

FACULTY FORUM

MENTORING FUTURE CHRISTIAN LEADERS: THE BIBLICAL CASE

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Mentoring Future Christian Leaders

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In this paper, I will focus my discussion on the biblical rationale for a mentoring internship in the training of future pastors and church planters. The development of a sound biblical basis for mentoring pastors and church planters is vital if churches and educational institutions are to profitably partner together in the grand task of fully equipping future Christian ministers of the Gospel. It is insufficient to ground mentoring in a pragmatic judgment that mentoring is being popularly utilized in the business and educational worlds of our day.

My objective is to demonstrate that the concept of mentoring Christian workers through a well-conceived internship is not a novel idea. The Scriptures, in both testaments, provide many examples of relationships that reveal mentoring dynamics. Each biblical example can be profitably studied to discover principles for the mentoring of modern day pastors and church developers. Though the words “mentoring” and “mentor” do not occur in the inspired text, the concept is found abundantly throughout the pages of Scripture, both in pattern and precept. The primary examples of field-based mentoring of ministers of the gospel are seen in the New Testament (NT) records, in the ministry models of Christ and his apostles. Yet the Old Testament (OT) also gives us rich insights of mentoring relationships. If we define mentoring as “a relational experience in which one person empowers another person by the sharing of God given resources”¹ then wonderful illustrations of mentoring can be seen in the older testament.

OLD TESTAMENT MENTORING

One fine example of leadership mentoring can be seen in the life and contribution of Jethro to his son-in-law Moses (Exod 18). Jethro has often been cited as an insightful OT example of discipleship, counseling and encouragement, but he also certainly demonstrates the marks of a faithful mentor toward Moses. Finding Moses troubled and overworked as a leader after the challenge of Egypt and the arduous journey to Rephidim, Jethro displays excellent listening skills and genuine concern for his son-in-law's welfare (vv. 7-8). He celebrates the victories God's people have experienced under Moses' leadership (vv. 9-10) and even worships with him (v.12). Jethro is observant and asks appropriate and probing questions which enable Moses to take a more honest look at reality (vv.13-14). Coming alongside as a friend and not as an authority, he challenges unproductive behavior and then discerningly provides valuable wisdom as a resource to help Moses through his time of ministry need (vv. 17-23). In addition to teaching his son-in-law the invaluable lesson of delegation, he empowers him by pointing to a workable plan to have others bear the burden of judging the people. Jethro's wise counsel not only enhances the capacity of Moses and his leadership team (Aaron and the elders) but also ensures the future well-being of God's people (vv. 22-26). It is striking that all of his solid advice is given in the context of genuine love for God, the work of God, and the man of God (vv.11-12). Jethro's words and actions

¹ Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992), 33.

display a relational posture of encouragement, uphold Moses' God-given leadership, and ultimately reaffirm God's purposes for Moses and the nation. Good mentors do all of these things and more.

A second OT example of life-on-life leadership mentoring is found in Moses with his successor Joshua (Deut 31:1-8; 34:9). Realizing that he would die before entry into the Promised Land, Moses commissioned and prepared Joshua to lead the Hebrew people into Canaan. Repeatedly he identified Joshua before the people as God's future leader of the nation and encourages him to find his strength not in his own abilities but in the Lord and His continuing presence (Num 27:18-22; Deut 31:7; 34:7). He also began passing on the leadership baton by entrusting Joshua with important responsibilities (Num. 13:16). Joshua was expected to spend time with Moses before taking on the mantle of leadership. Having been taught by the Lord and himself mentored by Jethro, Moses was able to pass on important spiritual experiences to his young protégé (Exod 24:13; 33:11). As a result of Moses' intentional mentoring, we are told Joshua was "full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him" (Deut 34:9). Related OT texts confirm that the Lord Himself is the giver of wisdom and skill (Exod 28:3; 32:3; 35:31; Mic 3:8), but significantly here we see that He used the veteran leader Moses to help equip Joshua for the leadership challenge ahead.² In the end, Moses empowered Joshua by modeling leadership and giving him credibility in the eyes of God's people.

Moses' mentoring ministry is evident as well in the preparation of Caleb, a young leader whom he also groomed for leadership, inspiring in him an unwavering faith in God's promises (Num 13:1-13; 14:6-9; 34:16-19). Interestingly, Joshua and Caleb stand together to urge God's people to have faith in God's power and protection to bring them safely into the land of promise (Num 14:6-9). They properly pinpoint the peoples' fearful reaction as rebellion against the Lord and His purposes. The strong confidence in God which they display, even under the threat of stoning (14:10), gives evidence that Moses' mentoring ministry in their lives had prepared them well to be future leaders. God's subsequent blessing on both of these young leaders shows his approval of their faith in the promises of God (Num 14:30, 38; 26:25).

The prophet Elijah and his successor Elisha exemplify a third OT illustration of a fruitful mentoring relationship. Elijah not only recruited his designated successor but apparently tutored him in the ways of the Lord while Elisha ministered to the senior prophet's needs (1 Kgs 19:16-21; 2 Kgs 2:1-16; 3:11). Elisha's passion for following the Lord and his allegiance to his mentor is evidenced by his immediate abandonment of his normal employment and family ties when called by the senior prophet (1 Kgs 19:20-21).

It is also noteworthy that the prophet Elijah evidently had some sort of "school of the prophets" where presumably he instructed and equipped many younger aspiring prophets of God. In the account of Elijah's translation to heaven at the end of his earthly career, there is repeated mention of a large group of fifty men called "sons of the prophets" (בְּנֵי-הַנְּבִיאִים) who were associated with the senior prophet's ministry (2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15). OT usage bears out that these men were not their physical descendents but groups of prophets

² "The phrase "I have filled him with the Spirit of God" (וָאֵמַלְא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים), Exod. 31:3; 35:31) and similar expressions (such as "I have filled him with a spirit of wisdom," Exod 28:3 cf. Deut 34:9; Mic 3:8) are linked to skill, ability, intelligence and wisdom—each time with the idea of God fitting the person for a particular mission to which He has called them; in each case the task serves the well-being of God's people.

normally affiliated with a prominent prophet like Samuel, Elijah or Elisha (cf. 1 Sam 10:5-10; 19:20; 1 Kgs 18:4; 20:35; 2 Kgs 4:1, 38-44; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1). While linguistic and textual evidence is insufficient to dogmatically state there was a professional training institute for these younger seers³, there is evidence that they were disciples of the seasoned men brought together for informal and periodic training.⁴ The senior prophets (Samuel, Elijah, Elisha) were evidently preparing them to become prophets as their lifework. “Sons of the prophets” in these OT contexts most certainly does not mean “children of the prophets”⁵ but likely has the connotation of an organized occupational grouping.⁶ The Hebrew phrase “sons of” can mean “members of a guild of”⁷

While Elijah’s actual mentoring of these servants of God is never stated in the text, it would be safe to presume that they learned by observation of and participation in the senior prophet’s ministry. Thus relational equipping and intentional empowerment for future ministry was taking place. This conclusion is borne out by earlier OT passages that indicate that the prophet Samuel evidently had some sort of mentoring relationships with two God-designated leaders: Saul (1 Sam 9-15) and David (1 Sam 16; 19:18-24).⁸

These OT illustrations of mentoring relationships, while not fleshed out with inspired instructions and guidelines, do enable us to perceive that veteran older men of God often took responsibility to tutor and invest in aspiring servants of God. Some involved long-term relationships while others were brief. Mentoring was face-to-face and involved the sharing of God-given resources (wisdom and experience) at teachable moments in the life and preparation of the younger leader. In each case, the younger leader was expected to spend quality time with their mentor in order to receive hands-on, on-the-job training. For example,

³ See T. Raymond Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC 13 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 25-26; and Jack Pearl Lewis, *The Schools of the Prophets*, *Restoration Quarterly* 9, no.1:1-10 (ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, 1996), 1-10. EBSCOhost (accessed April 8, 2010);

⁴ See Leon J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 20; 164-166; cf. Lewis, *The Schools of the Prophets*, 9. The view that these “sons” (בָּנִים) were actually disciples or students of the prophets is reinforced extra-biblically by the Targum rendering “students of the prophets” (תַּלְמִידֵי נְבִיאִים) and by Josephus who refers to Elisha as the “disciple” (μαθητής) of Elijah (*Ant.* IX. 28, 33) and later uses the same word for the unnamed prophet sent to anoint Jehu (2 Kgs 9:1; *Ant.* IX.106). John Calvin (*Calvin’s Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*. Vol. 2. Trans. J. Owen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950, 353) continued this teacher-student view which was then followed by most of the older scholars and commentators (see G. F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d., 392; Keil and Delitzsch *The Books of the Kings: Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Vol. 5. Trans. James Martin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1950, 5:290, 314, 323, 339). But according to Lewis (9), this traditional view of prophetic “schools” is now passé in modern studies of the prophets.

⁵ It seems highly unlikely that prophetic calling and inspiration is a hereditary possession.

⁶ Lewis, *The Schools of the Prophets*, 7-9. A parallel usage would be “the sons of the gatekeeper” in Ezra 2:42

⁷ cf. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1962), 69-70.

⁸ That the prophet Samuel also had a “company” of younger prophets which he led and trained is apparent in two significant earlier OT passages: 1 Sam 10:5-10; 19:20. (See Wood 1979, 164-166)

the student prophets gained intellectual and spiritual training not by withdrawal from the world but in the context of ministry in the world. Thus we see the vital role that established leaders can have in the training of future leaders.⁹

The OT book of Proverbs reminds us that all wisdom ultimately comes from God and yet is often received through the ministry of others. It is often passed on to the next generation through appropriate questions that encourage the emerging leader to reflect on his or her values and convictions. Proverbs speaks of the potential of relational mentoring as “iron sharpening iron” (27:17). It repeatedly mentions the benefit of listening carefully to wise counsel from those around us who seek to sharpen, challenge, and encourage us in order to help us succeed in life and vocation (10:17; 11:14; 12:15; 15:22; 20:5; 27:9; 28:23).

CHRIST’S MENTORING MODEL

Mentoring also reflects the very pattern of Jesus with His own disciples. Robert Coleman in his classic book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, describes Jesus’ plan for redeeming the world by personally investing Himself in a few key men in an apprenticeship/ discipleship relationship. A.B. Bruce in his classic work, *The Training of the Twelve*, lays out in great detail all that the twelve apostles learned and experienced in their discipleship relationship with Jesus over three years that prepared them to be “apostles.” Both books capture and express the essential dynamic employed by Jesus in preparing his disciples to be leaders of an emerging church planting movement.

The Gospel accounts reveal that Jesus related to people on various levels. Logan and Cole¹⁰ point to four levels of interpersonal relationships and roles of influence. First, was Jesus’ relationship to the multitudes; He taught and healed them (see Matt 5:1; 9:8). Second, was His relationship to His followers, often called “disciples.” He led them by example and later sent out seventy of them to preach (Luke 10:1-17). Because many of these witnessed His death and resurrection and would be the core group for the early Church, He lovingly shepherded and cared for them (Acts 1:15-26). Third, He had an even closer relationship with the Twelve. Uniquely chosen so that they might be with Him constantly, He invested three years of His life providing personalized teaching, guidance and equipping for these future Church leaders and Gospel preachers (Matt 10:2; 20:17; Mark 3:14). As the Master Disciple, He called them to make and multiply disciples (Matt 28:18-20). Finally, the Gospels show that Jesus set aside special time with the “inner three.” Because, these three apostles would become key leaders in the early stages of the Church He promised to build (Matt 16:18-19), Jesus is seen investing priority time with this inner circle on at least four occasions (Matt 17:1-8; 26:37; Mark 5:37-43; 13:3). As His apprentices, He brought them into His life and gave them specialized hands-on training and modeling. For Peter, James and John, the mentoring relationship became even more purposeful and strategic.

