The cover features a decorative graphic on the right side consisting of three overlapping circles of varying sizes, each with a dark blue center and a lighter blue outer ring. Two thin, light blue lines intersect at the top left and extend diagonally across the page, framing the circles.

Ministry Praxis HANDBOOK

Central Baptist Theological Seminary

2012

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Introduction to Ministry Praxis

The mission of Central Baptist Theological Seminary is to educate and develop women and men called by God to be leaders for the church of Jesus Christ who are theologically articulate, biblically knowledgeable, spiritually healthy, humanly sensitive, and professionally competent.

A key ingredient of this education and development is Ministry Praxis, otherwise known as field education. This part of Central Seminary's curriculum is comprised of three required courses for the Master of Divinity degree, two of which involve a practicum site and pastoral mentor:

MP501 – Christian Witness

MP502 – The Church's Worship and Rituals (mentored practicum)

MP503 – Ministry Dynamics (mentored practicum)

This Handbook applies only to the mentored practicum courses MP502/503.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is also available, and may be substituted for MP503, or else taken for credit as elective hours.

- One unit of CPE is equivalent to six credit hours.
- A maximum of twelve credit hours (2 CPE units) may be applied to the MDiv, or six credit hours (1 CPE unit) to an MA degree.

-
- The *purposes* of Ministry Praxis are to enhance professional competencies in the practice(s) of ministry and to wed theory and practice via contextualization in actual ministry situations. In the process, seminarians progress in the development of pastoral self-identity.
 - Participants will be engaged as *Ministers-In-Training* (MITs) with a *Pastoral Mentor* at a pre-approved *practicum site*. While churches comprise the vast majority of our practicum sites, it is possible to work out a practicum within any one of a variety of ministry contexts. Choice of practicum site and mentor depends a great deal on the particularities of each seminarian's calling.

- Many seminarians enroll in Ministry Praxis while already serving as pastors or chaplains.
 - Some may have the freedom to commit additional time outside their ministry setting to a ministry practicum elsewhere; others are unable to do so.
 - When one's ministry "practicum" is carried on within the seminarian's current (employed) ministry setting, emphasis is placed on:
 - finding a mentor with significantly more ministry experience
 - using the ministry praxis courses as opportunities...
 - to reflect deeply on one's established practices of ministry
 - to gain and learn from peer feedback
 - to establish professional learning goals regarding practices of ministry with which one has less experience and/or competence.

- Individual *Learning Covenants* are negotiated between MITs, their Pastoral Mentors, and Ministry Praxis instructors.

- In addition to the 8-10 hours per week practicum (120 hours minimum per semester), MITs meet 3 hours per week for didactic and peer group sessions. Groups engage in facilitated case presentation and reflection (theological, psychological, sociological, ethical) on their ministry experiences. Ministry rituals are written and presented, also.

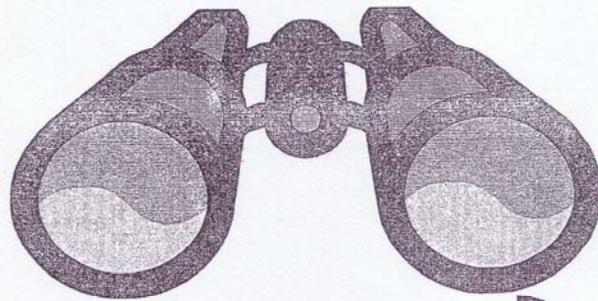
- MP502 places emphasis on ministry experiences involving *ritual practices* of the Church (baptism, eucharistic practices, officiating weddings and funerals, etc.), especially those of the MIT's particular denomination or tradition.

- MP503 includes an introduction to family systems theory as applied to congregational life and ministry.

- Registrants for MP502/503 typically will have completed already at least 24 hours of other core courses in the MDiv program.

Images for Supervision
Some ways of perceiving the Student/Supervisor Relationship

Mentor
Teacher
Consultant
Spiritual Companion



resource

GUIDE

MODEL

Colleague

Conversation Partner

Theologian

Adapted from Vanderbilt Divinity School

Pastoral Mentors and Practicum Sites

A high quality Ministry Praxis program is maintained by recruiting and retaining excellent Pastoral Mentors. What is expected of such persons?

- Significant pastoral *experience*
- A *generative, generous, and gracious* spirit
- Pastoral *sensitivity, spiritual wisdom* and *excellent* moral character ⁺
- Good *listening and feedback skills*⁺
- Willingness to *share personal experiences* in ministry ⁺
- Commitment to their own *lifelong learning* process⁺
- Provision of a *ministry context* with opportunities for 8–10 hours per week of Minister-In-Training (MIT) participant-observation (total of 120 hours minimum per semester). *Clarity with regard to specific ministry opportunities will be worked out between Mentor and MIT in a written Covenant of Learning.*
- Personal *time*, including a scheduled *one hour appointment per week* for one-on-one reflective conversation with the MIT
- Ability to free the MIT to develop his/her own pastoral identity ⁺
- *Theological reflection* with the MIT on practicum experiences
- *Signed verification of MIT's weekly log/journal* accurately reflecting practicum activities and hours (See Appendix A for a blank copy of the log form.)
- *One written evaluative response* to the MIT's final Practicum Reflection Paper due at semester's end (Note: The MIT will not receive a passing grade until the Mentor's evaluation is received by the seminary professor.)
- Participation (as schedule and distance allows) *in two on-campus mentoring events*:
 1. **Orientation** held in conjunction with the first class session each semester
 2. **Celebration** with MITs, held in conjunction with the last class session

A potential Pastoral Mentor's anticipated inability to comply with one of more of the stated requisites must be disclosed and negotiated with the program director. Mentors are expected to abide by the personnel policies of Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mentors are encouraged to purchase and read, along with MITs, the course textbooks.

