



**Christian Coaching Essays**  
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# Christian Coaching Essays

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# Introduction

When *In2action Christian Coach Network* project got underway in 2006 we made a commitment to see what God could do in two years with this ministry. By the end of three years we had achieved over seventy trained network members, with eighteen churches involved and clients from many sectors of the church system. We functioned in five Conferences in Australia and provided resources internationally. This level of activity demonstrates clearly the interest that exists amongst church workers and lay leaders for coach support.

Since having returned to the Church system as the Ministerial Secretary in the Victorian Conference, I have continued to coach pastors both formally and informally. The interest in coaching continues to grow in our Conference and throughout Australia.

The vision of having a coaching culture across the church system and particularly for pastoral leaders is still very much at an embryonic stage. It is not difficult to involve pastors in formal coaching. The challenge is how to involve every pastor and every lay leader in a coaching relationship. In most places pastors have to create their own 'supportive' relationships. It is not part of what the system offers them.

A survey conducted in 2007 of Seventh-day Adventist Pastors in Australia and New Zealand reported that many (25%) experience a lack of friendship in the workplace and lack of anyone to talk to about their progress on a regular basis. The survey says that nearly one third of ministers have experienced periods of depression caused by their work. Also, the majority of ministers experienced little support from their fellow ministers. The end result is under performance and sad to say loss of ministers.

The following testimony gives us an insight into the mind of a burnt out depressed minister.

“As someone suffering burnout and recovering, let me tell you it doesn't just go away. It affected my confidence and self esteem. I really couldn't face conflict of any kind, or even decisions that could bring conflict. If I felt that a pending decision would bring conflict, then I would really struggle to make that decision. I really had no energy to visit people. I literally had to force myself to take on Bible studies, and to visit people in their homes, and I dreaded people ringing me and asking for advice. My management style was characterised by indecision. I found myself day-dreaming frequently about the bliss of retirement, even knowing that I couldn't. The harder you try to work through burnout the more entangled you seem to become in it.

Oversensitivity was another characteristic that seemed to plague me. It seemed that anything negative was aimed directly at me and that I was being attacked personally. I also had a profound sense of failure. I had let my family down, my church down and I had let God down. For many people the only way out is to quit. But is quitting really the answer? I thought that it would have to come to this. Ministry is full of stressful situations and I didn't know how to deal with them anymore, and this would reduce me to tears. So quitting seemed like the only way to go.

So it seemed to me that my unresolved burnout would lead one of two things, either a complete breakdown, or I would quit relieving the pressure from the job that was driving me down, physically and emotionally.” *Anonymous.*

The stressors of leadership are compound when leaders function without support. A lack of regular dialogue with a trusted person can have a detrimental affect not only on a leader's emotional wellbeing but also on the quality of leadership they provide to their church. According to Christian Schwarz, of Natural Church Development (NCD), one of the distinguishing characteristics between pastors of healthy growing churches and non-growing is whether they have an outside support person. The NCD survey asked pastors if they "...regularly sought counsel from a trusted outside source..." of the fifteen questions that related to leadership, this had the strongest correlation to overall health and growth in a church.

Not only do pastors need support they need to be support givers of their leadership team. Effective leaders spend a good amount of time coaching their leaders and members. Ellen White acknowledges the importance of pastors spending time coaching their members. She wrote, "If pastors would give more attention to getting and keeping their flock actively engaged at work, they would accomplish more good..." (Ellen White Gospel Workers, 197-198).

It has been a real delight in our coaching work to help pastors shift their focus from their own doing to the doing of their leaders. This is a very satisfying shift for pastors. One of our current participants expresses his satisfaction in these words.

"I have found coaching leaders really is empowering leadership at its best! It has not only transformed and taken my leadership and ministry to whole new level but also the church and it leaders. There is nothing more exciting than seeing church members and leaders realise their God given potential, become equipped and begin leading in a way that really does change people's lives for eternity."  
Greg Pratt

The equipping and growing of new leaders is fundamental to the growth of a church.

The purpose of this collection of short articles (previously print in In2action Newsletter) is to share the learning of the last four years; draw some conclusion from that experience; and stimulate some ongoing discussion. There is no question in my mind that all leaders, all church pastors, all lay leaders and every member will contribute more to God's work when they are involved in a formal supportive coaching relationship.

I hope this material may encourage you in finding ways to create supportive relationships that help build God's kingdom.

Regards

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# Why Coaching?

Coaching today comes in a variety of forms, from Personal exercise trainers, everyday life coaches, to expensive executive coaches. Coaching is a rapid growth industry. Fortune Magazine says coaching is, "The hottest thing in management today..." Coaching has grown out of the recognition that human beings function better when they are supported by another, when they apply a discipline of accountability to themselves, and when they spend regular times reflecting with a coach on what they are doing.

Over the years I have been a coach and have trained church growth coaches. However, I had not had the opportunity in a formal way to offer coaching to the full array of leaders of a local church. Let me tell you, coaching local church leaders is a delight! The return for effort that one's receives is great. There are many lay leaders who with a small amount of support and a few nudges will perform significantly better.

Unfortunately, most ministers struggle to find the time or have the confidence to provide systematic coach support to their leaders. In fact most lay leaders operate totally on their own. Their only support coming from their team members. Without adequate support these leaders are setup for poor performance and often discouragement.

As a church system we do reasonably well when it comes to training and resourcing our leaders. Unfortunately, it is in the implementation of strategies where often it fails. Many good plans and strategies have never gone anywhere because the leader isn't sure what to do next, or doesn't know how to get his team on board or simply fails to delegate the tasks.

The ability of knowing how to implement a plan comes from experience and one's personality. Some people are real doers but need help in knowing what to do. Others are very creative but not naturally skilled in working out how to bring their ideas into being. In every people group there is a small number of people who excel at process. They can easily tell you what the options are in dealing with a problem. They enjoy mapping out the action steps for others. These people when aligned to leaders help leaders' pickup on those missing ingredients that will make all the difference.

## Great Challenge of Implementation

George Barna is well known in the USA because of his organisations excellent church research. Barna says his "...objective had always been to get good information into the hands of leaders so they would convert those insights into great strategic decisions about how to minister more obediently and effectively." At the end of 2003 he concluded that the 'insights' that his organisation provide to the church in North America was not resulting in genuine life transformation in churches. They were not acting on the research. In 2005 Barna re-launched his organisation with a new focus of working collaboratively with churches, through their Transformation Church Network.

Lack of implementation is not unique to churches. In a recent survey of senior executives at 197 companies conducted by management consulting firm Marakon Associates and the Economist Intelligence Unit, respondents said their firms achieved only 63% of the expected

results of their strategic plans. Michael Mankins, a managing partner in Marakon's San Francisco office, says he believes much of that gap between expectation and performance is a failure to execute the company's strategy effectively.

This failure to execute strategy is very prevalent in church life. A common reason for this failure is a loss of focus by leaders in managing the implementation of strategies. Leaders assume that those who are given the responsibility know how to implement. Often the strategy is allowed to shift over time and hence is never truly implemented. Most significant strategies require numerous incremental adjustments.

Strategies often fail because of a lack of synchronisation. The success of a strategy is often subject to the collaboration of a number of departments. One department's activity may be held up by another department's lack of activity. Leaders have to look at the big picture as well as the specific strategy they want to implement.

Sometimes strategic plans fail because those who are responsible for implementation don't understand the strategy or don't agree with it. They simply don't implement the strategy or do it half heartedly with poor results.

Most churches do not have an effective system in place to monitor implementation. Many board and business meetings are poorly attended and lack adequate reporting from department leaders. Few department leaders receive regular supervision or coaching from their church leadership. This means that unless leaders are highly motivated and disciplined that implementation will often falter.

Successful implementation requires an understanding of the big picture, as well as all the sequential steps that lead to it. Until there is a system in place in churches where leaders are brought to understand the big picture and are helped in working through the sequential steps many great plans will never be implemented.

Sources:

Perspectives: New Directions by George Barna April 4, 2005.

Closing the Strategy-to-Performance Gap Techniques for Turning Great Strategy into Great Performance by Michael C. Mankins and Richard Steele.

Natural Church Development Christian Schwartz P23.

# 12 Thoughts on Leadership

## ***Good leaders make good things happen!***

I am sure that most of our leaders in local churches could achieve greater results if they followed a few key principles. The following are common leadership issues that I have seen in my work with churches over the years and more recently in our coaching work:

1. *Eternal Matter*: Often church leaders act as if their role is unimportant, at best a short term commitment. Leaders need to be challenged to see their responsibilities as having eternal significance.
2. *Lack of huddles*: Many church leaders fail to call their team members together on a regular basis, this results in a lack of accountability and follow through by team members. It is better to have short meetings more often than infrequent long meetings. A good time to have meeting is around a meal. This save time and adds a fellowship component to the meeting.
3. *Do it all yourself*: Poor leaders make the mistake of doing most of the work themselves. They fail to recognise that this is unsustainable on their part and does not build team.
4. *No clear purpose*: There are many teams in churches who if asked what outcome they are seeking would struggle to be able to articulate one. Purpose produces commitment and outcomes.
5. *No shared vision*: Some leaders fail to understand the principle that most people will commit at a higher level to a vision that they have had some part in creating. Leaders need to facilitate a shared vision in their team.
6. *Short term view*: If a leader is only in the job for the short term then team members will not likely to commit. Leaders need to understand that leadership involves a higher level of commitment.
7. *Lack of priority*: Often inexperienced leaders fail to distinguish between the important items, those things that will really make a difference and the unimportant items.
8. *Lack of understanding of human behaviour*: Often leaders fail to get team members on board, to attend meetings, and to follow through on commitments because they have not considered human weakness. Most people need reminding, most people perform better when praised, most people are busy and need incentives to make the effort for meetings etc.
9. *Too many strategies*: Enthusiasm is great but too many strategies at once is foolish. Most of us plan too much and end up with mediocre results.

