

SPIRITUAL MENTORSHIP

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Spiritual Mentorship according to Anderson and Reese, is being defined as a means to enhance intimacy with God. His call for the disciples to follow Him assumes a complex relationship through which one becomes educated for the reign of God in their hearts. The kind instructions Jesus provided was different from the classroom instruction. It assumed relationship styles that made mentor and protégé (Spiritual Mentoring, p. 12). This experience was a weird experience, tasted and touched by the learner. The ideal type of spiritual mentorship does not only affect the relationship between the person and God but must impact the person's relationship with their fellowman. It is the transfer knowledge, experience, achievements, opportunities and the relationships they accrue in their possessions to others according to Myles Munroe (Passing It On: Growing Your Future Leaders, p.x & xi)). "After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. . . . These newly converted ones need nursing—watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone. . . ; they need to be educated . . . to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with" (*Evangelism*, p. 351).

Jesus could be considered as one of the greatest leaders of all times because, he invested over three years in personal training of a handpicked group of people. We also should seek to first be equipped and then take someone to impact in positive ways. It does not have to be in a formal or structured setting. Even in an informal way we can engender and perpetuate quality relationships with God and one another, while imparting values and cultivating growth.

Bob Biehl gives four reasons why the mentorship tradition should continue today:

1. Mobility: People are overtime separated by thousands of miles mentorship ensures the perpetuation of teachings, traditions, values and practices.
2. Ushering young people into manhood and womanhood
3. The need for modern day models to emulate

4. Maintaining Status and Traditions: Minority groups will soon become extinct if traditions and practices are not perpetuated through mentorship (Mentoring: Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming One, p.13).

One of the earliest traditional documents that outlined the father's responsibility to his son is the Babylonian Talmud. The father was required to circumcise his son and redeem him, referring to the firstborn son, as per Biblical passage in Numbers 18:15-16; to teach him Torah; and to teach him a trade. Some say he must also teach him to swim. Rabi Judah says, whoever does not teach his son a trade, teaches him robbery (Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Kiddushin p. 29a*).

Traditionally boys and in more modern era girls were initiated into Jewish religious practices by their fathers. Jewish Initiation marks a person's entry into God's covenant with Abraham and membership of God's Chosen people. The two important stages of male initiation in the Jewish tradition are B'rit Milah and Bar Mitzvah. The Hebrew term is B'rit Milah (covenant of Circumcision). This is a religious rite performed eight days after the boy's birth. It symbolizes the covenant or agreement that Abraham entered with God. When a boy is circumcised, it is a sign that he is entering the Jewish community, the community of the descendants of Abraham. A Jewish boy has his Bar Mitzvah in a synagogue on the first Saturday after his thirteenth birthday. Jews believe that when a boy turns thirteen and a girl turns twelve, they are old enough to understand and obey the ten commandments. These are the most important rules of Judaism. The words *Bar Mitzvah* mean "a son of the Commandments." *Bat Mitzvah* means "a daughter of the Commandments" (Sacramentsofinitiation.weebly.com/Judaism.html. accessed October 10 2017).

Abraham was set up by Jehovah as an example of that father who could be trusted to model godly values to his children. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19). It was Abraham's duty to pass on to future generations what he knew of God's dealings with the human race.

In my reading and experience I have deduced at least four forms of mentorship programmes:

1. **Social Mentorship Programmes** in which a person with more experience and expertise may assist a less experience person to be successful in a field or relationship.
2. **Humanitarian Approach** in which experienced and equipped persons or institutions to include government entities employ methods for lifting vulnerable persons or groups, such as at-risk black men in vulnerable communities in the United States
3. **Spiritual Mentorship** in which religious methods are employed by experienced religious leaders for spiritual formation and moral transformation.
4. **Eclectic Approach** where social, humanitarian and spiritual methods are employed by the experienced to facilitate transformation in the less experienced.

Theoretical & Theological Perspective

Mentorship is to be considered as a valuable way of passing on information not only theoretically but mainly through right examples as the idiomatic expression states “values are more often caught than taught.” Learning theories gives the best framework for understanding mentorship in its entirety. Learning theories are [conceptual frameworks](#) in which knowledge is absorbed, processed, and retained during [learning](#). There are three types of learning theories:

- Classical conditioning: where the behaviour becomes a reflex response to an antecedent stimulus.
- Operant conditioning: where an antecedent stimulus is followed by a consequence of the behaviour through a reward (reinforcement) or a punishment.
- Social learning theory: where an observation or behaviour is followed by modelling.

People learn through observing others’ behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours. Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action (Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, accessed July 19, 2017).

