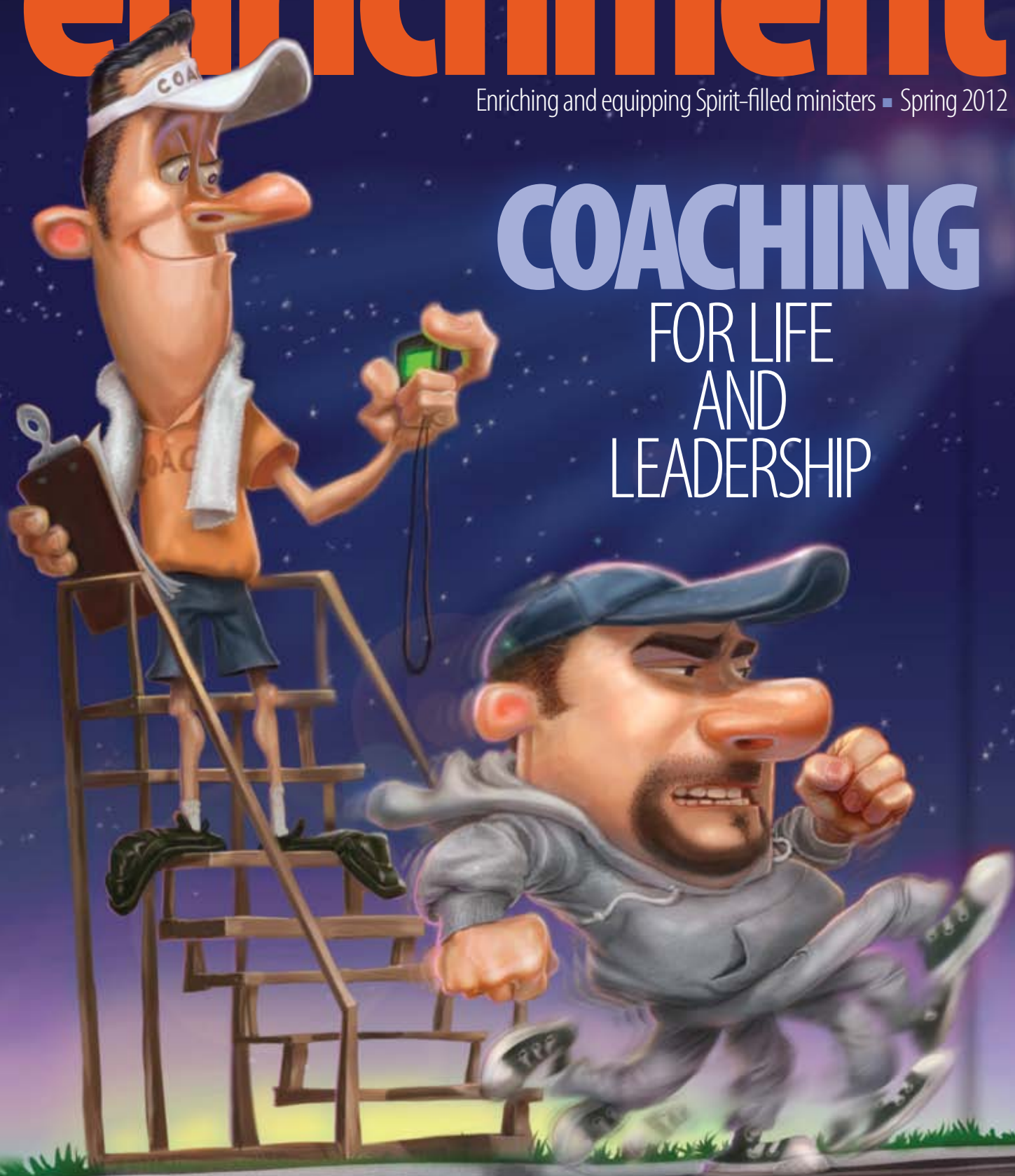


# enrichment

Enriching and equipping Spirit-filled ministers ■ Spring 2012

## COACHING

FOR LIFE  
AND  
LEADERSHIP







## COACHING for Life and Leadership

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### Next Time in **enrichment**:

### TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHALLENGES TO THE GOSPEL

**The world gets smaller every day.** Advances in technology make communication across great distances instantaneous. Increasing access to education exposes people to a variety of religions, worldviews, and ideologies. And immigration across national boundaries brings people from very different cultures into close proximity with one another.

As the world gets smaller, Christians must face new ideas that challenge their understanding of God and His purposes for humanity. The summer 2012 issue of *Enrichment* examines some of those ideas, especially ones that challenge core elements of the gospel.

Craig Keener kicks off the issue by using John 3:16 to explain what the gospel is. Other authors reply to specific challenges to the gospel: atheism (Jerry Walls and Kyle Blanchette), Calvinism (Roger Olson and Waldermar Kowalski), rationalistic critiques of the Atonement (Frank Macchia and Joseph Davis), annihilationalism (Jim Railey), universalism (George Paul Wood), Buddhism (Alan Johnson), Islam (Joseph Cumming), pluralism (Ivan Satyavarata), and indifference to personal evangelism (Randy Hurst). George O. Wood concludes the issue with reflections on the practical importance of sound theology.

The summer 2012 issue of *Enrichment* will inform you about challenges to the gospel and equip you to respond to them in a biblical way.

# enrichment

Enriching and equipping  
Spirit-filled ministers

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■ **UPSIDE-DOWN PERSPECTIVE**

## Voluntary Simplicity

**Cluttered lives — overcommitted calendars — accessibility overload.** An ever-increasing pace of life governed by e-mail, instant messaging, and 24/7 busyness leaves us stressed and looking for ways to uncomplicate our lives.

Currently, evidence of an antistress movement is reflected in magazines, books, and websites devoted to simplifying our lives. Generally known as the “voluntary simplicity movement,” it encourages readers to declutter and downsize their lives, homes, wardrobes, and possessions, and to slow down to a more balanced, deliberate life. Mental health professionals have also joined the movement, focusing on how simple living can help alleviate tension-related reactions such as anger, insomnia, anxiety, and chronic fatigue.

You may be so crunched for time and energy that you cannot think of ways to simplify your life. Here are a few suggestions to partner with prayer:

- **List and prioritize your activities. Eliminate those that no longer serve a purpose.**
- **Delegate.**
- **Let go of the myth of perfection.**
- **Set boundaries. Say no to projects that do not fit into your time schedule or will compromise your mental health.**
- **Turn off your cell phone when you do not want to be interrupted.**
- **Live within your income and work toward debt reduction.**
- **Limit the amount of information/stimuli you expose yourself to daily.**
- **Avoid overexposure to negative people. Nurture supportive relationships.**

Simplicity is about discovering what is enough in your life based on a thoughtful analysis of your lifestyle and values as God intends — and discarding the rest.

**PATTI ANN THOMPSON**, Kansas City, Missouri

■ **RELATIONSHIPS 101**

## TIME FOR SPRINKLING JOY

**A few moments of encouragement can lift a person's spirits.** Consider little actions you can do to add joy to people's lives.

- Start the day by noting three reasons to be thankful. Share these thoughts with others.
- Randomly choose friends, staff members, or people at church and mail a card with a short note.
- Phone someone to tell him you are praying for him/her.
- Cuddle up with your spouse or child.
- Give hugs.
- Compliment people for their work, effort, or looks.

- Thank people for being themselves, for their good character traits, or for their presence at church or a meeting.
- Express appreciation for the work of others.
- Encourage someone with a promise to help. Follow through with that commitment.
- Give 1 hour a week or month to help an elderly church member with lawn care, a chore, or other needs.
- Place \$5 or \$10 in an envelope and give it to someone this week.
- Buy flowers for your spouse or write a note expressing your love.
- Plan an appreciation party for people who have helped you or the group you lead.
- Take someone out for coffee, or bring a healthy treat for workers.
- Smile at everyone you greet.

**KAREN H. WHITING**, author and speaker



## DIGITAL REVOLUTION

# THE STEWARDSHIP OF TECHNOLOGY

**Everything boils down to stewardship.** We must be good stewards of our time and talent. We need to be good stewards of our right brain and left brain. We need to be good stewards of our hormones. And we need to be good stewards of our resources. Let me add one more to the mix. We need to be good stewards of technology.

The church should be in the business of redeeming technology and using it to serve God's purposes. Is this not what Johannes Gutenberg did? He unchained the Bible from medieval pulpits when he printed it to put the Bible into the hands of the average parishioner. This was democratization of discipleship.

In his book, *God's Secretaries*, Adam Nicholson writes, "The old church and new technology were the closest of allies." New technology fueled the Protestant Reformation. Nicholson calls Martin Luther "the first genius of mass communications." One German printer estimated that Luther sold 100,000 Lutheran Bibles printed on his printing press. Can you imagine how many scribes and how long it would have taken to make 100,000 copies by hand?

Here is the bottom line: A revolutionary message plus a revolutionary technology packs a powerful one-two punch.

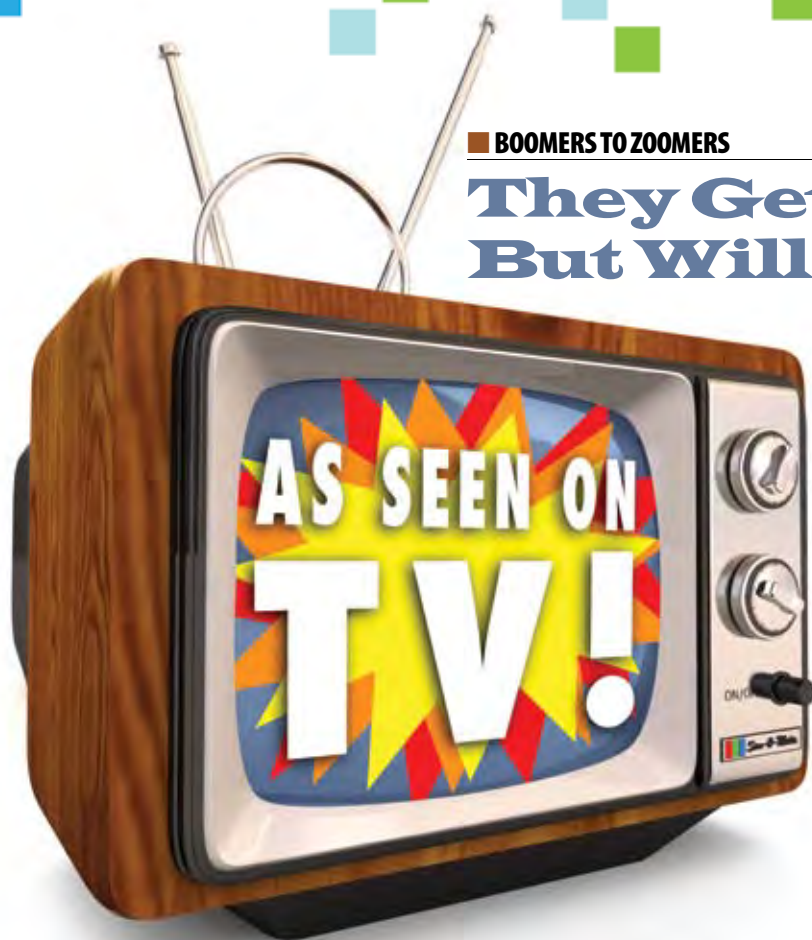
The printing press marked the transition from the oral age to the analog age. Our generation is witnessing the transition from the analog age to the digital age. And just as the church led the way in the analog revolution, the church needs to lead the way in the digital revolution.

We must redeem the blogosphere. We need to turn podcasts into Godcasts. We need to turn our websites into spiritual portals that introduce people to Christ.

**MARK BATTERSON**, Washington, D.C.

## BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

# They Get It, But Will They Buy It?



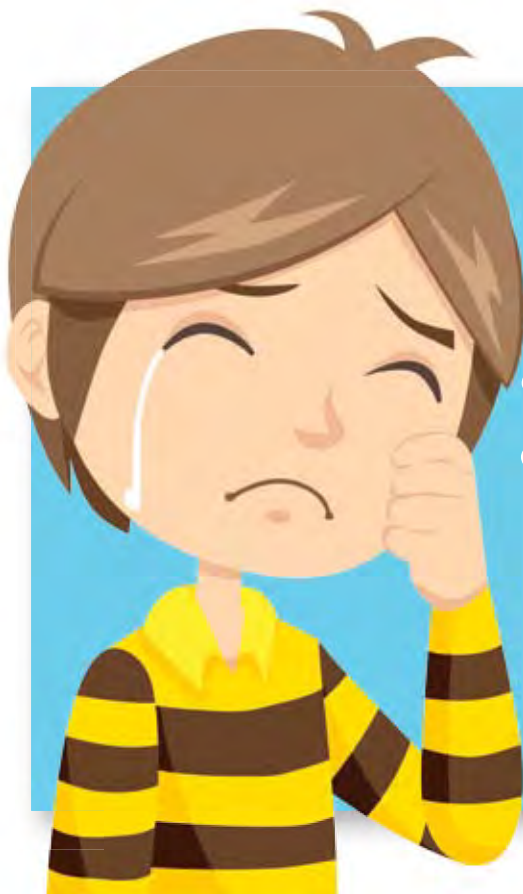
**Whether it's an image of Tony the Tiger or LeBron James**, a recent study<sup>1</sup> acknowledged that children as young as 10 recognize how TV commercials use celebrities to influence their purchasing decisions. The study, which surveyed 8-to-12-year-olds, further described their recognition of five other tactics used by advertisers to influence them. This study points to the cognitive developmental stage of adolescents in which they identify how another person's perspective intends to influence their lives; in other words, when do they get it? If this survey is correct, they get it pretty early in life.

So we ask, "How do they perceive their pastor's attempts to influence their lives?" Is the message and ministry compelling, worthy of consideration, or does it come off as just another commercial? To what degree are you as a church leader embedded enough in their lives in ways that seem honest enough for them to buy it?

**RANDY WALLS**, director of continuing education, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

### NOTE

1. Esther Rozendaal, Moniek Buijzen, and Patti Valkenburg, "Children's Understanding of Advertisers' Persuasive Tactics," *International Journal of Advertising* 30 no. 2 (2011): 329–350.



## UPWORDS

**When I was about 4 years old, I was playing in the yard** with a makeshift spear I had fashioned from a broken broomstick. As I was delivering a deathblow to an imaginary enemy pinned under my bare foot, my thrust reached an unintended target. I felt

# Heal It!

a stab of pain and blood began to flow from my wounded toe. According to my mother, I danced around yelling, "Heal it, Jesus! Heal it!"

Mom heard my cries, came to my rescue, and did what she could to ease my distress. There was no instantaneous healing of my toe, but a mother's soothing words can produce almost miraculous results.

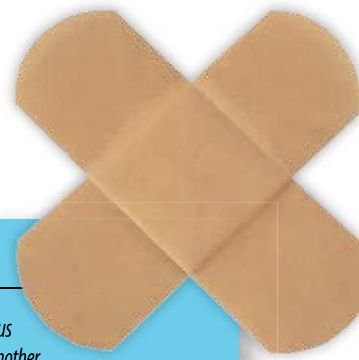
Today, I wonder why I responded the way I

did. *Why did I call out to Jesus rather than scream for my mother as one would normally expect from a child?* Someone had obviously done a good job of portraying Jesus to me as the Great Physician. In my childlike faith, I believed Jesus cared about my bruised toe and would do something about it.

Looking back, I also wonder, *When did I lose that absolute, unquestioning trust in Jesus?* and *How can I get it back?* In my wondering, I am reminded of the prayer of the father of the demon-possessed child who said with tears, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

As I make this prayer my own, I long once again to be the little child whose knee-jerk reaction to trouble is to always look *first* to Jesus for help.

**JACK AIKEN**, Eagle River, Alaska



## TIMEWISE

# TIMES OF WAITING

**Waiting for God's answers can be productive.** Waiting provides moments, days, and even years for inner growth, developing a deeper relationship with God, and time to help others.

- **Rest in God.** Enjoy family and church members. Once God answers, you may need to invest more time and energy in new directions. Set aside time to be alone with God and listen, talk, and journal your thoughts. Focus on being with people and listening to them.
- **Remain humble.** Hold a grain of salt or sand and realize God's vastness and your smallness. Ask daily how you can be God's servant and how you can help someone in need.
- **Avoid forcing your way.** Abraham's man-made route had far-reaching consequences. Before making or launching plans, ask for God's blessing and listen to wise counsel, including Scripture.
- **"Dwell in the land."** Do your best wherever God places you (Psalm 37:3). Joseph did his best where God placed him, even in prison. Like Joseph, focus on doing your best with the resources God provides. Avoid being lazy or complaining, but thank God for your circumstances.
- **Do good while waiting.** Help someone or spend time praying for and with others. Joseph helped others in prison and God prospered him. Minister to people under your leadership. Be generous with smiles and encouraging words.

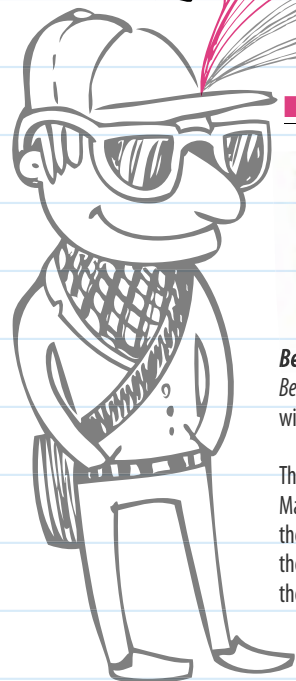
Waiting is a gift of time from God, so appreciate it.

**KAREN H. WHITING**, author and speaker





Date



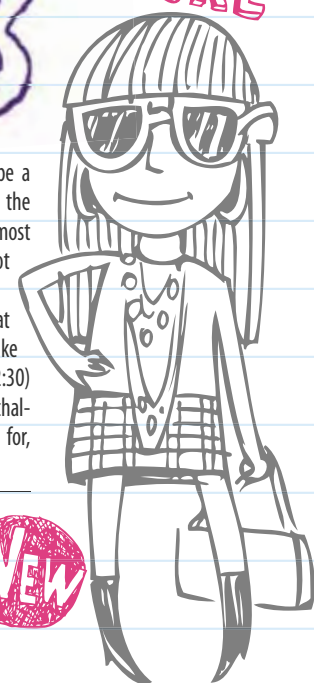
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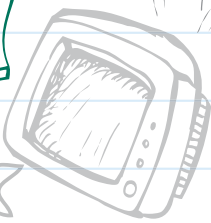
shorts

# Becoming

GIRL



BOY



**Becoming.** Dictionary.com defines this verb as “to grow to be.” *Becoming* describes a process. It is something that takes place with time, experience, and investment.

Today’s teen is not familiar with the process of *becoming*. They *become* friends on Facebook with the click of a button. Many *become* a couple over night — quick and cheap like their favorite fast food. Boy meets girl, girl sleeps with boy — there is no *becoming*. One night they are strangers and single, the next they are a couple.

Paul instructed the Philippians to “work out your salvation” (Philippians 2:12). The word, *work*, according to Dictionary.com, means “*exertion* or effort directed to produce or accomplish something.”

Could our teens be missing the type of relationship Jesus is inviting them to? Might they base this relationship on the way relationships work (or do not work) in their everyday world? Could there be some confusion as to what He is calling them to become when they become a Christian?

We need to be clear that Jesus is calling them to be a servant or “a bondservant” (Colossians 4:12, NASB<sup>1</sup>). He is the One for whom they put everything else aside. He is the most important relationship in their lives. This relationship is not passive or quick. It requires seeking — an action verb.

Seeking takes effort — learning about who He is, what He is like, and then being intentional about becoming like Him. “With all your heart and with all your soul” (Mark 12:30) is what He requires. Let us not be afraid to put out the challenge. Teens want it. They want something worth dying for, but even more important, something worth *living* for.

LYNN COWELL, Charlotte, North Carolina

## NOTE

1. Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible<sup>®</sup>, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission (www.Lockman.org).

NEW

FRIEND

## ON THE HOME FRONT

### Ministers All Week

**As a minister, you have valuable occasions to minister to children all week** by teaching their parents. From birth to 18 years, 85 percent of a child’s learning hours are spent outside the classroom — mainly the living room. Home is the primary class and parents are the first and most important teachers. Scholar and theologian William Barclay counseled, “There are no teachers so effective for good or evil as parents.”

Encourage your church parents to daily teach about our Heavenly Father as commanded in Deuteronomy 6. Urge them to weave spiritual lessons into conversations,

letters, chores, and activities with their kids. Teach parents the power of placing visual reminders around their homes that cause children to ask questions. Visual reminders of faith include pictures of Jesus, praying hands, the Bible, or placing Scriptures on the refrigerator or the car visor.

Remind parents that their participation in church sends a message to their children that they value their community of faith. Church attendance must become a habit of the heart.

Assure parents that they do not need to be perfect spiritually before they can be spiritual equippers to their children. One young mother recognized she did not always have to quench the thirst of

her son’s spiritual needs but she must create the thirst.

Your eternal contribution to children does not end on Sunday. It goes beyond the church when you coach parents to impress spiritual truth on their children every day.

BRENDA NIXON, Mount Vernon, Ohio





BOOKIT

# UNBROKEN: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption



**I first heard about this book from my business partner.** I filed the information under “things to do if I have the time.” A few weeks later a buddy raved about the book he was reading. The title sounded familiar. Then I remembered my business partner’s recommendation. So I got the book and could not put it down.

*Unbroken* tells the story of Louis Zamperini, world-class runner and world-class war hero. As a teenager, Louis was dedicated to causing trouble and was headed in the wrong direction until he discovered that he could run. That God-given ability propelled him through high school and college and into the Berlin Olympics. He had dreams of glory at the next Olympics in Helsinki, but those games were cancelled because of the war. So Louie joined the Army Air Corps and became a B-24 bombardier. The book details his wartime exploits, including his air battles, his survival after a crash in the Pacific, and his suffering at the hands of the Japanese in a prison camp.

Author Laura Hillenbrand meticulously researched Zamperini’s life. She says, “That first conversation with Louie was a pivot point in my life. Fascinated by his experiences, and the mystery of how a man could overcome so much, I began a 7-year journey through his story. I found it in diaries, letters, and unpublished memoirs; in the memories of his family and friends, fellow Olympians, former American airmen, and Japanese veterans; in forgotten papers in archives as far-flung as Oslo and Canberra. Along the way, there were staggering surprises, and Louie’s unlikely, inspiring story came alive for me. It is a tale of daring, defiance, persistence, ingenuity, and the ferocious will of a man who refused to be broken.”

Masterfully written with a rhythm of struggle, humor, and human drama, the story pulls you along. This is not a Christian book (published by Random House), but it has a serious Christian punch line. And it is loaded with potential sermon illustrations.

**DAVE VEERMAN**, Naperville, Illinois



BIBLE EVANGELISM

## Fishers of Men (and Women)

**Looking for an evangelistic tool to reach out to sports enthusiasts?** BiblicaDirect.com offers a variety of Bibles and New Testaments for sports lovers that offer stories about famous athletes who model godly character. Each Bible includes unique features such as athletes providing Bible verses that help them, reading and study tools, and photos of athletes.

*The Heart of the Outdoors* NIV Bible, which targets hunting and fishing enthusiasts, offers adventure stories about hunter Ed Wetherby, outdoor writer Kathy Butt, and fisherman Jay Yelas.

*Path to Victory* New Testaments include a baseball edition that features stories of Albert Pujols and Jake Peavey. The football edition includes stories about Kurt Warner and



LaDainian Tomlinson. John Salmons and Anthony Parker appear in the basketball version. A stock car racing edition sports a story about Kyle Petty. There is also an *Action Sports* edition.

The *Passion and Power* NIV New Testament targets women in sports. It features hot topics from God’s Word, including dealing with adversity, peer pressure, and drinking and drugs.

Finally, there’s a *Path to Victory Multi-sport Bible* that comes in Today’s New International Version (TNIV) and offers stories about NASCAR’s Matt Kenseth and snowboarder Kelley Clark.

These make great evangelism tools to reach the sports enthusiast in your community. Prices range from \$1.99 to \$4.99. Order at [www.BiblicaDirect.com](http://www.BiblicaDirect.com).

**DIANNE E. BUTTS**, Pueblo, Colorado







## FACES OF THE FAITH

### Francis of Assisi

**Francis of Assisi singlehandedly awakened Christianity** to the importance of simple living and the loving of all beings, human and animal. Born into considerable wealth, Francis could have looked forward to a life of leisure and affluence. The experiences of being wounded in battle and held as a prisoner of war, however, made him question his values and life.

Once while riding his horse, Francis saw a leper by the side of road. Normally, such sights repulsed him, and he would spur his horse quickly past them. This time, however, the leper became the source of a mystical, transforming vision for Francis. Francis saw the face of Christ in this leper's face. Overcome with love and joy, Francis leapt from his horse, kissed the leprous beggar, gave the man money, placed him on his own horse, and took the man to his destination.

From that point on Francis lived a life of love and simplicity. He renounced his father's wealth, dedicated himself to a life of poverty, and began to preach a profoundly simple gospel of love and service to God. By 1218, there were at least 3,000 followers of Francis living his same lifestyle.

Francis died in October 1226 and 2 years later was canonized as a saint. His last words were, "I have done my duty; may Christ now teach you yours."

**VICTOR PARACHIN**, Tulsa, Oklahoma

## HEAVEN, HELL, AND ETERNAL DESTINY

### Winning and Losing

Rob Bell's best-selling *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (HarperOne), has caused quite a stir and elicited heated reactions.

Three of these reactions come in book form: *God Wins* (Tyndale) by Mark Galli, *Erasing Hell* (D.C. Cook) by Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle, and *Hell is Real (But I Hate to Admit It)* (D.C. Cook) by Brian Jones.

*God Wins* is a direct response to Bell's work and is an outstanding resource. Galli, senior managing editor of *Christianity Today*, clearly and thoughtfully presents the biblical and traditional orthodox teachings regarding sin, salvation, judgment, heaven, and hell while keeping a positive, conciliatory tone. His thesis rests on the sovereignty of God and the authority of God's Word. And although Mark refutes Bell's main premises, he does so with grace.

The book by Preston Sprinkle and Francis Chan, pastor, international speaker, and author of the wildly successful *Crazy Love*, also responds to Bell but takes a slightly different approach. Written in a more casual, conversational tone, *Erasing Hell* unpacks, as the subtitle announces, "What God said about eternity, and the things we've made up." This book answers these question and more: Does everyone go to heaven? Has hell changed, or have we? What did Jesus say about hell? What did Jesus' followers say about hell? What does all of this have to do with me? What happens to the person who hasn't heard about God or Jesus? Similar to Galli, Chan and Sprinkle treat Bell with respect.

Brian Jones is senior pastor at Christ's Church of the Valley in the suburbs of Philadelphia and is well known in "emergent church" circles. Brian confesses that for the first few years of his ministry he did not believe in hell. In this book, he shares his discovery that hell exists and why we are afraid to admit it. This book is more personal than the others and is filled with practical implications and exhortations arising from the doctrine of hell.

"Heaven, Hell, and Eternal Destiny" would make a great adult Sunday School class study. I recommend using *God Wins* as the text by following Galli's outline and using the other volumes as supplemental resources. Unfortunately, in recent years we have often been reluctant to talk hell in our churches, but the *Love Wins* controversy gives us opportunity to underscore this truth while answering Bell.

**DAVE VEERMAN**, Naperville, Illinois



## APP NEWS

### Enrichment for iDevices

**Did you know** that you can read *Enrichment* on your iPad and iPhone? Just download the app from the iTunes Store using the link below. In addition to the high-quality content of the print edition, the app includes hyperlinks to online resources. Future issues will include streaming video of interviews, tutorials, and sermons — all of which will be viewable without exiting the app. *Enrichment* is also working on an app for Android devices. Both the app and the entire content of each *Enrichment* issue are free! Go to [itunes.apple.com/us/app/enrichment-journal/id461816475?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/enrichment-journal/id461816475?mt=8).







## LEADERLIFE

# Leadership's Continuing Task

**Singapore is now the No. 2 economy in the world.** The legacy of this tiny nation and its rise to power led by the venerable Lee Kwan Yew is truly a story of sterling leadership. However, recent analysis suggests that the future may not be as bright as current economic indicators might indicate. While the CEOs in Singapore express their willingness to develop the next generation of leaders, very few of them are proactive and strategic in making this happen. While productivity has lifted the Singapore economy to global strength, the future may yield some surprises.

What is even more ironic is that Singapore emerged in a post-WWII era when daunting ethnic, religious, and economic challenges threatened to annihilate this former colony of the British Empire. The leadership

that emerged during this time formed in the middle of adverse situations. They triumphed against incredible odds. Surprisingly, in responding to the current seismic economic shifts that require new skills for continued economic strength, Singapore's key companies are cutting their budgets for leadership development.

The case study of Singapore yields a critical lesson for church leadership. Iconic leadership may be a great example to observe and learn from. However, unless leadership for ongoing effectiveness becomes an intentional part of current leadership's deepest commitments, vitality can quickly digress to mediocrity. In the fast-changing contexts that are the "new normal," current effectiveness is not the foolproof predictor of continuing effectiveness.

# Self-leadership

**People in the business world (and church world) often achieve leadership at high cost.** Extraordinary skills that yield competency, believing in one's own capabilities, and sheer determination are leadership qualities that we tout as admirable. But a long trajectory of skillful and determined effort can also lead to arrogance when we achieve that long sought after position of influence.

Surprisingly, "humble" leadership facilitates long-term success in an organization. Research describe *humble leaders* as having:

- an accurate and realistic sense of one's abilities and achievements.
- the ability to acknowledge one's mistakes, gaps in knowledge, and limitation.
- openness to new ideas and contradictory information.
- the ability to keep one's abilities and accomplishments in perspective.
- relatively low focus of self and the capability to "forget the self."
- appreciation for a plethora of contributions that different people make to our world and communities.

Author Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't*, observes that *humble leaders* are willing to listen to opposing viewpoints without being overly defensive. These leaders have high moral values that result in focusing on doing things right, for the right reasons. Self-leadership that yields long-term effectiveness acknowledges that effective leaders play to their strengths and minimize their weaknesses by creating trusting relationships in the organizations they serve.



**BYRON KLAUS**, president, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

## LEADERLIFE

# A Listening Ear

**"Be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19).**

In his book *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists of listening to them. Just as love for God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brothers is learning to listen to *them*. It is [because of] God's love for us that He not only gives us His Word but also lends us His ear."



Listening was a key element in solving a problem between two ethnic groups in the infant church in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1–7). One group felt those who were distributing food were discriminating against their widows. So the apostles wisely listened to their complaint, worked out an acceptable solution, and settled the dispute.

Listening to others is important because churches are becoming increasingly diverse. People come from broad ethnic, racial, and generational backgrounds and are at different levels of maturity. How easy it is to be so driven to express our views or vent our feelings that we do not hear what others are saying.

There is a time to speak and a time to listen, a time to share our ideas and a time to value the ideas of others. Leaders are communicators. The paradox is finding the times to communicate with our lips and the times to communicate with our ears. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you work on that balance.

**PATTI ANN THOMPSON**, Kansas City, Missouri

■ HOLY LAUGHTER

## Top 10 Signs the Youth Pastor Wants the Senior Pastor's Job

10. Begins visiting shut-ins behind senior pastor's back.
9. Starts turning in reports on time.
8. At staff meetings, switches from Mountain Dew to coffee.
7. Suddenly replaces the music blaring from his office with Bill Gaither Homecoming tunes.
6. Sits in senior pastor's ergonomic office chair when she is out of the office.
5. Replaces the skateboard in the corner of his office with a golf bag.
4. Shows up wearing a tie and long pants.
3. Reads each issue of *Enrichment* cover to cover.

2. Demands that teens start calling him "Dr. Watson" rather than "Pastor Whacko."
1. Asks to borrow senior pastor's John Maxwell books.

So, before you find yourself victim of a congregational *coupe de grace*, here are some top three tips from someone who has been on both sides of the desk:

3. Never hire someone as youth pastor who wants to gain experience so she can be a senior pastor.
2. Make sure the youth pastor has a written job description.
1. Frequently encourage your youth pastor from the pulpit and in person.

**JAMES N. WATKINS**, Marion, Indiana  
For more "Holy Humor" visit [www.jameswatkins.com](http://www.jameswatkins.com).











## STUDY SUGGESTS WOMEN LOSING FAITH, COMMITMENT

**Women — for generations the driving force behind lay ministry in churches — appear to be less interested in spiritual devotion,**

according to a new analysis of trends in the past two decades by The Barna Group. The Ventura, California-based research group suggests that females today are both less engaged in church-related activities as well as less committed to biblical beliefs. Since 1991, an additional 17 percent of women consider themselves unchurched.

"The frightening reality for churches is that the people relied upon as the backbone of the church can no longer be assumed to be available and willing when needed, as they were in days past," says George Barna, founder of the company.

A majority of women in the country no longer attend church on a weekly basis. The ratio of females in the pew has fallen to 44 percent today compared to 55 percent in 1991. Likewise, only four out of 10 women read the Bible in a given week, down from half 20 years ago. That is now lower than men, of whom 41 percent crack the Scriptures weekly.

Sunday School involvement for women has dipped seven points to 24 percent in the same time span.



There has been a nine-point decline in the percentage of women helping out at church in a typical week. Although their participation and commitment is dwindling, women still are more devoted to church than men, comprising 57 percent of the adult volunteers.

While 63 percent of women say their faith is extremely important to them, this represents a drop of six points from 20 years ago. Only 42 percent of women (versus 49 percent earlier) firmly believe the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches. Those who are sure that God is "the all-knowing, all-powerful and perfect Creator of the universe who still rules the world" has tumbled 10 points to 70 percent.

"Women used to put men to shame in terms of their orthodoxy of belief and the breadth and consistency of their religious behavior," says Barna, who reports his findings in the new book *Futurecast*. "No more. The religious gender gap has closed considerably."

Images: Photos.com



## California City Appeals Pentecostal Church Ruling

**A California municipality is challenging an appeals court decision** that cleared the way for a growing Foursquare Gospel congregation to build in an industrial park, which the church contended served as the only suitable site in the city limits.

The city of San Leandro has filed a petition with

the U.S. Supreme Court to prevent the local Faith Fellowship Foursquare Church from relocating to property it purchased more than 5 years ago. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a rebuke to the city for using zoning laws to stifle Faith Fellowship, which wanted to build a 1,100-seat sanctuary to relieve the overcrowded quarters in which it meets in a residential area for three services. The church is claiming violations of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) as its defense.

"The City of San Leandro is seeking sweeping power to deny religious assembly zoning applications and undo a federal law that has been relied on by countless churches for more than a decade," says Brad Dacus, president of the Sacramento-based Pacific Justice Institute, which represents the church.

The 2,000-member church signed a purchase agreement for an abandoned software company site in 2006, making a \$53,903 down payment and shelling out another \$50,000 in nonrefundable fees while waiting for the city to approve a rezoning request. The church complied with municipal directives for changes to the property, but the city council later blocked the move. The church ended up selling the property at a loss of

almost \$4 million and filed suit against the city.

Judge Kevin Thomas Duffy, writing for the three-member panel that reversed a lower court decision, said the city had failed to prove a compelling interest for its actions and that its actions imposed a "substantial burden on the church's exercise of religion within the meaning of RLUIPA."

The city's real estate agent as well as a former city manager testified that only the industrial location could suffice for such a large congregation to meet.

"City leaders suggested that the church did not belong in a 'prime' property, but instead should buy a mobile home park and evict the residents, buy a property resembling a junkyard or pay inflated prices for properties that were not being offered for sale," Dacus says.

Duffy, in his opinion, wrote that the city failed to appreciate the church's core religious beliefs that require members "to be able to meet in one place to engage in joyous corporate worship" on Sunday mornings.

Dacus says if the Supreme Court hears the case it could have wide-ranging implications for houses of worship across the nation.



## Congregation Prevails in Municipal Land Dispute

**T**he City of Yuma, Arizona, agreed to pay \$400,000 to a church in December after an appeals court ruled against the municipality in a property dispute. The San Francisco-based 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals determined that the city did not treat Centro Familiar Cristiano Buenos Nuevas Christian Church equally with similarly situated groups and businesses as required by federal law.

"Government officials cannot use broad commercial reasons to favor non-religious businesses or membership organizations over religious ones," says Byron J. Babione, senior legal counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund, which argued the case. "The city's actions left this small congregation with a mortgage to pay on a building it could not use for 2 years while it had to pay for another meeting place at the same time."

The reversal last July by the three-member 9th Circuit of a lower court ruling meant that the congregation could seek damages, including payment for the money it lost paying the mortgage on a building the city would not allow it to occupy. On behalf of the 250-member Southern Baptist congregation, the Scottsdale-based ADF sued under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), which protects churches from discrimination in land use disputes with local governments.

"It is hard to see how an express exclusion of 'religious organizations' from uses permitted as of right by other 'membership organizations' could be other than 'less than equal terms' for religious organizations," Judge Andrew J. Kleinfeld wrote in the opinion.

The city required religious organizations to obtain a conditional use permit to operate even though businesses and other "membership organizations" can build "as of right," meaning they do not need a special permit. The city refused the church's 2007 request for a permit on the basis that the expanding church — by occupying a vacant JCPenney store purchased at a distress sale price — would "blight" an arts and entertainment district. The court noted that "many of the uses permitted as of right would have the same practical effect as a church blighting a potential block of bars and nightclubs."

In December, the city approved giving the church \$400,000 to cover legal fees, costs and damages to end the 4-year dispute.

## MEDIAN AG MINISTER AGE IS 53 YEARS



**A**ction taken by delegates at the 2011 General Council in Phoenix to expand the General Presbytery by adding a dozen ordained ministers under the age of 40 from geographic districts, language groups, and ethnic fellowships is partly in response to the gradual aging of pastors in the U.S. Fellowship. Slightly less than one-fourth of AG ministers are under 40, according to data compiled by AG statistics supervisor Sherri Doty.

As of December 31, 2010, the movement had just 14.8 percent of its ministers in their 30s and only 7.6 percent in their 20s, according to Doty. An even one-fourth of AG ministers are 65 and older, while another one in 10 is ages 60 to 64. In all, 19 percent are in their 40s and 23.5 percent are in their 50s.

The median age of ministers in the AG is 53. For ordained ministers, the median age is 58.

The youngest AG minister at the end of last year was 18, the oldest 104.

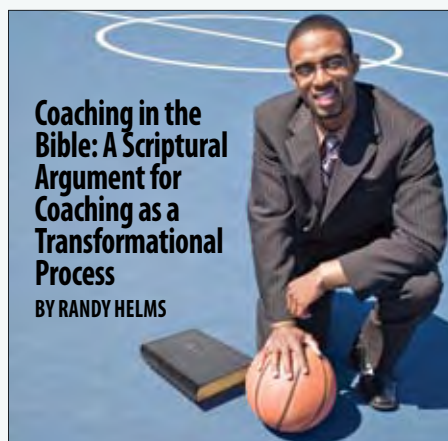
The National Slavic Fellowship had the youngest median age for ministers, 47. The youngest geographical districts' median age, 49, are in Nebraska, North Dakota and Ohio. Seven districts — Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota, and Wisconsin-Northern Michigan — had the next youngest age, 50. The Southwest District has the highest median age of 60. The next-to-oldest age, 59, is in the Korean District.

The median age of AG ministers hovered in the 40s for most of the 1980s and 1990s, but has crept up at an accelerated pace in the past 15 years. The median age was only 47 in 1996, but 49 by 1999. Two years later it hit 50, then 51 in 2004, 52 in 2007 and 53 in 2009, according to statistics compiled by Doty.





**Is coaching in the Bible? Was Jesus a coach?** These are important questions because coaching is becoming a part of the church landscape. While the Bible does not use the title *coach* and no biblical leader called himself a coach, we do find biblical principles and practices for coaching in Scripture. Coming alongside individuals to help them discover a better way, sustain vision, and move forward in their lives or careers is a direct reflection of the heart of God displayed in Scripture. Randy Helms, in this insightful article, explores the scriptural place of coaching in the church.



## Coaching in the Bible: A Scriptural Argument for Coaching as a Transformational Process

BY RANDY HELMS

Images: Photos.com



## HOW ONE DISTRICT IS BRINGING A COACHING CULTURE TO LIFE

BY KEVIN WEAVER

**“Where was coaching 20 years ago when we started ministry?”** asked Sarah Lehman, wife of Lead Pastor Mark Lehman, Family Life Assembly of God, Pittsburg, Kansas, after she completed the Assemblies of God Kansas District (AGK) coach-training process. Lehman was seeing a new way of doing ministry. As coaching increases as a viable method for transforming lives and churches, districts are looking for ways to provide coaching training for their pastors. The Kansas District model describes how districts can successfully use a coach-approach to enhance the ministry effectiveness of its pastors.



## Which Hat Should I Wear?

BY THOMAS LINDBERG

**Ministers wear many hats:** counselor, board chairman, pastor, goodwill ambassador, and spokesperson for the church on moral issues, et al. But one hat every pastor wears is that of a preacher. For Thomas Lindberg, “the supreme task of a minister is to preach God’s Word.” Using 1 Corinthians 1, Lindberg provides scriptural evidence that preaching is the most important hat a pastor will wear.



## The Cost of Nondiscipleship

BY JAMES D. HERNANDO

**How do we account for the sinful acts Christians sometimes commit?** How do we respond to those who commit these acts? We often wonder if such people are even saved. The apostle Paul dealt head on with these issues. He provided rebuke, instruction, and encouragement to those who are on a path of moral and spiritual transformation. He called believers to walk worthy of their calling and then described what that meant. A failure to disciple believers causes negative consequences, both individually and corporately. James Hernando encourages pastors to fulfill their role in discipling those under their care.



## Transforming From Pastoral Counselor to Pastoral Coach: New Tools for the Pastor’s Toolbox

BY LINDA J. MILLER

**Many pastors enjoy the variety in ministry.** Pastors are often more gifted in one area than in others. While some pastors enjoy counseling, others might not feel as comfortable in that role. This article gives an account of how one pastor found that the coaching approach to counseling freed him from some of the anxiety he faced in his counseling appointments. Linda Miller explains how the coaching approach to counseling can transform your counseling sessions.







INTRODUCTION

# COACHING

for Life and Leadership

► BY RICK KNOTH

**I** have always loved and played sports. In my former days of “sports glory,” I played for several coaches. Some I remember with great fondness; others have been hard to forget — and for good reason.

I most remember one of my high school basketball coaches, not for his coaching prowess and inspiring pregame talks, but rather for his tough demeanor, vulgar tone, and win-at-all-cost philosophy. He failed miserably to seize upon the team’s victories and defeats as teachable moments in the lives of his players.

Illustration by Gary Locke

Instead of building positive character traits — respect, responsibility, discipline, and self-worth — he dismantled players' character with fear, intimidation, and shame. Not the model coach you would want for your kids or grandkids, to be sure.

The imprint of a coach's legacy on a player's heart is not for his or her swagger or winning ways but for the courage he inspires, the character he instills, and the confidence he imparts. A great coach sets standards of excellence, learning, and improvement that encourage and motivate players to be great persons on and off the court.

Many consider the late John Wooden — a self-effacing kind of sage for both basketball and life — the greatest basketball coach in the history of the sport. Though he never stressed winning as the “be-all and end-all” of life, he did win 10 national championships, more than any other basketball coach. His “Woodenisms” have stood the test of time. Here are a few that speak to his greatness as a person and a coach:

“Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.”

“What you are as a person is far more important than what you are as a basketball player.”

“Being average means you are as close to the bottom as you are to the top.”

“Make each day your masterpiece.”

“Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible.”

“Make friendship a fine art.”

“Build a shelter against a rainy day.”

“Pray for guidance.”

“Count and give thanks for your blessings every day.”

The arena of high school and college athletics could certainly benefit from a few more John Woodens. Wouldn't you agree?

By now you might be asking, “Why are you devoting so much space in *EJ* to the topic of coaching? After all, I am a pastor, not an athlete. What does coaching have to


do with my life and ministry? Jesus is coming back and people are going to hell. Aren't there more important topics to talk about?”

Yes, Jesus is coming back and people are going to hell. That is precisely why we need to be at the top of our game. So this issue of *Enrichment* highlights a different kind of coach — a life coach. We could all benefit from having an objective third-party come alongside us to help us see beyond our problems and the thousand pressing needs that crowd our days — someone to help us stay grounded and focused on the things in life and ministry that really matter, like winning people to Jesus — someone who treasures the “game” as much as we do and who is committed to our success.

Have you ever given thought to how coaching can be expressed in the ministries of your church or how coaching can personally benefit you and your staff? If not, by the time you finish reading this issue you will have a clear understanding of the role of coaching and its significance to you and your church.

The model of coaching presented in this issue is a designed alliance between a coach and a coachee, where the coaching relationship continually gives all the power back to the person being coached. A life coach believes that you have the answers to every question or challenge you may have in your life and ministry, even if those answers appear to be vague, hidden, or buried inside.

Life coaching is not the “be-all and end-all” for your ministry, but it is a very important first step to get you to the top of your game. Other support ministries like counseling, consulting, and mentoring have their rightful place at the table, and you need to utilize each one to its full potential within its proper ministry context.

We hope that after reading this issue you will either find a life coach or desire to be a coach to others. We also trust you will enjoy this issue of *Enrichment* as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you. 

We could all benefit from having an objective third-party come alongside us to help us stay grounded and focused on the things in life and ministry that really matter — someone who treasures the “game” as much as we do and who is committed to our success.