Stipends regrettably are not available for Pastoral Mentors' service. Stipends paid by churches to Ministers-In-Training are permissible but not mandatory, especially since the emphases of Ministry Praxis are on educational opportunities rather than task fulfillment in ministry contexts.

⁺ These statements are adapted from Queen's Theological College's criteria for field education supervisors, at <http://www.queensu.ca/theology/L3Learn-Theo-FieldEd.htm> (accessed 12 June 2001). Used by permission.

Specific Tasks of the Pastoral Mentor

1. Be a person with whom, and establish an atmosphere in which, the seminarian Minister-in-Training may experience ministry formation and personal growth.
2. Consult with the Minister-in-Training in regard to her/his Learning Covenant, and add your signature only when the covenant is acceptable to you as one that fits the practicum setting and the learner's needs for formation and growth.
3. Meet weekly with the Minister-in-Training, and observe their ministry practices to the extent possible.
4. Review, discuss, and sign each week the Minister's-in-Training weekly log and reflection.
5. Share liberally your own wisdom and experience in the practices of ministry.
6. Provide a written evaluative response to the Minister's-in-Training Practicum Reflection Paper, due at the end of each practicum semester.

How to Make a *Good* Minister-in-Training Practicum *Superb . . .*

★ *take seriously the mentoring relationship*

It is expected that the Minister-in-Training (MIT) will spend 8-10 hours per week in the practicum setting, including at least 1 hr/wk of one-on-one conversation with the Pastoral Mentor. These weekly sessions might include: reflection on ordinary or perplexing situations encountered by the MIT, “how to” discussions pertaining to particular roles and responsibilities in the practice of ministry, discussion of assigned readings and relevant Scriptures, collaboration on preparation of Learning Covenant and Context Analysis assignments, evaluation of progress on learning goals and objectives, prayer and practice of other spiritual disciplines, etc. You might also include food and drink from time to time. “Take seriously” the mentoring relationship, but enjoy one another’s company!

★ *covenant for learning*

The Learning Covenant is a collaborative exercise and document. Learning goals should be clear and accompanied by objectives for accomplishing the goals. Both MIT and mentor should have copies for weekly reference during mentoring sessions and for mid-term and final evaluations.

★ *define clearly the MIT role*

The MIT should have a clearly defined role or function. The practicum involves some participant-observation, but the emphasis is on responsible and active *participation* in ministry opportunities. These should be appropriate to the student’s abilities and learning goals, and to the needs of the practicum setting.

★ *make introductions*

It is helpful to introduce the MIT to others in the practicum setting. Use newsletters, bulletin boards, public announcements, personal introductions, perhaps even business cards. Proper introductions help to legitimize the MIT’s presence and to enable trust-building.

★ *assign a title for the role*

“Minister-in-Training” or “MIT” will do nicely—or the practicum setting may have another preferred title such as “seminary intern.”

★ *provide a space*

Is there a desk, corner of the library, perhaps even an empty office where MITs might “hang their hat”? We’re all happier and more productive with some space and place to call our own. This too helps to legitimize the MIT’s role.

★ \$\$\$

Stipends are not essential to the MIT practicum; and the emphasis is on learning rather than on reimbursable work. Nonetheless, MITs provide a service in the activities of learning and therefore 1 Timothy 5:18 is applicable. If it is possible to stipend the MIT, this is usually appropriate and always appreciated.

The Mentoring Meeting

1. *Connecting Time*

Humanizing moments; checking in with one another: How are you doing? How was your week?

2. *Description of Ministry Activities*

What ministry has happened since we last met? What went on in that ministry? What was at stake for the student?

- Updates are a mutual responsibility (Mentor and MIT) but primarily driven by the MIT
- Uncovering the most pressing issue or pastoral concern
- Various methods for getting at the data: case study, verbatim, critical incident report, sermon, journal, observation of leadership activity, video/audio tapes

3. *Reference to the Covenant of Learning*

How does the most pressing concern relate to the learning goals and objectives? Offering feedback, both critical and affirming.

4. *Raising Theological Matters*

Probing the theological issues: Embedded or deliberative theology? Where are faith and life intersecting? What biblical stories or paradigms shed interpretative light?

5. *Pastoral Implications/Alternatives*

What ministry needs to happen now? What are the student's next steps or pastoral actions? Are there alternatives to explore?

6. *Evaluation of the Mentor Meeting*

Mutual summarizing of the learning that emerged in the session.
Reflecting on the session and supervision.

7. *Closure*

Saying goodbye -- perhaps a prayer or meal.



Notes:

- Ministry Praxis is neither clinical supervision nor spiritual direction. Rather, it is educational supervision and mentoring of ministry. We nurture a life-long learner.
- A mentor meeting ought to get at facts, feelings, understandings and alternatives. A major focus (and time spent) in mentoring will be in the raising of theological matters.

Adapted by Jennifer Judd from Jean Stairs, "The Supervision Session" (unpublished 2000). Used by permission.

Reflections on the Value of a Mentor Throughout My Seminary Education

The mentor/student relationship has been one of the most valuable elements of my theological education. I believe that it has been beneficial for me to have the same mentor for my entire seminary education. Listed below are a number of guidelines which might help mentors to understand what has been the most helpful to one student in the mentor/student relationship.

