

PART TWO: ISSUES OF DEFINITION

CHAPTER 3

Defining Christian Community: The Context of Mentoring

The greatest need of modern civilisation is the development of communities – true communities ... where the humble and wise learn to shepherd those on the path behind them, where trusting strugglers lock arms with others as they journey on.¹

Advocates across the political and philosophical spectrum have argued for the rebuilding a ‘sense of community’² and in the Christian context there is similar focus: ‘how one achieves that communion with God and with one another, and indeed with the whole of God’s creation, is, always has been, and always will be the most important spiritual question of our time.’³ If this assertion is true it presents a dilemma for the Christian church existing in, and at times reflecting, an often fragmented society⁴ in which organisational life has segmented in homogeneous units.⁵ Homogeneity has certainly influenced church structure and organisation,⁶ and

¹ L Crabb, ‘Introduction,’ in *Connecting: A Radical New Vision*, (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), p. xvii.

² For example, The United Way of America exists to promote community building nation-wide with approximately 1400 projects already part of the movement. See ‘About United Way of America,’ <<http://national.unitedway.org/aboutuwa/>>, accessed August 2005.

³ RP McBrien, ‘Toward a Spirituality of Communion,’ in MH Snyder (ed.), *Spiritual Questions for the Twenty-First Century*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), p. 107. McBrien underlines the importance of the communal dimension of existence: ‘To be human is to live in community; just as to be Christian is also to live in the community that is the church,’ p. 105.

⁴ There are many factors that militate against communal cohesion in Western society in spite of the fact that belonging to such a community is vital to human health. Solitary confinement is one of the most severe punishments inflicted upon individuals for this very reason. ‘There are few if any forms of imprisonment that appear to produce so much psychological trauma and in which so many symptoms of psychopathology are manifested,’ C Haney, ‘Mental Health Issues in Long-term Solitary and “Supermax” Confinement,’ notes from a seminar at the University of California, (December 2002), in *C&D*, p. 2, <http://www.capdefinet.org/pdf_library/temp/Seminars/12-02/Haney-C&D_Final_Draft-R.pdf>, accessed June 2007.

⁵ Increasing denominationalism is an example of homogeneity in recent decades.

⁶ Church programmes are often segmented into women’s, men’s, children’s, seniors’ and youth ministries, etcetera. Vander Bröek, informed by sociological studies of the breakdown of community in twenty-first century life, offers suggestions from Corinthians on how the obstacles to community

one of the dangers of segregating a church by age group, for example, is that the young become isolated from the very people who have the potential be guides, mentors, models and friends.⁷ While emphasising the importance of community it is not to negate the necessity of solitude. Nouwen speaks of 3 ways of reaching out: to our innermost self, to our fellow human beings and to our God, emphasising that a choice is not to be made between solitude and community – both are complementary and both are essential to our well-being.⁸

While societal trends may have had a negative influence on communal relationships, the current situation presents an opportunity for the church to show that it is the type of community that Postmodern society at large is seeking. As Küng recognises, ‘the church must constantly reflect upon its real existence in the present with reference to its origins in the past, in order to assure its existence in the future.’⁹ It is a contention of this work that Christian mentoring is one way of moving towards a realisation of authentic personhood and community that will help sustain the church of the future.

Christian community¹⁰ and Christian mentoring enjoy a symbiotic relationship. The community is the context and environment in which mentoring operates. It is from the aims of Christian community that mentoring derives its purpose and from its characteristics mentoring derives its shape. Conversely, mentoring safeguards a space in which the distinctives of Christian community can be reflected upon and integrated into real life experience. The passing on of skills and abilities that build up the community can be encouraged. To achieve a deeper understanding of the importance of Christian mentoring there is a need to examine the importance and nature of Christian community.

might be overcome. LD Vander Bröek, *Breaking Barriers: The Possibilities of Christian Community In a Lonely World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002).

⁷ For a discussion on the negative effects of homogeneity in church communities see R Keyes, *Chameleon or Tribe: Recovering Authentic Christian Community*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1999), pp. 117-19.

⁸ HJM Nouwen structures his book, *Reaching Out*, (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1980; reprint 1998), in these three movements, pp. 2ff, 42ff, 81ff.

⁹ Küng, *The Church*, p.15.

¹⁰ Many times when the term ‘Christian community’ is used in this chapter it refers to the church. The word ‘community’ was chosen, however, to acknowledge there are many types of Christian community, (for example, retreat communities, theological education communities, of which the church is the unique and predominant one).

3.1 The Importance of Christian Community

The importance of environment for the formation of Christians cannot be overstated:

A person's beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviour patterns (and hence his Christianity) are formed by a great degree by his environment, and therefore, the normal person needs a Christian environment if he is going to live Christianity in a vital way.¹¹

Here is recognition of the need of Christian community for the development of followers of Christ. This view was also the case in the early church where new disciples were 'formed by the nature of the church itself and by its worship and preaching. New Christians were also mentored in small groups and in one-on-one relationships.'¹² The central importance of Christian community lies in the fact that it defines who Christians are and the goal for which we were created. Community can be

...understood as the goal of God's program of creation. ... And God's purpose in this activity is the establishment of "community" – a reconciled people who enjoy fellowship with him, with one another, and ultimately all creation. ... *we come to find our true identity only as we participate together with others in the community* of the followers of Christ. ...we are created for community.¹³

This contention is articulated as part of a growing school of thought that maintains that personhood is only truly realised in community.¹⁴ In this understanding, Christian mentoring provides a means to self-realisation and comprehension. Christian community, though, should not be a God-substitute where people derive meaning and identity from their involvement rather than from God himself.¹⁵ This proviso is safeguarded if the mentoring encounter is considered as encompassing a triadic relationship as noted earlier. Neither is Christian community a 'lifestyle

¹¹ Clark, 'Chapter 2 – The Pastoral Goal: Community,' in *Building Christian Communities*, p. 2.

¹² Webber, *Ancient Future Evangelism*, p. 73.

¹³ Italicised text my emphasis. Grenz, *Created for Community*, pp. 23, 80.

¹⁴ JD Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's, 1985). See also M Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), C Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991). For a development of the philosophical basis for the social understanding of personhood, see A McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See particularly, Houston, *The Mentored Life*, p. 118 and S Luke, *Individualism*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), pp. 3-26.

¹⁵ Keyes, *Chameleon or Tribe?* p. 107.

enclave¹⁶ that ‘celebrates the narcissism of similarity.’¹⁷ There must be an intention for both unity and diversity: ‘Constructive, transforming encounters with otherness and true exchange of ideas are facilitated in mentoring communities, where hospitality to otherness is prized and practiced.’¹⁸ The reasoning for acceptance of difference or otherness within the community of God is based on our reflection of the image of the triune God:

Why should I embrace the other? The answer is simple: because others are part of my own true identity. I cannot live authentically without welcoming others – the other gender, other persons, or other cultures – into the very structure of my being. For I am created to reflect the personality of the Triune God. ... The divine person is the other persons.¹⁹

An antidote to introspection within Christian community is to remember that the church has ‘a calling into community with a special vocation to be mediators of the message of God to humankind.’²⁰ If reconciliation to God, to ourselves, to others is a goal of community then that community must be a place where disciples or mentees are nurtured and thus prepared to pass on the message and become equipped to make other disciples.

Christian community, then, is important as a formation environment and as a place where Christians learn to accept diversity and learn how to appropriate the message of reconciliation and take its message to the world. Mentoring is a means to promote assimilation into the community, to reinforce its nature and to aid the formation of disciples. It is as the Christian is immersed into the redemptive communal life of church that the disciple begins to be formed.²¹

¹⁶ Keyes, *Chameleon or Tribe?* p. 108.

¹⁷ R Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 72.

¹⁸ S Daloz-Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2000), p. 141. See also Guenther, *Holy Listening*, pp. 7-8, Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, pp. 44-5 and Vanier, *Community and Growth*, pp. 265-83.

¹⁹ M Volf, ‘Exclusion and Embrace,’ in JM Gundry-Volf & M Volf, *A Spacious Heart: Essays on Identity and Belonging*, (Harrisburg, PN: Trinity Press International, 1997), p. 59. This Christian acceptance of diversity is something the post-modern society could learn from.

²⁰ K Ward, *Religion and Community*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 136.

²¹ Webber, *Ancient Future Evangelism*, p. 75.

3.2 The Characteristics of Christian Community

To examine the characteristics and distinctives of Christian community provides a theology of *koinonia* that underpins the practice of mentoring. It is difficult to read the Scriptures without becoming aware of the importance of communal identity among the historic people of God: ‘according to the self-understanding of the first Christians the community of believers is a “community of God” (1 Thess 2.14; 1 Cor 1.2; 10.32; 11.16, 22: 15.9; II Thess 1.4; Acts 20.28), a “community of Christ” (Rom 16.16 cf. 1 Thess 1.1), and a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 3.16: 6.19).²² Here is a trinitarian description of the people of God. The call to ‘one another’ echoes throughout both Testaments.²³ In addition, communitarian doctrines, models and metaphors²⁴ emerge that describe God’s relationship with his people.²⁵ An examination of their characteristics provides a rich source of material to inform mentoring practice and benchmarks against which an evaluation of mentoring in Christian communities can test congruency.

The earliest development of ecclesiology focused on scriptural images but there were certain theological elements that gained wide consensus in the first five centuries after Christ and despite the many controversies on the doctrine of the church throughout history²⁶ still hold true for many today: 1. ‘The church is a spiritual society, which replaces Israel as the people of God in the world’; 2. ‘All Christians are made one in Christ, despite their different origins and backgrounds’; 3. ‘The church is the repository of true Christian teaching’; and, 4. ‘The church gathers the faithful throughout the world together, in order to enable them to grow in faith and

²² E Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, (trans., J Bowden; London, SCM Press, 1985, 1989 edn), p. 35.

²³ For example: life (Zech 7.9), behaviour (Lev 19.11), love (Jn 13.34), greeting (1 Pet 5.14), and encouraging (Heb 10.24). Pue helpfully lists scriptures that illustrate accountability to God and one another, C Pue, *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling and Competency*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), pp. 246-7. Quoting Socrates - ‘An unexamined life is not worth living’, Pue asserts, ‘To have our lives examined closely by those who live with us in community actually gives us a greater sense of life to live,’ p. 247.

²⁴ A recent work on mentoring for pastoral formation cited earlier has recognised the value of metaphors and images that are helpful in constructing a picture of the role of mentor. Williams, *The Potter’s Rib*, p. 26.

²⁵ ‘These mostly personal terms indicate a relationship of partnership,’ p. 307, R Mayer, ‘Israel’, in C Brown, (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. II, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986).

²⁶ Theological reflections on the nature of the church are often fuelled by controversies, for example, the Donatist, Reformation, Liberation and Feminist Controversies.

holiness.²⁷ The implications these theological contentions have for Christian mentoring is that it takes place in the context of a ‘spiritual society’. Oneness in Christ is a basis for a relationship of respect and equality. There is a repository of Christian teaching to be shared with a mentee in their holistic development and whose interpretation will be balanced by interaction with others in the local and wider Christian community. The ‘notes’, ‘signs’ or ‘marks’ of the church as recorded in the Creed of Nicaea affirm that the church is ‘one’, ‘holy’, ‘catholic’, and ‘apostolic’²⁸ and can be discerned in McGrath’s summation above. With regard to these signs, Küng asks what is essential when considering them, and proposes that: ‘What is truly decisive is not the formal presence of certain characteristics, but their use and practice. The word of the Gospel must be preached, heard and followed, the sacraments must be really used, oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity must be lived by living men in a living church.’²⁹ What then are the theological and scriptural characteristics of Christian community that are to be lived out and how do they relate to the mentoring encounter?