**RICK KNOCH** is managing editor, *Enrichment* journal, Springfield, Missouri.





# BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING

► BY TIM ROEHL

Author's  
intro video



**Both the  
Old and New  
Testaments  
give us great  
models,  
instructions,  
and scenarios  
to help us in  
our coaching  
journey.**



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**M**any pastors regard coaching with skepticism. Some say, "It smacks too much of business." Others say, "If coaching is about somebody barking orders to win at all costs as I see in some sports coaches, I do not want to be a part of it. Jesus was not like that." Still others remark, "Show me where you can find coaching in the Bible.

Coaching at its best is grounded in biblical principles. God's Word gives examples from which we form our understanding of mentoring and coaching.

In their simplest forms, my teammate and coauthor Steve Ogne and I define mentoring as *pouring in* and coaching as *pulling out*.

Knowing when to pour in and when to pull out are essential issues for coaches. Our joy as coaches is to see the Lord work as one leader comes alongside other leaders to help them discover how God is working in them and empowering them to be transformed into the image of Jesus so they can join Christ on His redemptive mission. We call this TransforMissional Coaching.

Divine appointments happen where relationships of a coach, a leader, and the Holy Spirit intersect. From the beginning of Creation, God designed us to be in relationship, and coaching flows out of relationships. In *Spiritual Mentoring*, Keith Anderson and Randy Reese note: "We discover our identity in the context of community. We learn best together with the help of other people."<sup>1</sup>

## Old Testament

The Old Testament contains insights about

coaching. We find one example in Moses' father-in-law Jethro, also called Reuel ("friend of God"). In Exodus 18:1–24, we find the friend of God serving God's leader as a mentor and coach in vital ways.

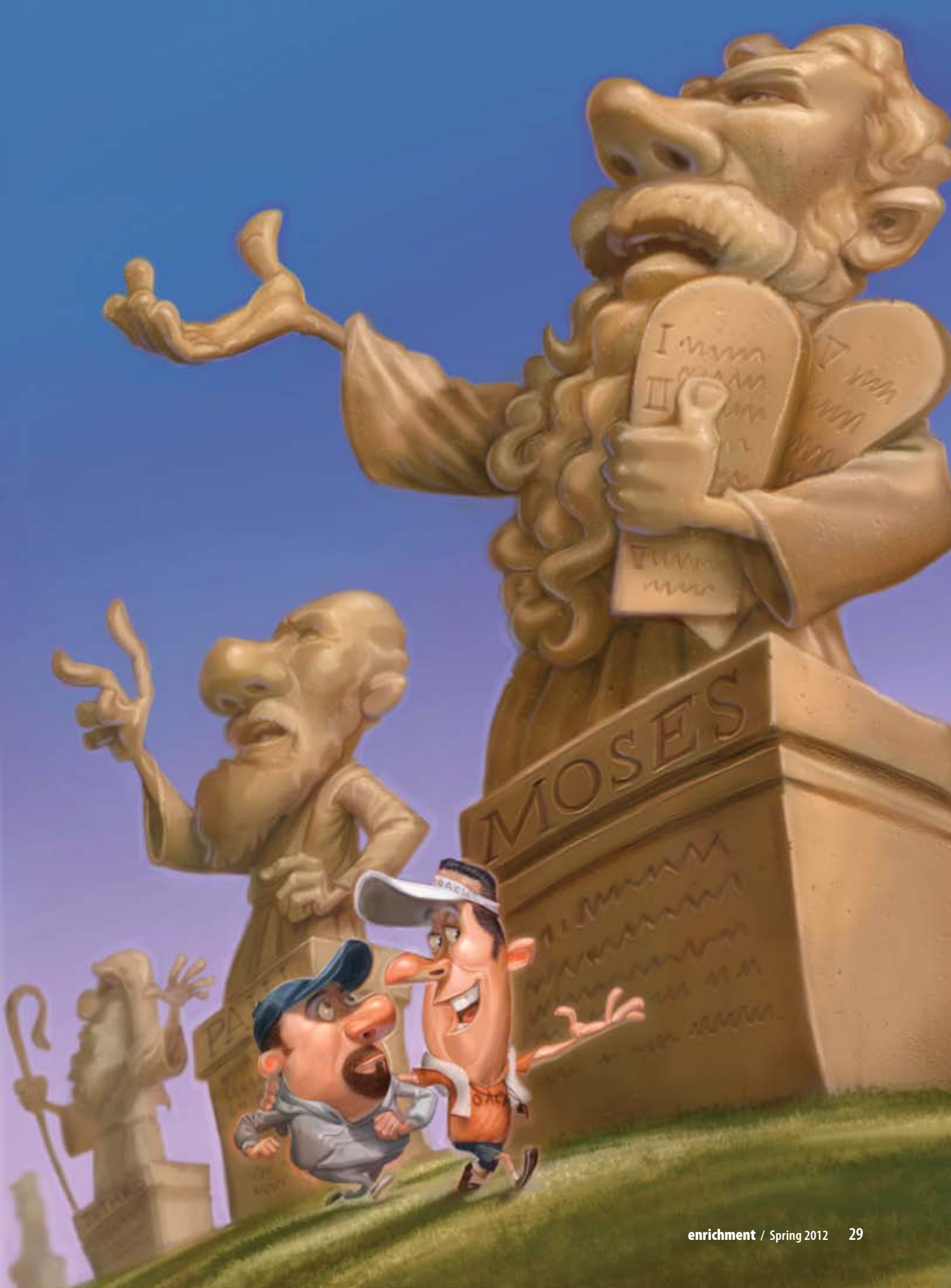
Jethro mentored and coached Moses by:

- meeting with him (verse 7).
- taking time to find out how he was doing personally (verse 7).
- listening to him about the ups and downs of his journey (verse 8).
- celebrating with him (verse 9).
- worshipping with him (verse 12).
- eating with him (verse 12).
- watching him work (verse 14).
- asking him probing questions (verse 15).
- challenging unproductive behavior (verse 17).
- giving wise counsel (verses 18–23).

Jethro is an Old Testament model of a coach and mentor. He wisely drew out what God was doing in Moses' life and poured in at the right moment to help Moses develop a plan for leading God's people in healthy ways. He was a friend of God and a friend of God's leader.

The Book of Proverbs has insights about coaching. Proverbs' pithy principles are timely. Flowing from the central theme of our







The wisdom and perspective of others influences maturity and understanding.

need for wisdom, a number of verses remind us that wisdom comes from others as they listen, challenge, encourage, and sharpen us.

One verse that relates to the influence of one life on another is Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Textually there is evidence to suggest we need to link verse 17 with verse 19: "As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart" (verse 19). One possible interpretation could be, "Just as a mirror confronts you with your public shape, so your friends confront you with the shape in which thoughts and habits like your own have grouped themselves into character." A relationship has a sharpening influence by reflecting back what a person genuinely sees in another person's heart. Seeing accurately, motives and all,

becomes a starting place for genuine change.<sup>2</sup>

Proverbs 20:5 says, "The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out." *Purposes* is translated *motive* in some versions. Effective coaches get below the surface so leaders can get better clarity about their motivation and actions.

Another passage related to companionship and partnership is Ecclesiastes 4:9–12: "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

## Jesus' Questions

**Questions make us think.** Jesus often asked questions to engage those around Him because He knew that questions would prompt more soul searching than providing answers.

In the Gospels, Jesus asked more than 300 questions. This number varies because one translator might translate it as a question while another translates it as a statement. Some of Jesus' questions were rhetorical; He imbedded others inside

parables. Some were clearly leading to an answer He had in mind. In this regard, they were more like the coaching competency of direct communication. Many prompted discovery and centered on the heart of the matter.

Jesus' questions interrupted, informed, and illuminated the hearts of people and invited people to discovery, clarity, and destiny in a relationship with Him. We often focus on the teaching ministry of Jesus. We should also learn from the asking ministry of Jesus.

Studying Jesus' questions has made me better at formulating coaching questions. It is highly unlikely I will ask, "How many loaves and fishes do you have?" But Jesus' questions inspired me to form similar questions that will resonate for believers and prebelievers alike. Instead of "How many loaves and fishes?" I often ask, "What resources do you have that you may be overlooking?"

The following chart shows a sampling of Jesus' questions and a coaching question that each inspired.<sup>1</sup>

Reference	Jesus' Question	Today's Coaching Question
Matthew 8:26	"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"	Of what are you afraid?
Matthew 9:28	"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"	What could strengthen your resolve?
Matthew 14:31	"You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"	What misgivings do you have?
Matthew 15:34	"How many loaves do you have?"	What resources do you have?
Matthew 17:25	"What do you think, Simon?"	What are your initial thoughts?
Matthew 20:32	"What do you want me to do for you?"	What are your prayer requests on this matter?
Mark 8:19	"When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"	What additional or unexpected benefits did you receive?
Mark 9:16	"What are you arguing with them about?"	What is the essence of the debate?
Mark 9:21	"How long has he been like this?"	How long has this been the case?
Luke 8:25	"Where is your faith?"	On a scale of 1–10, how much faith do you have on this?
Luke 10:26	"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"	What is your interpretation?
Luke 10:36	"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"	How can you be a servant in this situation?
Luke 11:40	"Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"	What action will align with your intent?
Luke 12:20	"Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"	What is the long-term impact?

These verses highlight benefits of having someone walk along with you: You are more productive, you get help when you fall, you receive the comfort of companionship, and you get protection when you are under attack. The wisdom and perspective of others influence maturity and understanding. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes remind us that a companion with a listening ear, a timely word, or the ability to bring thoughts and intentions to the surface embodies relational empowerment.

## New Testament

### Paul gives the mandate for coaching

The apostle Paul gave a mandate for coaching in Ephesians 4:11,12: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his

people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

The Greek word *katartismos*, translated "equip" is also translated "prepare" or "perfect" in other versions. In his commentary on Ephesians, Francis Foulkes explains, "The word for equipping, *katartismos*, is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, although the corresponding verb is used of repairing something (Matt. 4:21 — in this case a fishing net); of God bringing the universe in the beginning into its intended shape and order (Heb. 11:3); and of restoring spiritual health to a person who has fallen (Gal. 6:1). It may be used, however, of perfecting what is lacking in the faith of Christians (cf. 1 Thess. 3:10; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10). We may say ... that the word denotes 'the bringing of the saints to a condition of fitness for the

The apostle Paul gave a mandate for coaching in Ephesians 4:11,12.

Luke 12:26	"Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"	How does this rank in your priorities?
Luke 12:42	"Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?"	What would be a wise and timely next step?
Luke 12:57	"Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?"	What is the truth of your present situation?
Luke 14:28	"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?"	What are all the costs?
Luke 14:31	"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"	What is your capacity?
Luke 16:12	"And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"	What accountability system do you need to put in place to be able to trust yourself?
Luke 24:17	"What are you discussing together as you walk along?"	What important topic do you want to discuss?
Luke 24:38	"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?"	What are your main concerns?
John 1:38	"What do you want?"	What do you want?
John 5:6	"Do you want to get well?"	What are you willing to do on your own behalf?
John 11:9	"Are there not twelve hours of daylight?"	How will you prioritize your activities today?
John 13:38	"Will you really lay down your life for me?"	What are you willing to sacrifice for this?
John 16:31	"Do you now believe?"	How strongly do you believe in this?
John 18:11	"Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"	What is your ultimate purpose?
John 18:34	"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"	What is your perspective?
John 20:15	"Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"	Who are the critical participants?
John 21:15	"Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"	How important is this to you?
John 21:22	"If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"	What could distract you from your goal?

## RESOURCE

1. Finis Jennings Dake, *Dake Study Bible* (Dake Publishing, 1963). At the end of the Old and New Testaments, there is a list of every question by book and verse.





istockphoto

Coaching is a role that focuses on “bringing the saints to a condition of fitness,” which is a function in the body of Christ.

discharge of their functions in the Body.’”<sup>3</sup>

*Katartismos* is one of the best New Testament words to describe the essence of relational empowerment of coaching. Coaching is a role that focuses on “bringing the saints to a condition of fitness,” which is a function in the body of Christ. Peer coaching is part mending, part restoration, and part inspiration, which all contribute to the Body being built up.<sup>4</sup> Coaching is an essential way to *katartizantas* leaders. Coaches help leaders fulfill their God-given purpose and make their ultimate Kingdom contribution.

#### **Barnabas, a model for coaching**

Of the people in the New Testament, besides Jesus, none fit the picture of a coach better than Barnabas. His name means “son of consolation or encouragement.” Some have called him “Barney the Encourager.”

No one had more influence in the growth of key leaders in the Early Church than Barnabas. He was willing to walk with Paul when everyone else wanted to walk away. When Paul wanted to drop Mark from the team, Barnabas stuck with the young leader who needed to work through some personal issues. So powerful and pervasive was the impact of Barnabas’ ministry that his ministry to Paul and Mark brought about the growth of the Early Church.

Three passages highlight Barnabas’ coaching impact. Phil Alessi depicts them this way<sup>5</sup>:

1. In Acts 9:23–31, Barnabas *discerned* potential in others, especially Paul.

2. In Acts 11:22–24, Barnabas *discovered* God at work as he worked alongside others. Note the words that describe his ministry: “News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.”

In his coaching, Barnabas was with them; he watched and discerned what God was doing; he celebrated what God was doing; he encouraged them; he helped them stay on course to their purpose; and he was a factor in their fruitfulness. Barnabas’ Spirit-filled character contributed to his coaching effectiveness.

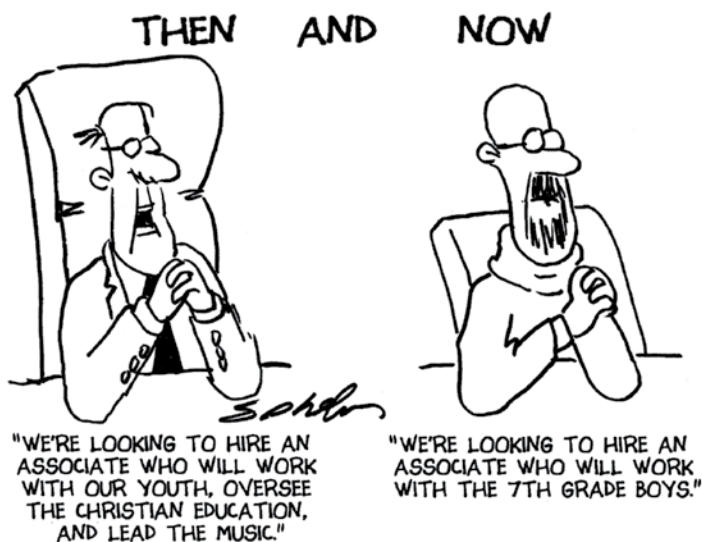
3. In Acts 11:25,26, Barnabas *deployed* the potential of others. He intentionally brought Saul into a ministry situation because he knew Saul would be an asset. He and Saul taught and led the rapidly growing church in Antioch.<sup>6</sup> When the Holy Spirit formed a new missionary leadership team in Acts 13:1–3, He designated Barnabas first on the team: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’ ” (verse 2).

As the new venture began, however, a significant shift occurred in the way the team operated. Before Acts 13:2, Luke talks about “Barnabas and Saul.” After the church at Antioch sent them out, we read about “Paul and Barnabas.”

Barnabas deliberately took a step back on the team as he recognized God’s work in and through Paul’s life. Barnabas was not only willing to sponsor Paul in ministry environments, he was also willing to let Paul take the leadership of the apostolic movement. He had seen enough of Paul’s heart and the fruit of his labor to know when it was time to encourage his partner to exercise his leadership gifts. One of my favorite quotes about coaching applies to Barnabas’ coaching Paul into his full potential: “The great leader is not the one in the spotlight. He’s the one leading the applause.”<sup>7</sup>

#### **Jesus, our Master Coach**

Above all coaches, Jesus stands supreme. His relationships with others — especially with His disciples — draw attention to many attitudes and activities we can assimilate into coaching.



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Keith Webb, veteran Church Resources Ministries missionary, coach, and trainer, says, "Jesus emptied himself (Matt. 20:20–28; Philippians 2:7) of power and status to become incarnational. Is there a lesson here for people of hierarchical cultures to empty themselves in order to serve, rather than to build the largest power base in order to serve? Does this also parallel an emptying of self as a coach in regard to advice giving and focusing more on drawing out the client in a Spirit-led discovery process?"<sup>8</sup>

Jesus' life is an inexhaustible supply of wisdom and insight about how to coach. He sent His Spirit to empower us to live and minister as He did.

### The Holy Spirit, our internal Mentor and Coach

The Holy Spirit lives in every Christian. Our intimate relationship with Him is the ultimate empowerment we need to coach others.

Consider these verses about the ministry of the Holy Spirit (italics highlight coaching applications and implications): "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another *Counselor* to be *with you* forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, because *He remains with you and will be in you*. I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you" (John 14:15–18, NIV, 1984).

The word *Counselor* is also translated "Helper" and "Comforter" in other versions. In Greek, the word is *parakletos* and has the idea of one who comes alongside.

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send Him in my name, will *teach you all things* and will *remind you* of everything I have told you" (John 14:26).

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, *he will guide you into all the truth*. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what *he hears*, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me *because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you*. All that belongs

to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he *will make known* to you" (John 16:13–15, italics added).

Webb quotes Richard Foster: "What is the purpose of a spiritual director? His direction is simply and clearly to lead us to our real Director. He is the means to open the path to the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit."<sup>9</sup> The ministry of spiritual direction and coaching are similar. They both depend on the power of the Holy Spirit and lead to life-changing discoveries.

Both the Old and New Testaments give us great models, instructions, and scenarios to help us in our coaching journey.

### Personal Application

- What Old Testament examples of coaching come to your mind?
- In what ways did Barnabas coach Paul?
- What coaching qualities are evident in the description of Barnabas found in Acts 11:23,24?
- Whom did Paul coach?
- What coaching qualities did Jesus practice?
- In what ways is the Holy Spirit an internal coach for you?
- How will coaching help you equip the saints for ministry? ☺

This article is edited from the chapter, "It's Biblical: Equipping the Saints for Ministry," in *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World* by Steven Ogne and Tim Roehl. Published by B&H Books, 2008. Reprinted and used by permission.

### NOTES

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Both the Old and New Testaments give us great models, instructions, and scenarios to help us in our coaching journey.



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For additional coaching resources visit [www.wesleyan.org/ecg/wcn\\_resources](http://www.wesleyan.org/ecg/wcn_resources).

No matter the size of your church,  
creating a coaching culture can move  
your congregation forward in  
carrying out the Great Commission.







# CREATING A COACHING CULTURE IN YOUR CHURCH

**A**t its core, coaching is about relationships. It is about connecting people to their highest aspirations, potential, and passions. Coaching is a means by which we can help people plug in to their dreams, calling, and design, and help them discover the actions that will move them forward. Your church, too, is a place where these connections are made, or at least it could be.

What would it be like for those in your church to be really clear about who and how God designed them to be? How would it change the impact of your congregation on your community if those involved in your congregation were intentional about how God has gifted them, where their passions lie, and what they could do to leverage those gifts and passion for the betterment of their community? These are the kinds of benefits churches and other organizations are experiencing as a result of creating a coaching culture within the organization.

**Reflection questions:** How can you, as a ministry leader, better equip others to serve their faith community? What if the members of your congregation felt more ownership and responsibility for the ministry of your church?

## What is Coaching?

You have probably heard people use the term *coaching* to describe various activities. Given the growing popularity of coaching in the last

several years, it is no wonder many call themselves coaches. So, what are we talking about?

As we understand coaching in our organization, we are talking about a mindset, a skill set, and a relationship.

Coaching starts with a *mindset* ... a fundamental belief in the worth, capabilities, and motivation of others. Coaches believe in other people and in their value — that inherent set of talents, passions, and potential. Coaches believe others have within them the ability to determine what they want, the actions they can take to get what they want, and the ability and motivation to take that action. Coaches start out believing that others do not need our solutions, but are capable of determining their own solutions.

How would believing this about the people in your congregation change how you interact with them? What would your conversations look like if you believed this about others?

Another important element of a coaching mindset is the belief that people are more

► BY **BILL COPPER**



Author's  
intro video



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Coaches *listen*,  
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them to think,  
dream, and discover  
their own solutions  
and then take  
action on those  
solutions.



mindset is the belief that people are more likely to act on their own ideas. We have adopted a saying popularized by Thomas Peters in his 1985 best seller *A Passion for Excellence*: “No one ever washes a rental car.” People take care of what they own, including their ideas. Coaches understand that when we draw out ideas and solutions from others, they are much more likely to act on those ideas.

In addition to a mindset, coaching is also a *skill set*. Coaches use a specific set of skills in their communication with others that is designed to draw out the best in them. Coaches *listen*, *ask questions*, and *encourage* others in a way that inspires them to think, dream, and discover their own solutions and then take action on those solutions. Excellent coaches learn to listen well. When we listen to others, we hear their passions, fears, and dreams. We listen for doubts, roadblocks, and assumptions. We listen on behalf of the other person without judgment, without trying to solve or figure out.

Coaches also ask questions. We use questions not to get answers, but to get people to think in ways they have not thought of before. Coaches do not ask leading questions, attempting to get the other person to see some truth the coach sees. Coaches ask questions to get others to see things from a whole new perspective.

Coaches ask questions in much the way Jesus did. In Mark 6:38, Jesus asked His disciples, “How many loaves do you have?” Do you think Jesus did not know how much food was at their disposal? Was Jesus curious about how many loaves the disciples could gather up? Certainly not. Jesus knew the answer. He was not asking so He could know. He asked so they would open their eyes to the resources available. Jesus asked this question to get them to see the situation from a different perspective.

Jesus never asked questions because He was curious about the answers. Jesus knew the answers — He knew the hearts and thoughts of the other person. Jesus asked questions so the *other person* would know the answer.

How would your communication change if you started telling less and asking more? How would your relationships change if your questions caused others to really think?

Coaches also encourage others. In all of

our work with congregations and denominations, we have yet to find a group that does too much encouraging. What can simple, intentional encouragement do to help people plug in to their dreams, calling, and design, and help them discover the actions that will move them forward? Coaches know that encouraging others gives people hope, helps them take big steps, dream bigger dreams, see themselves as God sees them, recognize their gifts and talents, and gives them the motivation to keep going. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul tells the church, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (ESV<sup>1</sup>).

How well are you doing in encouraging others? Do your words “give grace to those who hear”? Do those with whom you relate walk away feeling encouraged? How would your congregation be different if you fostered



## Jesus' Questions

**The Gospels are full of questions** because Jesus was (and still is) a master at questioning. Here are a few of the many questions asked by our Lord:

- “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15)
- “Why all this commotion and wailing?” (Mark 5:39)
- “Whose image is this?” (Mark 12:16)
- “What do you want me to do for you?” (Matthew 20:32)
- “Who is it you are looking for?” (John 20:15)
- “Which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?” (Luke 12:25)
- “What can anyone give in exchange for their soul?” (Matthew 16:26)



would you see if people were intentional about encouraging one another? Using coaching skills in your everyday interaction with people can make an incredible difference in the lives of those you serve.

Effective coaching occurs in the midst of relationships with one another. Coaching occurs in relationships as we interact and communicate using a mindset and a skill set designed to bring out the best in people. As you begin to create a culture of coaching within your congregation, many of you will establish some formal processes for coaching those inside and outside your ministry. Others will informally coach one another in your everyday interactions.

**Reflection questions:** How would your rela-



tionships change as you begin creating a culture of coaching in your congregation? How would people's lives change as you adopt this way of being with each other? How would your life change?

## How Do I Get Started?

If you are beginning to see the advantages of creating a coaching culture in your church, how can you get started? What are the steps in the process of introducing this way of being community?

The road to creating a coaching culture is different for every congregation. Every organization takes a unique approach to introducing the principles of coaching into the life of the congregation. We have, however, observed some common elements among organizations that have successfully made the transition to a coaching culture.

**Find a champion.** Every successful transition to a coaching culture that we have witnessed has had, from the beginning, a champion for creating that culture —someone who has

caught a vision for coaching and wants to bring that vision to the congregation. Often this champion for creating a coaching culture is the pastor or other senior leader. Just as often, however, that champion is someone in the congregation who was introduced to coaching in another context — perhaps through his/her business. In either case, it is critical that any effort to bring coaching to your congregation be led by someone who is passionate about the impact coaching can have on the lives of those in your ministry and on the ministry itself.

**Reflection questions:** Who are the champions for coaching in your congregation? Who else could you enlist to drive this fundamental change in how you relate to each other?

**Start small.** Although each organization takes a unique path to introducing coaching into its ministry, all of the successful transitions we have seen have been the result of an organic movement — one that started small and then blossomed as more people began to catch a vision for how coaching could impact the congregation. Coaching is not a program your church can start promoting. Rather, it is a way of relating and communicating with one another. Getting started in some small, but intentional, way will ensure that a coaching culture develops naturally among the members of your congregation.

**Reflection questions:** What is one way you can get started to bring coaching to your church? What is your first step?

**Introduce coaching to key influencers.** Creating a coaching culture will depend on the support and endorsement of the key influencers within your congregation. Introducing your key influencers to coaching will go a long way toward rolling out the welcome mat for a coaching culture. Matching coaches with influencers to help them experience the benefits for themselves is a great way to garner support for coaching in your ministry. Providing opportunities for key leaders to learn about coaching is another way to grow your group of coaching champions.

**Reflection questions:** Who are the key influencers in your congregation whose support you will need? What coaches do you know who could help you by coaching some of your key leaders? How will you get this started? How can you provide coach training to your key leaders?



How would your communication change if you started telling less and asking more? How would your relationships change if your questions caused others to really think?



### Coaching QuickStart

#### Need help training your leaders in coaching skills?

*Coaching QuickStart* is a resource developed by Coach Approach Ministries to help Christian leaders introduce coaching principles and skills to their organizations.

*Coaching QuickStart* is a two-part training resource that begins with an online tutorial — *QuickStart Guide to Being Coached*. This online resource introduces each participant to the definitions, skills, and process of coaching. Each participant gets an introductory overview into the mindset and benefits of taking a coach approach to interacting with other people.

The second part of the *Coaching QuickStart* is a 5-hour onsite workshop that builds on the concepts learned in the online tutorial. Participants in the QuickStart workshop review the definitions and skills of coaching and have opportunities to practice these skills in real-time at the workshop.

The *Coaching QuickStart Guide to Coaching One Another* Leaders Kit includes:

- Leaders Manual with facilitation notes (PDF)
- Power Point slides
- Participants guides (PDF)
- Personality Inventories (PDF)
- Knowledge Model video

For more information about the resources available from Coach Approach Ministries, visit: <http://ca-ministries.com/>.

To order the *QuickStart Guide to Coaching One Another*, visit <http://qs.eventbrite.com/>.

#### Use coaching skills in existing relationships.

One way to help others experience the difference coaching can make is to begin using the key coaching skills — listening, asking questions, and encouraging — in your existing relationships and interactions. As a ministry leader, you already interact with members of your congregation on a regular basis. As you begin using coaching skills in these interactions, others will notice and begin to experience the difference.

In what existing relationships could you begin using coaching skills? How would an intentional focus on listening, asking questions, and encouraging others change your staff meetings? Board meetings? Pastoral counseling sessions? Marital counseling? One-on-one conversations?

In addition to these basic steps in creating a culture of coaching, there are a number of unique ways in which congregations are introducing coaching into the life and ministry of their church.

#### Offer coaching-based discipleship resources.

Many churches provide opportunities for their members to mature in their faith by providing discipling opportunities. Whether your congregation prefers small groups, Sunday School, one-on-one discipling, or other methods, consider providing resources that use a coach-approach to discipleship. Many traditional resources for discipleship use a telling approach that delivers information/knowledge from the leader or expert to the

student. Coaching-based resources use an asking approach to help the learner discover truths and the next steps they need to take in their faith journeys.

**Reflection questions:** Where can you find resources that take a coach approach to helping others move forward in faith? Who are the leaders in your congregation best suited for this kind of approach to discipleship? How can you train/equip disciplers to use a coach approach?

**Launch a coaching ministry.** Many congregations offer, as a part of their ministry to their communities, counseling ministries. Churches often staff these ministries with church staff or members who have credentials and are qualified to offer these professional services. They typically base their fees on one's ability to pay. Similarly, coaching ministries are cropping up among those congregations that have embraced a coaching culture. These churches see the benefits of offering professional services to their members and others in the community. They handle the staffing, qualifications, and fee arrangements similarly to church counseling ministries.

**Reflection questions:** How can providing a coaching ministry serve the members of your congregation and community? Who has the capacity and passion for launching such a ministry from your congregation? How can such a ministry impact the effectiveness of the ministry itself?

**Provide coaching for staff.** Coaching is a

### Coaching Resources

As coaching in the church has grown over the years, a number of organizations are developing resources to facilitate a coach-approach to discipleship and Bible study. Here are a few of these resources:

- *Faith Coaching Toolkit.* Churches can use this study guide in a 2-day workshop or a 12-week study to introduce learners to the concepts of coaching others on their faith journey. Order from: <http://fctoolkit.eventbrite.com/>.
- *Serendipity Bible.* This NIV Study Bible is a great resource for those wanting to take a coach approach to discipleship and Bible Study. With hundreds of topical and felt-need study courses, this study Bible is a treasure of excellent questions aimed at getting others to discover the truths contained in Scripture. Order from: <http://www.amazon.com/Serendipity-Bible-Personal-Small-Group/dp/0310937329>.
- Bible Study Curriculum. This site offers leader and student resources for Bible studies based on asking questions. Most series are for a 13-week study. Order from: <http://www.ethicsdaily.com/index.php>.
- Coaching resources. Coach Approach Ministries' Coaching Resources page at: [http://ca-ministries.com/?page\\_id=11](http://ca-ministries.com/?page_id=11).

great way to assimilate new staff into the life and work of the church. If coaching helps individuals plug into their dreams, calling, and design, and helps them discover the actions that will move them forward, what better way to get new staff members off to a successful start than by providing them with a coach? Providing coaches for new and existing staff is a great way to model for your congregation the idea that coaching is beneficial.

**Reflection questions:** How can providing coaches for your staff change how they function?

**Hire trained coaches on staff/get coach training for staff.** If coaching is to become a part of your congregation's culture, demonstrate this is by making sure you equip your staff to coach others. Whether you consider hiring staff who are trained coaches or provide coach training for your existing staff, make sure staff have a coaching mindset. Coaching skills will go a long way toward creating a coaching culture in your congregation.

**Reflection questions:** What resources will you need to train your staff in coaching skills? How can you get coach training for your staff?

**Commit resources to coaching.** Some resources will be necessary to get coaching off the ground. As you begin creating a coaching culture in your church, commit the necessary resources — money, time, and people — to make sure the effort can succeed. Funds may be necessary to pay salaries for coaches on your staff, external coaches, training, and coaching resources.

**Reflection questions:** What are you willing to commit to creating a coaching culture in your church? Where can you find the additional resources to ensure success? How can you see these resources as an investment in the future of your congregation?

### Is Coaching Just for Larger Congregations?

Many pastors assume that creating a coaching culture is only possible in congregations of significant size. You cannot imagine hiring a staff of coaches or offering a coaching ministry in your church. Some of the examples of churches bringing coaching into the mainstream of their congregations can seem out of reach to the vast majority of smaller churches. The good news is that there are ways you can begin creating a coaching culture in any size congregation.

Pastors and other leaders from churches across the country — from the smallest to the largest — are seeing results when they take a coach approach to their leadership. Perhaps you are the only staff member of your church, or you are pastoring more than one small church. As you begin to use coaching skills in your everyday interactions with people, you will see a difference in how they respond. Imagine how, in your small congregation, members would behave differently if they really understood their strengths, gifts, and passions. What could it look like if you were intentional about helping them see how they can align their strengths, gifts, and passions with how they serve in the church? What if you began communicating your belief in other people and created the expectation that they can come up with solutions and take action? My own experience is that people hungrily respond to this kind of leadership.

As you begin to take a coach-approach to leadership in your church, you will see more fulfillment as members gain new insights and take new actions. You will see a greater sense of ownership in the ministry of the church among members as they experience a greater sense of empowerment. No matter the size of your church, creating a coaching culture can move your congregation forward in carrying out the Great Commission. 🌱



Pastors and other leaders from churches across the country — from the smallest to the largest — are seeing results when they take a coach approach to their leadership.



**BILL COPPER**, director of the Hollifield Leadership Center and a principal with Coach Approach Ministries. He is coauthor of *Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith*. He lives in Conover, North Carolina.



# THE POWER OF COACHING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

► BY CHAD HALL

Author's  
intro video



**Learn the power coaching can have on your congregation and its impact on the way you lead and serve.**



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**N**ear the end of 2 days of training in Portland, I noticed Gary gazing out the window. While we discussed what a shift to a coach approach would mean to ministry, Gary seemed lost in his own world. His participation in class had been normal up until this point, so I was a bit perplexed by his sudden disengagement.

I approached him at the next break and asked him what was on his mind. "This is either going to change everything or kill my ministry," came his cryptic reply.

"Pretty strong options," I said. "What do you want it to be?"

Soon we discussed how and if coaching should become a part of Gary's role as lead pastor. As students returned from break, their eavesdropping evolved into a full-class discussion.

The topic of how coaching can bless a church made for an excellent ending to the class that day. Gary walked away with fresh ideas for serving Christ and his congregation. Since that day with Gary, I have witnessed many ministry leaders wrestle with what coaching is and how it might impact the way they serve.

I, too, have faced this question. I became acquainted with coaching while planting a church. I learned firsthand the power coaching can have on a congregation. Through my experience and by witnessing the ways others have used coaching, I know that coaching can produce powerful and positive results. (See "Christ-Centered Coaching: Seven Benefits for Ministry Leaders" by Jane

Creswell on page 48 to learn more about the benefits of coaching.)

Coaching can help churches, but coaching is not a silver-bullet solution, and it is not a replacement for the mysterious and essential presence of God's Spirit. Coaching can be, however, a fresh way of relating and conversing so a church can create new possibilities, take new and intentional actions, and reach new places in the journey toward serving Christ and His world.

Like Pastor Gary, many pastors struggle with coaching because it is so different from how they typically serve and believe they add value. Most ministry leaders think their strongest assets center on what they know and how well they can tell people what to do. Coaching assumes essentially the opposite: That our strongest role is to draw out from others what they know and help them tell themselves what to do.

Not every situation calls for coaching. Some opportunities we address are best done by telling or delivering truth. Those situations call for mentoring, teaching, counseling, or consulting. For instance, when a person or team is in a remedial stage of development, each needs instruction and direction, not





Illustration by Gary Locke

coaching. Also, when someone is learning a rote set of principles, facts, or procedures, coaching is not helpful or appropriate.

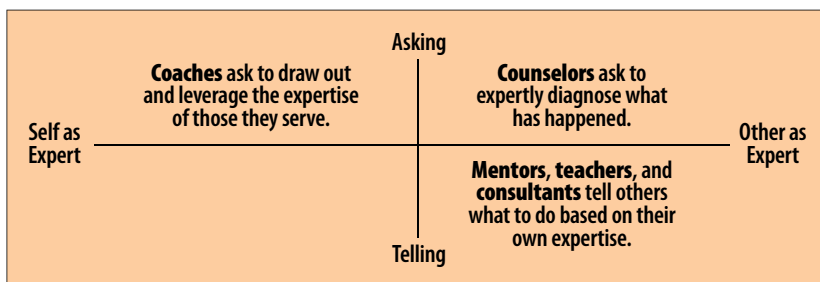
Other situations are less about identifying action and creating forward movement and more about healing and hope. Those situations call for counseling, spiritual healing, and perhaps anointing. Coaching is not therapeutic, nor is it diagnostic. When people

ask, "What is wrong with me?" or are in a state of depression, they typically need counseling or therapy, not coaching. Working with a coach can help people get a clearer sense of who they are and what obstacles are impeding growth. But the aim of coaching is not to address issues of abuse, addiction, psychosis, or dysfunction, or remove obstacles originating from pain.



## Key Distinctions between Coaching and Other Relationships

	Who is the Expert?	Assumptions About the Other Person	Purpose of Questions	What is the Outcome?
<b>Coaching</b>	Person being coached	Healthy, ready to move forward	To promote discovery for the person being coached	New awareness and action
<b>Counseling</b>	Counselor	Pathology; has experienced a wound that continues to cause hurt	To provide a diagnosis and/or to better understand "why?"	Understanding and acceptance to promote healing
<b>Mentoring</b>	Mentor	Experiencing circumstances similar to those previously faced by the mentor	The one being mentored asks questions to solicit advice and gather information	The one who is mentored resembles the mentor in knowledge and action
<b>Discipling</b>	Discipler	A follower of Christ who wants to learn and grow	Often scripted or planned in advance, aimed at learning from Scripture	A clearer understanding of Scripture and closer walk with God



## Pastoral Care

For most congregations, pastoral care focuses primarily on supporting people who are in pain, suffering through crisis, or experiencing severe change. Such care is important and often takes on a counseling or therapeutic nature.

When ministry leaders are capable coaches, they expand their pastoral care ministry to help their flock deal with positive change, create new awareness, and take action.

Cindy is an associate pastor in the Midwest who was getting burned out providing pastoral care amidst issues that almost always had a negative flavor. She told me, "With the exception of the occasional opportunity to minister to new parents, my ministry is limited to very negative experiences and crises. Unless a church member is sick, lost a loved one, or is struggling with their marriage, they do not need me. Not only is the work sucking the life out of me, but I provide very little value to most of our church members." Through coaching she has been able to help members as they shift jobs, improve already healthy marriages, navigate the college application process, and a host of other challenges and opportunities.

Cindy summed it up well: "If this were medicine, coaching would be considered preventive care. It allows me to care for people who are not in crisis and who, by moving forward, are much more likely to avoid crisis."

## Evangelism

Of all church ministries, evangelism might seem to be the one least fit for coaching. After all, shouldn't we *tell* people about Jesus and His good news? Of course we should. But people do not do or believe what we tell them to do or believe. Our neighbors have become less and less responsive to our appeals, our delivery of the gospel, our tracts, our postcards, and other forms of telling. Telling does work some of the time and is appropriate. However, our evangelistic efforts can also be upgraded when we add a coach approach to sharing the good news.

In our book, *Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith*, my coauthors and I explore how churches can increase their witness by asking questions that help others discover where they are in life, what's working, what's

When is coaching the appropriate approach? Coaching situations are characterized by a person or group who:

- is relatively healthy (coaching is not for those in need of recovery from addictions, abuse, or dysfunction).
- wants to address a current challenge or opportunity (coaching is not about dwelling on or dealing with the past).
- is motivated to take action, even though they likely do not yet know what action to take (coaching is not for people who lack motivation to change and act).

These are broad characterizations, so you can imagine that coaching has a wide application in the church.

Let me mention a few applications where coaching can make a significant impact.





missing, and what's next. Our coworkers, neighbors, family members, and the people we happen to meet most likely shut down when we start telling them about Jesus. But almost anyone is willing to engage in a conversation that consists primarily of questions that help them take forward steps. When we stop selling Jesus and start engaging in honest conversation, those around us will move forward in life, and Jesus is always forward.

## Discipleship

Just as coaching can help non-Christians discover where they are in life, move forward, and discern their need for Christ, we can also coach fellow Christians to a deeper walk with the Lord and toward more meaningful ministry and mission. Too much of our discipleship efforts rely on studies and lectures that do a good job of informing but not always a good job of forming. This is because formation is personal.

When we coach for spiritual formation, we start with where the disciple is in his or her walk, explore what is next, and what actions are required. When we coach for discipleship, we explore:

- their starting place. Are they new to faith, mature, or somewhere between?
- their momentum. Stagnant and stale? On the express train? Hot and cold? Running in sand?
- the issues of life that seem sensitive to the Spirit's activity. Are they facing an ethical decision at work? Is God calling them to shift their parenting style? What about finances?
- what actions will better align them with God's will and bring greater obedience to Christ.

## Teams and Committees

When I stumbled upon coaching as a church planter, the first place I took a coach approach was in my work with teams. One team I coached was our hospitality team. They were responsible for greeting guests, helping them feel welcome, and connecting with them. I asked them how well, on a scale of 1 to 10, they thought they were doing. Answer: about a 6. I asked, "What would it take for you to be at an 8?" For 20 minutes they brainstormed and problem-solved. Tossing out ideas

before settling on three key actions that fit our church, they said: provide home-baked food and coffee each week; greet all who enter, whether they are first-time guests or not; strive to get into conversations with new people rather than stay in the safety zone of talking to people they already know.

Coaching teams involved major and oftentimes awkward shifts for me. As the lead pastor of an infant church, I was used to being the answer man: teaching, training, and motivating the team to carry out an assignment — typically with limited results.

As I experimented with coaching teams, I realized how important it is that I trust the team members and believe they have valuable and workable ideas. It takes time to figure out a truth: If team members are not capable of being coached, then I have the wrong people on the team.

Another shift involved my willingness to allow others to have good ideas. I sometimes hear pastors and leaders say that delegation means you have to be willing to live with solutions that are not as good as what you would have offered. Maybe. But to coach our teams, I had to believe that differing ideas are seldom about better or worse. For most issues, there are many good options and solutions that are equally valuable. Coaching works because it brings out the ideas from the people who are willing to carry out the ideas, so there is ownership, which promotes an okay idea to a great idea.

When coaching teams, remember:

- A group is not the same as a team. Teams function as a unit or a whole, whereas a group is a collection of persons with similar interests or responsibilities.
- Teams create awareness and own actions at the team level, and each action needs a name assigned to it to ensure follow-through.
- Groups such as committees or councils usually create awareness at the group level and commit to actions at the personal level. Also, many groups function to make decisions, not take actions.

## Board Meetings

Coaching can have a positive impact on board meetings. Some might refer to these as elder meetings, council meetings, or

When we stop selling Jesus and start engaging in honest conversation, those around us will move forward in life, and Jesus is always forward.







When a church takes a coach approach to board meetings, the quality of listening increases among the board members and therefore the quality of discussion improves, resulting in better decisions.

something similar. Whatever the name, the function is to provide high-level oversight and direction for the church.

Many board meetings follow a rule of order or process (such as *Robert's Rules of Order*) and are constitutionally bound to such a process. This might cause one to think there is very little room for coaching. Not true. While coaching cannot replace a predetermined order or process, a coach approach by the leader and/or board members can have a profound and positive impact on how the process unfolds.

When a church takes a coach approach to board meetings, the quality of listening increases among the board members and therefore the quality of discussion improves, resulting in better decisions.

I have seen coaching make a difference in board meetings that have to do with distinguishing interests from solutions. Coaches are savvy at knowing the difference and at helping clients distinguish interests (what the client wants) from solutions (how the client might go about getting his interest met). Too often board meetings are a battle of proposed solutions when the underlying interests are not clear.

I facilitated a church board meeting where the discussion (shall we say *argument*?) revolved around what style of worship the church would conduct at the 11 o'clock hour. One camp wanted to stay with the traditional hymns while another wanted to go contemporary — not an uncommon discussion among churches in the

past decade. I posed questions aimed at exploring *why* each camp wanted what it wanted. One of my tactics was to push each side to complete the sentence, "I think we should do \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ is important to me."

While their solutions were incompatible (traditional versus contemporary), their interests were not. One side was most interested in honoring the longtime worship pastor (a classically trained and very gifted conductor who was nearing retirement), while the other was interested in attracting young people to the church. The board meeting turned when the board members let go of either/or thinking and began to ask how they could meet both interests.

Both/and thinking is at the heart of great coaching. The board decided that the 11 o'clock worship service could continue to meet the first interest, and that they could add an early service to meet the second interest. They also decided to honor their current worship pastor as long as he remained at the church and that, upon his retirement, they would openly and honestly explore altering the style of worship at the 11 o'clock service.

I have also coached boards that, when they revealed their true interests, cared less about Christ and the gospel and more about their petty preferences and grievances. Yet, the coach approach to these meetings is what finally allowed these board members to express and deal with their deep and unsavory interests.

## Leading

Coaching is not synonymous with leading, yet neither are the two incompatible. Leading is about influencing others toward a better future. Leaders who want to extend influence and have followers are wise to employ a coaching mindset and skills. Nowhere in the church is coaching more important for leaders than when it comes to vision.

Too many leaders isolate themselves from the congregation to become inspired with a vision they will then share. Such vision casting can even fall into a dictatorial style when pastors declare their vision is directly from God and that any opposition or question is an affront to God.

As the authors of *The Leadership Challenge* write, a strong leader is one who "inspires a shared vision," not someone who shares an inspired vision. The first problem with inspired



visions is that they often are informed less by God and more by a leader's own preference. The second problem is that inspired visions often fall on deaf ears and reluctant hearts so the leader must invest much energy getting buy-in. Coaching can help avoid both of these problems.

Leaders who adopt a coaching approach are constantly accessing the wisdom of their followers through the use of coaching questions and active listening. I call this skimming the vision. This method discerns vision by inquiring the followers and assuming that many of the followers carry some portion of the larger vision for the church. This is not vision by committee. Rather, it is vision by community where a gifted and called leader listens discerningly and assimilates prayerfully the vision in a clear and compelling way.

When shared, a skimmed vision sounds familiar to followers because it is already familiar — after all, it comes from them. The vision is inspiring because the coaching leader extends beyond his wisdom and preferences by tapping into the wisdom of others who are also listening to God. The vision is also inspiring because it has faint rings of familiarity, having come from the members of the church body.

Just as leaders must avoid taking a dictatorial approach to visioning, they must also be cautious not to fall into a laissez-faire or hands-off approach. While there is much wisdom in members, they need a catalyst to ask, listen, provide feedback, and challenge them. Leaders need to be engaged in helping members explore options and motivations, challenge their current thinking, and help them get clear on goals and actions.

### Managing Staff and Volunteers

Church leaders who manage others can also benefit from coaching. As with leading, coaching does not replace managing, but it does upgrade our approach. Managing involves sound utilization of resources (time, energy, equipment, money, etc.) to accomplish an end. When we manage staff and volunteers in the church, we can fall into the trap of believing people are simply resources like money or equipment. Of course this is not true. Individuals we manage have their own abilities, motivations, expectations, and history.