(The functions of ministry have been categorized by Seward Hiltner in *Ferment in the Ministry*.)

The Ministry of Preaching - The oral interpretation of the Word of God in a structured speaker-audience setting.

- Provide practical advice: How to prepare for a sermon, advantages and disadvantages of different styles of sermon notes, how to plan preaching themes.
- Provide opportunities to preach before a congregation, provide critical feedback and encouragement, help student to recognize progress and identify areas requiring further work.
- Provide opportunities to see the theoretical ideas translated into the practical realities of preaching through the mentor minister's style and manner of preaching.
- Provide opportunities to reflect on the ministry task of preaching and its place in the worship service.
- Provide opportunities for student to experiment with different styles of sermons in a comfortable and "safe" environment in which the student may receive honest feedback from the mentor minister and from congregation members.
- Provide practical resources which help the minister with sermon preparation.
- Discuss practical concerns of preaching: How to deal with interruptions, how to "read" the congregation during the service, how to preach to meet the needs of parishioners.

The Ministry of Administering - The management of people to accomplish the goals of the institutional church.

- Provide opportunities to reflect and discuss the role of the pastor as administrator (include practical and theological implications).
- Provide opportunities to experience administrative roles - allow student to plan agendas, chair meetings, etc.
- Provide opportunities for student to receive feedback from the mentor and from parishioners in response to student's leadership.
- Discuss situations which require special administrative care in the live of the church.
- Discuss how to help the church to plan, and provide opportunities for the student to enter into this process with church members.
- Turn over complete responsibilities for the general administration of certain programs within the church

The Ministry of Teaching - The nurturing of persons in the Christian faith and practice primarily in group settings.

- Reflect with the student on the role of the teaching pastor as chief learner within the church.
- Provide opportunities to practice teaching skills with various age groups, and provide opportunities for evaluation and feedback.
- Discuss methods and opportunities for discipling persons within the church and provide opportunities for student to disciple others.

The Ministry of Shepherding - The care of persons through helping relationships, (i.e. interpersonal counseling, group counseling, marital and family counseling, pastoral visitation, and hospital calling).

- Reflect with the student on the role of pastor as caregiver and share practical implications.
- Share with student personal experiences in counseling roles.
- Provide practical guidelines to help student with pastoral visitation (how often to visit, when to visit, etc.) and hospital visitation (how long to stay, how to act, etc.)
- Allow the student to go along with the mentor on pastoral visits, and then encourage and enable the student to begin regular visitation on their own.
- Encourage student as opportunities to shepherd naturally arise.

The Ministry of Evangelism - The gaining of commitment to Jesus Christ through interpersonal dialogue.

- Reflect with the student on the role of pastor and people in the task of evangelism.
- Provide resources to help the student become excited about evangelism.
- Share with the student ways to help church members to understand their responsibility to reach out to others with the Gospel, along with ways to train and enable congregation members to do that.
- Ask the student to evaluate the evangelism program at the mentor church, then discuss his/her evaluations and suggestions.
- Provide opportunities for student to share the Gospel with others.

The Ministry of Celebrating - The leading of persons into the presence of God through worship.

- Discuss the role of the pastor as worship planner and worship leader.
- Discuss the theological bases of worship and the implications for worship in the church.
- Share the mentor's method for planning worship.
- Discuss special opportunities for worship.
- Provide opportunities for student to plan and lead a wide variety of worship experiences.
- Encourage student to visit a number of different churches, which have a variety of worship styles.
- Ask the student to reflect on the worship needs of the mentor church and evaluate the degree to which those needs are being met.

The Ministry of Reconciling - The attempt to restore "right" relationships among divided persons.

- Reflect on the role of the pastor as reconciler.

- With respect to confidences, share with the student personal experiences in which you have acted as a minister/reconciler.
- Discuss disagreements within the church and how to handle them
- Discuss the dynamics of the church and politics within the church.

The Ministry of Theology - The ability to think about life as it relates to the Christian faith.

- Ask the student what they are thinking and struggling with; listen carefully, but do not try to provide "the answer."
- Minister to the student as he/she struggles with difficult theological issues.
- Discuss the role of the minister as theologian
- Engage in regular Bible study together - ask "What does this passage mean for us?"
- Recommend resources
- Help the student learn to verbalize his/her beliefs - ask "What do you believe about....and why?"

The Ministry of Discipline - The development of personal self-discipline

- Time management skills and resources.
- Continuing education beyond the seminary doors.
- Discuss the minister and his/her family.
- Model self-discipline in your ministry and life.
- Reflect with the student on the needs of the minister and minister's family for spiritual growth and pastoral care.

Summary

- Reflect on what you have learned in your years in the ministry.
- Encourage the student to reflect on the goals, gifts, and opportunities for ministry which God has given him/her.
- Provide a real church model or arena in which the student can apply what he/she is studying in seminary courses.
- Provide opportunities for the student to gain hands-on experience in ministry tasks.
- Provide a safe environment in which the student can experiment and learn using various ministry styles and approaches.
- Provide feedback and encouragement from the mentor and from congregation members.
- Provide resources and ideas.

The elements of my training which have been most helpful to me are often prefaced by phrases such as:

- "I wish someone had told me..."
- "I've learned..."
- "Something that was difficult for me was..."
- "Here's something you'll need to know..."
- "Watch out for..."
- "Be sure to..."

Written by Rev. Scott Berry, CBTS seminarian, April 1992. Used by permission.