10. *Lack of Empowerment*: Some leaders struggle to understand what issues should be discussed by the team and what issues team members should be empowered to deal with. The rule is 'the bigger the issue the more people need to be involved'.
11. *Lack of celebration*: Praising team member's efforts and the celebrating of team successes is often underdone in church life. These things are huge motivators that build team members commitment.
12. *Treat differently*: If you want leaders to act different from the average church member, to operate at a higher level of commitment then you need to treat them differently from the rest. If team leaders treat team members as important they will tend to treat their job with importance.

In many churches the lack of leadership is the restricting factor in growing ministry. It is essential that churches have in place a mentoring/apprenticeship system that grows new leaders. For every new leader you train you create the possibility of another team coming together to do ministry.

# Risk Taking

"As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers; Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Matthew 4:18, 19.

The disciples got up and followed. Just did it! Scripture records no discussion or suggestion of previous encounter. Now the disciples may have known or seen Jesus before but it would seem that Jesus was so impressive that they took the risk to follow him. Often when we think about who made up the majority of Jesus disciples, fishermen, we marvel at what they achieved for being only fishermen. Yes, it is true God can use anyone to do His work. But I think we are overlooking the characteristic that Jesus requires of his followers. To be fishers-of-men you need patience, perseverance and be willing to take risks. Jesus taught that his followers must be willing even to risk their lives for him. (see Luke 9:23-25).

What determines a person's capacity for risk taking? Theorists say that a person's willingness to take risks depends on two things, one's perception of risk and one's propensity to taking risks. In others words some of us are by nature greater risk takers but all of us are limited by our experience. The more risks you take successfully the easier it is to cope with more.

Business organisations know that they must systematically promote risk-taking in order to be adaptive and innovative. They must manage employee development in ways that reward appropriate risk-taking. An environment that places the consequences of mistakes and failure solely on workers can discourage innovation and learning.

Chasing safe, easily attainable goals is not the way God wants us to do church. After all, zero risk = zero change. Taking informed risks is a fundamental characteristic of Christian leaders. The risks that God asks us to take today are pretty minor in comparison to those who established the early church.

## ***Steps to Becoming a Change Leader***

1. Anticipate needed change and focus on the future.
2. See problems as an opportunity and motivator for change.
3. Understand that when you take a calculated risk there is more to gain than to lose.
4. Use your time in those areas that will make a difference in the future.
5. Preserve your energy for the important.
6. Talk with others about the possibilities and pray for leading.
7. Take a step today to build your future.

# Beginning Coaching: A Client Perspective

*The following material was written by Darren Croft, who was Senior Pastor of Lilydale church at the time. He reflects on the value of having a leaders coach for his congregation.*

At first airing the ‘coaching’ concept evoked thoughts of AFL success or failure. Succeed and be loved – fail and be sacked! At Lilydale the process began by Pr Rob Steed becoming our ‘coach’. Being new there was some uncertainty. Who would be involved? How would it work? Would it work? I can now report that it has begun to impact positively in our church. So what has its impact been?

1. **New Leaders** - As a church we have, at times, struggled to find new leaders. When someone takes on leadership in church it can be a major undertaking. For many the thought of leadership has been too daunting – fears arise concerning the size of the task, people and coordination skills, fear of failure, lack of time or the possible criticism that it might attract. We haven’t solved this entirely but coaching has helped. Reluctant leaders have been given invaluable back up, encouragement, and ideas. These reluctant leaders have become growing long term leaders in key ministry areas. It also has helped us find new leaders who were not prepared to take new positions on without assistance. When asked to take on a position of leadership which came with a coach to help them, the ‘yes’ response came more readily.
2. **Focus** - Often new leaders take time to find their feet and can use the scattergun approach of trying to take on too much at once. Coaching has helped leaders think through the doing of ministry in a way that affirms them while also increasing their focus and confidence in a non-threatening environment.
3. **Communication** - An unexpected outcome is the improvement we have made as a church in communication. Coaching helped identify a common area of need. Individually no leader was aware of the commonality of the challenge we faced. The coach was able to facilitate leaders talking with one another which has inspired new and more effective ways of communication.
4. **Seeing New Possibilities** - Sometimes leaders do things because that is just how it’s done. The coach allows leaders to step outside the normal sense of ‘doing’ and spend some time thinking laterally about their ministry. It has resulted in new facets being added to the ministry in our church.
5. **Opportunity for Broad Application** – A coaching culture. Initially the idea was for Rob to be a coach to a number of individual leaders in the church. As it has progressed I have certainly begun to see that much could be gained from extending this right across the church. The result is the beginning of a coaching culture within the church. We are moving towards a culture in which leaders should each expect that they will have a coach.

As Senior Pastor I have personally had Rob as a coach – after all you can’t expect others to have a coach and not do so yourself! Personally it has helped me to think through several difficult situations, have someone to talk to that has no barrow to push or strings to pull, has helped me think through implementation of goals and work on ways of more effectively utilising staff and working with other leaders in the church. For me the shift has been significant. Originally, I was willing to give it a go but wasn’t sure what it would achieve.

Now I am certain that its contribution to the life of the local church is valuable and it is a concept that I would wholeheartedly recommend for application elsewhere. For those who understand the Natural Church Development process I expect that this will have a significant impact in the area of 'Empowering Leadership'. Whether or not this is an area of need in your church – I have no hesitation in being an advocate for the contribution of Coaching in our Church.

# Coaching Not New

## *Early Adventist Pastors Spent Time Coaching*

It is fascinating to ponder the fact that coaching is found in the history of the early Adventist Church. Coaching was a core function of the Adventist church pastor. Now you won't find the word 'coaching' used but you will read about the pastor teaching, instructing, training, all words that are synonymous with coaching today. The following quotes from two of our pioneers, Ellen White and J.O. Corliss, illustrate the commitment to this pastoral function.

"In some respects the pastor occupies a position similar to that of the foreman of a gang of laboring men or the captain of a ship's crew. They are expected to see that the men over whom they are set, do the work assigned to them correctly and promptly, and only in case of emergency are they to execute in detail. The owner of a large mill once found his superintendent in a wheel-pit, making some simple repairs, while a half-dozen workmen in the line were standing by, idly looking on. The proprietor, after learning the facts so as to be sure that no injustice was done, called the foreman to his office and handed him his discharge with full pay. In surprise the foreman asked for an explanation. It was given in these words: 'I employed you to keep six men at work. I found the six idle, and you doing the work of but one. Your work could have been done just as well by any one of the six. I cannot afford to pay the wages of seven for you to teach the six how to be idle.'

This incident may be applicable in some cases, and in others not. But many pastors fail in not knowing how or in not trying, to get the full membership of the church actively engaged in the various departments of Church work. If pastors would give more attention to getting and keeping their flock actively engaged at work, they would accomplish more good, have more time for study and religious visiting, and also avoid many causes of friction" (i)

"Let the minister devote more of his time to educating than to preaching. Let him teach the people how to give to others the knowledge they have received." (ii)

"A man can hover over, and simply preach to a church until it depends entirely upon his preaching; but our church does not do that. Our church is at work. We try to get every member of the church at work. But the pastor wants to have a discriminating mind, as he talks with different members of the church, to know just what that individual is fitted for. I believe we can do this." (iii)

This emphasis on equipping and coaching as a core function of the minister remained strong in the Adventist church up until the 1920-30s when the church organisation began to mimic the more traditional protestant model of church by 'settling' pastors. The settling of pastors shifted the pastor's focus from equipping others for ministry to doing most of the ministry. (See Russell Burrill book *Revolution in the Church*, Hart Research Center).

The system that we developed attempted to reestablish a priority for coaching in our churches. Our program encourages pastors to formalise a coaching practice with their leaders. This is a radical shift for some pastors in their role and the way they relate to their church. The effect is that a coaching role moves the pastor's attention from their own doing to the doing of the team. The pastor now becomes the facilitator of the personal growth and skill

development of their members. Their focus is now on equipping and empowering their leaders.

What does a church with a coaching culture look like? Tom Crane says an organisation knows when a coaching culture is present when all team members "...fearlessly engage in candid, respectful coaching conversations .... about how they can improve their working relationships and individual and collective work performance." (iv) A church with a coaching culture will value feedback, learning and personal development. Its leaders will continually strive to improve what they are doing.

