Mentoring for Flourishing in Ministry

Eileen R. Campbell-Reed

Twenty months into this extended pandemic era, it is hard to think about what *flourishing* looks like. Most people I work with who are mentors or ministers are feeling lucky just to have survived. Flourishing is not really a word I hear anyone using.

Pre-pandemic, *flourishing* described a worthy ministry goal. And while a flourish sounds like something extra, icing on the cake, it is something more basic. I think flourishing is still worth understanding and prioritizing in mentoring relationships. The definition of flourishing in this essay comes from the work of my colleagues in pastoral theology, who ground it in the love and grace of God and in psychological healing and wholeness.

After sharing a brief story from my early forays into mentoring, I turn to descriptions of flourishing offered by Karen Scheib and Stephanie Crumpton. These understandings, along with findings from the Learning Pastoral Imagination Project, shape a practical theology of mentoring for flourishing. Finally, I recount vital lessons from the last eight years of directing a seminary mentoring program. These nine key practices hold potential to foster flourishing for mentoring and ministry.

Eileen R. Campbell-Reed is Coordinator of Coaching, Mentoring, and Internships at Central Seminary (Tennessee campus). She is also Visiting Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Care at Union Theological Seminary, New York. In addition, she is Co-Director of the Learning Pastoral Imagination Project. Email: eileen.pastoralimagination@gmail.com.

My Stories of Mentoring

I would like to tell you clear and powerful stories about how I received mentoring in ways that helped me flourish. However, that was not exactly my experience as a young, Baptist minister. I came to my pastoral role in a time of religious crisis. Women were still largely viewed as an issue rather than as colleagues in ministry.[1] Women in my Baptist ministry circles tried to support one another, but few of us experienced any mentoring at all. Thus, our concepts of how to mentor lacked clarity. Nevertheless, we groped and grappled our way into friendships that are sustaining even to the present moment, and those relationships functioned as informal peer mentoring and helped us to lean into something like flourishing.

As my ministry experience unfolded, I also learned to seek out more experienced ministers, such as my colleagues in the first congregation I served, to help me with specific skills such as preaching, baptism, and financial stewardship. And I certainly observed my senior colleagues' interactions with people and learned through an "apprenticeship to the situation" how to be more effective in my work.[2]

My first responsibilities to supervise seminarians involved three students, two of whom were significantly older than me. Their seminaries offered no training and minimal guidance for my mentoring/supervision. At the time, I was serving as minister of education and youth in a predominantly white congregation in North Georgia.[3] So, I leaned into what I knew best about being a minister: *show up*, *listen*, *give feedback*, and *create enough structure to accomplish the work and enough space to improvise.* I worked with each field education student to meet the stated requirements of their seminary program(s). Things might have gone worse, yet expectations were minimal, and I hope harms were also minimal. For sure, I made missteps.

The most significant mentoring mistakes I made were caught up in the church's larger story of decline and conflict. When our senior pastor retired, amid a moderate decline in congregational attendance and finances, conflicts arose. Most of the conflict gathered around me. As both the youth minister and the only ordained woman on staff, I was an easy target for congregational anxiety. At the same time, I was supervising an African American seminary student in her second career as she completed her field education. In my efforts (1) to keep her out of the fray and (2) to feel less exposed myself, I steered her away from attending a meeting where youth parents

planned to air their disgruntlements with me. Later, she expressed concerns to others in the church that she had been barred from meeting(s). It was a complex situation, and my motives were a mixture of shielding her and self-preservation. The situation clouded my judgment. What I clearly failed to understand was that she, as a Black woman in a predominantly white congregation, very likely felt excluded and dismissed by my actions.

After departing the church, I spent time sorting through all the thorny conflicts of my final six months. Upon reflection, one of the many things I began to grasp was that mentoring students from social locations different from my own requires adjustments to my attention, actions, and sensitivity. I also needed a better understanding of my impact on people whom I am teaching, supervising, or mentoring, especially when I am in crisis or am coping with an anxious situation. My efforts to truly embrace these realities and change my behavior continue to the present.