⁹ Jonathan and David are perhaps a final mentoring example found in the OT. If so, theirs is a type of peer mentoring relationship (1 Sam 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42) according to Stanley and Clinton (171-72).

¹⁰ E. Robert Logan and Neil Cole, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest*, (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart, 1992), 2:11-12.

These four levels of relationships can be pictured as a series of concentric circles as seen in Figure 1. Roger Martin, of The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting in Europe, points out:

Those on the outside of the circle required the most from Him, but were least significant in terms of His investment and ministry. Those on the inside were less demanding of Him, but actually were most significant in establishing a movement to reach the entire world. At the heart of His three year ministry was the mentoring of a few.¹¹

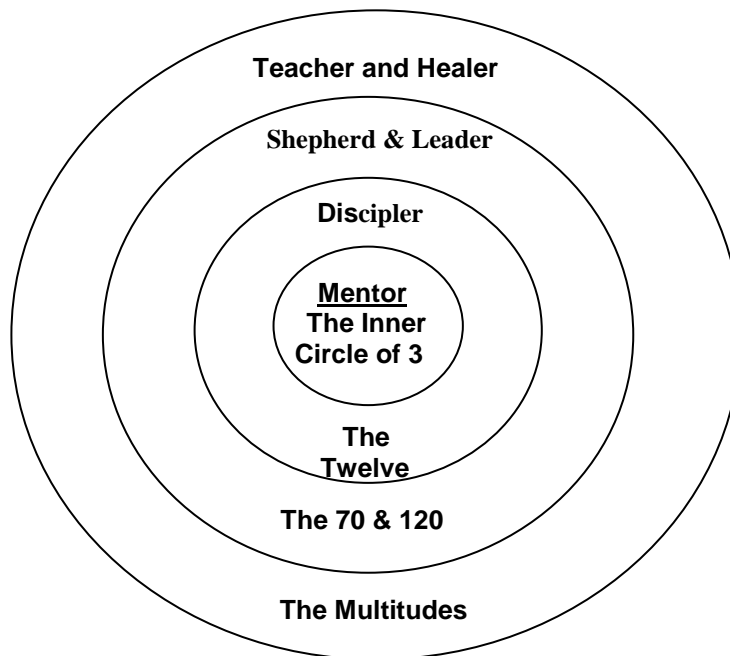


Figure 1 ¹²

Our Lord was effective in leadership mentoring and multiplication precisely because of the close relationships He cultivated with the Twelve, and in particular, the three. Logan observes, "Concentrated influence into the lives of a few future leaders can mean an investment that will multiply and outlast the [mentor's] own life."¹³

Significantly, Jesus called the Twelve to be "with Him" before He sent them out to preach and heal (Mark 3:13-15).¹⁴ His intent was a three-year "residency" whereby they were

¹¹ Robert W. Martin, and Regional Resource Team, *Mentoring Guidelines for Church Planters 2nd ed*, (Budapest, Hungary: The Alliance for Saturation, 1998), 35.

¹² Adapted from Robert E. Logan and Neil Cole, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources), 2:12; and Martin, 35.

¹³ Logan, 2:11.

¹⁴ The Gospels repeatedly record that Jesus spent quality time *with* both the Twelve and His broader band of disciples: Matt 26:20,36; Mark 3:7; 8:10; 11:11; Luke 6:17; 7:11; 8:1; 9:18; John 3:22; 6:3; 11:54; 18:1, 2. Being with Jesus was synonymous with being His disciple.

prepared for future ministry life-on-life. Günter Krallmann refers to this as the “with-ness” or “consociation” pedagogical principle.¹⁵ The essence of His instructional approach was association. Krallmann points out that the “with-ness” principle was practiced in Hebrew rabbinic tutoring and was essential for *information* (knowledge acquisition), for *formation* (character development), for *imitation* (reliable witness) and for *multiplication* (of disciples).¹⁶

Consociation has the sense of being joined together with another in an intimate union of persons, a personal companionship which leads to deeper fellowship. Christ’s men spent time with Him, lived with Him, followed Him almost everywhere He went, and observed His life and ministry. He intentionally made Himself very accessible to His men. He let them see Him minister in a variety of contexts to a variety of people.

Martin, summarizing the thought of Robert Coleman, states well Jesus’ intent:

Jesus regarded this kind of relationship with His disciples as the fertile soil for ministry preparation, relative to character, understanding, and skill development. It was pivotal to His training. Truth was not taught in abstract doctrines or regulations; it was caught in the experience of a shared life. Jesus intended that His disciples discern and absorb His vision, mindset, and method. He desired them to become saturated with the influences arising from His example, teaching, attitudes, actions and anointing.¹⁷

Krallmann believes the consociation principle of mentoring is “the heart and secret” of Jesus’ training method and model for mission.¹⁸ Even Jesus’ language revealed a more intimate communication with the Twelve which He did not have with the wider band of disciples. While the word “disciple” is found in the Gospels around 225 times in relationship to His followers, He only applies this term twice to the Twelve (John 13:35; 15:8). Instead, He called them “my brothers” (Matt 12:49, 28:10; John 20:17), “children” (Mark 10:24; John 21:5), “friends” (John 15:13-15) and “my friends” (Luke 12:4).¹⁹ This strong relational emphasis was inseparably linked to Jesus’ theocentric theology of leadership development. It was His passion to reflect His close relationship with the Father in all His relationships with His disciples (John 14:8-10; 15:9). Life transference, He knew, could only occur through the channel of committed relationships.²⁰

Jesus’ selection of the Twelve was not a haphazard or incidental process. He spent much time in prayer before carefully choosing His disciples (cf. Luke 6:12-19), men in whom He

¹⁵ Günter Krallmann, *Mentoring for Mission: A Handbook on Leadership Principles Exemplified by Jesus Christ*, (Waynesboro, GA: Gabriel Publishing, 2002), 50-55.

¹⁶ Ibid., 29-34.

¹⁷ Martin, *Mentoring Guidelines*, 36.

¹⁸ Krallmann, *Mentoring for Mission*, 53.

¹⁹ To promote humility, Jesus specifically forbade his disciples to even allow others to call them “rabbi” or “father” (Matt 23:8-12). He wanted them to see that *He* was to be each disciple’s teacher and master to whom they were accountable.

²⁰ Krallmann, *Mentoring for Mission*, 53-57.

could invest His life and to whom He would entrust the task of world evangelization. He was apparently selective and strategic regarding those He wanted to be His closest disciples (cf. Mark 3:13). Only those prepared to abandon all (occupation, family, and even life itself) to follow Him were to be viewed as genuine disciples of Jesus (Luke 14:25-27, 33). He required personal commitment to His authority and lordship. Thus a modern-day internship that carefully assesses and qualifies potential intern candidates has biblical precedent.

The broad procedural structuring of the mentor-based internship can also be shaped after the model of Christ. Craig Ott points out that Jesus' training model included four key elements: extended observation, verbal instruction, actual ministry experience and reflective debriefing. It is noteworthy that the disciples spent at least nine months hearing and watching Christ do ministry before doing any ministry on their own. The majority of Christ's personalized instruction of His disciples' focused primarily on basic understanding of the Gospel (Matt 13; Luke 17-19) and the Christ-dependent life (Matt 5-7; John 15-16);²¹ surprisingly, there was little instruction on precisely *how* the disciples were to do mission. Christ assumed they would simply emulate His example. To give them practical experience, Jesus repeatedly involved His disciples in hands-on ministry, often sending them out in pairs (Matt 10, Luke 10; cf. Mark 6:7-12).²² Ott points out that this "experiential learning" was "not in a controlled or artificial setting" and more than a "trial run." "The disciples were ministering to real people with real needs." Following these ministry assignments, we see Christ calling his teams back for a brief period of informal debriefing, allowing his disciples an opportunity to both evaluate and reflect on their ministry experiences (Luke 9:10-11; 10:17-24; Mark 6:30-31; 9:14-29). "These [crucial] debriefing sessions focused not merely on the functional development of skill but also on the total personal and spiritual development of the disciples."²³

Krallmann develops other key principles seen in Jesus' leadership mentoring strategy. As noted, there was first a call to *observation* ("Come and see"-- John 1:39), then to *imitation* ("Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" – Matt 4:19 cf. Luke 6:40), later to *continuation* even in the midst of adversity (Matt 10:26-28), and finally to *multiplication* (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; John 15:16). Christ was seeking to reproduce in His men "replicas of Himself." This was crucial because His purpose was "to launch a movement which could advance only by virtue of reproduction." Our Lord often mentored in a team setting, thereby providing mutual encouragement, stimulation, and challenge. They normally ministered and learned together, often in smaller groups. Finally, in His mentoring ministry, Jesus' aspiration was not to turn the Twelve into "brilliant scholars" or "shrewd theologians" but to be His reliable and Spirit-empowered witnesses (Mark 13:9; 15:27; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8), continuing His mission, proclaiming His message, and representing His person and work accurately. They were to be as His faithful emissaries for global advance.²⁴

²¹ Two exceptions are Jesus' task-oriented instructions before the sending of the Twelve (Matt 10:1-42 cf. Luke 9:1-6) and prior to sending out the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-16). But even these stressed the required commitment and total dependence upon God more than methodology.

²² Another classic example of hands-on involvement in ministry is the feeding of the five thousand, where the disciples assisted Christ in ministering to the masses (Luke 9:10-17).

²³ Craig Ott, *The Training of Lay Leaders in West German Free Churches: A Contextualized Model*, (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991), 31-51.

²⁴ Krallmann, 49-75.

This then was Jesus' leadership training approach. Instead of a classroom with a formal curriculum, Jesus' training was in the context of real life. Craig Ott²⁵ observes:

While Jesus at times taught in the synagogues, in the temple, or in public gatherings with students at his feet, the training [and mentoring] of the Twelve took place primarily on foot, on roads, in homes, at dinner parties or a wedding, in fields, on a lake, and generally in daily intercourse with people.

Jesus clearly built His training ministry on a discipleship relationship. He would teach and model God's truth and then, through on-the-job-training, give them practical experience where He later could evaluate the disciples' ministry. He would "show" them before He could "send" them. Minatrea clarifies this principle of experiential education: "Multiplying leadership can only be accomplished in the context of ministry, not in isolation from it."²⁶

Jesus' approach was always missional, focused on equipping them for community impact. In *The Leadership Baton*, Forman, Jones and Miller observe:

Jesus trained his disciples through the experience of a loving community, but he also developed them by immersing them in the wider community. His was no cozy leadership development club; it was a community that existed for the lost, lowest, and least.²⁷

Though His mentoring of leaders was always in the context of doing ministry in order to build competence and confidence for missional outreach, His priority and primary concern was always upon building character in His men. This is most evident in his focus on godliness in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). They had to *become* true disciples before they could make and multiply disciples.