A challenging question that needs exploring is, "How much of our pastors and system leaders' time should be spent in coaching?"

- (i) Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, 197-198.
- (ii) Ellen White 7 Testimony.
- (iii) J. O. Corliss, San Francisco pastor, *GC Bulletin*, April 21, 1901, Extra No. 16, 27.
- (iv) Tom Crane, *Business Coaching Worldwide*, Vol 1 Issue 1, 2005.

## **The Benefit of a Coaching Pastor**

There are numerous benefits for a church when the pastor engages in coaching. Here are some:

- Leaders feel affirmed and supported.
- Accountability and follow through by leaders is increased.
- A higher level of synergy between departments is achieved.
- Conflicts are dealt with more effectively.
- Leaders adopt a more long term view of their appointment.
- Interpersonal skills of leaders are improved.
- Communication between leaders increases.
- Leaders become more empowered to carry out their roles.

By being involved, the pastor has great influence in establishing a coaching culture.

# Coaching a Quadrant 2 Experience

Successful people are not always busy, and busy people are not always successful. But people who spend time reflecting, planning, clarifying values and spiritually renewing, know the difference between success and busyness.

It was Stephen Covey of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* fame who made famous the concept of Quadrant II behaviour. He taught that quadrant II activities are those important, but not urgent things - like planning, relationship building, values clarification, personal recreation, professional development, spiritual renewal etc.- that lead to success in life. Successful leaders typically spend more time in quadrant II activities than other leaders.



We see the quadrant II principle at work in the prayer life of great spiritual leaders of history. Martin Luther once said, "I have so much to do that I cannot possibly get by on less than three hours of prayer a day." Mother

Teresa ordered her nuns to pray for several hours every day — otherwise, she said, "...they wouldn't have the strength to do their work." Spending good amounts of time in Quadrant II enables us to work more effectively and with greater purpose.

Unlike quadrant 1 - the urgent and important, quadrant II requires a choice. Quadrant II does not act on us like quadrant 1 does; we must act on it. It requires discipline and planning if one is going to preserve this important activity of their life.

How easy is it for ministry to overwhelm us, to consume us and to exhaust us! Too much quadrant I and III can burn us out. Often we deceive ourselves into thinking that quadrant III, urgent-not important, is quadrant I activity. This deception can lead to ineffectiveness and burnout. Quadrant II activity helps to sort out quadrant III confusion.

Committing to a coaching relationship is one of the most effective ways by which to increase the amount of 'Quadrant II' time in your life. Every time a client meets with their coach they will spend some time discussing quadrant II issues no matter how busy they may be. The discipline of meeting on a regular basis with a coach helps maintain or increase quadrant II activity.

At our recent *Coach Training No 2* weekend the importance of quadrant II leaped out at me. One participant summarising what the weekend had meant to him said, "The weekend has renewed my ministry." How is it that those two days could have such an effect? My hunch is that when we spend time in quadrant II we regain the perspective of our calling that is so easily quenched by our business.

It is our hope that our efforts at *In2action* will have the effect of increasing the amount of quadrant II times in the lives of leaders and church members.

## ***Increase Your Quadrant II***

The following ideas are designed to increase the amount of quadrant II time in your life.

1. Start the day with a walk with God. (Do it for six weeks and it will become a habit.)
2. Spend the first hour each Monday morning planning your week.
3. Turn the radio off and play a spiritual music CD as you drive to work.
4. Spend one lunch time a week with a colleague catching up on their life.
5. Send an email at the end of each day to one person you have not communicated with for at least a month.
6. Spend half an hour each day talking with your partner.
7. Once a month talk with a friend or a coach about your ministry etc.
8. Spend a day, with your coach or friend, at the start of the year reviewing your personal mission statement.

# Accountability Makes a Difference

*Jenny headed up the prayer ministry team at Lilydale church. She has a family to care for as well as a teaching role at Lilydale Adventist Academy.*

## **Jen's Coaching Story**

When I was asked to be prayer ministry leader, I had no idea what the role entailed. There seemed to be so much involved, I didn't know where to begin. Prayer is so significant, so important and all encompassing. But whether I put notices in the bulletin and newsletter, ran programs, raced around doing a myriad of activities, or did nothing it didn't seem to matter much.

The following year I was asked to fill the same role. By this time I really wanted more guidance. What was it that the leadership team desired from this ministry? About this time, I heard that Rob Steed was to be offering coaching for leaders in my church. I agreed to continue with the proviso that I would receive guidance in this role.

Rob and I have met monthly since May. It was really good beginning a new church year with more direction. Having someone to bounce ideas off was good. He would ask questions about what I wanted to achieve and how I might do that. I wanted to bring prayer into every aspect of church life, not marginalised programs which requiring great effort for minimal return. We discussed synergy: working together with other ministries to achieve more than any individual ministry. We wanted to have prayer an intentional part of the worship service, where thought, creativity and broad member involvement is evident. We also wanted to build the team.

Some of my goals have been achieved, only then to raise the bar yet higher. Others are yet to be carried out. But throughout the coaching process, I have been both affirmed and challenged to be accountable. Knowing that my coach will ask how things stand on our previous plans helps me to follow through on things which are highly important though perhaps less urgent and hence easily postponed and easily neglected.

Should you have the opportunity for mentoring or coaching, I suggest you grab it with both hands!

## **Multiple Layers of Accountability**

*Accountability is one of the great benefits of coaching.*

In this month's newsletter I have asked one of my clients to share her experience. Jen's story illustrates how coaching puts legs on our intentions. So often we fail to implement our good intentions for all sorts of reasons - lack of confidence, poor planning, not sure where to start, discouragement etc. Coaching helps deal with many of these inhibitors to action. It provides both a strategic resource as well as emotional support.

Successful leaders typically have a number of sources of support and accountability. These sources are found within different layers of their life (See figure below). Spouses, friends, work colleagues, supervisors, external coaches etc. all play a part in supporting them.



Successful leaders tend to have an outside line of accountability and layered internal accountability. An elder in a church will be accountable internally to his pastor, head elder, elder team and small group. Externally, he is accountable to his coach and probably, more importantly, to his wife.

Bob Hill and Andrew Arroyo in 'Transformational Coaching' describe layered accountability as building circles of

accountability. "Each circle contains a few voices, with those in closest daily working relationships having more regular and immediate impact, while those in the outer circles comprise voices with which leaders interact whenever needed".<sup>1</sup> These voices, they say, may be accessed weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, or on special occasions. It is within this array of accountability the pastor coach and personal coach provides different but formal accountability.

When a leader receives support formally through coaching their performance typically goes up another notch. The simple practice of routinely meeting with another person to discuss their ministry has a profound effect of spurring on a leader.

*In2action* provides to churches a *coaching system* that not only increases the output of the leadership team but also their effectiveness. Without a system all the good intent will be unsustainable. A coaching system leverages the amount of accountability in a church.

Ultimately, the success of the client is not so much about the coach but the process of coaching.

1. Umidi Transformational Coaching, Xulon USA p117.

## Measure Your Accountability

How accountable are you in your leadership role? Use the following quiz to evaluate yourself. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing 'Never' and 10 representing 'Always', rank yourself on each of these characteristics of accountability.

1. I keep my team informed of what is happening.
2. I am proactive in dealing with issues.
3. I take responsibility for problems weather I have caused them or not.

4. I report on both my success and failure.
5. I am willing to risk my own comfort for the good of my team.
6. I put my trust in the team on important issues even though I may have a different view.
7. I will confront people with respect when necessary.
8. I am committed to finding ways to improve the effectiveness of our ministry.

The higher the score, the better. What can you do to become more accountable in those areas?  
Discuss your results with a trusted colleague.

# Leverage: Small change can make a big difference

Today in the church growth community there are many voices from a variety of traditions pushing for change in the way Christians 'do church'. The motivation for these innovations comes from a commendable desire for the church to be more effective in reaching the un-churched.

However, often in the pursuit of innovation leaders make the mistake of selecting strategies that involve radical change for little or no gain. It is easy for leaders to slip into a change for change sake mind set. The view that the bigger and more radical the change the more success will be achieved is often not the reality. The reality is that the more radical the change the more energy is drained from a church and often more resistance built for future change. Big change does not necessarily guarantee big results. Big change may improve things in the short term but often has a negative long term result.

There is a well known saying that there are "many ways to skin a cat". How true this principle is when it comes to growing churches. There are 1000s of ways to grow a church. But there is only a handful of change principles required when it comes to implementing those ways. One such principle that is often overlooked is 'leverage'.

