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DESCRIPTION

Positive mentoring relationships are essential to the formation of strong Christian leaders. This simple truth is often held as self-evident, but why? How can theological and biblical insights inform mentoring relationships? And what do these vital relationships look like across a range of Christian experience?

Opening multiple angles of vision on the practice of mentoring, Dean K. Thompson and D. Cameron Murchison have assembled an eminent group of scholars to reflect on these and other pressing questions. With contributions from twenty-one remarkable writers, this broad-ranging volume explores mentoring in biblical and theological perspective, within the context of diverse national and international communities, and across generations.

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EDITORS' OVERVIEW

MENTORING

Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives

Edited by Dean K Thompson and D. Cameron Murchison

Foreward by Jill Duffield | Afterward by Martin E. Marty

Mentoring and being mentored are two indispensable means by which character is infused into the social order from generation to generation. The book, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, serves as an encouraging panorama, a wide-ranging gallery of fourteen compelling chapters and angles of vision into the gracious, expectant, and somewhat demanding mentor/mentee relationship.

Part 1, Biblical Perspectives

In Biblical Perspectives, **Walter Brueggemann's** initial chapter presents how "remembered experience is mobilized as guidance for new circumstances" by using mentoring case studies from the Old Testament wisdom tradition, early narrative materials, the prophetic tradition, and royal figures. His rich and captivating examples make clear that Old Testament mentoring "allows for a great variety of styles and strategies."

David Bartlett completes this introductory section with New Testament mentoring insights focusing on the Apostle Paul's letters, work, and prayerful dialogue with his followers, and on Jesus and the Gospels and his relationship as Lord and friend to his masterly mentored disciples. "Though Jesus is much more than a mentor," says Bartlett, "he does act like a mentor" and "he calls others to imitate him."

Part 2, Theological Perspectives

Theological Perspectives begins with **Thomas Currie's** winsomely transparent reflections on pastor theologians who are "open to being mentored" by the prophetic and transformational work of Christ, which leads them toward deep listening, a healthy openness to "unlearning," and "discovering questions that question their own firmly held certainties."

Thomas Long examines the "preacher as mentor" and "the pulpit as mentoring site." He believes that "courage modeled in the pulpit undergirds courage in those who hear," and that "all good mentorship" involves "a blending of closeness and distance." As "the pulpit itself is a place that blends closeness and distance," there "the magic of mentoring" often takes place.

Rebekah Miles signifies "potential ethical landmines in mentoring relationships." Mentors are cautioned not to abuse power by "being manipulative, heavy handed, or tyrannical," and by transgressing confidentiality and intimacy boundaries. "We cannot do good mentoring without good ethics," she warns. "Ethics is necessary as we...set up and implement mentoring programs, and engage in mentoring relationships. Mentoring without ethics is unethical."

Cynthia Rigby seeks to expand the perimeters of feminist mentoring, which she regards as "everyone's business." In beholding his encounter with Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Rigby describes Jesus as a "feminist mentor." She hopes "for a day when all women and girls -- all people -- have access to the values and freedoms that make mentoring possible."

Part 3, Diverse National and International Communities of Mentoring

Diverse National and International Communities of Mentoring leads with a passionate essay on “mentoring magnificent men” by Howard University’s **Alton Pollard** who is grounded in the nurturing ethos of his childhood church and community. He champions the mentoring of endangered African American males and prophetically beckons “toward a new Black future” strengthened by “resistance and recovery.”

Preeminent in the field of womanist mentoring, **Katie Geneva Cannon** issues a brilliantly prophetic critique of classism, racism, and sexism. She exhorts all to grow in “embodied mediated knowledge” rather than in abstract, dispassionate, and calculated knowledge. Cannon asserts that the question “What is the work your soul must have?” is crucial for mentoring.

For **Luke Timothy Johnson**, the quest toward sanctity is a key to understanding twenty centuries of mentoring in the Roman Catholic tradition. Mentoring through the ministries and practices of monastic orders and spiritual directors imparted the pursuit of sanctity to novitiates in their religious charge. Yet Johnson believes that, since the Second Vatican Council, the historic emphasis on sanctity in Catholicism has decreased significantly as a major vehicle of formal mentoring.

Cristian De La Rosa extols the essential practices of facilitation and accompaniment while mentoring emerging generations of Latin@ leaders. She examines impressive accomplishments in a faith-based program that is grounded in the Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience – a youth/young adult coalition preparing for higher education while dealing with a “vulnerable existence of marginality.”

As she ponders the mentoring of Asian and Asian American students, **Kwok Pui-lan** completes this diverse section with a helpful analysis of the disjuncting differences between communal and Confucian-influenced education, where classroom participants usually remain silent, and an American context that is characterized by competition, individualism, “speaking up in class,” and openly challenging one’s professors.

Part 4, Generational Mentoring

Rodger Nishioka and Melva Lowry are a springboard for Generational Mentoring, as they reach out pastorally to “youth culture” that feels isolated, even abandoned. The authors aspire to build “intentional, demanding, mutual relationships for the mentoring of youth,” as they are recognized and supported by adults. They warn that affirmation without expectation undermines adolescent faith development.

College professors **Douglas Ottati and Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty** approach mentoring through “the formation of a disposition, style, or stance in life,” and with wanting to be one trusted by others as “a responsible human being.” Mentoring in higher education should be driven “by a wisdom that supports a humane disposition, attitude, and imagination” rather than by “commercially defined success or meritocratic obsession.”

Theodore Wardlaw and Camille Cook Murray conclude this section of co-authored mentoring conversations with an intriguing validation of cross-generational mentoring. Ted is a seminary president steeped in parish experience. Camille, a parish pastor, is 28 years younger. Both offer inspiring testimonies “that mentors need not always be more senior, more experienced, and more titled figures.”

This volume is bracketed with an artistic **Foreward** by *Presbyterian Outlook* editor **Jill Duffield** and a masterful **Afterward** by historian and public theologian **Martin E. Marty**.