3.2.1 Communitarian Theology

If an understanding of Christian community and mentoring within it is uncritically borrowed from models and movements in contemporary culture then church life becomes ‘indistinguishable from encounter sessions, sensitivity groups, and other kinds of therapeutic-religious communities that are so popular today.’³⁰ Mentoring as a form of ministry practiced in Christian communities ought to be informed or tested against doctrine that speaks of community. The first of such doctrines to be

²⁷ AE McGrath, ‘The Doctrine of the Church,’ in *Christian Theology*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994, 2nd edn 1997), p. 462.

²⁸ The Council of Constantinople 381, The Creed of Nicaea, D86. For further information on these ‘marks’ see McGrath, pp. 482-493.

²⁹ Küng, *The Church*, p. 269.

³⁰ DL Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991 Reprint 2000), p. 194. This is not to say that secular theories and models are of no use in Christian Mentoring. On the contrary, prevenient grace and the working of the Holy Spirit legitimises much of what would be termed ‘secular’ and is not in contradiction to a Christian worldview.

explored is that of the *Trinity*. Migliore, after Zizioulas,³¹ is convinced of the need for ecclesiology to develop a ‘closer relation with trinitarian doctrine’, which he argues would result in a church that is loving, missional and communal.³² As Oliver explains, ‘Our being is relational, so learning about that being, and its relation to divinity, involves a degree of intimate relationality, and a participation in the eternal conversation of the Trinity.’³³ This statement recognises the uniquely Christian aspect of Christian mentoring, namely the participation of the divine in the encounter. Mentoring, in secular terms, is an encounter between mentor and mentee – a dyad. Mentoring in the context of Christian community acknowledges the operation of God through the Holy Spirit in the relationship making it a *triadic* encounter: mentor, God and mentee(s).³⁴ As Williams contends,

in the Spirit-mediated *glorifica commutatio*, we share, in a derivative and appropriately human way, in the incarnate Son’s love for the Father, and in his love for other people. ... when even our relationships with other people are mediated by the Holy Spirit, we no longer have to coerce or dominate them, but are free to delight in their present otherness.³⁵

Recognition of the central role of God through the Holy Spirit is essential to authentic Christian mentoring.

What of the word ‘encounter’? Thistlethwaite suggests that ‘to know a human being is best understood as the mystery of encounter; this was first articulated systematically by Buber in his description of the “I/thou” relationship.’³⁶ Thus full self-understanding as a human being cannot be done in isolation. Farley argues that

³¹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, Volf, *After Our Likeness*, Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*. These scholars view the Trinity as an explanatory model for the church, re-emphasising the Eastern view of the Trinity in its diversity and unity.

³² Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, pp. 199-200. Boff also argues that when we take the Trinity as the starting point a new model of the church emerges – community, with each one having ‘his or her own characteristics and gifts, but all live for the good of all.’ L Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), p. 66.

³³ S Oliver, ‘Communities of Learning,’ in *CC*, Vol.123, No.4, (Feb 2006), pp. 24-5(24).

³⁴ An example of the triadic nature of this relationship is found in Deut 34.9: ‘Joshua son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him doing as the Lord had commanded Moses’ (*my emphasis*). Similarly, when Elisha asks for a ‘double portion of your spirit’ (2 Kgs 2.9-10) he is asking for the very Spirit of God who worked powerfully through Elijah, and Elisha, like Joshua, will follow in the pattern of his mentor.

³⁵ Williams, in *The Potter’s Rib*, pp. 152-3.

³⁶ SB Thistlethwaite, ‘Beyond Theological Tourism,’ in SB Thistlethwaite and GF Cairns (eds.), *Beyond Theological Tourism: Mentoring as a Grassroots Approach to Theological Education*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), pp. 6-7. Thistlethwaite cites M Buber, *I and Thou*, (New York, NY: Scribners, 1988).

what transforms a simple encounter into an ‘I/thou’ relationship is that it is a *face-to-face* encounter.³⁷ Irrespective of how different that face may be in terms of colour, shape, age or gender, there is a human correspondence in a face-to-face encounter that helps each person to affirm not only how they differ but also who they are. The word ‘encounter’ is also useful in this context in that it allows for the fact that mentoring can occur through literature, the internet, letter writing and other forms of media. These situations do still allow for the Holy Spirit working in the encounter³⁸ but from what we have noted already much can be lost from the lack of the face-to-face meeting.³⁹ Furthermore, the word ‘encounter’ allows for the mentoring to be done in small groups and indeed there is evidence of both one-to-one and group mentoring in the Scriptures.⁴⁰ Much can be gained from the practice of small group mentoring; notably, peer mentoring, evaluation and it has positive resourcing implications. As one-to-one mentoring, however, is more focused and contextualised its intimacy allows for appropriate self-disclosure. These two approaches can be viewed as complementary.

Feuerer recognises that the Holy Spirit ‘makes the Church the sacrament of intratrinitarian relationships. What happens in trinitarian life finds its echo in the intimate life of the church.’⁴¹ Christians do not find themselves actualised in isolation and because the analogy of *perichoresis* is appropriate to the being of God, it is

... therefore an appropriate way of speaking about humanity constituted upon God’s image and thus about the care of people. ... if human beings particularly bear the image of God, to be authentically human will be to be

³⁷ W Farley, *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition*, (Minneapolis, MIN: Fortress, 1990), p. 39.

³⁸ Clear, although rare, examples of the divine dynamic in mentoring are mentee encounters in the Scriptures with what could be described as a divine *Emissary*. Abigail and David (1 Sam 25.23-44 esp. v.32); the little girl with Naaman’s wife (2 Kgs 5); the angel, Balaam and Barak (Num 22.22-40). Examples in the New Testament are: Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8.26-40); and, Ananias and Paul (Acts 9.10-19). It is recognised that some of these ‘types’ (italicised from this point on) correlate with some of Stanley and Clinton’s ‘Mentoring Types,’ in PD Stanley & JR Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992). However, there is not a direct correlation – the definitions vary and they are categorised differently. See ‘Appendix 2: A Categorisation of Christian Mentoring Types,’ at the end of this work

³⁹ Judi Harris, a telemessaging researcher, maintains ‘e-mentoring should only be done when face-to-face mentoring isn’t available, feasible or appropriate’, in ‘Perspectives on e-mentoring: a virtual panel holds an online dialogue,’ in *National Mentoring Centre*, Bulletin No.9, (Winter 2002), pp. 5-14(8), <<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/bull9.pdf>>, accessed June 2007.

⁴⁰ Williams, in *The Potter’s Rib*, pp. 181-88, cites some examples.

⁴¹ C Feuerer, *Unsere Kirche im Kommen*, (Freiburg, 1939), as cited in L Boff, *Church: Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1985), p. 149.

perichoretic beings, interrelated in community, thus a notion of human perichoresis affirms that persons mutually constitute one another.⁴²

Trinitarian mentoring praxis involves the body of Christ moving people towards community, recognising that one person cannot provide everything another needs. Consequently, multiple mentoring or a mentoring network is important in that movement. Additionally, Christian mentoring focuses on character formation that reflects the likeness of Christ and confidence is based on the Holy Spirit's power and activity and not self-belief (as is often the case in secular mentoring).⁴³

The Trinity encapsulates the idea of diversity, unity and complementarity – all essential characteristics of a harmonious Christian community. In a mentoring relationship there is no hierarchical system in terms of dominance, rather the dynamic is mutuality. Christian mentoring as a triad of beings (mentor, mentee{s} and God the Holy Spirit), is a form of Christian community that images in a small measure the communion of the Trinity. In an ideal Christian mentoring encounter the mentee and mentor defer to each other in different instances; they consider and prefer the other and they recognise different roles within the relationship and strive to maintain unity.

This idea of reflecting God leads to the theological understanding of humankind *made in the image of God* (Gen 1.26-27) – the *Imago Dei*. In Gen 2.18 God declares that 'it is not good for man to be alone' and he creates a complementary being to be Adam's 'helper.' In the second creation narrative 'aloneness' is impressed upon Adam when he names the animals that are in pairs and recognises he does not have a being complementary to himself. God's best or 'very good' is only when humankind is created. The text would seem to suggest that *Imago Dei* incorporates the idea of relationship in community so no human can fully reflect the image of God on their own. Bonhoeffer summarises this point by arguing that 'God as Being exists in community. The natural and simple demonstration of God's communal image for

⁴² P Goodliff, *Care in a Confused Climate*, (London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1998), pp. 65-6. For a further discussion on perichoresis in church relationships see CE Gunton, 'Perichoresis', in *The One, The Three, The Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 163-73 and J Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune Face of God*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 38.

⁴³ Many of these ideas were contained in a seminar, 'A Theology of Mentoring,' given by Dr D Payne at *The National Conference on Mentoring – Shaping People who Will Shape the World*, (Denver, CO: Denver Seminary, 2002).

humanity is the gathering of the small group.⁴⁴ If in community humans best reflect the image of God then a Christian mentoring relationship is an example of one such reflection. The relationship is initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit and ‘the gift of the Spirit is to be continually transforming Christians (2 Cor 3.17-18) into the image of Christ (Rom 8.29).’⁴⁵

Also of relevance to this subject is the *Immanence of God*. This attribute of God has been described as ‘how God relates to man in his humanness.’⁴⁶ God in his immanence is intimate, close, in the midst, indwelling and accessible.⁴⁷ In 2 Cor 6.16 Paul cites what God has said in the past (Lev 26.12; Ezek 37.27), declaring that it has become a living reality: ‘I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God’. If this is the kind of relationship that God wants his followers to develop then the mentor is required to make themselves accessible to the mentee in terms of approachability and openness. In addition, the mentor walks alongside the mentee and encourages them into a more intimate relationship with God and into a realization of his nearness. In this process their relationship with each other will also deepen and collegiality will develop.⁴⁸

A fourth doctrine to be considered is that of the *Incarnation*, whereby the world came *face-to-face* with Christ. Christ is the embodiment of God’s immanent nature. Known as ‘Immanuel’ he is ‘God *with us*’ (Matt 1.21-23 cf. Jn 1.14, 2 Cor 4.6). Smith describes this localisation of Jesus succinctly: ‘When God himself became human in Jesus, it was as a person, born into a family, a culture, a network of relationships – in short, into a community.’⁴⁹ In addition, Jesus is the archetype of relating with the Father and with others: ‘His inner life of passionate intimacy with his Father becomes the great paradigm for all who would follow him in the

⁴⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ MJ Farrelly, ‘Holy Spirit,’ in M Downey (ed.), *NDCS*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), pp. 491-503(500).

⁴⁶ WA Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century*, (Houston: Touch Publications, 1995), p. 85.

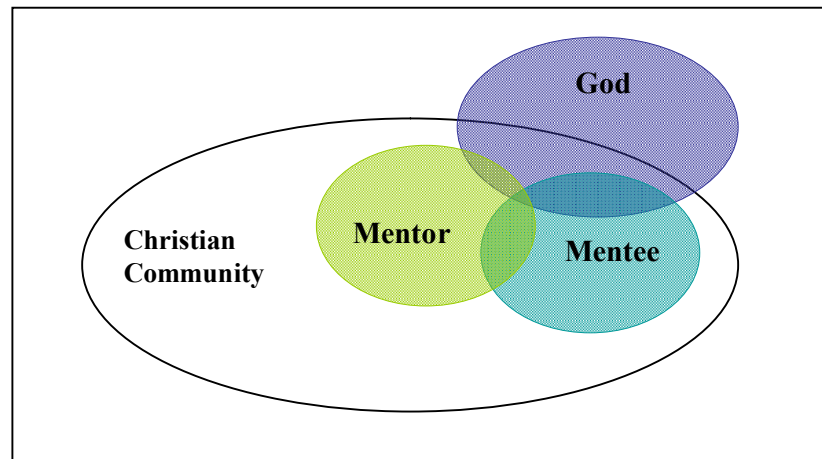
⁴⁷ Acts 17.27-28.