A wise manager takes a coach approach by

getting to know what is unique about each person and then partnering with that person to decide how best she can accomplish the end. A manager is a keen observer of the resources (strengths, skills, habits, personality, knowledge, preferences, etc.) a person possesses and helps this unique person contribute to the fullest potential.

A pastor (manager) who coaches does not pull out from the staff or volunteer *what* she should accomplish (since outcomes are typically set), but he does pull out from the person *how* to accomplish the outcome. When I managed a student minister, I often took a coach approach. I set the outcomes (involve kids and parents in programs aimed at their spiritual formation), but how the student minister went about her role was up for discussion. Rather than encourage her to fill the role like someone else would, I helped her discover how God had wired her for fulfilling the role. She enjoyed and was successful spending time with the parents and adult volunteers more than with the students. This allowed her to concentrate her efforts into helping the adults be involved with the kids and do most of the ministry with the students while she equipped and encouraged them. She also took a coach approach to working with her volunteers, helping them find where they fit best in the program (from behind-the-scenes volunteers who planned activities or ran the technology for student worship, to the out-front parents who had time and ability to eat lunch with kids at school). A manager (pastor) who employs coaching is able to live out what Marcus Buckingham implores of managers in *First, Break All the Rules*: reach inside each person and release his unique talents into performance.

### Conflict

All churches have conflict among members. While churches might not be able to avoid conflict, many churches engage in unhealthy conflict: arguments that linger, attacks that are personal, and divisions that block decisions and progress.

Coaching is not a cure-all for unhealthy conflict, but I have seen it make a positive difference in how churches engage in conflict by equipping leaders and members with more effective skills and attitudes. A coaching

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attitude helps people shift out of a debate mentality (where healthy conflict is almost impossible) into a dialogue mentality (where healthy conflict is much more likely).

Coaching helps make this shift by affording the skills to be clear and prompt others to be clear. The first place to be clear is in thinking. When I coach groups who are in conflict, I start by helping them get clear what their mental framework is. I share the core beliefs that lead to debate:

- I am right and those who disagree with me are wrong.
- I see things as they are, and those who disagree see things erroneously.
- I need to state and defend what I think, and not budge an inch; any openness to what others think is weakness or lack of loyalty on my part.

This is the default setting for many people, whether we are talking about the church, the marketplace, or even the family. It is so hardwired that we find it difficult to consider an alternative. But there is an alternative. A dialogue mindset chooses to believe things such as:

- People may disagree with me and still have pure motives.
- If there is a problem, I may be contributing to the problem.
- Each of us sees things others don't see.

When we train church leaders and members in coaching, they naturally open up to the possibility of a dialogue approach. This happens because coaches are trained to engage in conversation without trying to control the conversation. Also, coaches know that telling is not the only or the most productive thing in a conversation. Coaches practice the art of productive conversation.

### Preaching

If ever there is a time to tell, it seems that preaching would be that time. Since coaching is less about telling and more about asking and discovering, one might conclude there is very little room for coaching from the pulpit. However, coaching can impact the way you preach in at least four ways.

**1. Coaching reminds the preacher to seek balance between telling and asking.** If all one did from the pulpit was to ask questions, few would consider it good preaching. But dialing down the telling and turning up the asking can

add vitality and power to sermons.

One of the most life-changing sermons I heard ended with, "What tough decision are you putting off that's standing between where you are and where God wants you to be?" I do not recall what the sermon was about, but that question (and my response) shifted the course of my ministry and family.

**2. Coaching helps preachers become clearer in their overall communication.** Too many preachers provide far more quantity than quality when it comes to words. One core coaching competency outlined by the International Coach Federation is direct communication, which they describe as the ability to communicate effectively for the greatest impact on the client, to use language of the client, and to draw on the language of the client in creating metaphors and analogies. Preachers trained in coaching will know their congregation and use language that fits them. Hearers should not need to translate the preacher's lofty or limited vocabulary to learn and be transformed.

**3. Coaching reinforces the preacher's attention on creating awareness among hearers.** Delivering truth is not the same thing as creating awareness. Learning only happens when hearers expand what they know to include something new. Time to reflect on what has been said, time to chew on it and ponder what it means for their life, and time to formulate a more meaningful awareness is often lacking in sermons. Preachers skilled in coaching and taking a coaching attitude into the pulpit will sprinkle in intentional pauses that prod people to reflect and reach new awareness based on what is said.

**4. Coaching expands the preacher's ability to motivate hearers to action.** All good preaching has a "So what?" factor. Rather than tell people exactly what to do (one-size-fits-all hearers), preachers familiar with coaching will use questions and silence to provoke actions that are tailored to each person.

### Small Groups

One fruitful expression of coaching within the church over the past decade involves training small-group leaders to use coaching. Whether the group focuses on study, community, missions, or even recreation, a small-group leader skilled in coaching can have productive conversations with group members



— conversations that lead to new awareness and new action.

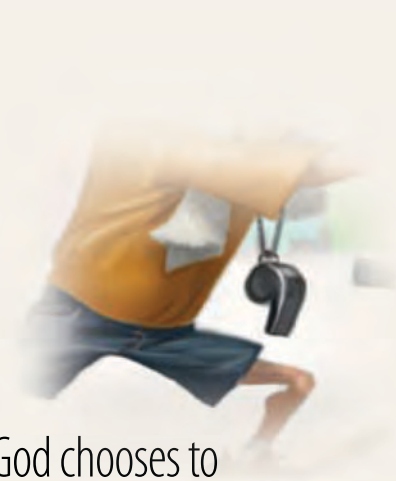
In groups that involve Bible study or the study of a book aimed at faith formation, coaches can move the conversation beyond learning and discussion and toward behavior, ensuring participants have clear take-away learning that will be expressed in action. These small-group coaches are action negotiators. They are also listeners who tie together the study experience, varying life experiences, and the challenge to live like Christ to garner tangible commitments and shifts in behavior from small-group members.

## Conclusion

Coaching can have a dramatic impact on the church. It would be inaccurate to overstate the power of coaching. Coaching, in and of itself, is not powerful. God is powerful, and He chooses to convey power through many channels, including people who coach. Adults who skillfully practice coaching under the guidance of God's Spirit can bring about fruit within the church. The list and descriptions above are only glimpses of ways God is using coaching and coaches. As you learn about coaching and begin to practice coaching, my hope is you will add to this list and bring blessings to your local church. 🌀



**CHAD HALL, PCC, Th.M.**, director of coaching, Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon. Chad lives in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.



God chooses to convey power through many channels, including people who coach.

**COACHING**  
FOR LIFE AND LEADERSHIP



# CHRIST-CENTERED COACHING:

## Seven Benefits for Ministry Leaders

▶ BY JANE CRESWELL



Author's  
intro video




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**C**hrist-centered coaching can be beneficial to ministry leaders in a variety of ways. Over 10 years of coaching, I have seen seven benefits that keep recurring. Christ-centered coaching:

1. leverages a person's strengths.
2. provides clarity and focus.
3. instills confidence.
4. catapults learning.
5. fosters intentional progress.
6. rubs off on others.
7. encourages God-sized goals.

Not every ministry leader experiences all of these benefits, but most experience them at some level. Thus they are able to transition from just barely surviving the challenges to thriving in their calling. What do these benefits look like, practically speaking?

"Charles" is a ministry leader who has experienced these benefits. Here is an example of what the benefits can look like in daily ministry.

Charles has pastored a relatively large church (500-plus attending Sunday worship) for 20 years. He has earned respect beyond his congregation. People across the district recognize his name and appreciate his leadership.

If you ask pastors in the area to name a pastor who is successful, many would put Charles at the top of the list. His congregation loves him. He has a great family life, with kids who are proud of him.

But while Charles has achieved a level of success, he feels a lack of challenge. Charles wonders: *What's next? I have a lot more years of ministry in front of me. Is God calling me to use my successful experience to have greater impact for the Kingdom?*

In our first coaching session, I asked, "Where are you and where would you like to be?"

Charles responded: "In most people's eyes, including my own, my ministry is successful. There is no conflict in my church. Things seem to be going well in my church and region. I guess that is where I am and where I want to be."

"Really?" I probed. "You are living your full Kingdom potential?"

A more thoughtful, honest answer this time: "Well, I have been wondering if there is something more I could be doing, somewhere I might have more impact, something more God wants me to do."

### **Orienting Around Strengths**

As we explored whether Charles was loving God with all his strength, Charles realized he enjoyed writing but seldom found time for it. He was spending about 12 to 15 hours a day on church and ministry-related work. He was increasingly challenged to give his family the time they wanted and deserved — and that he wanted to give them. He did not see how he could find time to write.

"Tell me more about your strengths as a writer," I encouraged.

"In college and seminary my professors gave feedback that I was able to give good examples; reduce complex topics into simple, understandable language; and include humor that was not derogatory or at anyone's expense. I am not sure if that is anything special. A lot of people going through a D.Min. program probably have that level of skill and ability — if not greater."

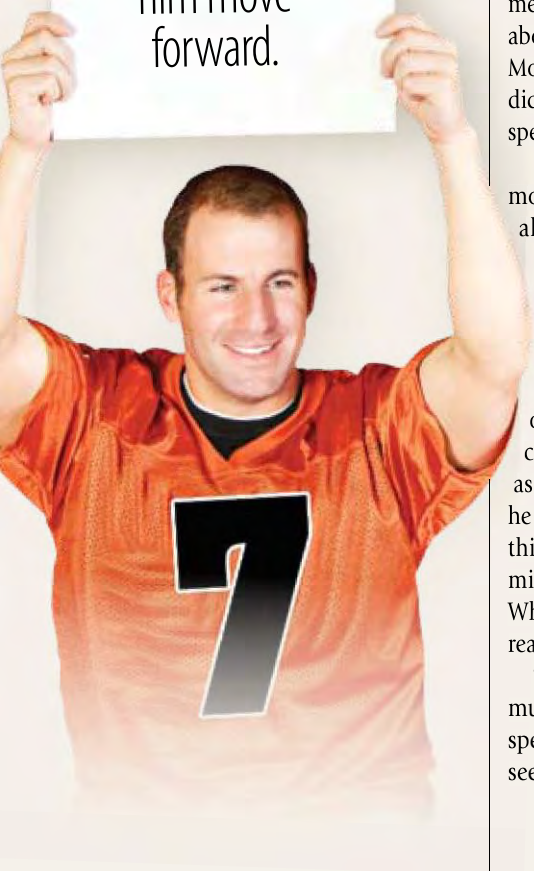
Remembering he wanted to focus on finding time to write, I said, "And maybe not. Writing may come so naturally to you that you do not even have to work at it. Maybe that is a top strength for you, and we need to focus on helping you use it to full Kingdom potential. How can you find the time?"

He already thought he did not have enough hours in the day. "You can't just create

**Here are  
seven ways  
Christ-  
centered  
coaching  
can infuse  
new life  
into your  
ministry  
and in  
those you  
lead.**



God had created  
the desire in  
Charles' heart  
to do more  
and had used  
a coach to help  
him move  
forward.



more time, you know. I don't know where I could find time," Charles said.

### Clarity and Focus

"What are you currently doing that is not having as much impact as sharing the successes of your 20-year ministry at this church with others?" I asked.

"That's a great question. It sounds like something I would ask someone else but do not ask myself. I do want to be a person of impact, and I am not holding myself to that standard.

"I sometimes think about the possibility of expanding my ministry beyond my congregation and my district by writing about experiences that might benefit others and help them in their ministry. I do things every day that are less important than that. For one, I spend a lot of time attending committee meetings where I do not think I am really needed. Some of these committees do not accomplish much. They meet for 90 minutes. Usually I would only call about 15 minutes of the 90 minutes productive. Most of these meetings are in the evenings. If I did not go to them, I would probably choose to spend more time with my family over writing."

"How could you do both?" I asked. "Spend more time with your wife and children and also find time for writing?"

Charles mentally ran through the list of committees. After some thought, he determined he could begin with one committee.

He believed he could stop attending these meetings without jeopardizing the work of the committee or his relationship with committee members. But almost as quickly as he determined to take this course of action, he began to wonder again whether they would think he was not doing his job if he started missing meetings. "What would people think? What would they say?" His concerns — fears, really — quickly popped to the surface.

"What strategy can you develop to communicate this change in how you choose to spend your time — a strategy that people will see positively?" I asked.

### Confidence

Charles hesitated, and then said, "Well, I guess I could be open and explain my reasons for not coming." The minute those words were

out of his mouth, he realized that, if he felt like he was wasting time, others might feel the same. He decided to explain his reasons and at the same time offer to help the committee figure out ways to have more impact and reduce the frequency and length of their meetings. This kind of change would be a win for everyone.

In our next coaching session, Charles reported that the committee — even the committee chair — gave him a round of applause for helping reduce the number and length of their meetings. Everyone was thinking the same thing but no one, except for Charles, had the courage to say anything.

He was excited about spending more time with his wife and kids. They already noticed a difference in his schedule just by changes in working with one committee.

### Learning

Charles was so pleased with the way this committee had responded he began to wonder what would happen if he could help all committees in a similar way. Then he wondered if anyone else had done this before and whether other ministers might like to hear how he had approached this situation and made this positive change in his life.

"How can you find out?" I asked.

He began to list. "I could ask some friends in district offices. I could see if any leadership journals I receive have addressed this issue. And at a conference not long ago, I met an editor from a publishing house. He would give me some pointers if I called him. In fact, I remember he had information about a writers conference he was doing. I did not pay much attention at the time."

"Which of these ways best fits with your way of learning?" I asked.

"I think I would like to pursue this from several different directions. So I guess — all of them."

### Intentional Progress

Charles did talk with others. He found that, while a lot of pastors were writing about churches doing away with committees, or transitioning committees to teams, they had not written much about making committee meetings

more productive, about the pastor's involvement, or about how frequently some committees need to meet. But the team concept really intrigued him. In many ways this sounded like the next step for what he was beginning to do with the committees at his church.

He gathered literature about team ministry. He liked the different model, the ministry focus, and he thought his people would like it too.

Charles was right. The more he talked about team ministry, the more excited he and his congregation became. They felt their time was better spent, more productive, and more about ministry than administration. Teams were actually looking for jobs to do, people to help, rather than sitting in meetings. This team concept was pulling people together, giving them focus, and reaching new people. The church was addressing community concerns, and the church was growing again.

But Charles had not lost his goal of finding time to write. He could see that many churches would be moving to the team concept, and he already had a smooth transition and positive experiences to share. He knew that the process his church used would help others, and his church's success could allay some fears of other ministers about this big change in church operations.

### Coaching Others

Charles also noticed that his way of relating to committees and teams was changing. Before he was often the silent partner or the expert on the team. But his behavior was changing.

He began to ask questions in meetings. He listened intently to what people were saying. And he saw that his questions were not seen as threats but as tools to move the meeting and ministry along. People were leaving committee and team meetings excited, talking about how productive the meeting was and the ministry their team was doing now and planning to do. Laypeople were accomplishing more than they ever had before — with commitment and enthusiasm. Some people who had accepted little responsibility in the past were stepping up to the plate, and some who had done little but grumble and groan were now productive team members. And the longer this continued, the more he realized

the teams did not need him all the time. Once they caught a vision for where their team fit in the church's overall ministry, all they had to do was work out the details. They seemed to enjoy having that responsibility and accountability. They knew he was available, if needed, so they did not feel neglected. They were busy with their ministry, and he was busy with his.

### God-Sized Goals

Eventually, Charles was able to find 2 hours a week for writing publishable articles on church health. This was something he would have considered almost impossible previously because it would take a miracle for him to have more time with his family and find time to write. Charles began to feel there really was more God wanted of him. God had been faithful to help him get to a new level in his ministry. Now he believed God had created the desire in his heart to do more and had used a coach to help him move forward.

Charles was ready for another level.

When ministers and churches lose their focus — their vision or purpose — they often end up involved in denominational politics. Coaching helps redirect that focus.

## Tri-Dialogue Coaching: The Third Person in the Coaching Conversation

While a coach is also one who comes alongside, the Holy Spirit is the third person in a coaching conversation. He provides guidance to the coach and the person you are coaching. I wrote this prayer to remind myself of the Holy Spirit's role in coaching.

### A Coach's Prayer

Lord, thank You for calling me to be a coach.

- Let Your unconditional love flow through me.
- Spotlight my sins that encumber.
- Mold me into a servant leader.

Before each coaching conversation, I pray:

- For boldness to be Your ambassador.
- For the ones I am coaching to listen to You.
- For your direction, insights, and inspiration to take action.

During each coaching conversation, I pray:

- For guidance from You on what to say and how to say it.
- For wisdom to know when to turn the conversation into a time of prayer.
- For peace when it is time to be silent and let You do the speaking.

And beyond each coaching conversation, I pray:

- For You to calm the fears of the unknown.
- For You to fill in the gaps of what was not said and what was really needed

beneath the surface.

- For boldness to take actions that go beyond what I know how to do and outcomes I know I can control.
- For followers of You, Lord, and not followers of the coach.
- For Christian coaches and their global impact.
- For coaches everywhere who are making the ground fertile for the gospel.

May You be glorified in all I say and do. In Jesus' name, Amen.





Many ministry leaders can benefit from a trusted, confidential, and competent coaching relationship.

### What Are the Benefits of Coaching?

Charles, over time, experienced almost all the major benefits of coaching. Some people are stuck and need help in only one area. Others, like Charles, just keep benefiting from the experience of coaching.

**1. Orienting around strengths.** First, Charles discovered he had strengths he had discounted or neglected. Coaching helped him discover those unused strengths and search for ways to use them. With a coach's help, Charles leveraged his strengths.

**2. Clarity and focus.** When ministers, and even churches, lose their focus — their vision or purpose — they often end up involved in denominational politics. The current issue begins to consume their time and energy. Because the pastor/minister/denominational leader has lost focus for the ministry he is called to do, politics begin to take the focus. Coaching helps redirect that focus.

Charles was able to help his committees abandon their administrative, discussion-driven meetings, and turn to a team-ministry

approach that focused on results. This new approach was helping people and changing their lives. Participants felt energized and the church was growing. Coaching helped Charles see new possibilities and focus on new approaches to ministry, clarify tasks, and arrive at better ways to do the work.

**3. Confidence.** When Charles first considered making some changes, his thoughts were full of fears: *What will people think? What will they say? What will they do?* Not changing seemed safer in many ways; after all, things were going pretty well. Why rock the boat?

But as he thought through a way to make his first change positive for all concerned, he determined he would go through with his plan in spite of his fears. That small change was so well received and so positive for everyone that he gained confidence and continued to suggest changes. Without the fears dragging him down, he began to see more possibilities. He was energized by the positive actions taking place. This was transforming his life and ministry.

**4. Learning.** It had been a long time since Charles felt he had really learned anything new, taken any risks, charted any new course, challenged the status quo, or felt any adventure. Of course, he went to conferences, and he heard what others were doing. And he might come home with an idea to implement. But he had never been a big believer in seeing what worked well somewhere else and copying that in his church.

Now Charles found himself in the middle of self-directed learning customized for him. He and I focused his interests, strengths, desires to expand his ministry — and ways to make this happen. He set personal goals guided by how he was being led by the Holy Spirit. Together we explored ways to reach them.

**5. Intentional progress.** Nothing is more encouraging than success. Charles was having success in his personal goals — to spend more time with his wife and children and to write — as well as in his ministry at church.

With my help, Charles closed the knowing-versus-doing gap. He had known since seminary that writing came easily and was something he enjoyed, but he had never

### Coaching questions that can help you experience these benefits:

#### 1. Christ-centered coaching leverages a person's strengths.

- What will it take to discover your strengths?
- What is the definition of loving the Lord will all your strength?

#### 2. Christ-centered coaching provides clarity and focus.

- Where are you now and where does God want you to be?
- What will you need to start, continue, or stop to stay focused on your God-given purpose?

#### 3. Christ-centered coaching instills confidence.

- What fears are holding you back?
- What are some specific strategies you can use to overcome those fears?

#### 4. Christ-centered coaching catapults learning.

- What do you need to learn to move to the next level in your ministry?
- What is the most effective way for you to learn? How can you employ that more?

#### 5. Christ-centered coaching fosters intentional progress.

- What additional plans do you need to put in place as roadmaps for your ministry?
- What criteria will you use to determine if you need a course correction?

#### 6. Christ-centered coaching rubs off on others.

- Who in your everyday ministry can benefit from being coached by you?
- What will you need to do to prepare to coach them well?

#### 7. Christ-centered coaching encourages God-sized goals.

- Where in your ministry do you need to stretch into God-sized goals?
- What are the greatest inhibitors to you stepping out in faith toward those goals?



done anything about it. With an intentional plan, worked out with his coach, he moved toward his goal. He found time he thought he did not have. With an intentional plan his two goals moved from impossibility to reality.

Charles designed a way of making himself accountable to himself, to do what he set out to do. He had not thought about writing in years. That strength lay dormant. Who knew if it could live again? If he thought about it, he might have decided it was a silly idea, and he had little to offer. But I listened, affirmed, asked questions, kept confidences. Because of the trust we developed in our relationship, he wanted to be accountable. That made the difference.

**6. Coaching others.** Charles did not enter a coaching relationship to help him with his church ministry or his ministry relationships. He felt good about how all that had worked through the years. He did not begin the process because his life had problems. He just wanted to be more effective in ministry.

Charles learned a lot from his coaching experience. He experienced having someone really listen to him, asking questions to cause him to go deeper into his strengths and behaviors, and helping him find untapped potential within himself that took him by surprise. The process was so affirming and empowering for him, that without even thinking about it, he began to use some of his coach's skills with the people around him. The basic skills were similar to what he had learned in seminary, but they were delivered in a way beyond anything he had learned since then. These skills seemed to fit the postmoderns he had been trying to move into leadership positions, and they responded positively as well. His staff and lay leaders felt affirmed. He was grateful to help others experience the benefits of coaching he had realized. (See the article "Coaching NEXT-GENERATION Ministry Leaders" by Sam Farina, page 76.)

**7. God-sized goals.** When Charles first met with me, he said how good his life and ministry were. He did not have any complaints. *But radical changes would take a miracle*, he thought. He was out of time, and he did not see how he could do anything more.

His church was doing well. But he learned through the years just how much to expect of people. Unrealistic expectations of laypeople only led to frustration. But coaching changed that. Charles was more focused, more energetic, and accomplishing more than he had dreamed he could. He expanded his ministry through writing, and his church had expanded its ministry by engaging laypeople. He was mentoring younger leaders. People were involved, and they were reaching more people.

Charles still had to deal with conflicts in the church. He still had to work hard to envision the future of the church and to communicate it to church leaders and members. He still had to deal with the dynamics of change. But he faced these challenges with more confidence and a more positive perspective.

Many ministry leaders can benefit from a trusted, confidential, and competent coaching relationship. Your situation may not be the same as that of Charles. However, these benefits, particularly encouraging God-sized goals, can infuse new life into your ministry.

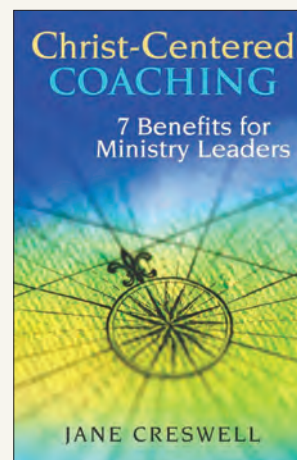
The writer of Proverbs wrote, "The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out" (Proverbs 20:5). This is what coaching is. Drawing out the purposes God has in mind for your ministry is available as you participate in being coached and also to others as you, in turn, coach them. ☺

#### NOTE

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FOR FURTHER READING



## Christ-Centered Coaching: 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders

Jane Creswell  
Chalice Press (April 2006)

**Creswell draws from her extensive corporate and ministry coaching experience** to provide ministers and other church leaders a clear definition of what coaching is and the seven basic benefits an individual, church, or group can receive through a qualified coach. Solidly based in experience, each chapter is built upon an actual scenario growing out of Creswell's own coaching experience. Along with the illustration, she provides scriptural teaching, gives explicit information on the purpose and merits of coaching, additional resources, and tips for coaching.



**JANE CRESWELL, MCC**, is founder of IBM Coaches' Network and author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Coaching for Excellence* and *Christ-Centered Coaching: 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders*. She lives in West Lafayette, Indiana.

For additional coaching resources visit <http://ca-ministries.com/resources/free-resources/>.





# THE **ART** OF COACHING:

## *Principles, Process, and Core Skills*

**C**oaching is exploding in the business world and within the Christian community. Moving from an embryonic stage to a developed methodology, coaching is racing across denominations and ministries and is touching people at a variety of levels.

In this article I offer a coaching process that gives structure to conversations along with three core skills that are common sense, but not always common practice. These principles seem obvious — just as the process and skills are obvious — but they are not easily lived out.

Over the past 8 years seminaries and denominational conferences as well as coaches who are coaching individuals and teams have tested these principles, processes, and skills. My hope is that you will find something you can apply immediately to your ministry context, so you will experience the power of coaching for God's glory.

### **Foundational Coaching Principles**

#### **The coaching mindset**

Pastors, counselors, and consultants have, at their core, a desire to serve God and help people solve problems and make healthier choices. Often this desire to help is focused on me as the one giving advice and on my ability to give advice and tell people what they can do differently. Coaching approaches people from a you mindset, based on the belief that the person being coached (PBC) has ideas, options, and solutions. This allows coaches to shift into asking questions and drawing out solutions and resources that create

discovery for the person being coached.

In training classes, we often hear that shifting to a PBC mindset is the biggest shift pastors and lay leaders need to make. For most, shifting to a PBC mindset comes by practicing and seeing the effectiveness of coaching. When pastors make this shift, the responsibility lies on the person being coached to hear from the Lord and think about and decide on the best approach and solutions. The result is a higher level of buy-in, commitment, and ownership of ideas and actions.

#### **Action and forward movement**

Coaching is about action and forward movement. When we coach, we want people to notice where they are and identify where they want to be. It is easy to get caught in the past. Most people like to ask, "What have you done so far?" The answer can consume time and does not move the person forward. In contrast, when we coach, we focus on the future.

The question, from a coaching perspective, might be, "What have you done in the past that can help you move forward in this situation?" This touches on the past, but stays focused on taking future actions. Coaching focuses on helping people take

► BY **LINDA J. MILLER**



Author's  
intro video

**Here is everything  
you need to know  
to get started  
in a coaching  
relationship and  
ministry.**



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When we coach,  
we want people to  
notice where they are  
and identify where  
they want to be.

intentional action to move forward. This is in alignment with Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." We must keep an ear toward God as well as toward the person being coached so we can keep focused.

### Not making others wrong

Ephesians 4:29 says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." In coaching, our desire is to help people be right. Have we corrected a detail that was not important or said

something sarcastically that hurt someone? Have we put a negative label on someone, sometimes in his or her presence? Have we put others down, intentionally or unintentionally? We want every conversation to glorify God and edify the other person. Notice how this Scripture focuses on the PBC side of the coaching mindset. This is where we want to live when we're coaching.

### A learning process

In every conversation, we want the people we are coaching to learn something about themselves or their situation. We want to create awareness for the PBC that brings about learning.

The person being coached is not the only one who learns. Coaches learn what questions

## What is Coaching?

Many people outside the corporate environment are not familiar with coaching. Most people only think of coaching in sports. The attitude and activities of the Olympic coach are much in alignment with an executive, corporate, or life coach. The tools and skills, however, are different. The best and simplest definition of coaching is: "Successful coaching is a mutual conversation that follows a predictable process and leads to superior performance, commitment to sustained improvement and positive relationships."<sup>1</sup>



### Basic Coaching Skills Are:

Observing, listening, questioning, moving through the gap, informing, challenging, and endorsing/encouraging.

Many models exist that define the coaching process. One example of a model for the skill of moving through the gap is the "Coaching Conversation™" authored by Lee Smith and Jeannine Sandstrom (CoachWorks® International), and now utilized by Corporate Coach U in their training programs:

1. **Establish Focus.** Where are you now, and where do you want to be?

What is missing? What needs to be achieved? Where do you want to go?

2. **Discover Possibilities.** What is possible? What can be done with what is known or currently "real"?
3. **Plan the Action.** This is the time for strategizing the way to get from where you are to where you want to be.
4. **Remove Barriers.** What stands in the way? How can it be removed? Remove it.
5. **Recap.** Go over the plan again, then, as Nike says, "just do it!"

This is the nutshell version of coaching. Obviously, this is overly simplified. Coaching is composed of many skills and techniques all focused on allowing the individual (or congregation) to achieve their very best. If you read the Exodus 18 account of Jethro coaching Moses, you will find all these steps and skills.

From *501 Building Blocks for Powerful Coaching*, materials developed by Linda Miller, MCC and Jane Creswell, MCC for Coach Approach Ministries. Copyright ©2010, all rights reserved. Used with permission.

### NOTE

1. Dennis C. Kinlaw, *Coaching for Commitment: Managerial Strategies for Obtaining Superior Performance* (San Francisco: Pfeiffer & Co, 1993).

## Coaching Principles

### Coaching is:

- A shift from telling to asking, so the PBC (person being coached) can develop her own thoughts, ideas, solutions.
- A focus on action and moving forward.
- Not making others wrong.
- A learning process for everyone.
- Being honest with others, even when we make a mistake.
- A wonderful way of developing and equipping others by encouraging them to think differently.

work or do not work. We learn ideas or options we never would have considered, yet they are the right ones for the PBC when they generate these ideas or options themselves. We learn when something we say has a different impact from what we intended. We learn that we have offered a solution that will not work when people respond, "Yes, but. ..."

### **Being honest, even with mistakes**

One way to learn is to be mindful when you make mistakes. For example, you are coaching Nick and hear yourself slipping to the me side with a comment such as, "I would not do it that way. Here is my idea. ..." Stop and come back to it. You may want to apologize because you realize you have just implied there is a better way.

When coaches make a mistake, most people are shocked and grateful when we correct it. This gives others permission to make mistakes. It also shows how mistakes can strengthen relationships.

I remember a situation where a coaching relationship started out so badly neither of us was interested in meeting again. After the meeting, I tried to figure out what had happened. I called the person and asked for another meeting. When we met, I told her I was aware that our first meeting had not worked. We decided on a do-over. Recently we talked about the strength of our relationship more than 2 years after that first bad start.

When we make a mistake, we call ourselves on it, take responsibility, and clean it up. It can sound like, "That question did not come out right. Let me try again." Or, "I notice that you are much more quiet than usual. What I just said was not what I meant. Let us take time to clean this up." Or, "You have missed a couple of coaching calls. If there is something I have done that has not worked, please let me know. I am committed to cleaning it up so we can move forward."

### **Developing others**

Ephesians 4:11–13 says, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to

the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Coaching develops others. It facilitates a way of thinking for the person being coached. Pastors, leaders, and people with oversight responsibility can use coaching within their organizations to equip others.

One way of developing people who are facing challenges is to encourage them to bring three options and one recommendation for the challenge or problem at the next meeting. This encourages them to be forward-focused and action-oriented. Then, when they are talking, we can coach them by continuing to draw out their thought process.

### **Getting Started in a Coaching Relationship**

When we coach in ministry, people notice it is a different type of conversation. Therefore, it is important to call out the differences and expectations when getting started.

For example, you might introduce the changes you are making with your staff by saying, "I would like to start using a different approach when we meet. This will mean a couple of modifications. Until now, we have met sporadically. I take responsibility for the inconsistency. Beginning immediately, I would like to meet twice a month. In the past, I told you what to do and gave you advice. I realize this has held you back. In the future, I will be asking for your thoughts, drawing out your ideas, and encouraging you to come up with solutions, rather than jumping in so quickly with mine. I also want to be open to a different level of feedback. In the past, I have delayed or avoided saying if something is not working. I assume you have too. Let us agree that we will give feedback — going both ways — as soon as possible. I cannot promise that I will be perfect, so let me know when something is not working for you."

There are many topics to address when starting to use a coaching approach. Some of those are:

#### **Confidentiality**

Coaching considers all conversations confidential. Even so, if the PBC says something that indicates the possibility of doing harm to self or to others, or if the PBC has said anything that is a reportable item within the organization or state law, we need to exempt these from confidentiality. In addition, think

Coaching develops others. It facilitates a way of thinking for the person being coached.



### **Setting Up the Coaching Agreement Within the Church**

**When using coaching with staff and volunteers,** discuss the following, depending on the situation:

- The difference between how you have worked together in the past and what will be different moving forward.
- Confidentiality — this is always in place with coaching, and you will need to adapt to your situation.
- Style, pace.
- Honesty, feedback.
- Expectations — how you will be responding differently and how you want your staff to be.
- Logistics (scheduling, whose office or by phone, how long the meetings will last, etc.).





In a real world,  
we base our  
relationships on  
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with each other  
and speaking  
the truth in love  
(Ephesians 4:15).  
When we are  
coaching, it is  
useful to talk about  
being honest and  
giving feedback  
to each other  
when needed.



carefully about confidentiality in your specific situation and have clear agreements about it.

## Style and pace

Coaches need to be aware of the PBC's style and pace so they can talk about it and match it, if possible. If we already know each other, we may know the style and pace. If we have new people, we pay more attention, especially if we are coaching outside of our church or ministry.

One learning experience occurred when I was working with someone who was from a different geographical region and who spoke v-e-r-y slowly. Unfortunately, I failed to pick up the discrepancy between my pace and his. Toward the end of our first meeting, he said slowly, "I want to work with you; however, you are talking too fast for me. If the pace does not change, we cannot work together." I burst out laughing and apologized for my insensitivity. We both laughed, and from then on, I settled myself before each conversation and slowed down. We worked well together for over 2 years.

## Honesty and feedback

In a real world, we base our relationships on being honest with each other and speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). When we are coaching, it is useful to talk about being honest and giving feedback to each other when needed. This models how to talk about honesty and feedback for the person you are coaching and sets the tone for other working relationships. One of the ways to address this is to say, "We both value honesty, so let us both agree to speak up when something is going on that we need to notice. If at any time something is not working for either one of us, it is our joint responsibility to address it immediately so the coaching relationship and your progress move forward smoothly."

## Expectations

How often do we talk about expectations in our relationships? In my experience, not very often. With coaching, it is important to clarify what we expect of the person we are coaching and what the PBC can expect from the coach. For example, we might say, "When we are coaching, you can expect me to be fully present and focused during our

meetings, and I expect the same from you. If you have something specific you want to discuss, that would be great. In fact, when we get started, I will ask you what you want to focus on during our time together. And, if I have something we need to address, I will let you know. If we have any miscommunications, let us both be responsible to address them immediately. We can focus our time on goals, strategy, tactics or anything else that will help you be successful in your role."

## Logistics

Address logistics and gain agreement on these up front. For example, it is important to know if the coaching will take place by phone or face-to-face. If face-to-face, in whose office? Talk about being on time (which is common sense, but not always common practice), how much notice to give if you or the PBC needs to reschedule or cancel, and how long the meetings or calls will last.

## The Coaching Process

After the agreement is in place, start coaching. Coaching is not random. It is an intentional conversation that includes the Holy Spirit with the goal of moving people forward. Some have wondered why we have a coaching process. It is a way of giving a consistent structure to the conversation and creating standardization.

There are many coaching models, but let us look at a simple process with four parts:

- Connecting
- Getting focused
- Discovering actions that are aligned with the focus
- Evaluating the actions and the direction

## Connecting

People want people to connect with them and show them they care. The first part of the coaching process is connecting:

- Say hello.
- Greet the person you are coaching.
- Ask the person about upcoming plans.

Connecting makes a world of difference. One church leader wanted me to coach him on how to improve morale on his staff. Each coaching session, I greeted him and asked about his family, some part of his week, or his upcoming weekend. During one of our



calls, the subject of connecting came up. He realized that what I was doing with him (connecting) was something he was not doing with his staff. He decided to try connecting with his staff at the beginning of each meeting and at other times during the day. Morale improved quickly. He was amazed that such a small change could create such a positive shift in the attitude of others.

When we are focused on getting the job done, we can forget to take time to connect with the people with whom we are coaching and working. Even though it may take a small amount of time, connecting has huge benefits.

### Getting focused

After the initial few minutes of connecting, it is time to focus. Getting focused can take up to half of a coaching session, so it is important not to be impatient. Impatience often leads to discussing the wrong topic. We know it is a wrong topic when the person leaves the conversation saying, "Oh, yeah. There's something really important that I need to talk with you about."

## The Language of Coaching

**Language that limits successful conversations** pulls the attention toward "me"

- Self-referencing (me, my, I, etc.)
- Do it my way (or any derivatives of that)
- Being focused only on tactical or strategic
- "Why?"
- Leading the person being coached toward the direction you think is best
- Assumptions of any kind

**Language that assists in coaching conversations** keeps the focus on the other person:

- What are you thinking about?
- What's most important?
- What else?
- How else?
- Who else?
- What will you do first?
- By when?
- How will you know?

People often come to the coaching meeting with a variety of topics. Sometimes the conversation seems to be a swirl of thoughts and challenges. During this part of the process, it is important to narrow down the focus, just like the sand that comes through the neck of an hourglass one grain at a time.

Specific language is one of the best ways to narrow the focus. Some examples of focusing questions include:

- What specifically would you like to discuss during this meeting?
- What's most pressing right now?
- Which of those [three] things do you want to focus on today?
- What would be most useful for us to discuss first?

### Discovering actions that are aligned with the focus

Once you have established the focus, draw out ideas and options that align with the specific topic. People love it when they come up with their own ideas. There is a much higher level of commitment to the actions they have identified.

As we get into discovering actions, I need to issue a warning. This is a critical place in the coaching conversation when we can navigate toward the me side of the coaching mindset. Wanting to give advice draws us in. Or, we want to share an idea because we think our idea is better. Or, we want to suggest what they need to do. Don't. Try to stay on the PBC's side by asking questions, drawing out ideas, and promoting discovery for the person you are coaching.

Questions during this part of the coaching process include:

- What ideas do you have? (A great follow-up question is "What are some other ideas?")
- What actions are you considering?
- What else could you do?
- Who could be a resource for you as you think through options?
- Where else might you find ideas?

### Evaluating the actions and the direction

As ideas and actions become clear, evaluate options. We want to encourage the person we are coaching to think about the focus, clarify his actions, evaluate the ramifications of his actions, and make needed adjustments.

We want to encourage the person we are coaching to think about the focus, clarify his actions, evaluate the ramifications of his actions, and make needed adjustments.





When we coach,  
the best questions  
to help people  
move forward  
begin with what,  
how, who, when,  
where, and which.

Questions might include:

- What is your priority with the actions you have identified?
- What challenges might you have in moving forward?
- What could go wrong?
- How will you know if your direction is not working or if it is going wrong?
- Who else needs to be included in this direction?



### Three Core Coaching Skills

- Deep listening — to the Holy Spirit and to the person you are coaching.
- Powerful questioning to promote discovery for the person you are coaching — keep them short and simple.
- Encouraging the person you are coaching.

### Three Core Coaching Skills

The coaching process is a wonderful structure for conversations and coaching skills hold that process together. There are over 200 coaching skills, most of which we will not cover in this article. I will address three of the most important skills: deep listening, powerful questioning, and encouraging the person you are coaching. While they are simple, they are not easy. They are practical, but not often practiced.

#### Deep listening

We are adults. We have been listening to others our entire lives. Yet, how often are we listening deeply, desiring to hear from the Holy Spirit as well as the person to whom we are talking? Instead, we are often thinking of what we will say next or trying to think of solutions. As Tom Peters said, "Americans don't listen. They just reload." As James 1:19 says, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

Deep listening means being present and focused. Try being present and focused for 5 minutes to see how hard it is. We have so many distractions.

Each of us has to figure out how to deal with the distractions so we can listen deeply, first to the Holy Spirit, and then to the person with whom we are talking. All other skills rest on this single proficiency.

Tips for listening deeply during coaching conversations:

- Be present and focused.
- Set aside distractions.
- Be in an attitude of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- Get comfortable with silence — times of silence are a gift we give to others.
- Be aware of our own biases or judgments, and set them aside.

#### Powerful questioning

Layered upon deep listening is the skill of powerful questioning. The most powerful questions come in small packages with a simple shape. They are open-ended and require a detailed response. Jesus asked questions throughout His ministry. Look through the New Testament and watch for Jesus' questions. When we coach, the best questions to help people move forward begin with what,

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"Do the ushers come after me if I'm guilty of tithe evasion?"



how, who, when, where, and which. These encourage people to think more broadly about how they want to move forward and get into action. If we use questions that elicit a yes/no response, we limit the person's thinking.

I once asked a person, "Do you have any ideas?" As soon as the question was out of my mouth, I asked the person if I could restate the question. I then asked, "What ideas do you have?"

At the end of our meeting, I asked her about the difference in her response to the two questions. She said, "When you asked me the first question, I wanted to respond, 'No, of course, I don't have any ideas. If I did, I wouldn't be here.' When you asked the second question, I thought, I really do have ideas that I hadn't realized."

Asking "why" often puts people on the defensive and makes them feel they have done something wrong. It takes people into the past rather than focusing on ways to move ahead. Instead of asking "why," we can ask, "What's behind that decision?" Or, "Please say more about how you arrived at that conclusion to find some new ways forward."

Powerful questioning is a core coaching skill because of its ability to help people think differently and move forward. Some examples of short and simple questions include:

- What options do you see?
- What else? (This is a great question because it keeps the options open.)
- How else might you think about this?
- Who needs to be included in the decision?
- Where will you find those resources?
- When will you take the first action?
- Which option is the best for you?

#### Encouraging the person being coached

Dr. John Gottman of the Gottman Institute in Seattle says that people receive seven negatives for every positive they hear. This includes

children in school, married couples at home, workers in their jobs, as well as people being coached. Paul states in Colossians 2:2, "My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart." What a blessing it is to be an encourager and to change the ratio of positives and negatives for the people we are coaching.

Encouragements take some thought, but very little time. You can deliver encouragement by phone, in person, in a team meeting, or through written communication. Great encouragements focus on the other person. "The meeting you ran yesterday was so well organized. The way you invited everyone to participate worked really well. Thanks." Notice that there is no mention of "I" in the statement. Compare that encouragement to this: "I really liked the way you ran the meeting. I liked it that you invited everyone to participate." This reflects more on "me" than on the other person. When encouraging others, keep the focus on the PBC.

People are energized when they are encouraged. Good encouragements are:

- genuine.
- timely.
- specific.
- focused on the other person.

When we encourage, we are living out the prayer in Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." When we coach well, we encourage others to have hope, joy, and peace by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### Next Steps

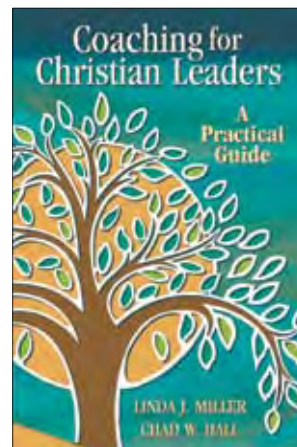
Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "There is nothing new under the sun." Nothing is new in the information presented above. However, there are many places where we may want to reconsider our mindset, tighten up our coaching conversation, or improve our coaching skills. Listen to where the Lord is leading you and find at least two areas where you can improve. Start immediately. Notice the results. ☺



**LINDA J. MILLER** is a global liaison with The Ken Blanchard Companies and has coauthored two books: *Coaching for Christian Leaders* (with Chad Hall, 2007) and *Coaching in Organizations: Best Coaching Practices* from The Ken Blanchard Companies (with Madeleine Homan Blanchard, 2009). Linda is also a principal with Coach Approach Ministries, is adjunct faculty for Western Seminary. See Miller's online article "Transforming From Pastoral Counselor to Pastoral Coach: New Tools for the Pastor's Toolbox" at EJ Online: [www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org](http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org).



#### FOR FURTHER READING



### Coaching for Christian Leaders: A Practical Guide (TCP Leadership Series)

Linda Miller and Chad W. Hall  
(Chalice Press, 2007)

**Even leaders need leading.** In the context of this greatly changing world, ministry experts Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl have coined the phrase "transformational" to define the unique type of inspired coaching they offer to spiritual leaders in need of fresh direction. "The path that the Lord of the Harvest has designed sometimes takes us beyond our comfort zone and off the map of our experience," they write. "We'll help you understand how coaching helps leaders get traction and make progress in personal growth and ministry productivity. We'll also help you become an effective coach so no matter where you find yourself — from church buildings to coffee shops to places you've never gone before — you can come alongside to help others live out their call and make a difference in their world."





# COACHING FROM THE INSIDE

► BY KEITH G. EDWARDS

Author's  
intro video



Here are  
important  
coaching  
principles to  
keep in mind  
when coaching  
your ministry  
leaders from  
the inside.



To share or comment on this article, go to  
<http://ej.ag.org/201202coachinginside>  
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**B**rian was doing a great job as children's pastor at Trinity Assembly of God in Lutherville, Maryland, when I arrived to become the discipleship and ministries pastor. My position included overseeing the youth and children's pastors. Although Brian was gifted and talented in working with kids, in my conversations with him, it became obvious that God was shifting Brian's direction toward pastoral counseling.

As a coach, who also had the role of supervisor, we worked together to discover God's plan and strategically implemented a transition. Eventually Brian went back to school to get a master's degree and is now a counselor and leads Celebrate Recovery for Trinity. Watching Brian's passion, vision, and skills converge with strategy and goal setting brings fulfillment to this coach's heart.

I delight in working with church planters, ministers, and leaders. I have coached pastors I have served under, staff I have served with, staff reporting to me, lay leaders and workers, interns, and college students. I have experienced people finding their place of ministry and becoming engaged at a level of giftedness and passion.