Learning at the Heart of Mentoring

During my doctoral work, I added the concept of sponsorship to my growing understanding of mentoring.[4] Sponsorship includes committed advocacy and championing of newcomers to a profession or situation, crucial in many systems to achieve a sense of belonging and flourishing. Ministry sponsorship can play a key role in the transition from seminary student to employed minister. Sponsors know the wider denominational and/or ministry options, and they help beginners with networking, introductions, recommendations, and/or references. In my research on clergywomen, I noted that women often lacked both mentors and sponsors.[5] None of the related and perhaps overlapping terms *mentoring*, *sponsorship*, *apprenticeship*, and *networking*, nor the attendant rituals, skills, or activities, necessarily foster flourishing in ministry. They might do so, or they might be far more transactional or obligatory in ways that do more harm than good.[6]

At the heart of effective relational work that supports the practice of ministry is a commitment to learning. My first full-time academic job led me into the Learning Pastoral Imagination Project (LPI Project), a national, ecumenical, and longitudinal study of ministry. Begun in 2009, the LPI Project confirmed, among other things, the powerful contribution of mentors to the learning process for a robust practice of ministry. Missteps and failures are a part of that learning process at every stage. When mentors, coaches,

sponsors, and peers make space for conversation about missteps, they are helping each other to cultivate a pastoral imagination, and the possibility of flourishing is greater. As the long pandemic season since March 2020 demonstrates, crises and grief can arrive unannounced and deeply change the ministry landscape and ministers themselves. Without a commitment to learning in each new situation, even through profound difficulties, the likelihood of flourishing is surely diminished.

<div align="center">DEFINITIONS OF FLOURISHING</div>

What does human flourishing in ministry entail? In his 2019 book *Flourishing in Ministry*, Matt Bloom draws on the field of positive psychology to offer "a framework for understanding flourishing" as "high levels of daily wellbeing, resilience, authenticity, and thriving."[7] These are not topics that arise in our interviews with pastors, nor are they defined objects of our study.[8] It is perhaps more accurate to say that we see these descriptors as by-products of a ministry that is well learned and wisely practiced.

The LPI Project focuses on *learning in practice,* and we gather instances of how the practice of ministry is cultivated across time and in various circumstances. Since 2009, we have continued to observe that the circumstances and conditions of ministry matter a great deal. When certain conditions are present, then ministers find support for learning. Key conditions include mentoring, freedom to fail and to learn from one's failure, feedback loops, supportive relationships, shared attention to the holy, and space for emotional and embodied aspects of practice.[9] In this learning, ministers experience something akin to flourishing, even when the ministry situation is daunting. Social location and power dynamics are also profoundly important factors in determining how one learns to be, know, and do the practice of ministry.[10]

To help us think about flourishing for ministry and mentoring, I turned to my colleagues in pastoral theology.[11] In *Attend to Stories: How to Flourish in Ministry*, retired pastoral theologian Karen D. Scheib argues for the centrality and use of stories to support flourishing in ministry.[12] She also describes how Christian theology traditionally takes two approaches to flourishing. The first is a vision of flourishing that happens in life *after* death, in heaven or a future eschaton, often using the language of salvation to convey its future orientation. The second is a conception of flourishing in

the here and now, with possible future culmination. Scheib wants to build on this here-and-now sense of human flourishing.[13]

She points out that Greek philosophy also embraced visions of flourishing, seeing "humans as having a capacity for self-awareness, insight, and growth through their own resources."[14] This value system also influenced Christian thinking about flourishing within what she calls the "self-realization model."[15] Scheib wants, however, to recapture a vision of flourishing grounded and animated by divine love. She sees it as *dwelling and growing in love of God, self, and other* (author's emphasis)." Scheib continues, "Flourishing is a process, not a fixed state. Through divine grace God makes possible moral, spiritual, and psychological healing for individuals, families, and communities and enhances the well-being of the whole society."[16]