Jesus' mentoring of his disciples was aimed at one overall training goal: to develop and mold them into devoted followers who would be able to be fruitful disciple makers (Matt 28:19-20). Craig Ott points out that in order to achieve this outcome, Jesus pursued three objectives: 1) *affective-behavioral*: the character of the disciples had to be first formed; 2) *cognitive*: they needed to understand Christ's core message, and 3) *instrumental*: they needed to develop practical ministry skills. Accomplishing this comprehensive training objective would empower and enable Christ's disciples "to reproduce his life and work in persons who would in turn reproduce the same in others." That Jesus "indeed accomplished his training objective of making disciples who were in turn disciple makers" is evidenced by "the dynamic spread of the Gospel and growth of the church as described in Acts."²⁸

²⁵ Ott, 41.

²⁶ Milfred Minatrea, *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 119.

²⁷ Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones, and Bruce Miller, *The Leadership Baton: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 91.

²⁸ Ott, 31-6, 51.

It is Jesus' "methodology" of mentoring and training disciples that is both the practical motivation and theological undergirding for a pastoral or church planting internship program. Without a doubt, the principles and patterns one needs to follow as a mentor or as a ministry intern can be found in a straightforward study of the four Gospels and Jesus' relationship with the Twelve. Krallmann goes so far as to claim that Jesus mentoring precedent and prototype for raising up movement leaders is *the* method He expects all succeeding generations to follow.²⁹

THE MENTORING MINISTRY OF BARNABAS

The mentoring ministry of Barnabas in the life of Saul/Paul and others is a sterling example of how one caring leader can shape potential leaders in such a way as to impact succeeding generations for Christ. Key passages in the book of Acts highlight Barnabas' life and the traits that should be emulated by leadership mentors in every age. Initially named Joseph, he was renamed Barnabas or "son of encouragement" because it fit well his personality and disposition (Acts 4:36-37). A good and generous man, Barnabas was full of the Spirit and faith and so was selected by the Jerusalem mother church to go to Antioch to check into this new work among the Gentiles (Acts 11:22-24). Church leaders evidently were confident he would keep an open mind and be able to recognize where God was at work. Discovering God was indeed at work in Antioch, Barnabas determined to work alongside of those the Lord of harvest was raising up in order to encourage this exciting multiethnic church body to be true to Christ and His mission. Soon he became the acknowledged leader.

After Saul's dramatic conversion, it was Barnabas who showed great discernment by both recognizing God's work in Saul before others and observing in this young convert great potential. Believing in him and vouching for him before the apostles, he not only opened doors for Saul to fellowship with the Jerusalem church but also helped position him for future ministry (Acts 9:23-31). "He was willing to walk with Paul when everyone else wanted to walk away."³⁰ Later, at Antioch, seeing that the rapidly growing church needed assistance, he invited Saul to join him on the leadership team where he could further mentor him (Acts 11:25-26). Barnabas recognized not only that bi-cultural Saul would be a great asset in the young church but that Saul's leadership gifts and skills could be further honed and developed in the environment of a dynamic missional church (13:1-2). He "not only spotted leadership potential in Saul, he also involved him in mission and ministry."³¹ Though Paul was already quite capable of publicly presenting and defending the faith (Acts 9:20-22, 27-29), no doubt the future apostle learned many other valuable leadership and ministry lessons under Barnabas' church-based tutelage.

When the Holy Spirit led the Antioch church to commission and send out its first missionary team, not surprisingly Barnabas is listed first, probably as the team leader (13:2-3, 7). "That stands to reason, for Barnabas was the networker, the facilitator, the one who had

²⁹ Krallman, 131.

³⁰ Steve Ogne & Tim Roehl, *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 61.

³¹ Forman, Jones and Miller, 109.

introduced Paul into the Christian community as well as into the church at Antioch.”³² As the dynamic duo teamed up to travel together for cross cultural missionary church planting (Acts 13:1-14:28), so successful was the mentoring that Paul eventually surpassed his mentor in leadership on the team. As the new missional venture unfolds, a significant shift occurred on the leadership team: Luke begins to speak about “Paul and Barnabas” (13:43, 46, 50 cf. 13:9, 13).³³ Though the Acts text does not explicitly tell us, it seems obvious that Barnabas, again recognizing God’s hand upon Paul and his divine gifting, was willing to allow Paul to take the lead of the missional movement. “He had seen enough of Paul’s heart and the fruit of his labor to know when it was time to step aside and encourage his partner to exercise his leadership gifts.” Model mentors, we learn, do not seek to be in the ministry spotlight; rather they often lead the applause for emerging leaders.³⁴ The best mentors gain their sense of fulfillment through the advancement of their protégé.

Later when conflict arose with Paul over John Mark’s role on the second missionary trip, the sharp disagreement resulted in Barnabas setting out with John Mark and Paul selecting a new partner, Silas (15:36-40). Again exhibiting his generous and discerning spirit, Barnabas saw beyond Mark’s current failure to the promise of recovery if given a second opportunity. In the sovereignty of God, both leaders’ assistants went on to have significant ministries. Evidently, Barnabas now poured his life into Mark, mentoring him for effectiveness so that later even Paul had to recognize Mark’s maturity and ministry usefulness (2 Tim 4:11). And years later Paul still expressed high esteem for his mentor Barnabas and his extended gospel labors (1 Cor 9:6; Gal 2:13). No doubt, *both* men had impacted each others lives and ministries. Once again we see how model mentors enable the ministries of emerging leaders. Martin and his European Saturation Church Planting resource team observe:

By mentoring Paul [and John Mark], Barnabas had a profound impact on numerous cities and countless people throughout the ancient world. His legacy shows that a mentor’s influence affects not only the mentoree’s life but also every life touched by the mentoree. (1998, 34)

At the very least Barnabas had indirect influence over the lives and ministries of several key NT church leaders. Ogne and Roehl believe, “No one had more influence in the growth of key leaders in the early church than Barnabas.” They point out that perhaps sixty percent of the NT “is a result of the ministry of Barnabas” (61). While no doubt an overstatement (no mentor is really responsible for all the future work of the mentee), they do highlight Barnabas’ enduring legacy. Barnabas’ mentoring impact for ministry multiplication is seen in Appendix 1.

THE MENTORING MINISTRY OF PAUL

Mentoring leaders for effective ministry can also be seen in the Apostle Paul’s pattern with his coworkers. The Apostle is without a doubt our best biblical example of field-based

³² Phil Newell, *Re-engaging the Church in Mission through Coaching*. D.Min. Project, Western Seminary (Portland, OR), 2008, 98.

³³ One exception to this superior position to Paul is the incident of the healing of the cripple in Lystra (Acts 14:9-14). For a good discussion of why the reversion to “Barnabas and Paul” (14:14), see D. Edmond Hiebert, *In Paul’s Shadow: Friends & Foes of the Great Apostle*. (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1992), 46-48

³⁴ Ogne and Roehl, *TransforMissional Coaching*, 63.

training of church planters. The training and mentoring of new missionaries and apostolic workers seems to have been a major objective of Paul's missionary church planting work. The NT record is clear that Paul surrounded himself with a circle of coworkers. Schnabel, in his authoritative work, *Paul the Missionary*, points out:

The coworkers who accompanied Paul on his travels participated in his missionary activities and can thus be seen as trainees, much like Jesus' disciples who had been chosen by Jesus to be with him ... and to be trained as "fishers of men" (Mk 1:17). The New Testament sources do not state explicitly that Paul surrounded himself with a circle of coworkers for the express purpose of preparing them for missionary service. This is a plausible assumption, however, as they did not simply carry out menial tasks: *they were involved in the same type of activities that Paul focused on*. Of the approximately one hundred names that are connected with Paul in the book of Acts and in the Pauline letters, *thirty-eight are coworkers of the apostle*. [italics added] ³⁵

Craig Ott points out that the study of the Apostle Paul's leadership training methods provides us with further insight into the applicability of Christ's methods "and to what extent the early Christians understood them as prescriptive."³⁶ Granted, the examination of Paul's training approach is somewhat challenging because: 1) there is less NT information about how he trained coworkers, 2) his missionary training operated in two cultures (Jewish and Hellenistic), and 3) his ministry was itinerant and often short-term, preventing him from establishing a formal school. Yet a close examination of Acts and the Epistles "does reveal a developmental purpose in Paul's relation to many of his co-workers and in the churches, flexible as it was."³⁷

That Paul's coworkers fully shared in his missionary work of evangelism, discipling, and church planting is evidenced by nine different designations the Apostle used to describe these gospel workers: apostle/envoy [ἀπόστολος], companion/partner [κοινωνός], worker [ὁ κοπιῶν], fellow-worker or coworker [συνεργός], soldier or fellow-soldier [στρατιώτης, συστρατιώτης], fellow prisoner [συναιχμάλωτος], servant or minister [διάκονος], slave/fellow-slave [δοῦλος/σύνδουλος], and brother [ἀδελφός].³⁸ These descriptive terms of affection and appreciation indicate a close and mutual relationship, one characteristic of those who had been first carefully trained and then entrusted with significant ministry.³⁹ They indicate that Paul's coworkers were more than traveling companions; they were involved in active missionary activity similar to Paul's.

³⁵ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 248-249. For a list of all thirty-eight of Paul's co-workers, and a discussion of each of their missionary ministries, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Paul and the Early Church*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 1426-1445.

³⁶ Ott, *The Training of Lay Leaders*, 80.

³⁷ Ibid., 60-64.

³⁸ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 249.

³⁹ For a good discussion of the meaning and significance of these nine terms, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1436-1445. Schnabel shows that Paul's coworkers did much the same significant work that Paul did. Their missionary work "should not be interpreted as an inferior substitute for Paul's own presence and ministry" (1437). Schnabel also shows the NT frequency of use of each terms.

Though Paul describes himself and his missionary teammates (both men and women⁴⁰) as “God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor 3:9), it is reasonable to assume the Lord of harvest used Paul to recruit most of his coworkers himself. And, as we shall see, most if not all of them, were then mentored by the Apostle through on-the-job training. A chart of Pauline coworkers frequently mentioned in the NT is seen in Appendix 2; the listing shows their hometowns, places of ministry and key NT references. A careful study of these texts leads to the conclusion that the majority of these coworkers were converts from the new churches that Paul had established. But they were more. Schnabel argues, “Some came to Paul as ‘delegates’ of their home churches (Col 1:7; 4:12-13; Phlm 13). They represent the ‘messengers of the churches’ (ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν; 2 Cor 8:23; cf. Phil 2:25).”⁴¹ Clearly, the previously established churches were participating through their envoys in Paul’s missionary church planting endeavors.

The historical book of Acts contains several fine examples of Paul’s ministry of mentoring leaders for church planting multiplication. Towards the end of Paul’s second missionary journey this mentoring strategy first becomes most obvious. It was evidently at Corinth that the Lord began to open the Apostle’s eyes to the potential of remaining in one place longer (Acts 18:9-11) in order to make disciples and develop leaders who could be sent out to other regions with the Gospel. In the sovereignty of God, Paul met a Jewish couple recently arrived from Rome (A.D. 49). Since Priscilla and Aquila⁴² were also tentmakers, and probably already believers,⁴³ Paul joined forces with them, evidently using the time to also mentor the couple spiritually through on-the-job training in the growing work at this cosmopolitan center (18:2-4). After more than eighteen months of ministry together (v.11 cf. v.18 “many days longer”), Paul was confident they were now prepared for some missionary work on their own. He brought them to Ephesus (A.D. 51), leaving them there to begin to lay the groundwork for the gospel until his return from Jerusalem (18:18-21; 19:1). Well trained by Paul, they soon established a house church in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19). When Paul returned to join them, he apparently lodged with them⁴⁴—giving him more time to mentor them.

