

RHYS BEZZANT

Ridley College, Melbourne

“SINGLY, PARTICULARLY, CLOSELY”: EDWARDS AS MENTOR

It is now a commonplace to assume Jonathan Edwards' pastoral ineptitude in the period after the revivals. His bungling in the Bad Book Affair of 1744 sees him naming and shaming the *witnesses* along with the alleged *perpetrators* of the scurrilous use of a midwifery manual. He baulks at pastoral visitation of members of his parish, and instead spends long hours each day in his study reading and writing. He finds himself in the middle of pamphlet warfare in the late 1740s when he tries to justify his actions in limiting the qualifications for communion, though it appears no one is listening, or at least no one is reading his defence. He is portrayed in this crisis as mounting a rear-guard action to squash lay rights by asserting his patrician, Puritan, and clerical authority over the congregation, despite the fact that he released new energy amongst the laity through his preaching during the revivals. He is ultimately dismissed in 1750 after twenty-three years ministry in Northampton. He has become known as a poor shepherd of the flock, even if a preeminent philosopher and theologian.

There is of course substantial evidence to build this case. Samuel Hopkins, a close confidante and responsible for Edwards' first biography, acknowledges that Edwards was not prone to home visitation given his aversion to small talk.¹

¹ Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the late Reverend, Learned, and Pious Mr. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College at New-Jersey, together with Extracts from his Private Writings and Diary* (2nd ed., Northampton: Andrew Wright, 1804), 54, 72. Edwards was nevertheless happy for others with the gift of pastoral conversation to exercise this ministry.

Edwards, in his own and others' estimation, recognised that his own gifting was essentially as a writer, and not as a speaker: "his tongue was as the pen."² He at first resists the call to take on the position as President of the College of New Jersey because it would take him away from writing and burden him with a large load of speaking engagements.³ He could be absent-minded in the minutiae of daily life, not knowing how his milk reached the table, although he did make it his own chore to chop wood for the fire.⁴ His determination to hold on to his responsibilities at Northampton when all seemed lost does suggest a man wilfully out of touch with reality, exercising forlorn hope for continuation of ministerial leadership.

Despite these shortcomings, it is the purpose of this essay to reframe the pastoral labours of Edwards, to review his context and to highlight his competencies. As a significant category of pastoral theology, it will be my contention that Edwards was actually a very skilled mentor and expert trainer of leaders for the church. While his ministry of mentoring may not have been unique in his day, he nonetheless acquitted himself well in this pastoral practice, especially in the relationship he developed with Samuel Hopkins and Joseph Bellamy as will be explored here. At one level his personality might have worked against congregational cooperation, creating pastoral tensions.⁵ At another level, however, his character, spiritual discernment, and openness to sharing his life and to new models of communication, were transformative, and created a significant legacy through those whom he mentored.⁶ Though Hopkins points out some of Edwards' weaknesses, he undertakes this task as one having been empowered by, and having benefited from, Edwards' mentoring ministry. Hopkins is also quick to point out that while bashful in some settings, Edwards was actually more sociable and affa-

² Hopkins, *Life*, 49, 81.

³ Jonathan Edwards, "To the Trustees of the College of New Jersey," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:726, 729.

⁴ Hopkins, *Life*, 54.

⁵ It is worth pointing out that Edwards' dismissal from pastoral responsibilities was not unique, but was a relatively common occurrence in eighteenth century New England, signalling issues that were bigger than the disagreements between Edwards and his congregation. Edwards Jnr, and Hopkins, for example, faced similar pastoral separation.

⁶ A revived appreciation for the movement spawned by Edwards, mediated through his closest adherents, is attested in recent publications concerning the "New Divinity," and Edwards' legacy. See *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. Darryl G. Hart, Sean M. Lucas and Stephen J. Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003); *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 59-61.

ble than was commonly assumed.⁷ Hopkins makes clear that Edwards was a skillful guide in spiritual matters, who addressed the soul issues of his family, friends and students “singly and particularly.”⁸ Edwards himself, in outlining the educational needs of Indian children in his care at Stockbridge, outlines his concern to treat them “singly, particularly and closely.”⁹ The unexplored theme of mentoring in Edwards’ ministry, and the urgent need for contemporary churches to better exercise leadership development, prompt the writing of this article.

Schools of the Prophets: Edwards’s Context for Mentoring

Recent ethical inquiry has again seen the need to draw attention to *human moral formation* in order to complement the categories of *deontological* or duty-based ethical deliberation, and *consequentialist* or utilitarian positions, which have been particularly suited to Enlightenment foundations.¹⁰ Virtue theory is making a comeback, for without giving an account of the moral life or the character of an agent facing moral dilemmas, discussion of liminal ethical case studies can be interpreted as reductionist and dissatisfying.¹¹ Edwards himself devoted prodigious energies to provide a *teleological* account of the nature of virtue in a world that was abandoning theistic assumptions.¹² His own ethical theory of *consent to being*, evident throughout his writings, was an essentially dynamic and relational strategy in which goodness and beauty were related within a theistic worldview to maximise the growth towards human happiness or flourishing.¹³ Edwards is passionately concerned about moral formation, within which his own attempts at mentoring are to be located. More concretely, mentoring can be defined as that intentional activity between two people which seeks to empower for spiritual development, often with the result of enhancing skills and attitudes for leadership. It most often occurs through face-to-face encounters, and is supported through other strategies, like letter writing, discussion of decision-making, and sharing resources. Smither, in his book *Augustine as Mentor*, helpfully suggests that “mentoring in essence means that a master, expert, or someone with significant experience is imparting knowledge and skill to a novice in an atmosphere of discipline,

⁷ Hopkins, *Life*, 44, 46.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47, 54, 55.

⁹ Edwards to Sir William Pepperrell, WJE 16: 412.

¹⁰ See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue? A Study in Moral Theology* (3rd ed., Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

¹¹ Phil C. Zylla, *Virtue as Consent to Being: A Pastoral-Theological Perspective on Jonathan Edwards’s Construct of Virtue* (McMaster Ministry Studies Series; Eugene: Pickwick, 2011), 2.

