

**COACHING CHURCH PLANTERS FOR
GROWING HEALTHY, GOSPEL CENTERED
CHURCHES**

By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Church planting in North America is on the rise. In 2001, Tom Clegg reported “Approximately one thousand five hundred churches were planted in the United States in the previous year” (2001:30). In other words, about four new churches were launching every day. More recent research conducted by Leadership Network suggests that as many as four thousand new churches now begin each year, and “more interest and activity surrounds church planting today than has been witnessed in over one hundred years” (*Leadership Network* 2007b:2).

Church planting is a crucial part of God’s plan to expand His Kingdom on this earth. Jesus said, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing” (Mt 11:12). His invisible Kingdom is advancing in many ways, especially as churches are planted.

Church planting, however, is hard work. When I accepted a call in 1984—twenty-five years ago—from the Presbyterian Church in America to start a new church, there was little in the way of training for church planting, nor was there any consideration of coaching which would have provided personal encouragement, skill development, and prayer support. Today coaches are more available and many church planters attend at least one or more training events. Leadership Network’s study found that church planting

groups that leverage assessment, training, and coaching, experience higher rates of survivability (*Leadership Network* 2007a:4).

One does not learn how to plant a church in a classroom or at a seminar. Many typical seminars and training events are based on church growth principles that are not gospel-focused. Some churches grow by using certain principles for developing any type of organization, but those principles are not governed by a gospel understanding of the Church or the Holy Spirit, nor are they necessarily signs of spiritual health.

Church planter coaching, an emerging field, has a positive influence on church planting and to launching churches. Much is being done to develop coaching methodologies, but it appears that very little is being done from a theological perspective. Is it sufficient to simply rely on a methodological approach, devoid of the theology of the gospel?

Most coaching methodology and training is founded upon secular theory and practice built upon the work of Carl Rogers, an American psychologist who was the father of the client-centered approach to therapy and considered one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology. Rogers believed “experience is . . . the highest authority” (1961:23). He wrote, “It is the client who knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been deeply buried” (1961:35). Modern coaching leaders John Whitmore and Miles Downey attribute their theories and work to Rogers, whose humanistic view that every problem is “out there” and the client already has the answer within him is counter to the gospel. Coaches who simply follow the modern view of coaching practices are not applying the gospel well.

The ministry of planting a new church is a unique calling that requires a distinctive set of competencies. Many first-time church planters working on the mission field in North America find themselves overwhelmed by the enormous and challenging task of starting a new work. Most overestimate what they can accomplish in the first year of their ministry. The typical church planter begins with a huge vision, grand plans, and an abundance of enthusiasm. However, as the first months of transition wane and the reality of the work begins to settle in, many become disillusioned, distracted, or depressed. The new work suffers, the church planting couple suffers, and often, core team members suffer. The financial loss to donors and core members can also be significant. The result may be an unhealthy church established in a community where it has little or no gospel influence.

Loneliness and isolation can become debilitating factors that sink the entire project. The lack of on-going assistance by someone who can lead the planting team through the rough and tiresome waters of starting a new church has been a major complaint of planters who are in the field or have already quit. Tom Clegg noted in a lecture, “Eight out of ten church plants do not survive the first five years” (2001).

Some church planting leaders suggest that the loneliness factor can lead to additional problems. Church planters tend to be loners and more entrepreneurial in their ministry. Archibald Hart notes in an article “the aloneness factor often leads to arrogance, which can lead to addiction and then adultery” (2001:14). When adultery occurs, it often ends the planter’s ministry and possibly the work itself.

Another major issue is spiritual warfare, an issue that distinguishes church planting from secular endeavors. The enemy hates the church and does not want more

churches to be planted. He will attack the planter, his family, and the core group in many ways, as he attempts to destroy the church plant.

The greatest concern though, is the heart. A very real and present danger in the life of a church planter is his heart becoming cold and his life with God losing its vitality, pliability, and centeredness on God's grace, the Spirit's work and his own personal holiness. Depending on one's own ingenuity, natural ability, talents, and fleshly effort is the bent of every human heart. The church planter is not immune to this. In my coaching experience during the past eight years, I have dealt more in this arena than any other.

In spite of an increase in the number of churches planting new churches, church planting networks, and denominations that have become more intentional in starting new churches, much of the coaching methodology is not theologically driven, gospel saturated, or grace-centered. Can we expect gospel-centered, theologically rich churches if our methods of coaching the planters are simply technique-oriented, especially if those techniques are from a humanistic foundation? Henri Nouwen offered this critique:

Few ministers and priests think theologically. Most of them have been educated in a climate in which the behavioral science, such as psychology and sociology, so dominated the educational milieu that no true theology was being learned. Most Christian leaders today raise psychological and sociological questions even though they frame them in scriptural terms. Real theological thinking, which is thinking with the mind of Christ, is hard to find in the practice of ministry. Without solid theological reflection, future leaders will be little more than pseudo-psychologists.... They will think of themselves as enablers, facilitators, role models, father or mother figures, big brothers or big sisters, and so on, and thus join the countless men and women trying to help their fellow human beings cope with the stresses and strains of everyday living. But that has little to do with Christian leadership (1993:65, 66).

Thesis Question

How can a church planter use coaching to grow a healthy, gospel-centered church?

Definitions

The following terms will be used in this study:

1. Coaching: “Coaching is a process of imparting encouragement and skills to succeed in a task through a relationship” (Clinton 1992:76).
2. Gospel Centered: Richard Kaufmann writes,
The Gospel is God’s explosive power that changes everything. The gospel makes us Christians.... God forgives your sin, declares you righteous in Christ, gives you eternal life, adopts you as His child, and ushers you into an intimate relationship with Himself, through the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the gospel grows us. The gospel is not merely the way we enter, it is the way we make all progress...it is the ‘way of righteousness from first to last.’... Since the gospel not only makes us Christians, but also grows us as Christians, the most desperate need of both unbelievers and believers... is to hear and appropriate the Gospel to their lives. Thirdly, the gospel empowers us to serve...with a whole new motivational structure...setting us free to love and serve unconditionally in response to God’s grace in Christ (Kaufmann 1997:24).
3. Church Planter: A person called by God to start a new church within a given context.
4. Rogerian: The humanistic, non-directive, client-based method of counseling and caring for an individual that was developed and taught by psychotherapist Carl R. Rogers. Dr. Larry Crabb suggests that Rogers believed and firmly taught that all that is in man is only good and corruption enters from the outside. Through self-actualization, man will become all that he is able to become. All answers are inside the client (1975: 32, 33).

5. Church Planting: The task of establishing a new, healthy, reproducing community, by a group of believers who are reaching, discipling, and equipping lost people in their region with the gospel and releasing them into the community to bring their “world” into the transforming power of the kingdom of God.

Significance

The significance of this study lies in its identifying the importance of the biblical and gospel-centered strategies of coaching for the coach, the church planter, and the church. It will expand the training tools used to equip church planting coaches within the church planting networks in which I serve. It will also contribute to the expansion of coach training resources and materials for Global Church Advancement, Inc., in Orlando, Florida.

This study will enable me to deepen my understanding of how the gospel brings renewal and freedom in ministry. In so doing, it will help me as I coach church planters, church planting network directors, pastors, and trainers, as well as empower others to coach.

Goals

My purpose in this study is to develop a church planter coaching methodology related to a biblical, theological, and gospel paradigm that will facilitate and empower the growth of church planters, church plants, and church planting networks. As I explore the recovery of a gospel paradigm for coaching, I seek to fulfill four primary goals.

1. Biblical/theological (Chapter 2): A description of the biblical and theological foundations undergirding a gospel-centered approach to church planter coaching.
2. Historical/ literature review (Chapter 3): A description of the gospel and practices for church planting pastors utilized by Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts, (1726-1750) and contemporary eras.
3. Analysis (Chapter 4): An evaluation of the problem in light of the biblical/theological findings and the historical/literature review findings.
4. Synthesis (Chapter 5): A suggestion for how these descriptions and evaluations can be used as a coaching process that will enhance the growth of healthy, gospel-centered churches.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made prior to beginning the research:

1. The Church is the hope for the world. The Church is the only institution in the world both designed and equipped by God for the spiritual, cultural, and social renewal of all nations.
2. Starting new churches is the most effective means for reaching lost people with the gospel. Bruce McNichol writes in *Christianity Today*:

Churches over fifteen years of age win an average of only three people to Christ per year for every one hundred church members. Churches three years to fifteen years old win an average of five people to Christ per year for every one hundred church members, but churches under three years of age win an average of ten people to Christ per year for every one hundred church members (1991: 69).

3. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the ultimate solution to every social, spiritual, cultural, and personal problem. Personal, church, and cultural transformation is to be found by a recovery and application of the transforming power of Christ's work and life, through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

4. Coaching is a key to ministry success. Robert Logan, writes, "I am convinced that coaching is key to making and multiplying disciples, to raising and reproducing leaders, to starting and multiplying churches" (2008: www.coachnet.org).

5. Great coaching is highly relational, situational, and multi-dimensional. It is not one-dimensional and must be gospel-centric. "An effective leader will diagnose the skill and motivation of his followers, as well as the requirements of the situation, and use the appropriate leadership style in order to achieve maximum results" (Thompson 2005:53). Coaching practices that follow biblical models adapt to the situation and remain personal and connected to the client.

Research Methodology

The methodology for this study is a combination of exegetical, theological, and historical research in tandem with research of topical literature in the area of coaching, leadership, mentoring, and church planting. The resources for review encompass two basic areas: (1) selected writings of the Old and New Testaments and (2) selected writings from subject matter experts in coaching.

Primary literary resources for understanding the biblical, theological, and historical perspectives of church planter coaching are written materials gathered from Reformed Theological Seminary Library in Orlando, Florida, Columbia Theological

Seminary Library in Decatur, Georgia, and Pitts Theological Library of the Candler School of Theology (Emory University) in Atlanta, Georgia. I have also collected online data from the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University.

Exegetical and theological research concentrates on four areas: (1) the relationship of Moses with Jethro and with Joshua, (2) the relationship of Jesus and the twelve apostles, (3) the relationship of Barnabas and Paul, and (4) the relationship of Paul and Timothy. Historical research concentrates mainly on Jonathan Edwards's ministry as pastoral coach and mentor, as well the writings of Carl Rogers and his influence on contemporary coaching theory and methodology, both secular and Christian. Exegetical and theological research primarily informs the biblical and theological studies in chapter 2, and historical research, the historical studies in chapter 3.

Research of the topical literature includes study in the areas of the gospel, church planting, coaching, church planter leadership, and mentoring methodologies. This literature came from my personal library, my readings for the Doctor of Ministry course work, various doctoral dissertations, books, articles, Internet research, lectures, and seminars. Some of it also came from a coaching class at Clayton State University, Atlanta, Georgia, as well as from Global Church Advancement's Coach's Training (Orlando, Florida) and other training courses attended throughout the doctoral process. In addition, I have analyzed manuals and researched various church planting churches regarding their coaching approaches.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF COACHING

“What is coaching and how is it different from mentoring?” “How do you define coaching?” These are common questions I am typically asked when I tell people that I coach church planters. Coaching is a modern word. The practice of coaching is not new, but the concept of coaching in business, education, fitness, medicine, finances, and even life is quite contemporary.

There are as many definitions of coaching as there are books and seminars on coaching. Robert Hargrove writes,

Leaders at every level are recognizing that they can leverage their personal success in accomplishment by coaching others to be successful at accomplishment. There is a Coaching University, flight schools and boot camps are popping up, and there are at least a dozen books on the subject. Yet for all this interest, there is no commonly held answer to the question, “What is coaching?” No coaching ‘method’ is widely accepted and applied by leaders and managers. No real professional standards exist for practitioners. The website of a coaching collaborative I visited offered the same coaches for executives as they did for marriage counseling (2003:1).

Robert Logan affirms the problem when he writes, “Now that coaching is catching on, it’s time to define not only what coaching accomplishes, but the skills that are necessary for excellent coaching. Just calling yourself a coach does not mean that you are doing excellent coaching” (2003:8).

Defining Coaching

Gary Collins explains the background of the word “coach”:

In the 1500s the word coach described a horse-drawn vehicle that would get people from where they were to where they wanted to be. Many years later, in the 1880s, coach was given an athletic meaning, identifying the person who tutored university students in their rowing on the Cam River in Cambridge. That use of the word stuck and coaches become known as people who help athletes move from one place to another. Over time the word also became associated with musicians, public speakers, and actors who rely on coaches to improve their skills, overcome obstacles, remain focused, and get to where they want to be (2001:14-15).

Collins defines coaching as “the art and practice of guiding a person or group from where they are toward the greater competence and fulfillment that they desire” (2001:16).

Dr. Allen Thompson, a church planting mentor of mine, suggests:

Church planter coaching is developing a supportive relationship with the coachee that leads to continual gospel renewal and character deepening, that focuses on the realities of cultural life, and that results in the improvement of skills, and performance by a form of instruction that enables the coachee to build awareness and responsibility (2005:17).

Steve Ogne, in his training materials, defines coaching as “the hands-on process of helping someone succeed Coaches help people develop their God-given potential so that they grow personally and make a valuable contribution to the kingdom of God” (2005:17). Andy Stanley, pastor of one of the largest churches in the United States, writes simply, “What exactly does a leadership coach do? Three things. An effective leadership coach: Observes, Instructs and Inspires” (2003:119).

In their book, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, Robert Clinton and Paul Stanley suggest there are six types of relationships that are keys to having life success: discipler, spiritual guide, coach, counselor, teacher, and sponsor. Regarding coaching, they write, “Coaching is a process of imparting

encouragement and skills to succeed in a task through a relationship” (1992:76). They helpfully explain that a “key to good coaching is observation, feedback, and evaluation. An experienced coach does not try to control the player (or mentoree), but rather he seeks to inspire and equip him with the necessary motivation, perspective and skills to enable him to excellent performance and effectiveness” (1992:76).

From these varied definitions, we see that a coach is someone who has a relationship with another person whom he encourages and assists in developing the skills necessary to advance in a particular area. Clinton and Stanley add, “A coach is particularly important when you step into a new responsibility or try to do something you have never done before” (1992: 73).

Coaching a church planter includes encouraging, equipping, and empowering him with the necessary skills and competencies for starting a new church. Gospel-centered coaching, however, adds another dimension noted by Thompson as “. . . continual gospel renewal and character deepening” (2005:17). Coaching by the gospel is an approach that moves beyond the outward, methodologically-driven process, to the motivational level of the planter. A gospel-saturated coach is in relationship, using varied appropriate means as the situation demands with the planter. The coach is able to speak into the life of the planter. The gospel-oriented approach to coaching a church planter is biblically sound and theologically rich.

Old Testament Coaches

Though a Bible concordance does not include a listing for “coach”, there are examples of coaching in Scripture. Several of these are in the Old Testament.

Jethro and Moses

Moses was a powerful leader with great influence and great humility. He had been raised in Egypt, schooled among the finest scholars, artists, scientists, linguists, architects, doctors, and military the world had known. He had probably been schooled in leadership methodology as well, since he had been taken in as an adopted son of the Pharaoh.

Alfred Edersheim helps us understand the kind of world Moses was raised in when he writes:

In no country was such value attached to education, nor was it begun so early as in Egypt. No sooner was a child weaned than it was sent to school, and instructed by regularly appointed scribes.... But beyond this, education was carried to a very great length, and, in the case of those destined for the higher professions, embraced not only the various sciences, as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, etc., but theology, philosophy, and a knowledge of the laws. There can be no doubt that, as the adopted son of the princess, Moses would receive the highest training. Scripture tells us that, in consequence, he was “mighty in his words and deeds” (1972:38, 39).

In addition to providentially giving Moses an outstanding education, God provided practical leadership experience. Tending his father-in-law’s sheep in the desert for forty years taught Moses how to lead creatures who were prone to wander and slow to learn. Even with his unique background of education and experience however, Moses benefited from coaching.

The story of Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18 stands out as a significant illustration of coaching:

Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, together with Moses’ sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God. Jethro had sent word to him, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons.” So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law

and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them. Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. He said, "Praise be to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly" . . . 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?" Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws." Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. 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. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide for themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied. Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country (18:5-11, 13-27).

Alfred Edersheim comments:

This wise advice was given so modestly and with such express acknowledgment that it only applied "if God command" him so, that Moses heard it in the gracious direction of God Himself. Nor would it be possible to imagine a more beautiful instance of the help which religion may derive from knowledge and experience, nor yet a more religious

submission of this world's wisdom to the service and the will of God, than in the advice which Jethro gave and the manner in which he expressed it. From Deut. 1: 12-18 we learn that Moses carried out the plan in the same spirit in which it was proposed (1972:104,105).

Moses was coached in his new task by his father-in-law, Jethro, a businessman from Midian. They were involved in a relationship in which Jethro had observed Moses's practice, witnessed him working all day long trying to administer justice for the masses, instructed him in alternative practices for better results, and persuaded him that if he followed Jethro's insights, his load would be lighter and he would be able to endure!

Steve Ogne outlines Jethro's coaching of Moses:

Jethro coached Moses by meeting with him (v.7), taking time to find out how he was doing personally (v.7), listening to him about the ups and downs of his journey (v.8), celebrating with him (v.9), worshipping with him (v.12), eating with him (v.12), watching him at work (v.14), asking him probing questions (v.15), challenging unproductive behavior (v.17), and giving wise counsel (vv.18-22). Jethro is a great Old Testament model of a coach (2008:56, 57).

Jethro, a wealthy livestock owner, helped an overworked godly leader get a plan in place so that he wouldn't burn out and so that the people he was leading would be well served.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prov 27:17).

In his commentary on this passage, John Calvin offers this insight into Jethro's coaching:

Jethro dares, indeed, to promise success, if Moses will obey his counsel; yet does he not proudly boast that this will be the fruit of his own prudence, but ascribes it to God's blessing and grace, if he proposes even when nothing is established but on the best system. For this is the import of the expression, that a counsel occurs to him, which if Moses follows, God shall bless him. Nor yet does here reprove Moses, as if God had not been thus far with his pious zeal and industry, but rather hints that God is the author of his counsel, which He will follow up with His grace. In sum, he does not state it to be his object to diminish in the smallest degree the

grace which Moses had already experienced; but to point out a plan, of which God will, by its result, shew His approbation (1984:305).

Based on what Calvin has noted, Jethro was humble in his counsel to Moses, not wanting the credit for a better plan, but confident that his counsel was wise because it was from God. Jethro advanced a mark of a gospel-centered coach by pointing Moses to God's grace.

Jethro coached Moses to complete the task God had given him and showed him a way to leverage his time, energy, ability and skill. Jethro came alongside his friend as an encourager and provided assistance in the skills necessary to advance in the area of organization. Jethro did not tell Moses how to adjudicate the law, but coached him in the systems necessary to do his job more effectively. Gary Collins comments:

It's unlikely that Moses ever heard of coaching. But he learned about it early in his career as leader of the children of Israel Early in the morning, Moses would take his seat to serve as judge for the people. He sat alone and the people lined up and waited from morning until evening to get his advice. It didn't take long for Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, to see that this was poor management and bad leadership Then Moses got a little coaching. He explained why he was managing like he was but Coach Jethro proposed a better way. Select some new candidates for leadership, he advised. Find people with integrity, people who are trustworthy, capable, and God-honoring. Then train them carefully. Teach them how to do what you do and let them handle the simpler cases. Permit only the complex issues to be referred to higher levels. "That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you," Jethro concluded. "If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied. Notice that Jethro was not an executive coach or Moses' boss. They weren't working for the same company. Jethro didn't criticize the present system's inefficiency. Instead he did what modern coaches often do: He observed Moses' performance, made some observations, provided some options that gave a vision for something better, and helped Moses clear some of the obstacles that were consuming his life. Perhaps Jethro stayed long enough to guide and consult with Moses on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis as the new policy was put into place (2001:31-32).

Moses and Joshua

Moses, as the ordained leader of the people of Israel, spent forty years preparing Joshua for the role of Israel's next generational leader. The first reference to Joshua is after the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea in their deliverance from Egypt. They camped at Rephidim and the Amalekites came up to fight Israel.

Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men, and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered.... So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven (Ex 17: 9-14).

God was teaching Joshua through Moses that He will not tolerate rebellion against himself. Francis Schaeffer comments, "In other words, the war of Amalek and the Amalekites against the Israelites was not just the surrounding world making war with God's people: the war was a blow against the throne of God. The Amalekites were challenging with the sword God's rule, God's throne, God's rightful place over all the world" (1975:10). Moses was also, by a form of coaching, demonstrating to Joshua that the power of God, not the power of the sword would ultimately give victory. As Moses held up the rod of God, Joshua and the troops prevailed. It is also interesting that Moses is told to write the event down and to retell it to Joshua.

Moses and Joshua's relationship is next mentioned in Exodus 24:13, where Joshua is called Moses's assistant. The Hebrew word *sharat* means "serve" or "minister." As it is used here, the word has the idea of a special relationship of service with an important person (Harris 1980: 958). Only Joshua was allowed to climb Mount Sinai with Moses (Ex 24:13; 32:17). As Moses was developing his young assistant,

Joshua had a unique relationship with his coach. Moses leveraged his relational capital to coach Joshua in leadership principles and practices.

God later instructed Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders” (Num 13: 2). Moses chose Hoshea, the son of Nun, from the tribe of Ephriam. Interestingly, in Numbers 13:16, we are told, “Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua” Commentator C. J. Goslinga suggests, “Moses probably renamed Joshua following the victory God gave him over the Amalekites (Ex 17: 8-16). Whatever the case may have been, the change in Joshua’s name has deep significance. Whereas, ‘Hoshea’ can be translated simply as ‘deliverance’ or ‘help,’ ‘Joshua’ means ‘the Lord is salvation’ (1986:7). Moses had quite an impact on Joshua’s life. He renamed him, “Savior.”

When Moses asked God to allow him to enter the Promised Land, God told him that he was forbidden from entering due to his disobedience (Deut 3: 23-29). The time had come to pass the leadership baton to the one Moses had been cultivating all those years: “But commission Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he will lead this people across and he will cause them to inherit the land that you will see” (Deut 3:28).

New Testament Coaches

Coaches encourage, equip, and empower their coachees in the ministry God has called them to do. The New Testament is replete with examples of coaching as God established and grew his church.

Jesus and His Apostles

The best model of coaching men to change the world is Jesus Christ in relationship with his twelve apostles. Jesus' three-year ministry with Peter, James, John, Andrew, Matthew, Bartholomew, Judas, Philip, Thaddeus, Simon, James the son of Alpheus, and Thomas, provides a clear and compelling example of biblical coaching. Jesus had called them to the task of evangelizing, disciple-making and planting churches among the nations of the earth. It was a huge and seemingly impossible task.

He recruited them to enter into a relationship with him as their Rabbi. He wanted each of them to enjoy the companionship, or togetherness with him that would enhance their development for the task to which he was calling them.

Jesus coached the apostles by teaching, modeling, assisting, questioning, and leading them. Although Jesus' coaching was not devoid of skill development and encouragement, the unique feature of his involvement with them was his interest in their attitudes and motivations. His focus was on what they would become, not what they were.

Reading the Gospels reveals that Jesus' primary focus in coaching his disciples was not simply to have them master skills for advancing the Kingdom on earth. However, many of today's church planting coaches focus on leadership dynamics, goal setting, strategic planning, or preaching.

As Gunter Krallmann notes, "From the model which the Master supplied by his being, doing and speaking, his disciples were able to benefit respecting knowledge, skill and character growth. Without any doubt, it was the last-mentioned area to which Jesus

devoted his primary attention. Actually, according to the Gospel records, Jesus' communication relating to practical ministry issues was surprisingly scant" (2002:62).

Jesus gave them examples of how they were to relate to God and be the type of men God wanted them to be. He aimed for the motivational heart structures that drive behavior. "Jesus concentrated his instruction more on those attitudes and spiritual principles which underlie and determine conduct, relationship building, skill application and ministry performance" (Krallman 2002: 63). Jesus modeled, taught, directed, asked lots of "why" questions, and prayed with and for them, as he coached them to become what the Father's calling was upon them.

Krallmann further observes,

We are shown that they were men of little faith and slow learning, sometimes impulsive, impatient, argumentative; we see them as fearful, skeptical and prejudiced. Jesus' loving and patient commitment to them did not entail his condoning their failures in silence. On the contrary, he quite clearly addressed various weaknesses; among them one that he regarded as singularly detrimental—pride . . . It is indicative of Jesus Christ's affectionate and considerate mentoring that he never explicitly criticized the Twelve for being proud. Rather, he devoted extraordinary effort to repeatedly pointing out to them the antidote—humility (2002:63).

Jesus developed his closest followers to become key church planters. Fulfilling Jesus' command to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28: 19), most of them would launch new assemblies of worshipping communities called churches in countries such as Italy, Russia, Ethiopia, Spain, Poland, Turkey, India, and Greece and across North Africa. Jesus focused much of his time making them into gospel-saturated ministers.

