
6. **Swapping partners each week** – some were in favor, brought variety to each week's meeting; but others wondered what we missed out on by switching. True “mentoring” requires consistency.
7. **Eliminate “meaning-making” portion** – If the focus is on the one-on-one relationship being built, then the meaning-making portion is non-essential.
8. **Content** – Material from the Pastoral Epistles and Paul / Timothy was good. Useful for our purposes. Not the only textual model; could consider other options at some point (Moses / Joshua; Naomi / Ruth; Elijah / Elisha; Jesus / disciples).
9. **Problem: How do you selectively choose mentors to be a part of this?**

How do we construct a model incorporating these important factors?

APPENDIX H
COMPLETED MODEL

Proposal: An Intentional Mentoring Model for Disciple Formation at Mayfair

The following is one potential point of application generated by the Model Development Team (MDT) over the course of my intervention.

Form: Class setting, either Sunday AM or Wednesday PM

Length: 6 class sessions in total; periodic “offline” meetings to follow

Size: 10 participants; 5 mentors, 5 protégés

Covenant: Participants covenant together to honor and respect one another, to make these sessions a priority.

Prior to the class, identify 5 young adults who are hungry for mentorship. These 5 individuals will be identified, at least initially, from within the young professional and young marrieds Bible classes. (Future applications of this model need not be limited to these groups.) Recommendations from the ministry staff, particularly those who work closely with these two groups, will help identify ideal protégé candidates.

These mentees would be asked to answer the following questions: **“If you could spend time with an older brother or sister here at Mayfair, who would it be? Who do you respect? Who would you like to learn from, someone who you believe could help you grow spiritually?”** These names will be used to “recruit” mentors for the ensuing sessions. In circumstances where a potential protégé has difficulty identifying a potential mentor, staff members will make recommendations.

This process will help us avoid the problems of selectively choosing mentors from within the congregation. Not all Mayfair members --- even her older members --- are sufficiently formed spiritually to capably mentor a younger disciple. However, tapping into the respect protégés have for their potential mentors alleviates the problems inherent in a discriminatory mentor-selection process. By asking the potential protégés to identify the “living ideals” they respect, the mentoring model demonstrates consistency with the Stoic philosophy that undergirds the project.

Mentors and protégés will partner with one another for the duration of the sessions. These pairings will provide a consistency to the ensuing sessions reflective of the ongoing relationship Paul enjoyed with Timothy. Mentoring group participants will meet for 6 one-hour class sessions as a way of forming the mentor-protégé

relationship. Jason Bybee will serve as facilitator and leader of all mentoring group sessions.

The 6 class sessions will follow this schedule:

Session 1: “Mentoring the Mentors”

Session 1 is for the mentors only. Jason will establish the context for the mentoring groups through teaching on the nature of biblical discipleship, seeking to establish the working definition of discipleship as “following behind Jesus, walking alongside one another.” Session content will also consist of a brief examination of discipleship in the ancient world as demonstrated from a secular, philosophical perspective (as gleaned from the teachings of Epictetus and Seneca) as well as the relationship of Paul and Timothy as expressed in the Pastoral Epistles. 2 Tim 3:10ff will be highlighted as the foundational text for the remainder of the sessions.

Following this teaching content, mentors are asked, “**Who has mentored you? Who are some of your greatest spiritual influences?**” The groups will share their responses with one another as a means of adopting the mentoring mindset for the next 5 weeks. This exercise underscores one of the primary tenets of the project: spiritual autobiography is one of the greatest resources available to us for mentoring and discipling.

The ensuing sessions would follow the general chronology of our MDT Sessions, using 2 Tim 3:10 as a template.

Session 2: “My Story: Sharing about our spiritual influences”

Mentors and protégés are introduced to the 2 Tim 3:10 text and engage in appreciative interviews by responding to the following inquisitive statement: “Tell me about one of the most positive spiritual influences in your life. Why was he or she so special to you?”

Session 3: “My Teaching: Sharing about significant Scriptures”

Mentors and protégés examine Paul’s statement that Timothy has known and followed his teaching. Appreciative interviews allow for a response to the following inquisitive statement: “Which Bible story or character is most meaningful to you?”

Session 4: “My Faith: Sharing about our faith stories”

Mentors and protégés examine Paul’s statement that Timothy has known and followed his faith. Appreciative interviews allow for a response to the following inquisitive statement: “Tell me about your faith story, either your conversion or what God is doing in your life right now.”

Session 5: “My Endurance: Sharing about the hard lesson of perseverance”

Mentors and protégés examine Paul’s statement that Timothy has known and followed his endurance. Appreciative interviews allow for a response to the

following inquisitive statement: “Share about a time when you learned the value of spiritual patience or spiritual endurance.”