¹² Jonathan Edwards, “Dissertation II: The Nature of True Virtue,” WJE 8:537-628.

¹³ Zylla, *Virtue as Consent*, 47, 54, 74.

commitment, and accountability."¹⁴ Edwards, both theoretically and practically, espoused a ministry of mentoring.

Indeed, it is quite remarkable that though the word 'mentor' itself was first used in modern literature by Fénelon at the end of the seventeenth century in the book *Les aventures de Télémaque*, and its first known appearance in English occurs in 1750 in the writing of Lord Chesterfield, the word appears in correspondence between Edwards' two most significant disciples, Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) and Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790), as early as 1758, to refer to Edwards himself:

I have enclos'd to you the Answer to J. G. partly because agreed to take it, and get it printed, but forgot it. but especially, because Mentor has lately been here, and advises by all Means to have it published ... MENTOR has heard it and commends it, and offerd to be the first Subscriber.¹⁵

The writings of Fénelon circulated widely in colonial America; references to *Télémaque* appear in Edwards' own "Catalogue" some time between February 18, 1744 and July 15, 1746, so it may not be surprising that this vocabulary circulated amongst the coterie of his closest friends just a few years later.¹⁶ Indeed, Hopkins was himself greatly influenced by the ethical theory of disinterested benevolence which was espoused by Fénelon and his interlocutor Madame de Guyon in late seventeenth century France.¹⁷ Furthermore, the fact that the word 'mentor' in the above quotation is capitalised, in the first instance initially and on the second occurrence in its entirety, may be evidence that it functions as a proper noun and refers to the lead character of that name in Fénelon's book. This matrix of mentoring associations from literature further supports Edwards' involvement in a ministry of mentoring.

More significant still than the use of certain words or literary models is the

¹⁴ Edward L. Smither, *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 4. I want, however, to take issue with Smither's presentation, in as far as he seems to suggest that any patterns of influence whatsoever can be denoted as mentoring. Augustine's *individual letters* may have served the purpose of deliberate Christian formation, but it is much harder to see this being the case when Augustine gives a *speech in a synod*. Providing resources for instruction can be mentoring when these books target spiritual or ministerial lacunae, but the publication of discourses or treatises does not constitute mentoring *tout court*. For example, see Smither, *Augustine as Mentor*, 185-186.

¹⁵ Samuel Hopkins to Joseph Bellamy, 19 Jan. 1758, WJEO 32, Letter C141a. Mentor was appointed as tutor to Télémaque while his father was absent undertaking his odyssey, and had the responsibility to teach his pupil how to rule wisely and to live simply.

¹⁶ Edwards, "Catalogue" of Reading, entry no. 462, WJE 26:230.

¹⁷ Peter J. Thuesen, "Editor's Introduction," in WJE 26:65; see also Stephen Post, "Disinterested Benevolence: An American Debate over the Nature of Christian Love," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 14 (1986): 356-368.

mentoring tradition from which Edwards drew. This was an ancient practice despite its new literary shape. Monastic foundations, for example, had made faith transmission an essential part of their reason for being since the fourth century. Leaders of such communities were entitled abbot, appealing etymologically to their role as "father" or "abba" of the house, from whom the individual monks received spiritual direction. Augustine is particularly deliberate in forming his clergy through their common commitment to a monastic rule,¹⁸ though the Puritan movement disavowed the contemplative features of monastic mentoring, preferring the active model of universities which made passing on the faith a critical indicator of their success. John Preston exemplified such a Puritan mindset of multiplication in espousing the strategic potential of the Colleges of Cambridge: "a preacher in the University doth *generare patres*, beget begetters."¹⁹ Even when local parishes during the reigns of Elizabeth or James I refused to offer the living to a Puritan preacher, such leaders could be accommodated within the life of the church through appointment as a lecturer, or self-supported teacher, who was neither responsible for regular Sunday services nor answerable to the patron of the parish. Itinerants of a sort, they resembled members of medieval mendicant orders in modern Protestant guise.²⁰

Edwards' mentoring ministry was further shaped by the relatively common practice amongst disenfranchised English Puritans of building a local community of like-minded believers for training in preaching and godly living. A framework for collaborative learning outside of the formal structures of ecclesiastical preparation became the fall-back position for those like Richard Greenham of Dry Day-ton, five miles north-west of Cambridge in England, who encouraged young men to take up residence in his parsonage, to create an environment in which mutual correction and encouragement might be practised, and thereby to prepare men for Puritan ministry.²¹ These "schools of the prophets," drawing their inspiration from communities of prophesying leaders described in 1 Samuel 19, or 2 Kings 2, where disciples were trained to handle the law, became a common and effective strategy for faith transmission in the seventeenth century. Not bound by church regulations or episcopal rule, these colleges of learning were united more radically by 'bonds of affection,' and generated great loyalty and common vision.²² Such

¹⁸ Smither, *Augustine as Mentor*, 148-55.

¹⁹ As quoted in William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism: Or, The Way to the New Jerusalem as set forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 73.

²⁰ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 29-30.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 26-29.

²² For example, Bellamy's school was characterised by its "spiritual fraternalism." Mark Valeri, *Law*

spiritual disposition is highlighted in the work of William Haller, who is inclined to see this contribution as constitutive of the Puritan movement as a whole.²³ In the New World, such informal training strategies were integral to the stability of the church. Local home seminaries not only received the graduates of Harvard or Yale College to prepare them for a learned ministry,²⁴ but they even prepared boys for enrolment in university before the Great Awakening.²⁵

However, such an educational model did gain new dynamism in the course of the New England revivals. While Harvard and Yale had themselves been conceived as “schools of the prophets,” their rationale as training institutes for clergy was being undermined.²⁶ Opposition to the revivals from the standing order of New England church leadership had caused doubts in some minds as to whether those leaders, trained at the recognised universities and critical of the revivals, were actually converted. George Whitefield, during his New England itinerations, accused the ecclesiastical cadre of being unregenerate, the model of a “reverse jeremiad” in which many amongst the laity were encouraged to speak critically of the ministerial caste, and to appeal for their penitent response. Such was the animus, that there developed in New Jersey a new training institute, nicknamed the Log College, in which the apprenticeship model of ministerial training was situated within an atmosphere of revivalist sensitivities. Not surprisingly, Whitefield himself was especially enamoured of the project when he visited in November 1739:

The place wherein the young men study now is, in contempt, called *the College*. It is a log-house, about twenty feet long, and nearly as many broad; and, to me, it seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets

and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America (Religion in America Series; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 20.