This flourishing, says Scheib, includes a sense of joy and belovedness, freedom and grace, justice and peace. She draws on theological and practical guidance from John Wesley's three rules—do no harm, do good, and attend to the ordinances. These rules guided small discipleship groups (classes and bands) in early Methodism, and they point contemporary ministry peer groups toward shared experiences of grace.[17] Wesley advocated for each new generation to cultivate practices that fit their time and context. Thus, Scheib says, "You can discover or develop the spiritual practices that work best to foster growth in love and flourishing."[18]

While Scheib's vision of flourishing is expansive and builds on Wesley's ideals, womanist pastoral theologian Stephanie Crumpton dives deep into question about flourishing or thriving for people who are experiencing tremendous suffering, injustice, personal or cultural trauma, and unfair social and ecclesial marginalization. In her book *A Womanist Pastoral Theology against Intimate and Cultural Violence*, Crumpton presents the stories of six Black women who experienced sexualized violence, and she traces how each woman experienced healing, sometimes within and sometimes without their churches.[19] Crumpton draws on the "self psychology" of Heinz Kohut to explore possible pathways to turn suffering, loss, trauma, and marginalization toward healing and empowerment.[20] Giving attention to the disproportionate numbers of Black, Brown, and Indigenous women who live with these experiences, Crumpton says, "Like all people, in order to thrive, Black women need to experience great women, men, and ideals in community and society as mirroring cultural selfobjects with whom they connect and experience a sense of uplift that affirms them and sup-

ports psychological health."[21] In other words they need people, institutions, arts, and communities that embody flourishing, and from which love and growth can be borrowed and internalized.

Women who are routinely marginalized need mentors who understand their experiences and who support their hope for healing. They also need mentors who will not respond with overly simplistic answers or glib responses to their pain and isolation. People who suffer traumatization personally or as part of a social group deserve careful consideration and support from peers and mentors who can offer trauma-sensitive care and help survivors sort through unhealthy and wounding theologies.[22] Black, Brown, and Indigenous women who are called to ministry are disproportionately survivors of both cultural and personal oppression and abuse.[23] They need ministry peers and mentors who (1) grasp the complexity of their lives, (2) support their healing and learning, and (3) help them cultivate their leadership style and voice.

Findings from the LPI Project and insights from Scheib and Crumpton give us rich resources for assembling a practical theology of mentoring for flourishing. Mentoring is a participation in the love and life of God and God's creation. When we prioritize learning and healing as two central and sacred human activities, we approach one another in embodied, relational, integrative, and holy ways. With adequate structures to guard our vulnerabilities and channel our learning, we reduce harm, and offer one another grace. When conditions allow, mentors and mentees can take part in one another's healing and learning toward ministries that embody pastoral imagination and flourishing. For the human beings among us who have suffered tremendous marginalization, trauma, complex grief, and other harms, special care is needed to support them fully with understanding, support, and attention to uses and abuses of power. Black, Brown, and Indigenous women who know firsthand about suffering can heal and flourish when wise ministers come alongside them with recognition, support, and encouragement.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE MDIV PROGRAM

Molly T. Marshall, president of Central Seminary from 2004 to 2020, understood the reality of the unevenness of conditions that allowed for flourishing in ministry. She herself was formed in a Southern Baptist context

where female pastors and ordained ministers were rare. Black and Brown women called to ministry and serving Southern Baptist churches were exceedingly rare. Even in the new millennium, three decades after her own ordination, Marshall saw that the landscape of ministry in the United States remained an "uphill calling" for most women pursuing a vocation of ministry.[24] She launched the Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI), an MDiv program at Central Seminary, in 2014, designed to support women and equip them for breaking through the glass ceilings of ministry in the U.S. context. In 2014 Marshall hired me part-time to take a lead with mentoring, coaching, and internships for students in the WLI. My congregational ministry experience and five years of LPI Project research fueled my curiosity about how we might cultivate pastoral imagination and support women in seminary with LPI Project research findings.[25]