Jesus sent out the Twelve in pairs on their first mission endeavor (Mt 10:5-14; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6). Their leader gave them specific instructions on what they were to do (preach, heal, cleanse, and cast out demons), what they were to take (one staff, one

pair of sandals, no money, no food) and where they were to go (cities, villages, towns in Israel). Part of coaching them was to get them into the game.

Learning involves the on-going cycle of assessment (what is it that I need to know?), a learning event (formal or non-formal input), application (an activity or action event) and evaluation (did I learn what I needed to learn?). Sending them out on a mission trip involved them at a level in which Jesus could now coach. The Gospels of Mark and Luke both record that they returned and reported to him all that they had done. They were “debriefed” and evaluated. It is hard to coach someone without observing him or her.

Dr. Steve Childers offers a wonderful summary of Robert Coleman’s classic, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* and applies it to the church planter:

Coleman comments, “When His (Jesus’) plan is reflected upon, the basic philosophy is so different from that of the modern church that its implications are nothing less than revolutionary . . . His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes but with men whom the multitudes would follow . . . Men were to be His method of winning the world to God. The initial objective of Jesus’ plan was to enlist men who could bear witness to His life and carry on His work after He returned to the Father.” If the church leader is to be like Christ, not only in character but also in ministry methodology, he must prioritize the investing of his life in the lives of those people who will bear the maximum responsibility for the future ministry of the church. One of the best models for developing a philosophy of leadership development is the example of Jesus Christ in the training of the twelve disciples (The category titles below are taken from Coleman’s book).

Selection (People were His Method)

The church planter . . . must look for those who are faithful, available and teachable. He must seek to find those who have a genuine heart to grow in Jesus Christ.

Association (He Stayed with Them)

The church planter must be in the lives of those leaders he is seeking to develop . . . He should schedule periodic lunches, times to share a meal

together, leadership retreats, etc. The church planter should seek to visit each leader's place of employment.

Consecration (He Required Obedience)

One of the most important ways for the church planter to see an (obedient) lifestyle developed in his leaders is to pray for them and with them.

Impartation (He Gave Himself Away)

The church planter must seek to ground his leaders in all the basic spiritual disciplines of the Christian life, such as Bible reading and contemplative prayer; regular times for personal, family and corporate worship; the discovery and development of their spiritual gifts within the church, etc.

Demonstration (He Showed Them How to Live)

The church planter's personal walk with God is probably one of the most important factors in developing godly leaders. There is no message quite as clear and powerful as that of seeing first-hand the realities of Jesus Christ being demonstrated in the life of their pastor.

Delegation (He Assigned Them Work)

Each leader must be given at least one major area of responsibility. These delegated ministry responsibilities can play a vital part in the spiritual development of the emerging leaders.

Supervision (He Kept Check on Them)

The church planter should be reminded of the importance of proper supervision and follow up on ministry assignments. Without proper supervision, the job will often times just not get done. The church planter must learn not only to delegate the ministry task but then to supervise the process until the task is completed.

Reproduction (He Expected Them to Reproduce)

The church planter should learn from this example the importance of motivating leaders with a vision of investing their lives in the lives of others in order to have a lasting impact for Christ upon our world (2005:4-19).

Jesus focused his effort on coaching the twelve apostles because he was preparing them for a great mission. His preparation was a process of life-on-life coaching in character, skill, and knowledge. This process for development involved at least four phases. First, he invited them to "come and see" (Jn 1:38-39). Next, his invitation moved to "come and

follow me” (Mk 1:16-20). Then, he then asked them to “come and be with me.” In his final phase of coaching, when Jesus commanded them to go to the nations and plant churches, he empowered them and promised to be with them and invited them to follow his example in developing them (Mt 28:18-20).

Barnabas

Another biblical model of coaching found in the New Testament is in the life of Joseph, who is better known as Barnabas. “Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:36-37). Joseph was so good at coaching people that the apostles nicknamed him Barnabas or “Son of Encouragement.” He was generous with his time and possessions. As a Levite, he may have been involved in an auxiliary role assisting the priests in caring for the tabernacle (Num 3:5ff) as well as the collection and distribution of tithes (Deut 14:28-29).

About three years after his conversion to Christ, Saul, later called Paul, went to Jerusalem. However, because he was known for hating and persecuting Christians, the apostles were suspicious of him and would not see him. Barnabas stepped in and intervened on Saul’s behalf.

When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord (Acts 9:26-28).

Barnabas showed himself to be an encourager in befriending Saul and testifying to the apostles on his behalf. As F. F. Bruce points out, “Barnabas’s prestige with the apostles and other Jerusalem Christians was such that, when he gave them his guarantee that Saul was now a true disciple of Jesus, they were reassured” (1977: 206). Later, when the Jerusalem Church heard that a large number of Gentiles had come to faith in Christ, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to encourage the new believers and assist in establishing the new church.

Coaches are encouragers. But as a great coach, he knew that the new church needed mature leadership. Barnabas left Antioch and went to Tarsus to recruit Saul to be a pastor on the new church staff. After bringing Saul to Antioch, Barnabas and Saul spent the next year leading this new church, pastoring the members, teaching them God’s Word, and evangelizing lost people (Acts 11:25). Great numbers of people came to faith, were baptized, and joined the church.

In the ongoing mission of the church in Antioch, the leaders understood they were to be a multiplying church and needed to be about the Great Commission: planting new churches among the nations. In Acts 13, Barnabas and Saul, two of the leading pastors on staff, were called by God and affirmed by the church leaders to take a church planting team (John Mark, Barnabas’s cousin, being one of the team members) and plant new churches in Asia Minor. Barnabas, though a fellow church planter, was also coach for Paul and John Mark, who was also identified as their “helper” (Gk. *hyperetes*).

Barnabas’s influence as a coach in John Mark’s life is remarkably displayed later in Acts. John Mark had left the missionary trip and, in Paul’s mind, he had deserted them, thus making him a liability. When the time came for Barnabas and Paul to make a

return trip to visit the churches they had planted, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them but Paul refused: “Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing’ (Acts 15:36). Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company (Acts 15:36-38). William Larkin comments,

Luke does not explain why Barnabas wants to take John Mark along. Is it that this encourager’s sympathy reaches out to restore the deserter (compare Acts 4:36; 9:27)? Is it Barnabas’s sympathy with the viewpoint of the strict Jewish Christians, which he may share with Mark, and which may have occasioned Mark’s earlier defection (Gal. 2:13)? Is it simply the family tie between them (Col. 4:10)? What we do know is that from Paul’s perspective, John Mark’s desertion in the midst of the first missionary journey rendered him unfit for the second (Acts 13:13; compare Lk. 8:13; I Tim 4:1). Luke has not told us why John Mark deserted. Paul does say that Mark had not continued with them in the work, and earlier that work was defined as ‘the door of faith’ being opened to the Gentiles (14:26-27). It may be that on a journey to communicate the Jerusalem church’s affirmation of the Gentile mission, the defector would have proved more of a liability than an asset (1995:230-231).

Barnabas, ever the coach, took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. Paul chose Silas and Timothy and left, “commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:36-4). Barnabas however, was willing to take the risk with John Mark and develop him for further mission service.

Paul and John Mark later reconciled, and John Mark became a valuable team member. Barnabas’s influence as a coach made the difference. Barnabas is not seen again in the book of Acts. However, Paul wrote,

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he

comes to you, welcome him.) . . . These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God and they have proved a comfort to me (Col 4:10-11).

Paul referred to him again in his letter to Philemon, “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers” (vv. 23-24).

While a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote a second letter to Timothy, in which he asked Timothy, “Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Tim 4:11). After the sharp disagreement over whether John Mark was useful or not, Paul later believed him to be a welcomed ally, a “fellow worker,” and someone who was “helpful,” or useful, in the ministry. We cannot state with certainty exactly what Barnabas did to coach Paul or John Mark, but we do see results of having a coach. Some believe John Mark planted the church in Alexandria, bringing Christianity to Africa. Church historian Philip Schaff, quotes Jerome: “So, taking the gospel which he himself composed, he went to Egypt and first preaching Christ at Alexandria he formed a church so admirable in doctrine and continence of living that he constrained all followers of Christ to his example” (1994:III, 64).

Paul

Paul was a developer of leaders. He appears to be a dominant, task oriented, risk-taking leader. Yet, he knew the value of relationship and coaching younger leaders. Perhaps because of his earliest experiences with Barnabas, he recognized the immense value of creating healthy relational lines for the development of new leaders. Throughout his epistles he lists by name almost eighty people with whom he shared personal

relationships. The leaders he mentions include Silas, Titus, Luke, Epaphras, Onesimus, and John Mark, but perhaps the most notable was Timothy. Paul forged a unique relationship with Timothy, referring to him as “my dear son” (2 Tim 1:2), “my true son in the faith” (I Tim 1:2), and “a son with his father” (Phil 2:22).

Ralph Earle points out,

We first meet Timothy in Acts 16:1-3. There we are told that on Paul’s second missionary journey he found at Lystra a young disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish Christian mother and a Greek father. Paul was so impressed with the young man that he asked him to join the missionary party. It seems clear that Timothy had been converted under Paul’s preaching at Lystra on the first missionary journey (about A.D. 47). He had matured so well as a Christian that only two years later (A.D. 49) he was ready to become an apprentice to the great apostle (1978: 349).

Writing to Timothy about fifteen years later, Paul said, “You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and in Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them” (2 Tim 3:10-11).

Paul’s coaching of the young, developing church planter had begun and was maintained in a relationship. An examination of Timothy’s development indicates that Paul seemed to be most interested in focusing on three main elements: character (1 Tim 3: 1-13; 2 Tim 2:1; Titus 1 and 2), skills (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; 2 Tim 4:2, 5) and knowledge (2 Tim 3:14-17; Titus 1:9).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (11:1). The example Christ gave of coaching young, emerging church planters was to invite them to come and see, to participate in the work themselves, to do ministry

while he gave feedback, and finally to do the task of world evangelization and church planting that he delegated to them.

Paul understood that the churches he was planting would not last long nor experience healthy effectiveness if he did not develop godly leaders. He was deeply interested in their lives, encouraging, equipping and empowering them. “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice” (Phil 4:9). He played the significant role of coach.

Steve Ogne helpfully suggests:

Coaching is the preferred approach for equipping leaders in the emerging culture and the transformissional church for the following reasons:

1. Coaching is relational . . . [providing] acceptance, safety, and trust for emerging leaders.
2. Coaching is incarnational because it’s hands-on, person-to-person, face-to-face.
3. Coaching is practical because it deals with the real and immediate issues in the life and ministry of the leader.
4. Coaching is holistic because it touches on the calling and character of the leader as well as the life of the faith community and its place in the culture.
5. Coaching is contextual because every coaching conversation starts and ends in the life and ministry context of the leader.
6. Coaching is missional to the degree that the coach helps the leader understand and engage the culture through missional activity and significant personal relationships with secular people.
7. Coaching is flexible and is an especially useful approach to ministry during this time of changing paradigms.
8. Coaching is cross-cultural because it is centered in the context of the leader and not the coach (2008:27, 28).

Summary

We can clearly see from Scripture that coaching leaders and emerging leaders was a fundamental activity in the lives of various leaders. It was one of the pathways in how

they did ministry. These godly men understood that one of the keys to the formation of missional communities and churches was the ongoing coaching of new leadership.

Gary Collins rightly observes, “Good coaching is the key to producing good leaders. In changing times, to be a good leader you must be a good coach. And to be a good coach, you must recognize that coaching is a significant and increasing emerging form of leadership and leadership training” (2001: 31).

The leaders we have observed understood the necessity of developing a solid relationship, built on trust and mutual acceptance. Good chemistry flowed back and forth between the parties, with the coach encouraging the coachee. Coaching was not an event, but a process in life’s flow. In some cases the relationship was short, perhaps just two or three years, but in others, such as Moses and Joshua or Paul and Timothy, the relationship lasted over a decade. In addition to coaching, prayer to God and reliance on his Spirit was essential to the growth and development of the emerging leader.

We see from the biblical examples that a key element of gospel-centered, church planter coaching is an intentional relationship between a gospel saturated coach and the church planter. With both under the influence of the Holy Spirit, this relationship provides the planter with encouragement, prayer, experience, skills development, and regular examination of his heart motivations, for the planting of a healthy, Christ-centered, God glorifying, missionally focused church.

The primary focus of this chapter was reviewing briefly the life and practice of Moses. We noted from the Old Testament that Jethro, his father-in-law, coached him as a new leader in the church. We then observed how Moses practiced coaching in his relationship with Joshua.

We also considered important passages from the New Testament, particularly from the life and practice of Jesus relating to the twelve disciples, and from the church planter, Paul, the apostle, as he was first coached by Barnabas and then coached Timothy.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

In this chapter, we will explore the gospel message and practice of Jonathan Edwards as a missional coach in the lives of two of his most famous colleagues as well as the theology and practice of Carl Rogers and his followers on modern church planter coaching.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

In 1729 a young minister assumed the lead pastorate of one of the largest and wealthiest congregations in the New England town of Northampton, Massachusetts. Jonathan Edwards was twenty-five years old and had been serving as the associate pastor of the church with his maternal grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, for just over two years.

Edwards was born into a strict Puritan Calvinist household in Connecticut. His father, Timothy Edwards, a Congregational minister, had planted a church in Windsor Farms, Connecticut, and remained as their pastor for sixty years. When Jonathan was twelve, his father sent him to study at Yale University. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1720 at the ripe age of sixteen. While growing up in his home and attending Yale as an undergraduate student, he studied the Westminster Confession of Faith and its Catechisms as well as Puritan theology, Calvinism, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek.

Jonathan's first pastorate was at a small Scotch Presbyterian Church plant in New York City. He was not even twenty years old. Due to financial constraints he served there for only eight months and then returned to his alma mater, Yale, and tutored

students while he finished his Master of Arts degree. There, he continued to write and develop his thoughts about theology, ministry, and missions.

Piper informs us that Edwards was always learning:

Even as a boy, he began to study with his pen in his hand; not for the purpose of copying off the thoughts of others, but for the purpose of writing down, and preserving the thoughts suggested to his own mind, from the course of study that he was pursuing. This most useful practice he commenced in several branches of study very early; and he steadily pursued it in all his studies through life. His pen appears to have been in a sense always in his hand. From this practice, steadily preserved in, he derived the very advantages of thinking continually during each period of study; of thinking accurately; of thinking correctly; of thinking habitually at all times (1998:51).

After his grandfather passed away, the congregation called Edwards to be their pastor. In the winter and spring of 1734-35, a spiritual revival began in Northampton and the surrounding areas. Within six years, the Great Awakening swept through New England. Edwards, along with other leaders such as George Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent, was a key leader God used to bring new converts to faith in Christ.

Edwards remained pastor for twenty-three years until a brewing disagreement over communion and church membership caused the congregation to vote to remove him as their pastor. It was a difficult time for Edwards and his family. However, it was seen not as a tragedy, but a blessing of God for Edwards to be used to further the Kingdom of God. Edwards graciously concluded his farewell sermon: "Having briefly mentioned these important articles of advice, nothing remains, but that I now take my leave of you and bid you, farewell; wishing and praying for your best prosperity. I would now commend your immortal souls to him, who formerly committed them to me, expecting the day when I must meet you again before him, who is the Judge of quick and dead. I desire that I may never forget this people, who have been so long my special charge, and that I may never cease fervently to pray for your prosperity. May God bless you with a faithful pastor, one that is well acquainted with his mind and will, thoroughly warning sinners, wisely and skillfully searching professors, and conducting you in the way to eternal blessedness. May you have truly a burning and shining light set up in the candlestick; and may you, not only for a season, but during his whole life, that a long life, be willing to rejoice

in his light. And let me be remembered in the prayers of all God's people that are of a calm spirit, and are peaceable and faithful . . . Amen (1974: ccvii).

Edwards was a brilliant and effectual theologian, pastor and cultural activist. His theology has a unique place in coaching planters with a gospel-oriented approach. Mark Noll explains:

Edwards . . . makes his case succinctly. For Part I: "All that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that one phrase, 'the glory of God'." For Part II: "'Tis evident that true virtue must chiefly consist in love to God; the Being of beings, infinitely the greatest and best of beings." In other words, the world exists for God to manifest his glory; all other purposes, especially the happiness of the human creature, are subordinate to that one great end. Correspondingly, genuine virtue is found only in deeds motivated by a heart captured by the divine glory. While 'secondary' or 'natural' virtue—like deeds motivated by love of family, country or friends—is found among all humans, only those whom God has drawn into the kingdom may approach 'true virtue'; because only they do good deeds in order to glorify God. From these summaries, it is quickly apparent that the major impediment to considering Edwards's *Two Dissertations* a 'classic' is not its abstruse style but its blunt contradiction of the ruling assumptions of our day. Where we are now into diversity, Edwards is abrasively particularistic—virtue will be defined in one way, or it is not virtue. Where we are preoccupied with the creature, Edwards is besotted with the Creator—God as the Being of beings defines his own place in the cosmos along with the places of everyone and everything else. Where we worry about our ability to preserve our planet, Edwards is blithely optimistic about the future—he is convinced of the eternality, not less than the infinity, of the divine goodness; he does not doubt for an instant that the Being of beings will prevail (1993: 854).

Edwards's view of the glory of God drove his life and missionary zeal. He decided that it was his calling to serve God first with his best gifts. The majority of his time was spent in study and preparation for preaching. He did very little "pastoral visitation of the sick" nor did he make the usual pastoral home visits to his congregation. Occasionally he made counseling appointments if there were special needs. He also spent much time with pastoral candidates, church planting pastors and missionaries (Marsden 2003:134,135).

One of the chief points of his biblical framework for ministry was his view of original sin. “All mankind, constantly, in all ages, without fail in any one instance, run into that moral evil, which is in effect their own utter and eternal perdition in a total privation of God’s favour, and suffering of his vengeance and wrath. By Original Sin, as the phrase has been most commonly used by the divines, is meant the innate sinful depravity of the heart” (Edwards 1974: 146). He believed most forcefully that man’s heart was desperately evil and depraved. He adds, “all mankind are under the influence of a prevailing effectual tendency in their nature, to that sin and wickedness, which implies their utter and eternal ruin” (1974: 149,151). To Edwards, the core of every human heart is corrupt, fallen, and ruined, and naturally prone to sin, even in the best of intentions.

Later in his discourse, he states, “I have before shown, that there is a propensity in man’s nature to that sin, which in heinousness and ill desert immensely outweighs all the value and merit of any supposed good, that may be in him, or that he can do” (1974:154). It is abundantly clear that Edwards did not believe in the goodness of the human heart. He taught that people are fundamentally selfish and prideful. The problem for each man is first and foremost inside himself. Because of this problem, man is alienated from God.

In *Charity and Its Fruits*, Edwards further diagnoses the human heart:

The ruin that the Fall brought upon the soul of man consists very much in his losing the nobler and more benevolent principles of his nature, and falling wholly under the power and government of self-love. Before, and as God created him, he was exalted, and noble and generous; but now he is debased, and ignoble and selfish. Immediately upon the fall, the mind of man shrank from its primitive greatness and expandedness, to an exceeding smallness and contractedness Before, his soul was under the government of that noble principle of divine love, whereby was enlarged to the comprehension of all his fellow creatures and their welfare

. . . . But so soon as he had transgressed against God, these nobler principles were immediately lost and all this excellent enlargedness of man's soul was gone; and thenceforth he himself shrank, as it were, into a little space, circumscribed and closely shut up within himself to the exclusion of all things else. Sin, like some powerful astringent, contracted his soul to the very small dimensions of selfishness; and God was forsaken and fellow creatures forsaken, and man retired within himself and became totally governed by narrow and selfish principles and feelings. Self-love became master of his soul (1969:157,158).

The very essence of the human heart is our bondage to self-love and selfishness. People are governed by their self-love and “place [their ultimate] happiness in good things that are confined or limited to themselves, to the exclusion of others. And this is selfishness” (1969:164). Very simply, people do what they love to do.

Thomas Schafer explains another piece of the uniqueness of Edwards's theology:

Edwards' first published sermon, delivered to the ministers of Boston in 1731, was entitled, God Glorified in the Work of Redemption, by the Greatness of Man's Dependence upon Him, in the Whole of it. It is a genuinely programmatic essay. God is the source and means of all the good that the redeemed possess, but he is also that good itself, both as the object of their love and as their “inherent good”; for “they are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency.” This excellency is the grace of God, the divine love, the Holy Spirit himself, who dwells within them. Man's faith is thus a humble receptivity to divine love, a total consent of his own being to absolute Being and regeneration restores the image which can alone reflect the glory of God If God is the Being of beings, the source and sum of all being, what such a God does must be right. “The bare consideration that God is God,” he says in a sermon, “may well be sufficient to still all objections and opposition against the divine sovereign dispensations (11)”. This is of course Calvinism, but Calvinism with a difference, for God is also the inherent good (1967:156).

Edwards', in his *Ethical Writings*, declares:

God in seeking his glory, therein seeks the good of his creatures: because^o the emanation of his glory (which he seeks and delights in, as he delights in himself and his own eternal glory) implies the communicated excellency and happiness of his creature. And that in communicating his fullness for them, he does it for himself: becauseⁱ their good, which he seeks, is so much in union and communion with himself. God is their

good. Their excellency and happiness is nothing but the emanation and expression of God's glory: God in seeking their glory and happiness, seeks himself: and in seeking himself, i.e. himself diffused and expressed (which he delights in, as he delights in his own beauty and fullness), he seeks their glory and happiness (Appendixes: paragraph 459).

Edwards continued:

It appears that all that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that tone phrase, the glory of God . . . in the creature's knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in and praising God the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged; his fullness is received and returned. Here is both an emanation and remanation. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole is of God and in God and to God; and he is the beginning, and the middle and the end (Appendixes: paragraph 531).

Jonathan Edwards's life and ministry had a profound effect in at least four areas. First, he believed, taught, and wrote extensively on the all-glorious God and gospel, found in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The gospel message was the same for Christian and non-Christian. Stephen Nichols quotes Edwards on this issue:

Don't slack off seeking, striving, and praying for the very same things that we exhort unconverted people to strive for, and a degree of which you have had in conversion. Thus pray that your eyes may be opened, that you may receive sight, that you may know your self and be brought to God's feet, and that you may see the glory of God and Christ, may be raised from the dead, and have the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart. Those that have most of these things still need to pray for them; for there is so much blindness and hardness and pride and death remaining that they still need to have that work of God upon them, further to enlighten and enliven them. This will be a further bringing out of darkness into God's marvelous light, and a kind of new conversion (2001:28).

Second, he was among the first to develop “concerts of prayer.” Thomas Schafer informs us:

A group of Scottish ministers had proposed a weekly interdenominational and international “concert of prayer” for evangelism and missions. Edwards supplied an enthusiastic commendation of the idea in his Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God’s People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth, which was published in 1748. The idea caught on in early nineteenth-century America and elsewhere, mainly through the circulation of Edwards’s writings (the great revival of 1857-58 began in such prayer groups) and continues to the present in the form of world-wide communion and world days of prayer (1967: 161).

Third, Edwards had a deep devotion to church planting and missions (he preached evangelistically for the “lost” to come to faith in Christ) and personally championed church planting missionary activities in New England and to the North American Indians. Edwards spent the last seven years of his ministry life working to begin a church among the Housatonic tribe in a remote village near Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

Fourth, he contributed to the training and coaching of over sixteen parish ministers, missionaries and church planting pastors. Most notable among these were Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, who is sometimes referred to as “the father of modern missions in America.”

Influence on Joseph Bellamy

During Edwards’ pastorate in Northampton he trained and coached young ministers and church planting missionaries. Joseph Bellamy was one such young man. Edwards would write that Bellamy “is one of the most intimate friends that I have in the world” (Williams 1928: 228). Bellamy first met Edwards at Yale, when Edwards was

tutoring students. Following graduation in 1735, he went to Northampton to serve in an apprenticeship with Edwards. He was licensed to preach in 1737 and preached from time to time in the early months of 1738 in his home church in Cheshire, Connecticut (Miscellanies: 645, 646).

George Marsden describes Bellamy: “He was a large, impressive, somewhat rough mannered young man, known for his wit and intellect and as a powerful preacher. He became one of Edwards’ most valued friends and allies” (2003:239). He adds: “Edwards’ closest friendships were with such younger protégés, including a number who succeeded Bellamy as students and guests in the Edwards household” (2003:239).

Bellamy remained in the Edwards’s home through 1738 until he began to preach regularly in Worcester, Massachusetts, in June. He was still not ordained but Edwards was no doubt very involved in his development as a minister. Edwards met with him and corresponded frequently by letters, answering questions and offering advice. Bellamy also continued to watch and learn from Edwards’s experiences as a senior pastor. In November 1738, Bellamy went to a new congregation in Bethlehem, Connecticut, and remained there as their pastor until his death in 1790. Over the next several years, Edwards continued to coach Bellamy as a pastor and theologian. He wrote letters and shared face-to-face meetings and preaching opportunities.