People come alive when they begin to discover, operate, and excel in their gifts. Coaching is a great way to help people realize and accelerate their growth. Proverbs 20:5 says, "The purposes of a man are as deep waters,

a man of understanding draws them out." Coaching reaches deep into lives to help them discover their God-given purpose and creates a strategic partnership to help them move forward.

When coaching leaders within the church, I adjust my definition of coaching: "Coaching is an intentional partnership, designed to encourage sustained success in the context of an authentic relationship." This working definition reminds me that the leader and I are partners, working to fulfill the vision of the church. As such, I walk alongside leaders to make vision and strategies realities. I regularly provide support, encouragement, and accountability in an atmosphere of authentic relationships, which empowers persons to reach their full potential. It amazes me how much people are looking for this investment and respond with openness and gratitude.

Keep the following in mind when coaching your ministry staff and lay leaders:

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### **Build Authentic Relationships**

People in ministry respond best to those who care about them as persons. The relationship opens the door for feedback, which I call *relational capital*. The healthier the relationship, the more opportunity one has to speak into the life of another.

Bob Logan and Sherilyn Carlton write, "If we skip over building a solid relational foundation in our hurry to get more accomplished, our strategy will backfire. Coaching that leaves out the relational element will be ineffective at best."<sup>1</sup> Authentic relationships may not be possible when the coaching comes from outside the church, but it is critical when it comes from the inside.

The fastest way to build authentic relationships is to tell stories about one's life and allow leaders to share their stories. This requires a certain level of vulnerability by the coach, which speeds up trust in the relationship. I want to hear about their

God story, places in their lives where God revealed himself in a significant way and touched them deeply. Asking about a leader's calling is asking about his God story. Although coaches should not take on the role of therapist or counselor, knowing about a staff member's background will help understand how the leader functions.

I also listen for patterns of behavior and consistent results. I learn about past successes and failures and connect them to the present. This is one way I help leaders become more self-aware as they identify the things God wants to change in their lives.

Furthermore, I listen for the dreams and visions leaders have as they pertain to life and ministry. They may have never spoken some dreams and visions out loud. Coaching creates a safe environment for this to happen. Although Brian was accountable to me, it was our relationship that encouraged the conversation in which he explored other ministry dreams.

People in ministry respond best to those who care about them as persons. The healthier the relationship, the more opportunity one has to speak into the life of another.





Coaching church staff and leaders requires pastors to look for, or create, teachable moments.



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Coaches can accelerate authentic relationships when they work with a leader firsthand. Praying, working, playing, sharing meals, and ministering together give the coach information not available through coaching sessions.

### Think Holistically

Coaching needs to be holistic, touching all areas of life: spiritual, emotional, personal, and ministerial, because all are connected. It is difficult to coach people toward a successful ministry when they are wrestling with their relationship with God or spouse.

One simple tool to help a leader find balance is "The Wheel of Life." The Wheel of Life is available at [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE\\_93.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_93.htm). This site provides a clear explanation on how to use this wheel. This tool helps a person find balance and identify areas of personal growth.

Being a coach in the same church gives pastors tremendous advantage. They can watch their leaders in action in real time, seeing firsthand their advancements and challenges, and they can offer encouragement and support along with accountability. This makes the conversations much easier. The coach can say, "I noticed..." or "Talk to me about..." or ask, "What about this situation reminds you of your previous experience?"

One challenge of coaching is that the coach can only work with what the leader brings to the session. When coaching from

inside, the coach has opportunity to give honest and timely feedback with more material with which to work.

### Work Toward Self-Awareness

While working with Paul, a dedicated Royal Rangers leader, it became obvious his passion for that ministry was diminishing. He lacked enthusiasm and energy and became more disconnected. After talking with him a number of times, he finally said, "I resign. I need time to just sit back."

I did notice, however, that when he prayed, there was something deep and special. Through a series of questions and conversations he decided to try something new. He began a Pastors Prayer Partner ministry with renewed joy and passion. This became a life-giving ministry and served to make a significant impact on the lives of many men, including me.

Many leaders in our churches are like Paul, serving where they are not gifted or called. This breeds discontentment and burnout. This is bad for recruitment as volunteers repeat negative stories.

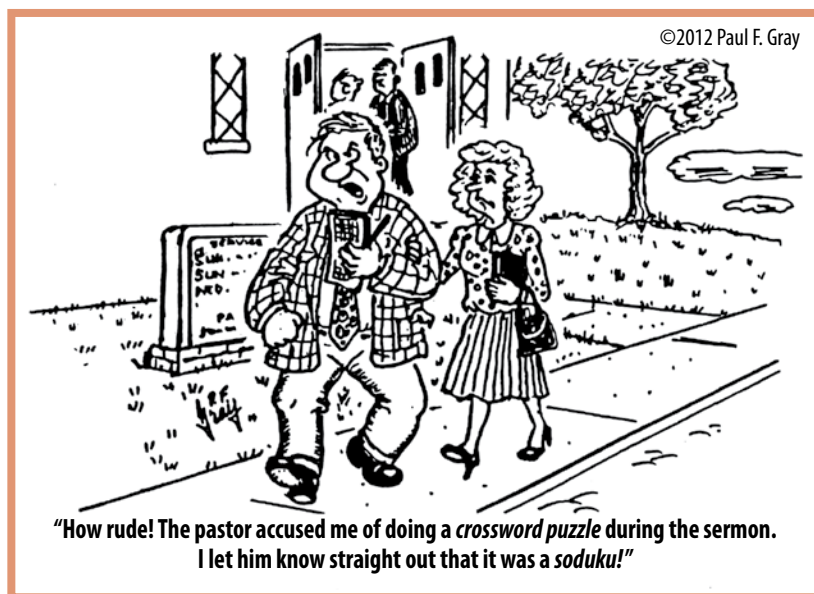
A coach works toward a leader's self-discovery. There are tools that help leaders discover their spiritual gifts as well as their personality profile: DISC (Dominant, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness). Pastors can order these tools from [www.uniquelyyou.net](http://www.uniquelyyou.net).

*Leading From Your Strengths* ([www.ministryinsights.com](http://www.ministryinsights.com)) is another tool to assist a coach in connecting the leader to the right teams. Both resources are quick and simple online assessments giving immediate, comprehensive feedback to the coach and leader as well as useful team-building exercises.

These tools, combined with questions and observations, give coaches feedback they can use to gain insight into how God has naturally equipped the leader. From here a leader can either use the insights to advance in the same ministry or experiment with other interests.

### Look for Teachable Moments

Coaching church staff and leaders also requires pastors to look for, or create, teachable moments. As coaches, pastors see leaders in action, they can ask questions that help these leaders improve. One specific area of growth opportunity for many leaders is in improving their communication and people skills. Ask,





"If you could rewrite the script for how you handled this, what would it look like?"

Anytime leaders experience a crisis, they have opportunity to reflect on personal growth. When life changes, it influences who we are: sometimes for the better and sometimes not. Whether the crisis is personal or ministry related, the coach can walk with the leaders he is coaching to discover the work of God in their lives.

When looking for teachable moments, I ask, "What is God teaching you about yourself through this?" If the coach has taken time to listen to the leader's stories, there is opportunity for significant growth.

I noticed one leader leaving church early, which was not his usual routine. I asked a few questions, which led to in-depth conversations. These conversations helped turn the situation around and teach valuable lessons on spiritual maturity. Observing out-of-routine behaviors allows the coach to get to root issues much faster and can lead to more efficient sessions.

Many times a coach can also create teachable moments. This combines mentoring with coaching. I had three interns for a summer, all of whom wanted to work on their public speaking. I helped each intern put together a message, pray over the message, present the message, review the message, and repeat the message. These teachable moments will serve to be beneficial in their future.

### Agree on an Agenda

Coaches are not simply looking for coffee partners; they are working toward advancement, helping leaders get from where they are to where they want to go. Agreeing on an agenda sets the direction for coaching. When leaders cannot clearly identify where they want to go, it presents a major challenge for all involved. Knowing that effective coaching happens when leaders are working in areas where they are motivated, a skilled coach will help leaders reach down and find excitement, conviction, and energy for change.

"Your Change Agenda" is a resource from Transformational Leadership Coaching. (See "Your Change Agenda" sidebar.) It asks a series of questions within three categories: Your energy for change, God's agenda for change, and the facts of life. If leaders can determine their long-range goals, the coach can help

them work backward to identify what they want to accomplish in the next 30/60/90 days.

The coach needs to work to attach the agenda to personal growth. For example, if a leader wants to grow personally in a certain area (i.e. spiritual disciplines), then the coach needs to help the leader set an agenda that will challenge that personal area as well as accomplish a specific project. A coach might ask, "As you were praying about the project, what did you learn from your study in Scripture and your time in prayer?"

### Set Goals

After you determine the overall agenda, move toward setting specific goals that move a person forward. This is where the partner takes ownership and responsibility for growth and change. It also sets the agenda for the coaching conversation and requires an outcome.

John Whitmore, in *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose — The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*, provides a tool to help people determine their goal and move toward it. He calls it the GROW model. He designed it to help people stay focused on sustained excellence by helping them define what they would like to accomplish and work through the specifics. The GROW model has a sequence of stages a coach can use to guide the partner toward a solution and determine realistic steps toward that solution. GROW is an acronym for:<sup>2</sup>

- **GOAL setting** for the session, as well as short-and-long-term goals.
- **REALITY checking** to explore the current situation.
- **OPTIONS** and alternative strategies or courses of action.
- **WHAT** is to be done, **WHEN**, by **WHOM**, and the **WILL** to do it.

A goal must cover five areas. Think of them as SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-specific.

Two questions help a person move toward action: 1) On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to following through with your decision? If the answer is lower than 5, it is not likely he is committed to the goal. If it is above 5 but less than 9, a good follow-up question is: 2) What would it take for you to move that number higher? The answer to this question provides the key to helping someone succeed.

## Your Change Agenda

**Purpose:** To set the growth agenda for a coaching relationship by identifying God's prompting and our motivations for change.

**Value:** Tuning in to God's change agenda for a person is vital because God initiates change.

**How To:** A coaching relationship helps you change and move toward your destiny in God's kingdom. The following questions will help you focus your coaching relationship by identifying key areas where you may want to develop a change goal. All of the questions below work toward the same goal. Choose the three or four that seem most significant to you and spend time reflecting and writing on each one.

### Energy for Change

- If I could change any two things in my life right now, what would they be?
- Do I have a compelling reason to change each of these things? What is it?
- Where am I excited, convicted, or determined to change?
- What am I avoiding that could change my life if I faced it?
- What are two things I could change that most drain me and hold me back?

### God's Agenda

- What are the top three things on God's change agenda for me right now?
- What do I need right now to take the next step toward fulfilling my God-given destiny?

### The Facts of Life

- What areas are my circumstances forcing me to address right now?
- What opportunities have my circumstances given me that I want to pursue?
- What major dream am I putting off that I need to start working toward?



## Challenges and Benefits of Coaching From the Inside

Coaching from outside an organization is profitable and objective; however, coaching your staff and lay leadership require a new set of skills and ideas. Here are a few benefits and challenges:

### Benefits:

- Coaching in real time provides opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and make mid-course corrections quickly.
- The relationship between the coach and the leader can be more relational, especially if the leader and coach are working side by side in a project or ministry.
- Leaders see the coach make mistakes and observes how they apply their own ideas.
- The coach has the ability to put on other hats, such as mentoring, to help leaders

accomplish their goals.

- The coach can offer the leader his earned influence to multiply the success of the ministry.
- The coach often has resources more readily available.

### Challenges:

- The consequences are personal.
- The mistakes are visible to the coach. If the coach has authority over the leader, this can be awkward at times.
- The coach has to be able to let the leader fail to learn a lesson, but that failure often reflects on the coach as well.
- Coaches are sometimes caught in the middle of defending a leader even when they agree with what others are saying.
- The temptation to tell is greater than the skill of asking questions.
- The lines between that of mentor and coach are often blurred.

and set new action steps.

Life is not always as smooth as we hope for and the best of plans can be derailed. Planned times of evaluation give the coach and the partner time to make midcourse corrections and work toward solutions or even set different goals.

As a coach starts and ends with the person in mind, it is important to ask what God is doing in the heart of the leader. We know that God is working to bring change. Here is the opportunity to recognize where God wants to make changes and/or challenge the person being coached to make these changes. This encourages the leader to move toward the next season with confidence.

### Celebrate Generously

Celebrate. Coaches must find ways to reinforce positive growth. Whether it is through gifts, words of affirmation, or time, coaches need to recognize success. When the aforementioned interns left at the end of the summer, the church gave them ESV Study Bibles as a way to encourage them to continue to grow in their gifts. These reinforcements do not need to be extravagant. Sometimes a simple note or a public affirming word will do.

### Conclusion

Coaching is a gift to ministry leaders. It says they are valuable and worth investing in. Coaching sees the potential leaders have in Christ. As pastors, we can make a difference in the lives of leaders in our churches by intentionally partnering with them, encouraging them toward excellence, and offering authentic relationships. 🙌

### NOTES

1. Bob Logan and Sherilyn Carlton, *Coaching 101* (St. Charles, Illinois: ChurchSmart Resources, 2003), 31.
2. John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose — The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership* (Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2009), 54.

### Develop a Plan

One adage says, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." Like going on a trip, we need directions or a map. A strategic plan is that map, called a "growth plan," that is a concrete, structured way a coach can help the leader move toward a goal. It leverages the coach's time by providing preplanned action steps for the leader to work on between appointments.

This plan needs to include as many details and timelines as possible to accomplish each task. It also needs to include the people and resources necessary to accomplish the goal.

### Follow Up

This is the accountability stage where most people fall short. During this phase, the coach and leader evaluate the process, celebrate the victories, address the challenges, make adjustments, acquire new resources,



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Coaching is a gift to ministry leaders. It says they are valuable and worth investing in.



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# TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING:

## *Coaching the Whole Leader*

► BY STEVE OGNE

Author's  
intro video



**Helping those  
you lead clarify  
their call, cultivate  
their character,  
create community,  
and connect  
with culture.**



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**J**ohn jogged into the coffee shop anxious to show me his large and colorful triple cross tattoo. He had my attention. He shared his ideas for a new kind of church. He interspersed his ideas with stories of his brokenness and how he felt others were trying to squeeze ministry out of him.

As I quizzed him about specific plans and goals, he said, "You seem to care more about what I can do than you do about me." Coaching John to start a church would be challenging.

John had already challenged my basic coaching paradigm based on performance, productivity, and effectiveness. He was more inclined toward authenticity, creativity, and relationship. As a result of coaching John, I decided to give attention to young and emerging leaders like him. This changed the way I coach everyone.

Many coaching paradigms overly focus on performance, productivity, and effectiveness. Coaching paradigms developed for business are this way by necessity. In my previous work on coaching, coauthored with Tom Nebel, we focused on starting stronger churches and growing bigger and better churches.

Coaching lay leaders often focuses on their effectiveness. At times, they may feel we are squeezing ministry out of them. Coaches may only focus on the personal life of the leader as if it was having a negative impact on ministry effectiveness.

The paradigm I present is a *holistic paradigm* intended to develop both the leader and his ministry while creating an authentic relationship between the coach and the leader. The new paradigm is a *transformational paradigm*, intended to help leaders live authentically and incarnationally while leading their ministries to connect with the culture and intentionally engage in redemptive relationships.

This new coaching paradigm focuses on a leader who is transformed through clarifying her *call* to ministry and cultivating personal *character* so she can transform surroundings by creating authentic *community* and connecting with the secular *culture* in a redemptive way.

Coaching is no longer just about effective programs and results; it is also about healthy and effective ministry leadership and relationships. A good coach focuses on the holistic development of the leader and ministry together. A good coach will seek to help the leader *clarify calling, cultivate character, create community, and connect with culture*. A coach may focus on only one of these areas in a





Authentic spiritual formation is one of the primary credentials for ministry.

coaching appointment, but the coach must routinely touch each of these areas in every coaching relationship. When seeking to identify where to begin a specific coaching conversation, you must prayerfully ask, "Where is God working in this leader at this time?"

This article introduces a holistic model of coaching I developed while coaching young and emerging leaders, but it is applicable to coaching all leaders: paid and volunteer. For experienced coaches, this article will expand

their knowledge and skills. For new, inexperienced coaches, particularly pastors interested in coaching, this article pictures how they can holistically coach their paid ministry staff or volunteers; and for leaders being coached, it lets them know what they might expect from a coach.

## Clarifying Call

Tom Ashbrook rightly stated at a Church Resource Ministries directors' training that coaches help leaders practice their "first-order calling" (being) as worshippers and followers of God, and their "second-order calling" (doing) as servants and ministers for God. Many Christian leaders are so focused on accomplishing some grand personal mission or calling that they have forgotten their first calling: to be a worshipping follower of Jesus. Some postmodern Christian leaders are so busy worshipping God and the idea of community that they cannot get anything done for the Kingdom. All Christian leaders need help discovering and fulfilling both their first and second callings.

## Were You Born to Coach?

Read each statement and respond below as objectively as possible.

I have been listening intently, asking pointed questions, and encouraging others as a preferred way of interacting with people all my life.

I always respond this way (see #1). It extends beyond work life. I often do it in addition to my current job, sometimes even instead of performing well in my current job.

I can see the benefit of and enjoy having structured conversations in order for others to take effective intentional action.

I am inclined to make fine distinctions in language to clarify meaning.

I naturally put my own agenda aside in deference to the person I am talking to.

I naturally see patterns in behavior that others do not see.

I recognize and can share trends that result in others being more effective.

I naturally value and prefer to invest in people and relationships rather than in equipment, tasks, or projects.

I have a keen awareness for underlying strengths, for what is not said, and for possibilities that are not yet realized.

I have a natural fascination for human interaction and am a student of human behavior. (This might include reading, seminars, etc., and is not limited to formal education or degrees.)

Not quite true

Already true

## First-order calling — Being

When coaching your leaders to fulfill their first call — to be a worshipping follower of Jesus — you serve as a spiritual director. You should encourage your leaders to slow down and practice reflection and other disciplines to rediscover the presence of God.

Many Christian leaders have no one holding them accountable for their spiritual formation while they seek to lead ministries and congregations to be followers of God. This results in the risk of ineffectiveness, emotional burnout, and moral failure. A coach who is willing to provide help and accountability in the area of a leader's first calling provides some protection from this kind of failure.

Authentic spiritual formation is one of the primary credentials for ministry. The ability to live out spiritual disciplines is essential to effectiveness. There is no list of roles and responsibilities covering spirituality. From the perspective of the postmodern church leader, a pastor who is not concerned with a leader's spiritual formation is no coach at all. In spiritual formation, it is not only essential for you to model the spiritual journey for others on your staff, it is also essential for the

From *501 Building Blocks for Powerful Coaching*, materials developed by Linda Miller, MCC and Jane Creswell, MCC for Coach Approach Ministries. Copyright 2010, all rights reserved. Used with permission.



spiritual protection of your ministry leaders as they engage the community for the sake of the whole gospel.

Leaders who engage in community transformation and spiritual transformation of the lost are far more likely to encounter significant spiritual warfare. The devil does not want to give up territory in the secular community any more than he does in the hearts of men. He will attack, and missional leaders must protect themselves through strong spiritual disciplines and the whole armor of God. A coach with spiritual authority and discernment can encourage personal spiritual formation in a leader, but can also help identify and defend against the attacks of the devil.

### **Second-order calling — Doing**

We describe second-order calling as a personal ministry call, or God's unique assignment for a specific leader. Leaders, young and old, volunteer and professional, struggle with their calling. Those who have been in ministry for a while lose sight of their call or begin to doubt its validity. Some lose sight of their call due to fatigue. Others lose their sense of call because of ineffectiveness or lack of results. Still others lose their sense of call and passion because they are serving in the wrong place. Volunteer leaders often lose sight of their ministry calling because the demands of career and family displace it. Finally, some leaders are at the stage of life where they are seeking to make their ultimate contribution to ministry and need help to determine what that is. As a coach, you can provide a safe place for members of your ministry team (paid and volunteer) to wrestle through the issues of their call.

New and young leaders may struggle to find their calling, whether volunteer or professional ministry. They need help to identify their gifts and passion, and understand their personality and leadership style. They need help hearing from God regarding what He desires of them, and then putting it together into a fulfilling and effective opportunity.

God has placed a call in the lives and hearts of emerging leaders. A discerning coach can help provide guidance and accountability to help define the call. A good coach will ask questions to clarify these things from within the life and experience of the leader, being

careful not to inject his own sense of call, personal vision, or agenda.

Helping leaders understand and pursue their first call (spiritual formation) and their second call (personal mission) is foundational and empowering for future coaching in all areas. Strong and positive spiritual formation will protect against temptation, burnout, and moral failure. Coaching to clarify personal calling, gifting passion, and ministry fit will release energy effectiveness and increased fruitfulness. Clarifying the call is only one of four arenas when coaching your ministry staff and volunteers.

### **Cultivating Character**

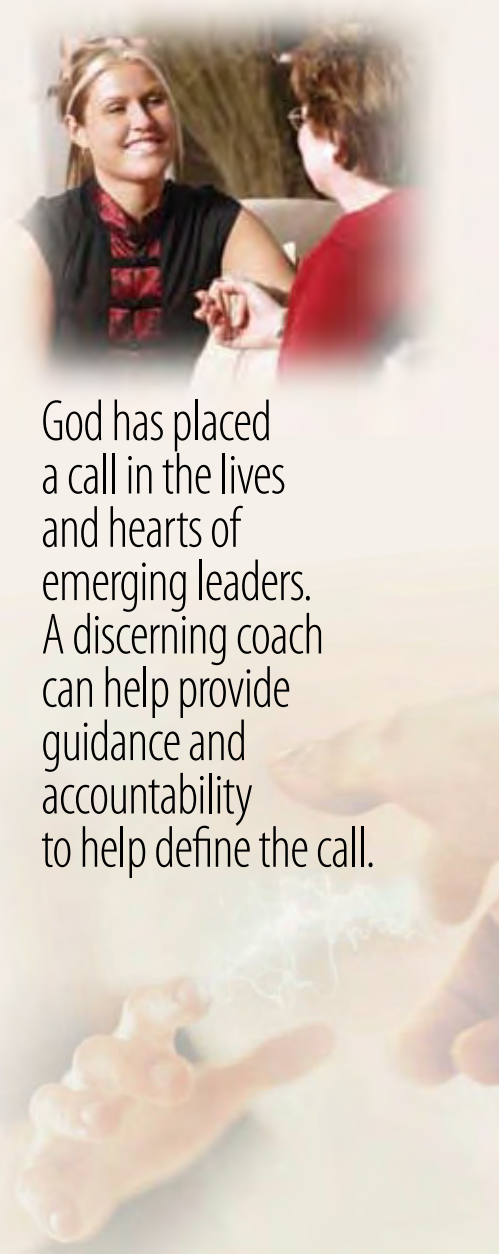
As a coach, you can help your leaders cultivate Christlike character. Character issues often hinder persons or forces them to forfeit ministry. The pressures of life and ministry often reveal character flaws. Coaching is intentional about helping leaders acknowledge character issues and cultivate character growth.

The church has often overlooked the minor character issues of its leaders in favor of their strong leadership, teaching gifts, or personality. Once people become leaders, others do not encourage them to address character issues until these issues are so great they begin to negatively affect their ministry.

Postmodern leaders often come to ministry as broken people, with visible character needs. Not only have they not developed good character, they have no desire to pretend. Authenticity is a high value item for them.

Coaching leaders who have character challenges can be very difficult. These six steps can help the leaders you are coaching:

1. Identify the character issue(s) negatively impacting their lives and ministries.
2. Identify and accept biblical references, standards, and examples.
3. Confess the issue(s) with their mouths to appropriate others. This will create accountability.
4. Seek forgiveness from those they have hurt. This will promote healing of relationships.
5. Identify the cause of their behaviors. This may require professional help.
6. Develop a plan and accountability to change their behaviors.



God has placed a call in the lives and hearts of emerging leaders. A discerning coach can help provide guidance and accountability to help define the call.



The standard for character formation must always be Scripture. Coaches need to make sure they are not becoming the character standard.

The coaching relationship needs to be a safe place where you, the coach, can monitor and encourage character development. The issue may be small like tardiness, poor time management, or a bad habit. It may be large, like moral failure. Either way, a coaching relationship provides a safe place.

The standard for character formation must always be Scripture. Any other standard will eventually break down. Coaches need to make sure they are not becoming the character standard. They must be careful to not settle for a cultural standard for character and emotional health. The person you are coaching may require the help of a professional counselor to address the causes of some character issues.

### Creating Community

Coaches come alongside the leader and help prioritize, create, and experience authentic community, both inside and outside the church. During the years I have coached leaders for effectiveness, it is evident many strategic issues young and old leaders face in the church rise or fall on the quality and authenticity of relationships. Creating community is a greater challenge than running programs. Most problems in the church are the result of broken relationships and lack of community. Most leaders in the emerging or missional church hold the authentic community of

believers as their highest value.

How do you coach leaders in your church to form and experience authentic community? First, you must practice an authentic relationship with the leaders. You must take time to listen to the stories of the leaders you coach. You must be willing to practice an appropriate level of personal vulnerability to demonstrate authenticity. As a coach, you must be willing to practice mutual hospitality with your leaders. The relationship moves to a new level when the coach, leader, and their families (where possible) share meals in their homes. Value the relationship more than the result of the relationship.

Second, as coach, you may need to help leaders define community and their expectations for community. Confusion can exist about what Christian community looks like. Unrealistic and/or unmet expectations are at the heart of most church conflicts.

Third, you must help the ministry leader model and practice authentic community in the church. This involves helping them stay in community with others, not removing themselves from community or placing themselves above or outside community.

Many pastors preach community, but do not practice it with their church. Some only practice community with friends outside of their fellowship. This usually indicates they have been burned or have some deeper spiritual or character issue.

Fourth, as coach, you can help resolve problems in the faith community. You can help your leaders maintain positive and realistic expectations for community in the church. You can help them establish time and space boundaries to protect their families. You can help your leaders create structures and environments where community can multiply. When necessary, you can provide third-party intervention to help your leaders resolve confusion or conflict in the faith community.

Coaching young and postmodern leaders in the new paradigm will focus on creating and maintaining healthy Christian community.

### Connecting With Culture

The ultimate goal of the coach in the new paradigm is to move leaders to become missional by redemptively engaging the needs



"I don't think 'always being right' is a spiritual gift."

of the culture. Leaders in the emerging missional church have a higher and far-reaching view of ministry than leaders in the pragmatic church. Their purpose is not just to minister to the devoted followers of Jesus that the pragmatic church seeks to produce. Instead, they desire to produce devoted followers of Jesus who engage and transform their

culture, not for the sake of church growth but for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Coaches help leaders engage their culture. Sometimes this means helping your leaders meet people of the culture; helping them understand needs and accept the culture; helping them intentionally establish significant relationships in the culture; keeping

Coaching will help your leaders initiate missional activity.

## 50 Great Coaching Questions

**One of the key skills to being an effective coach** is to learn how to ask the right questions. As a life coach with over 8 years experience, I have built a list of coaching questions I have used effectively. Here are some of my favorites.

I was trained in the GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, and Way Forward) Model, so I list these questions under the relevant section.

### Goal

1. What must you accomplish in the next 12 months?
2. What would you like to focus on today?
3. What is important to you at the moment?
4. What are you working on at the moment?
5. What challenges are you struggling with at the moment?
6. How can you word that goal more specifically?
7. How can you measure that goal?
8. How can you break down that goal into bite-size pieces?
9. How can you word this goal using positive language?
10. What do you want to be doing in 5 years?
11. What is your ideal future?
12. Where is your life out of balance?
13. What is the legacy you want to leave?
14. What new skill do you want to learn or develop?

### Reality

15. What is working well for you at the moment?
16. What is not working well at the moment?
17. What have you done so far to improve things?
18. How does this goal impact your spouse partner?
19. What excuse have you always used for not achieving your goals?
20. What aspects of your life will be impacted by reaching the above goal?

21. What is the biggest obstacle you are facing?

22. What are you afraid of?

23. What are you passionate about?

24. What are you willing to endure to see your goal become a reality?

25. Is that a need or a want?

26. Where are you sabotaging yourself?

### Options

27. What do you think you should do first?

28. What would be the most helpful thing you could do now?

29. If money was not a restriction, what would you do?

30. If time was not a restriction, what would you do?

31. What would you do if you were not answerable to anyone?

32. What would (enter name of relevant expert) do in this situation?

33. What do you sense God is telling you to do?

34. If you were guaranteed to succeed, what would you do?

35. What is the best use of your time at the moment?

36. If you could only do one thing this week, what would it be?

37. What can you do better than anyone else in your organization?

38. What books should you be reading to help you achieve your goals?

39. If you went to your boss with this problem, what would he/she suggest?

40. If you saw someone else in your situation, what would you suggest he/she do?

41. If you had 50 percent more confidence, what would you be doing that would be different?

42. If you were not holding anything back, what would you be doing?

### Way Forward

43. What are you going to do in the next 24 hours?

44. How committed are you in reaching this goal?

45. On a scale of 1 to 10, how motivated are you to achieving this goal?

46. What will it take to turn that 6 into a 9?

47. Who do you need to speak to about this goal?

48. How are you going to celebrate reaching your goal?

49. Whatever your first step is, can you think of anything that might stop you from doing it?

50. Is there anything else that you need to consider before starting?

Do you have any other coaching questions that you would like to add?

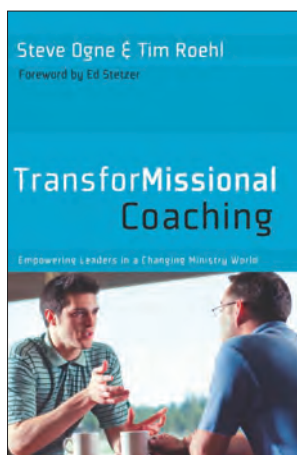
— **DARREN POKE**, Melbourne, Australia

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### FOR FURTHER READING



## TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World

Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl  
(B&H Books, 2008)

**Even leaders need leading.** In the context of this greatly changing world, ministry experts Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl have coined the phrase “transforMissional” to define the unique type of inspired coaching they offer to spiritual leaders in need of fresh direction. “The path that the Lord of the Harvest has designed sometimes takes us beyond our comfort zone and off the map of our experience,” they write. “We’ll help you understand how coaching helps leaders get traction and make progress in personal growth and ministry productivity. We’ll also help you become an effective coach so no matter where you find yourself — from church buildings to coffee shops to places you’ve never gone before — you can come alongside to help others live out their call and make a difference in their world.”

them accountable for intentional investment in these relationships; helping them stop doing less significant church duties and, rather, make time to engage people from the culture; and defending them when the congregation challenges them when they focus on the lost instead of on believers. It always involves helping leaders keep a balance between the lost and the found.

I challenge every pastor I coach to invest at least 10 percent of her ministry time with lost people. Emerging leaders I know see a 10 percent investment as way too little.

Coaches help leaders visualize ministry that takes place outside the box and outside the congregation. They also help leaders identify opportunities in the culture; help leaders motivate and mobilize workers to engage in social action; and help leaders determine how to affirm and support those who are engaged in ministry outside the congregation rather than expecting them to serve inside the congregation. Sometimes coaches can help facilitate partnerships between church leaders and community leaders for spiritual ministry and community service.

Often the first step in helping leaders engage their culture is to help them establish significant relationships with secular people. This can include holding them accountable to develop intentional relationships with pre-Christian neighbors and friends. It can also include helping leaders identify circles of interest and influence where they can develop relationships. A circle of influence is anywhere a person connects regularly with the same people over a shared interest. These circles can include business groups, sports, and recreational groups.

You can coach your leaders to connect with the broader culture by helping them network with political, business, and education leaders. Second, a coach will help leaders assess the needs of the culture where they can

mobilize people to make a difference. Needs exist in the sports and recreation programs of suburban communities where Christians can make a difference and develop intentional relationships. Public education needs present opportunities. One church mobilized teams to meet needs at each public school in the community.

Effective coaching will help your leaders assess the needs in their culture where they, their small group, or ministry can make a difference. This includes matching needs to the gifts and interests of leaders, groups, or churches.

Third, coaching will help your leaders initiate missional activity. This begins by helping them rearrange priorities to make time for relationships and activities. Coaches help leaders learn to cast vision.

Finally, as leaders and teams serve in the culture, it is essential they develop authentic relationships. Many will suspect or reject artificial relationships or relationships that exist only for evangelism. Engaging the culture includes two dimensions: First is serving or meeting needs as a part of God’s kingdom. Second is developing intentional spiritual friendships for the sake of the gospel.

### Conclusion

Most issues fall into one of these four arenas: call, character, community, and culture. Leaders who struggle with clarity of their gifts, passion, vision, commitment, or personal spiritual formation, struggle with issues related to their *call* as a leader or follower of Jesus. Issues regarding relationships, unmet needs, division, strife, small groups, or discipleship of believers are related to the faith *community*. Issues related to cultural relevance, community service, and evangelism have most to do with engaging *culture*. Issues of sin, behavior, habits, and personality are centered in *character*. ☪



**STEVE OGNE, D.Min.**, is a church planting trainer and coach with Church Resource Ministries, Camarillo, California. He, along with Tim Roehl, wrote *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World* (B&H Publishing, 2008). For more information see [steveogne.org](http://steveogne.org).





# COACHING NEXT-GENERATION LEADERS



Backphoto



**S**pace — the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship *Enterprise*. Its ... mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before." Each episode of the popular television series *Star Trek* began with those words. There have been five television versions of *Star Trek*, all with different captains who have different leadership styles and generational blends. The franchise started in 1966 and continues to have vibrant life and a huge following with a twelfth movie to be released in 2012. Film writers have successfully changed the story lines with culture while maintaining a never-changing mission.



► BY **SAM FARINA**



Author's  
intro video

**Helping  
next-generation  
leaders make  
their mark  
on the kingdom  
of God.**

This is the story of the church — same mission, but a changing crew. The new breed, next-generation leaders, who will take command on the bridge of the *Kingdom's Enterprise* will hear the never-changing mission proclaimed by Christ: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). This is the foundation for evangelism and cross-cultural missions in Christian theology.

Next-generation ministry leaders will redesign ministry methods in churches, world missions organizations, and denominational offices as they boldly go where no one has gone before. To accomplish their mission, they will need the voices of mentors, consultants, and at times, counselors. But no matter how good they are, Andy Stanley says, next-generation leaders "without a coach will never be as good as they could be."<sup>1</sup>

This article explains how to use a coach approach to help you and your next-generation colleagues make a mark for the kingdom of God. The goal of this article is not to make you into a professional coach or even make coaching your full-time job. Throughout this article, you will see ways to do your job better. But most important, you will discover ways to help next-generation

leaders do their job better by using a coach approach.

Do not assume you need a certain experience level to coach others. Some believe you need to have a certain number of years or wisdom to coach. Sometimes, lack of experience in a particular area makes the coach more objective. If you are going to engage in successful coaching of next-generation leaders, you should be actively using a coach in your own life and ministry.

### **Coaching Next-Generation Leaders Centers on Hearing the Holy Spirit**

The key to seeing success in coaching next-generation leaders is plain: Find out what ministry God wants them to lead, then use coaching skills to move them to think for themselves in creating a time line for action and accountability.

Robert Logan in *Coaching 101: Discover the Power of Coaching* states, "The role of a coach is simply to help leaders find out what that looks like for him ... and then help that person ... figure out ways to do it. Coaching works with next-generation leaders because coaches walk alongside the leader ... throughout the whole process: clarifying goals, brainstorming plans, trying them out, revising them, trying again, and coaches join in celebrating successes."<sup>2</sup> Walking alongside next-generation church planters, pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and ministry leaders is critical to their success.



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We can outline a blueprint for coaching as follows:

**God's Vision and Mission**

- + Scriptural Principles
- + Christ's Presence
- + The Holy Spirit (through the Holy Spirit our coaching reaches God's purpose in transformation of human hearts)
- + High Standard of Excellence as a Trained Coach

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**= Spirit-Empowered Coaching.<sup>3</sup>**

God acts through coaching to reveal truth. This is what makes a coach approach work as a catalyst for spiritual formation, evangelism, and discipleship, as well as leadership development. Spirit-filled coaches believe that Jesus is actively working through them to help them listen and ask powerful questions to the person being coached (PBC). The Holy Spirit in every coaching conversation challenges the PBC to reach his full Kingdom potential.

George Bullard coined the phrase "full Kingdom potential" to refer to the journey whereby people progress to reach their God-given destiny. This journey begins "in response to a God-called, Christ-centric, faith-based, sense of mission and vision."<sup>4</sup> Reaching full Kingdom potential means becoming all one is to be in Christ. It is by the Holy Spirit that coaching reaches God's purpose in the transformation of human hearts and lives. The coach approach mirrors how Early Church leaders made decisions directed by the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote, "Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. ... Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

This Scripture gives another important responsibility of our coaching. All ministry leaders need a Spirit-directed coach who will, from time to time, help them assess their state of discipline. Simply stated, a suggestion for enabling a good finish for next-generation leaders is to allow your coaching to be a vehicle for helping young leaders build accountability in their spiritual lives and ministries. As

a next-generation leader coach ask, "Who do you fully confide in that understands your situation? Who can warn and advise you to help you avoid pitfalls and grow throughout your lifetime of ministry? What is one way to get more energy in your life? What spiritual discipline do you need to take to the next level? How are you renewing the core of your soul?"

**Coaching Helps Next-Generation Leaders Think Differently**

In a recent coaching conversation, a next-generation leader was struggling to find how he would, with honor, transition the former lead pastor from ministry within the church. Three years ago the 67-year-old former leader decided to step down from the lead role and serve on the ministry team. He fully agreed to set in place the new leader as the main communicator and vision caster. Recent changes in methods of ministry met some resistance, and the former leader and his wife willingly listened to and embraced those who chose to resist.

Last week at the monthly church board meeting the board surprised the new pastor when they advised him that they needed to put a plan in place for the former leader to gracefully leave the ministry team. The next-generation leader wanted to leave the coaching conversation with some specific next steps in this transition.

The coach observed that the leader referred multiple times to a gut feeling. A four-question assessment by his coach about his past leadership successes revealed that when he followed the intuitive voice of the Holy Spirit (gut), he experienced great success. When he failed to follow the voice of the Spirit, he experienced less success and often became stuck in overanalysis. Coaching next-generation leaders may call for self-discovery assessments that give insight and lead to more confident leadership and decision making.

Next-generation leaders will often work with four generations as ministry partners and the people they are reaching with the gospel: The Silent Generation (a.k.a Traditionalists), born before 1946; Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; Gen Xers, born between 1965 and 1980; and Millennials (sometimes called Gen Y or Generation Next), born after 1981. These four generations do not always communicate well with each other.

A suggestion for enabling a good finish for next-generation leaders is to allow your coaching to be a vehicle for helping young leaders build accountability in their spiritual lives and ministries.

Judith Feld, on faculty at the University of Texas at Dallas School of Management Executive Coaching program, says, "When generations fail to communicate effectively, we see a negative impact."<sup>5</sup> This presents interesting challenges and opportunities for next-generation leaders. Coaching involves helping them think creatively about how to engage all four generations into a fully corporative, healthy ministry team.

America's 78 million baby boomers began turning 65 this year at a rate of one every 10 seconds — 3 million to 4 million per year.<sup>6</sup> In the coming years, the Captain Picards, who have commanded, carried past leadership knowledge, and championed the church to a powerful impact in the world will retire at rates never seen before. Coaching next-generation leaders involves helping them recognize and respect the contributions of older more mature leaders. It involves encouraging next-generation leaders to help maturing generations to transition from active to less-active ministry with dignity and honor.

One need not be a student of the Pentecostal church to know that changes are occurring at an extraordinary rate, even in the Assemblies of God.<sup>7</sup> Christian leaders are not "exempt from the radical morphing of our world, regional culture, and the church context in which we find ourselves," states Byron Klaus.<sup>8</sup> With unprecedented change occurring, it is crucial that we come alongside next-generation leaders to encourage them toward action and change.<sup>9</sup> This intentional journey will include helping these leaders determine the lasting internal and external changes that need to take place in the church, in the members, and within themselves.

Help next-generation leaders see the symptoms that show their need for change by asking, "What is on the surface you can see, sense, or hear?" Then help the leader focus on this situation by asking, "What are the details of what is happening?" By asking, "What is specifically causing this situation or symptoms?" you keep leaders moving forward in their thinking so they can determine the source. As coach, you must help leaders keep their eyes on the ultimate goal of coming up with their own solutions. Ask, "What are the specific actions you need to take? Who do you need to include in the actions? And

what will be the timeline of those actions?"

### **Leadership Development Coaching of Next-Generation Leaders**

Leadership development coaching builds the leader's future capabilities. James, 32, is starting his second year as lead pastor. He talks biweekly in a developmental coaching conversation. He was a youth pastor when he started his coaching journey. Over 12 months, as coach, I walked with him through many decisions, including the change to lead pastor. By using assessments that revealed his personality type, conflict style, personal values, needs, and health of the core of his soul, he was able to choose how he would best function in his lead pastor role.

In the first year of pastoring, he worked on personal shifts that needed to occur to facilitate personal growth. Coaching has included internal and external changes for James. With coaching he set a goal of attracting a certain people group. During the coaching process, he defined what attire and communication would best draw and keep that targeted people group. He is currently working on what needs to change personally and organizationally so the church can break the next growth barrier. He knows that to sustain a new level of attendance, he must put new systems, new people, and new thinking in to operation.

Many times this type of coaching prepares young ministry leaders for the next ministry career move. This style of coaching may require more time and commitment from the coach and PBC because it takes a deeper look at the person, the trajectory, and the types of growth needed.

Development is the key to increased performance and enhanced growth. Young people today are being thrust into leadership positions that require wisdom and maturity far beyond what one could expect from them, given their age and experience. Young leaders often benefit from *shadow coaching*, where the coach observes the leader in her day-to-day activities and gives immediate feedback. Shadow coaching may include observing the person leading a meeting, conducting one-on-one interactions with subordinates, or generally relating to peers or superiors in the organization.<sup>10</sup>

Some young ministry leaders have such a high level of confidence it borders on

Young leaders often benefit from *shadow coaching*, where the coach observes the leader in her day-to-day activities and gives immediate feedback.







Coaching  
next-generation  
leaders is  
about change:  
improving skills,  
building better  
relationships,  
and overcoming  
performance  
problems.

arrogance. Others have such a low sense of self-confidence their behavior borders on self-effacement. In *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*, author Jim Collins writes about “level-five leaders” — those who demonstrate a rare combination of two traits: fierce and focused resolve combined with humility.<sup>11</sup> When everything is going well, the level-five leader assigns success to others. When things are going badly, the same leader takes full responsibility for it. Having an appropriate level of confidence means being able to be humble and give credit to others who are doing well. Leadership development coaching is highly effective in moving young ministry leaders to level-five leadership.

Focus areas for leadership development coaching might include: 1) Strategic leadership and operational leadership: Articulating vision, defining and building culture, setting strategic imperatives, understanding group dynamics, managing conflict, solving problems, and creating clear systems. 2) Blind spots: Distracting mannerisms, habits, and language. 3) On-Boarding: The process of moving into new leadership positions. 4) Assumptions and limiting beliefs: About self and others.<sup>12</sup>

Ninety-six percent of leaders who have received developmental coaching report they received objective feedback; 78 percent said they were challenged and it gave them

a different perspective; 61 percent found the coach a safe sounding board; 57 percent saw things they were missing. Overall it led to better performance. They further report they have changed and are not only more skillful but also more confident, more certain of their direction, and more self-aware.<sup>13</sup>

### **Coaching Helps Next-Generation Leaders Resolve Life/Work Balance**

One issue that often arises when next-generation ministry leaders work with coaches is work/life balance — how to juggle personal and ministry priorities. Many young leaders watched their parents suffer fatigue, illness, and divorce and they strive for a better balance. They avoid long hours and keep their work and personal lives separate. Some older leaders view them as being less driven in their work habits and less loyal. The fact is they are committed to balance. As a coach of next-generation ministry leaders, you will need to include guiding questions to help them achieve this critical work/life balance.

When coaching next-generation leaders through work/life balance, some questions you may include are: “Where does your family fit in with your work? How do you take care of your personal health? How do you feed your spiritual self? In what ways do your calendar and schedule reflect your priorities? What actions can you take to help align your personal and ministry priorities? What in your work can you minimize, eliminate, or delegate? What new habits do you need to acquire?”

Remember, coaching next-generation leaders is about change: improving skills, building better relationships, and overcoming performance problems.<sup>14</sup> Terry Bacon and Karen Spear state, “The aim of coaching is to facilitate constructive, self-inflicted change one person at a time — not just to ward off catastrophic change imposed from without, but to help individuals maximize their potential and the contributions they can make to the ministry for which they have chosen to invest their passions and their energies.”<sup>15</sup>

We must base coaching on an adult learning model. “One of the most significant findings of adult learning research is ... that when adults learn something naturally instead of ‘being taught,’ they are highly self-directing [i.e. they feel ownership and act on

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**“I understand you do Bible studies in your home. Tell us a little more about the ‘minor profits’.”**



it]. ... What adults learn on their own initiative they learn more keenly and permanently than what they learn by being 'taught.' "<sup>16</sup>

Next-generation leaders entering ministry today differ in significant ways from previous generations. Some of those differences make coaching an especially good fit.<sup>17</sup> Next-generation leaders are the best leaders in church history. They are the best educated, most entrepreneurial, and are highly missional.