Mentoring That Works

Steven W. Klipowicz
Director of Mentored Ministry
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Charlotte
Assistant Professor of Ministry

Mentoring works. Since its beginning, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte has invested in mentoring to prepare leaders for the Church. The investment has paid handsome dividends. A recent survey of our students and their mentors reveal that mentoring has made a difference. Mentors provided students with clear role models, friendships, and seasoned feedback and perspective. Students have given mentors renewed enthusiasm for ministry and a powerful incentive for personal reflection and growth.

Why has mentoring been so effective at Gordon-Conwell? First of all, it is a proven method to prepare people for leadership. Today, mentoring is a hot topic! Over the last twenty years, a number of studies have discussed its potential for leadership formation. The U.S. military, educational institutions, and the corporate world have

enthusiastically embraced the use of mentors in the development of future leaders and teachers.

Gordon-Conwell Seminary's commitment to mentoring is more than responding to the latest management fad or leadership buzzword. Mentoring works because it is rooted in solid biblical principles. Mentoring future leaders for God's people has deep roots in Scripture. Moses and Joshua; Elijah and Elisha; Mordecai and Esther; Barnabas and Mark; Paul and Timothy are noteworthy examples of what can happen when one life is poured into another. Jesus modeled this principle of relational investment in His three-year development of the Twelve.

Church history also illustrates that mentoring works. Charles Simeon of Cambridge changed the course of the Church of England by pouring himself into the lives of a handful of seminary students. New England pastors apprenticed young men preparing for ministry. Jonathan Edwards and his wife, Sarah,

regularly invited students to live in their home to model pastoral activity, family life and personal devotion.

Mentoring also works because it is a priority. Mentoring is a relational process that requires patience and chemistry. As Paul Stanley and J. Robert Clinton define it: "Mentoring is a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources."¹ It provides in the words of Bobb Biehl, "warm help."² Effective mentoring relationships don't happen overnight or in a semester. They take time.

Gordon-Conwell's Mentored Ministry program capitalizes on this by making the mentoring relationship a priority. Mentoring can't be simply injected into the curriculum, so mentoring is a core component at Gordon-Conwell—Charlotte. Up to twelve credit hours are dedicated to this process. Seminary students are linked with a qualified ministry mentor for the entire duration of the student's time in school. The student chooses a qualified mentor. The student then is re-

8.

quired to spend at least 4 or 5 hours per month with the mentor who provides ongoing counsel, support, and accountability. As one student aptly puts it, "My time with my mentor has been vital in its role of shaping me as a minister, and permitting me to integrate my studies with the realities of the pastoral life."

Mentoring works at Gordon-Conwell—Charlotte because it is practice-centered. Mentor and student understand their primary focus is preparation for ministry. Mentors provide insight and perspective into the realities of congregational life and parish ministry. Moreover, students are required to develop specific ministry projects in conjunction with their mentor. Mentors coach and give feedback to the student on these projects. Accountability guarantees the quality of learning in these projects. "My mentor is pretty tough on me and doesn't let me get slack." This approach ensures that integration of theory and practice. As a result, students leave seminary ready for effective ministry.

Finally, mentoring works because it is a win-win situation for all involved. Students benefit from their mentors as role models, guides, supporters, coaches, and pastors. Mentors discover that they also benefit in the following ways:

A sense of significance. Mentors often develop a renewed awareness of extending ministry to the next generation. Diedrich

Bonhoeffer, German theologian and martyr said, "A righteous man lives for the next generation." Mentors are energized by this chance to extend their ministry and vision thirty to forty years beyond their own lives.

A source of collegiality. Pastors are often busy but lonely people. Mentoring reciprocally brings a growing relationship that often extends beyond seminary. As one mentor expressed it, "My student has become a great friend, an encouragement, and a kindred spirit."

A stimulus to personal growth. Our mentors, in a sense, go back to school. Students question and probe to get insight on ministry. This pushes the mentors out of their comfort zones to fresh reflection on the foundations of ministry and vocation. "My student has challenged my life and my thinking by her life and leadership. It has encouraged me to continually be learning and growing."

The real winner is the Church. The Body of Christ faces a crisis in the next few years as many proven leaders retire. New leadership is needed for the millennium ahead. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte is committed to preparing these leaders through mentoring. Mentoring works!

† Stanley, Paul D. and Clinton, J. Robert (1992). *Connecting*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.

‡ Biehl, Bobb (1996). *Mentoring*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman.

On mentored ministry at Gordon-Conwell—Charlotte



I have provided a classroom for my student to help him process the relationship between his education and his own experiences. I try to help him balance his education, family, and ministry.



My mentor has been a terrific role model in "walking the talk" of discipleship. Student



My mentor helps me keep my priorities straight, especially in the area of spiritual formation, which often gets neglected in an academic environment.

Ministry Praxis Experiences

Listed below are some basic experiences that teaching churches and/or Pastoral Mentors covenant to provide Ministers-in-Training (MITs) enrolled in Ministry Praxis. This is not an exhaustive listing. We expect that particularized Learning Covenants will be negotiated between the MIT and the Mentor, and affirmed by the seminary's Ministry Praxis professor. The list is intended to provide some guidelines for ministries performed by seminarians among the people of the church where they serve. A major objective of Ministry Praxis is for the MIT to have real "hands on" opportunities in various ministry areas, in addition to "shadowing" the Mentor in her/his ministry. It is a participant-observer role of action and reflection.