The WLI is a seventy-five-hour MDiv program that prioritizes equipping women for ministry. Values added to the standard curriculum include tuition scholarships, group coaching, one-on-one mentoring, and a cross-cultural praxis experience. Five women graduated with the first cohort (2014–18), and ten women graduated from the second cohort (2016–20). The third cohort (2018–22) spent over half their coursework and mentoring constrained by a global pandemic, meeting by Zoom and phone. Between 2014 and 2022, a total of thirty-six women started the WLI, and twenty-one have already or will graduate by May 2022.[26]

The basic components of the WLI mentoring program include the following: adequate funding for mentors rather than asking for volunteers, group coaching throughout the MDiv experience, one-on-one mentoring in a curated relationship, consistent structures of accountability with monthly meetings and five-minute reports for students and mentors, mentoring through field education experiences,[27] orientation, and relational and administrative oversight of the program. From 2014 until early 2020, I hosted a monthly luncheon called "Scholastica" for informal peer mentoring open to all WLI students, mentors, and clergywomen in Middle Tennessee. Scholastica fostered a culture of mentoring and created a network of support for students and local clergy.[28]

Key Practices of Mentoring for Flourishing

Based on my experience directing Central Seminary's WLI mentoring program and the findings of the LPI Project research, I commend the following nine practices as critical for fostering learning, supporting students, and creating conditions for flourishing.

1. Matching

The match matters. People in mentoring relationships need to be able to work together. They do not need to be best friends, and they do not need to meet all the needs of the other. There is not any magic in making a match. Nevertheless, I want to describe the criteria I used, which developed into an intuitive approach to decision making. Mentoring programs benefit from a matching process that embodies the values of the program.

First, I look for enough resonance between student and mentor experiences to create some recognition. For example, Elaine and Alice were both married to ministers, and they learned over time that each woman wrestles with avoiding spousal competition, feelings of guilt over upstaging, and working to prioritize affirmation and gratitude in their marriages.[29]

Second, following Crumpton, I seek to avoid harm by matching a student with a mentor to whom they do not spend time and energy explaining their lives or vocations. My first big misstep with this came when I matched a Black student with a white mentor. They shared many values, including a commitment to social justice and nonprofit leadership. Yet, expectations on both sides missed each other like ships in the night. More significantly, systems of racism and sexism failed all of us and left the student feeling unsupported. That match required a rare reassignment. After that, I redoubled my commitment to approximating social location in matches. Black, Brown, and Indigenous students need mentors who understand their lives experientially and not just intellectually. These students need support living under the "concrete ceiling" where they cannot even see what is out of reach.[30]

Additional factors that I consider when matching include the following: students' growing edges, stated in learning goals or observed in classroom assignments and life; vocational calling; and character and ministry style. Using a mentoring application, I ask potential mentors and students to share stories, expectations, and past experiences of mentoring.[31] This allows me to see possible pitfalls and clarify expectations up front.

Ultimately, the matching comes down to wisdom, as we have observed in the LPI Project; this wisdom is relational and is learned over time through many cases. My experience of seeing mentoring and ministry relationships work and not work helps me anticipate, at a level beyond rules, the matches that are likely to bear fruit and hold potential for flourishing. As mentoring coordinator, I work relationally, build trust, gather needed data, learn from mistakes, attempt not to assume too much, and draw from wells of experience to achieve matching effectiveness.

2. Starting and Ending Well

When I began operationalizing the mentoring program at Central Seminary, I was simultaneously teaching a class in interpersonal skills to WLI students and preparing them for one-on-one mentoring. I began recruiting mentors from among clergywomen in Nashville, Tennessee, the WLI's home base. If a student lived in another geographic area, I asked her to nominate three possible mentors, and I also accessed my own network to identify possible mentors. Using the criteria detailed above, I made matches and introductions by email, phone, Zoom, and in person. I offered group training sessions to all new mentors, orienting others individually.