²³ Perry Miller accentuated the rationalist stream in Puritan consciousness, contra William Haller. Janice Knight draws on both sets of insights to argue for a more heterogeneous movement, though she argues that New England Puritanism was dominated by the school of the “spiritual brethren,” as highlighted by Haller, rather than the “intellectual fathers” as Miller denoted those following Ames rather than Sibbes. See Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 10, 34. Their preaching style is a significant marker of distinction, with the “fathers” stressing logic and doctrine, and the “brethren” stressing rhetoric and the power of the affections. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 15, 19, 20, 48, 53, 54.

²⁴ Richard Warch, *School of the Prophets: Yale College, 1701-40* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 192, 268.

²⁵ Joseph Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1981), 21-22. An elementary school was located in East Windsor in Timothy Edwards’ manse: see ..(.....)...Kenneth P. Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Education and His Educational Legacy,” in *After Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, ed. D. A. Sweeney and O. D. Crisp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31-49, especially 31-32. Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 188, 189.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

... From this despised place, seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have lately been sent forth; more are almost ready to be sent; and a foundation is now being laid for the instruction of many others . . . Carnal ministers oppose them strongly . . .²⁷

While Schnittjer has shown that such a learning community was not indigeneous to America, this college was nevertheless the first of its type in Pennsylvania.²⁸ Tennent combined divinity and piety as twin goals of learning, but did so in the context of family life, farming, common worship, practical ministry exposure, and generous personal investment in the next generation of leadership, enabling a mentoring dynamic of significant pedagogical value.²⁹

Schools of the prophets were on the ascendancy in New England as well. Revivalist aspirations in Connecticut, for example, were especially at home amongst the middling sort of youth, who saw personal regeneration as the best kind of credential for church leadership, rejecting social standing alone as a qualification for ministry.³⁰ Such ministerial inclinations also promoted mobility, for the New Lights from Yale refused to return to the village or town where they had grown up, if this meant being apprenticed to an unregenerate pastor. Initiative for mentoring received new energy *from below*, as the recent college graduate had to choose with whom his ministerial traineeship would be served. Rural men, without significant financial means, would appreciate not just cheap tuition, but would be able to contribute their own skills and labour to the life of the training community.³¹ Edwards received many such ministry aspirants, two of the most notable being Dr Joseph Bellamy and Dr Samuel Hopkins who each later established a school

²⁷ George Whitefield, *Journals: A New Edition Containing Fuller Material than any Hitherto Published* (Guildford and London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 354-55.

²⁸ Schnittjer makes the case that it was not so much its institutional novelty that made this College famous, as much as the educational experience focused in mentoring which William Tennent, Sr. practised there. It should be added that much of the mentoring experience of its students, probably no more than twenty in number, was not intentional. Tennent drew on traditional academic categories, but necessity created new opportunities for shared experiences of farming or discussion of revival vicissitudes. See Gary E. Schnittjer, "The Ingredients of Effective Mentoring: The Log College as a Model for Mentorship," *Christian Education Journal* 15/1 (1994): 86-100. Despite meagre beginnings, it is estimated that its graduates went on to spawn some sixty institutions of higher learning, Princeton amongst them.

²⁹ Schnittjer, "Ingredients of Effective Mentoring," 94-95. Schnittjer's paper provides a useful outline of Tennent's mentoring ministry, though it does not expound the particulars of those mentoring dynamics.

³⁰ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 24. As well as ministry training in churches, such students may well have attended Yale too, as the College drew in a significant number of sons of farmers and artisans, opening up educational possibilities for them. See Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 153, 252.

³¹ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 39.

of the prophets to great effect.³² Bellamy was of a different stamp from Edwards: a pugnacious preacher,³³ from a different social background,³⁴ and known for a kind of vulgarity,³⁵ but was regarded as Edwards' most intimate friend.³⁶ Hopkins was not as accomplished a preacher as Edwards or Bellamy, had no family ties to the clergy, and needed entrée into a new social matrix, but turned out to be the executor of Edwards' literary remains.³⁷ Cumulatively, their efforts generated a distinctive Calvinist school, referred to at first by detractors, and then more widely, as the New Divinity.³⁸ Such was the constructive power of a mentoring mindset.

Edwards' home was a magnet for those looking to be trained. Hopkins had originally intended to move away from New England and his home in Waterbury in western Connecticut to study under Tennent in Pennsylvania, but decided in the end to complete his training in Northampton, after hearing Edwards preach on the validity of the revival at the Yale commencement of 1741.³⁹ Hopkins used Edwards' library, filled the pulpit in his absence, and fortuitously benefited greatly from the stimulating spiritual conversation of Sarah Edwards.⁴⁰ Joseph Bellamy resided in Edwards' home too, where he enjoyed the stability of family life, which he himself had missed growing up.⁴¹ Bellamy was arguably the most significant mentor in the nascent movement for revival, establishing the first private ministry training institute in New England in Bethlehem, Connecticut, and shaping some twenty-five ministers of the Gospel, including Jonathan Edwards, Jr.⁴² It had been of course an asset to Edwards that he had a happy marriage and eight daughters amongst his eleven children, which made a ministry apprenticeship in his home that much more attractive.⁴³ He made potential suitors most welcome:

³² Bellamy ministered in Bethlehem from 1740 to 1790, and was recognised as running the most successful ministry training school in Connecticut: Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 35. Samuel Hopkins ministered at Housatonic (later called Great Barrington), Massachusetts from 1743 to 1769, then at Newport, Rhode Island, from 1770 until his death in 1803.

³³ Valeri, *Law and Providence*, 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 10, 13.