⁴⁰ Andreas Köstenberger estimates that eighteen percent of Paul’s fellow missionaries were women. See *Women in the Pauline Mission*. In *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s mission*, ed. Peter G Bolt and M. Thompson (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 225.

⁴¹ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 255. For good summary of specific tasks Paul’s coworkers engaged in, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1439-43.

⁴² In four of the six occurrences of their names, Priscilla’s name stands before her husband’s (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19). For a good overview of the reasons suggested by commentators, see Hiebert, *In Paul’s Shadow*, 24-26. The most probable explanation is that she was the most gifted and capable in the Word, and thus took the more prominent role in the later instruction of Apollos, etc

⁴³ It is an open question whether the couple were believers when they first met Paul at Corinth. Many credible scholars believe they were already converted in Rome and then forced to leave the city because of Claudius’ edict of A.D. 49 expelling Jews (including Jewish-Christians) from the city. See Schnabel 2004, 1434; Hiebert 1992, 26-28, 30; and Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2007), 577-578.

⁴⁴ 1 Cor 16:19 asserts this, according to some manuscript readings (see Hiebert 1992, 31); he notes, “Although this reading is not authentic, it makes a correct inference.” Thus, Aquila and Priscilla lived in Ephesus for nearly three years (Acts 20:31), most of it simultaneous with Paul’s ministry there.

In Ephesus, this remarkable couple met and confronted the gifted but uninformed Apollos with the full truth of Jesus. Tutoring the Alexandrian in the Scriptures and in the person and work of Christ, this bi-vocational lay couple equipped him to become one of the early church's most powerful spokesmen for the Gospel (18:24-28). No doubt, they mentored Apollos in the same manner that Paul had personally mentored them. Apollos went on to have significant further ministry in Ephesus and Corinth (Acts 18:27-19:1; 1 Cor 16:12); but it was this humble couple that God used to privately ground him in the essentials of Christology, the gospel, and effective Christian ministry. Recognizing God's hand upon Apollos, they encouraged and empowered him for his future ministry. As for their own ministry, Priscilla and Aquila later returned to Rome where they once again hosted a house church (Rom 16:3-5) and were no doubt a great blessing to the believers there. Recognizing their significant contribution to the advance of the gospel, Paul expressed high esteem and strong affection for them (calling them "my fellow workers in Christ"), giving the couple "first place in a long list of Christian residents in Rome to whom he sent his greetings."⁴⁵ In their final years of ministry, this dynamic couple show up back at Ephesus and once again receive first mention in Paul's greetings, sent this time through Timothy (2 Tim 4:19). Paul's training of them had brought long-lasting dividends! Logan and Cole summarize the impact of Paul's mentoring in their lives:

These two ... were used of God all over the Empire in a church planting ministry. ... for the first time Paul raised up a church planting team *from* the harvest and *for* the harvest. These two went on to do the same thing, thus multiplying Paul's efforts. Apollos, the third generation, then multiplied their efforts countless times over! Paul had learned a strategic lesson from his Teacher, one that would play a central role in his next outing.⁴⁶

PAUL'S TRAINING CENTER MODEL IN EPHEBUS

It was on Paul's third missionary trip, after he had planted at least eight churches over the last seven years, that the Apostle began to implement this newly envisioned more regional church planting strategy. During Paul's three-year (A.D. 52-55) church planting ministry at Ephesus, the strategic sea port city on the west coast of Asia Minor, he apparently fleshed out a "training center model" with the goal of saturating the entire province with gospel workers equipped to plant new churches. Ephesus was an important commercial, political and educational center, best known for its magnificent temple of Diana (Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. With an estimated population of a quarter of a million, it was one of the largest, most important and wealthy metropolises of the Mediterranean world in the first century.⁴⁷ In this idolatrous but influential metropolitan hub, Paul

⁴⁵ Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, 33-34. In this Rom 16:4 greeting Paul also mentions how this brave couple "risked their necks" for his life. When this took place is uncertain (for options, see Hiebert, 32), but Paul does express great gratitude for their selfless service and states "all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well." Their reputation was well known!

⁴⁶ Logan and Cole, *Raising Leaders*, 6:12.

⁴⁷ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1206-14; F. F. Bruce *The Book of the Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 355.

implemented a teaching/mentoring strategy that would impact all of Asia Minor. The city became his missionary training and sending center for his third journey.⁴⁸ Because a significant portion of the NT involves the church at Ephesus⁴⁹ and Paul stayed there longer than in any other city, some believe that this is the most developed and helpful model of a disciple-making and leadership training in the NT.⁵⁰

The setting for this first training center is found in Acts 19:8-10. Building on the foundation laid by Aquila and Priscilla, his trainees, the Apostle initially did three months of concentrated proclamational evangelism and public outreach. Luke records that Paul was “reasoning” (19:8 cf. 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19) and “persuading” (19:8 cf. 17:4; 18:4) about the kingdom of God. Then, finding the synagogue audience stubborn and unbelieving, in order to better disciple his converts and to model ministry before a group of emerging leaders, Paul wisely withdrew his “disciples” and rented a meeting place called “the hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9). Bock⁵¹ states, “This is either a lecture hall or school building as the term σχολή indicates.”⁵² For five hours a day for two years (19:9-10),⁵³ as we will see, Paul evidently

⁴⁸ Darrell Bock, *Acts*, 586.

⁴⁹ The church at Ephesus is often mentioned in the NT—not only in Acts and the Ephesians Epistle—but also in 1 Timothy when Timothy pastors there, 1 John (since the Apostle John later ministered there), and even the Book of Revelation 2:1-8 (where 40 years after Paul founded the church, they are commended for doctrinal excellence and active service). Because: (1) Paul also penned his first epistle to Corinth and in later years dispatched the two letters that bear Timothy’s name while residing in Ephesus; and (2) decades later the apostle John composed his Gospel and three epistles in Ephesus, Simon J. Kistemaker [*NT Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 691] says “In a manner of speaking, as the Jews had been entrusted with the Old Testament Scriptures (Rom 3:2), so the Ephesians became the custodians of the New Testament books.”

⁵⁰ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-making Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Flemming H. Revell, 1990), 152; That the account of Paul’s ministry in Acts 19 is one of the most detailed in the historical record of Acts, may suggest that the inspired writer intended to show a pattern in the Apostle’s missionary work (D. Bock, 596-7), one which should be emulated by others in future generations. Ben Witherington III [*The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 572-73] suggests Paul’s longest sustained ministry in Acts, seen here, may be included to show what a mission in a given locale might look like.

⁵¹ D. Bock, *Acts*, 601.

⁵² The Greek word in this context (σχολή) conveys the idea of the place (a building) where instruction and discussion took place [Everett F. Harrison, *Acts: the Expanding Church*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 291; C. K. Barrett, C. K., *The Acts of the Apostles: Shorter Commentary* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 291]. That the hall was not being used for believers’ congregational meetings (fellowship, worship, etc) but primarily for training purposes, is suggested by the fact the church was evidently already gathering in several house churches in the city, such as Aquila’s (1 Cor 16:9 cf. Rom 16:5,14).

⁵³ F.F. Bruce believes the Greek manuscript reading from the “Western text” tradition that the daily lectures were “from the fifth hour to the tenth,” i.e., from 11 AM to 4:00 PM., is quite reliable (*The Book of the Acts*, 366; so also Bock, 601 and Kistemaker, 684). Paul’s discipling/mentoring ministry was quite intense and demanding—this was the hottest part of the day when people would normally take off from work for a midday nap! See also “night and day” in Acts 20:31. The intensity of Paul’s mentoring and teaching ministry has all the marks of an intentional training program.

invested in and trained a cadre of men and women. In this new headquarters, Luke records he was “reasoning daily” (Acts 19:9– καθ’ ἡμέραν διαλεγόμενος); the term implies an interactive teaching/ learning style was being used.⁵⁴ The effectiveness of this missional training center strategy with its sent-out coworkers, is noted by Luke: “so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (v.10). He also records that “the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily” (19:20 cf. Acts 20:31).⁵⁵ Evidently thousands were reached with the Gospel throughout the province. Even the church’s opponents concur concerning this regional impact (19:26 “in almost all of Asia”). The impact of these two years of intensive training and mentoring can hardly be overemphasized. Paul did not personally penetrate the entire province; clearly, highly qualified missional leaders were being produced to travel out into the extremities of the province. He “used Ephesus as a radiating center” while he himself remained in the metropolis and sent out his assistants.⁵⁶

The NT indicates that during this time, or soon after, at least three new churches were established by one of Paul’s interns in Laodocia, Hierapolis, and Colossae, cities in the Lykos Valley in the eastern part of the province of Asia Minor. Epaphras, possibly converted during Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, evidently evangelized in the Lykos Valley because he grew up in this region (Col 4:12–[he] is one of you”). Later writing to the Colossians, Paul makes it clear that he personally did not found the church; they had first heard and “learned” the gospel from Epaphras (Col 1:7).⁵⁷ Paul commends his mentoree for his hard work and prayers not only on behalf of the Colossian believers but for those also in Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col 4:12-13). Twice, in fact, Paul states that there was a “church” (*ekklesia*) in these neighboring cities as well (Col 4:15, 16 cf. 2:1). That Paul regarded Epaphras’ fruitful missionary work as an integral part of his own church planting ministry is evident from his grateful acknowledgement of Epaphras as “our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ *on our behalf*” (Col 1:7, ASV).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Διαλέγομαι here means “to engage in speech interchange, converse, discuss, argue” (BDAG, 2001, 232). The Greek term speaks of a form of instructional discourse that leads to questions and to an exchange of opinions [Colin Brown, ed, *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 82; cf. TDNT 1985, 155].

⁵⁵ Acts 19:20 is one of Luke’s frequent summary statements in Acts (cf. also 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 28:31) describing the numerical growth of the church. Harrison (294), comparing “the word of the Lord” phrase found in both Acts 19:10 and 19:20, notes, “Although the wording is the same as in verse 10, the sense is somewhat different; there the message of the Gospel is in view, whereas here [19:20] the Christian faith, or cause, better conveys the meaning.”

⁵⁶ R. C. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1934), 790.

⁵⁷ Epaphras is evidently not a shortened form of “Epaphroditus” (Phil 2:25; 4:18). See J. B. Lightfoot [*Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 61; cf. Schnabel 1988, 1432-4. Some have suggested they were the same person as both were coworkers of Paul and with Paul during his Roman imprisonment. Also, Epaphroditus is called an *apostolos* (Phil 2:25) while Epaphras was a church planter. Both were thus engaged in missionary activity. Yet Epaphras was evidently from Colosse whereas Epaphroditus was from Philippi. Both were common names in NT times.