The Bible is replete with examples of men and women who through their positive examples guided their sons and daughter, and younger persons who were not necessarily their offspring’s in their

field to success. The story of Abraham is one of the earliest examples of such mentorship. "For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen. 18:19). For Abraham he was a positive role model and mentor to Isaac, Elijah was a positive role model for his colleague prophet Elisha from his integrating him into the prophetic ministry to handing over to him before being swept away into heaven (1Kings 19 – 2 Kings 3). Asa was a great mentor to his grandson Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17 – 21), and the Apostle Paul to a younger minister Timothy in the New Testament. Huldah was regarded as a prophet accustomed to speaking the word of God directly to high priests and royal officials, to whom high officials came in supplication, who told kings and nations of their fates, who had the authority to determine what was and was not the genuine Law. She was a mentor and inspiration to many (2Kings22). In the book of Ruth Naomi was a tremendous mentor to her two daughters in law Orpah and Ruth. Phoebe was a mentor to Paul and many others in the New Testament (Rom. 16:1&2). Jesus Himself was a great Mentor to his disciples. He intends also that a similar strategy for spiritual mentoring be replicated by the church as enunciated in the "Great Commission" (Mathew 28:18-20) where all disciples are to become a teacher of faith to the nation.

The kind of instructions Jesus provided for the disciples was different from the classroom instruction it assumed relationship styles that made different demands on both Rabi and disciple, teacher and learner, mentor and protégé. More like the work of a mentor craftsman tutoring the young apprentices, Jesus style of instructions embodied a pedagogy that invested life in the learner through and incarnation of the message being taught, lived, experienced, tasted, and touched by the learner. Jesus did not only spend time instructing, training and informing, he spent much time forming a community

Establishing a Mentorship Programme

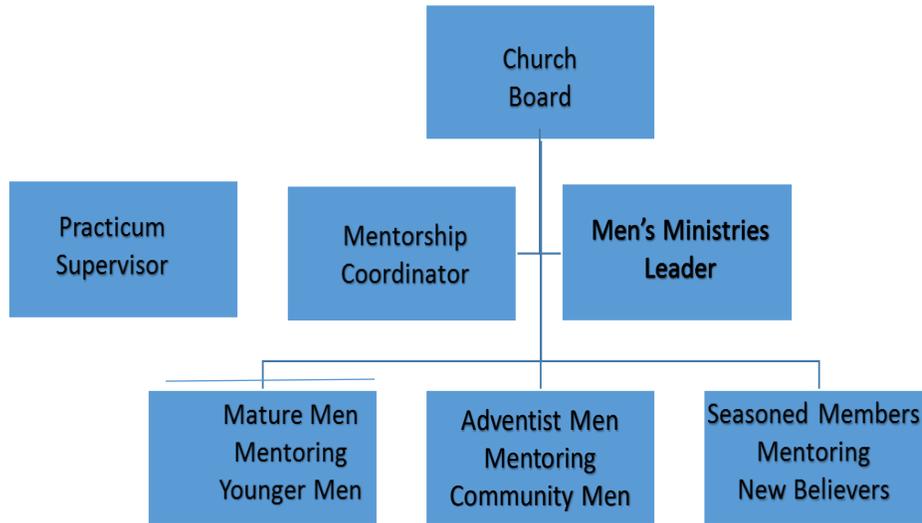
The structure of the mentorship model presented by Anderson / Reese involves initiating the relationship and covenant making and the establishment of clear boundaries. Next in the process is the development of trust and unity, which requires the spiritual teachable response of the mentee

(Anderson and Reese). In 2017 I developed a Men's mentorship programme at the Sydenham Seventh-day Adventist church using 4 stage adopted from the School of Inspired Leadership (SOIL) and modified to meet the particular needs of that Mentorship Programme.. The four phases of the programme include:

1. Prescriptive Stage – Selecting and training of mentors
2. Persuasive Stage - Making contact with mentees & defining the relationship
3. Collaborative Stage – Mentors relating to mentees on a weekly basis
4. Confirmative Stage – Guidance by mentors and evaluation by those who monitor the programme.

Even before the process of mentorship began a decision was made on who would oversee the programme and how it would be monitored. The Men's Ministries Leader was appointed to monitor the programme and he would report to the church on a monthly basis. The Dennis Men's Mentorship Ministry Model below gives an idea of a workable structure for Christian mentorship in the local church.

Dennis Men's Mentorship Ministry Model (2017)



Final Recommendations

There are a range of social, spiritual, professional and personal development benefits that can be derived from a Christian men's mentorship ministry I recommend that this ministry be included as a part of the operation of every Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica. The secondly mentors must be carefully selected, trained and evaluated. The fact that mentorship is observational and incarnational learning one must ensure that the negative influence of dons and predators is avoided. Mentors must not only be persons who know their skills and have leadership qualities, but men and women of integrity. Finally, an effective mentorship programme is one that is used as a medium to transfer knowledge, experience and success into the next generation. Mentorship aids in the preservation of values and attitudes, and inspires involvement of the next generation to quality family relationships and leadership in the church and society.