⁴⁸ ‘Many mentors have commented on the two-way aspect of the process as parity of esteem grows and the pairings’ relationship begins to edge towards partnership,’ V Bistany & M Read, ‘The Mentoring Development Project: An Action Research Project Toward a Best Practice Model of Arts Mentoring in an All-Ireland Context,’ a Report commissioned by the Arts Council/An Chomhaiele Ealaíon & the Arts Council of Northern Ireland with support from Dublin City Council, September 2006, <http://www.artscouncil-ni.or/news/2006/Mentoring_Dev_proj.pdf>, p. 52, accessed July 2007.

⁴⁹ Smith, ‘You and Who Else?’ p. 23.

development of disciples for the kingdom.’⁵⁰ In Jesus’ mentoring he exercised a ministry of presence – his ‘method’ was incarnational discipling.⁵¹ This type of relationship was fostered in community. Of course, when Christ ascended the disciples did not have his earthly presence, but as Muller observes, ‘instead their dwelling “in the Word” (8.31) and “in the Spirit” (14.15-17; 15.26f.) means that they, his disciples, remain in full fellowship with him.’⁵² New Testament writers recognise that hope, growth and change are the result of Christ’s indwelling presence and power.⁵³ The dominant Christian belief in Christ’s remaining presence means that all Christian mentoring encounters are triadic. In the present era Christians believe that they can experience God personally through the Spirit, and also as he is manifested in the life of another Christian (see Fig. 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Mentoring in Christian Community



⁵⁰ Italicised text my emphasis. Anderson & Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring*, p. 38. Christ’s method of discipling will be discussed more fully in the next chapter with reference to the Gospel of Mark. It is important to note now that, traditionally, discipleship has been for those who have made a commitment to Christ, but, there is an approach in mentoring that considers building relationships in the hope to promote kingdom values and lead people to Christ. Hence, there are many Christian mentoring programmes directed towards benefiting non-Christians, such as those among at-risk youth. For example: *Save Our Youth*, <<http://www.saveouryouth.org>>. Bauder is true to a Christian worldview, however, when he contends that ‘the summons to discipleship can only be fulfilled, when a man is grasped by Christ and undergoes transformation which existence under the Lordship of Christ involves.’ Bauder, ‘imitate, follow; imitator; fellow imitator’, p. 492.

⁵¹ See Lk 8.1-3. There is Christ’s declaration that ‘where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them’ (Matt 18.20). Similarly, in the Gospel of John Christ’s advice to his disciples is to ‘abide in me’ (15.4). Jesus and the disciples were companions (Cf. Heb 1.9; Ps 45.6, 7). He communicated his love for the disciples, (Jn 15.9-12) and refers to them as ‘brothers’ and as ‘friends’ (Matt 12.49; 25.40; Jn 15.13-14). The following chapter in this work will take an in-depth look at Jesus’ discipleship in the Gospel of Mark.

⁵² D Muller, ‘learner, pupil, disciple,’ in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. I, A-F, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 490.

⁵³ For example: Eph 1.11-12; 2.21-22; 3.20; Phil 1.6; 4.13; Col 1.27; Js 1.5. The writer to the Corinthians acknowledges that ‘now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we shall see face-to-face.’ 1 Cor 13.12; See also Hos 5.15 and Rev 22.4.

Mentoring, by this model, is incarnational discipleship. Mentors journey with the mentee through the highs and lows of their experiences. Through empathetic listening they enter into the mentee's situation. Today, Christian mentoring can be seen best as essentially a *ministry of presence* – human and divine. Mentors literally can 'be there' for their mentees. This presence is what Hurding describes as 'a fellowship of solidarity which, in turn, depends on the ever-present Spirit of Christ.'⁵⁴ Church history confirms that Christian mentoring was recognised as a triadic encounter.⁵⁵ Francis de Sales (1567-1622) proposed the finding of a spiritual guide and suggested 'when you have found him, do not look upon him as mere man nor trust in him as such nor in his human knowledge but in God who will favour you and speak to you by means of this man.'⁵⁶ While one recognises how God can use a mentor to speak to a mentee, care needs to be taken here to avoid abuse of position and trust.⁵⁷ Further, the Christian mentor is required to recognise that there is only one mediator between God and man in Jesus himself (1 Tim 2.5). The words of a mentor do not have unquestioned authority; they are to be open to challenge and scrutiny by the mentee in the light of theological reflection. A less hierarchical model was manifest in the Celtic church centuries before – the *anam cara*, or 'soul friend,' who walked *alongside* the mentee.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Hurding, *Pathways to Wholeness*, p. 290.

⁵⁵ Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, I.4, (trans., JK Ryan; New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989 2nd edn). Similarly, the main characteristic of the Cistercian Aelred of Rievaulx's (c.1110-1167) monastic theology was 'friendship' - a relationship that he saw as a way to God. T Merton 'Introduction', in A Hallier, *The Monastic Theology of Aelred of Rievaulx, Cistercian Studies*, (Shannon: 1969), p. xxvii. See also Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*, (Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1974).

⁵⁶ Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, I, 4.

⁵⁷ As Nouwen contends, 'When we do not protect with great care our own inner mystery, we will never be able to form community. ... an intimate relationship between people not only asks for mutual openness but also mutual respectful protection of each other's uniqueness.' Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Early Celtic Christianity introduced the more egalitarian idea of the 'soul friend' or 'friend of the soul' (Gaelic: *anmchara* or *anam cara*; Welsh: *periglour* or *heriglour*) - a teacher, confidant, confessor or spiritual guide - a mentor of either gender. EC Sellner, *The Celtic Soul Friend: A Trusted Guide for Today*, (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2002), pp. 13-15, 21. Hurding observes that the soul friend was 'sometimes a priest, but often a lay man or lay woman who was essentially a counsellor and guide. Notable female 'soul-friends' were St Brigid, and St Brendan's confessor - Ita of Cluain Credill. St Columbanus, for a time, also confessed to a woman. Here is the notion of fellow-pilgrim, one whose discerning and supportive wisdom was so valued that the Celtic saying – "Anyone without a soul-friend is a body without a head" – became proverbial. Soul-friendship provides an egalitarian model for today's spiritual direction.' R Hurding, *Pathways to Wholeness: Pastoral Care in a Post-modern Age*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998), p. 289.

Anderson and Reese, writing for contemporary Christian communities, affirm the triadic relationship between the mentor, the mentee {s} and the Holy Spirit⁵⁹ although they maintain that the aim of mentoring is spiritual transformation; and consequently, all the contemporary definitions they discuss in their text have that emphasis.⁶⁰ Definitions that consider mentoring in these terms often have a strong Trinitarian prominence. For example:

Spiritual direction strives to reproduce these divine relationships in the human but Spirit-filled dialogue that occurs. So the spiritual director acts as a son as well as a father; that is, he reflects as well as initiates. In the father/son dialogue there is a drawing together in the Spirit. So the entire relationship is seen as a reflection of God's nature and God's relationship with men.⁶¹

In spite of its narrowed focus this definition is included because of its emphasis on the egalitarian nature and the interpermeation of the human and divine relationships.

A further theological element to be considered is the concept of *covenant*.⁶² As Peterson maintains,

... the main biblical word for this structure of relationship between a saving God and a saved people is covenant (*berit*). ... Covenant, in effect, means that humanity cannot understand life apart from a defined and revealed relationship with God. ... And the relationship has to do with persons, with man "in the image of God" and with man "male and female" (Gen 1.27), for "it is not good that man should be alone" (2.18).⁶³

The church is known as a 'covenant community.'⁶⁴ Covenant is also a word associated with mentoring and refers to the agreement made between mentor and mentee(s) setting the boundaries and expectations for the relationship.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Anderson & Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring*, p. 12.

⁶⁰ Anderson and Reese include eleven contemporary definitions that deal with the triadic nature of spiritual direction in 'Appendix Two: Contemporary Definitions of Spiritual Mentoring,' in *Spiritual Mentoring*, pp. 174-77. Spiritual direction is seen as only one of many types of mentoring.

⁶¹ GE Keefe, 'Letter to a person beginning spiritual direction,' in *RFR*, No.33, (1974), pp. 542-5.

⁶² Heb 8.6-13, for example. PA Lillback, 'Covenant,' in SB Ferguson & DF Wright (eds.), *NDOT*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 173-6.

⁶³ EH Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 44. See also MS Horton, *The God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006).

⁶⁴ W Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994), p. 977. See also chapter 25 'The Covenants Between God and Man,' pp. 515-25.

⁶⁵ Covenant making is also known as setting 'Boundaries', making a 'Consensual Mentoring Agreement' or formulating a 'Learning Contract'. For practical advice on this process see Zachary, *The Mentor's Guide*, pp. 106-16.

Also at the heart of the Gospel is *reconciliation*. God desires fellowship with his creation, to see us connect with our true selves and to see reconciliation replicated in our relationships with one another (Rom 5.10-11; 2 Cor 5.18-20; Col 1.22). Crabb describes the all encompassing nature of fallen humanity's alienation:

Christians have long believed that the central difficulty in human existence is separation from God (we're under his judgement), from ourselves (we can't face what's true about us, either the extent of our sin or the depth of our pain), and from others (we demand from others rather than give to them).⁶⁶

The ministry of reconciliation is one of taking people who are alienated from God, themselves and each other and to begin 'building them into community which deeply cares for each member and allows God to care for them.'⁶⁷ Christian mentors are involved in this ministry in multifarious ways. Christian mentors, for example, encourage mentees to use spiritual disciplines to strengthen their relationship with God. Through story telling, confession and reflection or through the use of learning tools, such as learning contracts, mentees can begin to face who they are in their strengths and weakness. In similar ways they can be encouraged to develop right relationships with others, dealing with conflict and confrontation following the model illustrated by their mentors. In a mentoring relationship they experience care that can be demonstrated in their relationships with others. As mentors appropriately share weaknesses the mentee can identify and learn from the mentor's progress. These are lessons that then can be passed on to others if the occasion arises. Thus, the ministry of reconciliation is multiplied. Reconciliation results in the connectedness of *fellowship* (1 Cor 1.9; 1 Jn 1.3-7). Fellowship (*koinonia*) means communion, participation, intercourse.⁶⁸ The Greek noun (and related words with the same root meaning) occurs 119 times in the Scriptures and it is notable in light of this discussion that it is translated variously as 'fellowship,' 'communion' and 'community'.⁶⁹ The New Testament idea of fellowship is in part a fulfilment of the 'peace' or 'fellowship' offerings of the Old Testament. Although there is debate as to what this term means in that context, it would seem to suggest 'acceptance' (Lev

⁶⁶ Crabb, *Connecting*, p. 44.

⁶⁷ J Long et al, *Small Group Leaders' Handbook: the Next Generation*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), p. 28.

⁶⁸ J Schattenmann, 'Fellowship, Have, Share, Participate,' in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. I, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 635-44. See Acts 2.44-47; 2 Cor 6.14-16; Phil 2.1-2; 1 Jn 1.3-7.