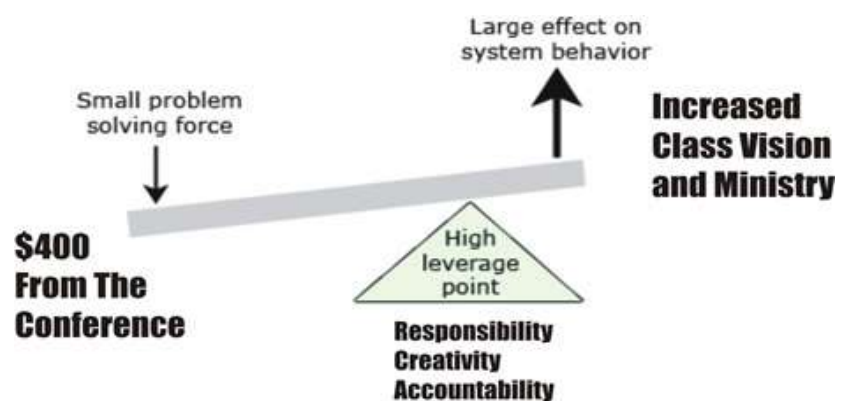
It was Peter Senge of *5th Discipline* fame, commenting about systems thinking said,

"The bottom line of systems thinking is leverage - seeing where actions and changes in structure can lead to significant, enduring improvements. Often, leverage, follows the principle of economy of means: where the best results come not from large-scale efforts but from small well-focused actions."<sup>1</sup>

Leverage can be defined as the ratio of change in input to change in output. A 'leverage point' is a place in a system where force can be applied. A *low leverage point* is a place in a system where a small amount of force causes a small change to system behaviour. A *high leverage point* is a place in a system where a small amount of force (the effort required to prepare and make a change) causes a large amount of predictable response.<sup>2</sup>

A brilliant example of a high-leverage point strategy is seen in what one Conference director did to challenge the thinking of Sabbath School classes. He sent to every Sabbath School class in every church in the Conference a budget of \$400. This

simple action had the effect of challenging Sabbath School classes to see themselves as more than a Sabbath morning Bible study group. Now they had to ask some important questions - "Why do we need a budget? What is the purpose of Sabbath School? What ministry could we



do with this money?" Questions that conference department directors have been unable to get on the agenda of churches for years. One small action leveraged a large amount of vision building for churches in that Conference.

The challenge for leaders is learning how to identify leverage points. Typically high-leverage changes are usually highly *non-obvious*. They are typically not closely connected to obvious problem symptoms.

Coaching is probably the ultimate process for identifying high-leverage strategies. When a leader spends time on a regular basis with a coach they increase the possibility of finding 'high-leverage points'. Coaching helps leaders to go on an intentional journey of discovery.

1. Peter Senge The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organisation, Random House Australia page 114.
2. Leverage Point [www.Thwink.org](http://www.Thwink.org)

## **How to Identify High-Leverage Points**

You know you have a high-leverage point strategy when:

1. There is little resistance to it.
2. The strategy has a high probability for success.
3. Its implementation is low cost.
4. The strategy is self-sustaining.
5. It impacts positively in a number of areas.

# What We Can Learn From McDonalds in Growing the Church

***It is the total package that counts not just the hamburger.***

The apostle Paul taught that the church is like a ‘human body’ where every member has a part to play. No part is more important than another. It is as the parts work together that the church will have health and growth.

McDonald's success is not based on it having hamburgers that are superior to other hamburger sellers. In fact most people would rate McDonald hamburgers as very average. The difference is what is packaged with the hamburger - clean toilets, parking, quick service, easily found, consistency in product and collectibles.

So often we see trends in church that emphasize one part of church life above the rest. This may not be the intent of the innovators but rather the mistake of the followers. A classic example of this was seen in the ‘seeker’ service movement. Many churches put great effort in developing a service that would be attractive and user friendly to ‘un-churched seekers’. The problem for most churches who tried this innovation was that very few, if any, seekers turned up to their seeker friendly service.

Those adopting the ‘seeker service’ strategy had failed to adopt the full package. The seeker service on its own would not produce the desired result. For the seeker service to work it needed a whole range of other factors working together. Members needed to bring un-church friends with them to the service. Greeters needed to be coached in how to put newcomers at ease. Follow-up strategies that conveyed a message, “we want to be your friend” without being intrusive needed to be in place. Small groups that could quickly assist newcomers in assimilating into the church community were rarely in place.

Innovative strategies that do not consider the whole system of church are bound to fail. Christian Schwarz’s model, *Natural Church Development*, provides a way for churches to measure and explore the different components of church. He says that the lowest performing area of church life will set the level of health and growth in a church. That in raising the quality of any characteristic of a church one must do so while considering the biotic impact on other areas. Schwarz’s model enables us to work in improving a church’s situation in a holistic way.

It is true to say that in our coaching practice I have never meet a leader who is not doing something useful. The problem lies not in what they are doing but more often in what they are not doing. The coaching relationship creates over time opportunity for the coach and client to identify the gaps, those missing ingredients, that when added will bring greater success.

## **Franchising**

A new franchise opens every eight minutes of every day in the USA. Franchises have a 90% survival rate after 10 years, while other forms of independent business have only an 18% survival rate. McDonalds is the ultimate franchised organisation. What franchisers like McDonalds to do is work out in detail what needs to occur for any new business to success.

The franchising business movement is based on one very important principle: “You reap what you sow.” You reap what you sow every time. Josh Hunt says, “Franchises have figured out, in the details, exactly what it takes to reap their desired results. They sow the required behaviour and expect and get the desired results, every single time.” He says, “...if it works in Atlanta, it will work in Dallas. If it sells in Chicago, it will sell in Sacramento, every single time. It is a law. God has said it. It will be done.”<sup>1</sup>

So often leaders in churches spend their energy recreating what already exists in other places. Instead of taking what is a proven strategy they seem to have a need to create their own. The problem with this is that creating new approaches, as necessary as that is on occasions, can be very energy draining and often overlooks important factors. When a leader employs a franchising approach it moves the energy of the leaders from the conceptual area to the details of implementation increasing the likelihood of success.

Hunt challenges the idea that all we need is broad principles. “It is not about a handful of broad principles. I wish I had a dollar for every time I have heard someone say that all we have to do is understand a handful of broad principles and everything will work out. It is not true. Success is not in understanding a handful of broad principles. It is in the details. They have worked out the law of sowing and reaping in the details. And so have doubling churches. They have worked out, in the details what it takes to serve people through a local church. Non-doubling churches, by comparison, are not as sharp”.

I don't particularly like McDonalds but I appreciate the fact that they give evidence to the truth: *that average people can succeed in business when they are give the right plans, ingredients and support.* Most McDonald outlets are run and owned by average people who have decided they would like to run a family business. They succeed because of the plan and the support that is provided.

It seems to me that the church system should follow McDonalds example and give higher priority to assisting churches clarify their ministry plan and provide a much higher level of personal support to pastors and leaders.

1. Josh Hunt, *The Franchising of America*, [www.joshunt.com](http://www.joshunt.com).

## ***Franchising Ministries***

Within church life there are some obvious areas that lend themselves to a franchised approach. Here is a list of some possible ministries where a franchised approach could occur:

- Small Groups/Sabbath School Classes
- Bible Prophecy Seminars
- Storm Co Events
- Kids' Club
- Cooking Schools
- Bible Studies
- Kids' Sabbath School
- Family Life seminars

In order to use a franchised approach, leaders need to access the information from someone who has demonstrated success and documented it. This can be from a previous leader within the church, a neighbouring church or from the Conference office.

# Long Distance Coaching Experience

## ***Being Coached From A Distance***

*Sue Redman was one of In2action first distant clients. This essay looks at how phone coaching can be an effective alternative to face-to-face coaching.*

When Rob invited Chatswood Church to participate in the coaching process I couldn't believe my 'luck'! Having become acquainted with Rob while implementing Natural Church Development at a previous church, my respect for him, his knowledge and skills, had seen me short listing him as one of my professional advisors and I had always appreciated his prompt and comprehensive responses to my phone calls and emails.

Rob's initiating the coaching process with Chatswood Church told me that a) he loved his ministry, and b) he was interested in me and my church – and that meant the world. Until that time I had been required to participate in a number of intern mentoring relationships – which I definitely appreciated – but never before had anyone *chosen* to work with me and never before had anyone expressed such a genuine and detailed interest in my church. I was blown away.

During the last ten months my coaching experience has proven to be everything I had hoped it would be. Inevitably a phone call with Rob precipitates an 'a-ha' moment in which I am able to see my way passed an obstacle or through a wall that had been blocking my progress. Of course, I never feel like I've made enough progress by the time of our next phone call but the inspiration I receive each session and the focus and energy that brings me means I definitely make a lot more progress than I would have otherwise.

Reflecting on my experience of being coached remotely to date, I would have to say that the first phone call or two felt a bit weird because even though I had met Rob, and as I said before, had contacted him from time to time for advice, shifting into a formal coaching experience required adjustment and shifting into a formal coaching experience with someone I couldn't see even more so. But Rob really helped with this. As the coach he took the lead and within a phone call or two I was feeling very relaxed and already comfortable enough to appreciate the coaching process and maximize its rewards.

And where are we up to? The reality is that Rob is probably now functioning as both my coach and mentor in that he still provides more advice than I imagine just a coach would – but that's only because I am always asking for it – and that's because I'm still feeling very 'young' in my role of sole church pastor. Even though I'm now in my eighth year of ministry and am no longer required to participate in an intern mentoring relationship, I still feel the need for a different kind of support than what my employees/the local conference provides, and coaching is where I get it.