³⁵ Edwards, "The Preface to *True Religion* by Joseph Bellamy," in WJE 4:572.

³⁶ Valeri, *Law and Providence*, 14.

³⁷ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 13.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-7.

³⁹ This sermon was later revised to become the tract, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE 4:213-88.

⁴⁰ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 31. Bellamy had so valued the encouragement that Edwards provided, that when a position in Stockbridge became available, he entreated Edwards to take up the opportunity, so that Hopkins in nearby Housatonic might benefit from Edwards' closer input.

⁴¹ Valeri, *Law and Providence*, 11, 173. See also Bellamy's MS student notebook of 1736, which he used while a student with Edwards, in Yale University Divinity School, Special Collections.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 56, 87, 157; Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 38.

⁴³ It was not just Edwards' home that attracted suitors for his daughters. Phineas Fiske prepared

If any gentleman desired acquaintance with his daughters, after handsomely introducing himself, by properly consulting the parents, he was allowed all opportunity for it, and a room and fire, if needed: but must not intrude on the proper hours of rest and sleep, nor the religion and order of the family.⁴⁴

A later long-term guest in the Edwards parsonage was the consumptive David Brainerd, for whom both Edwards and his daughter Jerusha had much affection.

Closeness of family ties abound throughout Edwards’ own school of the prophets and its heirs, creating a tight movement. Awareness of common social background outside of the traditional New England standing order, and commitment to the peer group with whom one was formed, was further encouraged through the Saybrook Platform in Connecticut, which since 1707 had valorised a pseudo-Presbyterian ecclesiology.⁴⁵ Interestingly, these schools of the prophets quite deliberately played down the types of competencies which were traditional in ministerial formation, for example home visitation, or broader social engagement. The minister as revivalist-preacher, and as local theologian, were rather the models set before those being trained.⁴⁶ The task of the teacher in the later movement was to ensure that apologetic arguments could be mounted to defend the theology of the revivals, even if this made the approach to learning more deductive and logical than Edwards would himself have espoused.⁴⁷ The influence of these schools in shaping followers needs to be set against Edwards’ deliberate but perhaps disingenuous disavowal of belonging to a school named after Calvin.⁴⁸ While there can be no doubt that Edwards’ theological trajectory can be named Reformed, his refusal to follow slavishly any one thinker was both *true*, given the breadth and liberality of his reading, and *wise*, as a strategy for training up the next generation of leaders, who would have to stand on their own two feet, and not just parrot him. Hopkins, perhaps with a hint of self-justifying independence, makes this clear in his biography:

He [Edwards] took his religious principles from the Bible, and not from any human system or body of divinity. Though his principles

pupils for College, and trained them afterwards in his own parsonage: “In this last role he may have had mixed motives, however, for he managed to marry his three daughters to three Yale graduates who came to study divinity with him.” Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 270-71.

⁴⁴ Hopkins, *Life*, 48.

⁴⁵ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁴⁷ Melvin B. Endy, Jr., “Theology and Learning in Early America,” in *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition*, ed. P. Henry (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 130, 133-134, 144.

⁴⁸ Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, WJE 1:131.

were *Calvinistic*, yet he called no man father. He thought and judged for himself, and was truly very much of an original.⁴⁹

Edwards' mentoring was not born out of a therapeutic modernism, which sought to promote self-expression or self-realisation, nor did he want others to ape him. Independence of mind does not necessarily require narcissistic individualism. He was part of a more substantial Christian narrative of faith transmission and ministerial formation, mediated to him through the urgency and intimacy of Puritan preaching schools, and sustained in the social and theological structures of the New Divinity. The mentor-protégé relationship was not unique to Edwards, but nevertheless proved to be a significant and pastorally effective feature of his ministry.

Familiar Discourse: Edwards's Practice of Mentoring

Edwards' intense pulpit persona may blind us to the tenderness of his friendships and his desire for sociability. He had many close friends in Northampton,⁵⁰ who wanted him to stay and establish a new church in their town after his dismissal.⁵¹ Many friends went out of their way to visit him on the frontier in Stockbridge.⁵² He called together a small council after he had been selected for the presidency of the College of New Jersey in 1757, to seek their advice for his future. When they confirmed to him the wisdom of the invitation, he burst into tears, "which was very unusual for him in the presence of others."⁵³ Perhaps this was not so unusual under more private circumstances. He may have been cautious in making friends,⁵⁴ but his capacity for spiritual discernment could render those friendships very rich nevertheless. It surely ought not to be surprising that Edwards' extraordinary achievement in isolating and analysing religious affections in a treatise could have some practical significance in personal relationships as well, even if during the dismissal the complexity of pastoral dynamics blunted his relational capacity. In his biography, Hopkins makes much of Edwards' discernment, and reiterates that this was in evidence from a young age; he was more insightful than many an elder in the church.⁵⁵ Such discerning insights into hu-

⁴⁹ Hopkins, *Life*, 44. Emphasis original.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 22, 23, 51. It ought not to be forgotten that Hopkins himself first came to Edwards not merely to learn homiletics but to find some level of resolution concerning his anxious seeking after assurance of salvation. Sarah Edwards was an important mentoring influence at this time too. See Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 29-32.

man personality came to concrete expression in Edwards' *pedagogy* and were refracted through his adoption of *modern epistolary conventions*. Both arts served his mentoring agenda.