⁶⁹ J Reumann, 'Koinonia,' in *EOC*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 134-6.

19.5) and subsequent reconciliation to God.⁷⁰ In traditional teaching the sacrifice of Christ is understood as making fellowship offerings obsolete and making true fellowship with God and others an ongoing possibility.⁷¹ Fellowship is portrayed graphically in the Last Supper - an instance of 'table fellowship'. Bartchy asserts that this feature of Jesus' ministry was distinctive in that his table fellowship was 'radically inclusive and non-hierarchical.'⁷² This redefinition of relationship dynamics was reinforced at the Last Supper when Jesus, the Master, washed the feet of his disciples. Another word for this meal is '*communion*', where there are the unifying symbols of one table, one loaf⁷³ and one cup.⁷⁴ The meal presents an opportunity for the consideration of others and reconciliation.⁷⁵

In fellowship with others and the Father, Christians can share in their successes, their difficulties and their growth. In fellowship, Christians can also confess sin (1 Jn 1.7). It would seem that fellowship provides a safe environment for confession. If this is so mentors need to be open, honest, real and transparent so that a mentee may feel safe enough to self-disclose. A large part of the satisfying aspect of fellowship and communion is the sense of acceptance. The non-judgemental attitude of a mentor gives a mentee a space in which to be truly themselves with none of the tension that comes from 'wearing a mask'. There is also a sense of involvement connected with fellowship/communion. Participation in a Christian mentoring project whether the primary focus is on spiritual, skill, personal or academic development gives a mentee a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves that has purpose, sets goals and offers a sense of direction.

Closely allied to the concept of fellowship is that of *unity*. The unity of the church is not an institutional but a spiritual one; it is a charismatic community.⁷⁶ As Boff

⁷⁰ The Biblical Studies Foundation, 'Lesson Four: The Fellowship Offering (Lev 3.17; 7.11-34; 19.5-8; 22.29-30),' <<http://www.bible.org/docs/ot/books/lev/deffin/lev-04.htm>>, accessed September 2004.

⁷¹ Matt 27.50-51; Mk 15.37-38; Heb 9.11-15.

⁷² SS Bartchy, 'Table Fellowship,' in JB Green S McKnight & IH Marshall (eds.), *DJG*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 796-800(796).

⁷³ 1 Cor 10.17.

⁷⁴ Matt 26.20-30; Mk 14.17-26; Lk 22.14-20.

⁷⁵ 1 Cor 11.17-34.

⁷⁶ Ward, 'The Church as Charismatic Community,' pp. 168-70. As Schillebeeckx also recognises 'The solidarity and equality of all Christians "in the Spirit" (Acts 2.17-18; 2 Cor 5.17), "living through or in the Spirit" (Gal 5.25; 6.1), "new creation" (Gal 6.15; II Cor 5.17) were key phrases in this "Antiochene-Christian", Jewish-Christian missionary movement and its theology. This ecclesiology

recognises, ‘the church has a Christological origin; it also has, in particular, a pneumatological one.’⁷⁷ In the emerging Christian community ‘union with the Spirit involved union with one another, for the Spirit was primarily a shared, not individual experience (2 Cor 13.14, Phil 2.1, Eph 4.3).’⁷⁸ Early believers were united in Christ and with one another.⁷⁹ Cyril of Alexandria, writing in the fifth century AD, speaks of the unifying work of the Holy Spirit: ‘Just as the power of the holy flesh of Christ united those in whom it dwells into one body, I think that, in much the same way, the one and undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in us all, leads us all into spiritual unity.’⁸⁰ Mentoring is a means to recognise and promote a mentee’s unity with God and with others.⁸¹ Unity is enhanced when Christian values are modelled, the Christian worldview is promoted and Christian fellowship and service are encouraged. As a mentee begins to understand the things that unite them with others, these shared experiences and attributes foster a sense of belonging. Participation in mentoring, then, is one way to become further assimilated into a Christian community while maintaining one’s uniqueness as a member of the body.

The role of the Holy Spirit in the church, of course, extends beyond that of creating unity: ‘The Holy Spirit is central to Christian spirituality and to any understanding of it. In fact the word ‘spirituality’ reflects the realisation that Christian life is led in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.’⁸² In Christian mentoring it is God through the Spirit who is considered the inspiration, the mediator, the revealer, the prompter, the redeemer, the enabler and the sustainer in the relationship. His participation and inspiration is acknowledged in the matching process, in mediating between persons and the Godhead, in revealing strengths and weaknesses, and

had its source in the baptism of the Spirit, the foundation of all church life.’ Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face*, p. 35.

⁷⁷ Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, p. 145.

⁷⁸ R Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community*, (Peabody, MASS: Hendrickson Publishers Inc, 1995), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Keay, ‘Paul the spiritual guide,’ pp. 151-5.

⁸⁰ Cyril of Alexandria, in *Johannis evangelium*, XVI, 20, in PE Pusey (ed.), *In D. Joannis evangelium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872), 736.23-737.4.

⁸¹ In TS Lane & P Tripp, *How People Change*, (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2006), the authors point out that in Rom 12.1-2 the writer asks that the believers ‘‘present your bodies (*somata* [plural]) as a living sacrifice (thysian [singular])’ emphasising the unity of believers, p. 82.

⁸² Farrelly, ‘Holy Spirit,’ p. 490. As Packer contends, the Holy Spirit was ‘given to the church as ‘‘another (i.e. a second) Paraclete’’ (Jn 14.16), taking over Jesus’ role as counsellor, helper, strengthener, supporter, adviser, advocate, ally (for the Gk. *Paracēltos* means all of these.’ JI Packer, ‘Holy Spirit,’ in SB Ferguson & DF Wright, (eds.), *NDT*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 316-9(316-7). In this article Packer uses several other verbs based on biblical texts to describe the work of the Holy Spirit: reveals, unites, assures, mediates fellowship, transforms, gives gifts, prays effectively, prompts missionary action and pastoral decision (p. 317).

revealing the message of the word,⁸³ in prompting decision making, in redeeming through change, in the enabling of mentee and mentor to fulfil their roles and complete their tasks through the giving of gifts, and in sustaining any progress that might be made. Thus, as mentors and mentees participate in teaching and learning the spirit must be one of engagement with each other and with the Divine Spirit. Humble acknowledgement of the Spirit's presence can be made in silent or audible prayer at the beginning of each session and moments of silence in which to hear the Spirit's voice can be encouraged especially at the conclusion of the mentoring session. Silent prayer is anti-manipulative. It allows mentees space to think about what has been said and to begin their 'cognitive housekeeping'. Leave taking is immensely important. This space afforded by silence facilitates the process of integration and allows the Spirit to speak and the mentee to listen.

This short discussion of doctrines that inform how a Spirit-led Christian community is shaped and functions shows how the microscopic community formed in a Christian mentoring encounter can be informed and can operate.

3.2.2 Community Models, Metaphors and Motifs.

Several metaphors, models and motifs in the Scriptures add further depth to this understanding.⁸⁴ As Dulles recognises 'images are immensely important for the life of the Church – for its preaching, its liturgy and its general *esprit de corps*.'⁸⁵ The wide variety of corporate images is a rich resource that can be mined to better conceive of how mentoring can be shaped by an understanding of its community context.

⁸³ 'The Holy Spirit moves the heart, so that believers wish to live by those things which the law commands, but which the law could not achieve by itself.' Martin Bucer, *Commentary on the Gospels* (Basel: 1536), p. 124.

⁸⁴ O'Brien states that 'more than one hundred different terms, metaphors and images are used in the NT to describe God's people.' PT O'Brien, 'Church,' in GF Hawthorne, RP Martin & DG Reid (eds.), *DPL*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 123-131(123). See also '2.3 Names for the church,' in KN Giles 'Church,' in RP Martin & PH Davids (eds.), *DLNT*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), pp. 194-204(196-7), PS Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1960; 2007 edn).

⁸⁵ A Dulles, *Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in all its Aspects*, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1985 edn), p. 22. See also RYK Fung, 'Some Pauline Pictures of the Church,' in *EQ*, Vol. 53, (1981), pp. 89-107.

There are images that are familial metaphors - family/household,⁸⁶ parenthood of God,⁸⁷ adoption,⁸⁸ which are models most universally recognised. Widening the focus, there are those that relate to the societal sphere - covenant people,⁸⁹ nation,⁹⁰ neighbour,⁹¹ hospitality,⁹² fellow citizens,⁹³ and the New Jerusalem.⁹⁴ Still others are organic or pastoral models of community – vine,⁹⁵ planting/field,⁹⁶ flock,⁹⁷ and body,⁹⁸ - that have a dynamic quality to them. Models from the realm of working roles and relationships offer further insights, for example servants⁹⁹ and fellow workers.¹⁰⁰ In addition, there are those metaphors and models of community concerned with religious buildings and roles, for example temple,¹⁰¹ building,¹⁰² priesthood¹⁰³ and saints.¹⁰⁴ The closing chapters of Revelation contain a vision of

⁸⁶ Matt 18.1-4; 23.8-9; 1 Tim 3.15; Eph 2.19; and Gal 6.10. SC Barton, 'Family,' in JB Green, S McKnight & IH Marshall (eds.), *DJG*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 226-29(226). PH Towner, 'Households and Household Codes,' in GF Hawthorne, RP Martin and DG Reid (eds.), *DPL*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 417-19(417).

⁸⁷ Deut 32.6; 2 Sam 7.14; Is 43.6; Hos 11.1; Matt 6.9; 12.46-50; Jn 1.12-13; 20.17.

⁸⁸ Gal 4.5; Rom 8.14-17, 23; 2 Cor 6.18; Eph 1.5; Phil 2.14-15. JM Scott, 'Adoption, Sonship,' in GF Hawthorne, RP Martin and DG Reid (eds.), *DPL*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 15-18(15)

⁸⁹ Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones of Pastoral Work*, p. 44.

⁹⁰ 1 Pet 2.9.

⁹¹ Lev 19.18; Matt 2.39; Rom 13.8; Gal 5.14; Jas 2.8. U Falkenroth, 'Neighbour', in C Brown (ed.), Vol. I, *NIDNTT*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 258-59.

⁹² Gen 19.8; Is 58.7; Deut 23.3-4; Lk 14.12-14; Acts 28.7; Rom 12.13; 16.23; 1 Tim 3.2; 5.10; Tit 1.8; Heb 13.2; 3 Jn 8. See P Alexander et al (eds.), 'Home and Family Life,' in *TLEB*, (Tring, Herts: Lion Publishing, 1978), pp. 193-224(220); Barton, 'Family,' in *DJG*, p. 228; Gower, 'Hospitality,' in *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, pp. 241-49;

⁹³ Lk 17.2; Eph 2.19. CC Caragounis, 'Kingdom of God/kingdom of Heaven,' in JB Green, S McKnight, & IH Marshall (eds.), *DJG*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 417-30.

⁹⁴ Rev 21.1-3. SJ Grenz, *Created for Community*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996, 2nd edn 1998), p. 276.

⁹⁵ Cf. 'vineyard' in Is 5.1-2, 7. and 'vine' and 'branches' in Jn 15.1, 4-5, 7-8. C Brown, 'Vine, wine,' in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. III, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 918-23.

⁹⁶ 1 Cor 3.5-9.

⁹⁷ Ps 77.20; Is 40.11; Lk 12.32; Jn 10.16. Cf. 1 Pet 5.2-3.

⁹⁸ JA Motyer, 'Body, member, limb,' in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. I, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 229-42.