Edwards had a lasting effect on the ministry of Bellamy. Through his correspondence, Edwards continued to coach Bellamy in his role as pastor. Marsden records one such instance:

This same letter shows that Edwards, as we might expect, had weightier matters on his mind. Bellamy had asked him to find him some of the classic Reformed works on divinity. Edwards mentioned Francis Turretin,

the seventeenth-century Swiss systematizer of Reformed dogma, as excellent on the five points of Calvinism and polemical divinity. Even better, he said was the Dutch theologian, Peter van Mastricht of the late seventeenth century. “But take Mastricht . . . for divinity in general, doctrine, practice, and controversy; or as an universal system of divinity; and it is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world except the Bible, in my opinion” (2003:318).

Joseph Bellamy became “a gifted preacher, a successful itinerant, much sought after theological teacher, popular clerical leaders appreciated author and interpretive theologian” (Anderson: 398). Evidently, Edwards’s ongoing relationship with Bellamy, coaching him in ministry skill and theology, served to equip him for a lifelong ministry of success.

Influence on Samuel Hopkins

Edwards had many other young protégés to whom he imparted, in the context of a relationship, encouragement and skills to succeed in the task of starting or pastoring a church. One such young church planting candidate was Samuel Hopkins. What is remarkable is that even though he had never met Edwards, Hopkins arrived unannounced at his home in Northampton and stayed from December 1741 through March 1742. After the first three months, he went home to Waterbury, Connecticut, to be licensed to preach. Hopkins returned to stay with Edwards in Northampton from the spring of 1742 until May or June of 1743. By this time, the Edwardses’ home was known as the “school of the prophets,” having become a training station for pastors and church planters. During this period, Hopkins served as interim pastor of a congregation in Simsbury, Connecticut, but his time apparently was spent mostly under Edwards’s tutelage.

On completing his degree at Yale, Hopkins had planned to begin additional training with Gilbert Tennent. When Hopkins, however, heard Edwards deliver the commencement address at Yale, he changed his mind: “Though I then did not obtain any personal acquaintance with him, any further than hearing him preach . . . I altered my former determination with respect to Mr Tennent, and concluded to go and live with Mr Edwards as soon as I should have opportunity” (Murray: 179).

Hopkins described his own condition when he arrived in Northampton: “I was in a Christless, graceless state, and had been under a degree of conviction and concern for myself for a number of months; had got no relief, and my case, instead of growing better, appeared to grow worse” (Works, vol.1: lvii). Jonathan and Sarah Edwards were adept at preaching the gospel to their young protégés. It was part of their coaching ministry in preparing church planting pastors and missionaries. Hopkins was nourished with the gospel. Apparently, he also learned the skills of preaching, small group leadership and bible study through the training he had received from Edwards in Northampton.

Hopkins eventually went to plant a new church in the North Parish of Sheffield, (also known as Housatonick, Massachusetts) which was a small settlement of only thirty families. From April 1770 until his death in December 1803, he was the pastor of the First Church in Newport, Rhode Island. For thirty years, he planned and worked for an African mission led by freed slaves. During this time, he recruited two members of his church, former slaves, and sent them to Princeton to train for church planting missions to Africa.

Murray informs us: “A bond was to develop between Edwards and Hopkins which endured for life. There were to be many other visits by Hopkins to Northampton

following the six or seven months which he spent there in 1741-42” (1987:181). In fact, Hopkins would eventually write the first biography on the life of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards had excelled in developing a relationship with his coachee, Hopkins.

Influence on Contemporary Missions and Pastors

Marsden explains Edwards’ life:

Edwards was extraordinary. By many estimates, he was the most acute early American philosopher and the most brilliant of all American theologians. At least three of his many works—*Religious Affections*, *Freedom of the Will*, and *The Nature of True Virtue*—stand as masterpieces in the larger history of Christian literature. The appeal of his thought endures. Every year several new books and scores of academic articles, reviews, and dissertations appear about him. Yet he also wrote effectively for popular audiences. His celebrated biography of David Brainerd was a best-selling religious text in nineteenth-century America and encouraged countless Christians to seek lives of disinterested sacrifice and missionary service A heralded preacher, he delivered what became America’s most famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (2003:1).

Jonathan Edwards not only influenced the lives of Bellamy and Hopkins, along with his contemporaries such as Samuel Buell, John Sergeant, Job Strong and Gideon Halley but his legacy continues into the modern era of missions and church planting. In 1749 he published *The Life of David Brainerd*, which has been used in missionary promotion ever since. Noll describes the reemergence of Edwards’s influence in modern evangelical circles:

Beginning in the 1950s with the Welsh preacher Martin Lloyd-Jones and the British publisher, the Banner of Truth Trust, Edwards’s substantial theological works were once again put to use in evangelical circles. More recently, Richard Lovelace of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary has proposed Edwards as a model for holistic renewal of churches, Iain Murray has written a substantial biography stressing the spiritual Edwards with whom academics (despite their fascination with Edwards’s mind) are

sometimes uncomfortable, and John Piper, a Baptist pastor in the Twin Cities, has written powerful books that lean heavily on Edwards in arguing for a God-centered vision of existence (for example, *The Pleasures of God*) (1993: 857).

Edwards's theology has also shaped the lives of contemporary theologians, pastors and writers such as James Packer, R. C. Sproul, Steve Childers, Tim Keller, Steve Brown, Charles Colson, John Gerstner, and John Piper.

John Carpenter notes: "Jonathan Edwards' ability to make the sovereignty of God a basis for evangelism had a major impact in sparking the era of modern missions. The Puritan mind combined their convictions about the unity of humanity with their convictions about the sovereignty of God. This mixture helped to spark the "Great Century" (2002:527).

Carl Rogers (1902-1987)

One hundred and forty-four years after the death of Jonathan Edwards another influential leader in coaching and educational development was born in Oak Park, Illinois. Carl Ransom Rogers later described his home life: "I was brought up in a home marked by close family ties, a very strict and uncompromising religious and ethical atmosphere and what amounted to a worship of the virtue of hard work . . . no alcoholic beverages, no dancing, no cards or theater, very little social life, and *much* work" (1969:5).

During his junior year at the University of Wisconsin, Rogers attended the World Student Christian Federation Conference in China. While interfacing with other religious leaders from around the world he came to reject the doctrines his parents had taught him.

He explains: “I was forced to stretch my thinking, to realize that sincere and honest people could believe in very divergent religious doctrines. In major ways I for the first time emancipated myself from the religious thinking of my parents, and realized that I could not go along with them” (1969:7).

After graduating from college, Rogers trained at Union Theological Seminary where he and a group of students formed their own learning community under the supervision of a faculty member. He decided that religious work was not for him. Instead, clinical psychology captivated his learning and life. He worked in child psychology and was deeply influenced by Freudian psychology. He worked for several years in the field of prevention of child cruelty, both as a researcher and psychologist. His first book, *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child*, was published in 1939 and was based on his experience and research in working with children.

Rogers’s thoughts and experiences began to challenge the traditional, formal, or directive approach to learning and change. In 1942 he published his second book, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice*. His approach became known as “non-directive” or “client-centered” counseling. He believed that people are basically cooperative, constructive, and trustworthy and when they are free from defensiveness, their response is positive. He taught that people are good, though with a potential for aggressive or anti-social behavior, which is provoked by threat to or frustration of basic needs. The client “has the capacity to guide, regulate, and control himself, providing only that certain definable conditions exist. Only in the absence of these conditions, and not in any basic sense, is it necessary to provide external control and regulation of the individual” (Koch 1959: 221).

Rogers believed that man was completely autonomous of all external authority:

No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me. Neither the Bible nor the prophets—neither Freud nor research—neither the revelations of God nor man—can take precedence over my own direct experience. My experience is not authoritative because it is infallible. It is the basis of authority because it can always be checked in new primary ways. In this way its frequent error or fallibility is always open to correction (1961: 23, 24).

Since Rogers believed that man is basically good, he practiced and taught that individuals can solve their own problems. “Gradually my experience has forced me to conclude that the individual has within himself the capacity and the tendency, latent if not evident, to move forward to maturity” (Rogers: 35). Therefore, the work of a therapist or teacher is to draw out the real person inside and free him in order to become all that he is supposed to be. According to Rogers, the answers to a client's questions are inside himself. The therapist or teacher, therefore, must reflect the client to himself through asking questions and mirroring his own statements to him.

Rogers suggests that one of the goals of therapy is to move the client “toward being autonomous. By this I mean that gradually he chooses the goals toward which he wants to move. He becomes responsible for himself. He decides what activities and ways of behaving have meaning for him, and what do not” (1969:171).

Larry Crabb explains Rogerian theory:

Rogers likes to believe and firmly teaches that in the circle of man, there is only positive. All that is within is good. Corruption enters from without. People have an inherent self-actualizing tendency which when free from restriction or force channeling will lead to personal satisfaction and social harmony For Rogers all problems have their root in a failure to be oneself. The solution naturally is liberation. Relax the boundaries, implicitly trust the person, encourage self-expression of all that is within

and eventually the drive toward appropriate self-actualization will evidence itself in external and internal feelings of togetherness (1975:32, 33).

Rogers is known as the founder of the humanistic psychology movement and client-centered therapy. He stated his central hypothesis in one sentence: "If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth, and change and personal development will occur" (1969:viii).

Rogers brought his ideology about education and teaching together in a book directed toward educators and teachers. His focus on teaching was on the pupil and attitude of the teacher rather than upon methods or techniques for instruction. He says,

We know that the facilitation of such learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon his curricular planning, not upon his use of audiovisual aids, not upon the programmed learning he utilizes, not upon his lectures and presentations, not upon the abundance of books No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learners (1969:105,106).

Rogers suggests people employ two types of learning. One is cognitive, which to him is meaningless, and the other is experiential, which he considers most significant and authoritative. Cognitive learning includes activities such as rote memorization, data and information gathering. Experiential learning addresses the needs and wants of the learner; it happens in everyday life and has personal relevance for the learner. Education traditionally has involved cognitive or meaningless learning. Rogers outlines the nature of significant learning under ten principles or observations. Based upon them, C. H. Patterson informs us, "Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is perceived by the student as having relevance for her or his own purpose. A person learns

significantly those things which are perceived as involving the maintenance and enhancement of the self" (1977: 19).

Patterson also suggests,

Learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process. When the students choose their own objectives and directions, formulate their own problems, discover their own resources, decide on and follow their own courses of action, and experience and live with the consequences, significant learning is maximized. Self-directed learning is meaningful and relevant (1977:19).

Rogers developed a system for counseling and teaching that focuses on the client or student. He believes the counselor must refrain from interpreting what the client is saying, but rather convey an attitude of positive regard. When the counselor develops an accepting, unconditional relationship with the client and helps to clarify by rephrasing and reflecting back what the client is saying, the client will become fully capable of solving his or her own problems. For Rogers, the problem is outside of the client or student and the answer is inside of them. The role of the counselor is to free up the client from feelings of anxiety or confusion so they will be able to find the answer.

Rogers believes that humans are intrinsically good and are motivated toward self-actualization, or enhancing one's life. Experiences that are perceived as enhancing the self are valued. Anything that impedes self-actualization must be removed. The counselor's role is, through unconditional acceptance, to see the world through the eyes of the client, then mirror that back to the client so the client will see how he sees the world. In this way, the client receives "positive regard." The counselor helps the client by facilitating the process, but the client is responsible for his own growth.

Rogers's theory and practice has influenced much of modern theory and practice, not only in education and counseling, but also in the field of coaching. We will explore the two leaders, in contemporary coaching, John Whitmore and Miles Downy, who have been most influential in applying Rogers's humanistic coaching methodology.

Sir John Whitmore (1937-)

In 1992 John Whitmore published what became "widely accepted as the definitive book on coaching methodology in the business context" (Whitmore 2002: 1). His book, *Coaching for Performance*, has sold over five-hundred thousand copies in seventeen languages. He is currently the chairman of Performance Consultants, in London, but earlier in his career, he was a professional race car driver and a member of the Le Mans Ford team, winning several international sports car races. After leaving racing, he studied psychology and became interested in humanistic psychology. During this time, he met Tim Gallwey, the founder of The Inner Game, who trained him to coach.

Whitmore developed his own theory and practice of coaching over the next several years. His research led him to follow the humanistic psychology taught by Abraham Maslow, a contemporary of Carl Rogers, and in a way a co-founder with Rogers of the "self-actualizing" movement. According to Whitmore,

Maslow's highest state was the self-actualizing person who emerges when both the esteem needs are satisfied and the individual is no longer driven by the need to prove themselves, either to themselves or to anyone else. He called this self-actualizing because self-actualized would have implied that we could really arrive there, whereas he saw it as a never-ending journey (Whitmore 2002: 111).

Along with Rogers, Maslow taught that men are innately good and their tendencies are predominantly healthy and benign. The role of the teacher or counselor is to assist the student or client to discover their own ideas, interests and desires. “Maslow contributed more than just his hierarchy—he was one of the founders of humanistic psychology that emerged after psychoanalysis and behaviorism. . . . The goal of humanistic psychology was the fulfillment of human potential through self awareness . . .” (2002:119).

Whitmore has become known as the “father of modern business coaching.” He defines coaching as “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” (2002:8). In his view, coaching works because of the supportive relationship between the coach and the coachee. “For coaching to work at its best the relationship between the coach and the coachee must be one of partnership in the endeavor, of trust, of safety and of minimal pressure. The check, the key and the ax have no place here, as they can serve only to inhibit that relationship” (2002:20).

Whitmore also believes that the answers to the coachee’s issues, problems, or needs reside within himself, and the coach is not to provide him with the answer. “The coachee does acquire the facts, not from the coach but from within himself” (2002:7). Whitmore’s understanding of how people change is founded upon his view that “self-belief, self-motivation, choice, clarity, commitment, awareness, responsibility and action are the products of coaching” (2002:38).

Whitmore believes that there are at least two keys to good coaching. One is awareness, “which is the product of focused attention, concentration and clarity It is the gathering and clear perception of the relevant facts and information, and the ability to

determine what is relevant” (2002:33). The second key is responsibility. “When we truly accept, choose or take responsibility for our thoughts and our actions, our commitment to them rises and so does our performance. When we are ordered to be responsible, told to be, expected to be or even given responsibility, if we do not fully accept it performance does not rise” (2002:37). Holding the coachee responsible for his own growth, change and development is vital to a good coaching paradigm.

For Whitmore, asking questions is the best way to create awareness and responsibility. However, he stresses that it is important to ask the right kind of questions. Some types of questions are more effective than others in creating both awareness and responsibility. He suggests that “the primary form of verbal interaction from a good coach is in the interrogative” (2002:46). The best types of questions begin with words such as, what, when, who, how much, or how many. Asking interrogative questions allow the coachee to focus on what is important to him.

Reflecting back to the coachee is an important aspect of the actual coaching experience. Whitmore writes:

So there are listening, hearing, watching and understanding, and the coach needs to be self-aware enough to know which he is doing. However clear the coach may feel, it is worth reflecting back to the coachee from time to time summarizing points. This will ensure correct understanding and reassure the coachee that he is being fully heard and understood. It also gives him a second chance to check on the veracity of what he has said (2002:50).

It is uncertain if Whitmore was the first to develop the GROW model for coaching, but he is regularly associated with its usage. GROW is an acronym for the sequence of coaching questions. He explains: “So the sequence of questions I would suggest would follow four distinct headings: GOAL setting for the session as well as short and long

term. 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” (2002:54). The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates Whitmore’s overall view of managing by coaching.

The GROW model encourages the coach to follow a sequence of questioning. Under each heading there is a series of questions to facilitate the coachee’s development and advancement through awareness and responsibility.



FIGURE 1. MANAGEMENT BY COACHING. (Whitmore 2002: 174)

Goal setting is the aim for the first part of the coaching session. “We invariably begin a coaching session by determining a goal for the session itself” (2002:57). In this first entry point, it is incumbent on the coach to allow the coachee to set the agenda. Whitmore suggests that the coach must distinguish between end goals (what the final objective is) and performance goals (specific outcomes providing the means of measuring progress). It is imperative for the coachee to have personal ownership of the goals set forth.

In developing performance goals, Whitmore suggests three goal approaches: SMART, PURE, and CLEAR. “SMART stands for goals which are Specific, Measurable, Agree, Realistic and Time Phased”, but PURE: Positively stated, Understood, Relevant, Ethical, and CLEAR: Challenging, Legal, Environmentally sound, Appropriate and Recorded” (2002: 61).

Suggested questions for the coach to use in this first on-ramp into the coaching session include the following:

What is the subject matter or issue on which you would like to work?
What form of outcome are you seeking by the end of this coaching session? How far and how detailed do you expect to get in this session?
In the long term what is your goal related to this issue? What is the time frame? What immediate steps can you identify, with their time frames (2002: 174)?

The next coaching step is to help the coachee determine reality.

The most important criterion for examining REALITY is objectivity. Objectivity is subject to major distortions caused by the opinions, judgments, expectations, prejudices, concerns, hopes and fears of the perceiver. Awareness is perceiving things as they really are; self-awareness is recognizing those internal factors that distort one’s own perception of reality (2002: 68).

It is vital that the coach and coachee do the necessary work to overcome the distortions to reality. Whitmore advises coaches to remain emotionally detached and phrase questions that elicit descriptive answers, sticking to the facts as they are known. The aim is to raise the coachee's deeper awareness, empowering him to new levels. The role of the coach is to "follow the interest or train of thought of the coachee" (2002:70).

Questions to prompt the reality insights might include the following:

What is the present situation in more detail? What and how great is your concern about it? Who is affected by this issue other than you? How much control do you personally have over the outcome? What action steps have you taken on it so far? What stopped you from doing more? What obstacles will need to be overcome on the way? What resources do you already have? Skill, time enthusiasm, money support, etc.? What is really the issue here, the nub of the issue or the bottom line (2002: 175)?

The third step in the coaching session is Options. Here, the coach is not trying to find the right answer but to facilitate the coachee in listing as many opportunities and alternatives as possible. "The quantity of options is more important at this stage than the quality and feasibility of each one" (Whitmore: 81). When an effective coach develops a non-judgmental relationship with the coachee, it facilitates creativity in problem solving.

Questions a coach may utilize in assisting the coachee in discovering his own options might include the following:

What are all the different ways in which you could approach this issue? Make a list of all the alternatives, large or small, complete and partial solutions. What else could you do? What would you do if you had more time, a larger budget or if you were the boss? What would you do if you could start again with a clean sheet, with a new team? Would you like to add a suggestion from me (2002:175)?

Once the listing of options is completed, the will phase may become easier and clearer.

The coachee may be able to easily determine which of the options he will act on and

when. The coach may have to be ruthless in activating the will of the coachee. He must resist deciding or telling the coachee which of the options are the best or most important because the coachee must own the action plan. Whitmore suggests the coach ask action questions, such as: “What are you going to do?,” “When are you going to do it?,” “Will this action meet your goal?” (2002: 89). The coachee must make a decision and the coach, by asking clarifying questions, helps focus on the details. “When are you going to do it? This is the toughest of all the questions. We all have big ideas of what we would like to do or are going to do, but it is only when we time frame it that it takes on a level of reality” (2002: 89).

Whitmore suggests additional questions that will move the coachee toward action:

Will this action meet your goal? What obstacles might you meet along the way? Who needs to know? What are your criteria and measurements for success? What support do you need? How and when are you going to get that support? What personal resistance do you have, if any, to taking these steps? What commitment, on a scale of one-to-ten, do you have to taking these agreed actions (2002: 90, 176)?

After the session, the coach should give the coachee a clear and accurate written summary of the session, the action steps agreed, and the coachee’s answers to the WILL questions. Then, the coach needs to offer personal help, encouragement and appreciation for the coachee. Whitmore concludes, “I want the coachee to leave the session feeling good about himself and about his chances of getting the job done. If he does, then it will be” (2002: 92).

Myles Downey

Myles Downey is the Director of Studies at the School of Coaching in the UK, which he founded in 1997. He is also a partner in Downey Coaching and Consultancy, located in London. He is the author of *Effective Coaching: Lessons from the Coach's Coach*, and has a worldwide reputation as an executive coach and trainer of coaches. He has been influenced by Sir John Whitmore, Carl Rogers, and Tim Gallwey, author of *The Inner Game of Tennis*. Downey's non-directive approach "is essentially an offshoot of The Inner Game, although it has borrowed much from other sources, not least Carl Rogers (Downey 2003:20).

Downey's non-directive approach defines *coaching* as "the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another" (Downey 2003:21). Since coaching is primarily concerned with the performance of the coachee, anything the coach says or does should be done with that end in mind. Coaching, however, also involves learning as an outcome. The coach, therefore, must keep in mind how the coachee is learning new skills, tasks, or technology. Downey also explains *facilitating* as the work of the coach to enable the player (coachee) to explore, gain awareness, grasp an understanding he lacked, and make a better decision for himself. Downey explains, "Facilitating implies that the person being coached has the capacity to think something through for himself, to have an insight or creative idea. It acknowledges that people can learn without being taught" (2003:21).

Non-directive coaching is the theory that the coach does not instruct, direct or tell the coachee anything. The coach works to tap into the energy, instincts and creativity within the coachee so that he learns for himself. Downey believes that the coachee has

all that he needs within himself. The coach facilitates learning, understanding that the coachee sometimes may become stuck and unable to move ahead. Downey suggests that in those times, the coach give appropriate feedback or advice. However, “the magic inhabits the non-directive end of the spectrum” (2003: 24).

Downey encourages the use of a modified GROW model for coaching. The GROW model was formulated through his experience in working with coachees. According to Downey it was not formulated in theory, but intuition and practice. Coaching was already being practiced before it was “discovered” (2003:25). The GROW model diagram (Figure 2) outlines Downey’s process.

As noted by the diagram, Downey added a feature to the GROW model, which differs some from Whitmore. He includes *Topic* because he believes it critical to the coaching process that the coach and coachee identify specifically what the coachee wants

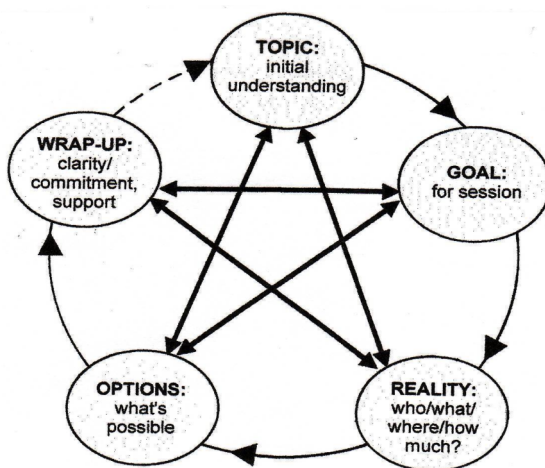


FIGURE 2. The GROW Model (Downey 2003:25)

to talk about. It is vital for the coach to know what the emotional significance is for the coachee, what the scope of the topic is in terms of the whole, and what the longer-term vision is for the topic being brought to the table. Downey calls the model “To Grow,” borrowing the “To” from topic (2003:26).

Downey explains the other parts of GROW in similar fashion with the classic usage: Goal, Reality, Options and “Wrap-Up”, which he changes from “Will”. He suggests that the goal may have the greatest impact on the success of the coaching conversation. He adds that “goal” is probably better understood as “outcome” for the coaching time. The coach is helping the coachee discern and agree to a number of clear and achievable outcomes for the conversation.

In the Reality phase, the conversation turns toward discerning an accurate picture of the topic.

In this phase the primary function of the coach is to understand: not to solve, fix, heal, make better or be wise, but to understand. No analysis, no problem solving, no wisdom, no good ideas, no jumping to conclusions. The magic is that it is in that moment of understanding that the player understands for themselves, becomes more aware and is then in a position to make better decisions and choices than they would have done anyway (2003:29).

Once the goals are in place and there is a clear understanding of the situation, the discussion turns to what possibilities are available to deal with the topic. The coach’s job is to draw out of the coachee what options or possibilities of action exist, without being biased or judgmental. After a list has been drawn up and numerous options offered, the final stage is for the coachee to select the next steps.

It is almost always useful to get the player to say exactly what their action plan is—some coaches have the tendency to say, “so your action plan is”. If the player states the action plan it ensures clarity and agreement and ,

from the tone of voice, the coach can ascertain the level of commitment. In this stage the coach's intention is to gain communication to action (2003:32).

Downey adds another element to his coaching regime. He labels it "the Model T." "The Model T is a remarkably powerful technique for making progress in the GROW model. It suggests that you expand the conversation first, then focus on the detail" (2003:34,35). The idea of the Model T is that the coach has the flexibility to expand the conversation in any of the phases. Coaches may be tempted to think or reason for the coachee instead of allowing the coachee to remain on his own agenda. Utilizing the tool of expanding the conversation prior to the details may assist the coach in sticking to the need of the coachee. The Model T diagram is illustrated in Figure 3.