Sue Redman

## ***Coaching by Phone***

Coaching by phone is very common in the business world today. The biggest downside of coaching by phone is the loss of body language. However, this loss is partly compensated by a natural increase in listening skills. Most people are accustomed to conducting personal conversations over the phone with family and friends.

The upside of coaching by phone is that the client's choice of helper is not limited by geography. With capped phone calls anyone is accessible throughout Australia for a minimal cost. This means that one can be more selective in who they chose to obtain coaching from.

I believe that most pastors probably under utilise the phone as a means of coaching leaders and visiting members. The phone saves you and your client travel time. It is also less intrusive and more convenient for the client. Accessing church members in their homes has become quite difficult. By using the phone you can often connect with members at their work place.

Now in saying this I would not want to discount the value there is in physically being in the presence of the person you want to support. Where possible I try to find occasions with our remote clientele to catch up with them in person.

There are a number of considerations that coaches should keep in mind when coaching by phone.

1. *Check the emotional state of the client:* It is important to check with the client their emotional state. Typically in face to face coaching the client's body language would give clues to this. You may pick it up in their tone of voice. When coaching via the phone it is usually smart to ask the client how they are feeling. One of my standard lines is, "How are you travelling?" This will ensure that the coach gets to the important issues. Emotional questions elicit open honest disclosure.
2. *Negotiate the agenda as you go:* Make sure you are on the right track by negotiating the agenda throughout the session. There is nothing more frustrating for a coach to spent most of your session on material that is not the client's real concern.
3. *Express support:* In face to face work the coach encourages the client not only by what they say but by their physical attentiveness. For example leaning forward encourages more disclosure. On the phone there is a need to express support through good listening and a higher level of affirmation statements.
4. *Summarise:* It is more difficult on the phone to ascertain a client's commitment to new behaviour. They may say one thing but if you could read their body language it may tell you another. In all coaching situations there is a need to summarise and conclude discussion. However, this is even more so when coaching on the phone. I often ask my clients at the end of the session to tell me, "So what is it you will be working on?"

# Hitting the Sweet Spot

## *Linking a Key Role of Leadership*

Leaders know when they have hit the ‘sweet spot’ - the team is focused, there is good team spirit, things are happening and there are good outcomes! The challenge for leadership is working out how to stay there. The term ‘sweet spot’ originally referred to various pieces of sporting equipment, notably bats and tennis racquets. When hitting the ball, the bat (for instance) will rebound, but there is a location along the bat where this force is completely balanced out by turning force of the bat. (1) Either side of this spot there tends to be a jarring sensation. The sweet spot is all about balance.

It is very easy for leaders to become consumed with specific tasks, particularly those things that they have a natural work preference for, and to overlook other key areas of leadership. Leaders are particularly vulnerable to do this when stressed or overloaded with tasks.

Effective leaders utilise a full set of linking skills that co-ordinate and integrate the work of the team. Linking skills are not work preferences but are leadership skills. Without good linking skills a team will lack cohesion and struggle to deliver good outcomes.

A very useful instrument for helping leaders understanding their leadership preferences is *The Team Management System Model* (TMS). This system identifies both ‘work preferences’ and ‘linking’ skills. Linking skills are leadership skills that help bring together team members and their work preferences (giftedness).

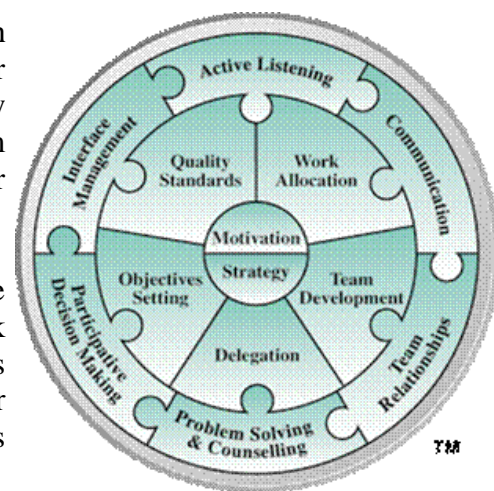
The TMS divides these ‘linking skills’ into three categories (see Figure below TMS Linking skills):

*Leadership:* These skills are very much associated with being the leader. Good leaders take responsibility for ensuring that the team is strategically focused. They typically facilitate the planning process. The team leader also plays an important role as the motivator and affirmer of the team member’s efforts.

*Task:* For the team to achieve its task, it must allocate work to team members based on their work preferences (spiritual gifts). It must explore new ideas and encourage members’ skill development. Clear objectives must drive the effort. The team effort needs to be evaluated along the way.

*People:* The team outcomes will only be achieved if team members are committed to the task and also each other. The following skills build the team relationships:

- *Active Listening:* attending, listening, in touch with feeling of others, two way discussions.
- *Communication:* good discussion at team meetings, all informed, able to speak persuasively.



- *Team Relationships*: role clarity of team members, valuing of each other, conflict dealt with, mutual respect, team loyalty and pride.
- *Problem solving and Counselling*: receptive to discuss problems, follow through on commitments, supportive to others, counsels team members to improve performance.
- *Participative decision-making*: shares leadership, welcomes differing viewpoints, involves team members in major problem solving.
- *Interface management*: coordinates and integrates the work of team members, facilitates team evaluation, represents the team in discussion with other teams and with senior management.

Leaders need to review on a regular basis their use of these skills. A coaching relationship will greatly help in such a process.

The apostle Paul challenged the church, "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." (2) Corinth did not have a united leadership team. They were running off in different directions following different people.

When leaders spend time linking purpose, tasks and people together they will enjoy more 'sweet spot' moments. Staying in the 'sweet spot' does not happen accidentally.

(1) Wikipedia.

(2) I Corinthians 1:10 NIV.

## ***Improving Your Leadership Skills***

There is never an end to our learning about leadership. Here is a list of learning options:

1. *Pray for leadership learning opportunities*. Personal reflection with God is an important part of our leadership development.
2. *Read some leadership books*: Here are a few suggestions - *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Leaders*, S. Covey; *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, John Maxwell; *Effective Church Leadership*, Kennon Callahan.
3. *Check the Web for free articles on leadership*:
4. *South Pacific Division (SPD)*: Contact Barry Gane at the SPD Leadership department for resources and training opportunities.
5. *Complete a Team Management Linking Skills Profile*: This measures your linking performance.
6. *Ask for feedback*: Some of the best learning is on the job. Ask some of your key leaders for feedback. Contact us for some materials to facilitate the process.
7. *Subscribe to a leadership newsletter*: This is a slow drip method for learning. Here are few newsletters- Christianity Today's [Leadership Journal](#); [Maximum Impact](#) John Maxwell.
8. *Attend a conference by download*: You can down load the [Willow Creek Association](#) leadership conference and listen at your leisure.
9. *Hire a coach*: I nearly forgot to list the most significant opportunity for leadership learning, hire a coach. Talk to your ministerial secretary or colleague.

# Adventist Pastor Survey

## A Coaching Response

A recent survey of Seventh-day Adventist Pastors in Australia and New Zealand reports that the majority of pastors are satisfied with their life and work. Most also reported having generally good relationships with their Conference administration. This is all good! However, according to the report's author Barry Gane, there are some areas of concern. He says, "Issues creating concern are in the areas of lack of friendship in the workplace and lack of anyone who talks to them about their progress on a regular basis."<sup>1</sup>

The survey says that nearly one third of ministers have experienced periods of depression caused by their work. The report says "the same number reported feeling lonely and isolated in ministry and of these, 25 percent felt they had no one to talk to." Also, the majority of ministers experienced little support from their fellow ministers.

A lack of regular dialogue with a trusted person can have a detrimental affect not only on a pastor's emotional well being but also on the quality of leadership they provide to their churches. According to Christian Schwarz, of Natural Church Development (NCD), one of the distinguishing characteristics between pastors of healthy growing churches and non-growing is whether they have an outside support person. (see figure below) <sup>2</sup>. The NCD survey asked pastors if they "...regularly sought counsel from a trusted outside source..." of the fifteen questions that related to leadership, this had the strongest correlation to overall health and growth in a church.

Now I don't think those who work in the area of pastor support or administer them actually need a survey to know how important support is for a minister's success. The issue conferences face is how to deliver a more systematic and intentional approach. My coaching experience has taught me that it is the frequency of contact that makes the difference. As Schwarz suggests, it's the 'regular' dialogue where trust grows and open honest sharing occurs that is so important.

One of the difficulties that any organisation faces in developing a coaching system is that coaching is a quadrant 2 activity - important but non-urgent.

When things are busy the non-urgent get squeezed out. The urgent usually are given priority because of their quantifiable nature.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency that if our pastors are not recipients of coach support then it is less likely that they will be mentoring their leaders. If mentoring is not a strong feature in our churches we will struggle to develop new effective leaders.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has one of the best church structures of any denomination for offering systematic support to their pastors. However, for that to be achieved the system will need to make a higher commitment to caring for its key leaders, the church pastor, and



Among the fifteen variables related to leadership, the factor with the strongest correlation to the overall quality and growth of a church, is the readiness to accept help from the outside.

less time on other activities. It is my belief that a well coached pastoral leadership team will see a significant increase in the health and growth of our churches.