⁹⁹ Lev 25.55; Deut 32.36; Ps 90.13; Rev 22.3, 9. EE Ellis, 'Paul and His Co-Workers,' in *NTS*, Vol. 17, (1971), pp. 437-52(437, 439).

¹⁰⁰ Rom 16.3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 3.9; 2 Cor 1.24; 6.1; 8.23; Phil 2.25; 4.3; Col 4.11; 1 Thess 3.3; Phlm 1.1; 3 Jn 1.8. Mk 16.20; Rom. 8.28; 1 Cor 16.16; 2 Cor 6.1; Jas 2.22. HC Hann, 'Work, do, Accomplish,' in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. III, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 1147-52.

¹⁰¹ W von Meding, 'Temple,' in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. III, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 781-85. The coming of the Holy Spirit to the church (1 Cor 3.16; 6.19-20; 2 Cor 6.16; Eph 2.19-22; 1 Pet 2.5 Cf. Rev 21.22) made the temple obsolete.

¹⁰² J Goetzmann, 'House, build, manage, steward,' in C Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. II, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 247-51. See also 1 Cor 3.10. Fung, 'Some Pauline Pictures of the Church,' pp. 100-105.

¹⁰³ 1 Pet 2.4, 9. Küng, *The Church*, p. 370.

¹⁰⁴ Paul always uses the term 'saints' - the plural - almost as if he does not conceive of a solitary 'saint'. GL Bray, in 'Communion of Saints,' in SB Ferguson & DF (eds.), *NDT*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 152-3(152).

the ultimate realisation of the community of God - intimate communion between the church as bride.¹⁰⁵ As a detailed study of each image would be too wide to be included here¹⁰⁶ one metaphor is chosen to illustrate the insights that can be gained from a consideration of mentoring in relation to communal metaphors and models; namely, the body.¹⁰⁷ For, as Fung contends, ‘of all the pictures of the Church in the New Testament, there is little doubt that that of the Body of Christ represents Paul’s maturest reflections on the subject.’¹⁰⁸

Jesus, at the last supper, gave the disciples bread to eat saying that it was his body.¹⁰⁹ The disciples shared in the common loaf, a symbolic foreshadowing of the fact that they were to be part of his body – the church.¹¹⁰ The Pauline writings use the idea of the body of Christ as a designation of the church.¹¹¹ Several hypotheses have been suggested for the origins of the phrase and it would seem that the concept ‘is more likely the result of the interplay of several influences.’¹¹² One such influence, suggests Fung, is Paul’s familiarity with the ‘Hebrew concept of “corporate personality,” with its oscillation between the individual and the corporate and its notion of the inclusion of the many in the one: a figure standing at the head (e.g., Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses) can be regarded as incorporating in his own person those represented by him.’¹¹³ So, it is suggested that ‘Paul uses the body figure to describe the interdependence of Christians as members of Christ and of each other.’¹¹⁴ Interdependence is a feature of both Christian community and mentoring. Mentor and mentee grow in and through their relationship with each other and with Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit and community is strengthened.

¹⁰⁵ Is 54.5; Rev 21.1-3. C.f. Hos. 1-3; Is 54.5f; 62.4f; Jer 31.3.1; Ezek 16; Mk 2.19f; Jn 3.29; 1 Cor 11.2. 1 Cor 6.16-17; cf. Eph 5. See Ellis, ‘Some Pauline Pictures of the Church,’ pp. 97-100.

¹⁰⁶ S Heron, ‘Mentoring as a Means for Building Christian Community,’ unpublished notes from a paper delivered at the *National Conference on Mentoring: Mentoring as Christian Ministry*, Denver Seminary, Denver, Colorado, USA, 31 March – 1 April 2006. A recording of this seminar can be ordered online from *National Conference Recording Services*, <<http://www.ncrsusa.com/>>.

¹⁰⁷ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, pp. 50-62; Minear, ‘The Body of Christ,’ Chapter 6 in *Images of the Church in the New Testament*.

¹⁰⁸ Fung, ‘Some Pauline Pictures of the Church,’ p. 92.

¹⁰⁹ Matt 26.26; Mk 14.12; Lk 22.19.

¹¹⁰ Col 1.24; Eph 5.29-30; Rom 12.4-5. See also, 1 Cor 12.12-13; Eph 4.11, 25; Col 2.19.

¹¹¹ It is also used of Christ’s physical body (Rom 7.4, for example) and in Eucharistic contexts (1 Cor 10.16, for example).

¹¹² RYK Fung, ‘Body of Christ,’ in GF Hawthorne, RP Martin & DG Reid (eds.), *DPL*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 76-82(77).

¹¹³ Fung, ‘Body of Christ,’ p. 78.

¹¹⁴ EP Clowney, ‘Church,’ in SB Ferguson & DF Wright (eds.), *NDT*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 140-2(141).

In 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 the theme of the body imagery is diversity within unity – one body with many members.¹¹⁵ There is mutuality and obligation in the relationships¹¹⁶ and union with Christ.¹¹⁷ Mentors operating in Christian community prefer the needs of the other. Unlike the dynamic in many ecclesial relationships mentoring promotes diversity in role while maintaining equality on the basis of unity in Christ. Untypical of human society in general, weaker and less ‘honourable’ members of the body are valued.¹¹⁸ Just as various mechanisms of the body work to strengthen weak parts so mentors can work to build up others in areas of weakness as they too are built up by others in the community. In contrast to some business mentoring that focuses solely on leaders and high achievers Christian mentoring must maintain the ethos of the inherent value of each member of the body. As Dulles succinctly asserts, the main thrust of the teaching in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 is ‘the mutual union, mutual concern, and mutual dependence of the members of the local community upon one another.’¹¹⁹

In Ephesians the implications of the image are more fully described. The teaching in Eph. 2.11-16 and 4.13 is also concerned with the reconciling unity of the body, and is emphasised by other metaphorical descriptions later in the chapter.¹²⁰ An important lesson that a mentor can impart to a mentee is that the things which unite body members are greater than the things which divide (in this case national and religious affiliation - vv. 11-16). In Col. 2.19 and Eph. 4.15-16 there is a new dimension of the image introduced, namely growth that derives from Christ the head.¹²¹ The church is distinctive in its relationship to its founder in its inward and organic

¹¹⁵ Prior contends that ‘Paul expects the church, even the divided and arrogant church of Corinth, gradually to provide a model of Christian community.’ (p. 195) and illustrates the diversity of a body, that has the same, ‘Spirit’, ‘Lord’, and ‘God’, working for the common good ((1 Cor 12.4-7): there are varieties of gifts (*charismata*; v.4), service (*diakonai*; v.5) and working (*energēata*; v.6). D Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, BST Series, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1985, Reprint 2002), pp. 196-7.

¹¹⁶ Rom 12.4, 10; Cor 12.14-26.

¹¹⁷ Rom 12.5; 1 Cor 12.12-13.

¹¹⁸ Rom 12.10; 1 Cor 12.22-24.

¹¹⁹ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, p. 50.

¹²⁰ ‘a new humanity’ (v.15); ‘citizens with the saints’ (v. 19); members of the household of God (v.19); ‘a holy temple in the Lord’ (v.21), ‘a dwelling place for God’ (v.22).

¹²¹ Christ, the Head of the body, is ‘at work fitting and joining the whole body together. He provides sustenance to it through every contact according to the needs of each single part. He enables the body to make its own growth so that it builds itself up in love.’ M Barth, *Ephesians, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, in *The Anchor Bible* (Doubleday, 1974), Vol. II (Eph 4-6), p. 426.

relationship to Christ.¹²² This dynamic relationship with the Godhead in Christian mentoring has the potential to give life, direction and meaning to the encounter. Fung asserts that ‘the image of the church as the body of Christ looks inward (to the mutual relationship of believers as members of the body) and upward (to the relationship between the body and the head).’¹²³ This factor reinforces the triadic nature of the mentoring relationship. There is reciprocity in the growth of members - the growth of one part of the body will impact another as the whole body is ‘held’ or ‘knit together’ (Col 2.19; Eph 4.16). The growth of the mentor is important to the growth of the mentee and the rest of the community and vice versa. This growth is initiated by the Holy Spirit. As Christ’s agent the Holy Spirit acts in the church, designating and equipping particular individuals for particular stated ministries (Acts 13.1-2; 2 Tim 1.6-7; *cf.* 1 Tim 4.14) and enabling every member of the body to render service that furthers growth into Christlike maturity.¹²⁴ It is not unexpected, then, to find the following emphasis in Scripture: ‘Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another’ (Heb. 10.24-25). From this injunction it could be argued that the ‘solitary’ Christian is self-deluded – to be in Christ is to be corporate. Torrance describes an ‘individual’ as a self-conscious autonomous unit who lives in ‘ungodlike isolation’.¹²⁵ In addition, Prior observes ‘any Christian who operates independently from others is reducing his own effectiveness and that of the body as a whole.’¹²⁶ Further,

God has so *composed* the body ... that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another’ (1 Cor 24-25). The word “composed” (*synekerasen*; v.24) has the basic meaning of mixing different parts together with a specific purpose in mind, *i.e.*, to produce mutual support and interdependence.¹²⁷

¹²² Ward, *Religion and Community*, pp. 133-6.

¹²³ Fung, ‘Body of Christ,’ p. 81.

¹²⁴ Packer, ‘Holy Spirit,’ p. 319.

¹²⁵ Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*. The phrase ‘ungodlike isolation’ is taken from TJ Gorringer, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Torrance is using ‘individual’ as opposed to ‘person’. Williams, in *The Potter’s Rib*, contends that the ‘person’ receives ‘particularity as, in communion with others, he or she moves across the individualized boundary of the self into the “between” of personhood,’ to be found in community, p. 159.

¹²⁶ D Prior, *The Message of I Corinthians*, p. 213.

¹²⁷ Prior, *The Message of I Corinthians*, pp. 213, 215.

Morris contends that the word ‘composed’ may be used in relation to mixing colours.¹²⁸ There are implications of this nuance for mentoring relationships in terms of accepting diversity, the tolerance of fluidity in designations as opposed to insisting upon high demarcation, how one person can be influenced by and is interdependent with the constitution of others, etcetera. This ‘fluid’ integration into the community of Christ is fundamental to the healthy, holistic development of the Christian. Daloz-Parks, after Fowler, asserts that

... we “interlive” with many others. ... everyone throughout life is dependent upon a tangible “network of belonging”. Everyone needs a psychological home, crafted in the intricate patterns of connection and interaction between the person and his or her community.¹²⁹

Daloz-Parks claims that young adults becoming more critically aware and who have a mentor still need the wider community to fulfil the potential of their formation.¹³⁰ To the three elements in this developmental equation - the developing person, the mentor, and the community environment - the significant influence of Christ the Head through the essential work of the Holy Spirit highlighted earlier should not be overlooked in Christian mentoring.

This image of the body is also fertile soil in which to ground a theology of corporate discernment and evaluation.¹³¹ In Eph 4.13-14 it is explained that gifts are bestowed for the building up of the body ‘until all of us come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their crafty deceitful scheming.’ A body that is mature and strong is on a surer footing in a ‘strong wind’ than an immature or weak one. The body members together can discern if there is an assault on any part. Mentors and mentees together and in the community of which Christ is the head are more likely to remain strong and discerning when challenges to faith arise.

¹²⁸ L Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1958), p. 177.

¹²⁹ Daloz-Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, p. 89. See also JW Fowler, *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

¹³⁰ Daloz-Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, p. 93.

¹³¹ To be discussed more fully in ‘Chapter 5.1 The Purpose, Value and Legitimacy of Evaluation,’ in this work.