⁵⁸ Other manuscripts read, “on your behalf”—cf. Col 4:12. Hiebert (140-141) believes “... the reading ‘on our behalf’ is much better attested and more significant. It clarifies why Paul had such a deep personal interest in the work at Colosse. Epaphras had not undertaken and independent

A number of NT scholars agree with this proposed scenario—that men like Epaphras, who were trained in Ephesus by Paul in the hall of Tyrannus, were the church planters God used to penetrate the entire province.⁵⁹ F. F. Bruce even suggests that six of the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2 and 3 – all located in Asia Minor – could have been started by some of Paul’s dispatched apprentices:

While Paul stayed in Ephesus, a number of his colleagues carried out missionary activity in neighboring cities. During those years his colleague Epaphras appears to have evangelized the cities of the Lycus valley, Colossae, Laodicia, and Hierapolis—cities which Paul evidently did not visit in person. . . . Perhaps all seven of the churches in Asia addressed in the Revelation of John were also founded about this time. The province was intensely evangelized, and remained one of the leading centers of Christianity for many centuries.⁶⁰

Other NT scholars agree with Bruce’s proposal that Paul’s coworkers were quite probably dispatched to these outlying cities north of Ephesus mentioned in Revelation.⁶¹ It also makes sense when one locates Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyratira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicia on a map and sees that they form a rough half circle around the coastal city of Ephesus, the capital of proconsular Asia. These cities were readily within reach of the sponsor church and were themselves “great centers of trade.”⁶² Schnabel even suggests that perhaps a Christian community at Miletus (cf. Acts 20:15-38) could also have been planted about this time.⁶³ Kistemaker is convinced the evidence indicates that for decades the Ephesian congregation was the evangelistic center for the Christian church in western Asia Minor.⁶⁴

enterprise; he had gone with the full support of Paul and as his representative. Since Paul had felt he could not leave his fruitful work at Ephesus, he had commissioned Epaphras to minister on his behalf.”

⁵⁹ See Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 284; F. F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 288; Donald Guthrie, *The Apostles*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 176; and D. Edmond Hiebert, *In Paul’s Shadow*, 140.

⁶⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The book of the Acts*, 366.

⁶¹ William J. Ramsey, *Saint Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, [Orig. pub. 1896] 1962), 274; Homer Kent, Jr., *Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in the Book of Acts*, (Winona Lakes, IN: BMH Books, 1972), 151; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1220, 1492; Bock, *Acts*, 601; Paton J. Gloag, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Vol 2, (Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1979), 201; Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts*, 685.

⁶² Ramsey, *Saint Paul*, 274.

⁶³ *Early Christian Mission*, 1220, 1231-33. If the gospel reached Miletus between A.D. 52 and 55, while Paul and his coworkers were actively evangelizing from their base in Ephesus, it is also possible that the church in Priene (whose existence is confirmed in the historical records extra-biblically) was started during this time. Schnabel further suggests that the cities of Magnesia, Tralles, Nysa, Antiocheia and Maeandrum might have seen “missionary activity” during this period. The church father Ignatius mentions churches in the first two of these five cities, all located in the Maeander Valley just west of Ephesus (Ibid., 1233-35, 1492).

⁶⁴ Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts*, 685.

No doubt the Apostle's itinerant missional teams mostly went out on their own; at other times they perhaps were led by Paul himself. The objective of this "field work" was to enable students to apply what they were learning about evangelism and church planting in the classroom. The regional impact of these well trained student teams can be perhaps viewed as a first century church planting movement. Harrison comments:

Luke's wording—"all Asia"—may sound highly exaggerated, yet ... [t]here is ... testimony along the same line, such as the winning to Christ of Epaphras, Philemon, and Archippus—all of them from Colossae—during this time. Through the witness of these and others, churches sprang up throughout Asia not only at Colossae, but also at Hierapolis and Laodicea (Col 4:13), in addition to the other locations mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3. Paul's own testimony is to the same effect (1 Co 16:19) ["the churches of Asia greet you ..."]. His strategy was to evangelize the hinterland through people he had brought to Christ and trained for service. This latter activity must have included instruction on how to reach "both Jews and Greeks." It is clear that Paul did not go out into the province, but remained in the city.⁶⁵

Paul's letter to Corinth, written from Ephesus in A.D. 54, not only confirms that there were several "churches" in Asia (αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας) springing up, but also that God had opened "a wide door for effective work" in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8-9). His mention of "many adversaries" seems to suggest that successful Gospel penetration was meeting fierce opposition (see 2 Cor 1:8-10 where he describes his experience in Ephesus; cf. Acts 19:11-41).⁶⁶ The evangelistic success of Paul and his coworkers is also seen by the conversions of both Jews and Greeks in the city and province (19:10), as well in God's gracious provision of miracles, causing many others to fear the true God (19:10-12, 17-20).

There were a number of coworkers who were no doubt trained and mentored by Paul in Ephesus and then sent out into the region during this period. As seen above, Harrison mentions three coworkers, all from Colosse. Ramsey⁶⁷ mentions three others: Timothy, Erastus and Titus. Gloag⁶⁸ lists six companions of Paul during this period—Timothy, Titus, Aquila, Erastus, Gaius and Aristarchus—who "would be sent by him to preach the gospel in other parts of the province." Kistemaker⁶⁹ includes five possible coworkers, mentioning Archippus, who is only given by Harrison. Schnabel⁷⁰ lists eight coworkers, all from the province of Asia and present in Ephesus.

⁶⁵ Everett F. Harrison, *Acts: the Expanding Church*, 291.

⁶⁶ Schnabel suggests, "The immense success of Paul's missionary work in Ephesus is indirectly confirmed by the hostility that Paul experienced in the city." He notes that in 1 Cor 15:32 Paul asserts that he "fought with wild animals in Ephesus," a statement Schnabel takes metaphorically, that Paul "fought for his life"—perhaps in connection with the incident in which Aquila and Priscilla risked their lives for the Apostle (*Early Christian Mission*, 1222 cf. Rom 16:3-4).

⁶⁷ Ramsey, *Saint Paul*, 274.

⁶⁸ Gloag, *Critical Exegetical Commentary on Acts*, 210.

⁶⁹ Kistemaker, *Exposition of Acts*, 685. On the basis of Phlm 1-2, he includes Archippus who along with Philemon were "fellow workers" and "fellow soldiers" with Paul in Colosse. The former may have been Philemon's son and may have also had a significant ministry in Colosse (cf. Col 4:17).

⁷⁰ *Early Christian Mission*, 1220.

Focusing primarily on Acts 20:4, one readily arrives at a list of *at least eight men* who were Paul's gospel coworkers at this time: Titus from Antioch; Timothy from Lystra; Gaius from Galatia; Sopater from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, both from Thessalonica; Tychicus and Trophimus, both from Ephesus. That these last eight men were all in Ephesus during the time the Apostle Paul was in the city is established by a careful comparison of various NT passages, particularly Acts 19:22, 29; 20:4; 21:29; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10.⁷¹ Then too, Aquila and Priscilla, Philemon and Timothy were part of Paul's team of missionaries in Ephesus right from the beginning (Acts 18:18-19; Phlm 1-2; 1 Cor 16:10, 19) and, as noted above, Epaphras was also probably in the city for training before being sent back to his hometown. We must remember that Apollos, having been instructed by Priscilla and Aquila and fulfilling his one-year teaching ministry in Corinth, returned to Ephesus where he met Paul, probably for the first time, and may have been furthered mentored, now by the Apostle (Acts 18:24-27 cf. 1 Cor 16:12; 2 Cor 8:18-19).⁷²

Eliminating the duplicates in all of these lists, we arrive at *possibly fifteen Gospel workers*, going and coming in Ephesus! See the chart in Appendix 3 for a listing of these Pauline coworkers and for further NT validation of their presence in Ephesus. One striking feature of both appendix charts of Paul's coworkers is the variety of Gentile churches and provinces they represented. "These saints represent his success from a wide-ranging mission".⁷³

Though the NT does not explicitly state that Paul mentored all of these coworkers in his training institute in Ephesus, it seems a plausible assumption that many of them were—particularly the younger emerging leaders who were from that region. At least eight were close to Paul and evidently with him for most of his three year ministry in the city. As noted above, each served as representatives from their particular churches sent to assist Paul in his work. Some evidently were also being commissioned by their churches to bring financial aid to the Jerusalem church (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4)—after meeting Paul first at Ephesus and staying for awhile to be trained. Paul even informs us he graciously provided for the basic needs of many of his coworkers, apparently supporting them through his tentmaking trade (Acts 20:34). It is also possible that Paul's apprentices, being from different churches in diverse regions (Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia), were learning from one another as each man shared his own unique experiences. Today we would call this "peer mentoring."

These eight "interns" were probably not the only emerging leaders being trained in Ephesus. Kistemaker suggests there could have been other student coworkers with Paul

⁷¹ Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, near the end of his three year ministry there (1 Cor 16:5-9 cf. Acts 19:21-22). That Titus was present in Ephesus is assumed because he is clearly present on many occasions when Paul wrote his epistles; also Titus represented Corinth for the Jerusalem relief fund (2 Cor 8:16-17). And Paul's letter to Titus shows the Apostle had trained him.

⁷² Cf. Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, 18-21. Unlike the ministries of Timothy and Titus, whose ministries were under the direction of Paul (he could "send" them as envoys), Apollos worked much more independently of Paul (he could only "urge" him to go places—see 1 Cor 16:12). For this reason, and the fact that Apollos was already a skilled teacher of the Word, Paul's mentoring of Apollos at Ephesus may have been short-term and minimal. Titus 3:13, however, does show that seven or eight years later the two men were still warm friends (together at Corinth), so that Paul entrusted Apollos and Zenas the lawyer to deliver his personal letter to Titus on Crete.

⁷³ Bock, *Acts*, 618.

who arose from the disciples (Acts 19:9) who had been baptized with John's baptism.⁷⁴ Writing later from Ephesus to the Corinthians, Paul does name others serving in ministry with him in the Asian port city: Sosthenes (1 Cor 1:1), Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17). The last three were evidently sent out as representatives by the believing community at Corinth ("they have made up for your absence"). It is uncertain if any of these were involved in the work of new church planting and development. Clearly, all of the coworkers mentioned above had a heart for God's work. The NT clearly demonstrates that Paul did not do church planting as a Lone Ranger. He always ministered alongside of others. He regularly mentored leaders. He understood that to effectively reach a city or community takes a team of properly prepared gospel workers.

During his farewell address to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35), the Apostle to the Gentiles recounts the components of his mentoring and multiplication strategy for leadership development in Asia Minor. Logan and Ogne (6:13) summarize what they call Paul's "effective leadership farm system from the *School of Tyrannus*" (emphasis theirs):

- Established a regional base of church planter development (Acts 19:8; 20:18).
- Implemented a teaching/mentoring strategy by life example, both in large gatherings and small groups (Acts 20:19-20).
- Used evangelism and discipleship as a strategy for training leaders for ministry (Acts 20:21).
- Allowed the Holy Spirit His rightful place in leading emerging leaders into ministry (Acts 20:28).
- Mentored individuals on a one-on-one basis (Acts 20:31).⁷⁵
- Empowered his leaders with accountability to God for the work which he modeled to them, so that his presence wasn't needed for the work to continue after him (Acts 20:32).