Downey has a bias toward the non-directive approach to coaching, but he is aware of its limitations. He understands that there is no one right way to coach. He explains that the trick is keeping a balance:

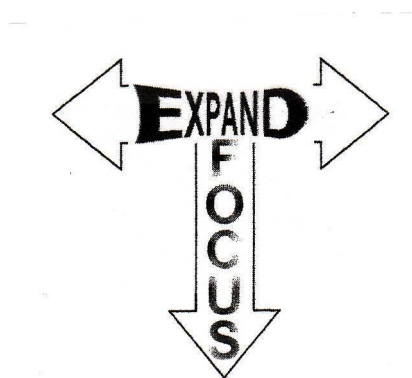


FIGURE 3. THE MODEL T. (2003: 35)

There is a very delicate balance to be struck because I do not want to give licence to those who might revert to type—or more accurately habit—and

to start instructing, making suggestions, giving advice or , worse still, attempting to control. The balance is between retaining what is vital in the non-directive model (ownership, responsibility, learning, high performance) and acknowledging that the person doing the coaching has intelligence, experience, intuition and imagination that, in many cases, will almost certainly be of value to the player. Imagine withholding a really good idea from the player—that would serve no-one’s interests. And so I want to debunk the notion that there is a correct way to coach (2003:187).

Downey believes that a key element to being a good coach is the ability to clear away all interference. One area of interference is the “thoughts, opinions and judgment that the person coaching might have of the player” (2003:189). He invites the coach to have a mindset of the person being coached that will free him from interference. He makes four propositions which he believes to be appropriate for a coaching relationship to be healthy: “People have huge potential; People have a unique map of reality—not reality itself; People have good intentions; and People are achieving their own objectives, perfectly at all times” (2003:192, 193).

In Downey’s postscript to his theory and practice he challenges the coach to have insight and understanding of his own uniqueness, including his own skills and models for coaching, along with insights into one’s inner game. He reminds coaches, “Effective coaching . . . requires a predominantly ‘non-directive’ approach, an approach that evokes excellence, in which learning is intrinsic and satisfaction derives from the pursuit and achievement of meaningful goals. This is what effective coaching can be” (2003:197).

Influence of Rogerian Coaching on Christian Coaching

Robert Logan (1953-)

Bob Logan, President of CoachNet International Ministries, is an internationally recognized leader in coaching and church growth. He has authored more than ten books related to church growth, leadership development and coaching. He was raised in a “staunchly evangelical Baptist church in Santa Monica, California” (Logan 1989: 9). He earned a degree in chemistry from the University of Southern California in 1974 and then entered Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, where he prepared for pastoral ministry. He received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1984.

In 1977 Logan moved to Alta Loma, California, to start a new church. During that time, he had a life-changing encounter with the monumental difficulties in planting a new church and promised God that he would give himself to serving other planters. The church he planted, Community Baptist Church, grew over the following eleven years to more than 1,200 people. It also became a church planting church, launching six daughter churches in four years.

After several seasons of personal struggle, he accepted the position of Vice President for New Church Development with Church Resource Ministries in Anaheim, California. Later, he founded CoachNet to serve the needs of church planters and church leaders. By this time, his vision for church planting mission had expanded:

Empowering leaders to start churches that will start churches, resulting in church multiplication movements; developing culturally appropriate, reproducible strategies to accelerate the multiplication of disciples, groups and churches within cities, regions and countries; raising up leaders for the harvest and from the harvest through reproducible systems of evangelism and leadership development; and cultivating networks for pastors and key leaders to facilitate effective church growth and church planting, giving

special attention to prayer, vision, mutual support, organization and personalized coaching (Payne 2006: 4).

Logan had various theological influences in his life. His parents were Methodists, but he attended a Presbyterian church for five years until he ended up in a conservative Baptist church. Missiologically, he was more attracted to the work of John Wesley than George Whitefield. Of the two men, Logan observed:

I've often thought about the difference between George Whitefield's ministry and John Wesley's ministry. I would say that based upon my assessment of these men's lives, that each equally had the anointing of God on their lives When you compare though the lasting fruit of their ministries, you do not find much of an impact from George Whitefield's ministry in terms of lasting church growth where disciples were made and remained in the church. Whereas you take a look at John Wesley's ministry and you are left with a whole movement of churches that in the generation after Wesley's death, saw more people come to know Christ, than even during Wesley's lifetime (Payne 2006: 12).

Wesley's approach to developing sustainable systems for evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and church reproduction are viewed by Logan as the most effective means for advancing God's glorious Kingdom on earth. To grow leaders, Logan has devoted much of his work to coaching and coaching methodology.

Logan defines coaching as "the process of coming alongside a person or team to help them discover God's agenda for some part of their life and ministry, and then cooperating with the Holy Spirit to see that agenda become reality" (Logan and Reinecke 2003: 3). The goal of coaching is helping someone succeed in discovering and doing the will of God. He stresses this many times in his writings and lectures. In order for this style of coaching to happen well, a relationship must develop between coach and coachee.

Later, Logan expands his definition by adding, “Coaches walk alongside people throughout the whole process: clarifying goals, brainstorming plans, trying them out, revising them, trying again, and celebrating successes. They help people discover who God made them to be and delight in the unique mission he has called them to accomplish” (Logan and Carlton 2003:23).

At the heart of all coaching is listening and asking good questions. It is important, Logan writes, for the coach to “understand the stages of the coaching process,” because it provides an “important road map for the relationship, but each stage—at its core—is about listening and asking good questions” (2003: 21). In fact, Logan advocates that “one of the cardinal rules of coaching is ‘Ask, don’t tell.’ Never tell a person something they can discover on their own” (2003: 53).

Logan appreciates the way people can solve their own problems if the coach asks good questions and listens closely. “When I summarize what others are saying, invite them to say more, and keep unpacking their resources, they will solve their own problems 70 percent to 80 percent of the time without any input from me” (2003: 35). One of Logan’s key approaches to coaching is to ask questions, keep asking questions, and never tell them anything because they can solve their own problems.

Since coaching is more an art than a science, it is important for coaches to learn the basic process for coaching. In order to learn the process, Logan had Dr. Charles Ridley conduct a qualitative research project to “define the process and outcomes of coaching, creating a road map that could guide people’s thinking” (2003: 28).

Out of the research, Logan developed his system for coaching called “The 5 R’s,” which stand for Relate, Reflect, Refocus, Resource and Review” (2003:29). Logan

believes anyone can coach by learning the basic method of coaching. However, learning the methodology is important because it gives the coach a map to follow. He writes, “Every journey requires a good map. Coaching is no different. Coaches need an easy framework that helps them understand what needs to be accomplished in the coaching process—a framework that will guide them through the journey walking alongside the person they are guiding” (Logan and Reinecke 2004: 2).

Through research, Logan developed a method of coaching that begins with the relate phase: “Relate: Establish the coaching relationship and agenda” (Logan & Reinecke: 29). “During the relate phase, the coach is CONNECTING on several fronts, namely the personal, spiritual, and philosophical. Forming a trusting, growing relationship will exponentially increase the significance and effectiveness of coaching” (2004: 3). Logan wisely observes,

Coaching at its core is about qualities like trust, connection, support, and understanding. Coaching is a relationship. Sometimes coaches are tempted to skip over the relate stage in hopes of getting to the meat of things faster and accomplishing more. Don’t do that. That strategy will backfire. Coaching that leaves out the relational element may move through agenda items faster, but will ultimately be ineffective. Ninety percent of the time the people who have the deepest impact on our lives are those we know on a personal level, those who have taken the time to invest in developing a relationship with us. Forming a trusting, growing relationship will exponentially increase the significance and effectiveness of your coaching (2004: Tape 1, side A).

The reflect phase is second. The focus in it is to discover and explore key issues. “The reflect phase of the coaching process focuses on the situation at hand: gaining a clear understanding of the factors contributing to a problem, relationship or issue” (2003:4).

Logan suggests that to coach effectively it is essential that the coach and coachee have an accurate picture of where the coachee is, where he has been and where he wants to go.

He adds, “Reflecting well is crucial; it helps us identify our priorities and understand the reality of our situation” (Logan and Carlton 2003: 43).

During this phase, the coach asks probing questions that assist the coachee in discovering the real issues at hand. Questions may include “What good things are happening?” “What are you excited about?” These questions help start the session on a positive note instead of focusing on the problems. Other types of probing questions are asked to ascertain what is really important at the moment, for instance: “What connects you to God’s call?” or “What do you value most?” (2003: 45).

The third phase is refocus, in which the coachee determines priorities and the action steps needed to achieve them. “Essentially, refocusing constitutes the planning stage. After gaining a general sense of direction in the reflect stage, we can now move on to giving our vision some definition and specificity. It’s time to create a game plan and come up with concrete steps that can take us where we want to go” (2003: 61).

During this stage, it is important that the coachee does not get bogged down or myopic in his list of possible action steps. The coach should help the coachee brainstorm all possibilities and challenge them “to help clarify who, what, and when the action plan will be implemented. To a great extent, a solid action plan determines the success of the coaching relationship” (Logan and Reinecke 2003: 35).

In the fourth phase, resource, the coach is to provide support and encouragement. “The resource phase of the coaching process centers on the implementation of the action plan. The coach provides resources in the form of accountability, pinpointing needs, and making mid-course corrections. Follow-up provides accountability and support for the leader during the change process” (Logan and Reinecke 2004: 6).

During this phase, the coach is focused on strategizing with the coachee.

Logan suggests that action steps, with time-lines and specific tasks to employ, along with people and other needed resources, are written out. A good coach will assist the coachee by directing him to the kinds of resources necessary to accomplish the objectives.

However, coaches may be uncertain as to how much to be involved in resourcing the coachee for fear they are overstepping. If the coach is unsure as to how to resource the coachee, Logan recommends he simply ask him, “What can I do to support you?”

The final phase, review, is a time for evaluating, celebrating, and revising plans (Logan and Reinecke 2003: 2). “At this point, we look back over our progress and ask, ‘What has been accomplished?’ and ‘How far have we come?’ Although we’re often tempted to skip this phase and move on to the next project, the growth potential of the review stage is considerable” (Logan and Carlton 2003: 85).

In Logan’s methodology, the primary task of the coach is to summarize the key learnings of the process. During this stage, the coach and coachee celebrate all that has happened. They also evaluate the coaching relationship and consider whether they want to end it or renew it.

Logan has developed a system for coaching methodology that is easy to follow. The win is that the coachee discovers and does the will of God. Logan has also been careful, however, not to leave out the competencies of the coach himself as a key factor in establishing a healthy coaching experience. He suggests that there are nine competencies for a coach that are structured under three categories:

Foundational (abiding in Christ, self-assessing and communicating);
Relational (establishing, supporting and concluding); and Strategic
(diagnosing, planning and monitoring) and excellent coaches master all

nine competencies to help leaders and teams clarify what God has called them to achieve and cooperate with His Spirit to advance in their personal and ministry development (Logan and Reinecke 2004: 8-9).

Although there is nothing in his written materials that is church planter specific, Logan certainly believes that coaching is essential for church planters. He says,

Coaching may very well be the single most important ingredient for success in a new church plant. Everyone needs to learn from those who have traveled the path of life and ministry ahead of them—great benefits can be reaped from their wisdom and experience. Having someone to guide new church planters along the sometimes difficult path of ministry can be invaluable (quoted in Childers 2005: 2-1).

Tony Stoltzfus (1962-)

Tony Stoltzfus, author of *Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach* and *A Leader's Life Purpose* has been involved with coaching for over twenty years. A noted expert in what is termed transformational coaching, he leads coach training events around the world. Stoltzfus is founder of the Relational Coaching Network, as well as the web based Coaching Pastors. Earlier, he co-founded Transformational Leadership Coaching, a Christian-based coaching school in Virginia Beach, Virginia and served as director of training and curriculum development (Umidi 2005: 167).

Stoltzfus defines coaching as “practicing the disciplines of believing in people in order to empower them to change” (Stoltzfus 2005: 7). He explains: “At its heart, leadership coaching is about helping people solve their own problems, not telling them what to do” (2005: 1). One of the necessary tasks of a coach is to ask questions instead of offering advice and counsel to the coachee. However, the coach must refrain from “solution-oriented questions: advice giving masquerading as coaching” (2005:2).

The center of the transformational coaching approach is that it is “relationship-based, goal driven and client-centered” (2005:8). It is the client who sets the agenda. Stoltzfus references John Whitmore as his source for this principle. In addition to the client setting the agenda, the client also is able to solve his own problem. Stoltzfus states, “This shift—from a diagnostic, advice-giving approach where the coach figures out what the issue is and solves it for you, to a curiosity-based, asking method where you solve your own problem—is the central paradigm shift in learning to coach” (2005: 21).

As in other coaching practices and principles observed so far, Stoltzfus also subscribes to the “Ask, don’t tell” approach to coaching (2005: 23). For him, the relationship between coach and client is the agent of change. The coach, utilizing effective questioning instead of suggestion, will keep the client moving forward so as to discover growth and change.

Stoltzfus’ presupposition is that transformational coaching is uniquely Christian because it follows the pattern of how God works with us. “The heart of a transformational coach is the heart of God: loving before changing, accepting before fixing, believing with unconditional love instead of judging” (Umidi: 96). Effective coaches imitate God and the way he deals with his people. God moves toward us based on grace and destiny. Stoltzfus comments,

God gave you something you didn’t deserve (life in place of death) simply as an expression of his own character. He is grace and he is mercy, and therefore he chose to act toward you out of His own heart instead of out of what you had coming. But, there’s a second reason: God made you for something . . . God never lost sight of your destiny—the good works he had created you for (2005:49).

Based upon the core value of God being the example, Stoltzfus offers seven practical examples of how coaches can imitate God in initiating change with their clients:

1. A Coach Listens.
2. A Coach Asks.
3. A Coach Sees More than He/She says.
4. A Coach Gives Responsibility.
5. A Coach Works through Internal Motivation.
6. A Coach Respects Free Will.
7. A Coach Honors Human Uniqueness (2005: 58-59).

Coaching models provide the necessary tools, techniques, and methodology for having an effective experience. The transformational coaching process has seven elements in its model. The first three elements are foundational presuppositions, presented by Stoltzfus as: (1) Coaching is relationship-based; (2) coaching is client-centered; (3) coaching relationships are goal-driven. He states, “These three elements—relationship-based, client-centered and goal-driven—form the context within which the coaching conversation takes place. Within that context lies the centerpiece of the coaching process: the coaching conversation” (2005:80).

The four key pieces that complete the process are listening, asking, acting, and supporting. “Listening and asking are the primary ways the coach moves the conversation forward. These disciplines allow the coach to move clients forward, without telling: the client is allowed to discover the answers, make choices, instead of being told what to do” (Stoltzfus 2005: 81). The conversation also involves action. Once a goal and strategies are set, the role of the coach is to help the client move into action.

Finally, once the client has agreed to a specific course with action steps, the role of the coach is to provide the client with support. Stoltzfus concludes, “Coaches provide consistent accountability for action steps, celebrate progress, affirm their clients’ abilities,

and help them get up off the ground and try again when things don't work. Effective support is a vital part of what makes coaching so successful at engendering change" (2005: 81).

Summarizing the transformational coaching approach, Stoltzfus writes,

The coaching context is relationship-based, client-centered and goal-driven. Within that context, the coaching process is comprised of listening, asking, acting and supporting. Taken together, these seven elements make up the unique coaching methodology. Each characteristic flows directly out of the coaching values . . . (and) the coaching values coupled with this methodology are an interlocking, consistent process for producing change (2005: 82).

Steve Ogne

Since 1990, Steve Ogne has served with Church Resource Ministries as National Coach and Ministry Architect. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Azusa Pacific University, a Master of Arts from Talbot Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry from Bakke Graduate University. He has trained over ten thousand ministry leaders from all over the world. He has co-authored several books on coaching, including *The Church Planter's Tool Kit*, *Empowering Leaders Through Coaching*, and his latest book, *TransforMissional Coaching*. He, along with Robert Logan, developed a church planting system, called New Church Incubators, which are church planting communities designed to provide training, spiritual formation, peer relationships, and coaching. Ogne is a nationally known coach trainer, professor, and leader. In 2005 he formed a partnership with Global Church Advancement and Dr. Steve Childers to facilitate the development of Church Planting Networks. He provides coach training for all of the basic training events hosted by Global Church Advancement.

Ogne's approach to coaching has been steady over the many years he has been teaching and writing. In defining the work of a coach, he states, "Coaches help people develop their God-given potential so that they grow personally and make a valuable contribution to the kingdom of God" (Ogne 2006:1). He distinguishes between a coach and a mentor, saying that a coach "stands beside and 'draws out,' while the mentor goes before and 'pours in' " (Ogne 2006).

Ogne unpacks his definition of a coach in his book, *TransforMissional Coaching*:

Coaches help people . . . Coaching is a relationship between leaders, not a program. It is focused on the leader not the program. . .develop their God-given potential The potential comes from God, not the coach. A coach helps draw out the vision, values, gifts, calling, and passion God has already placed in the leader . . . so that they grow personally . . . Like mentoring, coaching is concerned with the personal (including the leader's family), spiritual, and professional growth of the leader . . . and make a valuable contribution Coaches help leaders accomplish something for God . . . to the kingdom of God Coaches help leaders lead well within their faith community, to ultimately equip individuals within their faith communities to engage and transform the culture as representatives of the kingdom of God (2008: 26-27).

He has been influenced by John Whitmore and advocates the GROW model as a strategy for coaching in *Empowering Leaders through Coaching* and *TransforMissional Coaching*, as well as in his coach training events. However, over the last few years, Ogne has begun moving toward a more "holistic" or "transformissional paradigm" (2008: 29).

"This new coaching paradigm focuses on a leader who is personally transformed through what we call the '4 Cs': clarifying his or her call to ministry and cultivating personal character so that he or she can transform his or her surroundings by creating

authentic community and connecting with the secular culture in a redemptive way”

(Ogne: 29). The diagram in Figure 4 illustrates the connection of the 4 Cs.

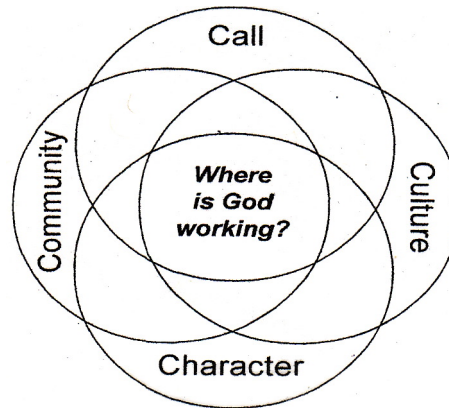


FIGURE 4. SEVEN HABITS AND THE 4 Cs (Ogne and Roehl 2008: 104).

Clarifying the coachee’s calling is the first order of business for the coach. There is no more important calling question than that of following and worshipping God. Ogne terms it the “first-order calling” (Ogne and Roehl 2008: 30). Once that is clarified, the coach may move on to the “second-order calling,” namely, serving as minister of God. “Christian leaders need help discovering and fulfilling both their first and second callings” (2008: 30). Coaches who expect to make significant progress with their coachee will need to be concerned with his or her spiritual formation because it is vital for his or her spiritual journey as well as for protection and power in engaging culture.

The second order of business for the coach is assisting the coachee in developing spiritual character. Most ministry leaders fail or end up with lost authority over moral or character issues. Ogne states, “Coaching is sensitive to and intentional about helping

leaders acknowledge character issues and cultivate character growth” (2008: 33). In order to deal graciously and carefully with character growth, the safety and confidentiality of the coaching relationship is vital. “Coaches help leaders reflect on Scripture and measure their character accordingly while establishing appropriate relationships to provide accountability and encouragement to cultivate good character” (2008: 38).

“The third focus for coaches is to come alongside the leader to help prioritize, create, and experience authentic community, both inside and outside the formal church fellowship” (2008: 38). Learning to live in community is hard work and is far more than having a church program. Most problems in churches are due to broken relationships and the resulting conflict due to lack of authentic community and loving friendship. Ogne suggests the coach practice authenticity with the coachee by listening, sharing personal failure (appropriately), and practicing mutual hospitality as ways in which a coach may engage in community with the coachee.

The coach may also need to help the coachee clearly articulate and define biblical community. “There can be a lot of confusion about what Christian community looks like and about expectations we have of one another” (2008: 42). The coach can encourage the coachee to be in community with others as well as practice it himself.

The last order of business for the coach in Ogne’s paradigm is connecting with culture. He encourages leaders to engage culture around them in a redemptive way.

Sometimes this means helping leaders meet people in the culture. Sometimes it means helping them understand needs and accept the culture. Sometimes it means helping leaders intentionally establish significant relationships in the culture. Sometimes it means keeping leaders accountable for intentional investment in these relationships. Sometimes it means helping leaders stop doing less significant church duties and make time to engage people from the culture. Sometimes it means defending

leaders when they are challenged for focusing on the lost instead of on the believers (2008: 44).

Every good coach has a method or map for coaching clients or players. Ogne developed his own coaching method, which he believes provides the necessary elements of relationship, flexibility, and spiritual awareness. He advocates the GROW model, but has found that younger coachees appreciate his model more because of its relational emphasis.

Ogne's model, the Spiritual Discernment Approach, is termed the "4D Flow" approach (2008: 115). The four D's stand for Discern, Discover, Develop, Depend. Ogne developed this approach after several years of coaching leaders, pastors, emerging leaders, and church planters. I personally have been through his training using this approach and found it very insightful.

The first element, discern, involves finding out where God may be working. Ogne notes, "It is vital to connect personally as you begin your coaching conversation. Take time to find out how life is going Enter his or her world. Even more importantly, seek to discern where God is at work both personally and in ministry" (2008: 116). Some typical questions a coach might use to assist the coachee in discerning where God is working include the following:

How would you describe your personal call to ministry? What about ministry gets you really excited? How is ministry affecting your emotions? How is your personality effecting others? How are others effecting your personality? How would you describe your spiritual climate right now? How would you describe the social environment of your community? How are you raising up leaders in your faith community (Ogne 2006)?

Notice that the discern questions range across the four environments in Ogne's paradigm, as do all the other Ds.

“Discover” deals with finding out how God wants the coachee to participate in where he is working. Questions suggested for the coach include:

Is your call dependent on the success of this ministry? How are you and God doing? Where is God developing your character? Where does God want you to grow relationally? How are you personally impacting the community of faith, positively or negatively? What social activity or social action would move the ministry forward? Where and how have you and your church been especially effective at reaching into your community? Where has there been a significant network of evangelistic relationships? What keeps you or your church from engaging your culture (2006)?

Ogne writes, “As you and the leader talk about where God is expressing His heart, moments of discovery will come. Looking at the situation together, ask what new ideas and insights come to mind. Take time to let fresh options and opportunities come into view. ‘Aha’ or ‘uh-oh’ insights will emerge. Solutions will begin to crystallize” (Ogne and Roehl 2008: 117).

“Develop” answers the question of next steps. Questions recommended by Ogne for facilitating the discussion regarding what action steps need to be taken include the following:

What options do you have to develop your leadership? What one area of your character, personal life, or spiritual life would you most like to develop? What will you do this month? What is the most important thing you can do to strengthen or expand the faith community now? How would you like to see your church connect with the culture? What options do you have? What will you do next (Ogne 2006)?

Ogne tells us, “As coach, you help the leader construct a practical course of action Mapping out a course of action in this way will give the distinct sense that you are coming alongside the Master Planner rather than just manufacturing a strategy” (Ogne and Roehl 2008: 117).

“Depend” asks who or what is needed in order to accomplish what God is calling the coachee to do. The point in this final step is to turn the coachee to dependence on God for the outcome and join him in his plan and work. “We acknowledge our dependence on God by praying about what we’ve talked about. We claim promises from His Word. We remember how He has led in the past and has honored our obedience One of the best things a coach can ask the leader is, ‘How are you going to let your intercessors know about this?’” (2008: 118). A coach may use questions such as these to garner dependence on the Lord: “What do you most need from God right now? Who do you need to help you? How can I help you? Where do we really need God to show up? How will we pray? How are you encouraging prayer and dependence on God with others? What risks will you take to demonstrate dependence on God” (Ogne 2006)?

For Ogne, GROW and his own creation (4D Flow) are similar in their methodology, but he claims there is a spiritual difference between the two:

In many ways, G.R.O.W. and 4D Flow are similar. They both provide the coach a clear path to follow as you walk with the person you coach. They both bring focus, clarity, options, and course of action. They both depend on “aha” or “uh-oh” moments. However the undercurrent of the two approaches is different in that 4D Flow is more intuitive and spiritual (a spiritual discernment model), while G.R.O.W. is somewhat more mechanical and formal (strategic-planning model). As you coach, seek to adapt your coaching strategy to what best fits the leader you are serving. Sharpen your skills. Depend on the Spirit. That’s where the science and art of coaching come together (Ogne and Roehl 2008: 118, 119).

Summary

In this chapter, we have gleaned insights about the nature of man and God from the life and theology of Jonathan Edwards. He is well known as a larger than life

eighteenth-century pastor and theologian, but he was also a church planting coach. He trained and coached young ministers and church planting missionaries including Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins.