Such community metaphors, as that of the body, offer a rich vein of thought to those contemplating what it means to engage in a mentorship. They emphasise a sense of belonging (people, nation, family, adoption, flock); a need for inclusivity (neighbour, hospitality); a role of ministering to each other and the world (kingdom, fellow workers, priesthood); their interdependence and giftedness for the building up of others (vine, house, body); their distinctiveness in their goal to be Christlike (saints); and, the forward-looking hopefulness that can be brought to relationships (New Jerusalem; bride). Evaluation can measure if these ideals are present in the environment, and if not, the impact their absence makes. Certainly, communitarian doctrines highlight the priority of relationship in the Christian experience. This precedence is the next consideration to be explored.

3.3 The Distinctives of Christian Community Related to Mentoring

Christian community has several distinguishing features and will impact the distinctiveness of Christian mentoring. A primary distinctive is its *gatheredness* in the name of Jesus (Mt. 18.20) through faith in him (Eph. 4.5).¹³² Gatheredness embodies the principle of *association*.¹³³ As Snyder elucidates, the ‘people and community constitute what the New Testament means by *ekklesia*, the called-out and called-together Church of God.’¹³⁴ In the early church key figures like Augustine gave importance to the idea of church as a gathered community.¹³⁵ Tertullian drew attention to the fact that, like the Trinity, the church is a community of those gathered

¹³² The idea of a gathered community has traditionally been used as a mark to distinguish between different forms of church structure and is opposed to the ‘parish’ system that assumes all those in the parish have a right to the sacraments of the church. The Dissenters maintained that only those that evidence Christian conversion have that right so the church became composed of the gathered converted. This technical theological distinction is breaking down particularly amongst evangelical Anglicans today.

¹³³ The principles that emerge here are paralleled in the following chapter that examines the principles of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark.

¹³⁴ HA Snyder, *The Community of the King*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), p. 57. The *ekklesia* translated ‘church’ derives from the verb ‘to call’ (*kaleo*) plus the preposition ‘out of’ (*ek*) and simply means ‘assembly’. In the first-century Roman world an *ekklesia* was an assembly of citizens in a community called together to deal with city affairs (Acts 19.32, 39, 41). J Roloff, ‘ekklesia,’ in H Balz & G Schneider (eds.), *EDNT*, Vol.1, p. 411; K Schmidt, ‘ekklesia,’ in G Kittel & G Freidrich (eds.), *TDNT*, (trans., G Bromiley; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-76), Vol.3, p. 513.

¹³⁵ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 61.

by the Spirit.¹³⁶ Some early Christian communities, however, took the idea of ‘gatheredness’ to the extent of communal living.¹³⁷ There is tension between the call to be separate from the world (Jn 16.19; 17.14; Jas. 4.4) and at the same time called to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation (Jn 17.18; 2 Cor 5.19). Benedict recognised the tension of balancing the *vita contemplativa* in the monastery and the *vita activa* on mission, and had reservations about monks leaving the cloister.¹³⁸ Within both spheres there was a need for a spiritual mentor. A form of mentoring in community was also practiced in Zinzendorf’s commune in the Eighteenth century:

In 1727 the congregation at Herrnhut organised itself in small *Bunden* or “bands” of people who were drawn together by a spiritual affinity to one another. Later a formal system of “choirs” was organised, “based upon age, sex, and marital status.” The choir filled the need for intimate sharing, confession, prayer and discipline and would meet almost daily. Through the leaders of the choirs Zinzendorf was kept informed of each individual’s spiritual growth.¹³⁹

This insight into life at Herrnhut reveals that mentoring was seen as a need, it was relational and frequent, had formation at its core and through prayer acknowledged the presence of God. Eberhard Arnold, founder of Bruderhof community in 1920, wrote: ‘All life created by God exists in a communal form and works toward community. Therefore, we live in community.’¹⁴⁰ Arnold believed that the

¹³⁶ Tertullian, *De Pudicitia*, c. AD213-223, (trans., S Thelwell; *The Ante Nicene Fathers*; Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885-96). Rankin illustrates that Tertullian also envisaged the church as Ark, Ship, Camp, Body, Spirit, Mother, Bride, Virgin, School and Sect. D Rankin, ‘Tertullian’s ecclesiastical images,’ chapter 4 in *Tertullian and the Church*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 65-90.

¹³⁷ For example, the third century desert monasteries. For an ‘International Directory of Christian Intentional Communities,’ see <http://www.jesus.org.uk/nccc/links_index.shtml>, accessed September 2004. See also information on ‘Covenant Communities’ in an article by SB Clark, ‘Mere Christian Community,’ <<http://www.rc.net/org/cka/covcom/htmlmc.html>>, accessed September 2004.

¹³⁸ D Tredget, ‘Basil of Caesarea and His Influence on Monastic Mission,’ a paper presented at the EBC Theology Commission, Belmont, (March 2005), p. 2, <<http://www.benedictines.org.uk/theology/2005/tredget.pdf>>, accessed June 2006.

¹³⁹ WC Moore (ed.), ‘Moravian Glossary,’ in *CH*, Vol.1, No.1: *Zinzendorf and The Moravians*, (1982), pp. 25-6(26). It is suggested that John Wesley, having visited Herrnhut based his classes on the ‘choir’ model he observed there. In Britain, in the Wesleyan band and small class meetings there was a tradition of mutual guidance, accountability and confession. See R Davies and EG Rupp, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol. I, (1965), pp. 189ff. Callen accounts for the success of the Wesleyan revival through its educational methods and structures of spiritual accountability. Callen, *Authentic Spirituality Moving Beyond Mere Religion*, p. 219.

¹⁴⁰ E Arnold, *Why we live in Community*, (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House, 2002 edn) an eBook of the Bruderhof Foundation, Inc., <<http://www.bruderhof.com>>, p. 5, accessed September 2004.

community should be active in answering the socio-political questions of his day.¹⁴¹ It is difficult to see how a closed community can impact the world in the incarnational way in which Christ intended.¹⁴² Further, a closed community gives an appearance of exclusivity, which is contradictory to the ideals of community.¹⁴³ The inward and outward dimensions of Christian community living are highlighted when the church is conceived of as a ‘community made up of those who believe in God as revealed in the Scriptures and who unite for worship and service to him.’¹⁴⁴ These two dimensions should be encouraged and integrated by a mentoring relationship.

The principle of *selection* in terms of choosing to be *committed* to a local community, and the principle of *association* with that community imply that *accountability* to one-another will be an expected aspect of belonging – a second feature of Christian community. It should be noted that:

True accountability does not entail blind obedience to a group or to dictatorial leaders. Rather, it involves taking seriously the simple truth that we are one body – an *interrelated, interdependent community* of faith. What each of us does and *how each of us lives* affects the entire fellowship. ... Accountability also means that we are open to *learning from one another*, knowing that each of us can be an instrument of the Spirit’s work in *fostering maturity* in us.¹⁴⁵

Crabb asserts that this level of commitment is a means for entering into deeper community: ‘We cannot experience the love and joy of real life until we’re *connected to another at the level of our soul*.’¹⁴⁶ Mentoring can provide a vehicle for communication at this deeper level - it is in small groups that people assured of confidentiality tend to self-disclose more. As Bonhoeffer contends, ‘In confession

¹⁴¹ Consequently, Bruderhof has an outward dimension to their community living. This is manifest in financial support of worthy causes and writings addressing issues of the times. Vanier, of the *l’Arche Communities*, contends ‘a true community becomes more and more open, because it becomes more and more humble,’ *Community and Growth*, p. 144.

¹⁴² ‘There have been attempts to renounce the world, but the central doctrine of incarnation gives a value to earthly life that is hard to gainsay, and the hope for a renewal of the world by the Spirit of God is at the heart of Jesus’ teaching,’ Ward, *Religion and Community*, pp. 131-2. This view does not preclude times of retreat for nurture and growth. Further, it is recognised that in Christian belief prayer, so much part of the daily routine of closed communities, can impact the world.

¹⁴³ Matt 28.19-20; Lk 24.47; Acts 1.8. This factor is one reason why this type of closed community is not considered as a context for examination in this work.

¹⁴⁴ G Bilezikian, *Christianity, 101*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), p. 177.

¹⁴⁵ Italicised text my emphasis. Grenz, *Created for Community*, p. 222.

¹⁴⁶ Italicised text my emphasis. L Crabb, *Soul Talk: The Language God Longs for Us to Speak*, (Nashville, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2003), pp. 10, 18. Crabb outlines this process as an aid to Spiritual Formation in 5 stages, pp. 30-33, and then goes on to explain each stage throughout his book.

the breakthrough to community takes place.¹⁴⁷ The concept of self-disclosure highlights some of the difficulties of developing close relationships in community: that is, first, having to relinquish defence mechanisms. It is in more intimate relationships built on trust that mentees feel they can be open and give mentors the right to speak into their life; and second, inappropriate disclosure. Boundaries should be established at the outset. When issues arise in spite of this safeguard the mentee should be directed to someone trained to deal with such issues.

A commitment to relational involvement for the development of others is another characteristic of Christian community and highlights the principles of *education* and *reflection*. There is the duty to affirm others, to encourage their uniqueness and freedom, and to become concretely and intimately involved in their formation through training and reflection. Christian mentoring is uniquely suited to this task.¹⁴⁸ It can also help facilitate the mentee's community relationships through providing prayerful support, wisdom and objective insight with regard to the dynamics of forming relationships¹⁴⁹ and conflict resolution.¹⁵⁰ The problem is, though, that as we engage with others 'we constantly run up against the fallenness, the brokenness that haunts human relationships. One way or another, we are caught in the conflict between self and God that underlies them all.'¹⁵¹ Christian mentors can draw on the many helpful interventions developed by others including secular mentors,¹⁵² but they also have unique access to the resources of *agape* love to engage with others in this sacrificial way.

¹⁴⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 87. Confession to one another is something that Bonhoeffer suggests is a characteristic of Christian community (pp. 86-96) - something that has been easier to do in a Roman Catholic than a Protestant environment.

¹⁴⁸ This factor will be discussed in fuller depth in the following chapter.

¹⁴⁹ Some strategies suggested by John et al are: promotion of unity through a recognition of the common need of forgiveness irrespective of background; shared experiences both social and functional that promote bonding; development of trust, vulnerability and self-disclosure moving from ice breakers to meaningful exchange with sensitivity and openness (in this area one-to-one mentoring is encouraged); and, encouraging accountability and commitment through regular contact. See Long et al, *Small Group Leaders' Handbook*, pp. 41-8.

¹⁵⁰ For further guidance on this subject see GR Collins, 'Interpersonal relationships,' Chapter 16 in *Christian Counselling: A Comprehensive Guide*, (Milton Keynes: Word (UK) Ltd, 1988, 1989 edn), pp. 229-46.

¹⁵¹ Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*, p. 143.

¹⁵² The insights of secular mentor practitioners and researchers that are not at odds with a Christian worldview can be viewed as the provisions of prevenient grace.

The gathered members of the community, then, can benefit from being accountable to each other regarding their interior and exterior lives. The community members gather to worship God, nourish each other and reach out to the world with the love they have experienced; the three fundamental activities of Christian community.

