

# Mentoring Scheme

Each student is assigned to a local church, if he is not able to attend his home church regularly during term-time. A student may continue with the same mentoring church for both years of the course or it may be more appropriate for another church to take responsibility for him during his second year. The allocation of students to churches will be done shortly after the beginning of the new academic year, on a case-by-case basis. The assignment of a student to a particular church will always be done in consultation with the church and student concerned and with the consent of all parties concerned.

## The Mentoring Church

The mentoring church has two areas of responsibility:

1. To provide a 'church home' for the student (and, where applicable, his family) over the course of the year.

It is important for students to be associated with a local church while they are on the course. Students need to enjoy Christian fellowship and benefit from regular preaching and pastoring outside the Seminary, to prevent Seminary life from becoming all-encompassing. They need to feel welcomed and they need to be taught, encouraged and pastored in a church setting just like any other Christian.

Some students may appreciate help with the cost of transport – or, where practicable, a lift – to and from meetings and other activities of the church. However, participation in the mentoring scheme imposes no obligation on a mentoring church otherwise to provide financial assistance to a student.

2. To involve the student, as far as is practicable and appropriate, in different aspects of the life and ministry of the church.

The extent to which this is possible will depend on the student's abilities, maturity, experience and background. However, he has come to seminary on the basis that he has some sense of calling to preaching and pastoral ministry, and he is being trained to that end. Practical experience gained in a mentoring church forms an important part of that training.

Such experience may be gained through a variety of means, such as:

- leading Bible studies or assisting with homegroups
- preaching opportunities
- participation in visiting and counselling
- participation in youth work<sup>1</sup>
- attending church officers' meetings
- spending one-to-one time with the pastor.

Obviously, requirements for confidentiality may restrict the extent to which a student may appropriately be involved in some of these activities.

It is vital that the right balance be maintained between active involvement in the mentoring church and the student's studies at the Seminary. This is a matter for discussion and agreement between the church and the student, subject to regular review between them and, if necessary, consultation with the Seminary. It would be natural for a church to ask less of a student at the start of his course and more as he progresses on it.

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<sup>1</sup> The student will not necessarily possess the relevant clearance for working with children/vulnerable adults. It is the church's responsibility to ensure that any such work is supervised in line with its own child protection policies, and with applicable provisions of law.

If a mentoring church has concerns relating to a student, those concerns should normally be raised first by the pastor with the student directly. If the matter cannot be resolved in that way, it should be taken up with the Seminary Principal.

## **The Student**

Each student is expected to commit himself to the mentoring church to which he is attached and treat it as his local church, to participate in the life of the church and to seek to be of service in it.

He should expect to attend the Sunday meetings of the mentoring church, unless he is preaching or has other legitimate engagements elsewhere. Where practicable (having regard to travelling time and Seminary commitments), he should try to attend other appropriate meetings and activities of the church. He should adopt a positive and willing attitude to service and involvement in the various activities of the church and to opportunities offered to him for ministry and mentoring, having regard to other commitments and his Seminary studies.

If a student has concerns relating to his involvement in his mentoring church, he should generally raise them in the first instance with the pastor of the church. If the matter cannot be resolved in that way, the student should raise it with the Seminary Principal.

## **The Seminary**

We will keep in regular contact with pastors of mentoring churches, to check that the scheme is working well and to give opportunity for any difficulties or concerns to be raised and dealt with promptly.

The Seminary will attempt to ensure that students are placed with appropriate churches so as to maximise the benefit of the scheme to all involved.

The importance of the scheme as part of the training provided through the London Seminary course will be emphasised to students, and students will be encouraged to become as involved as is practicable in the life of the mentoring church and to respond positively to opportunities for ministry and mentoring, consistent with their other responsibilities and Seminary studies.

A student's experience under the scheme will form part of his regular appraisal at the Seminary, on the basis of feedback provided by the mentoring church on the feedback forms provided.

## **Contact With Home Church**

We regard your home church to be an integral and essential element in your training for the pastoral ministry. Where your home church is different to your mentoring church, we will generally also be in regular contact with the pastor or elders of your home church, to inform them of your progress on the course.