We made several missteps in the first cohort's process that we corrected in the second cohort. First, we made the matches too soon. The group of students did not have time to gel adequately as a cohort nor commit to each other as supportive peers. Thus, with the second and third cohorts, I spent a full year mentoring and coaching students to work together and experience peer mentoring relationships. This also allowed me to observe their vocational commitments and learning edges. During that group coaching year, I recruited mentors in a more gradual process. Students continued to benefit from both individual mentoring and group coaching with me during their full MDiv experience.

Another significant adjustment came with training. Although we continued offering Scholastica lunches and special learning events for all students and mentors, orientation shifted to a meeting with each new mentor and student. I provided written overviews of the WLI program, coursework, and student internships. Then I met with each mentoring pair to give conversational guidance about how the mentoring relationship could unfold. I emphasized the three expectations of mentors (see number 3 below) and the responsibilities of students, answered questions, gave examples,

and walked them through the five-minute reports (see number 7 below). Ending the formal relationships for each student and mentor after three years included a time of reflection, questions, celebration, blessing, and, if possible, lunch.

3. Setting and Resetting Expectations

With the first cohort of mentors and students, I learned that clarifying roles and setting expectations was ongoing work. I also learned to boil it down to essentials. Now, I ask mentors to fill three role expectations: administrative, educational, and pastoral care. This is familiar work to ministers, but now they direct it to the mentoring process. I also invite mentors to "bring their whole selves into the process." This means that when teaching moments arise, I do not want them to hold back in a "neutral," observing, or therapist mode but to share their stories when appropriate and to build a relationship. Students are in the dual roles of minister and student learning in practice. It is their responsibility to initiate meetings and to set the agenda for conversations. This encourages them to advocate for themselves and to be responsible to ask for support. Sometimes, the mentor also fills dual roles with the student, for example, as field education or CPE supervisor, fellow church member, or professor in a WLI course. Such multiple roles are navigated more easily when mentors and students talk through expectations and clarify the roles in an ongoing way.

4. Maintaining Structure

In directing the WLI mentoring program, I have learned that my role as point person with oversight is crucial for sustaining the structure and attending to administrative issues, which are connective tissue for any relationally based support program. With each cohort's initial setup, mentors and students complete application forms and mentors submit résumés and received a contract from the school. The initial structural components, such as meeting monthly, completing five-minute reports, clarifying start and end dates, and paying mentors need consistency to build a dependable system. On occasion, I join pairs for monthly meetings to support students preparing for field education and capstone projects. The shift from emailing individual forms to creating a Google form that feeds into a spreadsheet streamlined my administrative tasks enormously. These administrative tasks allow me to keep a pulse point on how the relational work is going.

5. Sharing Stories and Skills

When I orient mentors and students, I share an article by Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap, highlighting how the skills of a professional practice are passed on to newcomers through stories and case studies.[32] Even without formal case studies, everyday stories carry tremendous teaching power, more than maxims, rules, or how-to guides. As Scheib says, attending to stories is important for flourishing. Making this point, WLI student Lucy said, "One thing I loved about our relationship early on was that Cynthia shared with me what was going on in her life. And what she was reading and watching [TV and movies]. It made it feel like we were on a two-way street. We shared conversation and relationship instead of her giving me a lot of advice." She said to Cynthia in our closing meeting, "As you told your stories about ministry, I would put myself in your shoes. And I thought about how I would be responding in the same instance. You had wise impulses, and I learned from your experiences."

6. Doing Relational Work

Ministry is relational work, and overseeing a mentoring program demands relational insight and willingness to engage openly with all parties. This work requires a kind of supervision that needs a light touch and yet an openness and flow of communication to allow noticing of particular problems. Almost every pair I worked with required an intervention at some point, even if brief. Sometimes interventions were educational because grades and degrees and classroom requirements were part of the mix. However, the need for clarification, resetting of expectations, and reconnecting mentoring pairs that had lost touch all grew out of relational dynamics.