Edwards was an accomplished preacher, but his enjoyment of dialogue and commitment to Socratic method were no less significant features of his ministry.⁵⁶ He wrote to the Trustees of Princeton describing his commitment to dialogical learning if he were to be appointed as President,⁵⁷ and when he arrived there he encouraged his students to prepare an answer for class which could be discussed when they came together.⁵⁸ Frequently he would debate with ministry aspirants while walking or riding. Evidently, the reason why he gave to Hopkins or Bellamy copies of his own recently composed discourses was to give them opportunity to learn while giving feedback.⁵⁹ Such an attitude in Edwards stood in stark relief to the later reputation of those in the New Divinity, who, it was said, developed quite hierarchical conceptions of master and learner, in which refusal to accept the received wisdom of the theological system was met with disapproval.⁶⁰ He lacked defensiveness in debate, and had an awareness of developmental psychology, which may surprise:

Among such whose candour and friendship he had experienced he threw off the reserve, and was most open and free; quite patient of contradiction, while the utmost opposition was made to his sentiments, that could be by any plausible arguments or objections. And, indeed, he was, on all occasions, quite sociable and free with all who had any special business with him ...⁶¹

In preaching, Edwards made room to address particular groups within the auditory: the children were addressed as well as the youth or adults in his *Farewell Sermon* of 1750.⁶² In his own family, he acknowledged the age and stage of those being taught:

As he rose very early himself, he was wont to have his family up in season in the morning; after which, before the family entered on the

⁵⁶ George S. Claghorn, "Introduction," in WJE 16:22. Minkema points out that Edwards advises the use of Baxter's *Matho; sive, Cosmotheoria puerilis* of 1738 for education in the natural sciences, a book constructed around dialogical investigations:Minkema, "Edwards on Education," 39-40.

⁵⁷ Edwards to the Trustees, WJE 16:729.

⁵⁸ Hopkins, *Life*, 84-85.

⁵⁹ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 55.

⁶⁰ Endy, "Theology and Learning in Early America," 131.

⁶¹ Hopkins, *Life*, 46.

⁶² Edwards, *A Farewell Sermon Preached at the First Precinct in Northampton, after the People's Public Rejection of their Minister ... on June 22, 1750*, WJE 25:483.

business of the day, he attended on family prayers; when a chapter in the Bible was read, commonly by candle-light in the winter; upon which he asked his children questions according to their age and capacity ...⁶³

Edwards' openness to new methods of engagement in teaching is in particular evidence when he takes over responsibility for the mission schools in Stockbridge. In a letter to Sir William Pepperrell, advocate for the mission and a hero of the Louisbourg campaign of 1745, he draws attention to the value of a teacher who 'should enter into conversation with the child,' and desires that "the child should be encouraged, and drawn on, to speak freely, and in his turn also to ask questions, for the resolution of his own doubts."⁶⁴ Such reciprocity helps pupils not just to understand words but also to comprehend ideas. Music could also be a pedagogical strategy, to join hearts and minds in "a relish for objects of a superior character."⁶⁵ On another occasion, Edwards gave advice about how to resist Satan, which evidenced a nuanced case-by-case pastoral strategy.⁶⁶ His attention to detail in interactions with those for whom he was responsible is important to note.

Alongside such *particular instances of concern for individual growth* in Edwards' letters, it is most helpful to investigate as well their *form* and *role* in Edwards' mentoring relationships. Letters are one of the most concrete ways for us to access his verbal contribution to mentoring dynamics, and to experience the modulations of pastoral address, which are evident there. Indeed, study of developing epistolary conventions in the eighteenth century, particularly the style known as the "familiar letter," both locates Edwards in his literary world and functions as a counter-weight to flat readings of his pastoral capacity. In general, letters can function as a means of *social ordering* when their phrasing acknowledges due deference or when meetings or visits are organised. Letters can function as means of *social transgression* when they represent or manipulate power dynamics, in which two parties, sometimes more, are involved. Konstantin Dierks builds the case that the "ideology of agency" was distinctively new in enlightened epistolary circles in colonial America and beyond, with the oft repeated phrase "in my power" functioning metonymically for the individual's recently renegotiated relationship with the opportunities and restraints of emergent capitalism, social mobility, and impe-

⁶³ Edwards can also speak of some Indian boys who "were now past their forming age." See Edwards to the Reverend Thomas Prince, WJE 16:638.

⁶⁴ Edwards to Sir William Pepperrell, WJE 16:408.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 411.

⁶⁶ Edwards to the Reverend Thomas Gillespie, WJE 16:229.

rial centralisation.⁶⁷ The *physical* agency or potency of one's hand has its parallel in *emotional* or *spiritual* agency or potency in one's hand, another term for one's script or letter-writing. Edwards is found to use this phrase nine times in his writing, five times in his extant letters, giving some purchase to Dierk's thesis and to Edwards' location in the eighteenth century republic of letters.

The familiar letter, in contrast with the more traditional polite letter, was that variety of correspondence which was "meant to foster emotional intimacy rather than business efficiency or aristocratic formality,"⁶⁸ and so was well suited to evangelical priorities and spiritual direction.⁶⁹ Letters had been used to provide communications in war, to invoice purchases, or to negotiate politics, but the origins of these modes predated the eighteenth century.⁷⁰ Indeed, the new literary genre of the *novel*, presupposing adequate education and leisure to read and sufficient funds to publish and purchase, grew out of the compilation of letters, which itself brought to expression the "personal voice" in communication, a sense of immediacy, and the "carefully modulated acknowledgement of the reader."⁷¹ Samuel Richardson's runaway success *Pamela* (1740) or Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's equally influential *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sufferings of the young Werther*) in 1774 are notable examples of the epistolary novel.⁷² Amazingly, despite its sometimes morally confronting story-line, Edwards read Richardson's novel, and twice, once in 1754 and once in 1755, lent it to his disciple Samuel Hopkins for his edification.⁷³ Reading more popular journals, alongside more serious novels, Ed-

⁶⁷ Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Early American Studies; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 1-8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁶⁹ Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition: Between the Conversions of Wesley and Wilberforce* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 245.

⁷⁰ Anderson and Ehrenpreis argue that the eighteenth century was the "great age of the personal letter," due to the rapid development of roads and therefore a postal network, the rediscovery of Latin epistolary models and growth in appreciation of French style, and a reaction to the fripperies of life and art before the Glorious Revolution. See Howard Anderson and Irvin Ehrenpreis, "The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century: Some Generalizations," in *The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. Anderson, P.B. Daghlian and I. Ehrenpreis (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), 269, 270-72.

⁷¹ Claghorn, "Introduction," WJE 16:4-5.