Session 6: “My Love: Sharing about God’s conduits of love in our lives”

Mentors and protégés examine Paul’s statement that Timothy has known and followed his love. Appreciative interviews allow for a response to the following inquisitive statement: “Tell me about someone who has embodied God’s love in your life.”

Each of these sessions will follow the same general pattern:

- An introductory portion of teaching to establish the context from 2 Tim 3:10 and the relationship of Paul and Timothy (10-15 minutes).
- An appreciative interview exercise where mentors and mentees participate in sharing and active listening. Each week, an inquisitive statement pertaining to the session’s teaching content frames the appreciative interview. Sufficient time will be given for both mentor and mentee to share their responses (30 minutes).
- Sessions will conclude with closing remarks and comments from the group (5-10 minutes).
- Sessions 2-6 will draw content directly from Paul’s language in 2 Tim 3:10, “You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings – what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.”

At the beginning of Session 2, mentors and protégés will enter into a covenant together, agreeing to fully participate in all sessions, to respect and appreciate their fellow disciples who are participating in the mentoring group, and to be good stewards of the personal stories we will share with one another. By covenanting together, the mentoring group establishes the trust necessary for spiritually nourishing relationships to develop.

Mentors and protégés also covenant to walk together for at least one year. At the conclusion of the 6 mentoring group sessions delineated above, mentors and protégés will meet together at least once a month in a less “formal” environment: talking over coffee; sharing lunch together; gathering their families together for a meal after worship on Sunday. The structure of these meetings is to be determined by each individual mentor-protégé pairing. The goal of these continued meetings is to create increased relational proximity in order for the narration of spiritual autobiography to continue to occur.

APPENDIX I

PROTOCOL FOR CODING FIELD NOTES

Protocol for Coding Field Notes:

1. Immediately following each MDT session, transfer handwritten field notes to digital file (Microsoft Word document).
2. For duration of MDT sessions, continue to add observations and reflections to field notes files.
3. At completion of MDT sessions, read through complete set of field notes, using margins for notations of questions, keywords, and reflections. (Open coding)
4. Index emerging themes in separate digital file.
5. Engage in process of categorizing themes and sub-themes; as new themes and connections emerge, generate new iterations of coding scheme.
6. Using “straw man” coding scheme, re-read field notes and make notations using numeric coding schema. Themes and sub-themes are either confirmed or found lacking; as new themes and connections emerge, generate new iterations of coding scheme to match field note data. (Focused coding)
7. Produce final Coding Scheme for Field Notes

Questions to inform analysis of field notes and production of Coding Scheme:

1. How do MDT participants conceptualize an intentional mentoring model in terms of essential components?
2. How do MDT participants conceptualize the ideal mentor?
3. How do MDT participants conceptualize the ideal protégé?
4. How do MDT participants understand the power of their spiritual autobiography?
5. How do MDT sessions provide the opportunity for participants to be formed by the narration of spiritual autobiography?

APPENDIX J

FIELD NOTES CODING SCHEME

Field Notes Coding Scheme

1. Model

- 1.1. Essential Principles
 - 1.1.1. Covenant Commitment
 - 1.1.2. Relational Emphasis: Following Behind, Walking Beside
 - 1.1.3. Appreciation for unique nature of our stories
 - 1.1.4. Appreciation for universal nature of God's story
 - 1.1.5. Scriptural / spiritual content
 - 1.1.6. Generational differentiation
 - 1.1.7. Consistent pairings of mentors to protégés
 - 1.1.7.1. Investment of time
 - 1.1.7.2. Acknowledgement of / openness to fictive kinship relationship
 - 1.1.8. Attention to logistics
 - 1.1.8.1. Length of mentor commitment
 - 1.1.8.2. Size of mentoring group
 - 1.1.8.3. Order / length of mentoring sessions
 - 1.1.8.4. Selection of mentors
 - 1.1.9. Appreciative Questions
- 1.2. Polarities to Manage
 - 1.2.1. Discipleship as event and process
 - 1.2.2. Discipleship as individual and communal endeavor
 - 1.2.3. Mythic and Parabolic Narration
 - 1.2.4. Intentional Structure and Organic Interactions

2. Mentor

- 2.1. Character of the Ideal Mentor
 - 2.1.1. Example
 - 2.1.2. Living Ideal
 - 2.1.3. Humility
 - 2.1.4. Spiritual Maturity
 - 2.1.5. Authenticity
 - 2.1.6. Ethos
 - 2.1.7. Living a good story
 - 2.1.8. Windows through which we see Jesus
 - 2.1.9. Willingness to mentor

- 2.2. Practices of the Ideal Mentor
 - 2.2.1. Sharing spiritual autobiography
 - 2.2.2. Encourage / Affirm
 - 2.2.3. Listen
 - 2.2.4. Patience
- 2.3. Polarities to Manage
 - 2.3.1. Encouragement and Hard Sayings
 - 2.3.2. Sharing and Listening