I. Experiences in Pastoral Care

The Minister-in-Training may:

1. Observe, as possible, and discuss the Mentor's theory and method of counseling.
2. Observe, as possible, and discuss the Mentor's theory and method of pre-marital counseling.
3. Observe and reflect upon the Mentor's hospital visitation and, will make hospital calls, individually and accompanied by Mentor.
4. Observe and reflect upon the Mentor's visitation to shut-ins and nursing home residents and will make visits individually and accompanied by Mentor.
5. Observe, as possible and reflect upon Mentor's visitation at the time of death, or other great loss.
6. Observe and reflect upon Mentor's ministry of general home visitation, and will make such calls individually and accompanied by Mentor.

II. Experiences in the Ritual Practices of Ministry

The Minister-in-Training may:

1. Observe, as possible, and reflect upon the Mentor's method of preparations and the conducting of a wedding.
2. Observe, as possible, and reflect upon the Mentor's method of preparation and the conducting of a baptismal service and will participate as much as allowable.
3. Observe, as possible, and reflect upon the Mentor's preparation for and the conducting of a parent/child dedication, and will participate as much as allowable. (In those traditions that practice such services).
4. Observe, as possible, and reflect upon the Mentor's method of preparation and the conducting of a funeral service, and will participate where allowable.

III. Experiences In Worship and Preaching

The Minister-in-Training may:

1. Reflect with the Mentor about the method(s) used by the Mentor in his/her sermon preparation.
2. Analyze and discuss with the Mentor at least two of the Mentor's sermons.
3. Prepare and reflect with the mentor two sermons.
4. Deliver at least two sermons each semester with feedback from the mentor and lay persons of the congregation.
5. Study the style and order of worship, reflecting upon the theology and practice of worship with the Mentor.
6. Assist in leading worship in all areas consistent with the doctrine and practices of the Mentor and the congregation.

IV. Experiences in Christian Education

The Minister-in-Training may:

1. Observe and reflect with Mentor upon the total educational ministry of the local church and its administration.
2. Observe and reflect with Mentor upon classes for children, youth and adults.
3. Teach and reflect upon at least one class session for children, one for youth, and one for adults.
4. Conduct and reflect upon at least one Bible study session other than Sunday Church School.
5. Observe and reflect upon one children's event, one youth event, and one adult event other than Sunday Church School.

V. Experiences in Church Administration

The Minister-in-Training may:

1. Reflect with the Mentor upon the Mentor's style and theology of administration.
2. Observe and reflect with the Mentor upon the leadership of two board or major committee meetings.
3. Reflect with the Mentor upon the planning, raising and administration of the church's annual operating and global mission budget.
4. Observe, as possible, and reflect upon the governing structure of the church and the particular role of the pastor.

VI. Experiences in Discipleship for Wholistic Mission and Evangelism

The Minister-in-Training may:

1. Discuss and analyze with the Mentor his/her own theology and methodology for developing disciples of Christ among congregants.
2. Discuss with the Mentor how new Christians and new members are integrated into the life of the congregation.
3. Reflect with the Mentor upon the Mentor's theology and practiced methods of mission and evangelism.
4. Observe and reflect together upon at least one occasion of mission and evangelistic outreach in which the Mentor is an active participant.

** The congregation that receives a Minister-in-Training will be invited and encouraged to be a "teaching church" by opening themselves up to the student. A teaching congregation provides a wide range of opportunities to do all kinds of pastoral ministry, allowing the Minister-in-Training to learn by doing.*

This document utilizes with gratitude and few adaptations the work of the late Reverend John Eldred, former Director of the Practice of Ministry, Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Covenant of Learning

The Covenant of Learning is an agreement carefully worked out by the Minister-in-Training and the Pastoral Mentor at the Ministry Praxis practicum site, and in harmony with the congregation where the ministry will take place. The Covenant is written with an understanding and awareness of where the MIT is at the beginning of his/her practice of ministry, and therefore, may need to be revisited or revised during this educational process.

Each semester, the Covenant of Learning typically will include three ministry areas for growth in pastoral leadership. (See Handbook section entitled “Ministry Praxis Experiences.”) The areas of emphasis typically for the fall semester of Ministry Praxis (MP502) are Experiences I, II, and III: Pastoral Care, Worship and Preaching, and Ritual Practices of Ministry. During the spring semester (MP503), the ministry foci are commonly Experiences IV, V, and VI: Christian Education, Church Administration, and Discipleship for Wholistic Mission and Evangelism. The objectives developed in the Covenant to achieve these learning goals must be very specific and measurable.

In addition, the Covenant of Learning will include two specific areas of *personal development and growth* in the life of the Minister-in-Training. These could be: an area of personal need to improve family communications, development of physical health and emotional well-being, work on the ability to understand and express feelings constructively, time management, improving one’s ability to meet and talk with strangers, practicing good listening skills, specific areas of spiritual growth, or other areas of personal development. Again the objectives developed in the Covenant to achieve these two goals in personal growth must be very specific and measurable.

The Covenant of Learning should be typed and needs to be at least one page, but no more than two pages. Copies may be provided to Peer Group members for review and accountability, and must be provided to the Pastoral Mentor, the Peer Group facilitator, and the director of Ministry Praxis.

(See Appendix B for Sample Learning Covenants)

Class Sessions and Peer Groups

Ministry Praxis classes will convene weekly, sometimes for a field-trip and more often for a brief presentation and discussion of a scheduled ministry topic. Half or more of most class periods, however, will be spent in Peer Groups of approximately 5–8 students plus a professor or other facilitator. These sessions may include a brief discussion of assigned readings, followed by ritual or case presentations and group reflection. Case presentations will be based on the model set forth in *Shared Wisdom: A Guide to Case Study Reflection in Ministry* (Mahan, Troxell, and Allen).