In our closing interviews, students offer practical advice to future students, such as to be real, say what you need, ask for help and guidance, accept the love that is offered, and show your fragile side. Mentors give similar companionable advice to future mentors, such as to listen, listen, listen; engage in real conversations but as people who are at different developmental stages; be aware that you and your mentee have different needs; do not expect students to present themselves in a stiff, professional way; keep a notebook; and eat together.

Rochelle said that before seminary she did not know a single woman minister or pastor. After four years of classes, cohort coaching, and individual mentoring, she says, "Now, five women are on my list, and I know I

can call [them] when I'm in trouble or need support." Sharla says she feels like she's a "hot mess" most of the time, but her relationship with her mentor allowed her to normalize her feelings and keep doing the work. Many mentoring relationships turned into deep and abiding friendships and became what Lucy called a "two-way street" and one mentor called "a circle of sisterhood."[33]

7. Creating Feedback Loops

Learning does not happen in a vacuum. We need feedback from outside ourselves to see how we are doing, where our growing edges are, and how to take risks and accept responsibility for our leadership and growth.[34] Many mentors and students gave me insights into how feedback is a consistent, ongoing part of listening and conversation. Martha says she begins by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and then listening carefully, two things that "go hand-in-hand." After her mentee Abigail responded fully, Martha would reply, "What I just heard was . . ." Over time, Martha says, Abigail became more vulnerable in her responses, and they both learned from the process.

Four feedback loops are structured into the WLI mentoring program. The first feedback loop is in the mentoring application forms prior to matching. I can close this feedback loop, for instance, when a student reports a negative experience with a past mentor. In the orientation session, we discuss the problems, and I help student and mentor proactively set expectations for a more positive experience in the new relationship. The second loop is the "five-minute form," which asks questions about key issues, celebrations, concerns, and resources needed. Field education provides a third opportunity to share feedback about thinking theologically, ministry skills, and learning in practice. The final feedback loop comes with the closing debriefing conversation.

8. Living in Creative Tensions

Mentoring pairs experience a variety of tensions. Some are creative, and others are more troubled and need intervention. For example, a student named Julie felt a constant tension about her vocation and questioned her calling to professional ministry. Her mentor Debbie kept making space to explore the tensions without pushing for an easy resolution. That approach helped Julie complete her degree. Some students became overwhelmed

with school or life, and they stopped taking the initiative to set up month-ly meetings. Sometimes, mentors stopped reaching out or inquiring about what was happening. Those relationships became distant and tension-filled over the months. These instances required my intervention and help with reconnection. In several cases, a meeting reestablished connections, reset expectations, and made space for each person to be heard, resolving the tension. In two instances the separation festered for too long, and the resentments proved hard to resolve. In those instances, we gave thanks for the first relationship, held a meeting for closure, and the students started fresh with a new mentor, recommitting to accountability.

Melba's tension was with her tradition. As a Black woman, Melba's call to ministry meant "navigating my Baptist tradition and all these men." Pastor Nora, who serves an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) congregation, gave Melba "a shoulder to cry on" and also pushed her back into the ministry world, saying, "You can do it!" Melba says emphatically, "Pastor Nora is my midwife for my ministry."

9. Noticing the Holy

On the monthly five-minute form, mentors and students are invited to include celebrations and gratitude, often revealing the sacred character of their time together. They also report regularly praying together and for each other. Going beyond the reporting structures, however, something powerful emerges when mentors and students attend to the holy.

In my debriefing conversation with mentor and chaplain Emily and WLI graduate Joan, white women in their early sixties, they shared deep appreciation and important metaphors for mentoring. Joan said to Emily, "You fed my soul at a time when I needed my soul fed." Yet Emily wondered if she had offered enough structure or asked often enough about the holy in Joan's work. When I asked Joan about metaphors for the mentoring relationship, she said "deep-sea diving" because she is searching for the pearl of great price to share with patients she meets as a chaplain. I asked, "What are you diving in or through?" She thought briefly and then said, "All the bits of my life." Joan paused another long moment. Then she said, "Emily did not need to ask me, *Where is God or the holy in my life?* It is like a fish asking, *Where is the sea?* We are swimming in the holy." I concluded our conversation by noticing the mutual friendship and support that had emerged between them and saying, "It is wonderful to see this relationship flourish."