While teaching and training leaders in the urban school hall, Paul was also founding, leading and growing a thriving congregation in Ephesus. He was actively involved in market place and household evangelism, discipling young believers, and developing emerging leaders. No doubt he took his students with him to assist in various urban ministries. Paul was intentionally modeling ministry for all to see. Leaders-in-training were able to observe Paul in action, learning from the Apostle how to evangelize, how to successfully plant, pastor and grow a new church. They were developing the practical skills for being effective pastors, evangelists and church planters.

After students spent time with Paul in the school hall and in actual ministry in Ephesus, they were probably sent back to their home towns or other cities in the province to practice what they had learned.⁷⁶ Later they would return to the mission center for debriefing, further

⁷⁴ Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts*, 685.

⁷⁵ Acts 20:31-32 shows that Paul's training and mentoring ministry was characterized by fervent ("night and day ... with tears") "admonishing" (νουθετέω) of young leaders to remain faithful to the living God and to the "word of his grace" which was able to fortify them for a fruitful and enduring ministry. (Footnote mine)

⁷⁶ E. H. Plumptre, [*The Acts of the Gospel*. In *Elliot's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, ed. Charles John Elliot. Reprint (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), 7:134] believes that Luke's description of Gaius and Aristarchus as "Paul's companions in travel" (Acts 19:29 cf. 20:4), indicates these two coworkers were involved in "missionary activity beyond the walls of Ephesus." Hiebert

instruction and refreshment. “Thus, there was the constant rhythm between the actual practice of ministry in their home community and learning in the school which Paul conducted”.⁷⁷ Paul’s training approach, like that of his Lord, utilized both informal and nonformal modes of instruction. There was a combination of content, observation and practice. There was mentoring for and modeling of missional ministry.

With their basic “boot camp” training in Ephesus mostly completed, Paul sent his apprentices (eight “interns” plus some of the other above coworkers?) all over Asia Minor and into other regions⁷⁸ to share the gospel and launch new churches. Luke specifically records that Paul sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus⁷⁹ into Macedonia, presumably to plant churches in that region; Paul intended to join them later (19:22). His objective (he “resolved in the Spirit”) was to eventually “pass through Macedonia and Achaia” with his teams, and, Lord willing, to eventually reach Rome itself with the gospel (19:21 cf. Rom 15:23-25). In Acts 20:1-6, Luke records Paul’s final excursion into Macedonia and Greece, upon leaving Ephesus, carefully mentioning seven coworkers who “accompanied him.” Significantly, the list in 20:4 has representatives from Berea, Thessalonica, Lycaonia and Asia, “showing the scope of Paul’s work”.⁸⁰ The list also “includes men from churches which were planted on all three of Paul’s journeys.”⁸¹ This Ephesian model of multiplication is summed up accurately by Shenk and Stutzman:

When Paul left Ephesus, he took with him a cluster of persons to visit some of the churches which he had planted in Macedonia and Greece. We may assume that these persons were

(1992, 130-2) agrees: “These two men had probably traveled in various parts of the province of Asia, spreading the gospel under Paul’s direction (cf. 19:10), but there is no evidence that Paul had traveled with them in his work.” Paul’s later description of Aristarchus as his “fellow laborer” (Phlm 24) and “fellow prisoner” (Col. 4:10) also confirms the latter’s aggressive and long-term propagation of the Gospel.

⁷⁷ David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman, *Creating Communities of the Kingdom: New Testament Models of Church Planting*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998), 154.

⁷⁸ For example, co-laborers of Paul show up later in Rome involved in the house churches there. Rom 16:5 mentions Epaenetus, “who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.” And 16:3 sends greetings to “Prisca (=Priscilla in Acts) and Aquilla, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.”

⁷⁹ Erastus was a Corinthian and helped carry Paul’s first letter to his hometown; he is also included in Paul’s greetings in Rome (1 Cor 16:10; Rom 16:23; 2 Tim 4:20). Bock (606) comments that the Erastus of Rom 16:23 may not be the same coworker of Paul since the name was rather common.

⁸⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 619.

⁸¹ Harrison, *Acts: the Expanding Church*, 309. Gloag notes at least three proposed reasons, all commonly mentioned in commentaries, why Paul recruited companions to travel with him: (1) as body guards to protect him from the Jews, (2) as messengers from the churches to help carry/protect the contributions for the poor Jerusalem saints, and (3) to assist in Paul’s evangelistic and church planting work (1979, 232-33). No doubt all three are correct but the third purpose may have been the primary one for his closest and long-standing coworkers. The afore-mentioned designations (“fellow workers,” “fellow soldiers” etc., see Appendix 2) indicate that many were doing the same missionary work as Paul.

leaders he had trained in Ephesus. He wanted them to see the churches he had told them about in his church planting classes. These persons included [20:4] Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus. He wanted these leaders experienced in church development in Asia also to experience Christian fellowship in European churches. This journey was a cross-cultural church planting trip for the leaders whom Paul was training.⁸²

The evidence indicates the Apostle had now learned how to raise up leaders—through intensive mentoring—for the harvest and *from* the harvest!

The above reconstruction of events agrees with the “center mission” strategy of Paul proposed by both W. H. Ollrog and Roger Gehring. Ollrog⁸³ made significant contribution to NT research in pointing out the clear connection between Paul’s system of coworkers and the congregational center mission (*Zentrumsmission*) concept; he saw the significance of these coworkers being sent out by their individual congregations, made available to Paul’s ongoing missional outreach. Gehring, in his more recent comprehensive historical and biblical investigation of the missional impact of house churches during the first three hundred years of the early church, advances on Ollrog by showing that center mission “is [actually] the opposite of the centrally organized mission of the Antioch church.” He redefines “center mission” as “a series of young [house church] congregations networked with and equal to one another in the (capital) cities, that is, *centers*, which then become bases of operation for Pauline mission”.⁸⁴ Both researchers see in Paul’s unique missional center training approach a “turning away from the [initial] traveling-missionary or mission journey approach ... [to the more focused] development of a system [and staff] of coworkers.”⁸⁵ In Ephesus, then, Paul was able to locate house churches and even a more public “hall” from which to base his teams short-term trips into the surrounding regions to plant new churches. From these “centers” he was able to regularly gather, train, mentor, supervise, and send out better equipped coworkers; these teams could later return to the base to report, regroup, and be further equipped and strengthened. Thus the “center mission” approach enabled Paul to better accomplish his overall objectives for greater missional and regional impact.

Paul’s Mentoring of Timothy and Titus

The close mentoring relationship of the Apostle Paul with his son in the faith Timothy further reveals his passion and plan for developing missional leaders. No other companion of Paul, with the possible exception of Luke, had such a long, close and continuous association with the Apostle. Paul’s reference to Timothy as τέκνον (son/child; 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1) indicates more than that he was converted through Paul’s ministry; it also speaks of a teacher-student mentoring relationship.⁸⁶ His discipling of Timothy is a

⁸² Shenk and Stutzman, *Creating Communities*, 154.

⁸³ W. H. Ollrog, *Paul und Seine Mitarbeiter: Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der Paulinischen Mission*, (WMANT 50. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1979).

⁸⁴ Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 181.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Rainer Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 2nd ed., (Tubingen: J. C. P. Mohr, 1984), 62, 108-110; cf. Schnabel 2008, 1444-45. The term “disciple” or “student/pupil” (μαθητής) does not occur in Paul’s

significant model of leadership training through mentoring.⁸⁷ Having recruited Timothy in Lystra, Paul invited this young growing disciple with evident leadership potential⁸⁸ to join him and Silas on their church planting journey (Acts 16:1-3). It is clear that the Apostle developed Timothy as a leader by immersing him and spending time with him in hands-on ministry (16:3-10). Shenk and Stutzman point out all the various ministry experiences that Timothy would have observed in just the one city of Philippi (Acts 16:11-34):

He was with Paul in Philippi when they met Lydia and the women at the river. He saw these women responding in faith to Jesus when Paul shared his evangelistic witness. He was with Paul when the slave girl mocked Paul in the marketplaces of Philippi. Later, he watched Paul cast out the evil spirit from her. When the Philippian business community became outraged and a tremendous riot developed, Timothy was with Paul. He witnessed Paul being beaten and imprisoned, and he saw God's miraculous intervention in the earthquake. He rejoiced at the subsequent conversion of the whole household of the Philippian jailer. In all these experiences Timothy watched Paul and worked with him. He *saw* and he *did* ministry in partnership with Paul not only in Philippi, but in subsequent church planting in other cities. It is not surprising that Timothy became an effective minister and overseer of the church.⁸⁹

By involving Timothy in mission and ministry, Paul was clearly replicating the mentoring process he had learned years before from Barnabas. As Timothy assisted and observed Paul, he grew to the point that Paul could leave him in charge of significant leadership roles. More and more Paul entrusted Timothy with independent ministry (Acts 16:3-4; 17:10, 14-15; 18:5; 19:22). He was so trusted that Paul occasionally sent him to further his evangelistic and teaching ministries in churches in his absence. For example, just three years after his conversion,⁹⁰ Timothy is dispatched to Thessalonica to “establish and exhort you in the faith” (1 Thess 3:2, 6); and later he is sent to Corinth to “remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church” (1 Cor 4:17). Clearly, Timothy is being empowered and equipped by Paul to do missionary work on his own.

letters. The term “child” (τέκνον) was later used by the rabbis for a “disciple.” Thus Paul uses it not only for those converted under his ministry but for more mature coworkers such as Timothy and Titus (see Titus 1:4). “It is safe to assume that the missionary coworkers who belonged to Paul’s team at various times and in different places studied the content of the gospel and learned how to formulate and preach the message of Jesus Christ” (Schnabel 2008, 1444).

⁸⁷ William J. Petersen, *The Discipling of Timothy*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1980).

⁸⁸ Paul’s relationship to Timothy may have begun on his first missionary trip when Paul visited Derbe (Acts 14:20-21). Since Timothy is already a young disciple with a believing mother by the time of Acts 16, it is likely that Paul had led him to Christ on his initial visit to Derbe, building upon the preparation from the OT that Timothy’s mother and grandmother had already provided (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). That he was qualified for leadership training is demonstrated further by his good reputation with believers in his home area’s churches (Acts 16:2) and also by his being teachable and submissive when Paul thought it best he be circumcised as a Greek to remove all stumbling blocks among the Jews for his future ministry (Acts 16:3).

⁸⁹ Shenk and Stutzman, *Creating Communities*, 152, author’s emphasis.

⁹⁰ Timothy is a good example of Paul’s pattern of quickly integrating new converts into his missionary teams, often giving them significant responsibilities like preaching and teaching. Timothy is made responsible for the congregation at Thessalonica only three years after his conversion. In that period of time he is no longer considered a “novice” (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6) and had exhibited maturity and character.

With the arrival of [Paul's] associates, an intensive missionary campaign was launched at Corinth in which Silas and Timothy had an active part. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 1:19, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached to you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus," show that Timothy took an active part in the preaching of the gospel.⁹¹

As shown above, Acts 19:22 (cf. 20:4) indicates trusted Timothy was one of Paul's coworkers in Ephesus, participating in the wide spread of the Gospel to the entire province,⁹² and was later dispatched by the Apostle from Asia to do further ministry in Macedonia. Starting out as an assistant to Paul and Silas on the second missionary tour, Timothy had by the third tour become a full-time partner in ministry!