- (1) Surveying Adventist Pastors by Barry Gane, South Pacific Division Record July 7, 2007 Signs Publishing Australia you may read the full report by going to.....??
- (2) Christian Schwarz, Natural Church Development 1996 page 23.

### ***Emotional Health Test***

Emotional health is difficult to define and measure. Rate yourself on the following checklist, giving yourself a score of:

0 if you never feel that way.

1 if you sometimes feel that way.

2 if you often feel that way.

Emotional Health:

1. Do you know how to handle the losses of life that inevitably come your way?
2. When you are criticized, do you keep a balanced outlook and avoid punishing or rejecting yourself?
3. When you feel angry, can you readily admit your feelings to yourself or others?
4. When you are angry, do you avoid becoming depressed and down on yourself?
5. Can you resist blaming yourself for mistakes?
6. When something happens that threatens your self-esteem, can you bounce back and reverse the damage?
7. When you genuinely do something wrong or harmful, can you own it and ask for forgiveness?
8. When someone forgives you can you let it go and stop feeling guilty?
9. Can you celebrate the accomplishment of others without feeling unusually envious?
10. Can you behave in a loving way toward people you don't like or who reject you?

Total \_\_\_\_\_

15+ If you score above 15 (the higher the better) you are a remarkably healthy person. (Honesty is also required.)

10-15 Shows reasonable healthiness.

10< Not so healthy - Find a person you can trust and talk about your results.

This test is from Archibald D Hart's book *The Crazy Making Workplace* 1993 Highland Publishers page 97, 98.

# Contented Cows

## ***A Coaching Leader***

E.A. Stuart, the founder of Carnation Milk, learned as a boy on his father's farm that quality milk had to come from healthy cows. The belief that quality milk came only from quality cows eventually led Stuart to establishing his own breeding farm, known as Carnation Farm. Carnation cows held the world milk production record for 32 consecutive years. One cow in particular, Segis Pietertje Prospect, produced 37,381 pounds of milk during 1920. In 1907, the public was first introduced to the promotional phrase, "Carnation Condensed Milk, the Milk FROM CONTENTED COWS™." 1

So what have contented cows got to do with coaching? Workers, like cows, are more productive when they are contented in their workplace.

Bill Catlette and Richard Hadden conducted a study of twelve high profile publicly traded companies that shows the stark contrast in business outcomes of six companies known as great places to work (Contented Cows) and six less distinguished competitors (Common Cows.) "The first group, the Contented Cows, out grew their Common Cow counterparts by a margin of 10:1, and out earned them by \$111 billion (\$US) in the fifteen-year period 1986-2001! Moreover, despite the fact that they were adding jobs while the other group was slashing payroll, the Contented Cow organisations experienced, on average, 3 times greater productivity, as measured by net profit per employee."2

The question that immediately comes to mind is what creates a contented workforce? One of the key characteristics, according to Catelette and Hadden is that, "In almost every case, Contented Cow companies were led, from top to bottom, by people who communicate more like coaches, and less like managers and bosses."3

Jesus challenged his disciples to adopt a similar approach when he said, "*You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" (Mark 10:42-45) In other words, whoever wants to be a significant leader needs to focus not so much on their own agenda but more on the agenda of their followers.

A coaching/servant style differs from other leadership approaches in avoiding a top-down approach, and instead utilises collaboration and empowerment. The coaching leader's motivation is a conscious decision to serve those they are responsible for rather than exercise their positional power. The objective is to enhance the growth of individuals in the organisation and increase teamwork and personal involvement.

Characteristic of a coaching leader is that they listen receptively to what others have to say and rely on their persuasion powers rather than their position. A coaching leader is committed to building community in the work place and supports growth in their employees.

"The reality is....," says Catellet and Hadden, "... you can't boss someone into commitment. Bosses get, at best, compliance; coaches get commitment."4 People will commit and perform

better when they feel cared for. Coaching leaders enable their people by providing the skill training, the tools and the trust to do the job their way.

Commitment comes not in a plan or a job description but via relationships. A good question for leaders to ask themselves often is, "How is my relationship with those I am trying to lead?"

- (1) Nestle Website: <http://www.verybestbaking.com/products/carnation/history.aspx>.
- (2) Coaching and Contented Cows by Bill Catlette and Richard Hadden TMS E-Journal Edition 52.
- (3) Dallas Business Journal - August 28, 1998 by Glen Bounds.
- (4) Coaching and Contented Cows by Bill Catlette and Richard Hadden TMS E-Journal Edition 52.

## **How to Build a Contented Church**

The key leader of any organisation, including a church, plays an important role in building a cohesive and contented membership. Here are some principles for building contentment:

1. *Be the last to leave church on Sabbath.* Be available to people.
2. *Spend time on the phone talking with your leaders and members.* Phone people for no reason at all except to see how they are doing.
3. *Recognise member's achievement, joys and sorrows.* Do this from the pulpit when appropriate and in private.
4. *Commit a significant amount of time in committee meetings to hearing from members.* Don't spend all the time discussing your agenda focus on your member's agenda.
5. *Have regular individual coaching sessions with your leaders.* If you have too many leaders to care for add a personal coach to your team to assist you. (We can train them for you.)
6. *Deal with issues and complaints efficiently.* A quick response conveys the message to people that you value them.
7. *Try to discover and support the vision of each of your leaders.*
8. *Find out what are the needs of your leaders and provide them with the tools they need to do their job.*

# Coaching Makes Relocation Easier

*Early in 2006 Pastor Darren Slade agreed, with his church, to be one of the two churches that would participate in In2action's initial coach development project. This included him receiving coaching along with a number of his leaders.*

*His reflections give us an insight as to the benefits of coaching for a pastor when appointed to a new church and the changing emphasis that occurs in a coaching relationship over time.*

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**Question:** Darren, in 2006 you moved to a new church in a new conference and right away began working with a coach. What difference did it make you settling into your new church in those first few months?

**Answer:** It made a huge difference to me. My new church was completely different in so many ways from the ones I had pastored previously, and I came in just after some major issues so my coach was very valuable in those first few months. In fact, I don't think the transition would have been nearly as smooth and pleasant had I not been able to bounce numerous issues off my coach. He really helped me to be balanced and professional (when I followed his advice!) in some pretty sensitive situations.

**Question:** How did this coaching relationship differ from other helping relationships you had experienced previously?

**Answer:** It was very different because I rarely had any helping relationships in my previous 8 years of ministry, including my internship. There were one or two people I could call if I needed advice in certain areas, but no all rounder. That is where a coach has been so useful. He is able to work through issues with me in any area, and is also looking at the big picture of how different strengths and challenges in my ministry relate to other areas. This ability to be neutral and see the totality of what I am doing and where I am headed has been so helpful, as I tend to get tunnel vision on the immediate issues at the expense of greater goals.

**Question:** You have been working with a coach now for over eighteen months. How has the coaching experience changed?

**Answer:** At first, my coach was my neutral advisor, and I really relied on him for counsel in how to handle many immediate situations from visitation and conflict resolution to the first elder's meeting agenda. After 6 or 8 months, I found that things were running fairly smoothly, that my coach had helped me over numerous humps, and now I want guidance in long term planning, vision casting, inspiring my church – different aspects of leadership than what I had been involved with in the first few months. So coaching changed from addressing immediate issues to looking further ahead and planning how to keep this big ship on a steady and sustainable course.

**Question:** Coaching is not just about solving problems but personal development. Where do you see yourself having developed during this time?

**Answer:** I am certainly far more intentional in my ministry than ever before. I realise the importance of visioning, planning and implementing rather than only being involved in getting from day to day and week to week.

**Question:** You have been a recipient of coaching and received coach training. How has this altered the way you relate to your leaders now?

**Answer:** Quite a big shift for me – I now see leaders as one of my church’s best resources if trained and empowered. I feel it is important to spend far more time with my leaders than I have before, and I am constantly looking to help them to step up, and I want to be there to encourage and support. I am not a perfect leader to my leaders, but I feel that my coach has dramatically increased my awareness and it is up to me to make my leaders a priority in the same way my coach has made me his priority.

## **Tips for New Leaders**

Every new leader experiences a ‘honeymoon’ period. New leaders need to use this time wisely as it is a time to set themselves up for long term success.

Here are some tips to consider:

1. Spend time connecting relationally with your leadership team. Get to know them personally as quickly as you can.
2. Remember you are joining a team and hence you need to show respect to their history and vision. Orient yourself to the existing strategy and assess the capabilities, culture, and politics.
3. Make it a priority to ascertain what is your job? What does your team expect from you?
4. Partner with key stakeholders in working through some unresolved issues. Work first on straight forward problems that will allow your team to gain confidence in your leadership. Avoid issues that are complex, leave them until you are more aware of the dynamics.
5. Try to work out what is the decision making and change process for this organisation. Identify who are the influential change makers.
6. Setup regular dialogue (coaching sessions) with key leaders. Lift the vision of your leaders.
7. Develop regular cycles of strategic planning.