Carl Rogers pioneered and advocated a client-centered approach in helping people. Based upon his belief that people are intrinsically good, and corruption enters from the outside, he taught that individuals can solve their own problems if they are freed from anxiety and insecurity. Rogers's vast influence in psychology and education is immeasurable. It has also carried into the modern era of leading experts in the field of coaching, both secular and Christian.

Two British coaching experts who were influenced directly or indirectly by Rogers are John Whitmore and Myles Downey. Both stress Rogers's non-directive approach and use the GROW model in their coaching. Downey, however, recognizes limitations in the non-directive approach and allows for the coach to use some amount of input while avoiding control.

Three Christian coaching experts who have also been influenced to varying degrees by Rogers and Whitmore are Robert Logan, Tony Stoltzfus, and Steve Ogne. All three are contributing to the field of coaching through their writings and seminars.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The Importance of Church Planter Coaching

Various methods and approaches to coaching exist, but does coaching a church planter actually make a difference in the planter and the church plant? Some research has been conducted in three different denominations to determine the significance of having a coach when planting a church.

Dr. Ed Stetzer is a researcher, author and church-planting specialist. Based on his research of over six hundred Southern Baptist church planters, he concludes “Planters who met weekly with a mentor . . . led churches that were almost twice the size of those that had no mentor” (2006: 103).

Steve Ogne also notes the importance of coaching for a church planter by highlighting a 2004 study conducted by the Foursquare Church. Their study found that church planters who met monthly with a coach or mentor increased their baptisms by 150% and experienced a significant increase in worship attendance in contrast to those without a coach or mentor. In addition, the study found,

Of the 425 churches planted between 2001 and 2003, 90 percent of Four Square churches were successful. Of those that failed, 60 percent did not have planters who received coaching in their efforts. In the 40 percent who had been coached, the contact was generally face-to-face, but the frequency was varied, with none more frequent than monthly (Ogne and Roehl 2008: 80).

Dr. Phil Douglas, professor of pastoral studies at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, conducted research on church planting in the Presbyterian Church in America. He found the following in his study: “Almost 42% of the 290 church planters

were mentored and 58% were not mentored. According to this data, effective mentoring would have ensured 5.6%, or 27 more successful church plants than actually occurred” (1995: 163).

Why would having a coach meet with a church planter make such a difference in the new church’s sustainability and growth? There are many variables and coaching certainly does not guarantee success. A coach, however, has the ability to see what the coachee cannot and this can provide feedback, evaluation, and encouragement to the planter. When the typical organizationally-challenged planter enters into the new responsibility of launching a new church in a new community, a coach would undoubtedly be of help. Dr. Steve Childers, President of Global Church Advancement, suggests, “Coaching can double or triple the effectiveness of a church planter” (2005: 2-1).

Some of the greatest athletes in the world, even after excelling in their respective sports, continue to engage the services of a single, or in some cases multiple coaches. Why? Because the great ones know that no athlete performs his way out of needing a coach. Phil Mickelson, one of the most talented golfers in the world, has won several major championships, including the famed Masters three times, yet he has several coaches to help him with his game.

Baseball teams employ batting coaches, pitching coaches, and physical training coaches. American Football teams have offensive coaches, coaches for quarterbacks, linebackers, and special teams. Why? Because they know that the athletes need specialized, focused attention on their particular skill to maximize their potential. Team

owners, coaches, and athletes themselves recognize they need input from those who can see them from the outside.

A few years ago, I decided to join a health club and begin the regimen of getting my body into a healthier condition. I visited a local club and was invited to walk around the facility to see what services they provided. After watching men and women work out on machines I had never seen before, one of my early conclusions was that I would need a personal coach to show me the ropes. I learned several things from that yearlong experience. First, I needed the training coach's knowledge to show me how to get the most out of each exercise. Second, I needed him to train me in a holistic approach (diet, lifestyle, cardio) and not just one area of my life. Third, I needed his encouragement and motivation. Many times he spurred me on with words like, "You can do this, keep going, don't stop yet." Fourth, I discovered that I needed accountability. Many mornings, if I had not scheduled the appointment and prepaid, I would not have gone for the work out. Lastly, he was able to measure progress. We had a starting point and were able to assess improvement as we went along. Coaching was a key to my success.

If one considers the significance of planting a gospel-centered church that will be used to transform the lives of individuals, families, as well as the surrounding culture for generations to come, it is reasonable to conclude that to be the best planter one can be—to excel in the spiritual work of launching Christ's local expression of his kingdom—receiving coaching is a non-negotiable.

Stanley and Clinton note:

Society today is rediscovering that the process of learning and maturing needs time and many kinds of relationships. The "self-made" man or woman is a myth and, though some claim it, few aspire to it. It leaves

people relationally deficient and narrow-minded . . . a coach is particularly important when you step into a new responsibility or try to do something you have never done before. A coach is also helpful when you bog down in a responsibility (1992:18, 73).

I approached coaching church planters with an understanding that what I am doing is vital to the health of the planter and his family, as well as to the organization he is forming. My desire is to do whatever it takes to help planters appropriate the gospel in each situation faced, whether negative or positive, so that progress is made in launching a healthy, gospel-centered church.

In one setting, the planter was not getting the kind of results the mother church's oversight team desired. They called me in to meet with them. The conversation included an explanation by me (his coach) of the big picture. I began, "I look at you folks as the owners of the team. You hired the quarterback and you put him in your jersey and said, 'Go out there and win.' He's not performing up to your expectations, correct?" They answered yes.

I then explained, "Here's how I see my job as coach. It's to prepare him every week to be ready to play up to his personal best, as God has equipped and made him. He will never be a John Elway or Dan Marino. I am not trying to coach him to be that type of level player. But I can assist him in becoming someone in and through whom God can do miraculous things. The importance of coaching is not that he becomes the next mega-church pastor. The importance is that God, by the power of the gospel—a gospel that takes weak and ordinary things and does great things, to show off the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ—will use him and this church to transform the community he is in with the gospel."

Much of the literature has limited the coaching conversation to the coach only asking questions and facilitating the coachee through a process of “self-actualization.”

Andy Stanley suggests that an effective coach needs to be more proactive in the development process of the coachee. He helpfully suggests,

Unlike a typical mentoring arrangement, a leadership coach doesn't simply advise when asked. A coach is going to be more proactive in his instruction and evaluation. A coach is often on the scene watching rather than in an office waiting for a report. In the world of athletics, the coach does not withhold his opinion until asked. Neither does he sit back and watch his protégé make the same mistake over and over without saying something. In the same way, a good leadership coach will do everything in his power to ensure progress. Like an athletic coach, a leadership coach operates as if he has something on the line. A win for the man or woman he is coaching is a win for himself. . . . Good leadership coaches function as if they have something at stake in your performance (2003: 109).

The Impact of a Non-Gospel Approach to Coaching

The GROW approach advocated by John Whitmore and others previously mentioned is also promoted by key Christian leaders such as Jim Griffith, president of Griffith Coaching Network; Jimmy Dodd, former coordinator of church planter coaching for the Presbyterian Church in America and current president of Pastor Serve; Allen Thompson, friend and mentor in church planter assessment and consulting, and President of the International Church Planting Center; and Steve Nicholson, author of the Vineyard Church coaching manual. GROW has its roots in the theology of Carl Rogers.

Rogers is one of the fathers of humanistic psychology. He has done in the counseling and coaching world what the humanist John Dewey did in the educational world. Humanism places an emphasis on subjective experience and human potential. In some respect, it has applied the philosophical expression of existentialism to psychology.

Rogers taught that people could solve their own problems if given the freedom to self-actualize. Why? Because man is morally good and his personal experience is the highest authority. Nothing from the outside can take precedence over one's own direct experience. All that is needed is within him.

A humanistic theology of man believes that man in his basic nature is innately good and has tendencies that are predominantly healthy and benign. The problem to every life issue is "out there" and the solution is inside the person. The coachee innately knows the answer to the issue or problem he is facing. The role of the coach is to draw out of the coachee the solution. Whitmore's theology leaves him to conclude that to "get the best out of people, we have to believe the best is in there" (2002:13).

Rogers developed his views and taught them to university students, who graduated with a human-centered ("client centered" or "learner centered") approach to therapy. Roger's students became teachers, writers, therapists, social workers and pastors. The Rogerian approach has dominated the field of counseling for the last two decades and now dominates the field of coaching. The Christian coaching field is filled with men and women who have accepted and practice the Whitmore/Rogers method of coaching.

Jane Creswell, in her book *Christ Centered Coaching*, writes, "Coaching focuses on promoting discovery By helping you focus on the untapped potential within you, a coach can guide you to discover that potential and what needs to be done. The coach won't provide the answer, make decisions for you, or tell you what to do" (2006:13).

Rogers, Whitmore and the humanistic approach to change have contributed a great deal to a healthy approach of treating others with respect, warmth, and genuineness.

By encouraging coaches to ask good questions, they have created a positive step toward building a good relationship with the coachee. Since some graduate level courses in communication often spend little time developing the listening skills of the students, Rogers's emphasis on asking questions has brought a much needed counterbalance.

However, there are two presuppositions regarding coaching that have flowed from Rogers to Whitmore and into the field of coaching. The first is that coaches never tell the coachee anything, they only ask questions. The second is that people can solve their own problems. There is almost universal acceptance of the companion statement, "Coaches draw out and mentors put in."

In personal or professional life, why do leaders accept the definition that coaches can only ask questions and draw out of their coachees the answers? Why is there, even among Christian coaches, common agreement in the belief that people can solve their own problems? The Scriptures and the gospel of Christ seemingly reject both presuppositions.

The Rogerian theology of man and God has obviously been adopted and applied in the field of coaching. Once again, Nouwen was prophetic when he observed:

Most Christian leaders today raise psychological and sociological questions even though they frame them in scriptural terms. Real theological thinking, which is thinking with the mind of Christ, is hard to find in the practice of ministry. Without solid theological reflection, future leaders will be little more than pseudo-psychologists They will think of themselves as enablers, facilitators, role models, father or mother figures, big brothers or big sisters, and so on, and thus join the countless men and women trying to help their fellow human beings cope with the stresses and strains of everyday living. But that has little to do with Christian leadership (1993:65, 66).

The GROW methodological approach is utilized and encouraged by church leaders as a helpful tool to lead a coaching conversation. Whitmore says that the GROW model is a shift from the old method of coaching (which was instruction), to a new method of coaching: “The coach is not a problem solver, a teacher, an adviser, an instructor or even an expert; he or she is a sounding board, a facilitator, a counselor, an awareness raiser. At least these words should help you to understand what the role implies” (2003: 40).

The definitive explanation of the role of the coach as being a facilitator or counselor exists because of the core belief that man is inherently good. The coach, therefore, utilizes a method that creates an awareness and responsibility that frees the coachee from the inner obstacles hindering performance. Whitmore’s method is tied to his core beliefs. Even though he advocates Whitmore and the GROW model, Allen Thompson rightly explains:

To be effective, a minister must continually experience personal and spiritual renewal. This happens when through the Holy Spirit the leader sees himself as a forgiven sinner, a righteous sinner in Christ. That is what brings confidence and power to his life and ministry. If either a consciousness of sin or acceptance of God’s love is missing, the gospel fails to operate. As coaches, we too, must be clothed with the gospel and experience continual renewal. Then, in our relationship with the church planter, we will stimulate one another to radical repentance and reliance on Christ by faith (2005: 16).

Later, Thompson defines coaching and then unpacks his definition to move beyond Whitmore’s limited methodology of only facilitation by asking questions. “Church planter coaching is developing a supportive relationship with the coachee that leads to continual gospel renewal and character deepening...and that results in the improvement of skills and performance *by a form of instruction* that enables the coachee to build

awareness and responsibility” (2003: 17; emphasis mine). The coach is to utilize three modes of instruction (formal, informal, non-formal) as needed, to unlock the coachee’s potential. The gospel calls us to a multi-dimensional relationship that involves far more than mirroring back to the client his own words and feelings.

The Impact of Edwardsian Theology on Church Planting Missions

Jonathan Edwards was a pastor, educator, seminary president, ministry coach to other church planting pastors as well as a missionary church planter himself, once for a little less than a year in New York City and later for seven years in the remote village of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He published *The Life of David Brainerd* to promote world evangelization and missions. Piper informs us:

Gideon Hawley, one of Edwards’s missionary protégés, carried it in his saddlebag as the only other book besides his Bible, as he traveled among the Indians. John Wesley put out a shortened version of Edward’s *Life of Brainerd* in 1768, ten years after Edward’s death The rise of modern Protestant missionary movement took great inspiration from Edwards and Brainerd The list of missionaries who testify to the inspiration of Jonathan Edwards’s influence . . . is longer than any of us knows: Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke, William Carey, Henry Martyn, Robert Morrison, Samuel Mills, Fredrick Schwartz, Robert M’Cheyne, David Livingstone, Andrew Murray . . . For 250 years Edwards has been fueling the missionary movement with his biography of David Brainerd (1998:60,61).

Ron Davies adds, “Missionary trainer does not seem too grandiose a title to give to Edwards in light of such relationships” (1997:66).

Edwards overarching and central thrust of all that he lived and worked for was “the glory of God in Christ.” This is what fueled his ministry and his commitment to extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ on the earth by planting churches. He was not preoccupied with man as the central figure in the drama of the universe, but with God, as

the Being of beings. Edwards cast a God-centered vision of the universe. The cosmos is for God's own praise, as is his church. The Creator God of the Bible is supreme and all creatures owe him their love and obedience. Edwards was far from holding a humanistic worldview.

For Edwards, the pressing issue for planting new churches was penetrating the culture with the gospel of Christ. He believed that Christ-centered churches would be the means of Christ's rule and transformation of the nations. Unfortunately, we are all idolaters of the self and are mostly interested in how our own lives progress forward. Instead of having God's glory as his central concern, it is possible for a church planter to want to plant a church as a means of finding approval from God or of providing personal security or of enjoying private pleasure of esteem.

In Edwards's view, a good coach would not help a church planter achieve his personal goals or his goals for the mission church if it weren't about the glory of God in Christ. The focus of the planter should be on "God gaining a great reputation for Himself by advancing His Kingdom on this earth through weak people in need of forgiveness, protection and deliverance" (Kaufmann 1997).

Edwards would have raised an objection to the presupposition that man is basically good and can solve his own problems if he were just freed up from all obstacles. Lovelace explains Edwards's critique of people's pretense of goodness that he presented in his sermon "Men Naturally God's Enemies":

Although most human beings give the appearance at times of being confused seekers for truth with a naïve respect for God, says Edwards, the reality is that unless they are moved by the Spirit they have a natural distaste for the real God, an uncontrollable desire to break his laws and a constant tendency to sit in judgment on him when they notice him at all.

They are at mortal enmity with the God revealed in the Bible. Since his purposes cross theirs at every juncture, they really hate him more than any finite object, and this is clearly displayed in their treatment of his Son. They are largely unconscious of this enmity. It is usually repressed through their unbelief, their creation of agreeable false portraits of God, their sense of his distance from us, their fear of punishment or their lack of awareness of the magnitude of their guilt. They are conditioned to pay their respects to some vague image of the Deity, and this is reinforced by fear and self-interest (1979:86).

Edwards's view of the human heart is that it has fallen wholly "under the power and government of self-love . . . is now de-based, and ignoble and selfish" (1969: 157). We are born with original sin and the human heart has shrunk into total selfishness. The love of self is the master of the soul.

Edwards's understanding of the Bible is that man is not good, nor even "basically good." Man is so desperate in his condition, so alienated from God, that he must have a supernatural, outside-in, work in his life. We abandoned God and became slaves of a private, narrow, and limited self-love. Whereas the humanistic approach says the problem is "out there" and the answer or solution is inside the person, the gospel teaches that the problem is not outside, but "inside the heart and mind" and the answer is found "outside himself" in Christ. Edwards explains this idea of the affections of the inward being:

The foundation of all holy affections is in moral excellence and the beauty of holiness. There is a love of holiness for its own sake that inclines people to practice holiness. Holiness is thus the main business that excites, draws and governs all gracious affections. No wonder then that all such affections tend to holiness, *for men will be united to and possessed by that which they love and desire*. And what has been observed of the divine teaching and leading of the Spirit of God in gracious affections will show a tendency toward a universal, holy practice. The Holy Spirit gives the soul a natural relish for the sweetness of what is holy and for everything that is holy as it comes into view. He also intensifies a dislike and disgust of everything that is unholy (1996: 170; emphasis added).

As stated before, people do what they love to do. Man is self-justifying and self deceived. “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jer 17:9). We easily justify our actions, thoughts, attitudes and plans. We have the potential to lie to ourselves and deceive ourselves. For a coach, therefore, to simply ask questions with the assumption that a person is able to find the answer within himself is, at the very least, an offer of false hope. “All a man’s ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart” (Prov 21:2).

One of Edwards’s insights concerning the grace of God was its ongoing work even after the initial act of conversion. In his sermon, “Hypocrites Deficient in the Duty of Prayer,” he said :

(The work) of a true convert is not done; but he finds still a great work to do and great wants to be supplied. He sees himself still to be a poor, empty, helpless creature and that he still stands in great and continual need of God’s help. He is sensible that without God he can do nothing . . . after a true conversion, the soul remains sensible of its own impotence and emptiness. It is still sensible of its universal dependence on God for everything. A true convert is sensible that his grace is very imperfect; and he is very far from having all that he desires . . . Through conversion, new desires are produced in him that he never had before . . . So that he hath business enough still at the throne of grace; yea, his business there, instead of being diminished, is, since his conversion, rather increased (2005: 383).

Even when a church planter understands that the work of Christ is new every day, he is not exempt from thinking his own ideas and plans are right. A gospel-saturated coach carefully and lovingly probes the motives of the planter’s heart and offers godly counsel and direction. This explains, in part, what having a gospel-friendship means. It seems that Edwards enjoyed that kind of relationship with at least two of his coachees, Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins.

The Influence of the Gospel on the Life of a Church Planter

How does the Bible inform us as to how God relates to us as his followers? Does God see the “conversation” he is having with us as one-dimensional? Does God rely solely on asking questions so we can find the answer within? Does he rely on commandments alone? When Jesus was leading his future church planters, what approach did he take in his relationship and coaching? Did he rely only on the Socratic method of asking questions?

The answers are self-evident to anyone who has related to God or has read the New Testament Gospels. God the Father and his Spirit relate to us in a multi-dimensional way. He has not confined himself to only giving directions or asking questions. He uses and applies the gospel by his Spirit, in various ways, as the circumstances may demand.

The book of Proverbs is more than a guidebook. Nevertheless it is filled with wisdom and advice for living a God-centered life. The writer takes his pen to coach his “son” and his readers in living a full and prosperous life for God. The father/son dynamic may be understood in terms of natural father and son or of the relationship of an older mentor to his apprentice. In the end though, Proverbs is written to make us wise for the journey of life, and the writer informs us on the best way to walk.

When God coaches his followers, he sometimes directs, using commands, instruction, and precepts. In Proverbs 1:8, God gives clear direction and instruction, exhorting us to “Listen up”: “Listen my son to your father’s instruction...they will be a garland to grace your head.” Later he writes,

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding . . . if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Prov 2:1-6).

The wisdom and answers needed for having a full life are not found within man, but outside, in the instruction and commands from God himself. The Lord directs our attention to follow his commands, applying them to our daily lives.

As Jesus worked with his future church planters, he often gave them direction and specific instruction. On one occasion, he sent them out on a missionary journey to the neighboring towns. He directed them, “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey or extra tunic, or sandals or staff; for the worker is worth his keep” (Mt 10: 5-9). After Jesus had finished instructing his church planters, he went on from there and began to teach and preach himself (see Mt 11:1).

The Lord also develops his followers. God offers us his resource, namely his Word and himself, in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. As he relates to us in this realm he often explains the “why” and clarifies the heart of the issues we face. “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you” (Prov 25:21).

Jesus understood and practiced the art of developing his protégés. He told a parable of the farmer going out to sow his seed, but the disciples did not understand what it meant (Lk 8:4-15). He told them, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, ‘though seeing, they

may not see; though hearing, they may not understand” (v. 9, 10). He then explained the parable in detail. His role as coach meant he developed his men so they could become successful in their calling.

God is also aware that we need defending, so he is our champion and defense. He coaches us, “Do not forsake wisdom and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you” (Prov 4:6). Good coaches understand that the planter is constantly on the radar of evil men and the evil one. One of the apostle Paul’s prayer requests in his church planting endeavors was “that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men” (2 Thess 3:2). Jesus also taught us to pray, “Deliver us from the evil one” (Mt 6:13).

God works with us in relationship by delegating. In this arena, God asks probing questions to the heart. “Adam, where are you?” and “Who told you, you were naked?” (Genesis 3). Additionally, he sets us free to follow his commands, empowering us by his Spirit to accomplish his plans and desires. In Jesus’ final coaching appointment with his church planters, just before his ascension, he said, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:4-5, 8). They had been delegated the responsibility of being influencers in this world, by first being influenced by the Holy Spirit. The Lord deals with us multi-dimensionally.

As a planter begins the process of planting a church, it is best to begin with the end in mind. A key question is “What will the new church look like?” I am concerned primarily with helping to start gospel-centered churches. I am not interested in launching

more churches that promote a moralistic salvation or works-based style Christianity.

Works-based churches lead to enslavement and toxic lives.

One church-planting leader who has influenced my thinking immensely on the gospel and the church is Dick Kauffman, pastor of Harbor Presbyterian Church, San Diego, California. Concerning the essence of the gospel, he says:

The gospel is God's explosive power that changes everything The gospel makes us Christians Some believe the gospel is the starting point, but then you must move on to more advanced teaching to grow. But the gospel is not merely the way we enter, it is the way we make all progress . . . it is the 'way of righteousness from first to last' . . . since the gospel not only makes us Christians, but also grows us as Christians, the most desperate need of both unbelievers and believers . . . is to hear and appropriate the Gospel to their lives . . . (and) the gospel empowers us to serve . . . with a whole new motivational structure . . . setting us free to love and serve unconditionally in response to God's grace in Christ (1997:8).

The gospel is to be applied and lived out in our vocations, in our ministries and in our relationships. A gospel-centered church is focused on seeing the work of Jesus Christ—his life, death, and resurrected life—applied now through the work of the Holy Spirit, bring transformation in their city or region. Because of Jesus, God has forgiven his people of their rebellion against him and is filling, empowering, directing and adopting them as sons and daughters. They are being progressively changed by the ongoing application of grace so that they continue to serve in love as a generous people of grace and mercy for others.

Since the most important player on the field when launching a new church is the church planter, it is necessary for the church planting pastor to understand and

appropriate in his own life and ministry the dynamics of a gospel-centered life. In leadership development, what you train for is what you get.

Most coach training for church planters is primarily focused on methodology. Methods are important, just as maps are necessary when traveling, but methods are not value neutral. They take you places. They have consequences. In some respects, a method-driven approach to coaching is shortsighted. If the desire is to launch a church that is centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ, the approach to coaching a planter in the development of the new church should also have a gospel centrality.

Effective coaching is about friendship, but a unique type of friendship built on the gospel. A method of coaching that arrests the gospel friendship may, in the long term, fail to assist the planter in making progress in a personal gospel lifestyle and in the health of the church he launches. Why? Because, as Kaufmann noted, “the most desperate need of believers is to hear and appropriate the Gospel to their livesThe gospel empowers us to serve . . .with a whole new motivational structure . . .setting us free to love and serve unconditionally in response to God’s grace in Christ” (1997:8).

The grace of God, found in the gospel story, invites us to become vulnerable with others with whom we have a relationship. Without Christ, we have a natural aversion to vulnerability, or “being known.” But a coaching friendship, grounded in trust and grace, can be a powerful game changer for a church planter. Bill Thrall explains: “In vulnerability, you deliberately place yourself under other’s influence, submitting yourself to others’ strengths. You give others the right to know the pain of your weaknesses and to care for you. You choose to let others know you, to have access to your life, to teach you, to influence you” (1999: 81).

Certainly there are obstacles that are outside the church planter. The world and the devil are two obstacles to the gospel and to church planting. But the gospel addresses them both, as Christ, not man, overcomes the obstacles. Christ advances his kingdom and builds his church through the movement and work of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures also teach that whenever there is a movement advance of the kingdom, there is a counter-response by the enemies of the gospel. Once again, Kauffmann helpfully explains:

Repeatedly the enemy imposes obstacles in the form of persecution (Acts 2:13; 4:18; 5:17-18; 5:40-42), hypocrisy (5:3), distractions (6:1-2), money (8:13, 18-19), racism and elitism (8:14, 10:14-15, 11:19-20), criticism (10:9-11:3), popularity (14:11, 13), and false teachers (20:28-31). In each case, the enemy's goal is to prevent the bold proclamation of the gospel. But Acts and church history since reveals that Christ overcomes all obstacles to the gospel (4:23, 31; 5:5-10; 6:1, 7; 8:1,4; 8:20-22; 11:4-21; 14: 14-15). Christ overcomes the obstacles not only to the gospel, but also through the gospel...The gospel not only has power, 'it is power' (Rom. 1:16). Obstacles are overcome not as a result of men, methods, model, or media, but through the gospel of the crucified, risen and exalted Christ (Acts 2:32-33)." (1997: 1)

The gospel also addresses the internal obstacle—the flesh. Lovelace reminds us,

Luther was right: the root behind all other manifestations of sin is compulsive unbelief—our voluntary darkness concerning God, ourselves, his relationship to the fallen world and his redemption purpose If the fall occurred through the embracing of lies, the recovery process of salvation must center on faith in truth, reversing this condition (1979: 90).