Repeatedly, we read of Paul's moving tributes to Timothy's faithful ministry (Phil 2:19-23; 1 Cor 16:10-11; etc). For example, in 1 Corinthians 4:17, he calls him "my beloved and faithful child in the Lord" who would be able to remind the church "of my ways in Christ." Hiebert observes the impact of Paul's training of his protégé—and Timothy's loyal imitation of his mentor:

Timothy was a faithful follower of his spiritual father, capable of revealing the father's ways to his Corinthian brothers. He stood in such close relation to Paul that he had become thoroughly permeated with his spirit and his teachings. Paul's testimony to Timothy confirms the closeness of the ties between them.⁹³

In fact, the beloved Timothy is mentioned in at least six of Paul's thirteen letters, normally as a co-sender of the epistle.⁹⁴ Years later, the Apostle highly commended his protégé Timothy for his selfless service and "proven worth" stating that "he has [faithfully] *served with me* in the gospel" (Phil 2:19-23). Because of Paul's intensive on-the-job mentoring and modeling, the Apostle was eventually able to dispatch his associate to Ephesus and entrust the oversight of the growing church—and its ongoing provincial outreach—to Timothy (1 Tim 1:3).⁹⁵

Knowing that he was facing death and his own ministry days were numbered, Paul then asked his trusted coworker to make a commitment to pass on the legacy of faith and prepare other missional leaders. Paul exhorts, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"

⁹¹ Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, 95.

⁹² "It would seem that Timothy had worked at Colosse and was well known to the church there. Paul associated Timothy's name with his own in the salutation to the Colossians as well as in the private letter to Philemon" (Hiebert 1992, 96).

⁹³ Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, 97.

⁹⁴ 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1; cf. Rom 16:21

⁹⁵ Assuming that Timothy joined Paul on the second missionary journey (around the year 48-49), and that Paul wrote his first personal epistle to him at Ephesus in the mid-60s, there were about 15 years during which the Apostle mentored his protégé. That seems to indicate intensive mentoring of this emerging leader!

(2 Tim 2:2). This classic text reveals God's strategy plan for leadership multiplication.⁹⁶ Leaders are to train and mentor others who are committed to train and mentor still others (four generations in one verse—Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others also). The teacher is to multiply and preserve his teaching and ministry by passing it on to others with potential to reproduce. Those to be trained and mentored are to be first screened for faithfulness and capability ("able to teach"). The training is to be systematic and thorough so that that which is passed on is "what you have heard" or "the same" from one leader to the next. The goal of this kind of discipleship mentoring is to produce leaders with the character, knowledge and skills needed to reach the next generation. Leaders must pass on to reliable successors the baton of "the faith" as well as a passion to reach the lost. "Success without successors is no true success".⁹⁷ Significantly, Paul's clearly stated training objective "was essentially the same as that of Jesus: to reproduce not merely reliable bearers of tradition, but mature followers of Christ able to build the church and reproduce themselves in others".⁹⁸ This would insure not only the preservation of the truth⁹⁹ but the advancement and continuity of the true Church.

Titus was another of Paul's converts (cf. Titus 1:4 "my true child in a common faith") whom he recruited for ministry as a traveling companion.¹⁰⁰ That Titus, a Greek, was being mentored by him for ministry and leadership over a number of years is evident from frequent NT references to his companionship with and short-term trips for Paul (see 2 Cor 2:13; 7:6, 13-15; 8:16-23; Gal 2:1-3).¹⁰¹ Mentoring was still going on when Paul, near the close of his life (mid-60s), wrote his coaching letter to his longtime coworker whom he had just dispatched to Crete. Missionary Paul and his team had likely planted several new churches on the island of Crete during a fourth missionary journey not recorded in Acts.¹⁰² Titus was then left on Crete with the charge to properly establish the young believers and fledgling congregations in the faith, protecting them from false teachers (Titus 1:5-16). After years of mentoring, Paul was now confident enough in Titus' maturity and leadership to make him a kind of temporary district superintendent for Crete. Titus, in turn, is now to

⁹⁶ "This verse is not just about reproducing disciples. The context indicates that Timothy's role as a church leader is to raise up and multiply qualified leaders. . . . This is one of the clearest verses on church planting that we have in the Bible!" (Logan and Cole, *Raising Leaders*, 1:8).

⁹⁷ Krallmann, *Mentoring for Mission*, 128.

⁹⁸ Ott, *The Training of Lay Leaders*, 65.

⁹⁹ The concern that sound doctrine (truth) be preserved and passed on becomes a prominent theme in 2 Timothy (see 1:13, 14; 3:10, 16-17; 4:2-5, 7; cf. 1 Tim 1:3; 4:6; 6:3).

¹⁰⁰ Hiebert (*In Paul's Shadow*, 107) suggests that Titus may have been converted as a young man during the initial revival at Antioch under Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:25-26). Paul no doubt saw promise of usefulness in Christian service and growing spiritual maturity in Titus, recruiting him when he returned to Antioch after the first missionary tour (14:26-28).

¹⁰¹ The NT record indicates that after Titus' ministry with Paul in Ephesus, he made possibly three separate trips to Corinth on behalf of Paul to introduce/organize the collection for the Jerusalem poor and to deal with problems in the church. For a reconstruction of Titus' travels and duties, see Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, 105-113.

¹⁰² Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 14-15, 50; H. Wayne House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 129-132.

focus on the selection and further equipping of qualified and godly leaders (“elders”) for the young island churches. What he had observed in and heard from his mentor was now to be passed on. Finally, once his organizing work on Crete is done, Paul requested that Titus would move on to Dalmatia (Titus 3:12; 2 Tim 4:10).

Paul’s mentor training objective was far more than the preservation and passing on of truth; he was also very concerned about life transformation of leaders. For example, Paul could say to young church leaders, “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). Thus, he exhorts both Timothy and Titus to be faithful examples, models molded by the Word (1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7). The Apostle repeatedly called his recruited coworkers and teammates to emulate his own example (τύπος), just as he was following Christ’s selfless example (1 Cor 4:16; Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 1:6; 3:7, 9; 2 Tim 1:13). For Paul, the central issue in mentoring was always building character and modeling Christ likeness. Character is also obvious in his instructions to Timothy and Titus when church leaders were to be selected (1 Tim 3; Titus 1). These didactic texts shed light on the kind of relationship a mentor should have with his student intern.

Paul’s mentoring work continued long after his recruiting of new leaders and entrusting actual ministry to them. He would often revisit them to assure quality control. His mentoring ministry utilized a variety of means: close association, teaching, modeling, and hands-on learning experiences. He also prayed regularly with and for them (2 Tim 1:3; Phlm. 4-6), wrote to them, and continued to give them wise counsel and instructions through his writings.¹⁰³ The Apostle’s detailed follow-up letters to both Timothy and Titus are actually pastoral “coaching” epistles. Above all, he was quite confident in the sufficiency of the Word of God which he had entrusted to them (Acts 20:32) and in the Spirit of God’s ongoing work in his trainees’ lives and ministries (cf. Phil 1:6; 2:13; 1 Thess 5:23-24).

Paul and Jesus: Parallels

As the trailblazer of the early church’s cross-cultural enterprise, the Apostle Paul perhaps best exemplifies “the nature and significance of Jesus’ Christ’s paradigm for missions.” Krallman points out that Paul “both interpreted and implemented the principles of the Master’s consociational discipling [leadership training] model” by the way he “faithfully followed the Master’s precedent.” He did not seek to design his own overall strategy but aligned his own lifestyle and labors for God with that of his Lord.¹⁰⁴

While Paul the Apostle did not follow the leadership training model of Jesus in every particular, there are common elements which are apparent. Both Jesus and Paul recognized the need for more harvest laborers (Matt 9:35-38 cf. 2 Tim 2:2). Both invested their lives in a few key leaders. In Ephesus, Paul seems to be duplicating the ministry of Christ in Galilee. “Just as the Twelve lived with Jesus for three and a half years, so Paul’s apprentices lived with Paul for about the same amount of time.”¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Paul’s practical

¹⁰³ “Paul maintained intensive and regular contacts with his coworkers, as is seen in the information about the efforts of coworkers and the greetings in his letters” (Schnabel 2004, 1443).

¹⁰⁴ Krallman, *Mentoring for Mission*, 101-102.

¹⁰⁵ Frank Viola, *Finding Organic Church*, (Colorado Springs, CO, David C. Cook, 2009), 37.

work of doing mission became a sort of schooling in itself, similar to how Christ's itinerant ministry became the school for His disciples.¹⁰⁶

Key components of Paul's leadership training practice, which parallel the strategy and precedent of the Master Mentor, should be noted.¹⁰⁷ First, the Apostle mentored his "understudies essentially on-the-job and on-the-move."¹⁰⁸ Leaders were always developed in the context of doing ministry with the goal of building both competence and character. Second, Paul sought to inculcate a "global perspective"¹⁰⁹ in his coworkers and fellow church planters. He constantly reminded them of the Lord's purpose to reach and bless "all nations" and peoples (cf. Rom 1:5; 15:18-30; 16:26, etc). Third, he intentionally mentored numerous coworkers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, seeking to impart to them much needed cross-cultural sensitivities and passions. Krallmann observes, "Among his co-workers were both Jews and Greeks, men hailing from Palestine as well as Macedonia, Pontus, Lycaonia and the province of Asia. Paul, therefore, was the first to apply the supracultural principles of Jesus Christ's mentoring mode on a large scale in cross-cultural context."¹¹⁰ Finally, the paramount goal in all of the Apostle's mentoring ministries was to equip missional leaders to spread the gospel and to multiply the testimony of Jesus through new communities of the King being established. "With the apostle, as with his Master, all mentoring was mentoring for mission."¹¹¹ For both Jesus and Paul, the overall training objective was the fulfilling of the Great Commission mandate of multiplying reproducing disciples and disciplemakers.

Forman, Jones and Miller see other "refreshingly simple and remarkably profound principles' for developing leaders shared by Jesus and Paul. They believe both mentored and developed leaders:

- With a focus on godly character;
- in the context of a small team—building relationships and community, sharing "life on life";
- with time for reflection on ministry experiences;
- over a long period of time, and assuming continual learning;
- and with a greater concern for faithfulness and obedience than knowledge and skill.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Ott, *The Training of Lay Leaders*, 65.

¹⁰⁷ These ideas are adapted from Krallmann's summary (189-190) but are rearranged and reworked by the author with references added that are not in the original.

¹⁰⁸ Krallmann, 189.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Krallmann, *Mentoring for Mission*, 190.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 199.

¹¹² Forman, Jones, and Miller, *The Leadership Baton*, 45.

Thus both Jesus and Paul focused on methods of mentored training that were more experiential than academic, a departure from the common rabbinical methods of discipleship of the day. Ott has summarized most succinctly: "Trainees were involved in apprenticeships which moved them from observation to participation to independence."¹¹³

Summary of NT Leadership Mentoring

The scriptural examples of mentoring for leadership development are numerous and varied. From Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha, Jesus to His disciples, and Paul to his coworkers, we see that leadership mentoring is crucial to handing off the vision and passion for God's mission to the next generation. A pattern of mentoring leaders is woven into both testaments but is most evident in the history of the early church. Clearly, the New Testament pattern of training and sending out leaders was an effective and necessary strategy for global evangelization.

