

# Mentored Ministry



**Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

**130 Essex Street, Box 241**

**So. Hamilton, MA 01982**

**978/646-4119, Fax 978/646-4197, [khovath@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:khovath@gordonconwell.edu)**

**[www.gordonconwell.edu/mentored-ministry](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/mentored-ministry)**

*James Singleton, Th.D.,*

*Director of Mentored Ministry*

*Katherine Kyte Horvath, D.Min.,*

*Administrative Director*

## **GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS**

*We're pleased to have you serve as an approved mentor in our field education program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary! Please review the following guidelines and adjust them to your particular ministry context as necessary.*

**Approved Mentors:** All mentors working in ministry with Gordon-Conwell students must be approved by the Mentored Ministry Department of the Seminary. Prior to commencing a mentoring relationship with a student the mentor must have completed an *Application to Mentor* and have been approved by the Director of Mentored Ministry.

([www.gordonconwell.edu/mentored-ministry/documents/ApplicationtoMentor.pdf](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/mentored-ministry/documents/ApplicationtoMentor.pdf))

The school requires mentor to have at least five years full-time experience in ministry before seeking approved mentor status. It should be noted that long years of experience and excellent skills in ministry do not necessarily qualify one for supervising ministry students. Therefore, the Seminary requires training in supervision for new mentors. Mentors are expected to attend (once) the seminary's fall or spring New Mentor Orientation program (a 4-hour morning, plus lunch) prior to or simultaneous with working with their student. If a mentor is not within driving distance of the seminary exceptions are granted with approval of the Director of Mentored Ministry. Normally, approval is made complete by participation in the orientation program. If a mentor has been trained in supervision at another seminary, Gordon-Conwell will recognize such training if the other school's program is comparable to ours.

Mentors will be expected to uphold the standards of the Mentored Ministry program in order to continue their status as mentors. This includes meeting the minimal mentoring commitment of meeting with their mentoree an average of 1 hour per week for personal and ministry mentoring during the 12 weeks of the student's Mentored Ministry units. It also presumes that the mentor is in basic agreement with the GCTS Community Life Statement

([www.gordonconwell.edu/visitors/community\\_life\\_statement](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/visitors/community_life_statement)).

**Expectations of the Mentor:** The Seminary looks to mentors to provide high quality supervision of the students who are training for various forms of Christian ministry. The supervisor is a mentor—one who teaches, models, and enables the student to grow as a minister. This involves active participation with the student and first-hand observation of the student at work. Being a mentor is being a teacher.

While the Seminary recognizes the needs of churches and Christian ministries to engage students to help in given projects, emphasis must be placed on the educational development of the student. Students should not necessarily be seen as experts in a given area nor employed

for that purpose. They may or may not have skills in certain areas of ministry. Field placement, therefore, should provide exposure to a broad range of tasks and situations to help students gain competence and awareness of the many facets of ministry, as well as provide experiences which will foster personal, professional and spiritual development.

**Mentoring Sessions:** Each student must spend at least 10 hours in supervision with the mentor for each twelve week unit, and is to take the initiative in establishing the agenda for these meetings according to his/her needs. As a mentor the supervisor should take an active role in planning for these sessions. Be intentional and direct but also gentle and fair. This is a time to talk about the student's development and to evaluate performance as well as to plan for the future. The mentor is encouraged to make regular use of the reflection tools found in the Mentored Ministry section of the Gordon-Conwell web site. Be willing to share yourself and your life experiences in ministry. Make prayer and reflection on spiritual issues a part of this time together as well. Regular meetings at specified times with a planned agenda are expected.

**Written Reports:** There are two assignments which mentors are to assist their mentorees with: The beginning-of-the-semester ***Learning Covenant***, and the end-of-the-semester ***Progress Report*** (or ***Final Evaluation*** if this is the mentoree's last unit with them). The mentor is expected to collaborate with the student in developing the Learning Covenant for each term or unit, and to sign the cover sheet indicating their approval. At the end of the term the mentor is asked to fill out the "Questions for Mentor Response" as part of the student's Progress Report or Final Evaluation. The mentor's signature on the cover sheet of each of these reports indicates that they have discussed the contents with their mentoree. Any and all forms that mentors will need may also be downloaded and printed from the GCTS web site.

**Grading:** Mentors are asked on the evaluation forms to give a suggested grade for their student for that term. At Gordon-Conwell the grades of A or B are acceptable. It is rare when a C is given, and that is only when the mentor (or professor) has a serious concern regarding the performance or character of a given student. The grade of "A" is most common grade – and often the most appropriate one - given to a Mentored Ministry student who has been faithful and diligent. If a mentor does have serious concerns about a student, they are encouraged to first speak with the student and/or to call the Mentored Ministry office for assistance in determining how to best deal with the situation (978-646-4119).