Effective gospel-centered coaching must address the obstacle of “compulsive unbelief.”

The gospel's two dynamics of repentance and faith, leading to obedience, are the only solution to the ongoing battle of unbelief. Luther elaborated on the idea of doubt having a ruining effect on one's spiritual condition and the healing power of God's grace:

To doubt the good will of God is an inborn suspicion of God with all of us. Besides, the devil . . . goes about seeking to devour us by roaring: “God is angry at you and is going to destroy you forever.” In all these difficulties we have only one support, the Gospel of Christ. To hold on to

it, that is the trick. Christ cannot be perceived with the senses The heart does not feel His helpful presence. Especially in times of trials a Christian feels the power of sin, the infirmity of his flesh, the goading darts of the devil . . . the scowl and judgment of God. All these things cry out against us, death thunders at us, the devil roars at us. In the midst of the clamor the Spirit of Christ cries in our hearts, “Abba, Father.” And this little cry of the Spirit transcends the hullabaloo of the Law, sin, death, and the devil, and finds a hearing with God. The Spirit cries because of our weakness . . . [and] is sent forth into our hearts . . . to assure us of the grace of God (1937:159).

The gospel of grace is the path of life we walk along to find life transformation. The gospel is the ultimate solution for every problem and issue we face and is obviously something outside of ourselves. We must go to Christ to get it. It is the supernatural power of God graciously given to us by His Spirit.

Either fear or pride will ordinarily strike the church planter in the course of his planting season. In fact, he will probably face both at some time or another. Fear and pride are common responses to a life lived outside of the gospel. I have found that most church planters overestimate what they can accomplish in the first year of their plant. Due to the nature of the high-risk adventure, most planters have a personality profile that lends itself to autonomy and perhaps arrogance. They are typically confident leaders who love the challenge and thrive on the risk. They seek the adventure with the possibility of high gain and high loss. Therefore, they often wrestle with the flesh of pride. Coaching by the gospel can help the planter to overcome pride and self-sufficiency by reminding the planter of the humility in the gospel. A coach might say, “You were saved and are saved not by your own goodness or cleverness” or “The church plant will not be your savior or your righteousness. It will not have the fruit God desires by your cleverness, your ingenuity, or what you can find within yourself.”

Fear may be a constant companion of the planter during the project. In fact, many pastors discover their fear continues long after the church has been established. One church planting pastor who successfully organized his church and grew it to a substantial size told me, “Every Sunday I feel the same fears I felt early on—today, this whole thing could fall apart.”

Fear of failure, fear of criticism, fear of conflict or inconvenience can stymie the work of church planting. The influence of God’s loving grace on the planter can help deal with the fear. Gospel coaches take those fears seriously and encourage the planter to preach to himself that he has been loved so greatly, that he can be free from the bondage of fear and respond with courage. In the past several years of coaching and consulting I have found fear to be the number one issue facing pastors.

Bryan Chapell reminds us that our hearts and our hands work in concert in the process of change:

Spiritual change is more a consequence of what our hearts love than of what our hands do. The spiritual disciplines are important, but not as important as developing a heart for God. Hands and hearts coordinate and reinforce each other’s functions in the biblical model of sanctification, but the heart is the command center for every battle A full and consistent apprehension of why we love God is the most effective piece of armor in the Christian arsenal, because the Devil always begins his attack with an alienation of our affections. Thus our most powerful spiritual weapon is consistent adulation of the mercy of God revealed in Christ. We preach the Gospel to our own hearts, telling others and ourselves of God’s eternal love, of Christ’s humble birth, sinless life, selfless sacrifice, victorious resurrection and coming glory (2001: 154).

Conclusion

As we have seen, a methodological approach to church planter coaching has value in the launching and survivability of the church plant and there are an abundance of methods. Coaching a planter through the diverse and difficult waters of vision strategy, people gathering, evangelism, launch team development, worship planning, prayer walking, operating systems, missional engagement, and a host of other necessary elements of planting can make a huge difference. Methods, therefore, do matter. Or, perhaps we should say, the theological supports of the methods matter. If the coaching processes or methods are devoid of theology or have a non-gospel foundation, is the anticipated outcome of a gospel-centered church realistic? I suggest it probably is not. Churches that desire to be rich in a gospel application toward their city, their relationships with one another, their communication and worship, and their service will benefit to a greater degree by having their key player (the planter) coached by a gospel-centered leader who also understands church planting methodology.

CHAPTER 5: A PRACTICAL MODEL OF COACHING

Gospel Centered Coaching is Necessary for Church Planters

What is gospel-centered church planter coaching? My definition is a variation of Robert Clinton's general definition: Church planter coaching is a process of imparting encouragement and skills to the planter in order to succeed in the task of starting a church, in the context of a gospel friendship.

A gospel-centered approach to coaching a church planter is necessary for at least five reasons. In my experience of working with church planters, I have found a gospel approach important first, because the coach needs the gospel and needs to see how it works in the relationship. A church planter with whom I coached, told me of a struggle he was having with some members on his launch team. When I offered some possible responses, he looked at me and said, "No way. I am not going to manipulate them for my advantage. That is not a grace approach." Even the coach needs to learn to apply the gospel in all areas.

The coach himself must know, live in, and live out the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is, in a sense, my central concern with coaching systems I have encountered. Not only are they not church planting specific they lack an emphasis on the coach's living out a gospel-oriented life. Without that as the operating system of his heart and life, the coaching friendship may shrivel. When it is there, however, great chemistry often exists between coach and planter.

Second, the church planter needs to continuously understand and apply the gospel to his own personal life as a Christ follower and minister. Planting a new church is a terrific context for a church planter to learn about the weaknesses within himself, his

struggles with idolatry and selfishness and the greatness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are all blind to our own limitations. If the planter is to launch a new gospel-centered church, the gospel must first be changing him. He needs to develop “a comprehensive gospel centered framework for thinking about, evaluating and doing personal ministry and continue to draw out the implications of the Gospel for personal ministry and growth” (Kaufmann 1997).

Third, the church planter needs to learn and apply the gospel in his development of new leaders in the church plant so they learn to appropriate and apply the gospel to their personal lives. Reproducing leaders is one of the most important tasks of a church planter. He will have no greater a privilege than to reproduce leaders who have clearly understood the good theology of the gospel and are applying gospel dynamics to their lives and ministry. Many planters discover as they train new leaders that the gospel is so “new” to their ears, that he will spend much of his training and discipleship in this area. I heard many times from emerging leaders in both of my church plants, “Why has no one ever told me this before?”

Fourth, the church planter needs a gospel-centered coaching motif because members of the new church need to live in the gospel. There isn't one area of a church or the Christian life that isn't in need of a gospel application. The gospel is able to create a new kind of community—one built on humility, love, and purpose, instead of pride, envy and using others. The planter will preach, motivate, recruit volunteers, raise funds, lead and counsel by the gospel. Since he wants others to relate to one another in love, they will need daily doses of the gospel vigorously applied. Martin Luther, one of the fathers of the gospel renewal and reformation, wrote:

Here I must take counsel of the gospel. I must hearken to the gospel which teacheth me not what I ought to do (for that is the proper office of the law), but what Jesus Christ hath done for me; to wit, that he suffered and died to deliver me from sin and death. The gospel willeth me to receive this and to believe it. And this is the truth of the gospel. It is also the principle article of all Christian doctrine Most necessary it is, therefore, *that we should know this article well, teach it unto others and beat it into their heads continually* (1860:206, emphasis added).

Fifth, the new church, in its missional focus to the city, to the lost, and to the poor and needy, will need a mix of humility and courage, both flowing from a gospel reality. An application of the gospel and mission will drive the church to dependent-bold prayer, love for their neighbor (rather than using their neighbors), and courageous acts of mercy and evangelism. Because of the gospel, believers can respect non-believers without fearing them or having a disdain for them.

It is important for the coach to know what tasks and skills are necessary in the long arduous process of planting a church. Also important, however, is the life of the coach as he relates to the gospel. To be effective, the coach must know the gospel inside and out. Since planting a church is a spiritual endeavor, to build a gospel friendship between coach and planter is vital to the planter and the new church

What is this marvelous gospel that we desperately need to live in, in order to plant gospel churches? I hear many church leaders talk about having a gospel-centered ministry. Church planters are speaking more and more about the gospel-centrality of their new works as being part of the uniqueness of their church.

The gospel is God's good news. Though I was alienated from God and under his

condemnation, living a life full of doubt and disobedience, God loved me and gave himself for me (Christ died on a cross, paying my debt with God and rose alive from death), to forgive my doubt and disobedience; to be my righteousness and to be my power to believe God, say yes to him in worship and no to sin. Childers says, “Therefore the gospel . . . should be seen as not only a message of good news for lost people to be saved from sin’s penalty, but also as a message of good news for Christian people to be saved from sin’s domineering power. The goal of the gospel is not merely to forgive us, but to change us into true worshippers of God and authentic lovers of people” (: 4).

Yet, the gospel is more a story than a definition. The Scriptures are clear that man was created to give God glory by finding his joy and satisfaction in relationship with him. The Westminster divines accurately posited, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever” (Westminster Shorter Catechism: Answer 1). John Piper extrapolates, “The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying him forever” (2003:18). God is the source of all joy and completeness. We were made to worship and find our wholeness in him alone.

God the Creator promised man that if he obeyed and followed his command, all would remain well and whole. But if he disobeyed, God would judge him and he would die. Man did not believe God, but believed the lie of the evil one that God was not enough and rebelled against God, deciding to become his own god and try to find wholeness or completeness within himself. He came under God’s fierce anger and sobering judgment, which is death. God promised, if you disobey, “you will surely die” (Gen 2:17). The apostle Paul later explains, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” and “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death

through sin, and in this way, death came to all men For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 3:23; 5:12; 6:23). We have been plunged into alienation from our Creator.

When man rebelled it created at least four primary separations. Man was separated from the creation (Gen 3:17-19), he was separated from relationship with others (Gen 3:12, 16), he was separated from God and has true moral guilt before him (Gen 3:10, 22), and he was separated from himself. His heart and mind has become darkened and is spiritually dead, and is a slave to sin. The apostle Paul summed it up: “Nothing good lives in me I have a desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Rom 7:18, 19).

Because of our rebellion, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa 53:6). Self is at the center. Man, each person, is alienated from God and labors now to be made “right” once again. Man is broken and not simply empty, but under a curse of death. From that brokenness, a life-long struggle emerges. It is a struggle to find a way to be made whole. The apostle Paul explains:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles (Rom 1:18-21).

Steve Brown, President of Key Life, has had more influence on my understanding of a Christ-centered, grace-oriented life than anyone else. He writes, “Let’s begin by

comparing the two basic anthropological views of mankindThe first view says that man is basically good, with a proclivity for evil. The second view says that man is basically evil, with a proclivity for goodIf mankind is basically good, then we should remove all our man-made social institutions so that all the basic goodness will be able to come out. In terms of educational philosophy, we should get out of the kids' way and let them learn naturally—because they are basically goodThe Bible takes the second view—that man is basically evil, but with a proclivity for good” (1993: 28,29).

Man developed a belief system as to how he can be made right again, but it is of his own making. He made idols or substitute saviors to try to earn his way back. James Wilhoit, professor at Wheaton College, explains,

Our soul-thirst is powerful, and it makes all of us idolaters. To be sure, not many of my contemporaries bow before actual pagan altars. Nevertheless, the Bible sees idolatry as a universal problem. To be alive is to be an idolater. One of the most basic questions in spiritual formation must be “What am I doing about my idols?” not “Do I have any idols?” (2008:73).

We were made to worship. Thus, man always centers his life around something. The idols of our modern world are not necessarily the hand carved statues of the ancient world. In our autonomous self-seeking ways, people have instead, come to serve or worship at the idols of comfort, security, or approval. In *True Spirituality*, Childers reminds us, “Because God has created man to be a worshipper, we are always worshipping something, whether we realize it or not. This is why we should always see our sin as heart idolatry. The first and second commandmentsare meant to remind us of the very dangerous and natural tendency we all have to worship idols” (: 5).

David Powlison, in a penetrating article entitled, “Idols of the Heart and Vanity Fair” explains the concept of biblical idolatry and the heart:

The most basic question which God continually poses to each human heart [is this:] . . .has something or someone besides Jesus the Christ taken title to your heart’s trust, preoccupation, loyalty, service, fear and delight? It is a question bearing on the immediate motivation for one’s behavior, thoughts and feelings. In the Bible’s conceptualization, the motivation question is the lordship question. Who or what “rules” my behavior, the Lord or a substitute (1995: 35)?

So, beneath every sin is the sin of idolatry, or serving a functional savior, which is the means by which we strive to right ourselves. We are helplessly enslaved to our sinful patterns of rebellious behavior and activity. Our new saviors make covenantal promises to provide us with meaning or wholeness—ways in which we will own “shalom.” They also threaten us that if we do not serve them our lives will be over, meaningless and empty. We begin by asking them to serve us, but they eventually overtake us and master our very lives.

Since we wrongly believe our functional idols can give us life if we continue to live under their works-oriented covenant, we struggle to manage life in order to gain, maintain or regain control. In this sense, control is not an idol, but the means by which we try to order our lives to function. There are three means that we can try to use to leverage control: power, manipulation or escape, if we feel the utter loss of control.

Why is it important for a coach and a church planter to understand the dynamics at play thus far in the gospel narrative? Because the church planter must understand the fallen strategies—the idols of comfort, approval, and security— may be in operation in his own heart. As emotions surface, such as anger, fear, anxiety, or depression, they serve as warning lights on the dashboard that indicate a flesh-oriented lifestyle. The

coach is not a counselor, but as he operates in the life of a planter, in the context of his friendship, he will encourage the planter with the gospel and its implications.

Wilhoit unpacks the concept a bit further: “We sin because our longings are so strong that at the operational level—not at the verbal level, where we confess ‘Jesus is Lord’—we feel that something in addition to Jesus is necessary for our happiness and well-being. We will never find the full freedom promised in the gospel if all we want from Jesus is relief” (2008: 74).

A coach should invite the planter to joyfully repent of his doubt in the goodness of God, trying to add something to Jesus, and then pointing him back to the reality of the cross and the operation of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is the way back to freedom in the gospel. “Repentance simply means agreeing with God about what needs to be changed in your life Repentance means nothing more nor less than agreeing with God about who you are, what you have done, and what needs to be changed” (Brown: 156, 167). Childers adds, “So repentance should not be seen as merely changing our external behavior but primarily as a willingness to pull our heart affections and our heart trust away from our idols” (True Spirituality: 5).

In a coaching appointment, Dick (not his real name) and I were discussing his personal evangelistic endeavors. He was having a hard time going from the “making contact phase” to talking about Jesus and the gospel. I asked him strategy-oriented questions to understand his personal technique. He kept getting stuck as he explained the difficulty of the transition. Finally, I asked him questions about what he thought an evangelist looked like? He described an evangelist as a man, with a slick haircut, funny shoes and a big black Bible in his hand, warning people about hell and damnation. He

was afraid that if he told lost businessmen in his community about God's problem with them (sin and death), and Christ's power to save them that he would lose their respect. He was afraid that they would see him as that slick, fast talking evangelist. I challenged Dick to repent of his idol of seeking other's approval and to redefine what an evangelist is according to a biblical perspective.

Dr. Bob Flayhart speaks of the gospel in terms of a waltz:

My research leads me to believe that an effective, Gospel-centered mentoring strategy must teach protégés the Christian Waltz. A waltz is a dance made up of three steps. Christians need to consider the Christian three step when it comes to growth. In the first step, we acknowledge our need as we see our sin in light of the Law. In the second step, we look to Christ to change us. In the third step, we fight against sin and fight to choose righteousness in the strength of the Holy Spirit. Repent! Believe! Fight! . . .Repent! Believe! Fight! . . .Repent! Believe! Fight!" (2001:212).

The first step in the gospel dance is a life of repentance with an ongoing realization of one's broken condition, along with a humble admission, "I cannot do this." The Christian life is 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3. The first step is not the last time you step there in a waltz. So it is in the gospel dance. Your first step is repentance, but you will return to that step again and again. In fact, sometimes the steps are 2-1-3. You might step with faith, then repentance, however, the dance never starts with 3.

The second step in the gospel dance is faith alone in Christ alone. Jerry Bridges in his classic work, *Transforming Grace*, writes:

If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, then all the expressions of God's forgiveness are true of you. He has removed your sins as far as the east is from the west. He has put them behind His back and hurled them into the depths of the sea. He has blotted them out of His record book and promised never to bring them up again. You are free from accusation, not because of anything whatsoever in you, but because of His grace alone through Jesus Christ. Are you willing to believe this wonderful truth and live by it?...Will you accept that God not only

saves you by His grace through Christ but also deals with you day by day by His grace (1991: 43) ?

Once again, Childers' insight is very helpful for our understanding:

The good news of the Kingdom is that our King has won a marvelous victory for us. Through his sinless life, sacrificial death as our substitute, resurrection, and ascension, he has not only conquered death for us, removing its penalty, but he has also conquered sin's power over us . . . through faith, God means for us to tap into the powerful victory of our King, so that we might be transformed into true worshippers of God and more authentic lovers of people . . . through faith we are always to be placing our affections on Christ (True Spirituality: 6).

We are provided with full forgiveness of our sins, credited with the righteousness of Christ. We enjoy legal righteousness and imputed righteousness. 2 Corinthians 5:21 graciously informs us: "God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Luther, in his Argument of the Epistle to the Galatians, writes:

Do we do nothing at all for the obtaining of this righteousness? I answer, Nothing at all. For this is perfect righteousness, to do nothing, to hear nothing, to know nothing of the law or of works, but to know and believe this only, that Christ is gone to the Father. . . not as judge, but made unto us. . . righteousness, holiness, redemption . . . that He is our high priest entreating for us, and reigning over us and in us by grace. . . in [his] righteousness and life I have no sin. . . I am indeed a sinner as touching this present life. . . but I have another righteousness and another life...which is Christ (1988: 20).

We, by Christ and his work, are forgiven, accepted, freed from sin's power, adopted into his family as loved sons and daughters, and given the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is producing in us godly character or spiritual fruit, such as love, joy, peace, and self control (Galatians 5). Through the Spirit, we can say yes to forgiving, loving and serving others with mercy and joy; and we can say no to our flesh. Francis Schaeffer instructed Christians to understand the spiritual process of change:

I became a Christian once for all upon the basis of the finished work of Christ through faith; that is justification. The Christian life, sanctification, operates on the same basis, but moment by moment. There is the same basis (Christ's work) and the same instrument (faith); the only difference is that one is once for all and the other is *moment by moment*. The whole unity of biblical teaching stands solid at this place. If we try to live the Christian life in our own strength we will have sorrow, but if we live in this way, we will not only serve the Lord, but in the place of sorrow, he will be our song. That is the difference. The 'how' of the Christian life is the power of the crucified and risen Lord, through the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit, by faith *moment by moment* (1971:79).

We fight, by faith, for obedience to our loving Savior. This is the third step spoken of by Flayhart, Childers and Brown. Obedience flows from the freedom of the gospel. We now obey out of love and gratitude rather than fear. "Obedience doesn't lead to freedom. Freedom leads to obedience. If you get that backwards you lose both your freedom and eventually your obedience" (Brown 1990: 28). Through the freedom of the gospel, our relationships are transformed. We are now able to share in a restored community.

The love of God for us is the beauty of the gospel and the motivational pull of the Spirit. "Love, not fear, is the motivating force behind obedience. If we ever substitute fear for love, we have moved into something that isn't Christian" (Brown 1990: 141).

God's love is the one eternal constant in all our inconsistency.

God's love is not Rogerian unconditional positive regard writ large... The Gospel is better than unconditional love. The Gospel says, "God accepts *you* just as *Christ* is. God has "contraconditional" love for you... God never accepts me "as I am." He accepts me "as I am in Jesus Christ". . . The true Gospel does not allow God's love to be sucked into the vortex of the soul's lust for acceptability and worth in and of itself. Rather, it radically decenters people. . . to look outside themselves (Powlison 1994: 49).

Flayhart informs us that without a firm grasp of God's love and favor, the Christian life will be a more difficult path:

An emphasis on the love and grace of God lays the dance floor, or foundation, for the waltz. Unless protégés are convinced of God's love for them and His favor over them by virtue of their union with Christ, they will minimize their sin and engage in blame-shifting and excuse-making in order to feel justified before God (notice Adam and Eve in Genesis 3). In addition, unless protégés are convinced of God's delight in them because they are in Christ, they will lack the ability to believe that God in His goodness, mercy and grace will come to them in their brokenness, and change their lives. Therefore, in keeping with the Pauline paradigm, a Gospel-centered mentoring strategy must lay down the indicatives as the springboard for the imperatives (2001: 212, 213).

Coaching planters with a thorough understanding of the gospel story is essential because the planter needs the gospel, the church people need the gospel, the people in the target community needs the gospel, and the culture around them needs the gospel.

The Benefits of a Gospel Approach to Coaching

Coaches who think strategically and who can open the planter's eyes to staying focused on Jesus' gaining a great reputation in the community will potentially have a longer range of influence than coaches who do not. Gospel-centered coaching is designed to assist the planter in planning and executing the launching of a church that connects lost people to Christ through various means of missional engagement, builds up leaders in spiritual formation and community, and becomes transforming agents of God's graciousness in the city, region and nations of the world.

Although there may be innumerable benefits from approaching the coaching friendship with the gospel, I suggest that there are at least four major benefits. First, there is the benefit of a healthy planter and his family. As the planter learns to appropriate the gospel to his own heart, to his family relationships, and the planting project, he will be spiritually renewed day by day.

C.H. MacIntosh, a British pastor in the 1800s, suggested the ongoing need of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit for the pastor:

The true secret to all ministry is spiritual power. It is not man's genius, or man's intellect, or man's energy; but simply the power of the Spirit of the God of the Gospel. . . . It is well for all ministers to bear this ever in mind. It will sustain the heart and give constant freshness to their ministry. A ministry which flows from abiding dependence upon the Holy Ghost can never become barren. If a man is drawing on his own resources, he will soon run dry. It matters not what his powers may be, or how extensive his reading, or how vast his stores of information; if the Holy Ghost be not the spring and power of his ministry, it must, sooner or later, lose its freshness and its effectiveness. How important, therefore, that all who minister in the gospel. . . should lean continually and exclusively on the power of the Holy Ghost! He knows what souls need, and He can supply it. But he must be trusted and used. It will not do to lean partly on self and partly on the Spirit (1869:214).

The second major benefit is the healthy relationships among the leaders the planter is discipling and training. As he discipless others with gospel-renewal truth and as he trains emerging leaders in dealing with their lives by and with the gospel, the leadership will be unified, dealing maturely with one another in love. Lovelace writes that without the gospel, many church members and leaders will fail either to engage themselves in the church or to move into deeper relationships with one another:

Sometimes with great effort [most church members] can be maneuvered into some active role in the church's program, like a trained seal in a circus act, but their hearts are not fully in it. They may repeat the catchwords of the theology of grace, but many have little deep awareness that they and other Christians are "accepted in the beloved." Since their understanding of justification is marginal or unreal—anchored not to Christ, but to some conversion experience in the past or to an imagined state of goodness in their lives—they know little of the dynamic of justification. Their understanding of sin focuses upon behavioral externals which they can eliminate from their lives by a little will power and ignores the great submerged continents of pride, covetousness and hostility beneath the surface. Thus their phariseism defends them both against full involvement in the church's mission and against full subjection of their inner lives to the authority of Christ (1979:204-205).

Third, is the benefit of healthy relationships in the church body. As the planter relates to others with the gospel, lives as the “chief repentor” before his followers, preaches and teaches the gospel, and leads by the power of the gospel, the people will grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

During one of my coaching appointments with Richard, he raised an issue concerning some of his launch team members’ lack of interest in inviting people. He could not seem to move his members into the bringing and gathering mode. As we tried to discover why, looking at it through a different lens, Richard came to see that it was due either to pride (a sense of superiority to others) or to fear (a sense of inferiority toward others). Instead of working on them through manipulation (do this so you will look good to the pastor or to one another) or power (do this or you will be put off the team), he approached them by appealing to their understanding of their position in Christ and their having become a people for others. He told them they could now move toward others, out of love for God and gratitude because he came for us. He encouraged them with the truth that they were freed from fear or pride and invited them to come together and repent of their idolatry. Richard later reported that his team had never heard that kind of talk before.