Case Study Guidelines: Format for Writing a Case

Adapted from Vanderbilt Divinity School, Department of Field Education; used by permission.

- I. **BACKGROUND:** Provide enough information to set a specific ministry event in context with a description of setting, persons, or related events. Is there any prior history that would serve as context (i.e., previous interactions, decisions, etc. that are pertinent)?
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT:** Describe what happened and what you did. Report the event in as much detail as possible. You may describe the event in narrative form, verbatim, or a combination of the two. Try not to evaluate or interpret the event at this point, but focus on describing what happened. It takes a certain discipline to “see” and not to judge.

There is another kind of seeing that involves a letting go. When I see this way I sway transfixed and emptied. The difference between the two ways of seeing is the difference between walking with and without a camera. When I walk with a camera I walk from shot to shot, reading the light on a calibrated meter. When I walk without a camera, my own shutter opens, and the moment's light prints on my own silver gut. When I see this second way I am above all an unscrupulous observer.

--- Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

- III. **ANALYSIS:** As if you are turning light through a prism, consider the event from the following points of view, so that you might add to your consideration of “what is going on here?”

A. **Psychological Concerns**

Some ways to get at this might be:

- Reflect on your own feelings and emotions that were present during the event
- Give attention to interpersonal dynamics that took place between people
- Share your “hunches” about psychological dynamics present in the situation

B. **Sociological Concerns**

Some ways to get at this might be:

- Consider any social forces that might be operative in this situation, e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc.
- Reflect on ways power, authority, institutional politics impacted this event
- Think about ways in which this event allowed you to think critically about

your own culture and perhaps to- consider your own social location from a different vantage point

C. Personal Concerns

Some ways to get at this might be:

- Give some attention to what this situation stirred up in you personally (feelings, memories, etc.)
- Reflect on any “aha moments” you had (any new learnings, insights, awarenesses)
- Recall ways in which this situation challenged your “comfort zone”

D. Pastoral or Professional Concerns

Some ways to get at this might be:

- Think about how you would describe your role in this situation (i.e. priest, prophet, preacher, pastor, counselor, etc.)
- Consider ways in which this situation raises vocational or identity questions for you
- Articulate questions or dilemmas regarding pastoral practice that might be sparked by this situation

IV. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: Now that you have begun to understand this situation from a variety of viewpoints, it is time to turn to the heart of the matter, or theological reflection. Theological reflection is the disciplined process of making connections between our lived experience and:

- our core commitments, beliefs, and faith
- our evolving understandings of God, Christ, Spirit, grace, sin, salvation, conversion, prayer, etc
- the religious tradition which we claim (or with which we struggle, or both)

Give this part of your case your best attention. Some ways to get at this might be:

- Reflect on the ways in which this event intersects with your own faith or belief. Are there ways in which a conviction(s) of yours is challenged, stretched, confirmed or enhanced?
- Consider how you would translate this event into theological language, metaphors, images, or categories
- Articulate the theological questions or dilemmas that are at stake in the event you described. (e.g., Does the event raise the theological question of the efficacy of prayer, or perhaps make you wonder if God really does have a “preferential option for the poor”?)
- Consult other sources such as holy texts, other thinkers, poets, denominational statements/creeds: How do others approach the question or dilemma you’ve named?

V. ASSESSMENT OF YOUR PASTORAL PRACTICE: Briefly indicate the ways in which you thought you were effective or ineffective in this situation.

VI. FUTURE ACTION: In what ways might this reflection inform future actions in this situation, or in similar situations you might encounter?

FACILITATING A CASE

Case Presentation

- 1) *Presenting the Case Aloud.* Participants follow along on their written copy noting questions or insights as the presenter reads the case.
- 2) *Clarifying the Information.* Here our goal is not analysis or interpretation, but understanding the case as the presenter represents it. Our central question is, Do we understand the presenter's description of what happened?
- 3) *Sharing Personal Wisdom.* Here our goal is to connect the case and presenter to the lived experience of the other participants and to become aware of the feelings and images each of us brings to the case.
- 4) *Pooling Professional and Educational Wisdom.* Here participants have the chance to offer the presenter the fruits of their training in the social sciences, psychology, literature, science, business, and so on.
- 5) *Claiming the Wisdom of the People of God.* Questions of theology and spirit inform the entire case process, but here they are made explicit.
- 6) *Reflecting on the Presenter's Ministry.*
 - a) Action to date. The group turns its attention to reflection on the performance of the presenter-minister.
 - b) Action in the future. Having reflected on the act of ministry, we ask, What implications are to be drawn for ministry in the future?
- 7) *Evaluating the Process.* The presenter is asked, What has been most helpful? What learnings have been gleaned?

Mahan, Jeffrey H., Barbara B. Troxell, and Carol J. Allen, Shared Wisdom, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993, p. 121.

Context Analysis of Minister-in-Training Practicum Setting

This optional exercise is designed to help you reflect on the context of your Minister-in-Training practicum setting. It should also help you identify more clearly your role within that setting. The information to be gathered and other matters raised will necessitate consultation with your Pastoral Mentor and others in the parish/congregation. It will entail close and critical observation during the early part of your practicum experience.

No composite write-up is required for this optional exercise to be profitable—only legible notes on this worksheet and/or attachments.



Demographics: (What are the characteristics of the people you serve?)

- Number of people: total vs. “active”
- Age spread: % of children, youth, 20-35, 35-50, 50-65, over 65
- Distribution by gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education/occupation, marital status, economic class
- Special factors/problems/possibilities due to make-up of group
- Does your constituency have any unique common history or experiences?