Unfortunately, there are no home improvement or handy garden centers for growing leaders. Our world is in an instant, find-a-short-cut, microwave-quick, leader-tricks-for-dummies culture. Taking time to grow depth, breadth, and height in one's life is not necessarily a high priority in the hearts and minds of many impatient or pressured young leaders. They need you as a coach. I encourage all ministry leaders to be trained in Basic Leadership Coaching.<sup>18</sup>

Training in a coach approach to leadership means you will learn how to withhold comment and listen with curiosity to what your younger leaders bring up. You will create coach-approach team meetings full of risk-free experiments, and be open to wherever the results lead. Most of all, you will let the Holy Spirit be your Coach as you coach others to the full potential the Holy Spirit is leading them to for the 21st-century harvest.

Coach next-generation leaders as they go where no one has gone before. ☺

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Taking time to grow depth, breadth, and height in one's life is not necessarily a high priority in the hearts and minds of many impatient or pressured young leaders. They need you as a coach.



**SAM FARINA**, evangelist and certified life coach, Red Oak, Texas





# WHY GREAT MINISTRY LEADERS NEED A COACH





**M**oses was a mess. He worked 10 to 12 hours a day. The people he led were frustrated. He teetered on the edge of burnout with no relief in sight. He felt separated and estranged from his wife and kids. He did not invest time in developing his skills — he rushed from task to task.

Sound familiar?

In my service to ministry leaders over the last decade, the No. 1 challenge they face is “getting it all done and keeping it all together.” Ministry leaders wear many hats — preach, lead teams, provide pastoral care, raise money, plan, relate to deacons, and deal with crises. By many people’s definition, *ministry is one of the most demanding jobs on the planet.*

With the task of “trying to get it all done,” ministry leaders often struggle to keep their lives together. They struggle with maintaining health and intimacy in their marriage and connecting with their children. They are overworked and undernourished.

While we are running the race to get everything done, we also miss opportunities to advance our skills, disciplines, and knowledge. We fail to expand our potential and, as a result, cap our growth.

This is where coaching can help. A coach will ensure you extract the mediocrity from your life and move toward greater excellence. A coach brings many benefits you cannot provide on your own. A coach can increase your courage to confront the areas of your life that need change — then help you change.

By taking a closer look at Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18, we can learn from their coaching experience. Ask yourself:

- How I can change my approach to ministry to lighten my load and increase my effectiveness?
- What action steps can I take to move away from mediocrity to greater excellence?

Moses had a mission from God to manage the Israelites, and it was a demanding job. People were complaining about their neighbors, living conditions, questions of the future, problems at home, at work — and on and on.

Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, had insight that could greatly benefit Moses. This is the first reason why pastors need a coach and why coaching works.

### Coaching Provides Outside Insight

Coaches can see what you cannot see. They have the power of observation working for them and you. As a coach observes your behavior and asks clarifying questions, solutions emerge. A coach sees ways to improve your performance and advance your skills and disciplines. A coach adds depth and greater discernment to decisions.

When you have a coach, you have an informed advocate investing experience and expertise in helping you think and act more effectively.

Imagine how empowering it would be to have a coach? You have someone who:

- understands ministry and its challenges.
- provides a safe place where you can discover solutions.
- provides accountability to help you grow your character and righteousness as well as implement your goals.
- brings fresh perspectives to expand your thinking.
- challenges your thinking to arrive at better decisions.

Jethro cared about his son-in-law, daughter, grandkids, and his people. He came to Moses not only to reunite his family but also improve his leadership. He came as a trusted advisor to help.

This is the second value of coaching and why it is so effective.

### Coaching Provides a Trusted Advisor

Good coaches are trusted advisors who understand your background, behavior style, challenges, and opportunities. They get to know you, your family, your team, and your

► BY **GREG SALCICCIOLI**

**Moses’ mission from God was demanding. Jethro, his father-in-law, had insight that could greatly benefit Moses.**



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culture, so they can give you maximum value in the coaching relationship.

Jethro was a trusted advisor who displayed self-control and maturity in responding to



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### Learning to Use a Coach

**Enlist a coach** in times of confusion, transitioning, when feeling stuck, or times of great success and effectiveness. Seek a coach who is certified and trained. Interview potential coaches. Look for *chemistry*.

- Do you feel the coach listens while you are talking?
- Do you trust him/her?
- Does the coach hear what you are saying?
- Do you sense this coach can move you forward in your issues of concern?
- What are some of the coach's success stories?
- What are some of the coach's challenges?

Commit to at least six sessions with a coach. It takes time to build trust and experience momentum in the coaching relationship. Talk with the coach about:

- What challenges you are facing?
- Where do you experience connectedness in life?
- Where do you experience fulfillment?
- What drains your energy in career, relationships, etc.?
- What makes you happy and energized?
- What are the places in life you feel stuck or confused?
- What transitions or changes are you facing with uneasiness?
- What do you need from the coaching relationship to help you move forward in life, career, or relationships?
- What opportunities are presenting themselves that you feel unprepared to embrace?
- What skills or capacities will help you feel more prepared for the presenting opportunities or challenges?

— **EDDIE HAMMETT, PCC**, Author of *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60*. This sidebar is taken from [www.thecolumbiapartnership.com](http://www.thecolumbiapartnership.com). Used with permission.

his son-in-law. Perhaps Jethro was concerned that Moses might be neglecting his wife, kids, and his own emotional and spiritual health because he was so busy with his work. Jethro looked to see how Moses could change, improve his situation, and emerge a better husband, father, and leader.

Jethro did what good coaches do: He observed Moses in his active leadership role. The next day as Jethro observed Moses, he saw that Moses had not developed a team to help him carry the load.

This is one of our most critical functions as a spiritual leader. A ministry team with the right gift mix and dedication can achieve greatness. Without it, ministry leaders are limited and unable to get much traction. Jethro helped Moses see what he could not see. Jethro wanted Moses to grow in his potential. With some simple steps, he helped Moses secure success. Listen to Jethro as he coaches Moses by confronting him through a paradigm change.

#### The confrontation

"The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, '*What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?*' " (Exodus 18:13,14, italics mine). (These are great coaching questions.)

"Moses answered him, '*Because the people come to me to seek God's will*' " (verse 15). (Really?)

"Moses' father-in-law replied, '*What you are doing is not good. (We need this honest feedback) You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone*' " (verses 17,18). (Can you take this counsel?)

Jethro was bold and helped bring about a dynamic change in Moses' leadership style. But he did not just confront, he did what great coaches do — he asked powerful questions that provided a practical path for Moses to resolve his problem.

This is coaching's greatest benefit — helping the person being coached arrive at his own sound solution.



## Coaching Produces Sound Solutions

Moses was a great leader, but he needed to change his approach. He needed the outside influence of a trusted advisor to help him see how to do things differently to get better results. Jethro gently guided Moses to a practical solution that resulted in change and advancement in his leadership style, family, and the people he led.

Fortunately for Moses, he welcomed the help of Jethro. He trusted his father-in-law. A coaching relationship based on trust provides freedom to explore thinking, evaluate situations, and strategize solutions.

People who utilize a coach say trust is what they appreciate about coaching. Coaching provides a consistent, safe environment that lets them explore possibilities with someone outside the context and challenges of their corporate culture.

Great leaders need a coach because they want:

- to achieve their calling.
- to advance their skills, disciplines, and knowledge.
- to remove inefficient or ineffective habits or practices that are undermining their leadership.
- to become people who enjoy life and loved ones.
- to know they are doing all they can to be the best they can.
- outside insight and an experienced, trusted advisor who can strategize with them so they can excel.

No matter what level of leader you are today, consider advancing your excellence. Here is an action plan:

### Action plan

(1) Answer the following questions:

- How do I want to grow in my personal life?
- How do I want to grow in my leadership?



- What are my goals for the year?
- How does my team need to change to maximize our efforts?
- What obstacles are blocking my growth?

(2) Contact a coach and review your questions to consider if the time is right to secure a coach's services. If you are interested in engaging a coach, contact AG Coaching at: [www.agcoaching.org](http://www.agcoaching.org); e-mail [agcoaching@ag.org](mailto:agcoaching@ag.org), or call 1-417- 862-2781, ext. 3535.

### Final Thought

Ministry leaders focus on serving the people around them — which is their calling. But who's focused on serving ministry leaders? Who's caring for your soul and success in life? This is why coaching is so critical. A coach equips you to experience greater spiritual vitality and leadership success. So get a coach! 🌀

Moses was a great leader, but he needed to change his approach. He needed the outside influence of a trusted advisor to help him see how to do things differently to get better results.



**GREG SALCICCIOLI**, founding president, Ministry Coaching International, Bend, Oregon





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# THE COACHING JOURNEY

How coaching became the key to one of the most fulfilling seasons of one pastor's life and ministry.

► BY DWIGHT SANDOZ

Author's  
intro video



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**T**om let out a frustrated sigh as he closed his Bible program and began to add notes for the day in his phone. Why did it seem like progress was so slow in the church he pastored? The people were good, faithful, kind, and supportive, but the low results and little growth were wearing on him. The outreach programs he tried had not led to strong responses. There was a nagging sense that the way he was doing ministry resembled a rough copy of several of his teachers and mentors, but it was not a true reflection of who he was.

He felt he was continuing the historic ministries of the church and keeping up the expectations of the past, but he was not going anywhere nor was he developing into the kind of

leader he knew God wanted him to be.

He placed the phone and computer on the stand. As he crossed the room toward the kitchen for some coffee, he saw a coaching

brochure in Saturday's mail. "More denominational stuff, and it probably won't apply to me," he muttered as he picked it up and walked over and poured a cup of coffee. Out of boredom he read the opening line and bullets on the first page. The first bullet caught his attention: "Coaching is an intentional relational encounter that accelerates a person's personal and professional growth by engaging in a way that stimulates transition and transformation."

He again muttered to himself, "I do need some acceleration in my personal and professional growth." He felt like a hamster on a treadmill in this church, repeating the same things week after week. Tom thought, *When was the last time I did anything for the first time?* He knew God had placed more in the well of his ability than he was currently releasing, but it seemed locked inside of him.

Tom reflected on his teaching from Genesis on the image of God that dwells inside every believer. Salvation begins the process of restoring God's image. The process is supposed to continue for life. Tom's journey of ministry did not feel like the image of a glorious and creative God being displayed through him.

The inside page of the brochure opened with a short paragraph reminding him of a recent sermon he preached about the image of God: "The coaching connection facilitates and accelerates the restoration of the image of God. God allows people to determine much of the pace and process of personal transformation. In a similar manner, the coach comes alongside to help clarify choices and prepare for changes."

"Accelerates the process," he slowly said. "Now, I would certainly like to accelerate something."

Upon further reflection he thought, *Clarify choices and prepare for changes. I could benefit from that. Maybe this new initiative the denomination is offering is just what I need.*

His eyes returned to finish the section: "The nature of man is to get stuck in the journey, plateau, and not be restored to his rightful 'Kingdom position' or personal development. Coaching jump-starts transformation. It changes the Popeye ideology of, 'I yam what I yam' to Philippians 4:13: 'I can do all this through him who gives me strength.'"

That was him. Stuck and plateaued in his personal life and ministry. Even when he

tried to implement changes into his life, he did not stick to the process. The idea of the Popeye ideology stung a bit as he reflected on his own words. "There's only so much one person can do. I am what I am." At that moment, he felt the convicting nudge of the Holy Spirit say, "Rather than expect the church to change and grow, maybe *you* need to make a few adjustments and grow."

Tom read the next section. The bullets described the benefits of powerful questions. He read it with a bit more interest.

"Powerful questions help the pastor:

- Take time to process information from a different perspective.
- Gain understanding.
- Promote personal discovery.
- Generate options.
- Uncover obstacles.
- Determine next steps."

He needed what the bullets described, but a guy cannot be too careful. *Do I really want someone asking questions and interfering with my life?* At that moment, he was sure the Holy Spirit was speaking to him again: "Are you becoming the person I created you to be, or are you going to remain stuck, unyielding, and cynical?"

The Holy Spirit was bringing back what Tom remembered reading when Jesus looked at Peter and Andrew and said, "Follow Me, ... and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matthew 4:19). Jesus was more interested in what Peter and Andrew would become than in what they were when He called them.

## Coaching: A Key Piece in Ministry Development

Could the coaching relationship be a key piece toward Tom's development in that journey? Would coaching really help? Other things he had tried were not successful. *How can a coach help me if he has not walked in my shoes?* he thought. Tom already knew the answer. God, by His Holy Spirit, had arranged this moment to help him advance in life and ministry. Slowly he took another sip of coffee and picked up the phone.

The sound of a woman's voice on the other end of the line surprised him. *A woman would never understand my personal struggles, so how could I possibly benefit from such a relationship?* he mused. The woman sensed his

Jesus was more interested in what Peter and Andrew would become than in what they were when He called them.





istockphoto

Coaching facilitates  
the gift of free will  
that gives the pastor  
the freedom to  
choose and to change.  
The person being  
coached sets the pace  
of the relationship.

uneasiness and politely explained that many coaches in the business world are women. Furthermore, she had also been a staff pastor with a long and successful ministry. She indicated she had an opening to coach a pastor and wondered if Tom would be interested in coaching for several months to evaluate if it was beneficial. Tom agreed to call at the appointed time the following Tuesday.

He shared the unusual events of the morning with his wife. He explained to her that a coach comes alongside another person and invites growth through questions that provide opportunity for exploration and discovery. He made clear that coaching empowers the learner to set goals and step into a path of growth and transformation. Tom's wife was well aware of his personal frustrations and encouraged him to move forward in the coaching relationship.

Tuesday, at 10 a.m., Tom dialed the coach's number. The session began with small talk and introductory comments about coaching and what it takes to help the conversation be productive. Then she asked, "What will make our conversation today the most helpful to you?"

Tom realized he would need to play an active role in the process. He remembered his frustration of trying to fulfill others' expectations and said, "I would like to do ministry in a way that reflects the uniqueness of how God created me." That statement

began a series of questions and responses that gave Tom insight to his situation.

Nearing the end of their time together, the coach asked, "If you could change three things about your ministry, what would you change?"

Tom paused in reflective thought. "If I could change anything — and money, leaders, and resources were not a problem — I would change my approach to ministry," he said. "I would build the church upon relationships and not upon structure and programs." The coach asked how he would accomplish this. His answer drew from the deep well of ideas in his heart. It was like he was saying things he had always known but had never articulated.

After Tom described the other two changes he would like to see in the church, the hour was spent. Finally the coach asked, "When we talk again next month, which one of these three things will you have completed?"

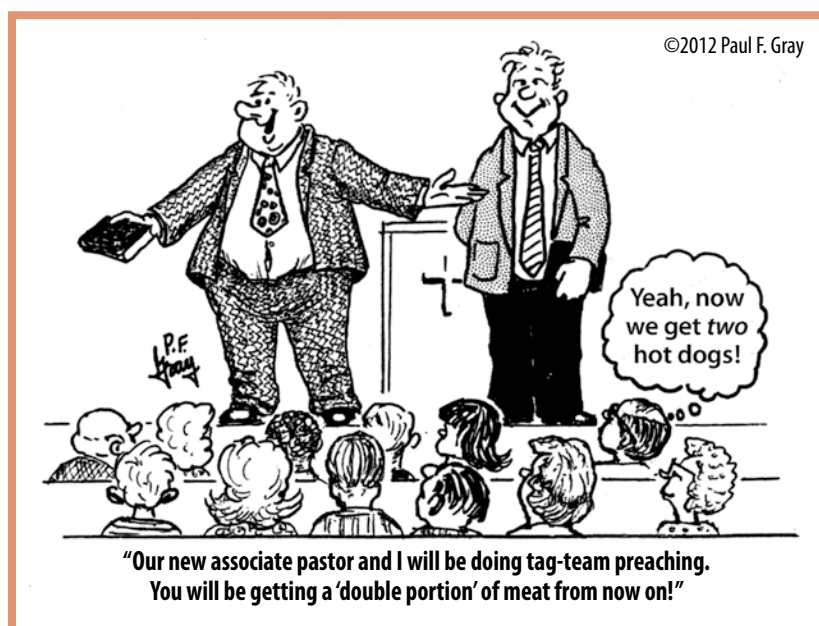
Tom gave three action steps he would take to make relationships the basis for leading the church. He reflected on the past 60 minutes and felt more hope, purpose, and direction than he had for years.

In the following months, Tom looked over the notes he was compiling. He started to read everything on coaching he could find. In his notes, he was able to summarize four things he discovered about the benefits of coaching for church leaders.

First, he discovered that most leaders are on a path of growth. However, their growth is often frustrating and slow because they do not have an intentional, relational process to facilitate it. Coaching allows leaders to identify and accelerate growth in their lives and ministries because it is rooted in authentic and unconditional relationship. It removes the performance mindset that can hinder growth.

Second, Tom discovered that coaching facilitates the gift of free will that gives the pastor the freedom to choose and to change. The person being coached (PBC) sets the pace of the relationship. This is especially helpful in his church where transitions happen slower than he would like.

Third, he discovered that he possesses many solutions but often needs the coaching partner to help unlock them. The knowledge that the next conversation is coming helps the action steps of the last session become a reality in the life of the leader.





Finally, Tom discovered that coaching develops the whole person: one's ministry performance, marriage, parenting skills, and many other important areas of the pastor's life. Coaching is not a silver bullet or a fix-all for personal leadership growth. Ministry leaders may need mentors or counselors for other areas of their development. While counseling primarily looks back, the perspective of coaching looks forward and is primarily for developing healthy leaders. While counseling may be needed for healing related to past issues, coaching helps leaders find solutions and clear away the clutter.

### Coaching: A Key Piece in Congregational Development

In a subsequent coaching appointment, Tom wanted to talk about how coaching could be utilized in his church in more practical and meaningful ways. He had grown weary of others thinking he was the answer man. As the questions and responses of the session developed, he had a mental picture of how coaching could be used in evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, board meetings, and even church discipline. The coaching session concluded, and Tom's assignment before the next appointment was to compare and contrast a teacher-driven model of learning with a learner-driven model and to figure out which model best facilitates learning in children and adults.

The teacher-driven model often works like this: The teacher pours truth into the student and hopes it will penetrate the student's heart and mind.

- The teacher pours in.
- The focus is on the teacher.
- The responsibility is on the teacher.

Tom summarized that this method of teaching inadvertently inoculates the student. The student knows about the subject, but the subject material is not internalized. The student can quote Scripture but is not living the

truth of Scripture. Most teacher-driven models of instruction do this to some extent.

The learner-driven model works like this: The teacher (coach) assumes that the student already has the solution.

- The teacher draws out.
- The focus is on the learner.
- The responsibility is on the learner.

In the learner-driven (coaching) model, the teacher's questions shape the discussion and draw from the deep well of knowledge and creativity of the student. This approach brings personal ownership (the student has a deeper ownership of truth) and higher levels of commitment.

Tom concluded that a balanced approach to Christian education should incorporate the best of both models. He saw how coaching could be used in every area of the life and ministry of the church. He researched everything he could find about coaching. After several weeks, he wrote a note in his phone: "When coaching becomes a lifestyle in a local assembly, great transformation is possible. Coaching helps the congregation live out the gospel at a local level."

### Conclusion

In the months that followed, Tom's life and ministry changed from frustrating to mostly fulfilling days that were a genuine reflection of the gifts and skills God had given him. Subsequently, the next year was the most fulfilling season of his life and one of the best years for the church.

The next Monday morning Tom breathed a prayer of thanksgiving for God's leading and for the renewed sense of clarity and purpose in his life and ministry. His eyes fell on a brochure for leadership training. With no skepticism, he read about an upcoming coaches' training. He made a mental note to attend. If he could help someone else experience what he had, it would certainly be worth his time and effort. 🙏

While counseling primarily looks back, the perspective of coaching looks forward and is primarily for developing healthy leaders.



**DWIGHT SANDOZ**, superintendent, Nebraska District Council of the Assemblies of God, Grand Island, Nebraska



# COACHING THROUGH CONFLICT:

## *Mastering the Art of Constructive Confrontation*

► BY CAL LeMON

Author's  
intro video



**Resolving broken  
promises, violated  
expectations, and  
bad behavior in  
your ministry team.**



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**S**he is the people magnet on your staff. Her ability to motivate and inspire is without question. For the past 3 years this junior high pastor has built her ministry into a vibrant, creative, and spiritually healthy segment of your congregation's appeal to a growing community. Everyone loves her. There is just one problem: This charismatic leader seems to have no interest or aptitude for being on time.

As lead pastor, you have personally addressed the need to provide timely information for calendar planning, a reasonable turnaround time for responding to interoffice e-mails, and returning telephone calls to both parishioners and colleagues.

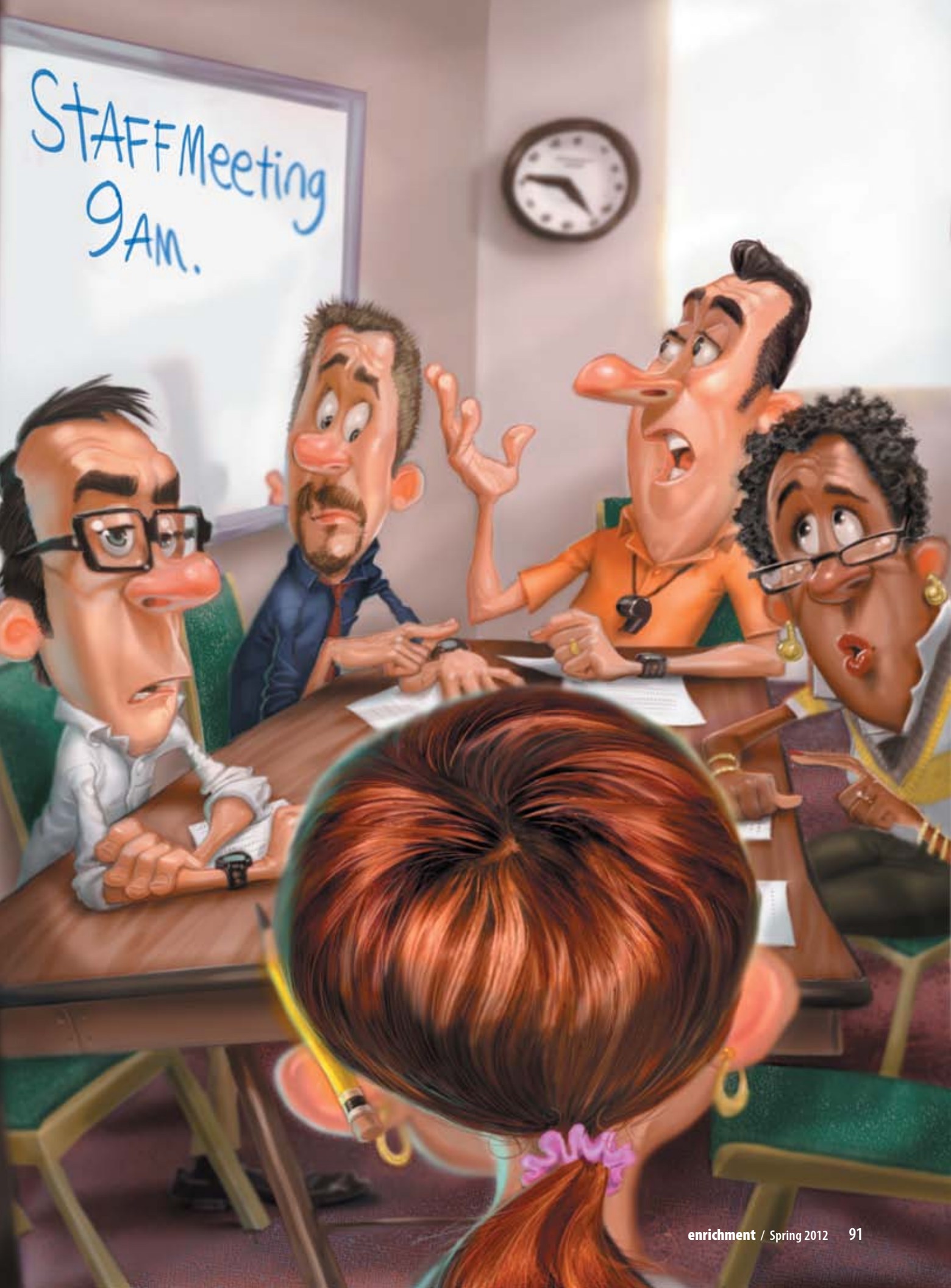
You are out of ideas and solutions. You may want to try coaching.

Coaching is the process of coming alongside individuals in your congregation (staff member, elected church leader, Christian education teacher, etc.) in an effort to advance their professional growth and improve their self-awareness. And, after providing statements of affirmation and personal offers to help, you may also need to confront.

The difficult, but immensely rewarding work, of confrontational coaching is establishing a comfortable learning environment built on transparent trust. Thus, when desired outcomes such as improving professional growth, self-awareness, or goal setting are not taking place, you, the coach, can and will confront without the need to demean or destroy.

We saturate the language and agenda of this unique approach by maintaining a mutually affirming relationship. The coach is not there to fix the person being coached (PBC) through intimidation and threat; rather, the coach accomplishes the fixing through frequent and genuine expressions of positive words and actions that give the









When a coach confronts, he never degrades or discredits. Instead, he affirms the PBC's innate value and supplies accountability to accomplish the PBC's potential.

coach permission to confront.

Therefore, when a coach confronts, he never degrades or discredits the PBC. Instead, the coach confronts to affirm the PBC's innate value and then supplies accountability to accomplish the PBC's potential.

### **Charting the Confrontation Cycle**

We live most of life in cycles: What comes around goes around. If you are an historic church leader, you know the past seems to show up again and again. This proven principle also works through a repeatable cycle for confronting in a coaching relationship.

First, inclusion of accountability must be part of the initial coaching agreement. Second, there are linguistic and emotional triggers when confrontation becomes the best intervention. Third, the coach will use specific interrogatory skills in the coaching conversation that signal the PBC requires accountability. Fourth, there are moments when the coach has to affirm with resistance. Finally, the confrontation cycle concludes and then begins all over again with the come-to-Jesus moment.

### **The Agreement to Confront**

Sometimes the small things mean everything. If you are coaching the staff member described in the first paragraph, a follow-up e-mail or letter stating your mutual responsibilities in the coaching agreement will be essential.

The e-mail or letter may read, "Thank you for your willingness to meet with me each month for the next 6 months. We have mutually agreed we will review together the progress you are making on the personal discipline of time management. I look forward to holding both of us accountable for our mutual growth as we serve the body of Christ."

The positive appeal of confrontation is its ability to renew. When you, the coach, place in writing the therapeutic rewards for confronting, the two of you can return to this document to renew your commitment to excellence.

No contract is required here, but there is a paper trail. Paper, in all aspects of your ministry (preaching the Word, the deed on church property, an annual financial audit, etc.), is a point of accountability.

Best intentions are not the foundation of growing a vibrant ministry. If we frame the coaching dynamic in just vaporous words,

the PBC could view confrontation as an interpersonal power play. What neither party in a coaching relationship needs is confusion when confronting. The coach's original letter or e-mail is a good place to revisit before continuing the PBC's renewal.

### **The Tripwire for Caring Confrontation**

If you are an experienced church leader, you already know you will either execute this next coaching skill set correctly or incorrectly.

The coin of the realm in leadership, whether you are a tattered veteran in the church or beaming novice ready to speak to the world, is your skill at reading what the person who receives your coaching may *not* be saying. Specifically, there are seven environmental circumstances that will demand an intervention of confrontation from you.

First, the conclusion to any coaching session needs to have a list of expected changes in attitude, behavior, or competence. How will you remember these commitments?

Here is why the coach needs to take process notes during or immediately after a coaching session. This individual shorthand will be the agenda for the next meeting when the session begins with, "Before we move ahead today, I am eager to hear what you have accomplished about your commitment to. ..."

Second, was the PBC supposed to give feedback to the coach after completing a particular task? If the answer is yes, provide this response, "Since I did not hear from you about, ... I am assuming you were. ... Tell me; am I right or wrong about my assumption?"

This may sound uncomfortable, but the coach's responsibility is to assertively ask what the PBC does not know. The coach's comfort level is not the predominant concern here. Is the PBC growing? This is the only question. Without accountability, the answer will probably be no.

Third, are you and the person you are coaching using an article or book as a place for your minds to meet? If the PBC has committed to reading particular works, and it is obvious the PBC has not read the material, you may want to confront with, "I need to check again to make sure my assumption is true about the reading assignment you accepted in our last session. Were you able to complete that article?"

Fourth, in the last coaching session, the PBC

enthusiastically agreed to formulate and write a vision statement for her ministry. Today you are meeting with her and eager to delve into the construction of this important document.

When you introduced the topic of the vision statement, you heard this reply, "For the past 3 weeks I have just not had time to work on this. To tell you the truth, I am swamped right now, and it will be some time before I can get this finished."

That statement sounds like procrastination. Right? If so, confront with, "This sounds like an intimidating task. Let's put aside the vision statement for today and explore how you normally respond when you may feel intimidated. Does that sound like a good use of our time?"

If the coach had said, "Hey, times are difficult for me, too. Don't sweat the little things; we can pick this vision thing up sometime in the future," what do you think will be the end result for your PBC? When there is no accountability, there normally is no growth. And, when there is no growth, the coaching relationship will come to a screeching, premature end.

Fifth, your PBC consistently expresses exaggerated enthusiasm for a variety of growth areas. As you look back over your process notes, you heard firm commitments to renew a prayer life, rehabilitate an injured relationship with a parishioner, devote 1 hour each day to enhance physical fitness, write a daily personal journal, and ... the list goes on and on.

It is obvious this PBC cannot remain centered on a task until it is completed. Your confrontation may be, "Look with me at the enthusiastic commitments you have made to yourself, and me, over the last 6 months. Does this list of uncompleted tasks concern you? What are you learning about you and commitments?"

Sixth, spirituality for people in faith communities is always fertile ground for a coaching relationship. Assume for a moment your PBC consistently complains about the church and its adherents. As the coach you may hear, "The people in this church are just not committed to the demands of the gospel," "The saints here cannot find unity about anything," "Most of the people in this ministry are unwilling to count the cost of following Christ."

The real problem, in your opinion as a coach, is this person is describing herself.

How will you confront? If you agree with all the foibles of the faithful, you give up

your position of coach and join the friends of Job. You may want to coach by stating, "The gospel often is demanding news. What is the demand our Lord is making on you and me as we work with people who often reflect our own hesitation to totally follow Christ?"

Seventh, there are times when the PBC hints, implies, or screams burnout. The non-verbal messages that accompany spiritual or career burnout are sequentially unmistakable.

Burnout begins with a quiet, pervasive disillusionment, followed by lots of silence, then elides into unfocused anger, and usually concludes with emotional and spiritual exhaustion.

If you are the coach of someone who is catatonically marching to the beat of another drummer, it is time to confront with, "I sense our coaching relationship comes at a time when you are internally out of breath. Have I read you correctly?"

### The Confrontation Question

As a coach you know you will test your verbal skills, not by what you initially say to the PBC, but what your follow-up statement will be. And, that statement needs to be a question. As a matter of fact, there are four questions you need to ask. This is how this skill works in a real coaching dialogue.

Using the final illustration in the last segment, the burnout scenario, here is what you can expect to hear next.

The PBC may say, "Well, it is interesting you mention internally out of breath. That is exactly what I have been feeling."

Silence. What is your next confrontational question?

Try, "If you are out of breath, what have you been doing that has emotionally or spiritually exhausted you?"

Notice the first question always parrots what the coach just heard.

The PBC responds, "I'm not really sure, and I know I shouldn't say this, but I no longer know why I am in a ministry that just keeps asking more from me."

Second question should be "Asking more? Who or what is asking more?"

The intent of this question is to localize the source of this person's pain. The coach does not make judgments about what he is hearing, he simply reflects with a question.

Coaching can be just another organizational remedy — or, the skills of a pastor-coach can provide a fertile field for leadership and organizational health to flourish.







All coaching begins  
and ends at  
the feet of our Lord  
Jesus Christ. As  
we know from our  
shared theology,  
this is the beginning  
and ending of  
who we are and who  
we are yet to be.

Assuming the PBC responds with something like, "Everyone expects me to be this spellbinding orator in meetings, chapel, and anywhere there is a microphone. I am tired of being on stage."

The third question has become apparent, "You always are on stage? It sounds like this place of ministry will not allow you to be yourself. Am I correct about that assumption?"

Notice, the coach follows not just the words, but the meanings behind the word choices.

The person you are coaching goes on, "Well, how can I be myself when I know the people who hired me are disappointed. I am really good at solving problems and managing this ministry. If I could crawl into a hole and serve the Lord quietly, I would be fulfilled. I do not need the limelight."

This staff member has just programmed the coach to internally ask, *How can I lovingly confront this person so she can take responsibility for her tomorrow?*

Looking at this scenario, the phrase, "serve the Lord quietly," may be the key.

Therefore, the fourth effective question may be, "It is obvious you spent a lot of time thinking and praying about serving the Lord quietly. Where could you serve the Lord quietly?"

Put this together. This PBC has taken a risk to reveal the pain of her present ministry position. She has also told you, the coach, this pain is untenable. There must be

a change. It is your responsibility as the coach to reframe what you just heard and always ask that effective question.

Please note. At no time in this situation should the coach give direction. Coaching is leading from behind. The PBC has to get up every day and live out the decisions that have been made, not the ones made by the coach. The issue of ownership is paramount in this third segment.

### **When the Coach Pushes Back**

Not every response from a coach should be a question. Sometimes it is time for a positive assertion.

A positive assertion is a three-stage progression of expressing emotion with the right language. In the first stage, the coach establishes the limits of leading from behind.

If you are presently serving as a coach, have you ever felt the emotional stop sign appearing in your coaching relationship? Let's assume you, the executive pastor, have been coaching the minister of music who administratively reports to you. The two of you have had a positive, trusting relationship for 4 years. Lately, your PBC has pockmarked your coaching sessions with incendiary tales of perceived victimization by members of the congregation and the lead pastor.

You have provided unconditional positive regard (UPR) as a listener, reflected appropriately, and asked questions that should have circled back the PBC to accept responsibility.

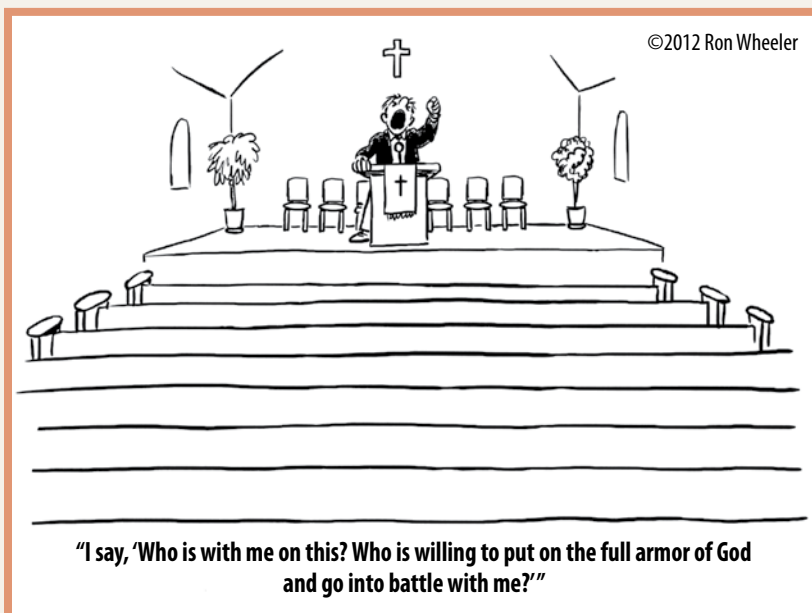
None of your best coaching skills have worked. The PBC is insular and projecting to be the victim. You have to admit to yourself there has been no progress.

In today's coaching session you heard, "He (the lead pastor) is not capable of change. I guess I need to work around him by going to the deacon board. They will see how insensitive he has been to me." In this first stage it is time to push back.

Your intervention may sound like this, "What will you accomplish by triangulating this situation? If you involve the deacons, what does your experience tell you will be the response of the lead pastor?"

We call this reality testing. As the coach, you are making a declarative statement with a question.

The second stage of this pushing back





paradigm is the screaming silence followed by the echo chamber. Staying with the minister of music scenario, if the PBC answered the above question with, "Well, I really do not care. I am so exhausted and angry about the victimization I have been feeling. If the lead pastor gets in my face, even in front of other people, so be it. Maybe this is what I should have done a long time ago."

Your response with the screaming silence should be to maintain intermittent eye contact and say nothing. Allow the PBC to intellectually and emotionally absorb his prescribed solution. You will find this person will stammer, verbally repeat what was just said, and mire down in angst. Continue your silence.

When the silence has soaked up the dead end of this statement, use the echo chamber by repeating back, "Maybe this is what I should have done a long time ago?" Notice, the tone of the coach's voice makes this a question.

The third stage of pushing back is owning your right to assert yourself as an effective listener.

If the PBC, in this working illustration of the minister of music, continues to endorse the triangulating solution, the coach has the right to say, "I do not agree," followed by, "What will be the result of your decision to involve the deacon board?"

Notice the strong, assertive "I statement" followed by further reality testing.

The pushing back phase can be the coach's best skill to effect change.

### The First and Final Solution

Coaching can be just another organizational remedy that winds its way through a short lifespan only to end up on the growing heap of harmless, hazy helps for the holy. Or, the skills of a pastor-coach can provide a fertile field for leadership and organizational health to flourish.

For the past 20 years, I have served as a coach in senior leadership in corporate

America. I have observed the organizational benefits of coaching as I have led from behind with leaders who have self-discovered the hard and often difficult choice. Inevitably, their organizations have grown and succeeded as a result of this inward journey.

But one option I normally cannot weave into my executive coaching is what I call the first and final solution. If you are reading this article, you may already possess this option.

All coaching begins and ends at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we know from our shared theology, this is the beginning and ending of who we are and who we are yet to be. So, the role of coach has already begun in a divine performance with a basin of water, a towel, and outstretched dirty feet. And, as it was for the apostle Peter, coaching always ends with an important confession.

Sometimes you, the Christian coach, must confess you have exhausted the limits of your intuition, reading, and experience. When coaching a person in an especially demanding set of circumstances, you may walk into your own professional black hole with no apparent solutions. When you hit this wall, you must, of necessity, openly admit the well inside you is bone dry, and you have no more intellectual, verbal, or emotional interventions.

Standing on Mars Hill in ancient Athens surrounded by erudite and haughty religious elite, the apostle Paul instantly discovered in his spirit and mind a new agenda for his preaching when he spied the altar to the "Unknown God" (Acts 17:16-34).

As people of the Spirit, we must admit our skill to coach another person in ministry is ultimately not in our own ability. We are always in need of being bailed out, by the Spirit, when our expertise fails us.

If you are in a coaching relationship with another believer, the first and final solution should be to discover from our Lord what neither of you have yet to find. ☪



As people of the Spirit, we must admit our skill to coach another person in ministry is ultimately not in our own ability. We are always in need of being bailed out by the Spirit when our expertise fails us.



**CAL LEMON, D.Min.**, president, Executive Enrichment, Inc., Springfield, Missouri, a corporate education and consulting firm



# BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS:

## *Faith Coaching as an Approach to Evangelism*



► BY KATHRYN McELVEEN

Author's  
intro video



**How can we  
successfully apply  
coaching skills  
to gospel-sharing  
conversations?  
The Parable  
of the Sower  
shows the way.**



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**S**haring God's kingdom is at the heart of Christian ministry. For those in ministry, God has called us to proclaim the good news and equip others to do the same. Even so, too often we understand the work of evangelism as something better left to the experts (evangelists) or undertaken by only one method (lifestyle, personal, confrontational, etc.).

The apostle Paul challenges us to understand evangelism as a "by all possible means" work (1 Corinthians 9:22). While the good news of Christ's work is true and unchanging, our means of sharing can vary. The New Testament has examples of different approaches taken by believers who wanted to share and bring others to faith.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, ministers today embody this call to evangelize in ways as unique as their gifts and the circumstances in which they encounter lost people.

Faith coaching is one approach that can enhance our efforts to evangelize by all possible means. Coaching offers tools to help people receive the gospel and move forward in faith, including: listening, asking questions, exploring options, goal setting, identifying and removing obstacles, and offering encouragement.<sup>2</sup> Through the particular lens of the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of Matthew, I present ways we can successfully apply coaching

skills to gospel-sharing conversations.

### **Seed and Soil**

" 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear' " (Matthew 13:3–9).

In the Parable of the Sower, the "seed" is the good news of God's kingdom shared by Jesus and His disciples. When the farmer sows the seed, it falls in different places with differing results. Here are practical ways we can use faith coaching to address conditions

in which evangelism occurs and support efforts to bring people to Christ.

### Sown Along the Path

" 'When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path' " (Matthew 13:19).

When we share the good news and people do not understand it, this is like seed sown on the hard-packed path. The seed falls to the earth but has no opening in which to germinate and grow. So the evil one can snatch it away.

People harden themselves to the gospel for various reasons: from cynicism to fear to shame. Satan seizes any hardness of heart as an opportunity to steal the good news before a person can receive it. The coaching approach is one way to engage in relationships where there is not openness to receiving the Word of God. Coaching recognizes that sometimes the first work is preparing the soil.

One minister took this approach in a relationship he developed with Terry, a congregation member's son. Terry's boss fired him from his job under allegations of wrongdoing. Terry's parents were concerned for their son, who was not a believer and had a long line of failures. The first time Robert and Terry met, Terry let Robert know he was not interested in being preached at. Robert took a different approach from what Terry was expecting. He invited Terry to tell him his story and Robert listened carefully. Terry noticed Robert seemed more interested in asking questions than in telling him what to do.

As their relationship grew, Terry began to drop some of his tough exterior. He began to look forward to visits with Robert, one of the only people in the community who did not seem to be embarrassed by him. Terry began thinking about things differently

and sharing some of those thoughts with Robert. One day he mentioned his growing fear.

Robert: "What are you afraid of?"

Terry: "I'm afraid I've missed my chance."

Robert: "Missed your chance for what?"

Terry: "For the kind of life I want."

Robert: "And what kind of life is that?"

Terry: "I don't like what people think about me. I want a life where people trust and believe in me."

Robert: "What would it take for people to trust and believe in you?"

Terry: "I would need to be honest about the mistakes I have made and the pain I have caused. I am not as bad as some people think, but I have made some selfish choices. I do not want to keep being the person who always lets people down. Lying about my mistakes is not helping me to be the person I want to be. I am starting to understand that. But I am afraid people have already given up on me."



Robert: "Hmm." [Thinks for a moment.] "May I share something with you?"

Terry: "Of course."

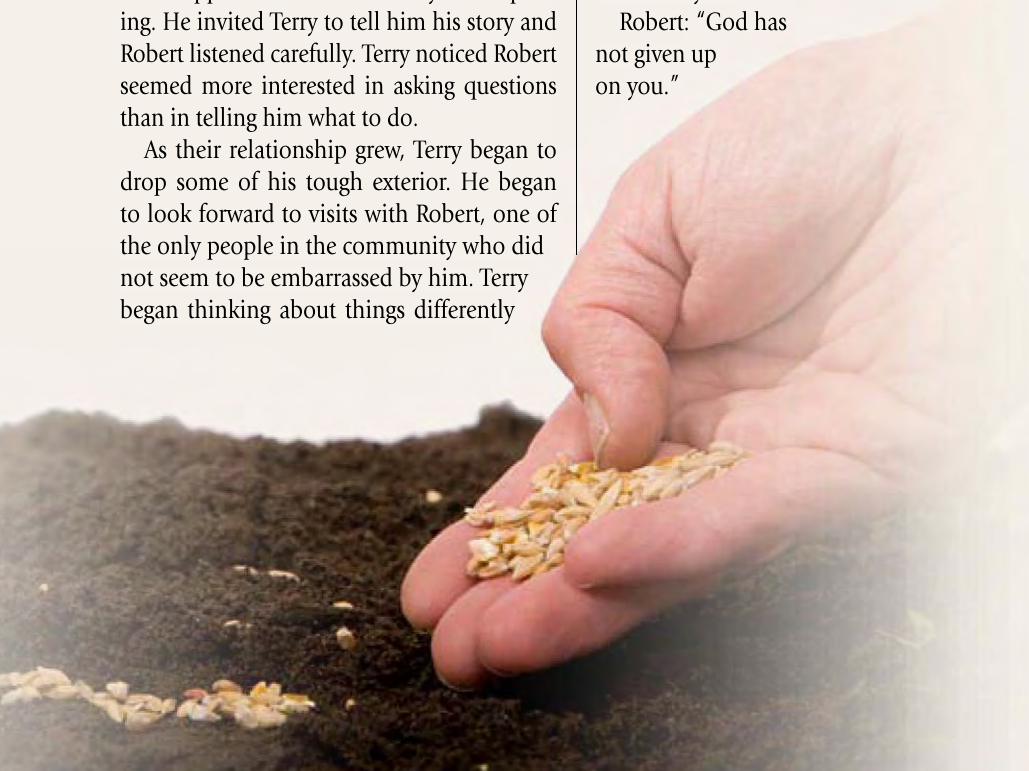
Robert: "When I first met you, you were in a really different place. I can see today how much you have changed and how much more you want to change. God is working in your life. What do you think?"

Terry: "I do feel like things are changing for me, but why would God want to work in my life?"

Robert: "God has not given up on you."



The coaching approach is one way to engage in relationships where there is not openness to receiving the Word of God. Coaching recognizes that sometimes the first work is preparing the soil.







Coaching questions help identify the barriers and the things that compete with the gospel while also tapping into the motivation and will to remove them.

Robert shared the gospel with Terry, and Terry decided to follow Christ.

The coaching approach Robert took with Terry helped open Terry to receive the Word of God. Among other things, Robert's approach built trust through listening and genuine care, enlisted permission or buy-in for scriptural truths, and minimized the divisive impacts of jargon.