⁷² See Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded* (Penguin Classics; London: Penguin, 2003). This novel, tracking the victory of virtue, is built around a series of letters from Pamela to her distant parents, describing her work for a noble lady, and later the ruses and devices of that noblewoman's son to win Pamela for himself in marriage. Letter-writing constitutes not only the strategy of communication, but it also provides much content to provoke events in the book. Pamela's attempts to secure paper, ink and couriers for her letters, and her designs to hide her correspondence from the intrusive Mr B. or Mrs Jewkes, are both instructive and comical. Pamela also uses the phrase "in my power" in relation to her growing sense of personal agency. Intriguingly, the parson, Mr Williams, is met on a country road reading Fénelon's *Télémaque* (p. 318)!

⁷³ Edwards, "Catalogue" of Reading, entry no. 593, WJE 26:271-272; Edwards, "Account Book," entries on Richardson, WJE 26:343-345. Wilson Kimnach suggests that Edwards was a "kindred spirit" with Richardson in terms of their "pietistic sensibility" and their commitment to "close observations of

wards was exposed to modern familiar epistolary models and absorbed notable features. The “motif of the letter” was omnipresent in colonial culture.⁷⁴

The familiar letter was conceived not to interact with polite concerns but instead with the minutiae of everyday life.⁷⁵ Note the contents of a letter to Bellamy dated 21 January 1742: Edwards notes receiving a previous letter from him on January 11, relates some recent awakening in New Hampshire, sends an apology for not being able to attend a meeting arranged by Bellamy at Guildford, organises the exchange of books with a colleague in Goshen, and sends a copy of *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. He concludes with intimate sentiment: “I am, dear Sir, your affectionate and unworthy |Brother and fellow-labourer, |Jonathan Edwards.”⁷⁶ In a subsequent letter to Bellamy dated 15 January 1747, he takes up a repeated theme in his correspondence concerning “the affair of the sheep,” which details their purchase, shearing, and the family’s requirements of wool for the remainder of the winter. He abruptly changes the topic to speak of post-Reformation dogmatics, namely the writings of van Maastricht and Turretin, then relates ongoing organisation of the transatlantic Concert of Prayer, concluding with a plea that Bellamy come to visit him and his family in February or March, for “we have so many affairs to confer upon that concern us both.”⁷⁷ Switching between topics jarringly, and acknowledging interruptions during writing, strengthened the claim in Edwards’ correspondence to immediacy, something prized in this style of letter.⁷⁸ “The hallmark of candor was taken to be spontaneity.”⁷⁹ Edwards as mentor is sharing his life and its concerns with Bellamy; he desires yet closer interaction through shared company. Dierks comments on this genre of conclusion to a letter:

To stop visiting one’s friends could be excusable, but to stop writing letters was ungracious. Personal visits and face-to-face conversation remained the ideal mode of social interaction, but heavy workloads and busy schedules often made letter writing the only realistic alternative . . . Writing letters helped men in the elusive process of trying to reconcile desire and reality—agency and constraint—into a self-image that reaffirmed their own personal adequacy, and also into a social im-

the workings of the human heart.” See Wilson H. Kimnach, “The Literary Life of Jonathan Edwards,” in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to America’s Theologian*, ed. G. R. McDermott (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 138.

⁷⁴ Dierks, *In My Power*, 144.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁷⁶ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16:98-100.

⁷⁷ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16:216-218.

⁷⁸ Dierks, *In My Power*, 120.

⁷⁹ Anderson and Ehrenpreis, “The Familiar Letter,” 272.

age that earned them a reputation for duty or affection.⁸⁰

Though stiff and formulaically deferential for twenty-first century readers, Edwards' letters can unselfconsciously point out ways in which his own social status had frequently counted for little in the business of letter-writing, so drawing attention to a surprising powerlessness.⁸¹ His dependence on unreliable intermediaries, like couriers or ships, or his exposure to unpredictable events, for example the weather or hard-to-locate friends, could be for Edwards exasperating. While in the main correspondence was still in the eighteenth century the preserve of a male elite,⁸² within this social sphere letters and their delivery could function to equalise relationships. As a postscript to his last known letter to Bellamy, written from Stockbridge on 1 December 1757, he writes:

P.S. December 5

Sir,

The opportunity for conveyance of my letters to ministers chosen to be of the council your way, not being very good, I here send other letters, desiring you to take the care of conveying them with all possible care and speed.⁸³

Edwards' need of assistance confirmed Bellamy's place in his mentor's inner circle, and the frequent functional inadequacy of Edwards' authority despite his wearing a wig. On the other hand, it may just be the *appearance* of loss of power or authority: by reifying what would otherwise have been local and ephemeral speech, Edwards' correspondence can gain value and influence and potentially longevity.⁸⁴

Ward argues that spiritual correspondence is one of the great achievements of the eighteenth-century revivals.⁸⁵ Bruce Hindmarsh, in commenting upon the letter-writing ministry of John Newton, brings the nature of eighteenth-century letter-writing to a theological head, when he astutely observes that it functions in a new space of spiritual solidarity, acknowledging its position "between the subjectivity of the confessional diary and the objectivity of the literary essay," combining "spontaneous expression with the treatment of a substantial subject."⁸⁶ It permits

⁸⁰ Dierks, *In My Power*, 163-164.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸² Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 17, 39.

⁸³ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16:736.

⁸⁴ Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 17.

⁸⁵ W. Reginald Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 2.

⁸⁶ Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition*, 32.

of predictable patterns of piety alongside enthusiastic excess, or social convention studded with relational innovation.⁸⁷ It is both constrained and free.⁸⁸ Edwards' ministry of *mentoring through correspondence* is extraordinarily well suited to the mediating position he has taken in the course of the revivals in any number of other areas, allowing for revivalist sentiment to nest within more traditional structures of order. He might prefer conversation face-to-face, but the substance of mentoring relationships can be expressed satisfactorily by mail as well, discussing a litany of theological comments, personal concerns, or administrative instructions. In fact, Edwards admirably cultivates this particular species of pastoral care in his correspondence. It is my contention that Edwards is particularly successful in mentoring, because in this forum of pastoral care he can renegotiate relationships, identity and clerical agency in ways which suit his temper and his times.