The following links have some additional material worth reading:

- [Coach less New Leaders](#)
- [10 Tips for New Pastors](#)
- [Common Mistakes Made By New Leaders](#)
- [Building Trust On The Way](#)

# Coaching Small Group Leaders for Healthy Churches

*Cell structured churches are healthier than other forms of church according to the Natural Church Development data.*

Small group activity has been an integral part of church life since it began at Pentecost. Luke records in Act 2 how the early Christians meet in homes daily. The apostles exhorted the believers not to neglect their interaction with each other (in home groups), "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25 NIV) The gathering of the church into groups where members encourage each other in their discipleship is fundamental to the health of the church.

The importance of small group structure for healthy churches has been verified in research carried out by the *Natural Church Development* organisation. Christopher Schalk said, "Comparing the NCD scores of cell churches and non-cell churches showed that cell churches overall scored significantly higher in all areas than non-cell churches. Combined cell church scores averaged 59 while combined non-cell church scores averaged 49. Not surprisingly, Inspiring Worship showed the smallest difference (6 points higher for cell churches) and Holistic Small Groups showed the most difference (16 points higher for cell churches). Significantly, even churches that say they would focus on small groups over large group worship still had better scores for large group worship. This finding indicates that cells don't detract from corporate worship - they add to it." "... Finally, the study showed that cell churches demonstrated an average growth rate **almost double** that of non-cell churches."<sup>1</sup>

If cell structured churches are so much healthier than other types of churches then why don't we have more churches adopting this model? There are a number of reasons for this slow take up:

1. *Churches find it difficult to make change:* Introducing a cell system is a major change event that requires a long term commitment. Most churches struggle to think long term.
2. *Been there done that mind set:* Many leaders think they have already tried the 'small group thing' and that it did not produce the outcomes they expected so they have given up on groups. They have not understood that change takes time and numerous action plan cycles.
3. *Not foundational to church life:* Many churches have had small groups but have not integrated them into their structure nor given them the necessary priority. They have seen small groups as an optional program rather than the foundational structure of church.
4. *Were not holistic groups:* Churches that have had a small group ministry often fail to develop holistic groups that have the ability to multiply.
5. *Group leaders often do not receive adequate coaching:* This is the most significant missing ingredient in churches that have struggled in their attempt at groups.

Both at the local church level and right through the church organisation we have not had a strong coaching culture. This has shown itself in the lack of support provided in churches for group leaders. Being a group leader is hard work because of the constancy of the role. Leaders need systematic support from a personal coach to encourage and help leaders sort through issues.

The evidence has been with us for a long time that churches that work out how to multiply their small groups will be healthy and growing. Christian Schwarz, states, "If we were to identify any one principle as the most important, then without a doubt it would be the multiplication of small groups."<sup>2</sup> No other of the eight quality characteristic of healthy growing churches can stand alone as an indicator of health and growth. It is only when churches adopt group life as a way of doing church, as opposed to a program, that they will have real success.

1. Christopher Schalk NCD International 2002 [read the full article](#).
2. Christian Schwarz, Natural Church Development 1996 Church Smart Germany p32.

## **Ways to Help Group Leaders be Successful**

The role of leading a group is demanding. Leaders need to be supported in the following ways:

1. *Have regular huddles:* Getting leaders together on a regular basis is vital. During this time celebrate each other's success, share resources, problem solve and pray.
2. *Develop an accountability system in the group:* Groups will grow if group members grow. Assign a sponsor to every new Christian. This will share the equipping load, increase friendship and involve group members in ministry. Pair the remaining group members into accountability partner relationships.
3. *Teach the group leader the art of delegation:* Group leaders need to share the group's tasks - worship leader, social leader, prayer journalist, child link etc.
4. *Support the leader with a supervisor/coach.* A supervisor/coach who has been there before will be able to encourage and work through problems with the leader. The coach will provide an outside perspective and quality control.
5. *Provide meeting resources each week:* Group leaders need to be resourced. Have the pastor or group supervisor supply meeting materials. This will allow the leader to focus their attention on the group members rather than planning meetings.
6. *Give the Leader a vacation:* Apprentices leaders and other group members can conduct the Bible study. Adopting a more shared leadership approach as the group matures will prevent leader burnout.

# Getting Organised for Greater Success

Have you ever embarrassed yourself because you have missed an appointment? It is only human isn't it? Well today, with electronic diaries, I am not sure the 'human excuse' answer still applies.

One of the most common issues that we see with clients of all ages is a lack of organisation and time management. Poor organisation simply means things don't get done and opportunities are lost. This month's newsletter outlines some principles for better time management and some tools that can help us manage ourselves better.

## Principles of Time Management

1. *Schedule regular reflection & planning times:* Spend time each day connecting with God, in His word and in prayer. Meditation and physical exercise are important in sorting out one's priorities as well as recharging the batteries. You will work more efficiently if you take time out to care for yourself.

At the start of your working day look at, and modify if necessary, your to-do-list and calendar. Extra time should be spent each Monday morning planning the week and month ahead. It is amazing how many clients fail in this basic area of planning. It is not that they don't believe it is important they typically have slipped into bad habits.

2. *Identify your ideal time usage profile:* At the start of each year review your ideal time profile. List all your daily activities and then categorise them into 7-9 groups and determine a time percentage of time use for each category (should add up to 100%). Draw these scores as a pie diagram. Draw a second 'ideal' pie diagram that represents what you would like your time usage to look like. Identify those areas you wish to increase and what areas you will need to reduce. A pie diagram is a good visual way to do this. Monitor your progress with your coach.
3. *Use an effective diary system:* The best type of diary is electronic. Using 'Microsoft Outlook' on your computer and synchronizing it with your phone or PDA will make a huge difference in promptness and diary entry. Most people carry their mobile phone with them everywhere. They can enter an appointment or to-do-list item immediately, avoiding memory failures. The carrying of your diary in your phone means that you can set alarms to remind you of appointments thus avoiding the embarrassment of forgotten appointments. And on top of those benefits is the ability to priorities with due by dates your to-do-list.

With all these benefits one still has to switch the phone on for all this to work. However, that would seem a more likely happening for most of us that opening our hard diary each day.

It is important off course to make sure you synchronize your diary in case of computer crash or phone lose. You can always print your diary off if you need a hard copy.

4. *Make a to-do-list part of your routine:* To do lists that allow you to prioritise, set due by dates and even allocate work to other people in their diary is the magic of computers at work. To-do-lists, like diary entries, will also remind you automatically with an

alarm when the due by date arrives. However, to-do-lists only work if they become a routine activity.

5. *Allocate time periods for tasks:* Procrastination can eat up time like nothing else. It is smart when you have a task to determine how much time you think you need to complete the task and add a safety buffer of 25%. As a minister I learnt to allow myself one and half days to write a sermon. Allocating a certain amount of time provides enough pressure, without being too stressful, to avoid procrastination and to get on with it.
6. *Deal with items once:* Where possible deal with items once, avoid double handling. Receiving bills, replying to emails, anything that you are going to read deal with it immediately where possible. It is best to set a time during the day to do your emails, phone call etc. all together.
7. *Avoid distractions:* You don't have to answer the phone if you are really busy. If you must know who called switch on the answering machine.
8. *Take into consideration your work preference:* By being mindful of your work preference you can pretty much work out where you will struggle in time management. Using the Team Management Wheel we know that 'creator innovators' procrastinate while 'concluder producers' tend to work without evaluating direction.
9. *Plan less:* Most of us plan too much in a day and get frustrated in not achieving our goals. Planning less, forces you to set priorities more clearly and to eliminate the trivia.

# Teams do Better than Individuals

*Leaders who go alone are at risk.*

A couple of years ago I spent a very interesting week with a group of researchers from around the world at the 5th Lausanne Researchers' Conference. One of the Australian presenters, Peter Kaldor, shared his study on church leadership. He has found that, "Around half of all leaders have difficulty finding time for recreation. A similar percentage acknowledged that they do not take holidays and days off as they should. Examination of levels of emotional exhaustion suggests these leaders experience significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion."<sup>1</sup>

These findings are not surprising when you consider what the traditional church pastoral role was. Pastors are expected to be expert preachers, teachers, motivators, counsellors, administrators, building supervisors, the list is endless. The expectations of church members and the system are high and often somewhat unrealistic. If pastors are going to successfully handle such an array of agenda they must learn to work with and through teams.



A significant part of the New Testament is made up of letters of advice from the Apostles to churches coaching leaders in their team practices. Scripture has a well developed theology of team work. The apostle Paul when advising one of the early churches said, "For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." (Romans 12:4-6) He then goes on to define some of the different

functions and gifts that exist. Paul uses the analogy of the human body and how its various parts work together to illustrate how church members need to work in teams while respecting each other's giftedness.

It has been my observations that church pastors and system administrators are more effective when they work through their teams. Developing a team approach means that leaders make better decisions, are greater motivators and simply get more done. No leader can by themselves cover all the facets of leadership, a team is required.