The coaching approach to evangelism embraces the admonition to "be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19). In Robert's relationship with Terry, listening helped build trust and prepare the soil to receive God's Word. Listening did not condone Terry's behavior, but it did show Terry he was valuable and worth hearing. Likewise, Robert's approach to ask instead of tell showed his genuine interest in and concern for Terry.

When Robert shifted from asking to telling, he asked permission first. Asking permission honored the trust he had built with Terry. We cannot coerce people into faith in Jesus. Just like Terry was free to reject Robert's offer to share, he was free to take or leave Robert's perspective.

Finally, Robert's approach shows the value of using language that is meaningful to the person being coached (PBC). Theological training and immersion in the life of faith equips us with technical language, called jargon. Language such as "sin," "atonement," "salvation," "blood of the Lamb" may be deeply meaningful to us. In our own appreciation of the richness of our doctrinal, theological, and scriptural language, we sometimes forget that this language is foreign to nonbelievers. More common expressions such as "hurts" or "mistakes," a "desire to make things right," or "find more meaning" are entryways.

### **Sown on Rocky Ground**

"The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away" (Matthew 13:20,21).

When my husband and I planted our first blueberry bush, I could not wait for it to bear fruit. It spit out a few berries and I was delighted. Later, when I purchased more blueberry bushes from a master gardener, she told me to pick off the flowers the first season. "Young plants need to put their energy into strong roots," she explained, "so in the long run they will be healthier and more productive." In the years that have followed, I have learned this truth firsthand. In the midst of droughts, that first bush suffers the most and, in spite of being oldest, is my least-productive plant.

Sometimes people hear the good news and begin to grow in relationship with Christ, but the evil one, or even their own rebellious nature, fights the gains of the gospel. With only shallow roots, it is easy for people to suffer under and fall away from God. The coaching approach orients us to the long view of fruit bearing by encouraging root growth.

One way the gospel takes root in people's lives is by connecting to the knowledge or experiences they already have. We can use coaching to identify ways in which the PBC is fragile in his faith, take steps to protect the new growth, and connect him to nourishing resources.

Here is a sample of faith coaching questions that help encourage and deepen root growth:

- Looking back, where was God already

ALONG THE PATH

working in your life even before you recognized Him?

- How do you recognize when you are separated from God? Or, How would you name sin in your life?
- Who or what stands in the way of your relationship with God?
- What things will change in your life if you are going to follow Jesus?
- What do you see as the impact of those changes?
- What challenges do you anticipate? How will you prepare for them?
- What does the voice of the Holy Spirit sound like in your life?
- Where do you find your ear most tuned to the Spirit's voice?
- What options/resources do you have?
- Who do you know who can help you?
- What will you do differently?
- What can you see now that you could not see before? What is still unclear?

Growth at the roots strengthens the relationship with Christ and produces "fruit that will last" (John 15:16) in the life of the new believer.

### Sown Among Thorns

"The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).

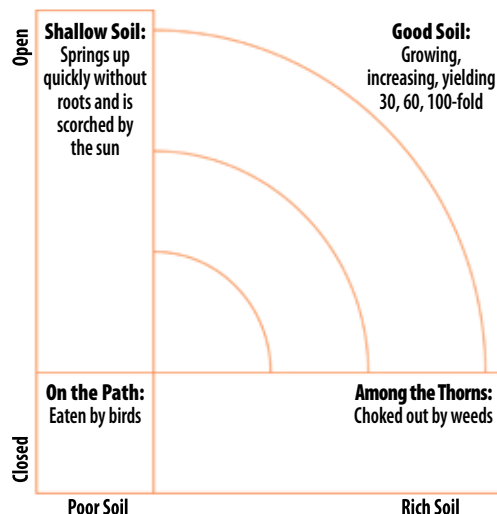
I have a weed growing in my garden. I remember noticing it growing among my strawberries when it was small and leafy. I thought, *I should pick that*. When it got big enough to be bothersome, I grabbed it with my bare hands and tiny thorns I had not noticed before sent shooting pains into my fingers. Several days later I went out with

gloves, but found it too difficult to uproot. The thorns were big enough to poke through the gloves if I gripped too tight. By that time it had also flowered. It was not too unsightly, so I left it. I learned the hard way about weeds going to seed. It only took a few weeks for these intruders to overwhelm my strawberry plants.

Thorny weeds act as barriers to light from above and nutrients from below. They compete with healthy plants; and, if we do not remove them, they will slowly (or not so slowly) choke out growth. Unchecked, they

## Lost People Are Located

**Everyone's soil (soul) starts somewhere.** Faith coaching recognizes that while accepting Christ may be an individual decision, it cannot be made alone and does not happen in isolation to a person's location.



- How does this diagram help you chart where an unsaved person might be?
- What are some characteristics that might be true for people in the different places on this diagram?
- How might you engage people with the good news of Christ who are at those different places?
- What gifts do you have that God can use to bring people into saving relationship with Jesus?

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# ON ROCKY GROUND





A coaching approach helps people take an honest accounting of the sin that separates them from God as well as the unique strengths and gifts they have to leverage in a life of faith.

are both difficult and costly to remove.

Coaching questions help identify the barriers and the things that compete with the gospel while also tapping into the motivation and will to remove them:

- What habits or practices do you have that are inconsistent with God's hopes for you or what you believe?
- What are the costs of changing them? The costs of not changing them?
- What can you do today?
- What things particularly tempt you not to choose God?
- Where can you find the strength to face them/avoid them?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you want things to be different?
- What motivates you? What gives you courage?
- What are you willing to do?
- What worries do you carry with you?
- What options do you have for dealing with them?
- How do you know when you are being deceived? When you are deceiving yourself?
- To what truth do you not want to admit?

Coaching also encourages a proactive, do-it-now approach to moving forward and facing obstacles. Weeds, like obstacles, are much easier to contend with when they are small.

#### **Sown on Good Soil**

"'But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown' " (Matthew 13:23).

Sometimes we sow the good news in soil that is ready to receive it. A coaching approach recognizes we must nurture growth

in relationship with God in ways appropriate to what is unique and wonderful about each person. Just as a coaching approach helps people take an honest accounting of the sin that separates them from God, coaching also helps take an equally honest assessment of the unique strengths and gifts they have to leverage in a life of faith.

As pastor of a small church, I often met with the close-knit youth group. Casey was the visiting friend of one of the group. She did not fit the profile of these rural youth who had grown up together. She and her family had moved to the area from a different state, a fact apparent in everything from her style of dress to her accent to the way she stayed quietly outside the conversation and activity.

A transplant myself, I had compassion for her. I also admired her for the courage to keep coming back. During an overnight retreat, I learned that, even more than courage, Casey had a deep desire to put on new life in Christ. Her challenge was to capture the vision of what fruit bearing would look like for her. Together we asked, "What unique gift does God want to bring into the world through you?" and "If there were no limits, what would you offer to God?"

I could not have imagined or prescribed what would blossom in her when she began to profess faith in Christ. Casey knew she was different. With her new understanding of the body of Christ, however, she began to see the unique gifts she had. She also began to hear, through the voice of the Holy Spirit, God's plans for her life.

Coaching helps support people who are envisioning and pursuing God-sized goals and encourages them to rely on the work of the Holy Spirit to empower their growth.

**AMONG THORNS**



## Equipping the Saints

**Faith coaching becomes a powerful approach** in a congregation where pastors equip people to use a coaching approach. In this context, even a little training goes a long way. I have worked alongside some congregations who are using resources like our *Faith Coaching* book and *The Faith Coaching Toolkit* to equip volunteers in a variety of ways including:

- Sunday School class/small group book study
- Pastor and ministry staff study
- Training evangelism and mission teams
- One-day workshop introducing the coaching approach
- Multiweek study to train internal coaches
- Large-scale coaching ministry to train coaches, match coaches with PBCs, and provide ongoing training and mentoring of coaches

Seekers and new believers, who have been impacted by a coaching approach to evangelism, find a church infused with a coaching culture to be a welcoming place to nurture and grow in their new faith.

### Evangelism I Can Do

I hear this comment consistently from ministers and church leaders who are introduced to the faith-coaching approach: "This is evangelism I can do." Perhaps that is because the coaching approach, as described here, offers another accessible tool for joining in work to which we feel a call. The personal work of evangelism happens in a larger context of God's saving work in the world. Paul reminds the church at Corinth: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6,7).

In my experience, I have played many roles in sharing the good news. Sometimes I have planted seed; sometimes I have helped work the soil; sometimes I have given attention to the roots; sometimes I have helped remove the weeds; other times I have helped nurture fruitfulness. But it is God, by all possible means, who makes things grow. ☺

#### NOTES

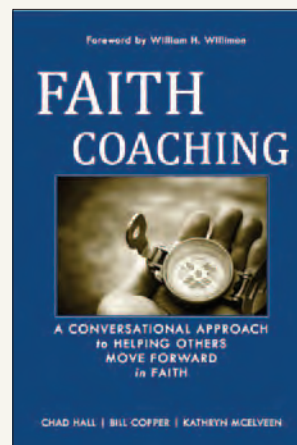
1. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleberg, is a resource for looking at evangelism styles and how to use them effectively.
2. See *Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith* by Chad Hall, Bill Copper, and Kathryn McElveen.



**KATHRYN McELVEEN, ACC**, president and lead coach, Vision Ventures, LLC, Travelers Rest, South Carolina. She is coauthor of *Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith*, and *The Faith Coaching Toolkit*.

For additional coaching resources visit [www.faithcoaches.com/](http://www.faithcoaches.com/) or [www.invisionventures.com](http://www.invisionventures.com).

#### FOR FURTHER READING



### Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith

Chad W. Hall, Bill Copper, Kathryn McElveen, William Willimon  
(BookSurge Publishing, 2009)

**For too long, Christians have taken a delivery approach** to spiritual formation: we memorize key verses and snappy concepts to spring on our unchurched neighbors; we provide fill-in-the-blank study courses for believers who want to grow in faith; we strive to tell, teach and transfer what we know. The results? Stagnant believers, lowered expectations, and an avoidance of spiritual conversations. There must be a better approach. What if you could take a discovery approach to spiritual formation? What if you didn't have to be an expert with all the answers but you could ask questions that helped others expand their commitment to following Christ? What if you could take a coach approach? And what if this approach were easy to learn, simple to apply, and bore fruit in the lives of those around you? Here is such an approach. *Faith Coaching* teaches you to leverage the power of coaching conversations to help others find and follow their spiritual path.

# ON GOOD SOIL

# AG COACHING:

## Accelerating Ministry Progress Through Coaching

► BY **ARDEN K. ADAMSON**

Author's  
intro video



**AG Coaching is  
a new initiative  
for raising the  
leadership level  
of ministers  
and laypeople  
in the local church.**



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**M**ost people think of sports when they hear the word *coach*. In Wisconsin, coach conjures up images of the legendary Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers. Today, *coach* has become a buzzword people apply to all types of helping professions.

The more serious individuals are regarding specific endeavors, the more they need a coach. One coach usually leads beginners as a group. Amateurs usually engage a personal coach one-on-one. Professionals often have several coaches, each focusing on a different aspect of their person or endeavor.

This contrasts with many in ministry who believe enlisting a coach is a sign of weakness. Many believe they know (or should know) how to perform ministry. This assumption may arise from the fact pastors are trained to be teachers, consultants, mentors, advisors, preachers, or counselors — all telling functions. When someone shares a problem, we commonly give advice or counsel. There are shortcomings to this model.

People who attend seminars only remember a small portion of what they hear and apply even less. Telling makes the teacher appear the expert and implies the listener knows less (or little). Moreover, telling brings

focus on the teller and devalues the listener.

Not everyone appreciates advice-giving, and some advice might not address a person's area of interest. Telling makes others feel they are not in control, because others are designing their activities for them. Telling makes more work for the teller because people keep coming back for more answers rather than learning to think for themselves. Finally, telling (knowledge) never changes anything; only action does.

James speaks to this when he declares, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22). Coaching reverses these issues by focusing on the person being coached (PBC), leaving the person in control to decide his destiny and put his decision into an action plan.

Coaching is a developed skill set that moves individuals in their personal and professional lives from current reality to desired outcome through a Spirit-led intentional partnership.





This approach has several components. The first component is to listen carefully — beyond the words the PBC speaks, to the tone, energy, terms used, and what is not stated. The coach follows this with skillfully crafted questions that draw insights and latent ideas out of the PBC. This approach continues until the PBC designs his own action plan with timetables and a system of accountability.

Putting knowledge into action makes coaching a powerful skill to elicit change, transition, and transformation in a person's life and ministry. It is possible to coach a person forward even if the coach does not know the answer to a dilemma. In other words, coaching accelerates progress.

Coaching skills raise the leadership level of individuals who serve others. All believers, including district officials, ministers, lay leaders, and parents, can utilize this competency to advance their effectiveness. AG Coaching is dedicated to these principles and to creating a coaching culture in the local church.

### What is AG Coaching?

AG Coaching (AGC) is a new initiative of the Assemblies of God for raising the leadership level of ministers and laypeople by developing a coaching culture within the local church. AGC exists to enable leaders to accelerate

progress in ministry wherever they serve. To accomplish this, AGC has created a process to train ministers and laypeople in coaching skills and to certify those who desire certification.

### The Standard for Coaching

The International Coach Federation (ICF) sets the premier standard for coaching excellence. Organizers formed this organization in 1995 to certify coaches. Today it has over 15,000 members and 7,200 credentialed coaches. ICF is unique in that it does not provide training and therefore has no vested interest in certifications. According to ICF, there are 11 competencies necessary for a person to exhibit excellent coaching ability. AG Coaching is aligned with ICF competency standards because these standards honor high-quality coaching.

### Training for coaches

AG Coaching provides training for individuals desiring to develop proficient coaching skills. AG Coaching uses teaching materials created by Coach Approach Ministries (CAM), because CAM designed these materials to teach coaching competencies. AG Coaching acknowledges there are many reputable coach-training schools and recognizes training from equivalent institutions. The primary concern is adequate development of the coach's skill

Coaching is a developed skill set that moves individuals in their personal and professional lives from current reality to desired outcome through a Spirit-led intentional partnership.







Manage  
process

Spending time with a mentor coach is valuable in that the learner coach can address any questions concerning the coaching process.

competencies as defined by ICF.

Those interested in learning more can attend a QuickStart presentation. This 4-hour seminar introduces coaching to potential coaches and people in the church who will be coached.

AG Coaching currently provides training in three modules with each module consisting of 16 hours of instruction over 2 days.

The first module, Unit 501, is Foundations of Christian Coaching. This module introduces basic components of coaching and distinguishes it from other helping professions — counseling, consulting, mentoring, and spiritual direction. Students study conversation- and mental-shift models to help them understand strategies a coach uses with the person being coached. Activities allow participants to practice the skills they are learning.

This second module is Unit 503, Transformational Change. This focuses on change, transition, and transformation. Presented as three levels of change, this module teaches how to apply coaching skills and facilitate minor, medium, and major changes in life and ministry.

Module three, Unit 507, Coaching Teams, explains the differences between coaching individuals and groups. The coach learns the skills and models of coaching teams, committees, or other groups in local or regional venues.

### **Coach certification**

For those desiring to obtain coach credentials,

AGC offers three levels of certification. The first two AG Coaching levels acknowledge an individual's competency development on the journey to obtain the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) offered by ICF. All AG coach certificates are for 1 year and are renewable.

The first level, AG Certified Coach (AGCC) is an entry-level certification for the person who has taken initial coach training and is using coaching skills. The intent is to go on to higher coach certification. AGCC coaches exhibit the ability to guide a client through an appropriate conversation model taught in Unit 501 noted above. Requirements include:

- At least 30 hours of training.
- Being coached by a mentor coach.
- Logging at least 15 hours of coaching experience.
- An assessment resulting in a satisfactory review.
- Application and fee submitted to AG Coaching.

Level 2, AG Advanced Coach (AGAC), is certification for the individual applying at least 50 to 60 percent of the fundamentals of the coaching skills required for ICF's Associate Certified Coach. AGAC requires an additional:

- Fifteen hours of coach-specific training.
- Fifty hours of logged coaching experience.
- Five hours of work with a mentor coach.
- An assessment resulting in a satisfactory review.



## **How to Create a Coaching Culture in Your District**

**Coaching is no longer merely a novel idea** in the Assemblies of God. Instead, district officials and other leaders are recognizing that coaching is a bona fide skill that accelerates progress in a minister's life and ministry. Here are some districts that are creating a coaching culture.

Pennsylvania-Delaware District Superintendent Steve Tourville is leading the way in building a district-wide coaching network. The district's goal is to foster a coaching culture, encourage coach training, provide certified coaches for any church or team that desires to be coached, and encourage people to connect with a life coach. The district has helped underwrite training for over 300 people. They offer breakout sessions about coaching at their Annual Ministries Summit (district council) and Ministers Enrichment (annual retreat). A group of coaches meet monthly to foster best practices and resource each other. A website is coming soon.

Michigan District Superintendent Bill Leach appointed a chairman for the district's

coaching network. The district offers coach training class 501 twice a year and class 503 annually. An ICF certified coach teaches these classes. The coaching network coaches church planters, Natural Church Development Church Health teams, district-supervised pastors/churches, and other ministers and spouses. An annual meeting with district-endorsed coaches provides opportunity to connect, inspire, and encourage.

The Oregon Ministry Network, led by Superintendent Bill Wilson and his wife, Joy, is developing a coaching culture. Wilson appointed an OMN lead coach and selected 10 people, certified through Ministry Coaching International, to assist with coaching lead pastors and associate and bivocational pastors. They offer sessions and workshops at their annual conference with opportunities to sign up for one-on-one coaching. The OMN website and network correspondence promotes the coaching culture. Approximately 15 to 20 percent of OMN pastors are in the process of being trained or have been coached.

The Minnesota District regularly trains coaches and utilizes coaching in their cadre groups, peer mentor groups, and leadership groups. The Kansas District has developed an extensive coaching culture and provides certification through CoachNet (see the EJ Online article "How One District Is Bringing a Coaching

- Application and fee submitted to AG Coaching.

The 3rd level, AG Proficient Coach (AGPC), is for the coach applying all the fundamental ICF competencies. While this credential is not the same as the ICF Associate Certified Coach credential, the intent is that the coach will exhibit the same competency skill level that he would for the ICF's ACC certification. Requirements include:

- An additional 15 hours (now totaling 60 hours) of coach-specific training.
- A minimum of 100 hours of logged coaching experience.
- Coaching at least eight different clients, a total of 10 hours of work with a qualified mentor coach.
- Two coach reference letters.
- Assessment resulting in a satisfactory review.
- Application and fee submitted to AG Coaching.

#### Mentor coach

A mentor coach is an ICF certified coach who works with other coaches desiring to improve their skills. Spending time with a mentor coach is valuable in that the learner coach can address any questions concerning the coaching process. The mentor coach might review some or all of the ICF coaching competencies, or the learner coach may coach

the mentor coach for part of the session and receive helpful feedback. However utilized, this one-on-one training holds high educational value in helping the learner coach make forward progress with his skill set.

#### Assessing potential coaches


A team of assessor coaches evaluates each applicant according to 10 of the following 11 ICF competencies.<sup>1</sup>

**1. Ethics and standards.** (The assessor does not assess this competency.)

**2. Establishing a coaching agreement.** The coaching conversation can only move forward if the coach and PBC agree on the issue needing discussion. The coach's responsibility is to help the PBC select an issue without influencing the choice the PBC makes. At times this can take up to half of the session time.

**3. Establishing trust and intimacy with the client.** The coach must be able to create a safe and trusting atmosphere where the PBC feels fully comfortable and able to freely think and speak without criticism from the coach.

**4. Creating presence.** The coach must be fully present during the coaching conversation. It is easy for a person's mind to drift. Creating presence means that the coach is fully cognizant of what the PBC is saying and has a relationship that makes the PBC feel the coach is fully conscious of the client with a mutually spontaneous relationship.



Questions are at the heart of coaching, but only certain questions are powerful and probing.

Asking Questions

Culture to Life") at [www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org](http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org). The North Texas District conducts AG Coach training seminars, as does the New York and New England districts. Other districts are also beginning training.

**How does a district create a coaching culture?** Here are some ideas by AG Coaching:

1. Contact AG Coaching at 417-862-1447, ext. 3535. We will help you tailor the process to your district's needs and desires.
2. District leadership needs to be supportive, understand coaching, and, if possible, make it financially feasible for training to take place.
3. Appoint a district coaching coordinator.
4. Present coaching at broad venues such as presbyter and/or district-wide functions as well as through printed or electronic communications.
5. Provide basic training in coaching such as Unit 501 (Building Blocks of Coaching) and Unit 503 (Coaching Through Change, Transition, and Transformation). AG Coaching offers these classes.
6. Encourage development of coaching skills through:
  - a. Practice coaching — encourage those trained in basic coaching to

utilize their skills in their own ministry.

- b. Create peer coaching small groups of two and three people.
  - c. Join the free AG Coaching skills webinar hosted by Sam Farina at 1 p.m. (CST) the first Thursday of each month. Contact Barb at [barb@samfarina.com](mailto:barb@samfarina.com) to receive notification and the webinar link.
7. Utilize coaching by connecting coaches to networks such as revitalization church pastors, church planters, leadership development groups, lead pastors, and associate pastors. Offer coaching to any leader who wishes to accelerate progress.
  8. Provide ongoing training to improve coaching competencies. AG Coaching offers up to 10 sequential training seminars.
  9. Encourage interested coaches to increase their skills by obtaining certification through AG Coaching. (See [www.agcoaching.org](http://www.agcoaching.org)).

A coaching culture can remove numerous hindrances to the work of the Holy Spirit in building the kingdom of God. AG Coaching is ready to assist you. Call AG Coaching at 417-862-1447, ext. 3535.

— ARDEN K. ADAMSON, AG Coaching Task Force Leader



Since nothing changes unless the PBC takes action, coaching sessions must always end with an action plan. The coach should ask what new areas of learning and accomplishment might be available and then encourage the PBC to strive to accomplish them.

**5. Active listening.** Many people think about what they are going to say next while someone else is talking. In doing so the listener misses much of what the other person is saying. A coach must focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying. The coach must try to understand the context of the PBC's focus issue, recognize body language, and tone of voice, while being fully supportive of the client's agenda.

**6. Asking powerful questions.** Questions are at the heart of coaching, but only certain questions are powerful and probing. Coaches must not ask for information to satisfy their personal curiosity. They should ask questions that provoke deepening thought, reflection, and lead to new insight for the PBC. Questions that move the PBC forward are open-ended and usually begin with who, what, how, and describe.

**7. Giving direct communication.** This is one of the few times the coach tells. Direct communication is a short statement that reframes and articulates the subject matter to assist the PBC to look at the issue from a different perspective. Coaches can clarify a concept by using a metaphor, analogy, or paint a word picture.

**8. Creating awareness.** This is the goal of coaching — helping the PBC arrive at a new awareness of the subject in which he wishes to move forward. At this point, information and insight converge to prompt a connecting of the dots, a new relationship between issues, or a variance of an idea that helps the PBC make progress.

**9. Designing actions.** The coach must lead the PBC to decide on action steps to take as a result of all considerations. Since nothing changes unless the PBC takes action, coaching sessions must always end with an action plan. The coach helps the PBC decide appropriate steps but should stretch the PBC by asking what new areas of learning and accomplishment might be available and then encourage the PBC to strive to accomplish them.

**10. Planning and goal setting.** An effective coach assists the PBC in creating specific, measurable, attainable, and timely goals relevant to the stated goal for that conversation. The coach and PBC evaluate the plan and make adjustments as required while they celebrate early successes to build encouragement and motivation.

**11. Managing process and accountability.** The coach demonstrates the ability to synthesize the information gained through the coaching session, keeping the PBC focused on behaviors and actions that lead forward on the focus subject.

Nobody wants to fail, but people usually do not mind failure so much if no one else knows about it. Therefore, the effective coach asks the PBC how to ensure the completion of the action plan. The PBC may select an individual for accountability or create another method, but an effective coach asks questions until the PBC has a personally satisfactory system of accountability.

As noted above, the assessor coach evaluates applicants for coach certification based on their proficiency in demonstrating ICF competencies. All competencies enable a higher quality of leadership thereby enabling others to accelerate progress in their field of service. AG Coaching is dedicated to creating this type of culture within the Assemblies of God and beyond, as God enables.

### How To Contact AG Coaching

If you are interested in learning more about coaching, receiving coach training, or engaging a coach, contact AG Coaching at: [www.agcoaching.org](http://www.agcoaching.org); e-mail [agcoaching@ag.org](mailto:agcoaching@ag.org), or call 1-862-1447, ext. 3535. AG Coaching is committed to helping you raise your leadership ability through coaching skills. ☺

### NOTE

1. International Coach Federation: <http://www.coachfederation.org/research-education/icf-credentials/core-competencies/>. Accessed 7/22/11.



**ARDEN K. ADAMSON** is AG Coaching Task Force Leader and is the former superintendent of the Wisconsin-Northern Michigan District of the Assemblies of God.





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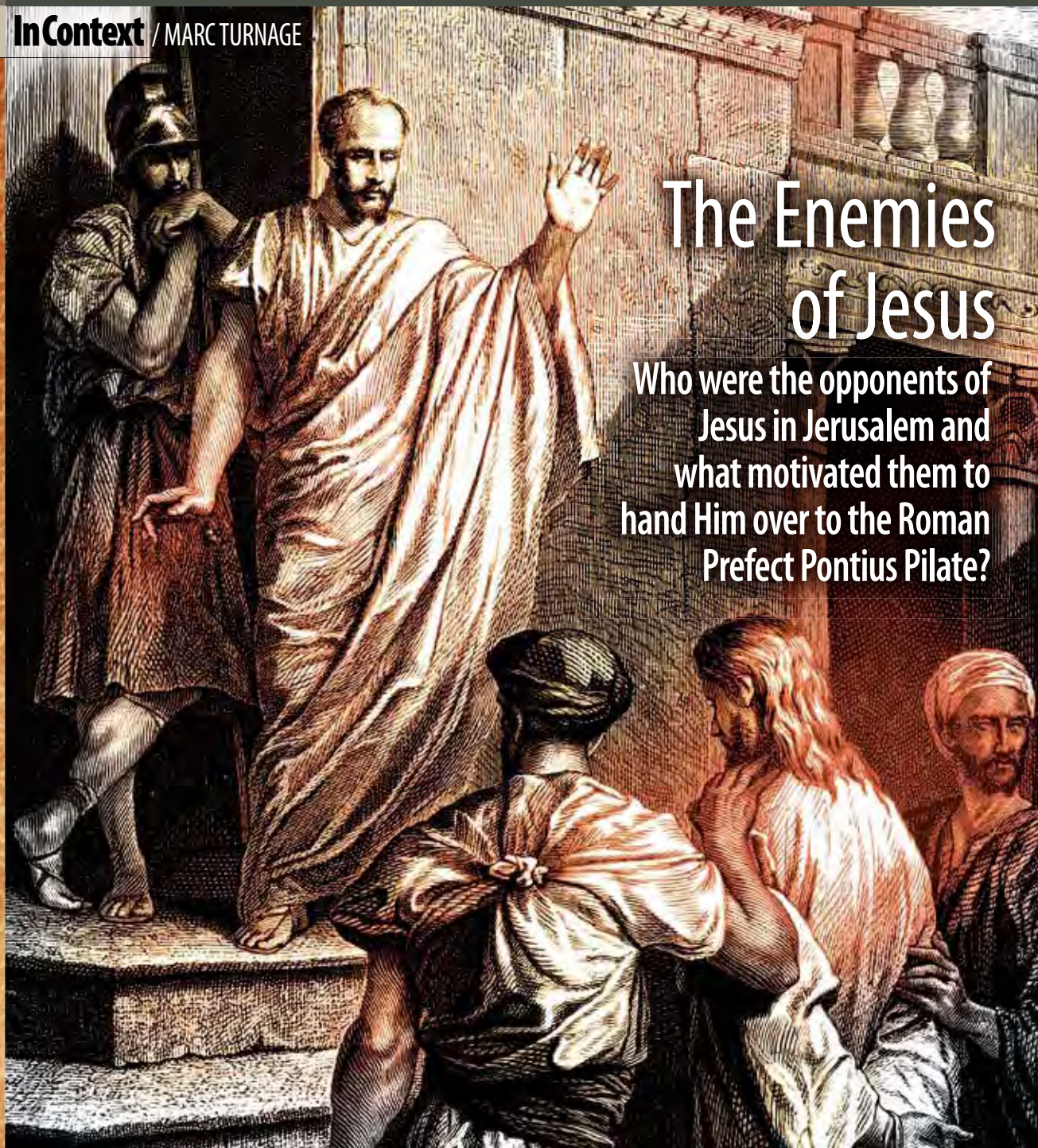
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# The Enemies of Jesus

Who were the opponents of Jesus in Jerusalem and what motivated them to hand Him over to the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate?

Easter is a time when we can reflect on the tumultuous last days and hours of Jesus' life. Have you ever heard a sermon that proclaimed, "The crowds that cried, 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday cried, 'Crucify' on Good Friday"? Usually the point of these sermons is to demonstrate the fickleness of the Jewish people and to support the mistaken idea that the Jewish people rejected Jesus. Even though this common characterization does not agree with the testimony of the New Testament, it continues to be a prominent component of Christian preaching during Holy Week. Who, then, were the opponents of Jesus in Jerusalem, and, more important, what motivated them to hand Him over to the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate?

The Gospels are clear that Jesus deliberately directed His actions against the chief priests, their scribes, and the Sadducean leaders during His last week in Jerusalem (Luke 19:45,46; 20:1–40). His popularity with the masses protected Him against the chief priests, led by Caiaphas, who sought to destroy Him (Luke 19:47,48; 20:19; 22:2). The Book of Acts likewise portrays this same group as the opponents of the

disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 4:1–7), who, like their Master, enjoyed the favor of the Jewish masses.

All of the Gospels indicate that the chief priests and the officers of the temple had to arrest Jesus under the cloak of darkness to conceal their actions from the Jewish people (Luke 22:52). Jesus pointed this out to them, "When I was with you day after day in the Temple, you did not lay hands on me" (Luke 22:53<sup>1</sup>). Quite simply, they



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could not because of His popularity with the people, which is why they needed to use the cover of night to hide their actions. The crowds never turned their backs on Jesus. According to Luke, on seeing the Romans brutalize Jesus, the crowds mourned what happened to Him (23:27,48).

At the beginning of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, He arrived with the crowds of Jewish pilgrims, riding a wave of popularity and redemptive anticipation (Matthew 21:1–9; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40; John 12:12–19). According to the Synoptic Gospels, in the wake of His popularity, Jesus entered the Jerusalem temple and challenged the corruption of the chief priests who oversaw the sale of sacrifices and financial activities of the temple (Luke 19:45). Jesus did not direct His actions against the temple itself; in fact, He never rejected the temple, as evidenced by the actions of His followers after His death and resurrection. They continued to frequent the temple in Jerusalem (Luke 24:53; Acts 3:1; 21:26). His actions were specifically against the sellers (Luke 19:45). He quoted a passage from Isaiah and one from Jeremiah, "My house shall be 'a house of prayer,' but you have made it 'a den of robbers'" (Luke 19:46).

Quite often Jewish sages preached sermons simply by the creative manner in which they combined biblical quotations. Because they knew the Bible by heart (as did their audience), they used common language between passages to connect them together. Also, they could assume that, even though they did not quote the entirety of the

passage, their audience would fill in the unquoted part. Jesus joined together Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 because of the shared appearance of the phrase "my house" (בֵּיתִי).<sup>2</sup> He assumed His audience (the chief priests) would fill in the fuller context of Jeremiah 7.

Jeremiah 7 contains Jeremiah's prophecy against the First Temple in which he highlighted the corruption of the people and their arrogance in believing that because they had the temple, God would not allow anyone to destroy Jerusalem and its temple. In other words, the existence of the temple in Jerusalem provided them with the "God in a box" or the ultimate trump card.

## His popularity among the masses gave gravity to His condemnation by the chief priests.

Jeremiah reminded the people about what God did to His former place in Shiloh where the tabernacle and ark of the covenant resided after the Israelites came into the land: "Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first ... therefore I will do to the house that is called by My name, in which you trust ... just what I did to Shiloh" (Jeremiah 7:12–14). Although the Bible never mentions it, earlier in Israel's history Shiloh was destroyed. Excavations at Shiloh have confirmed this. Perhaps Shiloh's destruction took place in connection with the loss of the ark when the Israelites fought the Philistines at Ebenezer (1 Samuel 4). The Israelites also thought they had "God in a box" with the ark (1 Samuel 4:4,5). Yet, because of their disobedience and the corruption of the priesthood of Eli and his sons, they lost the ark and more important, God cut off Eli and his sons from the priesthood.

Jesus' fragmentary citation of Jeremiah 7:11 would have caused His audience to make that connection. They clearly understood His message:

Because of your (the chief priests') corruption, God is going to judge this place (the temple), and He will cut off your priesthood. From their response in the Gospels, they clearly understood His message. Due to His popularity with the people, He was a threat they needed to remove.

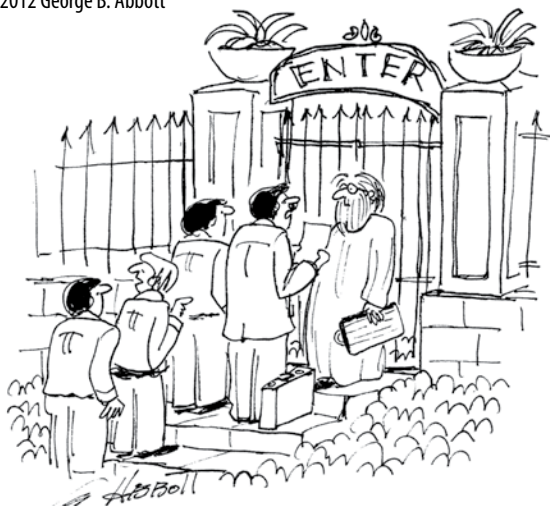
An interesting parallel to Jesus' message appears in an anonymous saying after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70: "On what account was Shiloh destroyed? Because of the disgraceful disposition of the holy things that were there. As to Jerusalem's first building (i.e., the First Temple), on

what account was it destroyed? Because of the idolatry and licentiousness and bloodshed which was in it. But [as to] the latter (i.e., the Second Temple) we know that they devoted themselves to Torah and were meticulous about tithes. On what account did they go into exile? Because they loved money and hated one another" (*t. Menahot* 13:22; cf. *y. Yoma* 1:1; and *Leviticus Rabbah* 21:9). As in Jesus' message, the three sanctuaries — Shiloh and the First and Second Temples and their destructions — are connected. The cause for the destruction of the Second Temple is connected with the financial corruption of the chief priests in Jerusalem.

The chief priests of Jerusalem in the first century A.D. controlled a monopoly. They set the prices for the sacrifices, which most pilgrims had to pay since they could not easily bring their sacrifices from a distance. In fact, we hear of episodes where the prices of the sacrifices were so high that the people could not participate in the temple festivals. Pharisaic leaders rebuked the chief priests for their greed (*b. Baba Batra* 3b-4a; *m. Kerithoth* 1:7). Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem have uncovered high priestly homes and attest to the opulent and lavish lifestyle in which these priests lived.

Ancient first-century sources also describe their wealth and the corruption their greed fostered within them: "Now the high priest Ananias was advancing day by day in prestige and was being ever more lauded and honored by the citizens. For he was a 'supplier' of money. Indeed, every day he was treating the high priest and

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"You can always tell when someone tries to take it with him — he brings his lawyer along."



Procurator Albinus to gifts. In addition, he had slaves, utterly depraved, who joined forces with the most insolent men. They would go to the threshing floors and take the tithes meant for the priests by force and beat any who resisted. The high priests were practicing the same things as their slaves and no one could restrain them. As a result of this, it happened that some of the priests who had formerly been fed from the tithes died for lack of food" (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20:205–207).

Josephus' picture of the chief priests and the action of their slaves parallels the actions of these figures against Jesus, who sought through brutal violence to protect their wealth and power (cf. Mark 14:43). During His last week, Jesus publically condemned the corruption of the chief priests (Luke 19:46; 20:9–19) and linked their corruption to the coming destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

Jesus was not alone in His critique of the chief priests. Other prophetic figures in the first century condemned their corruption and predicted the destruction of the temple because of it.

Josephus relates a story of Jesus, the son of Ananias, who 4 years before the war (c. A.D. 62) stood in the temple and cried out, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride (cf. Jeremiah 7:34)" (*War* 6:300–309). The chief priests and the elders of the people arrested this Jesus and brought him before the Roman governor, who had this troublemaker flayed to the bone with scourges. Clearly, religious authorities did not perceive Jesus, the son of Ananias, as the same kind of threat that earlier religious authorities had concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

Many among the Jews in Jesus' day hoped that He was the promised Redeemer (cf. Luke 24:21). His popularity among the masses gave gravity to His condemnation by the chief priests. They had to kill Him lest Caiaphas and the other chief priests lose their position and wealth (John 11:49,50).

It is a tragedy of Christian history that some lay the blame for the death of Jesus at the feet of the Jewish people, many of whom "hung

upon his words" (Luke 19:48). The greed of a small group who needed the cloak of darkness to cover up their clandestine activities from the sight of the people motivated what happened to Jesus (cf. Luke 22:52,53; Acts 5:27,28). They used their power to ensure His death (cf. Luke 22:66; 23:10,13,21; John 19:6). Their desire to retain their power and wealth drove the chief priests to hand Jesus over to Pilate. Unfortunately, they are not alone in human history in perpetrating heinous actions motivated by a lust for money and power. ☯



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#### NOTES

1. All verses are author's translation.
2. The Septuagint of Jeremiah 7:11 reads, "Has my house (ὁ οἶκος μου)..." reflecting the Hebrew ביתי as opposed to the reading of the Masoretic text: הבית הזה.

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**A five-stage strategy for saying *no* without ramping up the emotional wars between you and someone in your ministry.**

**A**s a preacher's kid, I grew up with an ever-expanding list of words I should never say. With every new school I attended or every new friend I made, my parents regularly monitored my language with vigilance akin to the KGB. The ubiquitous bar of Ivory soap was always handy to guarantee those syllables never crossed my lips again.

And for people who work and worship in faith communities, you undoubtedly will agree there is a word that makes profanity's Top Ten. This word is *no*.

The church has always struggled using *no* because we believe the word does not match our theology.

The good news, we biblically assume, is a divine shout-out of *yes* to humanity and creation. We have been taught the nature of the triune God is positive, affirming, exemplary, just, valid, excellent . . . and the list goes on.

Tucked discretely into the grandeur of our faith is also our silent confession that the church is often a spiritual community of unspiritual citizens. These denizens of divinity can be mistaken, selfish, predatory, negative, and occasionally they publically drag out the carrion of their fallen nature for the entire world and the church to see.

Sometimes, for the protection of the body of Christ and maintaining the purity of its mission, it is essential that spiritual leadership articulate the one word that should never be said in church — *no*.

### **Setting the Saints Free With ... Limits**

Your staff wants to spend an inordinate amount of money on an event that will have, in your opinion, minimal benefit. A member of your educational staff has asked to attend a continuing education program in Iceland. A board member is promoting an austerity budget for next year that will reduce the Christian education program by 50 percent. And, the youth pastor has put plans on your desk to transport 67 teenagers 300 miles to a remote location for a sunrise service.

One of the roles of leadership is to set limits, and limits can be liberating.

When leaders spend time proactively informing adherents and staff how, when, and why you will make decisions, the community of faith will spend less time doing battle over the *no* and more time adapting to change.

Crafting a *modus operandi* for limits within a faith community is an effective method for a leader to move followers quickly past the rationale for decisions to implementation.

### **A Progressive Paradigm for Communicating the *No***

There is nothing efficacious about looking at someone who receives your leadership and slowly intone, "What about the word *no* do you not understand?" If you are feeling insecure or have watched too many reruns of *Terminator* movies, these words may be appealing. The problem is this: Any parental approach that mixes insult and threat is ineffective in



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changing attitudes or behaviors.

When you try intimidation, the receiver normally begins to write a detailed planning guide for a covert counterattack. The adage, "Watch your back," comes to mind.

What follows is a five-stage strategy for saying *no* without ramping up the emotional wars

when you state, "This is what I cannot do. . . ."

**Stage Five:** Choose to be the assertive adult. After you have asked the right questions, listened, empathized, and emotionally communicated you genuinely care about the person seated across from you, here is a legitimate statement for a Christian leader, "I understand what

Well-known psychotherapist Carl Rogers best describes your intent: "If I can listen to what he tells me, if I can understand how it seems to him . . . then I will be releasing potent forces of change within him."<sup>1</sup> If you refuse to empathize, you will tear down any emotional, or spiritual, bridge between the two of you.

In the middle of this sandwich, you still need the *no*. The syntax for this statement may be, "I understand this will be difficult, and I will be here to listen, strategize, and coach as you make these cuts."

Notice, you did not equivocate on the percentage of the cuts.

It is now time for the final slice on top of this conversation with a resounding *yes*.

"As you begin the process of making these cuts, how about if we meet every 90 days this year to review the income in our ministry. If these sources have been consistently trending upward, I will restore part or all of the resources you have lost for your programs this year."

Sandwich complete.

### A Little *No* Name-Dropping

God said *no* to the first couple when they were pleading, "Hey, let bygones be bygones," with an apple core in their sticky hands. Yahweh said *no* to Moses when he thought he should be the first to step over into the Promised Land. Christ said *no* to the rich young ruler who thought a little cash would be enough to grease the palm of the Master. And, the apostle Paul said *no* to his spiritual colleague, the apostle Peter, when Peter came to Antioch and refused to eat with the Gentiles.

The gospel has always been a screaming *yes* to God through Jesus Christ. Within your covenant community of grace, there sometimes has to be a *no* to accurately hear and successfully communicate the next divine *yes*. 🌀



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#### NOTE

1. This quote originally appeared in Carl Rogers and F.J. Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication" in *Harvard Business Review* (July-August 1952). This excerpt was taken from *Harvard Business Review* XXX, no. 4, (1991) <http://personcentered.com/barriers.html>. Accessed August 25, 2011.

## The word *no* is an essential word for the work of leaders and is best sandwiched between two *yes* statements.

between you and someone in your ministry.

**Stage One:** When you hear information that gives you pause, immediately ask, "What I hear you saying is. . . . Did I understand your position/request correctly?"

In this first stage you genuinely want to make sure you have all the information. By repeating back what you just heard, you are both giving the person respect as the speaker and leaving the door open for clarification.

**Stage Two:** If you have heard the intent of the other person correctly, it may be time to move past the presenting problem to the real issue. Sometimes, especially when your answer may be *no*, the person who needs your approval will float a trial balloon.

If you think there could be some obscuring or embellishing of the truth between the two of you, you may want to ask, "Help me understand what is the final result you are looking for as a result of our conversation?"

The answer is essential for you to craft a *yes* or *no* response. Do not spend your time dancing with this person. It is time for the music to stop; it is time for a definitive question and answer.

**Stage Three:** Sometimes a *no* is nonnegotiable because the circumstances have already made the decision. In this stage you would ask, "What can either of us do about my *no* response?" If both of you recognize budget, clear biblical mandates, deadlines, policy, and a host of other givens, the conversation is over.

**Stage Four:** What follows the reality testing of Stage Three merges into this response in Stage Four, "This is what I can and cannot do in this situation." Notice there is no prelude like, "I am sorry. . . ." Or "I apologize because I cannot. . . ." You are the leader and you will be kind and professional

you have said and all the reasons for your request and my answer is *no*. I will be happy to provide more information behind my decision."

The five stages to this approach will give you a roadmap for words and emotions when you know people will reject your *no* or it will be emotionally distressing to them.

### Making and Serving the *No* Sandwich

William Ury, the coauthor of *Getting to Yes*, the best-selling book on interpersonal negotiation, has written a captivating new work entitled *The Power of a Positive No (How To Say No and Still Get to Yes)*. This book will accent the skills you have just learned.

The premise of Ury's approach is that the word *no* is an essential word for the work of leaders and is best sandwiched between two *yes* statements. It works like this.

You have a staff person who is disappointed and angry because the board reduced his/her budget by 15 percent during your next fiscal year. What makes this especially egregious for this ministry professional is other staff members do not have to work with this same percentage reduction.

It is your opinion, as this staff person's positional leader, that the 15 percent figure is warranted and fair.

Instead of looking at this disenfranchised staff member and seething out, "You should be happy it is only 15 percent," try the sandwich approach.

Begin the conversation with a *yes*. Your statement may sound like this: "You are right. A 15 percent reduction in your budget does appear to be extreme and unfair. I understand your reasoning and position."

You are not placating with those words; you are genuinely working at offering empathy.

# Five Mistakes Leaders Make With Their Teams

*& How to Avoid Them*

**Everybody makes mistakes, but a leader's mistakes are in the open for everyone to see and talk about.** They affect the organization, not just the leader. Some mistakes are innocuous and easily remedied, while other mistakes take time to recover from and cost more in mission drift, financial reversal, and personnel loss.

So, what are the top five mistakes leaders make when dealing with paid and volunteer staffs, and how can leaders avoid them?

## **Mistake #1: The My-Way-or-the-Highway Attitude**

Go to any playground and you will see kids battling to be on top. We learn to play king of the hill at a young age. When that translates to ministry, it reveals itself as a top-down leadership style about command and control. This is the opposite of empowerment. "Because I said so" works with a 5-year-old, but does not carry much weight with a volunteer or staff member.

Redemptive leadership rejects the top-down attitude in favor of releasing others to fulfill their potential. This is not sending edicts down from the throne. It is about releasing and empowering others in the organization to succeed.

Two famous signs have sat on the Oval Office desk — one from Harry Truman and one from Ronald Reagan. Truman's plaque said, "The Buck Stops Here." Reagan's said, "There is no limit to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit."