**Number of Students:** Mentors are not allowed to supervise more than two students at a time unless special circumstances such as denominational concerns or unusual time availability on the part of the mentor would warrant it.

**Titles:** Various titles are given to students in their field settings. A title which accurately reflects the internship nature and training emphasis of the Seminary's program is appropriate. Common titles for students are "pastoral intern", "student minister", or "student chaplain."

**Financial Guidelines:** The Mentored Ministry Department understands that not all churches or ministries are in the position to pay students for their work with them, and thus does not require financial remuneration to be given. However, since students pay tuition and/or a lab fee for the Mentored Ministry course, projects which offer remuneration provide a valuable help to students in covering these expenses. Individual needs on the part of both the student and the project must be kept in mind in negotiating possible financial arrangements. If the church or ministry is

able to pay a student in any fashion, the specific remuneration plan should be determined at the beginning of the placement and should be noted in the Learning Covenant.

For those who are in the position to offer remuneration the following guidelines are recommended:

- Consider a range of \$10-12 an hour, including preparation time.
- Pay necessary expenses such as long-distance telephone calls, meals in connection with the ministry, and .35 a mile for necessary travel.

# MENTOR DESCRIPTION

## Qualifications for Mentors

1. The mentor has demonstrated Christian maturity and competence in ministry, possessing the necessary knowledge and practical abilities to do contemporary Christian ministry.
2. The mentor is actively engaged in full-time parish ministry or a recognized para-church organization or ministry involved in Christian service.
3. It is preferable that a mentor have theological training (usually a seminary degree) and at least five years of full-time Christian ministry experience.
4. A mentor possesses supervisory skills.
5. Mentors should be in essential agreement with the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Statement of Mission: *“To advance Christ’s Kingdom in every sphere of life by equipping church leaders to think theologically, engage globally and live biblically.”*

## Mentor Responsibilities

1. Participate in an Orientation for new mentors. If a mentor is unable to attend the training session, he/she will speak with the Mentored Ministry Department and/or commit to attend the next scheduled Orientation if they are within driving distance.
2. Meet once a week with student for review of the student's progress both in the classroom and in ministry practice. As special emphasis on the student’s spiritual and personal development is also expected and desired.
3. Approve and/or assist in the composing of the student’s *Learning Covenant* or *Learning Covenant Update*, due at the beginning of each semester.\* (Please remember to sign the cover sheet.)
4. Due at the end of each term\* is the Mentored Ministry *Progress Report* (or *Final Evaluation*) which both mentor and student complete. It is expected that you will each other’s assessment before the student turns the evaluation in. You will also need to sign the appropriate cover sheet indicating that you have discussed the contents together.

It is recommended that the mentor and student schedule preparation of assignments into their meeting plans for the semester.

**\* Special Note: It is the student’s responsibility alone to turn all paperwork in to our office. Please do not agree to turn in the student’s work for them or to send your part in separately.**

## HELPS FOR MENTORS

As mentors you will want to go beyond the formal structures which have been designed for the program, since you have an intense interest in preparing persons for ministry. Review areas in your own life where you have had difficulty or where the advice of a mentor would have been helpful to you. You may then want to consider the following ways to help your mentoree in similar areas:

1. Walk them through your library and tell them how you use these vital resources in ministry. How do you choose books for your library? Budgeted amount each year? Do you have them in a computer data base for checkout purposes? Do you encourage your laity to use these resources?
2. Discuss one of your recent counseling cases (change it enough to make the persons anonymous and to protect confidentiality). Evaluate your own performance. Be vulnerable. Discuss the legal issues related to counseling. Tell them how you work with crises like suicide and abuse, among other issues.
3. Give the student an inside view of administration and church governance, e.g., discuss the power of agenda setting, the structure of the meeting room and other contributions and distractions of meetings. Let them accompany you to a meeting. Tell them what to expect and then discuss the dynamics after the meeting is completed.
4. Take the student inside your mind and heart as you prepare a worship service. Why do you follow a particular order or why do you choose particular hymns? What is the place of liturgy? What biblical, theological, and practical motifs support your theories of worship? What are your expectations of worship? Discuss Isaiah chapter six as one model of worship. Discuss the way you create a worship service to provide an alternation between what God does and what the "actors" do. Invite the student to evaluate Kierkegaard's analysis of prompters, actors and audience.
5. Rehearse your sermon preparation with the student. Let the student see how you choose a text, the exegetical and analytical aspects of your preparation and the hermeneutical process you use to interpret the text, the way you gather illustrations, and how you prepare to deliver the sermon. Discuss what it means to preach a biblical sermon.
6. When the opportunities arise, give them instructions in preparing for a funeral, a wedding, a baptism, receiving of members, among other special services.
7. Discuss your own spiritual and devotional life with the student. Be honest with them. Tell of the dark nights of the soul as well as affirming the mountain-top experiences. How often do you have devotions? What is the best time of day for you? What resources do you utilize?
8. Work with the student on priority setting. Discuss family issues, taking time for a spouse and children and vacations and time off for recuperation. Discuss "ministerial guilt" with them when one must choose between family and church.