Indeed, following these nine practices helped create a framework that supported mentors and students. Each graduate and mentor pair became strong, loving, compassionate, and mutual supporters for each other. The structure of the WLI mentoring program was just enough to allow these women in ministry to *dwell and grow in love of God, self, and other,* as Scheib commends in her definition of flourishing. They experienced their relationships as a "process, not a fixed state."[35] Indeed, God's grace surrounded them like the ocean. Mentors helped students experience uplift, as Crumpton suggests, and then students borrowed, internalized, and offered back healing and growth, putting them on stronger footing for the work of ministry. Each mentor and student embodied a unique and particular relationship, and all were marked by grace. Even through a season of global pandemic, God's grace and a sense of flourishing in these relationships and vocations is a beautiful and powerful thing to witness.

NOTES

1   Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, *Anatomy of a Schism: How Clergywomen's Narratives Reinter-pret the Fracturing of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016), 3–5.

2   "Learning pastoral imagination requires both apprenticeship to a situation and mentors who offer relational wisdom through shared reflection and making sense of a situation." This is one of six major findings of the LPI Project discussed in Christian A. B. Scharen and Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, *The Learning Pastoral Imagination Project: A Five-Year Report on How New Ministers Learn in Practice*, Auburn Studies no. 21 (New York: Auburn Theological Seminary, 2016). See also Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, *Pastoral Imagination: Bringing the Practice of Ministry to Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2021), 135–39.

3   My social location shapes me as a white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-to-upper class woman raised in the U.S. South, educated with four degrees at private liberal arts schools, and ordained in a progressive Baptist tradition.

4   I learned about "sponsorship" in the Vanderbilt Teaching for Ministry Study Collegium with guests Barbara Wheeler and Chuck Foster (Field Notes, January 22–23, 2004). "At the point of hiring faculty, 'sponsored' faculty were those identified as worthy of support and encouragement; they had protection. This helped them to relax and teach better. It lowered their anxiety." Ministry situations include a similar dynamic.

5   Campbell-Reed, *Anatomy of a Schism*, 43–44. When mentoring did figure into stories of clergywomen like Anna, it was often a challenging relationship on some level.

6   Some more clannish or tribal systems necessitate favoritism or nepotism for acceptance or advancement in their systems. And quid pro quo relationships can lack any support for flourishing.

7   Matt Bloom, *Flourishing in Ministry* (Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), Kindle, 80.

8   A quick survey of round one of the interviews with fifty pastors and ministers in the LPI Project at the point of graduating from seminary in 2009–2011 only returns five instances of these terms being used by interviewees. The exception is *authentic/authenticity*, which is mentioned thirty-three times in 872 pages (541,000+ words) of transcription and refers to a wide range of topics, often related in some way to ministry.

9   See Scharen and Campbell-Reed, *The Learning Pastoral Imagination Project*, 14, for a summary of findings about learning ministry in practice.

10 Scharen and Campbell-Reed, *The Learning Pastoral Imagination Project*, 37–41.

11 Books by two other pastoral theologians merit mention. Jaco Hamman, in *Becoming a Pastor: Forming Self and Soul for Ministry* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2014), writes about *authenticity* and *thriving* in conversation with D. W. Winnicott, and Paul Tillich. Like Bloom, Mary Clark Moschella, in *Caring for Joy: Narrative, Theology, and Practice* (Boston: Brill, 2016), also draws insights from positive psychology to explore the importance of joy in work, faith, and ministry.

12 Karen D. Scheib, *Attend to Stories: How to Flourish in Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundery Books, 2018).