"This is the Way: Walk in It"—Edwards's Enduring Example

In composing Edwards' biography, Hopkins builds the structure of his narrative around the value of Edwards' example to those who would follow. Both the beginning and the end of the work remind its reader that "This is the way; walk in it."⁸⁹ Hopkins provides an unedited list of Edwards' youthful resolutions to remind young readers of what can be accomplished spiritually even at any early age. Hopkins frequently resorts to language of sight and experience to bring vitality to his account, drawing his readers into the excitement of the story.⁹⁰ Naturally, he cannot give details about Edwards' secret devotional life, but obliquely makes comment about it by describing Edwards' outward generosity, a recollection which is permissible now that the subject, having died, can in no way become proud in the retelling.⁹¹ The point is this: Hopkins has not only benefited from Edwards' intentional pastoral investment, but he wants to pass on something of those riches for others who care to learn.⁹² Providing an historical model cannot be described as mentoring narrowly defined, but some lessons for ministry can nevertheless be gleaned. How might Edwards serve the cause of the development of pastoral leadership, or mentoring, today?

⁸⁷ Dierks, referring to social conditions broader than ecclesiastical concerns alone, shows how letters might hold together disinterestedness and advantage, convention and improvisation, authority and agency, service and obligation, and deference and sincerity: Dierks, *In My Power*, 58, 84, 98, 148, 151.

⁸⁸ Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition*, 246-47.

⁸⁹ Hopkins, *Life*, vi, 57.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, v.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 58, 69, 86.

To Share Not Only the Gospel of God, But Also Our Own Selves (1 Thess. 2:8)

In our day, ministry has been professionalised. We adopt a model of church life from the corporate sector, we create distinct spheres of work, family and leisure, and we create a cadre of leadership distant from the congregation. Our leaders are visionaries and public speakers, perhaps imitating stand-up comedians or talk-show hosts, with lives opaque to pastoral accountability. Edwards may well have maintained some of the social decorum attributed to his ministerial responsibilities in a deferential world, but alongside this he gave himself generously to those whom he was training. He wrote to Bellamy disclosing details of the settlement of his salary,⁹³ speaks of Bellamy as being "one of the most intimate friends that I have in the world,"⁹⁴ and frequently invites him to come and stay at their home.⁹⁵ In observing Edwards' life, his mentorees learnt not only the art of theological discourse, but self-sacrifice and self-denial as well, in contrast to the "complacency and worldliness" of many other clergy of their day.⁹⁶ In making reference to 1 Thessalonians 2, Edwards describes the church as "our mother." He comments that "[t]his is also a lively image of the care that the church, especially the ministers of the gospel, should have of the interest of Christ committed to their care."⁹⁷ Edwards broadens our expectation of pastoral leadership, and encourages us to share our lives with those we train.

Do the Work of an Evangelist, Carry Out Your Ministry Fully (2 Tim. 4:5)

A danger in any pastoral ministry is that we serve the interests of the people paying our living, yet neglect the interests of the broader mission of the church. It might be that we as leaders neglect our own evangelistic opportunities, or such neglect might come to expression when we fail to energise, encourage and train others more gifted in that area. The routines of pastoral ministry are much safer than the crises of revivalist zeal. Edwards and his adherents erred on the other side of the divide, espousing revivalist commitments even when local responsibilities seemed to be overlooked. Edwards could play down traditional pastoral practices and warned against "secular concerns interfering with the work of the ministry" to highlight more positively the mandate to do the work of the evangelist.⁹⁸ Edwards majored on the skills of homiletics in his parsonage-seminary,⁹⁹ even when

⁹³ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16:374-375.

⁹⁴ Edwards to the Reverend John Erskine, July 5, 1750, WJE 16:348.

⁹⁵ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16:218.

⁹⁶ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 47.

⁹⁷ Edwards, *Notes on Scripture*, entry no. 314, WJE 15:47.

⁹⁸ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 47.

⁹⁹ Hopkins, *Life*, 53.

his disciples were not of his capacity.¹⁰⁰ It is not that Edwards never provided pastoral care. Indeed, Deborah Hathaway, a young convert in the nearby parish of Suffield, had written to Edwards seeking his spiritual counsel given that her own church was without a minister. He provides her with a serious yet not heavily theological response, outlining some fundamental disciplines of the Christian life.¹⁰¹ Edwards also received many parishioners into his study for *soul conversation*, but his mentoring reminds us of the importance of recruiting the next generation of gifted evangelists and defending a place for energies devoted to outreach and cultivation of a mission mindset. Nested within a pastoral framework, Edwards sets before us the challenge of doing the work of an evangelist.

What You Have Heard From Me ... Entrust to Others (2 Tim. 2:2)

Developing long-term perspective on our ministry is difficult in an occupation where pastors are often faced with challenging situations requiring quick responses. It is easier to be reactive than proactive, and easier to receive or do ministry than to generate it amongst others. Edwards is aware of the need to provide for faith transmission, and invests a significant amount of time in those whom he is training. It is interesting that he does not use 2 Timothy 2:2 to validate a generic mentoring ministry, amplifying the sequence of links between any teacher and any learner as is common today in expounding that text. He does however use this verse to defend the propriety of ordination, which was in his own day, alongside family devotions, central to faith transmission between generations: "And what is intended [in this verse] don't seem to be only hearing the doctrines of the gospel preached and taught as ordinary Christians do, but some committing of these doctrines to teachers in a way peculiar to them ... the Apostle speaks of another committing."¹⁰² It is in the observation of fine distinctions that Edwards excels, and he shows here that he recognises the value of ministerial formation, even if *we* extend the application of this verse.

In explaining his ministry to the Indians of Stockbridge, for example, he insists that passing on the faith was integral to the ministry of Jesus and his followers: "When Christ lived in the earth, he chose twelve men to go along with him wherever he went, that he might teach 'em and instruct 'em, and fit 'em to be ministers to preach the gospel."¹⁰³ He later summarises "true religion" and makes his vow

¹⁰⁰ Bellamy was a "son of thunder," though Hopkins was less able as a preacher, whose style was more didactic and whose interests were often geared towards social reform. See Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 176-77, 180.