There has to be a leader and the buck does stop with him, but he cannot have the top-down mentality that takes all the credit and issues edicts *ex cathedra*. A combination of both philosophies results in great team leadership.

## **Mistake #2: Putting Paperwork Before Peoplework**

As a leader, do you view people as opportunities or as interruptions? Successful leaders have developed great people skills. They have learned to manage the tension between projects and people.

And, this tension is due to the people paradox. Simply put, the greater the leadership role, the less time you have for people. However, the greater the



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Paperwork  
before  
peoplework

Absence of  
affirmation

Showing  
mavericks  
the door

My way  
or the  
highway

Practicing  
dirty  
delegation

When a leader makes these five mistakes, it takes more time and effort to get things back on track.

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leadership role, the more you need people.

Successful leaders know how to work with people, and their people skills keep them effective. The higher we travel in leadership, the more our success hinges on spending time with key staff members in the art of peoplework.

Why? Because transformation happens through association. We cannot change people if we do not spend time with them. People who do not change their minds cannot change anything. It takes face time with people to see that transformation.

### Mistake #3: The Absence of Affirmation

What could be better than a pay raise? People like salary increases, but they also need a pat on the back for a job well done. And, when you are leading volunteers, a pay raise is not a possibility.

Effective leaders realize that affirmation and encouragement motivate most people more than financial reward. A huge leadership mistake is to neglect this emotional support for those who follow us. This can become the source of high turnover in many organizations and companies. After all, discouragement is the occupational hazard of ministry.

Remember two affirmation adages.

First, everyone thrives on affirmation. Everyone likes an honest compliment. In my first full-time ministry position at one of our Assemblies of God schools, I received a card from the president when my department made a noteworthy contribution to the school's mission. I kept it in my desk to look at when things got a little tough. I try to send out cards every week to employees and volunteers to remind them that I notice their good work.

Second, we underestimate the power of affirmation. Who can you encourage in your organization today? Is there someone who could use a gift card for a job well done? How about taking someone to lunch to tell her how much you appreciate her? Do you celebrate teams and team members that bring success to the mission, or do you just move on to the next task?

### Mistake #4: Showing Mavericks the Door

Ministries have life cycles just like we do — birth through death. Think of Bill Gates and Microsoft. Gates — a maverick and a college dropout — started the organization and changed the world through the personal computer. Entrepreneurs would now consider the organization to be big, bloated, and institutionalized. It is certainly not

as nimble as a startup. This is part of the organizational life cycle — and it is dangerous.

Revolutionaries often do not know what to do when they win the revolution, so they become

**A leader who can empower others, develop people skills, learn to affirm, make room for mavericks, and practice delegating instead of dumping will be well on the way to being a positive and redemptive leader.**

ensconced in a new bureaucracy to replace the one they transformed. This happens to most organizations as they grow.

Organizations put mavericks in their place with statements like these:

- That is impossible.
- We do not do it that way here.
- We tried something like that before and it did not work.
- I wish it were that easy.
- We have a policy about that.
- When you have been around a little longer, you will understand.
- Who gave you permission to change the rules?
- How dare you suggest we are doing it wrong.
- If you had been in this field as long as I have, you would understand that what you are suggesting is absurd.
- That is too much change for us.

To be sure, a leader cannot tolerate rebels, but he cannot push mavericks out the door, either. Jesus was a maverick, and the religious leaders did not make room for Him.

Remember, mavericks can save us from becoming a monument to the past, so it is important to learn to recognize a true maverick from a rebel. Legitimate mavericks care not just for their ideas but the goals of the organization. They work for more than themselves; they work for the mission of the ministry. They make a difference in their present position, instead of just talking about what they would do if they were in charge. Finally, they are willing to earn the right to be heard as they influence others and produce good results.

### Mistake #5: Practicing Dirty Delegation

D.L. Moody said, "I'd rather get 10 men to do the

job than do the job of 10 men." If that is true, why don't leaders delegate? Often, it is the fear of losing authority — the fear that someone else will take charge of the project. Other times, it's

the fear of the work being done poorly. My rule of thumb is this: If someone can do the work at least 80 percent as well as you, then delegate it. The reverse can also be true. We can fear someone doing the work better than us. That insecurity can keep us from delegating. There are many other reasons: unwillingness to take the necessary time, fear of depending on others, lack of leadership training and positive delegation experience, and fear of losing value in the organization.

As you delegate to your team, they are asking the same four questions:

1. What am I supposed to do? (assignment)
2. Will you let me do it? (authority)
3. Will you help me when I need it? (accountability)
4. Will you let me know how I'm doing? (affirmation)

Leaders can make a lot of little-to-moderate mistakes — letting the budget get off a percentage point or two, making a verbal faux pas in a sermon, or letting board meetings run too long. But when a leader makes these five mistakes, it takes more time and effort to get things back on track. On the flipside, a leader who can empower others, develop people skills, learn to affirm, make room for mavericks, and practice delegating instead of dumping will be well on the way to being a positive and redemptive leader. 🌀



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# 80

## Valiant Men

Consider these nine traits of a valiant leader.



**M**indful of a coming sunrise, the Almighty entered Eden and began taking inventory. He was short two humans and one apple. Also missing was the former atmosphere of uninhibited communion between himself and His creation. The once pure air of Eden reeked with silence, shame, and the first ever game of hide-and-seek.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the property line separating heaven and earth. God did not create it to be crossed, yet Adam and Eve, patrons of free will, chose to hop the fence and pluck the forbidden fruit.

God quickly called those responsible to step forward. The man got sweat. The woman contractions. The snake, because he was the instigator, received his sentence in three stages. First he would lose his legs. Next he would lose the keys. Finally, he would lose it all. In other words, on the eighth day God created ... accountability.

**Every leader needs his inner circle to be courageous. Offering more than the voice of reason, a leader must hear at times the voice of restraint.**

For nearly six millennia after the Garden collapse, the human race has limped along with its usual cycle of battles, bloodshed, plagues, and broken promises. Occasionally, a young boy grew to become a prophet with the grandeur of revival, only to discover that like those who came before him, he was prophesying to deaf ears and divided hearts.

Running parallel to the prophets were promising new kings who would take power and attempt to govern by virtue instead of aggression. But time and again, like the prophets, they found themselves leading hardened nations who opted out for stone deities

instead of a living and loving God.

King Uziah was such a king. Sixteen is a rare starting point in life. While you and I found ourselves driving our first car at 16, Uziah found himself behind the wheel of a nation. His exploits were jaw dropping. His military moves were the envy of kings. But like many successful people, Uziah became proud and presumptuous. Feeling the strength of personal sovereignty, Uziah crossed the boundaries of God's laws and entered the temple to burn incense — a role strictly reserved for priests.

Bursting through the temple doors was Azariah the priest along with "eighty priests of the Lord, valiant men. They opposed Uziah the king and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary'" (2 Chronicles 26:17, 18, NASB').

Gutsy, to say the least. More than a voice of reason, these friends of the Lord and Uziah spoke with the voice of restraint. Every leader needs someone who



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will love enough to speak valiantly (courageously) into his or her life and circumstances. Certainly, no leader needs a reckless and selfishly ambitious person in his ear hindering his leadership. This is not the mission of this encouragement. Instead, we need a valiant voice or two with both God's reputation and ours at heart.

The motive of these 80 priests is simple. As valiant men, they wanted Uzziah to remain valiant as well. Success breeds many ills; one main contagion is presumption. It makes a leader self-believe that he is innately right about anything and everything, that he can trust his every impulse. Yet, we see that the course chosen by Uzziah was anything but trustworthy. In this case, God's grace came through accountability and the hope of 80 valiant men. Sadly, Uzziah became enraged with the thought of having to give account for his behavior. That rage cost Uzziah everything. It will in any man's life.

I recently spoke to group of leaders about this passage and the personal hope I have for staying valiant for lifetime. I listed nine traits I have noticed throughout the last 30 years about valiant leaders and the valiant voices they offer.

When it comes to valiant leadership, I foremost want to be one. Equally important though, may I hear one when he speaks up on behalf of God. Here is what it takes to be a valiant leader:

**A valiant leader is passionate.** He has become the change he seeks. He operates in the intuitive gifts God has given him. He loves inspiring those around him to become their best and live out their design. He balances well a life of passion and practical living.

**A valiant leader loves God every day.** He does the things that matter most. His love for the Word of God and Bible study runs deep and is a habit for which others know him. He has sensitivity to God's presence and a prayer life to prove it. He desires greater faith and builds that desire through fasting.

**A valiant leader has great friendships.** Just like Jesus, he loves all men the same. He never imparts stigmas. Instead, he implores the world around to build lasting connections. He develops friendships with other men inside a committed circle. Yet, his sphere of friendships reaches into the marketplace. He always has a place in his heart for new men.

**A valiant leader rules his spirit.** He is a man

of grace not impulse. He never raises his voice to manipulate or coerce the emotions of another. He exercises respect for others in the marketplace. Integrity is the mark of his private life.

**A valiant leader loves to serve.** He is humble and sees the value of little things. He uses his gifts and passions to serve others apart from his professional duties. He pitches in to help a neighbor in need. No assignment is beneath him.

**A valiant leader lives generously.** He sees money as the test of gratitude and trust. He returns to the Lord God's tithes and offerings. He is intentional with his finances and commitments. He prepares for the future by saving money.

**A valiant leader shares his faith.** He is on mission no matter where he is. He is never embarrassed or ashamed of Jesus. He looks for ways to bring other men to his church. He takes time in the marketplace to pray for people.

**A valiant leader loves his church.** The church is a key part of his life. For the valiant pastor, the church is not his office, but a house of worship, learning, and serving. He prays regularly for other leaders and their families. He speaks well of them and handles conflict biblically. He invests his own personal resources in the church's vision before he asks others to do so.

**A valiant leader loves his family.** His passion for God and life begins at home. He shapes and resources the dreams of his family. He prepares for their future possibilities. He celebrates their unique gifts, talents, and relationships. He sees marriage is a gift, not a grind.

The tragic fact is this: Uzziah died a leper. An untouchable. An outcast. Though surrounded by valiant men, Uzziah died lonely and mostly forgotten — a physical fugitive. His obituary might have read "king," but his eulogy said "fool." Uzziah could have avoided such an end had he been just one more thing — teachable.

Stay valiant, friends. It will take you farther than staying relevant. ☺

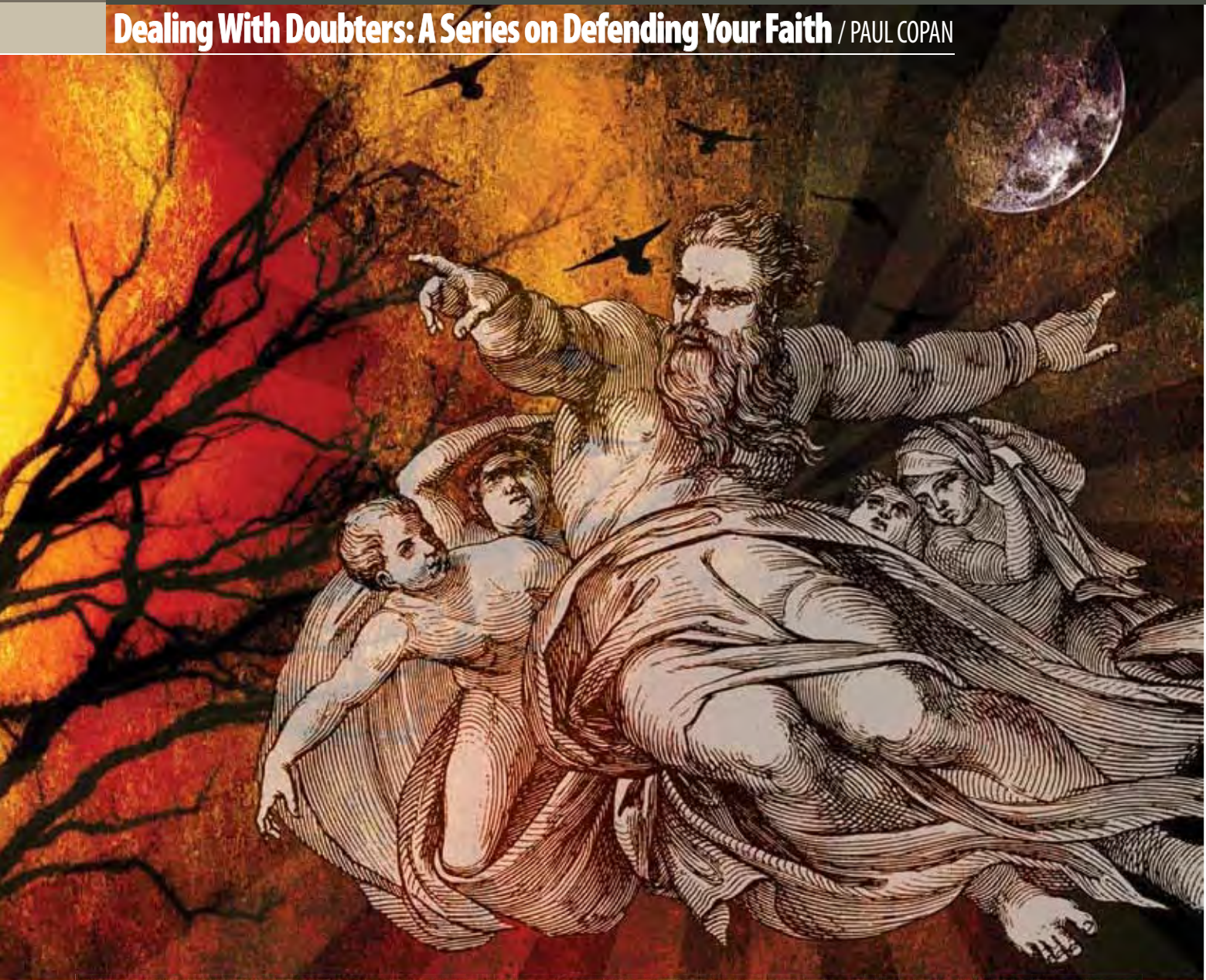


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#### NOTE

1. Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission (www.Lockman.org).





# If God Made the Universe, Who Made God?

Is it philosophically incoherent to say that something could be eternally existent and uncaused?

## Introduction

In his 1927 essay, “Why I Am Not a Christian,” atheist Bertrand Russell reflected on our origins. If we ask, “Who made me?” then we should also ask, “Who made God?” Russell concluded: “If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause.”<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, Cambridge physicist Stephen Hawking asks about what got the universe going, what makes the universe continue to exist, and what theory could unify everything. He then muses: “Or does [the universe] need a creator; and, if so, does he have any other effect on the universe? And who created him?”<sup>2</sup>

New atheist Daniel Dennett argues similarly — and sarcastically: “If God created and designed all these wonderful things, who created God? Supergod? And who created Supergod? Or did God create himself? Was it hard work? Did it take time? Don’t ask!”<sup>3</sup>

Children commonly ask, “Who made God?” or “Where did God come from?” but supposedly



sophisticated philosophers and scientists should know better. There is nothing philosophically incoherent with the idea that something could be eternally existent and uncaused. So let's explore this topic.

## The Universe Is Not Eternal; It Began To Exist

Christians know that the universe began to exist because the Bible tells us so: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). But mainstream scientific explanations of the universe seem to teach the same thing. Whether or not you agree with its implications for the age of the earth, the standard Big Bang theory affirms that the universe — physical time, space, matter, and energy — came into existence roughly 13.7 billion years ago.\* Three key reasons support this.

First, the universe is expanding — a phenomenon detected by red-shifted stars — that indicates they are moving away from us. As we backtrack in time, we see the universe moving back toward a definite starting point.

Second, energy is spreading out — an indication that the universe is winding down (the second law of thermodynamics), implying it has been wound up and is not eternal.

Third, the static noise you hear on untuned radios or TVs is the hissing sound of the Big Bang — what we call cosmic microwave background radiation. These three discoveries strongly support Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."<sup>4</sup>

The universe *has not* always been around — whether as a static (or "steady state") universe, an eternally oscillating (expanding and contracting) universe, or infinite number of universes ("multiverses," for which we have no scientific evidence anyway).<sup>5</sup> What's more, even naturalistic scientists acknowledge — even if grudgingly — the universe's absolute beginning. Astrophysicists John Barrow and Joseph Silk state: "Our new picture is more akin to the traditional metaphysical picture of creation out of nothing, for it predicts a definite beginning to events in time, indeed a definite beginning to time itself."<sup>6</sup> Nobel Prize-winning physicist Stephen Weinberg remarked that the now-rejected "steady state theory [which views the universe as eternally existent] is philosophically the most

attractive theory because it *least* resembles the account given in Genesis."<sup>7</sup> Michael S. Turner acknowledged in *Scientific American*: there "once" was "no previous era" and that "[m]atter, energy, space, and time began abruptly with a bang."<sup>8</sup> Barrow and Silk ask: "What preceded the event called the 'big bang'? . . . the answer to our question is simple: nothing."<sup>9</sup>

## Something Cannot Come From Nothing

"From nothing, nothing comes" — or, if you like the fancier-sounding Latin, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Skeptics would universally assume this principle were it not for the fact the universe's beginning sounds much like Genesis 1:1 — and a personal Creator to whom we are responsible. A lot of naturalists are hoping for a metaphysical "free lunch" — something from nothing — but this often seems to be a God-avoidance technique.



But let us get clear: *Nothing* does not mean "unobservable entities like subatomic particles"; it means *no thing*. Being cannot come from nonbeing since nonbeing has absolutely *no potentiality* to produce anything. The chances of *any thing* coming from absolute nothingness are zero. Popular science writer and physicist Paul Davies says: "We don't have too much choice": either the Big Bang was produced by "something outside of the physical world," or it is "an event without a cause."<sup>10</sup>

Metaphysics is *the study of ultimate reality*. An obvious metaphysical principle is that being cannot come into existence from nonbeing (nothing). Even the 18th-century Scottish skeptic David Hume called this something-from-nothing idea "absurd."<sup>11</sup> Atheist philosopher Kai Nielsen affirms what we all know: "Suppose you hear a loud bang . . . and you ask me, 'What made that bang?' and I reply, 'Nothing, it just happened. You would not accept that. In fact you would find my reply quite unintelligible.'<sup>12</sup> If this is true of little bangs, then why not the Big Bang as well?

So if absolutely nothing existed in the past, then nothing would exist now — but clearly something exists now. This means something has always existed. But given what we know scientifically, a physical universe (or anything physical) could not have always existed.

Some have suggested that eternal abstract mathematical entities could be responsible for the universe's beginning. But abstract entities or ideas do not have causal power to produce something; they just do not do anything. No, we are looking at some spiritual being capable of bringing finite matter into existence.

## Whatever Begins To Exist Has a Cause

The skeptic's "Who made God?" question *falsely assumes that all existing things need causes*. But it is just not obvious that whatever exists must have a cause. What is obvious is that whatever *begins* to exist must have a cause. Theists

**There is nothing philosophically incoherent with the idea that something could be eternally existent and uncaused.**

reject that *everything* must have a cause; if they did not, they would have to believe God was caused too. We know the universe *began* to exist. It must therefore have a cause. On the other hand, the eternal and self-existent God by definition does not need a cause but is *uncaused*.

"Who made God?" *assumes atheism* — that all things, including God, must have a cause. But a caused God is no God at all, since He would be dependent on something else for His existence. This is question-begging — assuming what you want to prove. This is like saying, "All reality is physical; therefore, God cannot exist." Now, the principle "whatever that *begins to exist* has a cause" is not question-begging; it does not assume God created the universe. We can still ask, for instance, whether its cause is personal or impersonal.

## Philosophers Throughout History Have Affirmed the Coherence of Eternally Existing Things

Sadly, Bertrand Russell had a reputation for



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engaging in one adulterous relationship after another.<sup>13</sup> In addition to this *physical* cheating, he did some *metaphysical* cheating as well. Remember his alleged rejection of God because of the “who made God?” objection? Yet later in a 1948 BBC debate with Christian philosopher Frederick Copleston, Russell nonchalantly commented that the universe is “just there, and that’s all.”<sup>14</sup> Did you see what he did? He earlier rejected God because he assumed *God’s* necessary self-existence was incoherent, but he accepted the *universe’s* self-existence as perfectly coherent. And he is not the only philosopher to play such metaphysical games.

### Unlike God, the Universe (or Its Parts) Could Easily Not Have Existed

Why does *anything* exist at all? Here it helps to distinguish between necessary and contingent being. A contingent being (a) requires something outside itself to cause (or actualize) its existence; (b) is sustained by something else; (c) is finite; and (d) is an intermediate explanation. By contrast, a necessary being’s own *nature* is the sufficient reason for its own existence; it is (a) uncaused, (b) self-sustaining, (c) eternal, and (d) ultimate.<sup>16</sup> By definition, God *has* to exist in all possible worlds. As a necessary being, God cannot *not* exist.

By contrast, there is no reason to think the

is in a distinct category from the rest of reality. To put God in the contingent category is like asking, “How does the color green taste?” or “What flavor is middle C?” God, *by definition*, is an uncaused, necessary (noncontingent) being. God should not be blamed for being noncontingent. To get clear, let’s reword “Who made God?” to “*What caused the self-existent, uncaused Cause — who is by definition unmakeable — to exist?*” The question answers itself.

### Two Lingering Questions

*Is it not baffling that something could be eternally existent?* Well, certain realities — such as logical laws or mathematical truths are clearly uncaused — and, we could argue, are rooted in God’s rational nature. For instance, the statement “ $2+2=4$ ” did not *become* true a finite time ago. So if this is true, why could not we say the same about God himself?

*And how could a perfect, maximally great being just “happen” to exist?* We could reply that skeptics face a more difficult challenge — a precisely tuned universe beginning from nothing. That is, how could a *perfectly tuned universe* spring into being — with its precise mass, expansion-rate, proton-electron ratio, electromagnetic force-gravity ratio, and many more delicately balanced conditions for biological life built in from the outset? Rather than opting for a *chance* universe *from nothing* that produces homo sapiens with *absolutely*



**Children commonly ask, “Who made God?” or “Where did God come from?” but supposedly sophisticated philosophers and scientists should know better.**

We have observed that the “Who made God?” objection assumes atheism. What is more, many of the world’s great thinkers from Plato and Aristotle onward believed that matter or the universe was eternal and needed no explanation for its existence. Now that we know the universe began to exist a finite time ago, why then could not an eternally existent God be its cause? As Dallas Willard observes, “an eternally self-subsistent being is no more improbable than a self-subsistent event emerging from no cause.”<sup>15</sup> In fact, before the Big Bang became a well-established theory, atheists and skeptics themselves — including Russell — believed the universe is eternal and therefore does not need a cause. But even so, *no one* could reasonably accept that something could pop into existence uncaused, out of nothing (as we saw with David Hume). But now that contemporary science supports the universe’s beginning, many nontheists squirm at the possible theistic implications of this fact; they would rather opt for its being uncaused or (somehow) self-caused.

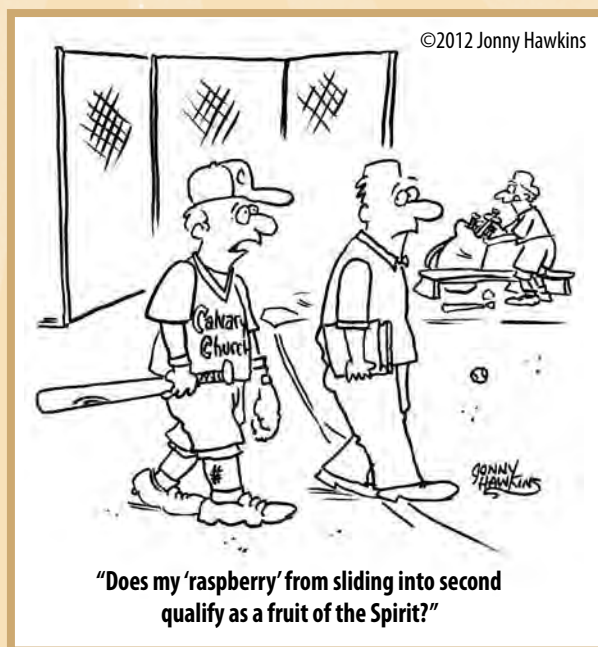
Whether it is the universe, God, or some other “Absolute” or “Ultimate,” many brilliant minds holding diverse philosophical views have considered an eternal, self-existent entity to be quite coherent.

universe has to exist — that it is a necessary being. Neither the universe as a whole nor any of its entire members *has* to exist. If the universe is winding down and is not eternal, then it is reasonable to ask: “On what does the *universe* depend?”

We have seen that the universe could not pop into existence uncaused from nothing. And why a *universe*? Why not *elephants* or *pianos* popping into existence uncaused? No, whether we are atheists or theists, we take for granted that for anything that exists (whether contingent or necessary), there is a sufficient reason for its existence.<sup>17</sup>

### “Who Made God?” Commits the Category Fallacy

We have seen that “Who made God?” begs the question, assuming what one wants to prove — namely, that all things must be contingent (dependent) entities. But God





*no margin for error*, an intelligent powerful necessary Cause behind this fine-tuning sounds far more plausible.

At some point, we will need to arrive at an ultimate stopping-point to intermediate explanations. If scientists allowed for an infinite series of explanations, scientific progress itself would be crippled. Clearly, the universe is not that ultimate, necessary explanation. As a necessary being, however, a self-sufficient God turns out to be the most suitable — and final — explanation for all reality outside himself. ☺



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\* The Assemblies of God takes no official position on the age of the earth (See AG Position Paper, "The Doctrine of Creation" at [http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position\\_Papers/index.cfm](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position_Papers/index.cfm)) but allows authors freedom to advocate positions on this issue based on their own study of the Bible and the relevant scientific evidence. A forthcoming issue of *Enrichment* on faith and science will include a debate between young earth and old earth authors.

## More Valuable Than Sparrows: Measuring Human Worth



The Bible first defines  
*who* determines worth,  
then defines *what* determines worth.

**T**o reassure parishioners that God cares about the details of their lives, most pastors at some point have quoted Matthew 10:29–31, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

A reminder that we are valuable in the eyes of God can bring comfort and perspective in the midst of life’s difficulties. Yet these familiar verses also undergird the essence of Christian bioethics. Bioethics largely concerns decisions about human life at its margins. When does a very young human life acquire moral status? Can an accident or illness incapacitate a person to the degree that he loses this moral status? Does the worth of human life change during different developmental stages?

Bioethics also concerns balancing the needs of the individual with the needs of society. Is the worth of human life proportional to the potential contribution of a person to society? Is human life unique from all other forms of life?

What we believe as the basis for human worth determines our answers to many practical decisions and influences the policies we craft through our government. In this article I address how we should measure human worth by examining the biblical answer alongside various contemporary philosophical approaches.

### Defining What Determines Worth

Before we can measure human worth and compare this worth to the moral value of other life forms, we

must first define what determines worth. The Bible first defines *who* determines worth, and then it defines *what* determines worth. The One who cares when a sparrow falls to the ground and numbers the strands of hair on the head of each person is the One who sets the value of every living creature.

The Bible sets humans apart from animals because humans alone bear the image of God (*Imago Dei*). The concept of the *Imago Dei* includes both the way in which we reflect God’s nature as humans as well as God’s love for humanity. Since the *Imago Dei* determines the worth of human beings, the moral value of a human life is intrinsic, and we do not base it on certain functions and capabilities that an individual possesses.

The United States Declaration of Independence follows a similar logic: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The signers of the Declaration of Independence believed the worth of an individual and the rights that this worth accords as intrinsic to humans — a gift given by their Creator.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, without specifically mentioning a Creator, echoes the Declaration of Independence in acknowledging the intrinsic worth of human beings: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

In contrast to the biblical view of human worth, a utilitarian perspective on human worth determines moral value based on capabilities such as rationality and self-awareness. Peter Singer, professor of bioethics at Princeton University, proposes that we define moral value based on a set of characteristics that a human or other creature must possess to be considered a person worthy of rights.<sup>1</sup>

### Assigning Greater Worth to Humans

If we believe that moral value arises from a set of characteristics that an individual must possess, then we cannot arbitrarily consider human life as unique from other animal life. Peter Singer and



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other utilitarian philosophers would consider such an approach an example of “speciesism.” If human life is on a continuum with other animal life, then we might consider certain animals as persons with moral value, and we might consider certain members of the human species nonpersons. If we use self-awareness as determined by the mirror test (a measure of self-awareness to see if animals either possess or lack the ability to recognize themselves in a mirror) as a criterion for personhood status, then orcas, bottlenose dolphins, elephants, European magpies, and the great apes such as bonobos, common chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans qualify, but a

This worth cannot be lost or diminished by age, disease, or traumatic event.

According to the Bible, humans have a spirit as well as a body. This confers value and identity beyond any condition and any developmental stage of the human body or the measure of mental capacity. As spiritual beings made in the image of God, God has set apart humans as different from animals, with a worth “more than many sparrows.”

S. Matthew Liao, clinical associate professor of bioethics at New York University, set forth a philosophical approach that uses empirical means to arrive at the conclusion that all humans possess moral value while avoiding “speciesism.” He defines

genetic endowment. Yet this definition of moral value encompasses all humans.

### Valuing the Sparrow

Utilitarian philosophers succeed in raising awareness of the need to treat all sentient beings well. While the Bible affirms the greater value of humans who are uniquely made in the image of God, the Bible also teaches that God values the sparrow. Matthew 10:29 informs us that God notices when a sparrow falls to the ground, with this event occurring only in concurrence with His will. As Christians, we need to respect all life as God’s creatures, treating them humanely. As Proverbs 12:10 states, “The righteous care for the needs of their animals.”

While Genesis 1:26 teaches that God gave mankind dominion over the rest of the animals, we must be careful to remember that humans have a stewardship role over creation (Genesis 2:15). We honor God, the Creator of both man and animals, when we properly care for His creation. Embracing the sanctity of human life need not devalue the worth of animals.

Pastors can help counter the influence of philosophical views of human worth that conflict with biblical teaching and diffuse misunderstandings regarding man’s dominion and Christian stewardship. The same Bible verses often used to bring spiritual comfort also teach us the value of life, the need for compassion, and the nature of our human existence.

How we measure human worth impacts our sensitivity to human rights, our health care policies, and our approach to medical research. By laying a firm theological foundation, pastors can equip parishioners to think carefully and Christianly about the important ethical issues our society is currently debating. ☺

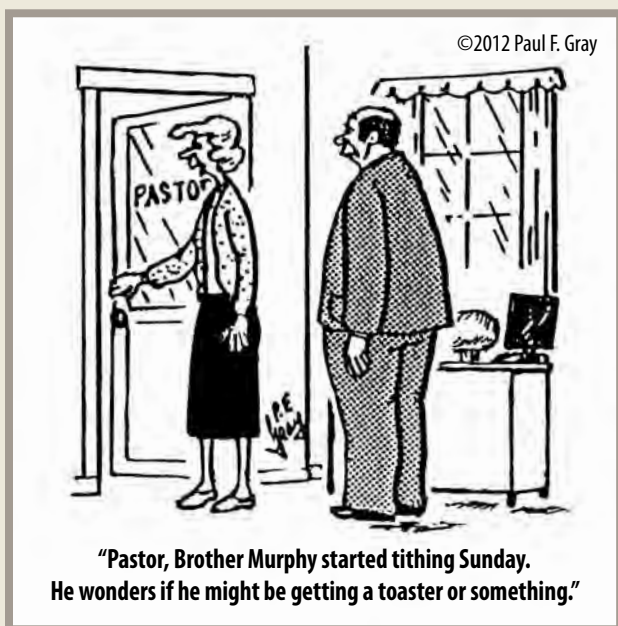
## By laying a firm theological foundation, pastors can equip parishioners to think carefully and Christianly about the important ethical issues our society is currently debating.

human child would not qualify until reaching the age of about 18 months.

If we base moral value on self-awareness, then the worth of an individual would change during different developmental stages, and he could lose it through an incapacitating accident or illness. The biblical view of human worth, based on intrinsic value, provides an unchanging measure of human worth throughout an individual’s life.

moral value by whether or not a creature possesses a “genetic basis for moral agency.”<sup>2</sup> He describes moral agency as the capacity to act in light of moral reasons. This capacity is not a behavioral trait nor should we confuse it with rational agency — the ability to act intentionally. Possessing this capacity does not guarantee that an individual will choose to act morally all the time or at all.

By this definition, all humans possess this genetic basis for moral agency even if their developmental stage prevents them from fully exercising such moral agency. An aged, ill, or injured human does not lose this genetic basis for moral agency even if he loses his ability to exercise it. A definition of moral value based on possessing a genetic basis for moral agency does not arbitrarily draw the line of worth at the human species, leaving room for the potential discovery of other creatures with a similar



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### NOTES

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## New Crib Rules Will Impact Most Churches

**“We strive to ensure that a crib is the safest place for an infant or toddler to sleep.”** — CPSC Commissioner Tenenbaum

Does your church have cribs in your nursery? Do you operate a child care center that has cribs? If you answered yes to either question, there are new federal regulations that apply to you — and, unfamiliarity with them could lead to substantial penalties and civil lawsuits that may implicate not only your church, but your church board as well. This article explains the new regulations and their impact on church practices.

### Background

Baby cribs have contributed to numerous deaths and injuries due to faulty design and construction. This prompted the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in 1973 to issue regulations addressing crib safety. But the regulations did not eliminate the problem, as evidenced by the fact the CPSC has recalled more than 11 million dangerous cribs since 2007.

Because of the continuing risk associated with baby cribs and other infant and toddler products, Congress enacted the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) in 2008, which required the CPSC to establish enhanced safety standards for infant and toddler products. The CPSC responded by voting unanimously to approve the first revisions to the crib safety

regulations in nearly 40 years.

The new regulations not only mandate new safety standards in the manufacture and sale of cribs, but they also impose requirements on most child care centers. The regulations become effective in two stages:

### June 28, 2011 — Safer Cribs

Beginning June 28, 2011, all cribs sold in the United States must meet the following requirements in the new regulations:

1. Traditional drop-side cribs cannot be made or sold; immobilizers and repair kits cannot be used to rehabilitate a noncompliant crib. The regulations prohibit any person to whom the CPSIA applies to “manufacture, sell, contract to sell or resell, lease, sublet,

offer, provide for use, or otherwise place in the stream of commerce a crib that is not in compliance” with the new standards. The CPSIA states that it applies to any person that: (A) “manufactures, distributes in commerce, or contracts to sell cribs”; (B) “holds itself out as having knowledge or skill peculiar to cribs, including child care facilities and family child care homes”; and (C) “owns or operates a place of public accommodation.”

2. Wood slats must be made of stronger wood to prevent breakage.
3. Crib hardware must have anti-loosening devices to keep it from coming loose or falling off.
4. Mattress supports must be more durable.
5. Safety testing must be more rigorous.

Does this regulation apply to churches? Yes, if they sell or otherwise dispose of noncompliant cribs on or after June 28, 2011. This is so even if the church does not meet the definitions of a “child care facility” or “place of public



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accommodation," since the regulations apply to any entity that sells, offers, provides for use, or otherwise places a crib in the stream of commerce regardless of its status as a child care facility or place of public accommodation.

**Example.** A church has four drop-side cribs in its nursery that are used during worship services. Church staff is aware of the new CPSC crib regulations and would like to voluntarily replace their noncompliant cribs with cribs that comply with the regulations. The church donates its four cribs to a small church that needs them. While the donor church is not a "child care facility" because it does not offer child care services for a fee (see below), it is subject to the new regulations as a result of its donation of the noncompliant cribs to the other church. The regulations prohibit any person to whom the CPSIA applies to "offer, provide for use, or otherwise place in the stream of commerce a crib that is not in compliance" with the new standards. The CPSIA states that it applies to any person that "distributes [cribs] in commerce," and this is what the church did by donating its cribs to the other church. Note that donating the noncompliant cribs not only will violate the regulations, but also will

expose the church to a risk of liability should a child be injured or killed in the donee church since the donation of noncompliant cribs could be viewed as negligence. In addition, if a jury determines that the church's donation of noncompliant cribs constitutes gross negligence, this could result in punitive damages (not covered by the church's general liability insurance policy) and may expose members of the church's governing board to personal liability since state and federal laws immunizing uncompensated board members of nonprofit corporations do not apply to directors' gross negligence.

If the sale or donation of noncompliant cribs violates the new regulations and exposes a church to civil liability, how should a church dispose of noncompliant cribs? The CPSC answers this question as follows: "All child care facilities, family child care homes, and places of public accommodation ... must prepare to replace their current cribs with new, compliant cribs before December 28, 2012 [and] should not resell, donate or give away a crib that does not meet the new crib standards. ... [They should] dispose of older, noncompliant cribs in a manner that the cribs cannot be reassembled and used. Noncompliant cribs should not be resold through online auction sites or donated to local thrift stores. CPSC recommends disassembling the crib before discarding it."

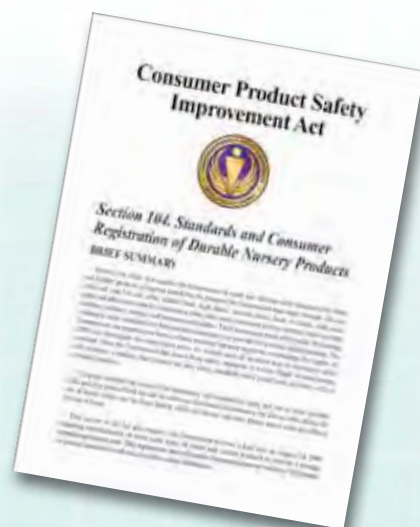
If your church purchased a crib prior to the June 28, 2011, effective date and you are unsure if it meets the new federal standards, CPSC recommends that you verify that the crib meets the standards by asking for proof. Ask the manufacturer, retailer, or distributor to show a Certificate of Compliance. The document must:

- Describe the product.
- Give name, full mailing address and telephone number for importer or domestic manufacturer.
- Give name, full mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number for the records keeper and location of testing lab.
- Give date and location of manufacture and testing.

Also, note that the crib must have a label attached with the date of manufacture, and this will help in determining if it was manufactured on or after June 28, 2011 (the date the new crib safety regulations took effect).

### December 28, 2012 — Mandatory Replacement

Another key requirement of the new regulations takes effect on December 28, 2012. On and after



**The new regulations not only mandate new safety standards in the manufacture and sale of cribs, but they also impose requirements on most child care centers.**

that date any crib that is used by a *child care facility* must meet the new and improved federal safety standards. The law does not define the term "child care facility," but the CPSC (which will enforce the new standards) has clarified that "we consider a child care facility to mean a nonresidential setting that provides child care services (which could include early learning opportunities) for a fee." The CPSC website addresses the application of this definition to churches as follows: "The CPSIA does not provide any exclusion for churches. If a church operates a child care facility, the cribs that it provides must comply with CPSC's crib standards."

Given the language in the CPSIA, we consider a child care facility to be one that provides services for a fee. If volunteers take care of children during a church service without pay, we do not consider that arrangement to be a child care facility, and cribs used under such an arrangement would not be subject to CPSC's crib standards.

This definition illustrates that a church child care facility subject to the new crib regulations is one that *provides child care services for a fee*. In addition, it clarifies that a church nursery that operates during worship services, that does not



## Churches that continue to use noncompliant cribs face an array of risks.

charge a fee for its services, and that does not compensate workers, is not a child care facility subject to the new regulations.

**Example.** A church has a child care center with 10 cribs that it operates each weekday. Parents pay a fee to enroll their children in the center, and the center is staffed by compensated employees. This facility meets both of the CPSC's definitions of a "child care facility," and so it must begin using compliant cribs no later than December 28, 2012.

**Example.** A church does not offer child care services to parents for a fee but does have four drop-side cribs in its nursery that are used during worship services and are staffed by uncompensated, volunteer workers. Since no fee is charged for nursery services, and workers are not compensated, the nursery would not be a "child care facility" under either of the CPSC definitions (quoted above) and cribs used under such an arrangement would not be subject to CPSC's crib standards. However, the church is not off the hook. Its continued use of noncompliant cribs exposes it to a risk of liability should a child be injured or killed since the continued use of noncompliant cribs despite the CPSC's widely publicized warnings could be viewed as negligence. In addition, if a jury determines that the church's use of noncompliant cribs constitutes gross negligence, this could result in punitive damages (not covered by the church's general liability insurance policy) and may expose members of the church's governing board to personal liability since state and federal laws immunizing uncompensated board members of

nonprofit corporations from personal liability do not apply to directors' gross negligence.

**Key point.** Before and after the regulations prohibiting child care facilities from using noncompliant cribs take effect on December 28, 2012, parents will likely ask church staff questions regarding the church's compliance with the new regulations. Obviously, informing parents that the church has decided to continue its use of noncompliant cribs because it does not offer child care for a fee and therefore does not meet the definition of a "child care facility" subject to the new regulations is not going to be a satisfactory response for most members. The same is true for parents visiting the church. Will they be attracted to the church or repelled by the church's conscious and intentional decision to expose infants to risk as a means of saving the cost of voluntarily replacing noncompliant cribs?

### The Risks of Noncompliance

Churches that continue to use noncompliant cribs face an array of risks, including the following:

- Substantial penalties under the Consumer Product Safety Act of up to \$100,000 per noncompliant crib.
- Compensatory damages in a civil lawsuit in the event that a child is killed or injured as a result of a defective and noncompliant crib.
- Punitive damages in a civil lawsuit in the event that a child is killed or injured as a result of a defective and noncompliant crib. These damages can be substantial, and they are not covered by a church's general liability

insurance policy since such coverage generally is deemed to be contrary to public policy.

- Personal liability of members of the church's governing board who approved the use of noncompliant cribs in the event that a child is killed or injured as a result of a defective and noncompliant crib, since the immunity from liability under state and federal law for uncompensated board members of nonprofit corporations does not extend to gross negligence.

A church's general liability insurance policy may contain an exclusion barring coverage for claims resulting from deaths and injuries caused by a defective product.

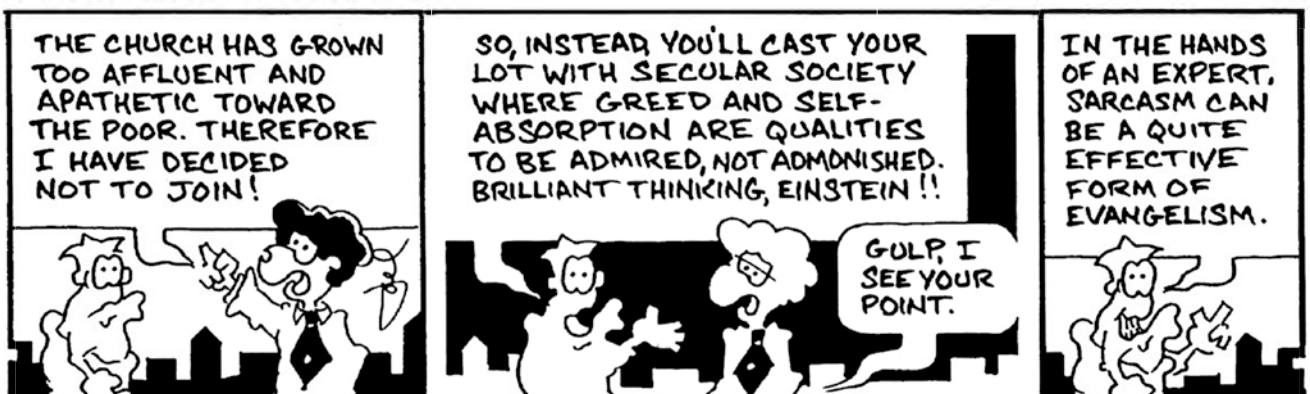
It is important for church leaders to understand that all of these risks except the first one apply equally to churches that do not offer child care for a fee and therefore are not "child care facilities" subject to the new crib regulations. As a result, church leaders should not permit noncompliant cribs to be used in a church nursery or child care facility regardless of whether the church satisfies the definition of a child care facility. Churches that continue to use noncompliant cribs, both before and after December 28, 2012, not only are jeopardizing the health and life of infants, but are also exposing themselves, and potentially members of the church board, to substantial liability. ☞



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## Pontius' Puddle

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## We Have a High-Needs Child



**Q** My husband and I have two children. We are in youth ministry and have moved halfway across the country from our closest family. Our second child has always been difficult, but recently his behavioral issues have become hard to handle. Upon the doctor's recommendation we had him tested. He was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. His case is not severe, but it is significant enough to qualify for intervention and assistance.

The people at church do not seem to understand this disorder. People, including the senior pastor and leadership, are becoming impatient with him and critical of the way I respond to him. A few people have implied that I should just be more firm with him. The final straw came when his Sunday School teacher kicked him out of class for being disruptive. This has forced me to sit in the foyer with him since he is not able to sit through the adult service. I feel alone and misunderstood.

**A** Nothing touches a parent's heart like a child who struggles. Receiving a diagnosis such as this produces grief as real as if your child had just lost a limb or an eye. It has the potential to affect every area of your son's life — including his education, his social network, and his future. Obviously, it will affect your life as well. At the same time, it is not a death sentence, and his potential in life is in no way set in stone.

Verify the diagnosis by getting a second opinion. Tests can be wrong and

over-diagnosis is not uncommon in our culture. It would be unfortunate to apply this label to your child without some significant testing and assessment.

First, become unified with your husband about this. You have not mentioned his response, but I am assuming he is processing as well. Because people grieve differently, it is not uncommon for spouses to respond in different ways. Sometimes one spouse embraces the knowledge, seeking to talk about it, read about it, and think about it, while the other handles it by avoiding the reality and resisting discussion and examining the problem. You can imagine the potential for frustration and misunderstanding with one another when this happens. Remember that neither way of responding is superior. They are simply different grief reactions. Give permission for your spouse to respond in his own way so the topic does not become one of tension and frustration between the two of you. Do comfort one another and work on making your relationship a safe place to process your feelings as much as is possible.