Physical Plant:

- Size and condition: an asset or liability?
- Is the location suitable? (Does the location create unique problems or possibilities?)
- Special features/problems



Present Programs:

- What are the needs of the congregation, agency or program?
- What programs are presently available to meet which needs?
 - Are there major gaps between the needs and the programs?
 - What are the needs of the neighborhood/community/world beyond the local congregation, agency or program?
 - What programs are presently available to meet which needs?
- Any major gaps between the needs and the programs?

Leadership and Power:

- Who are the most influential or powerful people? What are their positions in the church, program or agency?
- Quantity of leadership: Concentrated in one or a few people, or widely spread?
- Quality of leadership: Is it effective?
- What is the most common style of leadership: autocratic, democratic, collegial, other?
- How is leadership chosen?
- Are there any conflicts between "new" and "old" leadership?
- How is power exerted? By persuasion, by virtue of office, openly or covertly?
- How is conflict addressed and resolved?

Overall:

- What are the major strengths of the congregation or organization?
- What are the major weaknesses?
- Any present conflicts/crises?
- What are clear norms and shared values in the congregation or organization?

Your Role:

- What are your major responsibilities?
- What is your agenda? Are there things you want to accomplish beyond the parameters of your official responsibilities?
- What is your strategy?
- What will help you succeed?
- What stands in your way?
- How do you perceive/feel about your ability to function in this setting?
- What are your greatest strengths and assets at the practicum setting?
- What are your greatest weaknesses and liabilities at the practicum setting?

Ministerial Ethics

The majority of the Ministry Praxis program takes place within congregational settings, and most of these are denominationally affiliated. Hence, Ministers-in-Training and Pastoral Mentors are urged to respect the governing bodies and adhere to the policies and professional ethics of their denominational judicatory. In lieu of such, both MITs and Mentors are asked to abide by The Covenant and Code of Ethics adopted by the American Baptist Churches USA (Appendix C). The MIT's conduct is subject also to the Code of Ethics for Central Baptist Seminary students, as found in the Student Handbook.

Change in Practicum Site or Termination of Practicum

Certain issues and situations may require a change in practicum site or the termination of a Ministry Praxis practicum. In such cases every effort will be made to resolve the situation before a change or termination is considered.

The Minister-in-Training (MIT) should address relevant practicum concerns with his or her Pastoral Mentor. The Mentor, likewise, should discuss concerns with the MIT. If either the MIT or the Mentor believes that this cannot be done with benefit or that a solution cannot be reached, then she or he should discuss this with the Peer Group facilitator, course professor, and/or the director of Ministry Praxis. At this point, the director and/or professor will discuss matters with both the Mentor and the MIT and possibly with any other parties involved.

The Ministry Praxis director will, in discussion with Mentor and MIT, make the final decision regarding change of practicum site or termination of practicum. For other concerns or questions, MITs are encouraged to consult Central Baptist Seminary's Student Handbook which outlines the conduct expected of all seminarians and provides a grievance procedure.

Ministry Praxis: DIMENSIONS

Presence...

"just" being there...*in* the ministry context

Relations...

with:

Pastoral Mentor

Professor

Peers

Parisioners

Patients

Activities...

planning, analyzing, discussing, covenanting, pastoral caring and counseling, visiting, teaching, administrating, leading, preaching, praying, officiating, listening, observing, questioning, rehearsing, attending, conversing, meeting, reading, writing, creating, preparing, presenting, reflecting, evaluating...

You...

who you are becoming...pastoral self-identity

Emotions...

It matters how you and those to whom you relate *feel* about what's happening

Reflection...

Reflective-Action while in the ministry context
Active-Reflection with a Pastoral Mentor, Peer Group, and Professor

MP502/503 Activity Log

Name: _____ Week of: _____

Semester Week #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15 – (circle one)

Day	Activities	Time
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		
Total Hours		

Reflections (continue on back of sheet if necessary):

This constitutes an accurate record of practicum activities for the above week.

Student: _____ Mentor: _____

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE LEARNING COVENANTS

Minister in Training Practicum Learning Covenant

Pastoral Care

Presently I average about 12-15 pastoral calls per week. While I do keep track of who I call on, I plan on implementing a logging system to be used by myself in addition to all members involved in Community Care within the church.

Additionally we have several individuals who are considered either terminal or seriously ill. I plan on doing some additional research over the next 3 months on death and dying. This will include reading and discussions with numerous pastors in the area I will see over that period of time.

Ritual Practices of Ministry

I currently have 4 weddings scheduled for this year. We are evaluating premarital counseling materials. At the present time I do not use a specific guideline other than my own that I have developed over the last three years. I plan to try two different prepackaged programs in actual counseling situations this spring.

I am working with XXX on the development of a package on Baptism for candidates. We hope to have this package complete by late spring or early summer.

Worship and Preaching

We are in the process of developing a new worship service that will be conducted at 9:45a.m. on Sunday morning. We are still in the development stages of this service although we have several specific ideas about key components of the service. The remaining items to be completed include:

- Visit 5 other churches and meet with 3 other pastors and worship committee chairs about their services.
- Develop an order of service which incorporates the ideas we have developed.
- Prepare a budget for the additional staff hours required for the service.
- Determine if any additional visitor follow-up will be required in the first three months of the service.
- Develop final recommendation for steering committee presentation.

Personal

I have had several health problems this winter. I plan on going in for a major physical in the next few weeks and I intend to put in place an exercise program that I can stay with this year. I also am getting better at enforcing my day off during the week. I intend to make these a priority.