Fourth, there is a benefit to the community, as the church becomes a blessing to their city or community. A pastor who lives by grace, with leaders who lead by grace, along with members who are learning to grow in grace, will have a positive influence on their relationships with their neighbors and the culture around them.

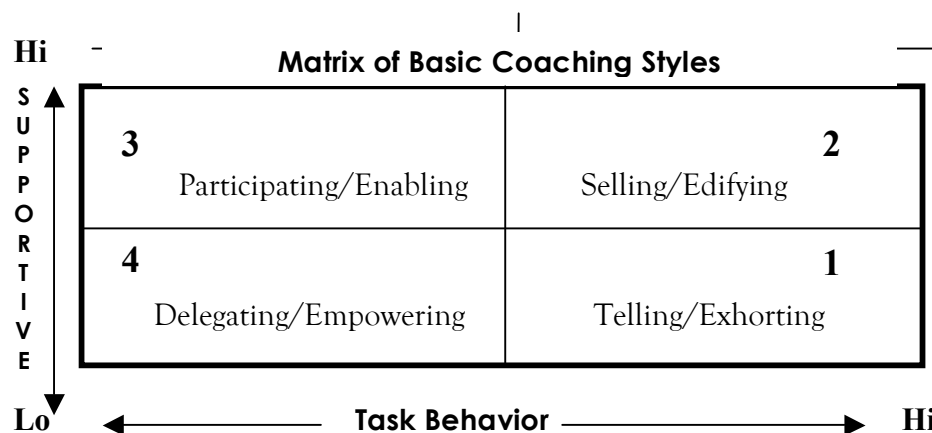
Practicing Situational Coaching

One aspect of coaching that I believe is vital to growing healthy church planters and healthy churches is gaining a good understanding of the various situations and phases that every planter goes through in the process of launching a new church. Coaches need to be cognizant of the ambiguity that the church planters must deal with.

Thompson developed a superb matrix for coaches in utilizing the appropriate coaching style. I consider understanding this application so necessary for a coach to be effective in leading and interacting with his planter that I quote Thompson at length:

An effective leader will diagnose the skill and motivation of his followers, as well as the requirements of the situation, and use the appropriate leadership style in order to achieve maximum results. The same approach applies to church planter coaching. The style of coaching should fit the readiness of the church planter at each stage of his development and the situational challenges he may be facing.

The matrix below illustrates the way these two orientations to coaching interact to produce four coaching styles.



To be most effective, then, a coach must be able to do four things:

- Maintain flexibility in his coaching style
- Accurately diagnose the requirements of a given situation
- Develop a coaching style appropriate to the requirements of the situation
- Establish agreement with the coachee regarding the coaching style to be used

Diagnosing For Coaching Style

The CP coach must also be able to correctly diagnose the maturity level of his coachee. This will enable him to employ coaching behaviors that have the right mix of task and relational orientation to maximize effectiveness in a given situation. To diagnose a coachee's task maturity, the coach must assess the following two factors: the coachee's competence (ability, skill, training, experience), and the coachee's commitment.

Coaching Responses for Different Maturity Levels

The following are the definitions of the four basic coaching styles and the appropriate situation for using them:

1. **The Telling/Exhorting Style**. For coachees with the least task maturity (competence and commitment), one should use a highly structured approach while still urging responsibility and ownership. Other descriptors of behaviors in this style are guiding, instructing, establishing or admonishing.
2. **The Selling/Edifying Style**. When a coachee has increased his commitment and/or sense of responsibility for completing the task, the coach should use an approach that provides a great deal of relational support while continuing to engage in dialogue with the coachee. The style is characterized by explaining, clarifying reasons, persuading and giving the big picture.
3. **The Participating/Enabling Style**. When the coachee's skills are reasonably well developed but his interest or commitment is variable or lacking, the enabling style is appropriate. The coach should provide considerable support but not a great deal of specific direction; that is, he uses encouragement, collaboration, exhortation or affirmation to develop greater commitment and/or confidence.
4. **The Delegating/Empowering Style**. With coachees having high task maturity, one should use the empowering style. You no longer need to provide much support. Characteristic coaching behaviors would consist of observing, monitoring and praising. When this level of task maturity has been achieved, these coachees are ready to take on the training/coaching of other church planters and the multiplier effect will begin to take place.

Effective Coaching Behavior for Each Style

The table below shows appropriate coaching behaviors for each of the four basic coaching styles:

<p>Style 3. Participating/Enabling The coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asks how goal setting is going • seeks clarification on plan changes • encourages coachee to make decisions • listens and helps solve problems • provides encouragement and support 	<p>Style 2. Selling/Edifying The coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviews goals • interacts on progress of action plan • asks how coachee will implement plans • maintains openness to provide feedback • provides encouragement
<p>Style 4. Delegating/Empowering The coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • available to review goals/plans as requested • coachee controls decision-making • communicates bi-directionally as needed • coachee assumes self-appraisal • provides feedback when requested • continues to affirm and show recognition 	<p>Style 1. Telling/Exhorting The coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assists coachee in setting goals • guides coachee in developing a plan • gives overview of how things are done • involves coachee in communication • evaluates work of coachee closely • helps coachee own decisions

As you progress from one coaching style to another it is obvious that more and more of the initiative must be assumed by the coachee. In every instance, however, the coach is involved in some fashion in identifying problems, setting goals, making decisions and monitoring progress. Be prepared for great joy as you watch those God has entrusted to your care grow in grace and ministry effectiveness (Thompson 2005: 53, 56).

Not only have I found it vital to the coaching process to understand the coaching style that most benefits the planter, but I also have learned the necessity of understanding the various phases of planting a church and how they relate to the coaching process. Though most coaching methods are “client centered,” meaning the client sets the agenda, as I coach, I lean more toward being “church plant project centered.” I mean not that the church planter isn’t job one, but that I cannot rely on his knowing what needs to be done in each successive phase.

In several instances of working with church planters, I have asked them to tell me what big items, or “big rocks,” they need to get done in the next thirty days. In many cases they have chosen to do certain activities that are not vital to the mission process. Allowing the planter to set his own agenda may result in poor planning and execution.

In my work with church planters and more recently with Global Church Advancement, I developed a worksheet entitled “Coaching Keys in the different Phases of Church Planting” to assist coaches in understanding the areas they need to help the planter focus on in each phase.

Phase One: Assessment to moving to the field—(Global Church Advancement’s “Preparing Season”)

- Vision and church planting proposal completed and agreed upon or a time scheduled for the strategic planning process
- Funding and prayer support: have at least one hundred prayer supporters and at least 80% of funding.
- Relocation issues: Has the planter solved his housing needs? Where do they live? What kind of home? Rent or buy a home?
- Family issues: Schooling needs, private school, public school or home school
- Health issues. Friendships, dealing with the loss from previous city and finding new ones

Phase Two: Core and/or Launch Team development to first services—(Global Church Advancement’s “Gathering season”)

- Strategic planning completed or nearing completion
- Core group gatherings and prayer meetings
- Launch team development (team assignments, roles, team building and prayer)
- Personal evangelism: 30-40% of time should be used in evangelistic appointments
- Personal worship and spiritual renewal: This is often one of the first things that is neglected. In this season check if the family is attending Sunday worship services
- Networking among the neighbors and community leaders
- Launch indicators: agreed upon indicators and a commitment to health driven criteria
- Keep the planter focused on gathering new people.
- Check up on marriage
- Make multiplication of the plant a core value early on: “We are here to plant multiple churches or to be part of a movement of church-planting churches, not simply to plant one church.”

- Since leadership selection should not take place before harvest momentum requires it, help in developing temporary leadership structures. Be willing to adapt people and roles. Encourage the planter not to choose or appoint people to function as “provisional elders” or a “steering committee.” If they do assume such roles, make sure they are temporary and all have an agreed upon a termination date.

Phase Three: Post Launch—(Global Church Advancement’s “Developing Season”)

- Keep outward focus a priority. Inward inertia will take over if you don’t
- Keep him focused on being “In Christ,” not in his performance
- Watch out that the planter does not get consumed with worship and Bible study preparation. He needs to keep “leaving the ninety-nine” for the lost.
- The church planter is still the driving force of evangelism and gathering for at least the first and second year or until there are 200 people.
- If the church planter stops gathering, the church will slow in growth and effective outreach:
 - The church planter is the primary vision caster. He constantly asks of himself and others, “How will this church effectively impact our community?”
 - Most planters overestimate what they can accomplish. Stick to doing a few things with excellence
 - Keep evangelism, spiritual formation and leadership development as top priorities. It is the means to health—trust me.
- Leadership, structures, and systems needed to facilitate growth: Organization and leadership selection needs to be clearly defined in terms of mission first and church government second. *The key issue is expanding the mission, not the control and order of the church.*
- Create operating systems so that new people are connecting, assimilating, being built up in the faith and quickly released into ministry.

Phase Four: The “3rd Launch”

- Prepare for formal organization of the church.
- Staffing issues: Staff to church’s strengths. Who is God bringing? What kind of church style is your context (ministry focus area and people coming)? How does the church leverage itself for maximum influence of the gospel?
- Determination of church size: growing churches normally involves intentionality and size determines the intentional thrust you will take
- Leadership: Be very careful what you set into concrete
- Planning for the next church planting opportunity

The worksheet is designed to assist church planter coaches in knowing where the planter is in the process and making sure that critical factors are not overlooked. It should not be seen as all-encompassing but rather as a quick-look guide. I encourage coaches to attend a church planter training conference, such as Global Church Advancement's "Church Planter Basic Training," in order to have a full grasp of the work of church planting.

Competencies of a Gospel-Centered Coach

Effective coaching within my definition requires that the coach have some experience in the area of church planting. The coach should have lived what the planter is facing, rather than just being a sounding board or personal mirror. When I was developing a plan to provide coaching to planters in a church planting ministry, we asked many of the planters if they would be willing to use a coach who had been trained in coaching methodology, but had not planted a church or been involved in a church plant. Without exception, they replied they would have no confidence in someone who didn't know the game or had never played. There usually is more credibility if someone has gone through the hardship or turmoil of planting and has "survived."

However, someone with experience in church planting is not necessarily qualified to coach. Some great players are lousy coaches. One of the dangers of successful planters becoming coaches is that they may be tempted to tell others how they did it and to simply follow their template. The principle seems to make sense, however, that coaches know something of the topic they are coaching in order for them to impart some skills. I believe effective coaches do instruct their planters in certain skill sets, especially as they relate to perceived need or particular weakness of the planter.

Robert Clinton and Paul Stanley emphasize the importance of coaches'

knowledge of their subject.

Coaches usually know the subject they deal with inside and out. They have an overall grasp. They can break good performance down into basic skills that must be learned. They can assess the mentoree's motivation and skill level and adapt appropriately. Most importantly, good Coaches know how to encourage and strengthen mentorees to do what is necessary to develop the skills and attitudes that will lead to excellence (1992: 78).

In his research, Phil Douglas found that encouragement, evaluation, and assistance in skill development are important aspects of coaching.

The eighth mentor descriptor most often chosen by the church planters surveyed was "coach," defined as "one who oriented me concerning significant elements of the church planting task while at the same time encouraged me to go beyond what I thought possible". . . . The literature asserts that the mentor as coach provides the competency training necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the church planting enterprise. The mentor observes and then offers evaluation of the beginning church planter's strengths and weaknesses and assists in establishing objectives that help develop fundamental abilities and skills. It is preferable that mentors be relational coaches who through careful questioning and positive evaluation can encourage the church planters to inspect their philosophies and feelings concerning their teaching. Evaluation is offered and the new church planter is "coached" on methodologies that lead to increased productivity. Basically, the mentor as coach "teaches the ropes" by providing relevant positive and negative feedback to improve performance and potential of the church planter. The coaching mentor will help church planters recognize and understand their personal needs, values, problems, alternatives, and goals (1995: 258).

Coaches are leaders because they are expending influence on another's life and ministry.

Christ is the Head of the Church, universal and in particular, the Head of the church the planter is launching. Thus the planter must see himself as a leader-coach, representing Christ as the Leader. Our Savior accomplishes his purposes through the three offices in which he ministers: Prophet, King, and Priest. Jesus ministers the gospel to us as Prophet, King, and Priest. Coaches are called to lead and model ministry to their

coachee's as representatives of Christ, serving them as prophet, king and priest. We are called to be all three, all at once.

But Christ is also our Friend. We must approach all our coaching in the context of friend, not in a place of superiority or expert. With the theologically rich paradigm of prophet, king and priest, coaching is seen as a conversation, not an interrogation. People who only ask questions are usually lawyers to witnesses, law enforcement officers to suspects, or emergency room physicians to patients. Not really conversations, would you say?

In the first role as prophet, the coach serves the planter as a motivator, pushing the planter to do more than he ever dreamed possible. Dan Allender offers a helpful description on the coach as prophet:

A prophet is an odd interplay of coach, poet, visionary, and therapist. He disrupts the paradigm of comfort and complacency. But when he shouts at me, he also invites me to desire and dream of redemption. When he comforts me with the vision of what will one day be my future, he calls me to create it with a commitment to honesty, care, and justice. . . . this odd presence cries out, invites and keeps telling me to move. A prophet exposes our subtle turn to indulgence and self-congratulation. He points out our self-righteousness and underscores the evidence that our current condition is not true, good or lovely (2006: 195).

The prophet-coach challenges, speaks into the life of the planter, and goes after heart motivations. He probes issues regarding subtle idolatries such as church, work, success, or approval. But he also imparts confidence, not simply of the planter's gifts, abilities, plans, and calling, but of the Lord's promise. God's calling is God's enabling. The prophet exhorts, evaluates, pushes, prods, and loves well. He reminds the planter of the vision, mission, and values of the church God has called him to plant. He brings God back into the big picture, reminding the planter of the gospel!

Secondly, the coach's role is one of king. Kings provide structure and protection. "A king must assess talent, recognize strengths and weaknesses, and ascertain openness or capacity to change" (Allender 2006: 190). A king-coach is able to evaluate the needs of the planter, observe them in action, and impart skills as needed.

"Equipping" (*katartizo*, Greek for making complete or mature) in Ephesians 4:12 is the activity of the king-coach function. The coach is not trying to solve or fix problems presented, but is working to mature the planter's competencies for effective ministry success.

Understanding church planting methodology or having a knowledge base of the seasons of church planting is important for any church planting coach. The king-coach is often able to be a resource for the planter, connecting his planter with others, such as fellow pastors, leaders, and subject matter experts, who can help him with such specific areas of need such as legal issues, facility search, relocation needs, or specialized ministries. As a king, he also serves to protect the church planter, being an advocate for the planter with his sending agency.

Third, the role of priest is a function of a gospel-centered coach, who has a ministry of encouragement, generosity, and permission giving. This is why cynical people do not make good coaches. The priest-coach comes alongside the planter and invites, welcomes, and counsels. He spends time in prayer with and for the planter and the family. He listens well, ministering God's presence. Again, Allender's perspective enlarges our understanding: "The relational style of a priest. . . offers care and enters the heart with a commitment to enhance the value and significance of others. This style offers dignity, respect, and honor" (Allender 2006: 188).

The competencies of a coach are defined through the lens of prophet, king, and priest as a representative of Christ. In so being, the coach brings all issues, questions, needs, problems, or solutions to orbit around the sense of a gospel dynamic, which he applies to each situation, because the gospel is the ultimate solution for every problem. Effective coaching comes from the confluence of the three dimensions.

The C.R.O.S.S. Model

Several years ago I was asked to join a ministry that had a history of starting churches in greater Atlanta, Georgia. Over the previous decade they had launched about ten churches in their network. In my three years, we launched nine new churches. In my new position I was not just assessing and hiring planters; I now filled the role of church planter coach. During my first coaching encounters, I learned much about myself, the power of the gospel, and church planting. Many of those church planters have remained good friends. When we changed course and re-tooled the network concept, I continued coaching church planters under a new ministry banner.

During these past nine years, I have developed a working model to assist the planter and me, the coach, in launching a new church. Before I begin a coaching relationship, I ordinarily review the planter's Assessment Summary and Church Leader Inventory (2008), developed by Allen Thompson, which assesses the planter in relationship to ten church planter dimensions. Understanding their results allows me to know what areas of strengths they have and if there are any "blind spots" or any potential areas of ministry "stallers or stoppers" (Thompson 2008: 12).

Coaching is a conversation, which means it is far more than my simply asking good questions. Conversations involve people in give and take, questions and answers, advice and direction. It means I listen, observe, respond, interact, offer insights, support, encourage, and sometimes give directions. Since it is a conversation, it means the planter listens, observes, responds, interacts, offers insights, support, and encouragement and sometimes gives direction. That is the nature of conversation between friends. The coach sometimes is a teacher (of the gospel), skill instructor, problem solver and possibly the only church planting “specialist” in the conversation.

Good church planter coaches are teachers. When you coach a leader, you are asking good questions, probing questions, heart questions, but you are also answering questions. That is what a good, healthy relationship looks like. To coach other leaders, you must be able to tell stories of success and failure in order to give the coachee wisdom. “Coaching-mentors focus on teaching how to do things” (Clinton and Stanley 1992: 79).

Both coach and planter need also to be cognizant of the interplay between personality types. There are numerous personality type tests and nomenclature, but most divide personality types into four quadrants. There is not one personality type which is better than another, nor one that works best for all people in all situations. The coach and planter will do well to know the difference in their types as well as understanding the dynamics that will be at play as they interact. Needless to say there is no one best personality type for a planter (planters come from all four different styles) nor is there one best style for a coach.

It is also very important to know which phase of the church planting project the coach is entering because the keys to coaching differ in each phase. Since there are several specific areas that are vital to mission success at different stages, the areas of need are different. It is important that the coach have a working knowledge of those keys. In this respect, church planter coaching is not necessarily “client centered,” with the planter setting the agenda.

The C.R.O.S.S model is the flow of the coaching conversation I have utilized in working with church planting pastors and emerging church planting leaders. It is important to emphasize the nature of coaching as “a process of imparting encouragement and skills to the planter in order to succeed in the task of starting a church, in the context of a gospel friendship.”

The “C” stands for “Connection.” This is the relational value of coaching. In this first section of our coaching appointment, the coach asks a variety of questions about the planter’s personal and family life, his recreational life, his emotional well being, and the spiritual dynamics of the gospel working in his inner heart and outer world.

Coaching at its core is about qualities like trust, connection, support, and understanding. Sometimes coaches are tempted to skip over the relate stage in hopes of getting to the meat of things faster and accomplishing more. Don’t—that strategy will backfire. Coaching that leaves out the relational element may move through agenda items faster, but will ultimately be ineffective. 90% of the time the people who have the deepest impact on our lives are those we know on a personal level, those who have taken the time to invest in developing a relationship with us. Forming a trusting, growing relationship will exponentially increase the significance and effectiveness of your coaching (Logan 2003: 4).

In my first appointment with one new church planter, after lots of conversation about his background, work history as assistant pastor, and a difficult assessment, he

finally had the courage to ask me a question: “What I need to know from you is do you believe in me?” It is essential to coaching that good chemistry exists between coach and planter. Chemistry might be the number one criteria in effective coaching relationships. In the early stages, the coach will need to work harder on developing the connection. If he does, it will pay off later, as trust and personal life connection are important. Learn their story. Let them know your story—all of it, wins and losses.

As a coach, it is very important to ask good questions and listen well to the answers. At the appropriate time, and if necessary, you may have to give some direction, or instruction in the form of gospel answers to issues that surface. Sometimes you can move directly to the encouragement or motivational aspect. The point is that the word given is timely. Let your talk be what is helpful for building up, according to what they need! That is situational coaching. If the gospel is not at work in the life of the planter, then it is highly unlikely it will be at work in the life of his church plant.

There are numerous types of questions the coach may use to elicit conversation and invite the planter into a friendship. They include the following: How are you doing personally; not work, not in ministry, but just you as a person? What kinds of things did you do for fun this past month? Is it what you like to do? How is your wife doing? How are you doing as a couple? Are there any new strains on your relationship that have surprised you? Does she still like you? Has she complained at all in the last month about your time on the church plant? How much significant time have you had with her? What about your children? Have you spent time with them? What types of things are you praying about for them? Are you experiencing conflicts with them? What kinds of fun things have you done with your kids? Are you settled in to your new home? How

are your wife and kids adjusting to the new schools, new neighbors, and new shopping? What types of things will your kids get involved with at school? Does your wife work outside the home? What things do you miss from the past? Are there things you used to do but have stopped? How is your heart spiritually? Have you had much time in contemplation with God? Is prayer better or worse? Why? Have you scheduled any half- day or full days of prayer? What is God doing in your heart right now? How have you had to preach Christ to your self this past month? In what areas are you most likely to not believe God? What has made you laugh? What has broken your heart? What is giving you the most pleasure right now? What is giving you the most pain? What is the present value of the work of Christ in you? How have you seen the Holy Spirit producing spiritual fruit in your life?

Questions are the on-ramp to applying the good news of the risen Christ to the heart, to encourage and inspire the planter to move forward in faith. Edwards's encouragement to young converts serves as a good reminder to coaches:

When the exercise of grace is at low ebb, and corruption prevails, and by that means fear prevails, don't desire to have fear cast out any other way than by the reviving and prevailing of love, for it is not agreeable to the method of God's wise dispensations that it should be cast out any other way. When love is asleep, the saints need fear to restrain them from sin, and therefore it is so ordered that at such times fear comes upon them, and that more or less as love sinks. But when love is in lively exercise, persons don't need fear. The prevailing of love in the heart naturally tends to cast off fear as darkness in a room vanishes away as you let more and more of the perfect beams of the sun into it: "There is not fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love (Nichols 2001:32, 33).

The coach must listen well, observe what is happening in the planter's heart and in his relationships with his family and others with whom he is interfacing, and utilize the

coaching relationship to speak into the planter's life as a prophet, priest, or king, as the situation warrant. In each coaching encounter the coach might end up being in all three roles! The coach can inspire him with the truth of who he is and Whose he is. He must encourage the coachee to "put on Christ," to find his courage in Christ, to remember he is "in Christ," to rejoice and celebrate what Christ is doing and will do. As the coach takes on the role of gospel friend, investing in him, taking a personal interest, he will find a greater influence as coach.

In *Three Signs of a Miserable Job*, author Patrick Lencioni offers a case study of Michael, a famous pro-football wide receiver who is traded to a new team.

Though Michael is famous and receives attention and adulation from fans and media alike, he doesn't feel his coach knows or cares about him beyond the football field. When Michael moved to the area after being traded, the coach didn't ask him about his personal life or his transition to his new town. That coach needs to talk to Michael about more than his injuries and his statistics. He needs to understand what Michael's interests are off the field. . . . Otherwise, Michael is going to feel like a commodity. A precious one, sure, but a commodity nonetheless (2007: 246).

The second part of the CROSS conversation is the "R," which stands for Review. In this Review segment, the planter and coach converse over what was discussed and decided in the prior meeting. In the early stages of the coaching relationship, the review segment might focus on the planter's church planting plan or proposal, or the coach may review with the planter his own plan for learning, given the results of his Church Leader Inventory. The review is how progress is measured. Is the coaching relationship providing the necessary changes, skills, and encouragement the planter needs to do ministry?

Someone said one of the functions of a leader is to determine reality. To grow planters through coaching, it is important to help the planter know what reality is. We all need feedback. Clinton and Stanley inform us of the importance of review or evaluated feedback:

A key to good coaching is observation, feedback and evaluation. An experienced Coach does not try to control the player, but rather seeks to inspire and equip him with the necessary motivation, perspective, and skills to enable him to excellent performance and effectiveness. A Coach understands that experience is the teaching vehicle, but a wise Coach knows the power of evaluated experience (Clinton and Stanley 1992: 76).

Coaching questions that might help start the conversation: How did your plan work to handle the situation you mentioned last time? What types of difficulties have you faced in trying to work out the steps you mentioned? Are there any areas of celebration in accomplished priorities and how have you celebrated those victories? Are you praying for your target group?

Two types of issues may surface at this stage. One is that the planter may have accomplished some or all of the objectives for the month. Celebrating those wins is very important. Celebrate what God is accomplishing and his graciously allowing us to participate in what he is doing. Guard against self-accomplishment.

On the other hand, the planter might not have done the things he set out to do. Again, what does the situation call for? Did he lack needed resources? Can the coach point him to people or materials to help them? Does the planter need a kick-start? Does the planter lack understanding of process and action planning? Does he lack a skill, or is it a motivational issue? Was there something the coach needed to do with him? Ken

Blanchard writes, “I believe providing feedback is the most cost-effective strategy for improving performance and instilling satisfaction” (1998:15).

A good coach assists the planter in closing the learning gap between the current reality and his potential. Inspiration is a key idea. The coach might assist the planter in reviewing the picture of the church as he sees it in five years. The planter needs to know, whether he has met his key objectives from the previous session or not, that the coach believes in him. When ending a review time with one planter, I said, “I think I believe in you more than you believe in you.” The planter said, “I agree, I think you do. How come?”