3. Protégé

- 3.1. Character of the Ideal Protégé
 - 3.1.1. Desire to be mentored
 - 3.1.2. Willingness to commit
 - 3.1.3. Humility
 - 3.1.4. Spiritual Maturity
 - 3.1.5. Authenticity
- 3.2. Practices of the Ideal Protégé
 - 3.2.1. Sharing spiritual autobiography
 - 3.2.2. Listen
- 3.3. Polarities to Manage
 - 3.3.1. Being mentored and becoming mentors
 - 3.3.2. Sharing and Listening

APPENDIX K

QUESTIONNAIRE CODING SCHEME

Questionnaire Coding Scheme

1. Model

- 1.1. Essential Principles
 - 1.1.1. Covenant Commitment
 - 1.1.2. Relational Emphasis: Following Behind, Walking Beside
 - 1.1.2.1. Pre-existing relationships
 - 1.1.3. Appreciation for unique nature of our stories
 - 1.1.4. Appreciation for universal nature of God's story
 - 1.1.5. Scriptural / spiritual content
 - 1.1.6. Generational differentiation
 - 1.1.7. Attention to logistics
 - 1.1.7.1. Length of mentor commitment
 - 1.1.7.2. Size of mentoring group
 - 1.1.7.3. Order / length of mentoring sessions
 - 1.1.7.4. Selection of mentors
 - 1.1.7.5. Selection of protégés
 - 1.1.7.6. Target date for launch
 - 1.1.8. Appreciative Questions
 - 1.1.9. Accountability / Follow-up
 - 1.1.10. Fellowship meal at beginning and conclusion
- 1.2. Polarities to Manage
 - 1.2.1. Discipleship as event and process
 - 1.2.2. Discipleship as individual and communal endeavor
 - 1.2.3. Mythic and Parabolic Narration
 - 1.2.4. Intentional Structure and Organic Interactions

2. Mentor

- 2.1. Character of the Ideal Mentor
 - 2.1.1. Example
 - 2.1.2. Living Ideal
 - 2.1.3. Humility
 - 2.1.4. Spiritual Maturity
 - 2.1.5. Authenticity
 - 2.1.6. Windows through which we see Jesus
 - 2.1.7. Willingness to mentor
- 2.2. Practices of the Ideal Mentor

- 2.2.1. Sharing spiritual autobiography
- 2.2.2. Encourage / Affirm

3. Protégé

- 3.1. Character of the Ideal Protégé
 - 3.1.1. Desire to be mentored
 - 3.1.2. Willingness to commit
 - 3.1.3. Humility
 - 3.1.4. Spiritual Maturity
 - 3.1.5. Authenticity
- 3.2. Practices of the Ideal Protégé
 - 3.2.1. Sharing spiritual autobiography
- 3.3. Polarities to Manage
 - 3.3.1. Being mentored and becoming mentors

APPENDIX L

REPORT FROM INDEPENDENT EXPERT

Dr. Earl Lavender, Lipscomb University Review of Mentoring Model

Initial Impressions:

My initial impressions of the model are very positive.

- Your project appears to be a highly effective tool to help spiritually form persons in relationship. I'm saying this based on the high level of interactivity, spiritual narration, and intentionality your model demonstrates.
- In my view, this is why the church is not functioning in a lot of places. Church has become a passive, consumer-oriented enterprise in many instances. In areas where the church flourishes, there is an appreciation of story, community, and personhood. This model reflects these essential matters.
- I define spiritual formation as people finding themselves in God's Story. Across the board, people want their story validated or interpreted. This model succeeds in validating and interpreting individual stories in light of God's Story.

Strengths:

- One of the great strengths of this model is the openness to learning that undergirds it. Your research has guided the model development; it doesn't seem as if you've been beholden to any particular preconceived notions. Rather, your model is a natural extension of your research. Your process has been shaped by your research of the mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy.
- I also see your emphasis on narrative leadership and appreciative inquiry as a major strength. There is something intrinsically biblical about this process you've engaged in. I find it foundational that God does not come to us with a set of answers in scripture to give us a prescriptive way of understanding reality. Instead, He offers us this rich and compelling narrative where He takes people in with all their brokenness and failings and allows them to live their story according to His Story, to live a more redemptive and complete story. Your project exercises narrative leadership by entreating participants to understand themselves and their stories in light of the ultimate reality of God's Story.