9. Consider periodic discussions on personal finances, church finances, tithing, financial campaigns, and stewardship among other related topics. Tell them how you pay your own way and do not expect handouts from others.
10. Give them opportunity for experience: preaching, teaching a Sunday School class, leading a small group, first level counseling, working with children and youth and singles and the aged, among other needed experiences. Take them to the hospital when you call on your people. Help them to understand hospital procedures, the best times for visiting, relationship with medical personnel and other related topics.
11. Tell them of a critical clergy flaw -- leading worship but not worshipping. Help them to know how to experience worship when they lead worship. Tell them how you manage to lead worship yet stand on tip-toe with joy as you worship with the people. Tell them how you keep your pastoral prayers fresh and meaningful. Again, at this point, remind them of Kierkegaard's concept that the typical church has God as the prompter, the minister as the actor and the congregation as the audience, when the proper roles are: the minister is the prompter, the members are the actors and God is the audience.
12. It is assumed that one of your objectives in mentoring is to discuss the call to ministry. This is a crucial dynamic of your work with the students. You may want to discuss Tertullian's concept that "baptism is ordination into the ministry" (paraphrased) and then to distinguish between the general call of all Christians and the specific, vocational call to full-time ministry. You might want to discuss H. Richard Niebuhr's understanding of the call, in his book The Purpose of the Church and the Ministry.
13. Discuss the ethical and moral implications of ministry. Make them aware of temptations that arise in counseling and visitation.
14. Work with the students on an integrative model of spiritual formation. Remind them (and yourself) that the protestant model is often a fragmented model -- the disassociation of intellectual spiritual formation and personal, interpersonal and social formation from spiritual formation. Help them to integrate these.
15. Provide resources for their devotional and prayer life. Share Doberstein's prayer manual with them. Introduce them to Michael Quoist and to the church fathers as well as to the more contemporary expressions of devotional life.

You could add other perspectives. We hope you will and that you will share them with the Director of Mentored Ministry for future editions of our manual. Mentoring will transform the student and will revive your soul and will, we believe, prepare a more effective, servant minister. You have an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the ministry. Thank you in advance for the part you will play in the process. You are the most critical link in our program. We cannot do it without you.

# POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR MENTORING SESSIONS

The following subjects are suggestions for discussion in regular mentoring sessions. Mentors and students may add to this list and adapt the issues to individual needs, however, it is good if each ministry area is addressed in some way as a part of the mentoring process.

## **Managing Ministry**

local church organization/structures  
leadership style  
recruitment/training of volunteers  
time management  
goal setting  
mission of the local church  
church office staff  
ministry staff  
delegation of ministry tasks  
conflict utilization  
initiating change in the local church

## **Serving through Pastoral Care**

visiting the homes of church members  
hospital visitation  
nursing homes  
pastoral counseling  
community resources for referral  
funeral and memorial services  
ministry to elderly  
lay training in caregiving

## **Planning Programs**

new member class  
leadership training  
discipleship  
evangelism training, outreach and events  
world missions education and short-term missions  
youth ministry  
ministry to young children  
adult education  
choir and music ministry

## **Understanding Process and Procedures**

sermon preparation and delivery  
teaching all ages  
weddings  
baptisms, including preparation  
the Lord's Supper  
leading Sunday worship  
mid-week services  
denominational polity  
moderating meetings  
local church finances  
stewardship  
building program  
minister's job description  
annual evaluation of the pastor

## **Reflecting on Personal Issues**

devotional life  
friendship  
family life  
finances  
leisure time; vacation  
continuing education  
minister's library  
personal ethics

## **Reaching out in Community Ministry**

determine community needs  
community service projects  
motivating others for outreach  
networking  
crossing racial/cultural barriers  
political issues  
social ethics