The next piece as you move along in your CROSS coaching is for the planter to set some major Objectives. In the military an objective often describes the plans of a given mission—to take a certain hill, to reach a river, or to bring back hostages. For a church planter, objectives are the big items the planter needs to accomplish in order to achieve the mission God has given him. It is here that the coach is often able to bring clarity to the planting phase. What a planter may think is a key objective may not be a key to his work at that time. One planter told me that one of his key objectives was to get his web site done. He had only been on the field for a few weeks. As important as a web site is, it wasn't a key to his progress at that time.

I suggest a coach not allow for more than three objectives in a one-month period. Most planters overestimate what they can accomplish. The coach can keep the planter focused on essentials as he works on his vision. Since most planters are organizationally challenged, I have found this step and the next one as a huge benefit to the planter. Planters tend to be grand in vision and dreams, and short on strategic implementation.

Questions that will stimulate this part of the coaching conversation might include,

What are the three important “big rocks” you have to work on this month? Why do you see them as the three most important? Have you looked at the vision or mission of the ministry lately? Which one is the most important now? Why? How does each help you implement the mission God has you doing? How are your core values playing a part in your objectives? What potential obstacles do you see to your accomplishing one or all of the objectives?

All planters will get stuck. Sometimes it is because they lost sight of the vision or mission and have been swallowed by the urgent and unimportant. Again, a role of a coach is to know what needs to be worked on and in what order to assist the planter in his development. The planter may set a course of action for working toward objectives that are important, but are not the most important for the process. When you begin to play a new game, it is important that you learn the basics of the game in the necessary order. In a similar way, coaching planters to set good objectives in the proper order can be one of the most important steps a coach can take. It is vital that the planter sees the importance of each objective and clearly agrees to what needs to be done.

The “S” stands for strategies. Strategies are concerned with the overall means and plans for achieving the objective. Each objective will have a strategy associated with it. I also add Tactics to this part. Tactics are associated closely with individual strategies. Strategies are the specific individual steps, along with the tactics, that are action-oriented, measurable tasks, and do-able in a time frame agreed to. They are necessary to accomplish each objective.

A coach might ask such questions as these to stimulate the specific planning:

What types of things will you do to accomplish the objective you mentioned? What are you going to do first? When will you start? When will you have it done? Whom will you tell once you have completed it? Whom do you need to help resource you to accomplish the tasks? What can I do to help you stay focused on the task? How does the strategy advance the gospel-orientation of your mission?

Tim Keller makes the point of the importance of drafting strategies for the church that will influence the spread of the gospel in ministry areas of the church.

Let me show you how this goes beyond any 'program.' These are elements that have to be present in every area of the church. So, for example, what makes a small group 'missional'? A 'missional' small group is not necessarily one, which is doing some kind of specific 'evangelism' program (though that is to be recommended). Rather, 1) if its members love and talk positively about the city/neighborhood, 2) if they speak in language that is not filled with pious tribal or technical terms and phrases, nor disdainful and embattled language, 3) if in their Bible study they apply the Gospel to the core concerns and stories of the people of the culture, 4) if they are obviously interested in and engaged with the literature and art and thought of the surrounding culture and can discuss it both appreciatively and yet critically, 5) if they exhibit deep concern for the poor and generosity with their money and purity and respect with regard to the opposite sex, and show humility toward people of other races and cultures, 6) if they do not bash other Christians and churches--*then* seekers and non-believing people from the city A) will be invited and B) will come and will stay as they explore spiritual issues. If these marks are not there it will only be able to include believers or traditional, 'Christianized' people (Kauffman 2006: 4).

The coach assists the planter in keeping his objectives and even his strategies and tactics tied to the values of the gospel and the new church.

The final "S" in the CROSS approach to coaching stands for the Spirit and prayer. This is a most important dynamic. It helps the leader remember that God must work. The work of planting a church is a spiritual work, unlike the launching of a new business

venture or charity. Whenever we see the work of God advancing, we will see opposition. The great enemy of God and the Church is watching, hovering, plotting, and scheming in various ways to keep the church from coming into existence or to kill it after its birth.

Chapell writes, “Paul urges us to . . . pray in the Spirit . . . first for ourselves and then for others What do we seek when praying in the Spirit for ourselves and others? Such prayer is not a plea for magical power so much as it is a prayer for the Spirit to stir up with us a greater zeal for God, an inner stirring to stand for his purposes when the enemy approaches” (2001:150). As noted, the enemy is regularly approaching the church planter and the people in the church plant to harm and destroy. One of the reasons the Spirit was given was to activate, empower and gift God’s people for a world-wide church planting movement

The Spirit is how we appropriate the gospel of grace into our lives and ministry, because it is His role to point us to Christ and His work as all-sufficient, as Packer writes:

On the night of his betrayal Jesus said of the Spirit: “He will glorify me,” that is, ‘he shall make me glorious in people’s eyes by making them aware of the glory that is mine already and that will be enhanced when I have gone back to the Father via the cross and resurrection and ascension to be enthroned in my kingdom’ (John 16:14). That basic definition of what the Spirit was and is sent to do gives us a comprehensive directional frame of reference within which the whole of the Spirit’s new covenant ministry should be seen, and apart from which no feature of that ministry can be adequately understood (1984: 46).

The Spirit is our Counselor (Jn 14:16) and dwells inside Christ’s adopted children. We are commanded to “keep on being filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18). A church planting coach encourages the planter to listen to his counselor (Jn 14:26; 15:26-27), to follow the leading of the Spirit (Acts 13:1-3; Rom 8:14; Gal 5:16-18) and to embrace the power of

the Spirit to believe the gospel (Eph 3:16-19). “The Spirit makes us see the love of Christ toward us as measured by the cross, and to see along with Christ’s love, the love of the Father who gave his Son up for us (Romans 8:32)” (Packer: 66). It is the work of the Spirit, rather than our natural flesh or abilities that transforms us into Christ-likeness (2 Cor 3:18; Gal 5:16; I Pt 1:2).

Lovelace’s reminder of the work of the Spirit to point us back to Christ is helpful:

We should look to him as teacher, guide, sanctifier, giver of assurance concerning our sonship and standing before God, helper in prayer, and as the one who directs and empowers witness. We should particularly recognize that growth in holiness is not simply a matter of the lonely individual making claims of faith on the basis of Romans 6:1-14. It involves moving about in all the areas of our life in dependent fellowship with a person: “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16 NASB) (1979:131).

The coach reminds the planter that by the Spirit, the gospel has given him a new power, not only to know and desire God’s will, but to do God’s will (Phil 2:13). It will be by the Spirit applying the gospel that he will continue to grow in grace (Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22-23), to minister in confidence despite his weakness (2 Cor 3:5-6), and be bold in his witness (Acts 4:31; 7:54-60). “All God’s work in us, touching our hearts, our characters and our conduct, is accomplished by the Spirit” (Pratt: 1,755).

The planter should be reminded that the gospel is appropriated by the work of the Spirit and the work of planting Christ’s church is found in the power of the Spirit of Christ. Steve Brown reminds us:

The Sovereign Spirit of God works through our poor witnessing efforts and communicates the eternal truths of redemption to a world that, without the work of the Holy Spirit, simply would never believe something so unbelievable . . . the fact of the Christian life is . . . a life lived with the

presence of God's Spirit always active, always standing beside us, always taking our best efforts, baptizing them in His supernatural power, and making us more like Jesus (1999:114).

The coach and the planter utilize prayer in the Spirit as a means of God's grace in the planting process. This is where Kingdom praying is used to remember we are to glorify God. This is where we pray the hardest prayer, which is, "Not my will but Yours be done," or, instead of "God bless my thing," "God, do your thing through me." This is where we repent of idolatry and fleshly hustle and to pray for daily bread (specific needs mentioned) along with the faith we need to follow. Mostly the coach prays for the planter, but on some occasions, both may pray for each other.

I have used John Smed's "Seven Days of Prayer with Jesus" materials (2006) to serve as a guide as we pray through the Lord's Prayer. It reminds us of our sonship and of God's Fatherly care. We revere God's name and his greatness. We pray through the mission of God's "already-not yet" kingdom coming to our own hearts, then to the community where the church is being planted, to the region, and the nations. We ask God to gain a great reputation for himself and not ourselves by advancing his kingdom through the planting of the church. Further, we ask bold things of God, making our "daily bread" requests known as mentioned in the coaching time. The requests may focus on the project, be personal issues, potential conflicts or they may be family related. In some cases, planters focus on the "bread" needs of neighbors or members. The planter may repent of certain sin issues related to his idolatries.

Packer's insights into prayer are important:

I hold that praying in the Spirit includes four elements. First, it is a matter of seeking, claiming, and making use of access to God through Christ (Eph. 2:18). Then the Christian adores and thanks God for his acceptance

through Christ and for the knowledge that through Christ his prayers are heard. Third, he asks for the Spirit's help to see and do what brings glory to Christ, knowing that both the Spirit and Christ himself intercede for him as he struggles to pray for rightness in his own life (Rom. 8:26-27, 34). Finally, the Spirit leads the believer to concentrate on God and his glory in Christ with a sustained, single-minded simplicity of attention and intensity of desire that no one ever knows save as it is supernaturally wrought (1984: 66).

In my experience, this one area has been the hardest to do with the planter. If the time is rushed at the end of a session, the temptation is to speed through the prayer time. I have found that skipping it or rushing through prayer diminishes the influence of the coaching time and we lose out on the prayers of our small community. The planter must not neglect this piece of the coaching appointment. John Smed's reminder of the significance of praying the Lord's Prayer is helpful: "Because this prayer is filled with Jesus, it is filled with purpose. Because this prayer is certain to be answered, it is filled with power. Jesus wants us to pray it faithfully. He invites us to pray it personally. He calls us to pray it in community" (2006: iii).

Summary

In this chapter, we have defined church planter coaching and then have shown that a gospel-centered coaching approach is necessary if our desire is to plant gospel-centered churches. The coach needs the gospel, the planter needs the gospel, the emerging leaders need the gospel, the members of the new church need the gospel, and the community needs the gospel.

We looked at length at the gospel, not so much as a definition, but as a story that is our story. As we plant churches, all the key players need to be continuously reminded

of our inborn suspicion that God does not love us and that we must make life work out on our own. We create our own gods to provide for our self-saving means. But we discovered the glorious truth that in Christ, God has reconciled us to himself and that we are now forgiven, free, and part of God's family as adopted sons and daughters. We not only have been made right, but we have all of Christ's "rightness."

A gospel-centered coach works with an understanding that the planter he is coaching wrestles daily with doubt, fear, pride, and idolatry. He understands the natural propensity of the planter to relate to others, to his work, to his marriage, in ways that might serve his desire for comfort, security, or approval. The coach as prophet, king, and priest, will be diagnosing possible subtle ways sin is invading the planter's heart and affecting his methods of planting. The coach will remind the planter of God's love, Spirit empowerment, and kingly reign.

When the coach is working with a gospel framework several benefits result. There is the benefit to the friendship developing between coach and planter. The planter and his family find freshness to their relationships, as the planter is not worshipping false idols of success and work. The new church experiences the newness of relating to God based on grace, not works righteousness. They begin to relate to one another with the love and forgiveness given to them from God. The community benefits from the motivated love and service of gospel-transformed men and women.

We also explored the uniqueness of situational coaching for planters. They are indeed in a very different world—much different than their brothers in established pastorates or business enterprises. Each planter is different and each situation presented

usually invites a varied response. There cannot be a one-dimensional conversation.

So, the coach finds at least four different styles that he may employ as the situation calls.

We also discovered that there are unique issues facing planters in at least four different phases of the life of a church plant. The church planting coach will find it necessary at each phase to keep the planter focused on some areas on which he may lose focus without an objective coach looking on.

Lastly, I presented a working model for coaching entitled the CROSS. It encourages the coach to move in the give and take of a friendship, through: Connection of life, Reviewing the previous conversation for updates on progress, to setting specific Objectives needed to accomplish and fulfill the mission, then creating Strategies with action points to accomplish the objectives set forth. Lastly and most importantly, he depends on the Spirit and his role in applying the gospel to the planter and the church, as well as the activity of prayer—spending time in prayer with and for one another.

The whole of the CROSS approach is focused on and saturated in a gospel framework. Beginning with the friendship, all the way to the launching of the new church, the gospel of grace, empowered through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is the means and motive for the launching of a new church. The church is planted as a gospel-centered church. The church planter, along with his family, is operating in the power of the gospel. The new leaders (elders, deacons, small group leaders, mercy and outreach ministry coordinators, etc.) are living and appropriating the gospel. The preaching and discipleship is gospel-rich and Christo-centric. The community in the sphere of the new church receives the blessings of the gospel and Christ is glorified!

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Research Summary

The question this paper has explored is how a church planter can use coaching to launch and grow a healthy, gospel-centered church. Church planting is on the rise in North America and with its growth, churches and agencies are showing an interest in providing church planter training and coaching. If, however, the church planter desires to plant a church that is centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ, then the method of coaching he seeks and receives will be important to the process.

Coaching is important to the launching of a new church. It may be, as the research has suggested, the single most important ingredient of a new church's survivability. Planting a church without a coach is possible, no doubt. But having a coach will increase the effectiveness of the planter. The self-made man is a myth. Research has also shown that the calling to church planting is unique and the gift set needed to plant a new church, distinctive.

Biblical examples of church planting coaches, such as Jesus Christ with his apostles, Barnabas with Paul, and then Paul with Timothy, used a variety of approaches and methodologies. Even Moses with Joshua, as they planted the "church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), equipped, encouraged and empowered Joshua to lead the people. However, as we discovered, the leader-coach in each of those examples adapted the methodology to the situation. Moses, Jesus and Paul did not limit themselves to a one-

dimensional approach. They leveraged their relationship to influence their respective coachee at the motivational level.

Theologian, pastor, and church planter, Jonathan Edwards understood the necessity of leadership coaching. He and his wife opened their home as a training center. He personally invested himself into the lives of dozens of pastors and church planting missionaries. He was used of God to launch a movement of church planting missions, which is still happening today.

Edwards, as the research has demonstrated, enjoyed a rich theology, orbiting around the glory of God in the gospel. All things exist for his glory was Edwards's great theme, but he also understood the fallen and darkened nature of man. He preached, taught, and wrote about the gospel. But he also counseled, mentored, catechized, and coached by the gospel.

Contemporary models for coaching have been built upon the man-centered theology of humanism and self-actualization. As the research demonstrated, through that approach, most contemporary coaches are advocates for two predominant presuppositions: (1) Coaches only ask questions, never telling their coachees anything; (2) The coachee can solve his own problems. The result has been a view of coaching that is one-dimensional and self-centered (client-centered coaching).

We have suggested that methodologies are not value-neutral. We also noted that we should be about the business of planting gospel-centered churches. A gospel-centered church is one that is theologically driven—the gospel of grace both justifies and sanctifies. “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught” (Col 2:6-7).

How did we receive Christ? Through faith and repentance. How do we grow in him?

Through a life of faith and repentance.

Churches that embrace a gospel-centrality will see their primary motive and means being rooted in the Good News that our God now reigns over all things through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In this Good News everyone who believes can find deliverance from both the penalty and the power of sin. These churches will be churches that develop deep, loving, and healthy relationships among their members. Leaders will lead, shepherd, and train with gospel dynamics, not toxic, moralistic, self-righteous or fear-based motivations. Gospel churches make a significant impact on their cities, towns and regions. They “make visible by word and deed, the invisible kingdom of God” (North Georgia New Church Network Vision Statement: unpublished).

Conclusions/Findings

Coaching that is focused on simply a methodological approach, devoid of a theology of the gospel, may limit the growth in the church planter, his emerging leaders, the congregation, and its influence in the community.

Theology matters. The gospel is the key to everything, and priority must be given to a gospel-centered coaching relationship. We should not honestly expect gospel centered, theologically rich churches to make a significant impact on our cities, towns, and regions with a technique-oriented humanistic approach to leading, training, and coaching.

Coaching in the context of a trusting, gospel relationship has the potential to change lives. An effective coach understands that he is influencing all the people the

planter will come in contact with over the course of his ministry life. The coach is not simply impacting one player, but, God willing, thousands of others.

Coaching is best approached as multi-dimensional, a conversation, and a friendship. Prayer is a vital part of the coaching relationship, as it is the means by which God empowers and releases his will on the planter and the church.

Coaches are, by calling, leader-coaches, who represent the Leader of the Church, Jesus Christ, as prophet, king and priest. We are challenged by the gospel to move toward the planter with confidence that God will plant the church.

Most importantly, the gospel of grace, through the Holy Spirit, is sufficient for all things. When the planter is weak, or even at his weakest, the cross shines the brightest, so that God can receive all the glory.

Recommendations

I suggest recommendations in five areas as a result of this study:

1. The church planter.

A church planter seeking the services of a coach should be aware of some critical areas as he interviews prospective leader-coaches. The planter will most likely have more confidence in the relationship if the coach has some track record. I have suggested that a church planting coach should have a working knowledge of church planting methodology and should have some personal experience or as a key leader or staff member in a church planting project.

It is important for the planter to know the coach's view of gospel transformation. The planter will want to know how the coach believes people change. He should factor in how the coach views the gospel in relationship to the church, asking for examples.

The planter should also explore the personality profile of the coach and how the two profiles or styles interact. The planter should sense a bit of chemistry with the coach. The planter might want to walk through four questions: (1) Do I like the coach? (2) Do I believe he is qualified (experience and gospel understanding)? (3) Do I believe I need his particular services? (4) Can he help me reach my goal of launching the church?

The planter is responsible for his own coaching. He should consider who coaches him as a critical decision point in the church planting project. The coach will potentially serve as a great advocate and friend for the next several years. In addition to having a coach, the church planter will need other relationships that will increase his effectiveness, health and survivability.

The planter should seek out a mentor to help guide him through life. A mentor will pour his life into the life of the planter. The planter might eventually need a gospel-oriented counselor. Often times the greater work being done is in the heart of the planter and new pressures and events will surface un-addressed life issues. Every planter also needs a supervisor. Everyone needs a boss. If he is working for a church planting church or committee, it would be in his best interest to have one supervisor, rather than being supervised by a committee. Finally, the planter will need a friend, someone to hang out with and not have to be "on his ministry game." In fact, several planters have found it

great to have a small group, or band of brothers, they can meet with periodically so they can de-compress from the demands of planting a new work.

2. The church planting coach

The coach has the opportunity to be a leader-coach in a planter's life. It is a high and unique calling because he will have tremendous influence not only the life of the planter, but potentially all the people he will connect with over the course of his ministry. He should not view coaching as a hobby, but as a calling to a specialized ministry.

As leader-coach, he represents Christ to the planter as prophet, king and priest. As a prophet, he will serve him well by empowering him with the gospel. He must help the planter keep his heart and life focused on gospel truth, not accepting the lies of the evil one. The coach must believe in the planter, because he will doubt God and himself many times over the course of his project. The coach can assist the planter in seeing through the fog to discover root problems. As root issues and development opportunities arise, he challenges the planter to move out in bold faith and action. The coach must keep his love and interest before the planter as a man of faith.

As king, the coach will best serve him as he navigates the work, keeping his appointments and being prepared. But he must also be available, remembering that church planting is not linear. Sometimes the planter may need to contact him outside of their scheduled appointment. The coach must be available to take a call.

The leader coach also can serve the planter well by serving as a priest who encourages his heart and enlarges his hope. He may wish to lead out of his weaknesses as well as his strengths. He should use prayer as a vital means of spiritual leadership and encourage the planter to become a praying pastor. The coach must give himself away. If

he needs the planter's approval or willingness to do what he says, he is not giving himself, but using him. Coaches come alongside, "sharing not only the gospel of God, but their very lives as well" (2 Thess 3:7-8).

All three roles are seen in the context of friendship. A good coach must push the planter past his current ability, from the known into the unknown, relying on Christ to build his church, as he promised to do. The coach should cast that vision on the planter and remind him that the gospel, through the Spirit changes everything.

3. The sponsoring agency

Most planters are under the supervision of some sending agency. Whether it is a presbytery, district, association, church planting network, or church planting church, planters should have someone to whom they are accountable.

I recommend that the adjudicatory (the sponsoring agency), set up intentional coaching systems for their respective church planters. Systems create behaviors. If we want to see a movement of churches planted, good systems will produce healthy results.

Coaching systems for sponsoring agencies or adjudicatories should develop coaching methodologies that are theologically sound and gospel-centered. Techniques that are inconsistent with the gospel may work in successfully launching a church, but it may not be gospel-centered and Christ glorifying.

Many networks have included in their coaching systems areas such as the following:

a. Attending coach training events. The events may be annual or semi-annual training days hosted by the agency or attending national church planter training events, such as those sponsored by Global Church Advancement. Through this type of event,

coaches and potential coaches may receive up-to-date church planter specific coaching modeling and practice, as well as gospel dynamics in a coaching appointment. Another training event might be a monthly debrief session with all the coaches together sharing ideas, potential problems, and insights.

b. Expecting all planters to be coached. Since coaching may be the single most important element in church planter survivability, all planters under the auspices of the sponsoring agency should be required to have a trained and approved church planting coach. The agency will not assign a coach, but will expect the planter to find one.

c. Tying funding to coaching. No funding is available to those who are not being coached by an agency-approved coach.

d. Clarifying supervisor and coach roles. The coach is an advocate for the planter. The supervisor represents the responsibilities of the agency.

e. Coaches being committed to the values and mission of the sponsoring agency.

f. Having the planter and coach sign a coaching covenant, making a one-year commitment to one another.

g. Coaches being available to meet with the sponsoring agency as requested.

Healthy church planter coaching systems create a coaching climate that is safe, authentic, relationally healthy, confidential, and reproducing.

4. The emerging leader coach

It is important for a leader who is considering being a church planter coach to prepare himself for the high calling of influence as a leader coach. He should gain a solid grasp of the gospel dynamics, or the “dance,” as previously mentioned. The more he can exegete the gospel in the coaching session, the healthier the planter will be.

He should see himself not as an expert in church planting, but as a specialist in the field. He can prepare himself either through his own church planting experiences, or by participating in the launch of a church. He may consider either supplementing his own experience or, if he has not been a planter, gaining knowledge by attending a church planter seminar, class, or training event.

He should become aware of his personal style or relational pattern. Tools and resources abound to assist in learning one's personality type or relational style. I recommend Steve Ogne's excellent summary of the personality wiring as it relates to coaching relationships in his book, *Transmissional Coaching* (2006: 196-209).

I also encourage him to begin praying, as a way of life, for church planters and church planting opportunities. As God leads, he may wish to contact a planter to ask if he can be of any assistance through developing a monthly contact.

Few men are called of God to plant churches. I have heard some suggest that out of ten men called to be a pastor, only one is called to plant a church. Whether that is accurate or not, I would say that perhaps, out of ten called to pastor, two are called to coach a church planter. Maybe anyone can learn how to coach others, but gospel-centered coaching of a church planter requires more than simply learning coaching techniques. The task is more holistic and spiritual and requires knowledge of church planting methodologies.

5. Recommendations for Future Research

The church in America is in need of renewal. My work in church planting networks has taken me to such places as London, England and Vancouver, British Columbia. Ministry in both of these locations has allowed me to glimpse what the

American church will look like within my lifetime. Part of the unhealthy condition of the church is the lack of gospel of grace being communicated and appropriated.

Evangelical churches institute programs and preach moralism, but the conversion rates among the un-churched continue to dwindle.

I recommend research to discover if gospel-centered coaching of pastors in established churches would assist the church in re-discovering the gospel. Research on church planting phases, development and methodology has helped shape church planter coaching. Perhaps research in church renewal would assist in the study of coaching renewal pastors to “re-boot” an established church using the gospel. There are far more established churches in need of renewal than there are coaches available to assist.

Research that would be helpful for the church is in the area of the seminary education of future pastors. How is the gospel being pressed upon the lives of the students? Are there gaps in the process of training that might be addressed if the future church is to enjoy the fruits of the gospel? Are there means of individual coaching of students so that they learn a coaching process to assist them in ministry?

Finally, I tell all the planters with whom I work that the call on their life to plant a church is significant, holy, and glorious. Pondering the high task of seeing a church spring out from a vision into actually being used by God to transform people from darkness to light, to transform neighborhoods from oppression into places of freedom and good, all by the power of the gospel, is too high to grasp. God’s calling is God’s enabling. However, they must understand that we have an enemy who hates the church and, therefore, hates anyone planting a church. I have seen the enemy fight viciously

with planters—attacking with vengeance the health and wellbeing of the planter, or his spouse, or their children.

In those dark days, and there will be dark days, the planter must remember essential truths. Jesus prophetically announced, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18); “And I tell you, . . . I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Mt 16:18). Paul proclaimed, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, and then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (Rom 1:16-17). The apostle John promised, “You. . . are from God and have overcome them [the spirit of the antichrist], because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 Jn 4:4).

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