13   Scheib, *Attend to Stories*, 67–70.

14   Scheib, *Attend to Stories,* 70–71.

15   Scheib, *Attend to Stories,* 70.

16   Scheib, *Attend to Stories,* 72.

17   Scheib, *Attend to Stories,* 102–17.

18   Scheib, *Attend to Stories,* 117.

19   Stephanie M. Crumpton, *A Womanist Pastoral Theology against Intimate and Cultural Violence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), Kindle.

20   Crumpton *A Womanist Pastoral Theology*, 9–14.

21   Crumpton *A Womanist Pastoral Theology*, 14. See also, Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (Jul., 1991), pp. 1241-1299.

22   Crumpton *A Womanist Pastoral Theology*, 112. See also Sung Hee Chang, "Ministerial Formation through the Lens of Suffering: A Theological Reflection on Trauma-Sensitive Pedagogy," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 41 (2021): 66–79.

23   Crumpton *A Womanist Pastoral Theology*, 1–4. Crumpton argues that churches are not exempt from but rather are complicit in violence against women and girls. Culture and churches "normalized violence against women in general (and women of color in particular)." Additionally, she says, churches inflict their "own kind of violence." Thus, "The processes and practices involved in their healing were not just about managing the posttraumatic symptoms of sexual and physical assault. They were also about the challenge of approaching this recovery within a cultural context that violated them through stereotypes and social processes that rendered them simultaneously invincible on one hand and inherently deserving of punishment on the other" (4).

24   See Barbara Brown Zikmund, Adair T. Lummis, and Patricia Mei Yin Chang, *Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998). For more about Marshall's support for women in ministry, see Campbell-Reed, "Molly Truman Marshall: Living Icon for Beholding the Spirit's Renewal of the Church," in *Festschrift Honoring Molly T. Marshall*, ed. Mark Medley (Waco, TX: Perspectives in Religious Studies, 2014), 121–36. See also Courtney Pace, "Breaking through the Extra-Thick Stained Glass Ceiling: African American Baptist Women in Ministry," *Review & Expositor* 110, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 77–91.

25   See Campbell-Reed, "Mentoring for Pastoral Imagination," in *Empower: A Guide for Supervisor-Mentors in Theological Field Education*, ed. John Senior and Matthew Floding (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 41–47.

26   Of the thirty-six students who began the WLI, seventeen are white, seventeen are Black/African American, and two are Latina. Dr. Sally Holt has been essential in shepherding students through the WLI.

27   Ongoing mentoring relationships allowed space for sustained theological reflection about field education, which relieved short-term site supervisors of this responsibility; this was useful in a twelve-week praxis course.

28 Scholastica, named for the sister of St. Benedict, ran for nine months each year until it became a casualty of the pandemic in 2020.

29 All student and mentor names in this essay are pseudonyms, and their stories are shared with permission.

30 Debora Jackson, *Meant for Good: Fundamentals of Womanist Leadership* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), Kindle, 34–35. Jackson writes about "the concrete ceiling, that additional rung in the ladder representing the specific challenges of African American women in the workplace." She continues, "It is indicative of the unknowable. Whereas a glass ceiling suggests that you can see through to the other side that which is unobtainable for you, a concrete ceiling suggests that you do not know that there is another side to which you can aspire. Such a ceiling affects African American women as they seek executive-level positions. Because there are fewer African Americans and women at these senior levels, aspirants have fewer mentors to provide guidance and help them navigate to the other side of the concrete barrier."

31 This application came from my Central Seminary colleague Ircel Harrison, and I adapted it for the WLI.

32 Walter Swap, Dorothy Leonard, Mimi Shields, and Lisa Abrams, "Using Mentoring and Storytelling to Transfer Knowledge in the Workplace," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 18, no. 1 (Summer 2001): 95–114.

33 Campbell-Reed, *Pastoral Imagination*, 63.

34 Campbell-Reed, *Pastoral Imagination,* 58–61.

35 Scheib, Attend to Stories, 72.