XXX and I spend quite a bit of time together and I am grateful for the opportunities we have had this past semester. I intend to continue to make use of his consultation as much as possible. My current work schedule is running around 55 hours per week plus school.

Covenant for Learning

Minister in Training: ABC
Mentor: XYZ

I. Pastoral Care and Visitation:

Objective 1: To gain experience in hospital visitation.

Goal 1a: Make at least two hospital visits with my mentor.

Goal 1b: Make at least two hospital visits by myself.

Objective 2: To gain experience ministering to individuals dealing with grief/loss.

Goal 2a: Discuss grief/loss counseling with my mentor.

Goal 2b: Talk with at least one person dealing with a grief/loss issue.

II. Ritual Practices of Ministry:

Objective 3: To gain experience relating to baptism.

Goal 3a: Discuss the baptism preparation process with my mentor.

Goal 3b: Learn what is involved in baptism preparation.

Goal 3c: Learn the step by step procedures of conducting a baptism.

Goal 3d: Learn post-baptism procedures.

Objective 4: To gain experience relating to funeral services.

Goal 4a: Discuss the funeral preparation process with my mentor.

Goal 4b: Learn what steps are involved in organizing a funeral service.

Goal 4c: Learn how to relate to the family when making arrangements.

Goal 4d: Learn the minister's role in relating to a funeral home.

Objective 5: To gain experience in conducting the Lord's Supper.

Goal 5a: Discuss conducting the Lord's Supper with my mentor.

Goal 5b: Observe and learn what is involved in preparation.

Goal 5c: Participate in at least one Lord's Supper.

III. Evangelism and Discipleship:

Objective 6: To gain experience in personal evangelism.

Goal 6a: Discuss personal evangelism with my mentor.

Goal 6b: Share my testimony with at least five people.

Objective 7: To gain experience in discipling new believers.

Goal 7a: Discuss the process of discipleship with my mentor.

Goal 7b: Develop a process of discipleship for new believers.

Goal 7c: Look for the opportunity to disciple at least one believer.

Objective 8: To gain experience helping new church members become integrated.
Goal 8a: Discuss integrating new members with my mentor.
Goal 8b: Determine what our church does to integrate new members.
Goal 8c: Propose a plan for integrating new members.

IV. Personal Relationship with God:

Objective 9: To develop a more intimate relationship with God.
Goal 9a: Read the Bible and pray daily.
Goal 9b: Memorize and meditate on one verse per week.

Objective 10: To make worship a priority.
Goal 10a: Participate in corporate worship at least weekly.
Goal 10b: Practice individual worship while in my car.

V. Personal Well-being:

Objective 11: To practice living a healthy lifestyle.
Goal 11a: Eat vegetables/fruit at least daily.
Goal 11b: Exercise at least four times per week.

THE COVENANT AND CODE OF ETHICS for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with, the help of the holy spirit, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

- I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.
- I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.
- I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.
- I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.
- I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayers and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ministerial and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.
- I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.
- I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.
- I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.
- I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent.
- I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.
- I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children.
- I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.
- I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

Signed _____ Date _____

Amended 10/2004

Appendix D – SAMPLE RITUALS

Blessing of a Son on the Eve of College

READING: Psalm 127:3-4 AChildren are indeed a gift from God; they are a real blessing.@

PARENTS: Having been blessed with you, our son, we and your siblings wish to offer a blessing for you.

DAD: Our blessing comes on the eve of your leaving us to enter the adult world of college and even more learning, of less dependence, more interdependence and some independence.

SIBLINGS: We bless you as you leave this home and family to make a second home elsewhere, to expand your family beyond the biological bonds we share with you.

MOM: As you go, NAME, may you know always how much you are loved and missed by your first family, and that you always are welcome here in our home, your childhood home.

ALL: We send you off with words of blessing and strings to remember what was said and done this night.

White strings are tied on his wrists and words of blessing offered . . .

PRAYER (spoken together):

God of this family and all families,
 thank you for the years we have had together
 in several homes and places.
Thank you for the years yet to come,
 whether together or apart from one another.
Especially now we pray for NAME,
 that he would find a Ahome@ at college
 and return again to this home at times when it is fitting.
May he be blessed with good friends and helpful teachers,
 learning much and enjoying life.
May he know how much he is loved by those he leaves behind.
We pray these things in Christ=s name.
Amen.

Pastors= Passing of the Church Keys

Departing Pastor:

In the home, the car, the business place or school, keys are both functional and symbolic.

The function of keys is obvious: they allow some people in and enable those same people to keep some others out.

Symbolically, then, keys are a sign of power and trust.

Leaders of the church, both pastoral and lay—the holders of keys—hold power in their hands.

Pastor NAME, this power transferred with the passing of keys is a good power to be used to do good as a pastoral leader in this place. May God enable you always to use well both your keys and the power they symbolize.

Keys are symbolic also of trust. The passing of them from me to you is a demonstration of the trust I have in you, and especially so of that trust placed in you by the congregation which has called you to be their new pastor. May God enable you always to be a trustworthy pastor who trusts also these people whom you both lead and serve.

[The keys are passed.]

The church keys you hold now, Pastor NAME, open up to you no ordinary place, but sacred space. The church property, this sanctuary, the pastor's study or office down the hall is holy ground reserved for activities acceptable and pleasing unto God. May it be so always while you hold the keys.

And may God's blessing be upon you, Pastor, each time you open those sacred gates and holy doors!

So be it. Amen.

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