- I am intrigued by your use of appreciative inquiry for spiritual formation, which parallels some of the practices I have personally engaged in as a mentor to young college students. I have experimented with this in several of my classes as well as with some of my one-on-one mentoring relationships. Asking these kinds of positive questions is an effective way of eliciting a level of sharing that contributes to persons being formed in community. What a gift of healing to your community to be able to share their brokenness and their joys in settings like this!
- The appreciative inquiry exercises seem to be the key to growth here. Growth can only start when you're working out of who you are. A lot of spiritual formation processes don't work because they're imposed from outside yet they never connect to your story. Formation can't take place because the process is external to the person. Your model, however, allows spiritual formation to occur from the inside out. You're asking people to draw their story closer to God's Story. This is essential in guiding spiritually formative practices. You're teaching people to engage in these practices, not simply because the Bible says so, but because these practices help us understand who we are and who God is. That's spiritual formation.
- These practices also stand to benefit the mentor as much as the protégé. In my experience as a mentor, I have been formed spiritually by the rich relationships I have developed with my protégés. They have formed me spiritually in rich ways and I'm excited to see the way your mentors will be nurtured and enriched by the application of this model at Mayfair.
- I know of no better way to do this than the model you've laid out here. Your process is well thought out and ready for implementation. We have to know one another's stories or we can't hold one another accountable, we can't grow together as God's people.

Concerns:

- Question: How applicable will this model be to the masses? I'm not saying it won't be applicable, but it is important to recognize that not all will be excited about sharing their story in this kind of environment. Also, not everyone is going to be in favor of an "official" mentoring program. Expect some push back here from those who choose not to participate.
- No matter what, this interaction cannot look forced. The younger generation will bail if this model ever feels too programmatic. You are allowing for the relationship to develop naturally, but keep this in mind as you work toward application.
- The bottom line is that much depends on the receptivity of the participants. Their level of commitment to the program will be a major determiner of success. However, given my understanding of the Mayfair church, I would say you all possess a tremendous, even uncommon, desire to serve the Lord that I don't encounter in many other places. I don't anticipate this being a major problem at Mayfair.

- The issue with many mentoring programs is that the ones who need it the most will never step forward and say they need mentoring. However, if you add a significant “Go and do likewise” component, your protégés could possibly reach out and engage these who are reluctant to participate in your model.

Toward future application:

- First of all, I hope you’ll continue to reflect openness to learning as this model is applied at Mayfair. You’ll find what works and what doesn’t work and future iterations of the model will expand and grow to look different than these early applications. However, consider this a joyful exercise in learning.
- For instance, the meaning-making portion doesn’t necessarily need to be jettisoned in order for the model to work. Instead, maybe you can experiment with this and determine the best way to use the interaction of every mentor-protégé pairing to shape all who participate. Be open to tweaking the model as you see fit in future applications.
- I think you have a unique opportunity to encourage and train your leaders to ask the essential question: “Tell me your story.” As I have already pointed out, people are going to be at different level of willingness to share. And yet, everyone wants to tell their story. With the right kind of training of your key leaders, I could see this spreading throughout the entire church. The more you apply this and tweak this, the more your concept will permeate the entire culture of your church, creating an even greater atmosphere of spiritually formative practices.
- As this kind of familiarity with the language of story continues to permeate, then I could envision the church taking this question to the community. When our fundamental posture in the community becomes one of saying, “Tell me your story,” the missional implications are limitless. One of the most evangelistic things we can say is, “Tell me your story.”
- To that end, I could envision you bringing all your educators together across all generations (teachers of adult, teen, and children’s classes) and begin an entire shift in emphasis, away from information dissemination and toward spiritual formation. People can get information anywhere these days. What they’re looking for are life skills. Wisdom. Examples. This calls for mentoring. I personally believe that if my lectures in class don’t lead students to come by my office, then I’m not doing my job well. The point of all of this is relationship and participation in the learning process is where change really occurs. This kind of interaction really brings about spiritual formation.
- Also, I’m not as concerned about generational differentiation. I mentor plenty of students and consider them my friends. Of course, there is significant generational differentiation between us, but that’s not the primary understanding of our relationship. I think this kind of model could be used to form my mentor relationship with my students; but it could just as easily be applied in peer-to-peer relationships with other students, or between marriage partners, or myriad other applications.

BRIEF VITA

Jason Bybee was born in Nashville, Tennessee on November 2, 1976 and grew up in the nearby community of Lebanon where he attended Friendship Christian School. He graduated from Lipscomb University in 1999 with a bachelor of arts in Bible. Jason served as the youth minister for the Northeast Church of Christ in Kingsport, Tennessee from 1999 – 2002. From 2002 – 2004, Jason was campus minister for Madison Academy, a private K-12 Christian school in Madison, Alabama. In 2002, Jason joined the staff of the Mayfair Church of Christ where he currently serves as one of the preaching ministers. He completed a Master of Divinity degree at Lipscomb in 2008. Jason married Sunny, his high school sweetheart, in 1999. Together they have three children: Joshua, Abby Kate, and Jackson. The Bybee family lives in Huntsville, Alabama.