¹⁰¹ Edwards to Deborah Hathaway, WJE 16:91-95. Outside of his immediate family, such correspondence with a woman was unusual. See Dierks, *In My Power*, 158.

¹⁰² Edwards, *The "Blank Bible,"* entry on II Tim. 1:13, WJE 24:1132.

¹⁰³ Edwards, *The Things that Belong to True Religion*, WJE 25:570.

that “[t]his is the religion that I will teach you while I stay in this place.”¹⁰⁴ Edwards draws attention to the nature of Christ’s mentoring as an intentional programme of *training* individuals for the ministry, which Edwards as clergy from time to time fulfils, and the importance of *discipling*, teaching believers the necessary attitudes and skills to learn from and follow Christ, which he exemplifies. He achieves both, given that Edwards’ mentorees excelled in their ability to sustain both organisationally and pastorally the movement which he began.¹⁰⁵ His strategic foresight is set before us as a noble aspiration.

Think Over What I Say, For The Lord Will Give You Understanding (2 Tim. 2:7)

It ought to be acknowledged, however, that Edwards’ disciples did not replicate his ministry without modification. They had been taught to think critically and creatively, through discussion, reading and writing, and now they continued to think fresh thoughts, sometimes renegeing on ideas which Edwards had so passionately held. Bellamy and Hopkins were confident to modify the Edwardsean deposit, in large part to make their prized Reformed worldview relevant to revolutionary politics, nation-building and discussions of social ethics, in particular slavery, of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century.¹⁰⁶ At heart, Hopkins extends the nature of divine sovereignty to include a positive divine will for sin, an assertion of God’s hatred for those presumptuous enough to seek salvation, and an encouragement of disinterested benevolence, or being “willing to be damned for the glory of God and the good of mankind.”¹⁰⁷ Bellamy was more inclined than Edwards to preach terror, as Solomon Stoddard had practised it. I contend therefore that Edwards had been a successful mentor in *teaching* his adherents, not *indoctrinating* them, even when those same followers in defending their mentor’s cause modified his arguments. Of course, Edwards himself had negotiated new intellectual worlds as part of his own philosophical development, though perhaps his native intelligence made of his discoveries a more subtle reconciliation with Biblical truth. There is always a moment of anxiety and vulnerability when, during the relay race, the baton is passed from one runner to the next. This mentoring moment in the ministry of Edwards is no less worthy of attention and excitement, as the Lord gives new understanding to his representatives. Mentoring as contribution and not control is here witnessed.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 574.

¹⁰⁵ The foundation of seminaries like Andover was one such institutional achievement of the New Divinity movement. Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 82.

¹⁰⁶ Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 123, 125.

¹⁰⁷ Hopkins was also uncomfortable with the place of aesthetics in Edwards’ schema, interpreting it as needlessly speculative. Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 61, 110, 115.

So What is it with the Sheep and Mentoring?

In all of Edwards' correspondence, nothing amuses or intrigues quite like his repeated references in letters to Bellamy over a period of seven years to sheep and their value. He makes arrangements for Bellamy to purchase some if the opportunity arises.¹⁰⁸ He writes to revise these arrangements given the urgent need of wool for the winter, being prepared to send more money for their procurement.¹⁰⁹ Apparently a middleman has been organised to deliver wool in June 1747, which Edwards is keen to confirm.¹¹⁰ A polite reminder to Bellamy about securing the wool is penned in July 1749.¹¹¹ In perhaps Edwards' most concise letter to Bellamy in November 1750, consisting of just a few mundane sentences, Edwards alludes to the disagreements in his marriage arising from the question whether their own sheep should be sold or hired out! His impending move from Northampton connects the question of raising sheep to his own personal needs and situation.¹¹² Settled in Stockbridge, he appears to have bought some more, and sends men to secure their delivery, reassuring Bellamy that outstanding dues will be supplied.¹¹³ Sheep function as a significant theme in the extant letters to Bellamy.

While no doubt important to Edwards' family's prosperity, for our purposes these references to sheep provide another window into the dynamics of Edwards' ministry. He is part of a growing money economy, where economic interdependence is a *sine qua non* of social life.¹¹⁴ Even his mentoring reflects this reality. The fact that Edwards is *using letters* to secure his financial arrangements is further testimony to their place in the growing capitalist economy, both for contracting and for invoicing. Epistolary conventions are shaped by the economic capacity to trade and to have the resources to write and to post.¹¹⁵ He demonstrates extraordinary trust in his friend to negotiate the purchase of the sheep, sharing his financial arrangements, and thereby inviting Bellamy, not just into his spiritual world, but into his pecuniary and marital world too. Edwards is sharing his whole life with his intimate friend. Bellamy is a communications hub, confidante, financial adviser, wholesaler, marriage counsellor, and events manager. Here we see a picture of Edwards as the spiritual guide, whose sheep (metaphorically) knows and trusts his voice. His pastoral relationships may have been damaged in Northampton, but his pastoral instincts in the saga of the sheep (literally) are quite plain to see.

¹⁰⁸ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16: 210-211.

¹⁰⁹ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16: 216-217.

¹¹⁰ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16: 223.

¹¹¹ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16: 288.

¹¹² Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16: 362-363.

¹¹³ Edwards to the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, WJE 16: 600.

¹¹⁴ Valeri, *Law and Providence*, 78.

¹¹⁵ Anderson and Ehrenpreis, "The Familiar Letter," 276; Dierks, *In My Power*, 3.

A b s t r a c t

Appreciation of Jonathan Edwards' labours as a pastor has grown in recent years with the publication of many formerly unknown sermons. It is the intention of this paper to show the ways in which some of his own significant mentoring relationships contributed to his achievements in pastoral ministry. By examining Puritan assumptions of faith transmission, early biographies of Edwards, and his letters, we open a window into the world of ministry training and educational philosophy, which guided his intentional investment in the next generation of clerical leadership. Developments in the art and rationale of letter writing serve as a focus to understand Edwards' own epistolary output, and function as a way of locating the distinctives of nascent evangelicalism. The paper concludes with reflection on Biblical themes in Edwards' ministry, which encourage contemporary mentoring ministry.