In the New Testament, church planting leadership was learned as men did missionary work alongside of Paul. Paul's method of training was to establish new churches and involve his coworkers in the process. Christ always expands His Church through calling out new leaders who are trained and equipped by other seasoned leaders trained on the job. Particularly through the examples of Jesus and Paul, we see that the best way to pass on the mission of God to the next generation is through the investment and training of emerging leaders. This is best done in the context of community and in a dynamic local church such as seen at Antioch and Ephesus. The New Testament demonstrates that missional leadership is best learned "through apprenticeship within communities" where emerging leaders can "learn firsthand how to live out the practices of community formation"¹¹⁴

That the church planter Paul modeled mentoring both effectively and extensively is seen in his field training of many leaders, both vocational and laypeople, on his church planting teams. Besides Timothy, who was a relatively constant member of Paul's missionary team, we see in the New Testament the Apostle mentoring John Mark, Silas, Titus, and apparently others mentioned as occasional traveling teammates such as Dr. Luke, Aquila and Priscilla, Epaphras, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Trophimus and Tychicus. Some of these itinerant missionaries worked with Paul for short periods of time and then, once mentored and trained, were encouraged to work independently of Paul as evangelists and church planters (such as Barnabas, Silas and Apollos). Others were dispatched as personal envoys of the Apostle Paul to further organize newly planted churches or to deliver important messages for him (such as Timothy, Titus, Onesimus and Epahroditus).¹¹⁵ Still others were more closely tied to the ministries and outreaches of their sending home churches. Yet, it appears, all participated with Paul in his pioneer missionary activities, particularly in the work of starting and growing new churches. And most of these coworkers at some point thereby received some measure of mentored training for ministry.

¹¹³ Ott, *The Training of Lay Leaders*, 214.

¹¹⁴ Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Leadership: Equipping God's People for Mission*. In *Missional Church*, ed. Darrell L. Guder, 183-220 (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans MI, 1998), 214.

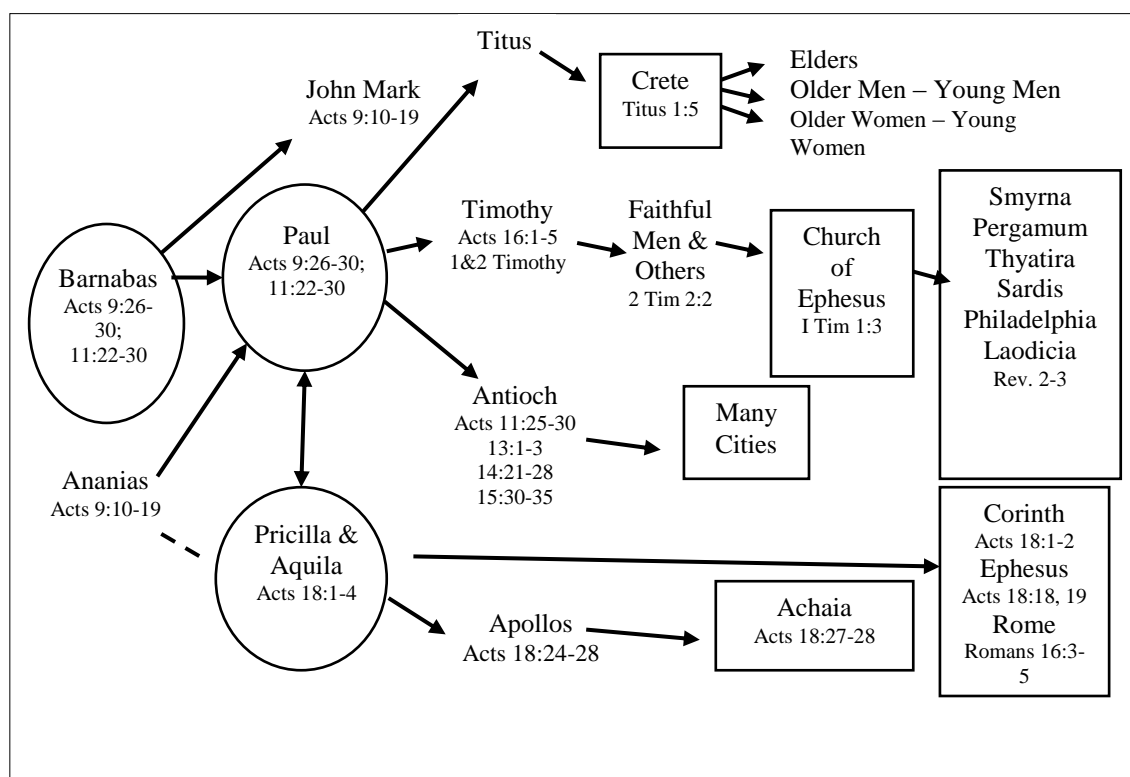
¹¹⁵ For a discussion of the delegated authority of these envoys and how the churches were to receive these messengers as they would receive Paul himself, see Schnabel 2004, 1438-9.

Two final lessons emerge from this NT study. First, in order to facilitate a church multiplication movement, leaders must be raised up and mentored both *for* the harvest and *from* the harvest. And each generation of leaders—whether church planters or pastoral leaders—must take responsibility to raise up the next generation of leaders.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Logan and Ogne, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest*, 1:7-8.

Appendix 1

Barnabas: Mentoring for Multiplication¹¹⁷



¹¹⁷ Adapted from Martin, *Mentoring Guidelines*, 34.

Appendix 2

Paul's Frequently Mentioned Church Planting Coworkers

Worker	Place of Origin or Conversion	Missionary Work Locations	Key NT References	Designation
Barnabas	Jerusalem (Judea)	Antioch, Cyprus & Galatia	Acts 11:19-26; 13-14; 15 Gal 2:1, 9; I Cor 4:6	<i>Apostle</i> - Acts 14:4, 14 <i>Co-worker</i> – Col 4:10-11
Timothy	Lystra (Lycaonia) (Acts 16:1-3)	Macedonia, Achaia, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Corinth	Acts 17-18; 19:22; I Cor 4:17; 16:10-11; I Thess 3:1-6; I Tim 1:3; Phil 1:1	<i>Brother</i> - 2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; I Thess 3:2; Philem 1 <i>Servant</i> - I Thess 3:2; <i>Fellow Slave</i> - 2 Tim 2:24; <i>Soldier</i> - 2 Tim 2:3; <i>Co-worker</i> - Rom 16:21.
Luke	Antioch (Syria)	Antioch (?), Philippi, Macedonia, Caesarea?	Acts 'we' passages Philem 24 Col 4:14 cf. v. 9-11 2 Tim 4:11	<i>Co-worker</i>
Aquila & Priscilla (Prisca)	Rome cf. Acts 18:2	Corinth, Ephesus & Rome	Acts 18:1-4, 18-19, 26 I Cor 16:19; Rom 16:4	<i>Co-worker</i> Rom. 16:3-5
Silas/Silvanus	Jerusalem	Macedonia & Achaia	Acts 15:40; 16:19; 17:4; 10, 15; 18:1, 5; 2 Cor 1:19; I Thess 1:1, 2; 2 Thess 1:1; I Pet 5:12	<i>Brother</i> - Acts 15:22 <i>Apostle</i> - 1 Thess 2:6 <i>Coworker</i> - 1 Thess 3:2
Titus	Antioch (Syria)? cf Gal 2:3	Antioch, Corinth, Crete, & Dalmatia (Illyricum)	2 Cor 7:6-7; 13-15; 8:6, 23; Titus 1:4-5; 2 Tim 4:10	<i>Brother</i> - 2 Cor 2:13 <i>Partners & Coworkers</i> - 2 Cor 8:23
Tychicus	Asia Minor?	Colossae, Ephesus & Crete	Col 4:7-9; Eph 6:21; 2 Tim 4:12; Titus 3:12	<i>Brother</i> <i>Servant</i>
Apollos	Alexandria (Egypt) Acts 18:24	Corinth (Achaia), Ephesus, Crete	Acts 18:24-27; I Cor 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13	<i>Brother</i> <i>Apostle</i> - I Cor 4:19 <i>Servant</i> - I Cor 3:5 <i>Coworker</i> - I Cor 3:9
Epaphras (Epaphroditus?)	Colossae Col 4:12— "one of you"	Colossae, Hierapolis, Laodicia, Ephesus	Col 1:7-8; 2:1; 4:12-13, 16 cf Phil 2: 25-29	<i>Servant</i> - Col 1:7 <i>Fellow Prisoner</i> — Philem 23
John Mark	Jerusalem	Antioch (Syria), Salamis & Paphos, (on Cyprus), Rome	Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37-39; 2 Tim. 4:11; Cf. Col 4:10; I Pet 5:13	<i>Servant</i> <i>Coworker</i> – Philem 24

Appendix 3 Possible Interns of Paul at Ephesus

Coworker	Hometown (Province)	N.T. Validation for Ephesus Presence
Timothy	Lystra (in Galatia)	With Paul since recruited in Acts 16:3; Acts 18:5; 19:22; I Thess 3:6
Titus	Antioch (in Syria)? cf. Gal 2:3	Sent by Paul from Ephesus to Corinth to organize the collection to the Jerusalem poor. 2 Cor 8:6, 10, 16-17, 23; 12:17-18.
Priscilla & Aquilla	Rome cf. Acts 18:2	Left by Paul to do gospel spade work in Ephesus and start house church. Acts 18:18-21; cf. I Cor 16-19
Philemon	Colossae	Heard gospel & was saved evidently during Paul's ministry at Ephesus: later returned to Colossae to open his home for believers to meet – Philem 1-2 cf. 23
Epaphras	Colossae cf. Col 4:12	"Missionary to the Lykos Valley" Founded churches in Colossae, Laodocia and Hierapolis – presumably after being trained in Ephesus & sent out by Paul "on his behalf" Col 1:3-8; 4:12-13 cf. Philem 23
Apollos	Alexandria (in Egypt) cf. Acts 18:24	Discipled by Aquila & Priscilla (& Paul?) at Ephesus before going to Corinth. Acts 18:24-27; cf. I Cor 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 16:12
Erastus	Corinth (in Macedonia) cf. Rom 16:23 2 Tim 4:20	Sent with Timothy by Paul from Ephesus to Macedonia and to co- carry the letter to the Corinthians. Acts 19:22 cf. I Cor 16:8-10; 2 Tim 4:20
Gaius	Derbe (in Galatia)	Escaped riot in Ephesus to travel with Paul to Macedonia, Corinth, etc. Acts 19:29; 20:4

Aristarchus	Thessalonica (in Macedonia)	Escaped riot in Ephesus to travel with Paul to Greece, Rome, etc. Acts 20:4 cf. 19; 29; 27:2; Col 4:10; Philem 24
Tychicus	Asia (Ephesus?)	Native of Asia Minor who carried Colossian, Ephesian & Philemon letters for Paul. Acts 20:4 cf. Col 4:7-8; Eph 6:21-22
Trophimus	Ephesus Asia (Acts 21:29)	From Ephesus accompanied Paul to Macedonia, Achaia, Asia and Jerusalem Acts 20:4; 21:29 cf. 2 Tim 4:20
Secundus	Thessalonica (in Macedonia)	Acts 20:4
Sopater (Sospater? cf. Rom 16:21)	Berea (in Macedonia)	Acts 20:4
Archippus	Colossae	A “fellow soldier” with Philemon (his father?) in the Colossian ministry Philem 1-2; Col 4:17