3.3.1 The Activities of a Christian Community

The discernable activities of early Christian community life can be considered as aspects that a mentoring relationship should encourage - namely, worship, nurture and mission. Acts 2.42 and 44-47 contains evidence of communal commitment to first, *worship* including preaching, ritual and prayer. Secondly, there is evidence of *edification* or *nurture* including teaching, united fellowship and communal life, sharing and service. Without commitment to the nurturing of disciples they can become ‘malnourished’ and growth is stunted.¹⁵³ Thirdly, the early believers were committed to *outreach* or *mission*, providing practical and spiritual service as part of their mission to church and world. These functions have a unifying aspect. As Clowney asserts ‘the gifts of the Spirit equip the church to *praise God, nurture the saints* and *witness to the world*. The stewardship of the diverse gifts does not divide; it unites the church as a functioning organism.’¹⁵⁴ These foundational activities of Christian community have correspondences between them (see Fig. 3.2). Nurturing and mission, for example, can be acts of worship.¹⁵⁵ Worship is preparation for mission¹⁵⁶ and is nurturing;¹⁵⁷ In turn nurturing enables Christians to worship and

¹⁵³ B Donahue & R Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), pp. 27-8.

¹⁵⁴ Italicised text my emphasis. Clowney, ‘Church,’ p. 141.

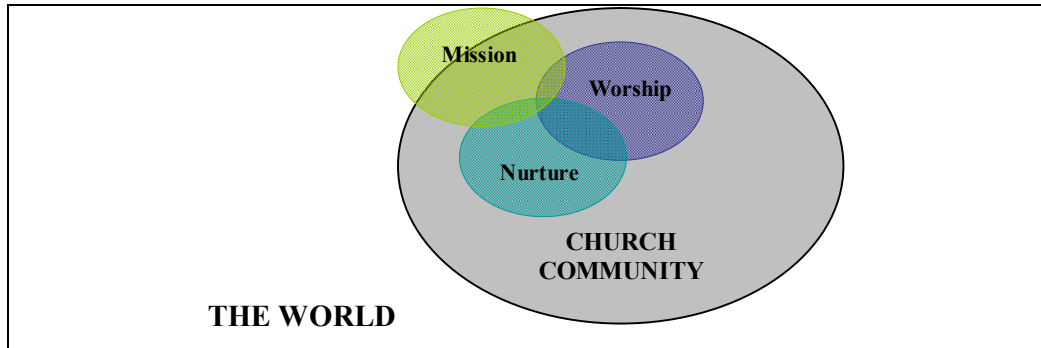
¹⁵⁵ It is one measure of success in a mentoring relationship when mentor and mentee can share an act of worship together, although, if worship is taken in its widest sense, as the mentor serves the mentee that is an act of worship in itself.

¹⁵⁶ What is meant here is more than praise. It includes components of praying, praising, singing, listening, giving, receiving, edifying, proclaiming, serving. It extends beyond the formal service to the corporate life as the body lives in and serves the world. See 1 Cor 10.31. Webber has shown how worship nourishes spirituality: ‘the use of ritual and symbol and sacrament engaged the whole person in constant reminder of their spiritual identity and calling to live in the pattern of death and resurrection.’ RE Webber, ‘How Worship Nourishes Spirituality,’ Chapter 6 in *Ancient Future Worship*, The Institute for Worship Studies, <<http://www.iwsfla.org>>, accessed June 2004.

¹⁵⁷ Gratton observes that ‘the value of communal celebration lies also in the aliveness of the celebrators themselves whose lived faith ... shines out and enkindles the heart of all who are present.’ Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*, p. 151. Marshall in ‘Paul’s Idea of Community,’ correctly contends that ‘whatever the function of the different actions of the church meeting, each and every one of them must be helpful to the other people present,’ p. 99.

be involved in mission.¹⁵⁸ Outreach and edification are ultimately worship-orientated, with worship understood as including ritual, but also as a God-centred, community-orientated way of life.¹⁵⁹

Figure 3.2: Foundational Activities of Christian Community.¹⁶⁰



This interrelationship between the activities will be reflected in integrative mentoring activities that aim to develop Christ’s followers. There is a symbiotic relationship between those aspects of Christian community that shape Christian mentoring as discussed above and between the nature of mentoring that supports those same aspects of Christian community. In the early days of Christianity, the disciples were to continue the work of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶¹ As highlighted earlier, the responsibility for discipleship did not end with conversion. Hippolytus (c.AD170-236) describes how a mentor acts as sponsor for the new convert during rites of passage and also in the continuing discipleship process.¹⁶² Christian

¹⁵⁸ Bilezikian correctly observes that ‘the spiritual oneness of the church necessarily results in functional oneness, since a foremost sign of oneness in the church is the inclusive availability of spiritual gifts.’ Bilezikian, *Community 101*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁹ Rom 12.1-2.

¹⁶⁰ See also Long et al, *Small Group Leader’s Handbook*, p. 32. Snyder, in *The Community of the King*, lists 6 elements in the structure of the early church: worship, community, leadership, nurture, witness, service (pp. 143ff).

¹⁶¹ Bilezikian, *Community 101*, p. 213.

¹⁶² Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, (trans., BS Easton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934; New York, NY: Archon Books, 1962), p. 41. The ‘success’ of Methodist outreach was attributed in part to its use of small relational groups based on the Moravian precedent: ‘the genius of Methodism was not merely popular evangelism but also the mixture of close knit community based on cell groups, preaching services, quarterly love feasts, and a growing corps of lay preachers. Close community was key: “We introduce Christian fellowship,” said Wesley, “where it was utterly destroyed.” These patterns provided the foundation for rapid growth.’ HA Snyder, ‘My Parish is the World,’ in R Banks et al (eds.), *The Quiet Revolution*, (Oxford: Lion Publishing plc, 1985), pp. 72-3. In another tradition, The *Westminster Confession* states that all saints ‘being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other’s gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.’ *The Westminster Confession of Faith, Together with the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism*, (Atlanta: Presbyterian Church in America Committee for Christian Education and Publications, 1990), Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVI, 1.

mentoring today also has an essential role in the teaching and training realm of ongoing disciple-making. Mutual edification is crucial to the maturation of community (Eph 4.11-13):¹⁶³ ‘Mentoring not only makes disciples, it impacts the entire church in its journey of discipleship’.¹⁶⁴ Ideally this mutual edification should happen as part of the church’s relational culture. Initially at least, there may be need for a formal mentoring programme that ensures the practice occurs across personality types and generations. When mentoring occurs in the communal context there can a support network to help maintain mentoring relationships and there is a pool of wisdom, experience and resources to be drawn upon. This embeddedness of the mentor and the mentee in the community means that ministry emerges out of the wisdom and tradition of the Christian community gathered around Scripture and not out of the individual’s resources.¹⁶⁵

3.3.2 A Proposed Definition of Christian Community

Life in community has always been God’s intention for his people. It is integral to the development of Christians, reconciling them to God, their true selves and to others. Communitarian doctrines, metaphors and motifs are central to establishing an ecclesiology and their prominence are an indication of the necessity of corporate dimensions to formation. The examination of Christian community distinctives reveal the activities that the community exists to promote. In light of the discussion above this working definition of Christian community is proposed:

Community begins with the Triune God and his intentions for humanity. Christian community gathers in the name of Jesus Christ. It is dynamically formed by God’s nature and purposes and shaped by Scriptures that speak of community life. Its main objectives are worship, nurture and mission. It has an eschatological fulfilment.

Out of Christian community mentoring emerges and out of Christian mentoring community is strengthened.

¹⁶³ There are many benefits in being part of intentional relationships: strength for life’s difficulties; wisdom to help with decision making; acceptance that helps repair wounds; and, a sense of solidarity, for example. Donahue & Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups*, p. 38.

¹⁶⁴ Webber, ‘Formed through Mentoring,’ in *Ancient Future Evangelism*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁵ W Brueggeman, *Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living*, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 178.

3.4 Mentoring in the Theological Education Community

Writing in the seminary community context in the early twentieth century Bonhoeffer recognises the role of the ‘other’ in Christian communities:

God has willed that we should seek him and find his living Word in the witness of a brother, in the mouth of a man. Therefore, a Christian needs another Christian who speaks God’s Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth. He needs his brother as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation ... and that also clarifies the goal of all Christian community: they meet one another as the bringers of the message of salvation.¹⁶⁶

The need of the ‘other’ in theological education still exists today. The foci for this empirical research was Belfast Bible College (hereafter BBC), an institution for theological education at tertiary level offering full-time and part-time study for college diplomas, university undergraduate degrees and post graduate pathways for Masters and Doctoral degrees.¹⁶⁷ In the Irish context it is unique with its multi-national and multi-denominational community of approximately 180 full-time male and female students, 40 of whom are residential. Every mainstream denomination is represented and in any one year there is an average of 25 nationalities present. Consequently, there is diversity culturally, theologically, liturgically and ministerially among the student body. In addition, 3 of the 8 full-time faculty, (including the principal), are internationals and among the alumni there are graduates serving in Christian ministry in over 70 countries worldwide.

It could be argued strongly that the local church context should be the focal point for a study of this kind as that is where lifelong discipleship takes place. However, the Christian community context of a theological education college, rather than the local church context, was chosen as a locale for the project for several reasons. First, theological education colleges have long been associated with formation and, consequently, have the same overarching aim as mentoring. Formation and in

¹⁶⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁷ This project is described in detail in chapter 6 of this work. *Belfast Bible College* (BBC), Glenburn Road South, Dunmurry, BT17 9JP, <<http://www.belfastbiblecollege.com>>. BBC is a constituent college of the Institute of Theology at The Queen’s University of Belfast (QUB), University Road, Belfast BT7 1NN, <<http://www.qub.ac.uk>>.

particular the fragmentation between formation objectives is growing area of concern among theological educators. This work, therefore, will inform a current movement and contemporary area of concern.¹⁶⁸ Secondly, theological education colleges are often close communities that meet daily (unlike many churches), and even have students who are resident. It could be argued that a retreat community should have been chosen. The diverse nature of such communities, however, and the fact that some focus mainly on spiritual formation and not learning and training, ruled them out as an environment promoting the type of holistic, integrative mentoring context being considered in this work. Moreover, some of these communities are reclusive and exclusive and, therefore, do not conform to the inclusive and outward-looking ethos of Christian mentoring. Thirdly, there is the issue of resources. An advantage of providing a programme in this setting is that there is a ready pool of potential participants. Staff members may already be mentoring in an informal capacity and may have developed relevant skills. There are organisational structures and resources that may be at the disposal of the programme. Fourthly, while the local church context was considered, and indeed, a parallel case study was made,¹⁶⁹ the scope of this work would not allow for the consideration of two programmes with each requiring an in-depth and lengthy analysis. It was considered that the breadth of scope within this study was secondary to depth of analysis especially considering a theological education college is in some senses a microcosm of the church. Colleges, like churches, are worshipping communities engaged in the nurture of their members and involved in training them for mission in the church and the world. In addition, they often have a nationally diverse population more representative of the global church than localised congregations generally do. Finally, mentoring in theological education is more relevant to the previous knowledge and experience of the author of this work and there is an argument for practitioner research because practitioners ‘really understand what goes on in their minds as they are planning and executing their education programme, so that there is no better person to research the role.’¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ The European Evangelical Accreditation Association (EEAA) took as the theme for their General Assembly in Rome in November 2007 ‘Mentoring and Spiritual Formation.’ See EEAA, *TTE*, Vol. 2.2, December 2007.

¹⁶⁹ A ‘Youth Mentoring Programme’ for 26 youth leaders in training was implemented and evaluated in 2005/2006 by the writer of this work along with a youth mentoring programme team, in Newtownbreda Baptist Church, Newtownbreda Road, Belfast, BT8 7BQ, Northern Ireland. The findings are too extensive to be included in this work.

¹⁷⁰ P Jarvis, ‘Expanding Horizons of Research in Adult Christian Education,’ in *BJTE*, Vol.13, No.1, (2002), pp. 9-20(16).