Your next order of business is to find a healthy support system. This is crucial to your survival and well-being. It could include other parents who also have children with behavioral issues or people in your world who are compassionate and caring in general. It could be a support group; a paid counselor; a wise mentor; a compassionate, self-educated friend; or a combination of these.

Do not underestimate the power of prayer. Because you will be dealing with ongoing stress, you will need unlimited prayer support. Enlist the prayers of intercessors who will continually lift your family and son to God. Ask them to pray for resilience, patience, and wisdom for your husband and you, healing and progress for your son, and grace for your family.

Along with your husband, consider sitting down with the senior pastor and leadership to have an honest conversation about your son's challenges. Be willing to listen nondefensively and explore solutions creatively.

When it comes to people in your everyday life and particularly those in the church, you will need to extend grace. You will find that some will understand and will show compassion and understanding toward you. Others will appear to be uncaring and naively opinionated, making



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ignorant statements about how you should handle your son's behavior. Recognize that, in most cases, they do not intend to do harm. People often speak out of their lack of knowledge and experience with these things.


## A healthy support system is crucial to your survival and well-being. It could include other parents or people who are compassionate and caring in general.

Offer resources to those who seem willing to educate themselves. Perhaps your friends, your pastor, and/or other leaders would be willing to read a book or watch a video on the topic. Make yourself available to answer questions and provide explanations nondefensively and calmly.

Regarding the Sunday School expulsion, keep in mind that your son's behavior is a dilemma for everyone. Most Sunday Schools are staffed by volunteers who are not professionals. They love children and most likely care about your son but are baffled by the challenge of teaching a class while he acts out. You, more than anyone, know the challenge of directing your child's behavior. Do not be too harsh in condemning those who are unable to assist

him or are reluctant to try. If a door closes, pray about your other options.

- Could you attend class with your son to monitor his behavior? Would your husband or a friend alternate with you so you could occasionally attend adult services?
- Maybe another parent would trade special-needs child care with you so you would not be stuck in the foyer 100 percent of the time. Would the church partially pay for his care during services?
- Is God calling you to start a special-needs class?
- Could you sit through a portion of the service with your child, finding ways to redirect and channel him for a shorter time so you can at least partially participate?

You are facing a life challenge that could well be stressful and unrelenting at times. God's grace will need to be an everyday part of your life and being. At the same time, your child is a gift from God, loved by God with amazing purpose for his life. Every day find God's gifts to celebrate and, together with your family and loved ones, rejoice in each victory. 



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## ■ The Word Made Flesh

KENNETH D. BARNEY

TEXT: John 1:1–14

### INTRODUCTION

When Jesus was on earth, there was much controversy and misunderstanding about who He was. Some thought of Him only as “the carpenter’s son” (Matthew 13:55). Others thought He was John the Baptist risen from the dead or some other prophet who had come back to earth (Matthew 16:13, 14). Today there is still confusion over who Jesus is. The answer has been staring humanity in the face for nearly 20 centuries: Jesus is who He has always claimed to be, the One the Scriptures proclaim Him to be.

### MESSAGE

#### 1. The Word in Eternity

- “In the beginning” (John 1:1) reminds us of Genesis 1:1. While Matthew and Luke focus on Jesus’ birth at Bethlehem (making very clear He was born of a virgin), the Holy Spirit inspired John to take us into the eternity of the past. When no earth had been created, when there were no angelic hosts, the Word was.
- “With God” literally means “face-to-face with God.” He was God. He was what the Nicene Creed states: “of the substance of the Father, God of God and Light of Light, very God of very God.”
- The mighty act of creation is attributed to the Word. Nothing was made without Him. The writer to the Hebrews enlarged powerfully on this truth in Hebrews 1:1–12.
- The Word is the source of life and light (John 1:4). This could be said of no mere man, however holy.
- Jesus himself bore witness to John’s proclamation in this passage: John 8:56–58.

#### 2. The Word in Time

- “Became” refers to an event, not a process (John 1:14). This is how John described the miracle of the Incarnation, the details of which the Holy Spirit fills in for us through Luke’s pen (Luke 1:26–35).

- “Dwelt among us” (John 1:14) literally means “tabernacled among us” or “pitched His tent among us.” This is why He was given the prophetic name, Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). “Us” refers to a world of sinners, a fallen human race, but God loved sinners so much He did not hesitate to step down to earth to share our human experiences (except our sins).
- From time to time Jesus’ followers were made to realize He was not an ordinary man, even though their understanding was imperfect and sometimes confused. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that He was the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). John could write, “We beheld His glory” because he remembered being present on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–8). A doubting disciple confessed Him as “my Lord and my God” after seeing Him in His resurrection body (John 20:28).
- He not only taught about “grace and truth,” He embodied them. He was “full of grace and truth” (verse 14). In Him people saw the grace that could save them from their sins and the truth that revealed the Father fully.

### CONCLUSION

We do not have to defend the miracle of the Incarnation. We need only to proclaim it. It is the solid rock on which God’s whole redemptive plan is built. Storms have beat upon the rock through the centuries, but the rock still stands while its enemies are long forgotten.

## ■ I Believe in Jesus Christ

TERRY L. TERRELL, Sparta, Wisconsin

### INTRODUCTION

I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe He came to this earth to provide for the salvation of mankind. I believe He comes to all who believe on Him as Savior to provide salvation and to abide through the Holy Spirit. I believe He is coming again to take believers to an everlasting heaven.

To do all this, Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, became our substitute on the cross of Calvary, was bodily resurrected from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God the Father. Let’s examine what the Scriptures say about these truths.

### MESSAGE

#### 1. Jesus was born of a virgin.

- Prophesied (Isaiah 7:14).
- Proclaimed by an angel (Matthew 1:23).
- Named Son of God, Jesus, Savior (Isaiah 49:1; Luke 1:31, 35).
- Named for the work He would perform (Isaiah 9:6).
- No other name can provide our salvation (Acts 4:12).

#### 2. Jesus lived a sinless life.

- Exposed to same temptations we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).
- By virtue of this, He became our High Priest, opening up access to God for us (Hebrews 7:26).
- Secret of His sinless life and example for us was the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Him (Isaiah 11:2).

#### 3. Jesus performed miracles.

- Prophesied by Isaiah (42:1, 7; 61:1, 2).



- b. Declared by apostles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- c. Still performs miracles — everlasting “I will” (Mark 1:41; Hebrews 13:8).

#### 4. Jesus became our substitute on Calvary’s cross.

- a. The sinless Lamb of God endured agony and death on our behalf (Isaiah 52:14; 53:2–4; Psalm 22:1,7,12–18; Matthew 27:27–50).
- b. He atoned for us — made us “at one” or joined again to God (Isaiah 53:5; Psalm 103:1–3).
  - (1) Atonement for sin (Isaiah 53:5; Psalm 103:3).
  - (2) Atonement for healing (Isaiah 53:5; Psalm 103:3).
  - (3) Atonement for peace (Isaiah 53:5; 26:3; Colossians 1:20).

#### 5. Jesus was bodily resurrected.

- a. Prophesied (Psalm 16:10).
- b. Prophecy fulfilled (Luke 24:6,7; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4).
- c. Because He was resurrected, so shall we (Isaiah 26:19).

#### 6. Jesus is exalted at God’s right hand and is coming again for us.

- a. Declared by angels and Paul (Acts 1:9,11; Philippians 2:9–11).
- b. He will return to bring believers to be with Him (Colossians 3:1–4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Hebrews 9:28).
- c. This event is to be a hope and comfort to us throughout life (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:18).

### CONCLUSION

Because I believe so completely in Jesus Christ, I have no option but to give my life to Him, declaring Him to be the eternal Son of God, my Savior and Lord. Won’t you give your life to this Jesus today?

## Calvary and Pentecost

MELVIN HODGES

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 1:23–25; 2 Corinthians 12:9,10

### INTRODUCTION

There is a relationship between Calvary and Pentecost that comes 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pentecost is Calvary’s complement. Calvary opens the way to God. God comes to us in Pentecost. The divine fire descended upon the altar. We need not only Pentecost, but the Cross plus Pentecost.

### MESSAGE

1. **The Cross is the divine intervention that gives a remedy for sin and rebellion.**
2. **The Cross crucifies self (Galatians 2:20).**
  - a. Peter was self-confident. When he humbled himself and sought God, he was baptized with Pentecostal power.
  - b. The Cross signifies the surrender of human will. “Not my will but Thine be done” power requires accepting divine direction.
3. **The Cross demonstrates pardon.**
  - a. “Father, forgive them.”
  - b. We must watch our own spirits.
  - c. Have a redemptive attitude.
4. **The Cross is the triumph of love.**
  - a. When we were enemies.
  - b. God’s love reaches out to all humanity — no one excluded.

## The Recasting of Man

CLANCY P. HAYES

TEXT: Romans 12:1–21

### INTRODUCTION

(Read verse 2 from the Phillips translation.) Man is affected by the society in which he lives. Mass media, schools, music, and even one’s church help form the way a person approaches life. In this passage, Paul argued that when we are recast in Christ’s image, our approach to life is radically different from that mandated by the world.

### MESSAGE

#### 1. The whole man (verses 1,2).

- a. God wants the body and mind of each Christian.
  - (1) Platonism (correct thinking equals salvation).
  - (2) Epicureanism (salvation comes through bodily activities — pleasure).
- b. God wants to be master of the inward attitude as well as the outward.

#### 2. The way we view ourselves (verses 3-8).

- a. Balanced view of self (verse 3).
  - (1) Not too highly (competition).
  - (2) Not too lowly (associating self-worth with abilities or inabilities).
  - (3) Based on who God is, what He has given you, and how it is used.
- b. Seeing ourselves as a part of something bigger (verses 4,5).
  - (1) Purpose greater than personal gain.
  - (2) Belong to the Body universal.
- c. Uniquely gifted (verses 6–8).
  - (1) Exercise gifts in His strength.
  - (2) Exercise gifts with satisfaction.
  - (3) Exercise gifts with confidence.

#### 3. The way we treat others (verses 9–21).

- a. Kind (verse 10).
- b. Others’ welfare first (verse 10).
- c. Excitement for His work (verse 11).
- d. Light in dark circumstances through prayer (verse 12).
- e. Help others in need (verse 13).
- f. Love those who hate us (verses 14–20).

#### 4. The core of personality (verse 21).

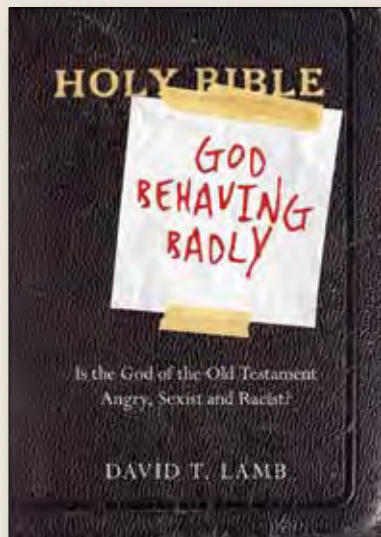
- a. Philosophical concepts to embrace (verse 9).
- b. Good and evil — active forces trying to capture the believer’s heart, soul, and mind.

### CONCLUSION

Each person will stand before God. Will you be molded in Christ’s image or the image of our culture (Romans 12:2)?



For additional sermons, visit [www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org](http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org). Look under Resources for Practical Ministry.



### God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist, and Racist?

DAVID T. LAMB (InterVarsity, 208 pp., paperback)

New atheist Richard Dawkins thinks lowly of God: "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."

Ever since Marcion, even Christians have struggled to reconcile the Old Testament portrait of Yahweh with the New Testament portrait of Jesus.

In *God Behaving Badly*, David T. Lamb rehabilitates God's "bad reputation." More than that, he argues that "Yahweh and Jesus" — the divine names of the Old and New Testaments, respectively — "while they have distinct personalities, are both God and are essentially one. And most importantly, both are characterized by love."

Lamb structures each chapter around a contrast. Is God angry or loving, sexist or affirming, racist or hospitable, violent or peaceful, legalistic or gracious, rigid or flexible, and distant or near? In each case, he argues that Bible readers can choose to ignore, rationalize, or work to understand the Bible's diverse material. His book models the third option. Lamb acknowledges some measure of truth to both points of the contrast, if only at the level of appearance. But he also argues that the latter is the one that predominates Old Testament teaching.

For example, he says this about the angry/loving contrast: "Yahweh does get angry — but always legitimately so — over evil, injustice and oppression. ... He's slow to anger and ... what primarily characterizes Him is love."

For another example, he says this about the stubborn/flexible contrast: "Yahweh is both stubborn and flexible: stubbornly inflexible about His commitment to bless His people, which is good news, and graciously flexible about showing mercy to repentant sinners, which is great news."

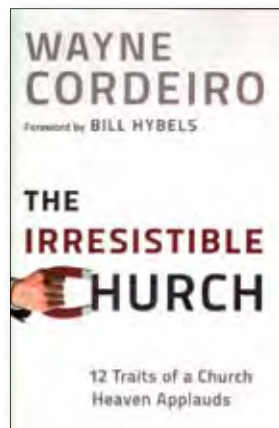
I highly recommend this book to students, laypeople, and pastors as an excellent introduction to how to understand the Old Testament portrait of God in light of the questions raised by new atheists and struggling Christians. It includes discussion questions for each chapter, making it a perfect text for book clubs, small groups, and Sunday School classes.



Lamb

— Reviewed by George P. Wood,

executive editor of *Enrichment* journal and director of Ministerial Resourcing, Springfield, Missouri.



The Irresistible Church: 12 Traits of a Church Heaven Applauds

### The Irresistible Church: 12 Traits of a Church Heaven Applauds

WAYNE CORDEIRO (Bethany House, 170 pp., hardcover)

Cordeiro offers his latest book as a collection of principles aimed at the applause of heaven and boldly claims that his 12 traits of an irresistible church will work in any congregation. His writing exhibits a tension between encouraging faithfulness and exhibiting fruitfulness, but in the end Cordeiro seems to favor a model similar to Warren's purpose-driven and Hybels' seeker-sensitive.

Cordeiro's style is honest and engaging as he illustrates concepts with personal stories. While the book contributes nothing groundbreaking, it has many apt pieces of counsel readers can glean from the author's extensive ministry experience.

Throughout the book Cordeiro's practical considerations garner significant attention,

while his exhortations to pray are conspicuously absent. Additionally, in his positive exhortations toward evangelism, Cordeiro falls into common evangelical pitfalls. He commends the Great Commission with the trite lingo of "winning souls for Christ," which is only one part of God's work of new creation. "Connecting everything to a soul" (Trait 8) helps emphasize personal responsibility in evangelism but neglects issues of social justice, creation care, and other community-building concerns that certainly fall into the church's evangelistic mandate.

Readers need to thoroughly study Cordeiro's references to Scripture. At times his interpretations are questionable. For example, he claims that the Parable of the Sower invites the church to take risks. These complaints are minor, however. Cordeiro encourages enthusiastic reflection and missional mindedness.

This book can be of value to pastors, deacons,



and all who serve the church. The 19-page study guide provides a profitable way for church leadership teams to interact with the material and contextualize its message.

— Reviewed by Nathaniel Rhoads,  
pastor, Word of Life Fellowship (Assemblies of God), Winnemucca, Nevada.

## T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution

STEVE SMITH with YING KAI (WIGTake Resources, 352 pp., paperback)

This is a refreshing book for pastors and missionaries involved in church planting and/or multiplying their existing churches. Steve Smith describes for us what a living church looks like, how to enlist every believer into God's intended priesthood role, and how to effectively (and simply) penetrate communities and people groups to bring drastic changes by the gospel.

The premise for the book is that God designed everything to reproduce after its own kind. Thus churches produce more churches until a movement impacts cities and regions — geographically and across generations. Smith provides a biblical understanding about church as God intends it, within an ever-expanding mission perspective.

T4T (Training for Trainers) is a great resource for leaders to educate and use in their churches. This book goes beyond painting the philosophy of ministry for church planting by reflecting God's heart. It details the practical steps/recommendations along the journey. It is truly a re-revolution of our familiar church-life and multiplication understanding.

The author gives solid exegesis on Kingdom expansion, but equally on the subjects of starting new generations, not just multiplying groups, on mentoring a movement, and reproducing leaders. Though provocative to our familiar leadership understanding, pastors and missionaries will find the author's concepts freeing and stimulating.

The topics are some of the best, simple, scriptural, and practical/ready for use I have read. The book shares the secrets of the fast-growing T4T church planting movements in Asia, Africa, and in the U.S. Since the publication of *The Indigenous Church* by Melvin Hodges, no book has more potential to become a reference book for church leaders and missionaries. Reading it will prove to be life and ministry changing.

— Reviewed by Daniel Peiffer, D.Min., Arizona District Council of the Assemblies of God, Native Lay Leadership Development.

## Veneer: Living Deeply in a Surface Society

TIMOTHY WILLARD AND JASON LOCY (Zondervan, 272 pp., hardback)

Willard and Locy take dead-aim at the complacent, shallow life in *Veneer: Living Deeply in a Surface Society*. Fueled by a passion borne of frustration with the inconsistencies in our culture, the authors have penned a response "less about our anger toward the world, Christians, and the church, and more about wanting something different for the world, Christians, and the church." They clearly have found their mark.

Why are we so obsessed with celebrity status? Why are we so ashamed of our imperfections? And why do we always need the latest, greatest, new and improved gadget of choice? Willard and Locy seek to answer these questions and many more throughout the pages of *Veneer*. Their self-proclaimed hope for the book is "that it will help you figure out who you are. That it will help you figure out how you are meant to live." By encouraging readers to drop their facades and be real with God, themselves, and each other, the authors might just count *Veneer* as a hope fulfilled.

The authors clearly intertwine a love for God's creation with a zeal for serving Him authentically. *Veneer* is full of vivid imagery from majestic "whale stars" in the Four Corners region to breath-taking plunges at Panther Falls in the George Washington National Forest. Through writing that appeals to all five senses, the authors invite readers to experience God in a whole new way.

*Veneer* is a book for those seeking a deeper encounter with God. It will inspire you to reflect on your walk with the Lord and fellow man. And possibly, by the grace of God, it might just help us see the "beauty of imperfection" in our own lives.

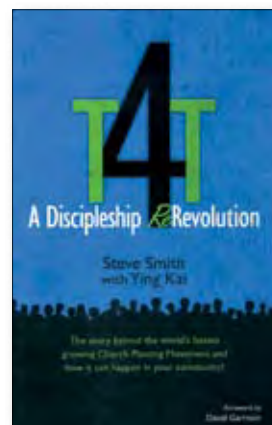
— Reviewed by Von Mitchell, freelance writer, Delta, Colorado.

## Engaging the Culture, Changing the World: The Christian University in a Post-Christian World

PHILIP W. EATON (InterVarsity Press, 206 pp., paperback)

Philip Eaton, president of Seattle Pacific University, has written a provocative, engaging argument for Christian universities in an easy-to-read style. Eaton believes the Christian university "holds special promise to lead the way toward a better world."

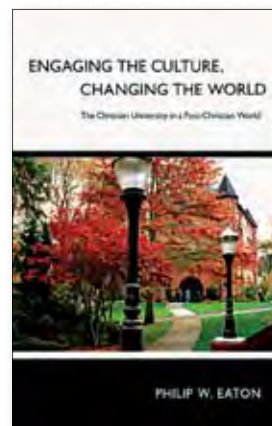
Eaton believes the job for Christian universities is to: (1) do the hard thinking about how Christians can make the world a better place,



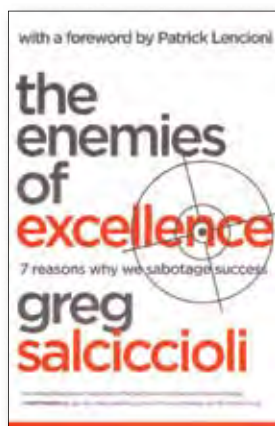
T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution



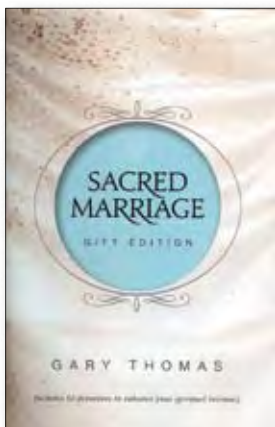
Veneer:  
Living Deeply in a Surface Society



Engaging the Culture, Changing  
the World: The Christian University  
in a Post-Christian World



**The Enemies of Excellence: 7 Reasons Why We Sabotage Success**



**Sacred Marriage Gift Edition**

(2) equip the next generation of leaders to engage our American and world cultures, and (3) teach and model how we embrace our Christian story, even while our culture questions what is true, good, and beautiful. Eaton spends a great deal of time explaining his third purpose.

Chapters 14 through 17 are worth the price of the book. Eaton builds compelling arguments for building communities of trust (rather than cynicism and suspicion), embracing the Christian story, and modeling vibrant Christian community. Pastors could easily adapt these principles to church life, even though he wrote for the world of academics.

Eaton is not timid. In chapter 17, he takes on Harvard University, especially in regard to its refusal to include a course on Reason and Faith in its general education requirements. A faculty committee had recommended such a class in a 2006 report because 94 percent of Harvard students said they discussed religion frequently or occasionally. Eaton echoes the famous C.S. Lewis quote of "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."<sup>1</sup>

Every Christian educator, pastor, and parent of a high school student needs to read this book, especially if they care about transforming lives.

— Review by G. Robert Cook Jr., D.Min., executive vice president of The Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education.

**NOTE**

1. C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Collier, 1949), 22.

## **The Enemies of Excellence: 7 Reasons Why We Sabotage Success**

GREG SALICCIOLI (Crossroad, 100 pp., hardcover)

In a society driven by success, we often admire those who attain this golden dream. We look for their secrets to success to apply to our own lives. We want to attain to their level of achievement and monetary comfort. While this may describe those in secular employment, we also find this same desire for success in ministry. *If I could just pastor a larger church or lead a greater ministry* is often in our thoughts. We somehow feel that when we arrive at the top, nothing could go wrong. But too many leaders arrive at the top, only to have their lives unravel because they make foolish decisions that sabotage their success.

Life Coach Greg Saliccioli uses the story of a friend who sabotaged his ministry to discuss the seven reasons why people often sabotage

their success and lives. Saliccioli divides these risk levels into three categories. Low-risk levels include egotism, life mismanagement, and bad habits. Medium-risk levels are indulgence and broken relationships. High-risk levels involve isolation and self-sabotage.

In chapters 3 through 9, Saliccioli explores each of these enemies and provides an action plan to help readers overcome these enemies of success. The author also provides the antidote to these seven enemies that sabotage our excellence. We can do this by stepping aside from the "frenzied fray of life and leadership to discover the truth about our head, heart, and habits."

While leadership has intrinsic dangers, there are ways to avoid these temptations. Saliccioli has provided a valuable resource for all leaders to disarm these enemies of excellence.

— Reviewed by Richard L. Schoonover, associate editor, *Enrichment journal*, Springfield, Missouri.

## **Sacred Marriage Gift Edition**

GARY THOMAS (Zondervan, 452 pp., hardcover)

The commercialization of weddings has hit an all-time high. Reality television shows such as ABC's *Bachelor* and TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress* emphasize the drive toward the wedding day. Ironically, the popularity of these shows rests on tapping into the viewer's fantasy and imagination of "happily ever after" rather than the reality of what the wedding day represents. In *Sacred Marriage*, Gary Thomas presents the reader with the rest of the story. Marriage is an event but it is also a process. Thomas presents the idea that God purposely uses the process of marriage to foster spiritual development.

*Sacred Marriage* is not a self-help book. It is written from a philosophical position that is interlaced with stories that illustrate Thomas' bold challenge. He purports that "God designed marriage to make us holy more than happy." This is less likely to be an appealing message to those who are considering marriage. However, it validates the real and predictable experience of disillusionment that every spouse encounters at some point. These moments truly test a person's love and dependence on God. To those who find their source in Christ, love can be extended through a posture of humility, respect, prayer, confession, perseverance, service, forgiveness, and sexuality.

The *Sacred Marriage Gift Edition* is a two-in-one book. The second half of the book contains 52 devotionals. Each devotion opens with a Scripture



followed by a provoking thought. Although his message at times seems hard hitting, it is empowering. For instance, Thomas writes, “We can’t fully determine how others treat us, but we can determine how we treat others. When we love we experience God. Do you seek happiness? Then seek to love.” This idea is a rich discussion topic. The main text along with the supplemental *Sacred Marriage Participants Guide* are a great resource for a marriage retreat or small group.

— Reviewed by Christine Arnzen, MA, LPC, director of clinical services, National Institute of Marriage, Branson, Missouri.

## Revelation

GORDON D. FEE (Wipf & Stock, 340 pp., paperback)

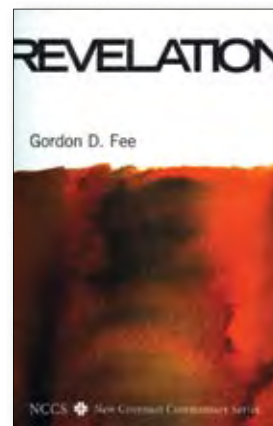
Gordon Fee’s long and respected ministry is without parallel in raising the level of scholarly discussion among Pentecostals. His *Revelation* commentary furthers this heritage. It highlights Fee’s personal interpretation of Revelation, footnoting mostly scriptural support and only very rarely other scholars. DeSilva calls it “a commentary on Revelation — not a commentary on commentaries.” As such, the work is helpful for biblical research, but is not a bibliographical resource.

I was impressed by Fee’s: (1) thoroughly historical approach to the first-century setting of John and his readers. The entire book had

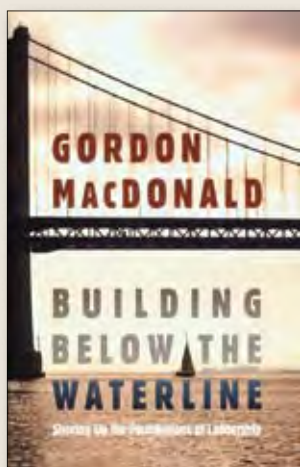
something to say to them beyond the letters to the churches. (2) appreciation of the genres of Revelation, specifically the genre of apocalypse and its impact on interpretation. (3) refusal to allow “previously worked out eschatological schemes” — such as dispensational eschatology — to determine how we interpret Revelation. (4) attention to the aural manner in which early believers received the message without artificial chapter division and versification.

Interesting highlights and/or implications of Fee’s study are: (1) Revelation speaks largely to the church’s late first-century struggle (“holy war”) with the Roman Empire that would continue into the following two centuries. Although Fee does not consider Revelation’s intent *only* for the past, neither is it *only* for our future. (2) Fee sees the ancient church as fully present in the events of “tribulation” (suffering and death at the hands of evil humanity), but at the same time protected from God’s “wrath” (God’s judgment). (3) Revelation 20:1–6, the traditional “millennium” passage, is not a temporal but rather *literary* interlude in the final battle (Revelation 19:11–21; 20:7–15) meant to assure soon-to-be martyrs. (4) Heaven, as an eternal abode, is Earth renewed and glorified. We do not go to God, He comes to us.

— Reviewed by Dwight Sheets, Ph.D., associate professor of New Testament, Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri.



Revelation



## Building Below the Waterline: Shoring Up the Foundations of Leadership

GORDON MACDONALD (Hendrickson, 250 pp., hardback)

**Shoddy work on the deep, unseen foundations of your life will be your downfall.** This is the warning from Gordon MacDonald in his latest work stemming from his many years of experience. MacDonald points out the key components that determine the strength of our foundation. Beginning with the inner life of a leader, the author addresses issues of character, attitudes, and spiritual practices. The second half of the book deals with the outer life of a leader: presenting Christ and modeling Christ to those we lead. We must constantly maintain the integrity of our foundations to enjoy a lasting, fulfilling life and ministry.

Although the book covers a broad range of topics and can become a bit tedious at times, it has an important message for leaders at every stage of ministry. The style and prose will likely appeal to mid- or late-life ministers; however, the content is essential for young, emerging leaders who wish to make a lasting impression on their generation.

Perhaps the best way to read this book is with a group of peers. Each relatively short chapter concludes with three coaching questions or assignments. These are conducive for inspiring one another and holding each other accountable as you strive to build solid foundations for life and ministry.

*Building Below the Waterline* is worth reading, and the foundations it addresses are worth building. Take time to read this book and apply its principles before attempting to build anything else above the waterline.

— Reviewed by Bart Wilkins, copastor, Flatland Church, Omaha, Nebraska.

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Braxton, Mississippi





## JACOB'S HOPE

**Jacob's Hope** is the first Assemblies of God World Missions ministry to minister to Jewish people around the world. Jacob's Hope's vision is to bring the blessings of God to Jewish people. It plans to accomplish this goal in a variety of ways: feeding needy Jewish people in Russia, renovating apartments for elderly Holocaust survivors in Ukraine, bringing medical teams and job training to the Ethiopian Jewish community, and providing resources to Jewish believers in Belarus.

In Israel, Jacob's Hope will distribute food and clothing through six compassion ministry centers. Its goal is to have 30 such centers in Israel in the next few years. The needs of Jewish people around the world are great. Many Jewish people must choose between buying food, paying the rent, or purchasing medicine, if available. In Israel, more than 25 percent of the population live below the poverty line. Blessing the Jewish people with material goods can open the door for the gospel.

In Israel, more than 99 percent of the population does not know their Messiah. The most important function of Jacob's Hope is to bring the Jewish people the one true hope — Y'shua, Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

General Superintendent George O. Wood said, "This is the first time Assemblies of God adherents have a chance to invest in humanitarian, evangelistic, and discipleship efforts to reach the Jewish people around the world."

For more information on Jacob's Hope, visit: [www.jacobshope.com](http://www.jacobshope.com).



Jacob's Hope team: Jeff Coose, Chris Mann, Jeff Friedman, and Micheal Maurer



**The U.S. military community worldwide** represents a largely untouched mission field. The focus of the new, soon-to-be-released *Warrior's Bible: A Military Community Application Bible* is to help people in the military apply the timeless truths of God's Word in practical ways to their daily lives and decision making.

The audience for the *Warrior's Bible* includes approximately 2.4 million men and women — active military personnel in uniform serving in the United States and in 130 countries overseas — and millions more spouses, children, family members, civilian contractors, and veterans.

"With this Bible we hope to cast the widest net possible to reach the military community. We want to touch people's lives with the Word of God, no matter their level of faith or faithlessness," states Chaplain Scott McChrystal (COL), USA Ret. Mil/VA Rep. and Endorser, Chaplaincy Ministries, Assemblies of God.

McChrystal serves as managing editor of the *Warrior's Bible* project, according to Guy Highfill, director of Life Publishers International, which is responsible for the publication of this Bible.

From cover to cover, the *Warrior's Bible* will identify with and speak to the military community through its design and content. In addition to providing the Scriptures and Bible study helps, it will include articles written by Christian military personnel that address pertinent topics relating to military life, such as coping with deployment, communication and marriage, culture shock, loneliness, reintegration, and more.

Once complete, this Bible will be an effective tool in the hands of chaplains and Christian military personnel to help influence and impact the lives of men and women wherever they serve. For more information, visit: [www.WarriorsBible.com](http://www.WarriorsBible.com).

## National Women's Department Announces Love Revealed

**The National Women's Department**, in conjunction with Influence Resources, has produced *Love Revealed*, a book with six inspiring stories, written by five unique women, about the amazing love God reveals to women everywhere.

Kerry Clarensau, National Women's director says, "God reveals His love in personal and powerful ways." The book's title is also the national department's theme for ministering to women in 2012, in line with the Assemblies of God's Year of Compassion.

*Love Revealed* is centered on the Acts 2 model: Connect, Grow, Serve, Go, Worship. Clarensau says, "We want women to connect with one another in meaningful ways, apply God's truth to their lives by helping them to grow, find genuine fulfillment in serving, go into their workplaces and communities — and we want their lives to become worship."

A teaching DVD that contains six 20-minute sessions is also available. Clarensau demonstrates sharing God's love in relational mentoring through these videos. Additional *Love Revealed* products, such as a mug, bracelet, t-shirt, sticky notes, bulletin covers, and posters are available to help remind women of the message of God's love.

To order a copy, call Gospel Publishing House at 1-800-641-4310, or by visiting: [www.gospelpublishing.com](http://www.gospelpublishing.com). Item #S0TW0111; \$9.99.





## 2012 World Missions Summit III

**World Missions Summit III** will be held Dec. 28–30, 2012, in Ft. Worth, Tex. As in past events, Assemblies of God World Missions will partner with Chi Alpha to challenge young adults to give a year and pray about a lifetime of missionary service. “The Summit has grown in importance for 18–30-year-olds, and we anticipate an even larger number of participants for Summit III,” says David Lee, director of AGWM U.S. Relations and conference organizer.

Each region — Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern Asia, along with International Ministries — will use visual and media presentations, interactive cultural exhibits, and music to present the need to win the lost for Christ. Mealtimes will focus on establishing relationships with AGWM leaders and missionaries. “The Summit is reality missions,” says Lee. “Young adults hear, see, and experience missions in events, exhibits, and interactive breakouts.”

Chi Alpha leaders at Sam Houston State in Huntsville, Tex., report that past Summits influenced 11 full-time missionaries and several missionary associates from their Chi Alpha group to serve in missions. At the Feb. 2010 World Pentecostal Congress in Chennai, India, several missionaries told E. Scott Martin, Chi Alpha director of student missions and conference organizer, “The World Missions Summit confirmed my call to missions.”

The Summit will include “Gatherings” for all participants with worship, special presentations, and missions speakers. Morning and afternoon “Windows to the World” will introduce young adults to the variety of missions opportunities and give them insight into cross-cultural living.

God has used the Summit to change lives. After attending a 2008-09 “Window to the World” session highlighting Europe, a student said, “I had no idea that only 3 percent of Europe’s population claims to be Christian.”

After the Summit, another young adult said, “I have attended church all my life, but this was different. I have been changed.”

### ASSEMBLIES OF GOD U.S. MISSIONS RETOOLING FOR COMPASSION

**Assemblies of God U.S. Missions launched the Resource and Research Center website** as a bridge for chaplains, missionaries, and project volunteers who need assistance researching compassion topics. The website will supply data and information that will aide in fulfilling the Great Commission through the Seven Windows of America.

Human trafficking is an example of a compassion topic that requires careful examination and strategic intervention. This website will house information on human trafficking from organizations that follow best practices models, and integrate community partnerships that are salt and light. Links to free resources are available, such as posters with the human trafficking hotline number and Internet safety training for children.

At the General Council in Phoenix, U.S. Missions launched its compassion focus on human trafficking. One thousand leaders from across the United States heard from a survivor, an advocate, and a law enforcement officer challenging the church to make a difference through prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. To further demonstrate the complexity of human trafficking, Floodgate, a Central Bible College drama team, presented a wrenching enactment of this crime at the U.S. Missions exhibit and luncheon.

According to “Human Trafficking: A Resource Document” by the Assemblies of God, modern-day slavery is a complicated issue and requires that those who want to help pray and do adequate research before becoming involved. (See document at: [http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Official\\_Statements/](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Official_Statements/)).

U.S. Mission’s Resource and Research Department is ready to help. If the resource you are looking for is not on our website, contact us at [usmissionsresources@ag.org](mailto:usmissionsresources@ag.org).

For additional information, visit the U.S. Missions website: [www.usmissions.ag.org/](http://www.usmissions.ag.org/).



### Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education Faculty Conference

**Each year the Assemblies of God** Executive Leadership and the Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education host a 3-day conference for faculty members and administrators from the 18 colleges and universities of the Assemblies of God. This conference provides faculty and administrators opportunity to network with colleagues from other AG schools, exchange ideas specific to their academic disciplines, and highlight current topics in higher education. Disciplines from all of the colleges and universities are included on a 3-year rotating schedule.

The 2012 faculty conference is scheduled for June 26–28 at Evangel University in Springfield, Mo. This conference is for faculty from the behavioral sciences, communications, fine arts, humanities, math, and social sciences departments.



**HealthCare Ministries introduces a new project** — Rx for Change — that will help your church get involved with giving toward medical missions. Churches and their members can write a prescription to change someone’s life through HCM by taking an empty prescription vial and filling it with 28 quarters — \$7. That is all it takes to treat just one person on an HCM outreach.

Churches can send the funds they collect to HealthCare Ministries, 521 W. Lynn St., Springfield, MO 65802.

For more information and a free template of labels to make your own Rx for Change bottle, visit [www.healthcareministries.org](http://www.healthcareministries.org) and click on the resources link.

### THE HOPE CENTER

**Jacob’s Hope, the international Jewish ministry** of Assemblies of God World Missions, is planning a major ministry center in Israel. Israel struggles with a 25 percent poverty rate. More significantly, more than 99 percent of Israelis do not know the Messiah. The Hope Center will address a number of issues to improve the lives of struggling Jewish people.

The Hope Center will be a multi-purpose facility. A major part of the building will be warehouse space. Jacob’s Hope has warehouse space in Virginia to gather and prepare clothing, medical equipment, household goods, and other items for shipment to Israel. Having warehouse space in Israel will facilitate distribution of these much-needed items. This will also free up money to bring in more urgently needed material.

It is often difficult for Israeli believers to find meeting space. The Hope Center will provide believers a place they can call home. At least three congregations in the area are currently in need of a spiritual home. It will also be used for seminars and conferences.

Another large need in Israel is for job training. The Hope Center will provide job training to help Israelis, especially new immigrants from the former Soviet Union, to develop a marketable skill to better support their families.

To reach younger Israelis, Jacob’s Hope will launch Hope Café. Here young Israelis can learn about Messiah in a nonthreatening, comfortable environment. Bibles and other literature will be available as well as music by believing musicians from Israel and the world.

This new facility will also provide accommodations for volunteers who feel a call to bless the children of Jacob by serving in Israel. The Hope Center will need short-term construction teams and longer-term volunteers.





## Spanish Edition of the *Fire Bible for Kids*

Soon after launching the English editions of the *Fire Bible for Kids* (NKJV and NIV), the Assemblies of God Bible Alliance received requests for a Spanish edition of this Bible for children. Thus, Life Publishers has begun translation for the *Fire Bible for Kids*.

The *Fire Bible for Kids* is a first-of-its-kind Bible for children. What makes this Bible unique is its emphasis on Pentecost and the Pentecostal experience. The purpose of this Bible is to create an interest in children to know about God's power and to understand how this power can help them live Spirit-filled lives in service to God. Kid-friendly features and illustrations throughout its pages emphasize the principles of a Spirit-filled life as viewed from the perspective of a child.

"We are excited about the potential impact the Spanish edition of the *Fire Bible for Kids* will have in providing children in Latin America and many nations with the Word of God," says Phil Combs, *Fire Bible* director.

Bible Alliance plans to have the *Fire Bible for Kids* in Spanish finished in 2 or 3 years. They also want to provide the *Fire Bible for Kids* in many more languages. For more information or to contribute to this project, contact Life Publishers at 1-888-776-2425.



## The *Jesus Path*

*The Jesus Path* is a distinctive Internet Bible-based pathway designed for worldwide evangelism and discipleship.

It is now available from Network211 to embed in your church's website. Using *The Jesus Path*, visitors to your church's website can find Christ and strengthen their personal relationship with Him.

Traveling *The Jesus Path* provides a systematic journey with answers to important life questions as well as directions to follow Jesus. Using materials developed by Network211 and Global University, a person advances through four progressive segments in his journey of faith:

- *Jesus Is the Answer* consists of more than 51 lessons and 13 short videos leading an individual to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- *Walk With Jesus* is a series of 13 videos for addressing issues that new Christians face.
- *Grow With Jesus* is an 18-course discipleship series designed to deepen the Christian's personal relationship with Jesus.
- *Serve Jesus* is a series of 18 study courses that assist believers in developing their spiritual lives and equipping them for Christian service. These courses are designed to enhance the faith and ministry skills of all believers.

*The Jesus Path* will transform your website into a resource tool and assist you in developing an online discipleship program that will look, feel, and act like your own ministry. To learn more, visit: [www.Network211.com](http://www.Network211.com) or e-mail [info@Network211.com](mailto:info@Network211.com).

To view, go to [www.GlobalChristianCenter.com](http://www.GlobalChristianCenter.com) and click *The Jesus Path*.



## Holy Lands Study Trips

their children. Join General Superintendent George O. Wood, his grandson, and Single Adult/Young Adult Ministries Director Dennis Franck to explore the paths traveled by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and others in the Bible. This trip will take place June 14-24, 2012.

Participants will experience a deeper understanding of the Bible through teaching, discussions, and insights into the Holy Land and its history, cultures, and peoples. There will be relational times designed specifically for participants and their families. Participants, including children and grandchildren, will participate in an archaeological dig as well as make a mosaic, bake bread as it was done 2,000 years ago, ride camels, journal, pray together, and more. This trip will help adults pass the truths of their Christian faith and heritage to their children and grandchildren.

## Young Adult Holy Lands Experience

Assemblies of God Center for Holy Lands Studies and Young Adult Ministries Department are offering young adults a customized exploration through Israel, Nov. 7-17, 2012. Through pre- and post-trip study materials participants will better understand the world of the Bible and what it means to them today.

Tour hosts are Marc Turnage, director of the Center for Holy Lands Studies, and Ryan Moore, Assemblies of God young adults coordinator. Tour sites include Caesarea, Mount Carmel, Nazareth, the Mount of Beatitudes, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, the Jordan River, Dan, Jerusalem, Temple Mount, Bethlehem, the Israel Museum, the Judean Wilderness, Masada, the City of David, Pool of Siloam, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, the Pool of Bethesda, Via Dolorosa, the Church of the Resurrection, and a night boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.

For more information on either of these tours, contact The Center for Holy Land Studies, 417-862-2781, ext. 3590; visit [www.holylandsstudies.ag.org](http://www.holylandsstudies.ag.org); or e-mail: [holylandsstudies@ag.org](mailto:holylandsstudies@ag.org) or [singles@ag.org](mailto:singles@ag.org).

## Generations Holy Lands Experience

The Assemblies of God Center for Holy Lands Studies is offering a Holy Land tour for grandparents and their grandchildren, and married and single parents along with

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The real problem in leadership is how we respond to *unknown unknowns*.

# KNOWLEDGE PROBLEMS AND NECESSARY VIRTUES

► BY **GEORGE PAUL WOOD**



**I**n a February 12, 2002, press conference, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made the following statement: “[T]here are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns — there are things we do not know we don’t know.”<sup>1</sup>

Rumsfeld was answering a question about the apparent lack of evidence connecting Saddam Hussein’s government and terrorist organizations seeking weapons of mass destruction. But his remark applies to the knowledge problems leaders face in any organization, including the church. And they suggest certain virtues that all leaders, including ministers, need to develop.

Start with Rumsfeld’s first two categories: *known knowns* and *known unknowns*. The older I get, the more I realize how ignorant I am in most areas but how knowledgeable I am in a few. Career specialization is the reason for this lopsided ratio of ignorance and knowledge. I have been a vocational minister for half of my life and all but 2 years of my professional career. Consequently, I have the knowledge base and skill set necessary for vocational ministry. Had I chosen or been called to a different profession when I was 21, no doubt I would have a very different knowledge base and skill set.

When you know what you know and do not know, it helps you develop appropriate virtues. In the case of known knowns, *confidence*, and in the case of known unknowns, *teachability*. In 2007, I transitioned from associate pastor at a megachurch to senior pastor of a turnaround church. I was not afraid of the new task of preaching weekly because my previous ministry experience had prepared me for it. I approached the pulpit with confidence. But I had never led a board meeting or annual business meeting, never been responsible for formulating the entire budget for the church (as opposed to my department’s budget), and never done a thousand other things that senior pastors routinely do. I was unconfident, but I was teachable. And I benefited from mentors both inside and outside the church who were willing to share their knowledge and skills with me. Had I approached my known unknowns with confidence, rather than teachability, the growth of the church would have been stifled by my ignorance (and pride).

The real problem in ministry — or leadership generally — is how we respond to *unknown unknowns*. Consider the Early Church. It was entirely Jewish. Then Jesus Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on Gentile God-fearers without their being circumcised, keeping kosher, or observing Sabbath. The Early Church did not know how to respond to this novel situation, which they had not even imagined would happen.

When you experience unknown unknowns, two extreme

responses are common: *resistance* and *ditching*. In the Early Church, Judaizers resisted the law-free gospel and clung to the necessity of the ceremonial law, while antinomians went to the opposite extreme and ditched the moral law along with the ceremonial one. The proper response, as articulated by Paul? *Flexibility*. Paul flexed with the new wind of the Spirit blowing among the Gentiles without being uprooted from Scripture’s foundational “law of love.” In the crazy, rapidly changing times in which we live, ministers similarly need to know what can change and what must remain the same.

To Rumsfeld’s three knowledge problems, philosopher Slavoj Žižek adds a fourth — *unknown knowns*,<sup>2</sup> “the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values.” Žižek was writing about what happened at Abu Ghraib.

Sometimes we ministers overlook and even justify sin in our churches. We do not confront the abusive dad because he is chairman of the board. We give the gossiping woman a pass because she does so much for missions. We take out loans for building campaigns but do not have money in our benevolence accounts. *Repentance* is the only appropriate response, and we ministers should lead the way.

*Confidence* when we know what we know. *Teachability* when we know what we do not know. *Flexibility* when we experience unknown unknowns. And *repentance* in the face of unknown knowns. These are the knowledge problems we ministers face, and the virtues we need to develop.

## NOTES

1. <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2636>. Accessed 18 January 2012.
2. <http://www.lacan.com/zizekrumsfeld.htm>. Accessed 18 January 2012.



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