One anticipated disadvantage of choosing this context was that that it might be difficult to find staff mentors who were willing to give additional time to the project. Further, while integrative Christian mentors can be excellent tutors not all tutors are necessarily equipped to be integrative Christian mentors in theological education. Moreover, some faculty could resist training in this area for a variety of reasons: a lack of time, they may feel they are already qualified, they may not consider this to be their role, they may misunderstand or be wary of the concept of mentoring, or they may feel some of their inadequacies may be exposed. Additionally, leaders of current related programmes could feel under threat and there could also be issues regarding the funding and resourcing the project. Furthermore, it was recognised that students could also feel unable to commit to a further demand on their time no matter how advantageous it may be to them. Nevertheless, as any context has its own set of challenges, the theological education setting was chosen recognising that the model employed in the educational context could be transferred and adapted to other Christian contexts as ‘every community that wants to last beyond a single generation must concern itself with education.’¹⁷¹

In spite of the challenge of providing and committing to mentoring programmes, forums and discussions with graduates have revealed there is rising demand for mentoring among students themselves.¹⁷² Irrespective of race, gender, age, nationality, social class, disciplinary interest or departmental affiliation students desired mentoring for various reasons. They wanted someone to have a concern about them and to show them how their studies fitted their context. Someone with whom they could discuss issues arising from their studies was also cited. Further, it was important to them to have someone to teach them how to be a professional in their area of interest and to have someone to care enough to help them open doors leading to funding or career opportunities.¹⁷³ Young adults are becoming more accustomed to developing a network of mentoring relationships in their professional

¹⁷¹ W Bruggemann, *The Creative Word*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 1.

¹⁷² For example, forums and discussions took place at Rackham School of Graduate Studies at University of Michigan. See J London, *How to Get the Mentoring You Want: A Guide for Graduate Students at a Diverse University*, (Michigan: Student Information Publications University of Michigan, 2002), p. 2, <<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/StudentInfo/publications/>>, accessed June 2004.

¹⁷³ London, *How to Get the Mentoring You Want*, p. 2.

lives¹⁷⁴ and, recognising the benefits, are seeking similar relationships in Christian community contexts.

Theological colleges have a lengthy history of promoting formation and close community as well as fulfilling the more obvious objectives of academia: ‘it is education of a very particular kind that will keep alive a community and create a body of faith in the next generation; it is education of the soul, spiritual mentoring for spiritual formation.’¹⁷⁵ Some scholars have claimed that a caring community can only really grow within a residency context, especially when residency is a pre-requisite for both students and lecturers.¹⁷⁶ Many theological educators recognize the importance of communal formation and the need to give serious regard to the development of a caring, nurturing, learning community. Geographical proximity and residency is not always possible and sometimes the assent to community is lost in the demands of every day life in the institution. Alternatives must be sought and Kempe suggests that ‘two special ways of addressing these needs are through (i.) *personal pastoral care* for the individuals and families that comprise the community; and (ii.) *the provision of mentors* for all members of the community.’¹⁷⁷ Mentoring in the theological education community context is an integrated way of relating and communicating so that the transference of knowledge and skills to the mentee is enhanced while developing the mentee spiritually, personally and communally. In addition, to focus a programme of Christian mentoring in the theological education context is also to train students in a form of discipleship that can be carried on into their own ministries. To teach them the value as leaders of being supported and accountable in their ministry is essential.

¹⁷⁴ Daloz-Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁷⁵ Anderson & Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁶ For example, R Benne, *Quality with soul: how six premier colleges and universities keep faith with their religious traditions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 194. In a presentation to the General Synod the Bishops of the Church of Ireland announced that one of their goals in their ‘Ministry Formation Project Plan,’ is ‘Community’ stating that because they recognise that ‘building community is essential to the church – a focussed and purposeful residency is a key element of training.’ Bishops of the Church of Ireland, ‘Ministry Formation Project Plan’, presentation to The General Synod, Kilkenny, 9 May 2007.

¹⁷⁷ RJ Kempe, ‘Lutheran Theological Education in the 21st Century – an Agenda for Discussion,’ an article based on an inaugural lecture, Australian Lutheran College, Adelaide, Australia, 2004, <http://www.luthersem.edu.aupdf/files/Inaugural_Lecture.pdf>, p. 8, accessed April 2007.

Education, even when conceived of as purely academic, has fundamental correspondences with the communal and the relational. Philosopher and educator Parker Palmer, writing of community and higher education, insists that both knowledge and truth (foundational quests of higher education) are communal terms. He contends that knowledge is not the outcome of an isolated individual reflecting on the world; rather, it is a type of responsible relationship, and even ‘a means to relationship’ with others. Thus knowing ‘becomes a reunion of separated beings whose primary bond is not of logic but of love’; truth, he suggests, is the name of this ‘community of relatedness.’¹⁷⁸ This conception of an academic community rests easily with a Christian worldview as ‘knowing’ and ‘loving’ have an intimate link in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.¹⁷⁹ Palmer asserts that knowledge is neither ‘out there’ (objective) nor ‘in here’ (subjective) but ‘between us’ in dialoguing relationship.¹⁸⁰ This claim indicates the potential power of a mentoring relationship. The spiritual quest is at the core of each human being and should not be totally introspective. Crucially, it is about

... the relationship of the human person to what is not oneself – to what is ultimately Other, to a Sacred presence, to, if you will, a divine Someone Else. We today sometimes turn spiritual guidance into a concern for a merely interiorised process of growth and development.¹⁸¹

Spiritual guidance, then, ought to be seen as a dialogical process that interacts with a person’s community and commitments.¹⁸² In a similar vein, Peters suggests that ‘the ability to reason, in the philosophical sense of thinking critically about one’s beliefs, develops only if a man *keeps critical company* so that a critic is incorporated in his own consciousness. The *dialogue within* is inseparable from the *dialogue without*’.¹⁸³ It is this potential for critical dialogue that a theological education community affords and is what promotes reflective and critical thinking. Mentoring

¹⁷⁸ P Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 32-3. This is a statement appropriate in a post-modern environment as never before; signalling the movement away from enlightenment thought to a rediscovery of community.

¹⁷⁹ ‘The Hebrew Bible uses the word “know” to indicate conjugal relation of husband and wife (as in “Abraham knew Sarah”), the same word it uses for our knowledge of God and of the created world. The most common New Testament word for “know” is also used for lovemaking... The images ...reflect the quality of knowing at its deepest reaches, the quality of truth that draws us into community.’ Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*, p. 58.

¹⁸⁰ Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*, p. 55.

¹⁸¹ Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*, p. 4.

¹⁸² A Van Kaam, *Dynamics of Spiritual Self-Direction*, (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1976), pp. 384-5.

¹⁸³ RS Peters, *Ethics and Education*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 51.

can only enhance this as another ‘voice’ or ‘voices’ are added to the relational dialogue. One of the greatest strengths of a mentoring programme in theological education is that it provides the space for the processing and integration of information and experiences. Interpersonal encouragement is essential in the theological education context where there is the potential for doubts to be raised and disequilibrium to be caused in the mind of the student.¹⁸⁴ Mentoring provides the structure for these encounters to take place. For many undergraduates embarking on a course of theological education it is an unsettling experience often because theological education involves ‘an actual identity formation and hence will often result in deconstruction as well as reconstruction.’¹⁸⁵ It is an act of responsible care on behalf of the theological institution to provide an environment where such often deeply-felt doubts and uncertainties can be expressed. Mentoring can provide such a forum where reassurance and reflection can take place and where prayerful support can be given. There is great scope in mentoring conversations for the integration of what student knows from the classroom, the library, and has experienced in devotional practices with their placement training and their everyday experiences. In this way can mentoring be considered a means to discover the ‘Holy Grail’ of theological education – integration?

Research has shown that ‘students who get the most out of college, who grow most academically, and who are happiest, organise their time to include interpersonal activities with faculty members, or with fellow students, built around substantive academic work.’¹⁸⁶ Simon, a philosophy professor at *Hope College*, has argued that academia is robbed of joy because of its loss of a sense of community. She highlights the challenge to Christians in academia to ‘recreate community’ and concludes by suggesting that part of the calling of Christian academics is to be ‘colleagues and mentors’ in which ‘our deep gladness meets the deep hunger of the world.’¹⁸⁷ This scenario represents part of the redemptive nature of Christianity.

¹⁸⁴ Krathwohl, Bloom & Bertram, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ B Mayo, ‘Centre for Youth Ministry Theological Education,’ in *BJTE*, Vol.12, No.2, (2002), pp. 109-17(111).

¹⁸⁶ R Light, *The Harvard Assessment Seminars: Explorations with Students and Faculty about Teaching, Learning, and Student Life. Second Report*, (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard Graduate School of Education and Kennedy School of Government, 1992), p. 32.

¹⁸⁷ C Simon, ‘Collegiality and Calling: Mentoring as an Occasion for Grace,’ unpublished notes from a plenary session attended by the writer of this work during *The Professor as Pilgrim: A conference*

Redemption is not a singular occurrence. Mentoring in theological education is a means to develop meaningful, redemptive community relationships.

3.5 Conclusion

Basing his conclusions on recent research in North America¹⁸⁸ Vander Bröek asserts that

We are experiencing a crisis of community in mainstream denominations. “Christians without community” has become the hallmark of the contemporary church. ... Community is a vital issue for the church because we define and evaluate the church primarily in terms of our communal experiences.¹⁸⁹

It is one contention of this thesis that Christian mentoring is a means to a restoration, or consolidation, of community. In the symbiotic relationship between Christian community and Christian mentoring the community context shapes the type of mentoring that can be achieved. The ideal environment is illustrated in theology and Scripture. These sources reveal the internal desire for community that is created within the human being, acknowledging the need for communal experience to help humans develop and presenting the ideal characteristics for the mentoring encounter. The type of mentoring that takes place ought to be in harmony with the Scriptural objectives of Christian community, namely worship, nurture and mission. Conversely, mentoring can shape the type of community that exists. Clark contends that the ‘kind of environment a particular environment is depends on how the people interact.’¹⁹⁰ This claim is interesting because it suggests that interaction is more important to a community than necessarily the ethos to which an institution adheres. There are differences between the concept of ‘institution’ and ‘environment’. They have different patterns of human interaction with one often being task or accomplishment-oriented and the other more often being relationship-oriented. As a result one tends to be static and the other dynamic. As a consequence, if an

on *Christian faculty mentoring in the secular university*, Minneapolis University Minnesota, 24 September 2005.

¹⁸⁸ Putnam’s analysis of five independent survey archives, for example, in *Bowling Alone*.

¹⁸⁹ Vander Bröek, *Breaking Barriers*, p. 12.

¹⁹⁰ Clark, ‘Chapter 2 – The Pastoral Goal: Community,’ in *Building Christian Communities*, p. 4.

institution wishes to develop community spirit it must provide the resources and structures (such as those needed for a mentoring programme) to allow for deeper levels of interaction than would normally be the case. In an ideal situation the positives of the mentoring encounter can feed into the building of Christian community in terms of establishing intentional relationships that underpin close community, the shaping of people involved and the equipping of mentees and mentors to serve the community.

Presented in this chapter are the principles and characteristics of authentic Christian community and the relationship that exists between community and Christian mentoring. Evaluation is the test whereby a judgement can be made on the functioning reality of the community context in which a mentoring programme exists, how efficient the programme was, how effective the mentors were within the constraints of their environment, and what progress if any was made by the mentees. Thus, evaluation has the potential to discover the level of integration between the ideal and reality of both community and mentoring.