----- Non-balanced Teams Are Less Efficient -----

Now it is important to recognise that not all 'teams' work effectively. If a team is to be successful it has to have two factors in place - good balance and be well linked. Balance occurs when there is a spread of work preferences (gifts) in team members. You don't want a team of only visionaries, nothing will ever get done. Nor do you want a team of only doers for they will keep doing and getting what they always have got. Getting balance in the team is essential for success.

A study by Roberts and Nason, "...found that although non-balanced teams engaged in more interactions than balanced teams, quantity of interaction did not equate with quality of

interaction; the balanced teams demonstrated more efficient and effective knowledge building interactions than non-balanced teams.”<sup>2</sup> What this means is that non-balanced teams are inefficient and frustrating to be part of.

For a number of years I have been using the *Team Management Profile* (TMP) to help leaders understand their ‘preferences’ and their team member's preferences. Understanding one's preferences helps leaders to avoid surrounding themselves with people like themselves which would result in non-balance.

If your team isn't balanced there are three options:

1. Add additional members who have the missing work preferences.
2. Invite outsiders with the missing preferences to contribute as needed.
3. Take more time in your decision making and functioning in the missing preference areas.

Not only is diversity in team members crucial for team success but also the ability to link members together. Teams with diversity that are linked together are high performing teams. Linking requires good leadership and facilitation skills.

Working through team does require patience and time, all of which will be repaid many times over. Leaders need to trust their teams even when they may see things differently. For ultimately it is the team that has to implement whatever decisions are made. Christian leaders need to acknowledge that they are not the head of the team but the one responsible for ensuring that the team is connecting with Christ who is the head.

**T.E.A.M. Together Everyone Achieves More!**

1. National Church Life Survey 2008
2. Roberts, Alan G and Nason, Rod (2004) Quality not Quantity: Comparing Interaction Patterns of a Balanced and Non-Balanced Teams Engaged In Model-Building within a Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) Environment. In Proceedings International Conference on Computers in Education, Melbourne.

# Coaching Helps Church Transition

## *Motivating Members to Ministry*

*The first coaching session I had with Tony challenged me because of what he said in conclusion of our session, "I now have a plan of what I am here to do." It hit me just how easy it is for leaders to be caught up in the doing of leadership and hence fail to establish a direction for themselves. Often as leaders we measure our value against our doing and not so much against the doing of those we are responsible for.*

*Tony Moala is the pastor of Bowral and Goulburn Churches in South New South Wales Conference. He is relatively new to ministry, graduated in 2005. Tony had been involved in coach training program for the last twelve months when this written interview was conducted. The following interview shares his story as a new pastor working with a church that is undergoing major transition into a group structured church.*

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Question: Tony how is ministry for you at the moment?

Ministry is exciting and satisfying, praise God!

Question: You've been involved in our coaching program for nearly twelve months, how has that impacted you and your ministry?

It has totally changed my ideas on church life. I used to think that the success of the church solely depends on the pastor's abilities and gifts. However, through the coaching program, it has opened up my eyes to the fact that it depends on leaders who are motivating members to minister in their gifted areas. Hence, church ministry's success comes from leaders and members working together.

Question: Tony, a lot of our coaching time has focused on Bowral and its transition to a higher functioning approach to doing church, particularly through the use of small groups. Where are you up to in that process and what lies ahead?

In the process of changing Sabbath School classes into holistic small groups, and establishing a system where leaders are equipped and developed; God led the leadership team to a stage where we recognised that in our current system, we have created a culture where few members are involved in church life while more members are on the side line observing. Consequently, with consultations with Conference leaders and yourself, we came up with a structure, where leaders and members are supported; equipped and trained for outreach. Here are some of the things we are working on:

- People with leadership skills will be selected as elders/class leaders.
- Leaders will be coached by pastor or leaders that have been trained in this area.
- Leaders will train apprentices to assist in group life, and for future leadership roles.
- Elders/class leaders and Children SS class leaders make up the Pastoral Team, in implementing strategies and vision set by the Church Board.
- Departmental leaders and coordinators (Deacon, Evangelism etc) will work closely with the Pastoral Team in carrying out Departmental responsibilities, where the whole

class members will be involved, and not just elected leaders. Therefore, every responsibility will come back to the class groups to be carried out.

Question: A key component in that change has been your use of the new resource, The Sabbath School Maximiser. Tell us how you've used that material in your transition?

We have used the Sabbath School Maximiser in our SS facilitators training sessions; in working out our new structure and in generating Jobs Descriptions for leaders and committees.

Question: An interesting feature of our work with you has been that both you and your Sabbath School/Small Group leader have received coaching. How has this 'dual' coaching worked?

Before we came back from the *In2action* coaching seminar, we had already formulated a coaching plan for our leaders. We have not only implemented our plan well but we have been very supportive of each other in leading and training our church members in holistic Small Groups. This partnership has helped out tremendously in leading our church to where it is now.

Question: It has been a very busy, exciting and challenging twelve months of ministry. What have you learned?

I have learned that it is far more effective and fulfilling for the minister and church members to work together than the minister working on his own with a few members supporting. I believe that coaching is crucial for the success of the church because when leaders and members are supported and equipped, they own everything they decided to do. Hence, more members are happy to be involved, and more work gets done.

## **Principles for Transitioning Classes to Holistic Groups**

A holistic class-group church system has five key components that produce health and growth.

They are:

1. *Class-Group Connection:* In a group based church all ministry works out from the class-groups and back to the class-groups. The groups are foundational to the ministry of the church. They support the other departments and are fed by them.
2. *Equipping:* The class-group prepares newcomers for ministry by encouraging them to discover and exercise their spiritual gifts. The class-group disciples newcomers.
3. *Accountability:* The class-group provides support and accountability for each group member. The more accountability they achieve the greater the faithfulness of members.
4. *Leadership:* New leaders are being apprenticed within the class-group in preparation for group multiplication. The church will provide both on the job learning and specific training for new leaders.

5. *Evangelism*: The class-group encourages and teaches group members how to find the lost. Creating opportunities for friendship making and ways to meet the needs of contacts is a key corporate activity that supports the groups.

# Coaching Multiplies Training by 88%

## *What is the relationship between training and coaching?*

I have spent more than a decade of my life training leaders or hosting training events. I estimate that over that period we have trained over six thousand participants. That represents a lot of travel, handouts, guest speakers and expenses. I have often asked myself, "What impact does all that effort have?" I have no doubt that such training has produced change in churches, in conferences and in leaders' ministry. But has it produced enough change?

Over the last three years I have had the unique privilege of providing both training and coaching to leaders. I have seen how effective the combination of training and coaching is for leaders. Simply put, more happens when coaching is added to training. Why, because coaching provides the emotional support for change. A coaching relationship helps leaders work through the implementation issues and even more importantly helps to hold leaders more accountable to what they have planned to do. These are all important components in rolling out new strategies. The training alone approach struggles to provide these essentials factors in bring about change.

A study by the *International Personnel Management Association* compared 'training alone' to coaching combined with training. They found that, "Training alone increased productivity by 22.4% while training plus coaching increased productivity by 88%." 1 The two diagrams below illustrate the graphical difference that occurs in results when coaching is added to training.

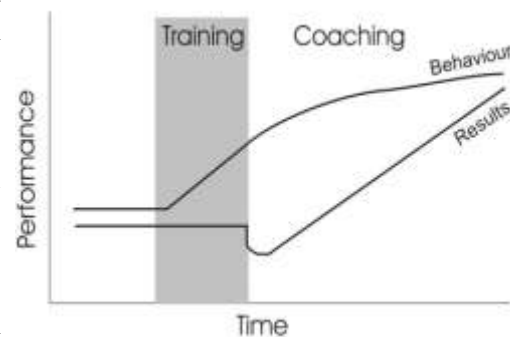
When a leader goes to a training event it is not just a matter of learning new skills or approaches but includes unlearning. It involves disconnecting from the old ways while applying new approaches.

Learning involves four stages: Stage 1: Unconscious Incompetent (UI). You are not even aware there is something to be learned. Stage 2: Conscious Incompetent (CI). You are aware there is something to be learned. Stage 3: Conscious Competent (CC). You learn the skill, concepts, and procedures and can apply what you learned with mistakes and omissions. Stage 4: Unconscious Competent (UC). You can perform well without thinking about it.

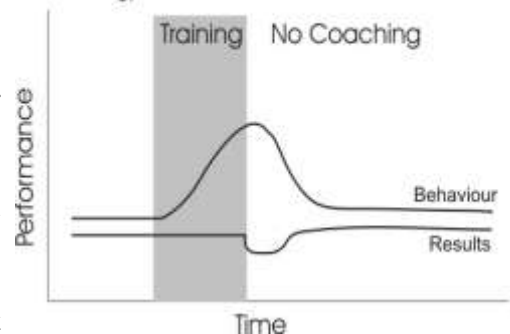
----- "It is not just a matter of learning new skills or approaches but includes unlearning-----"

Lipow says, "How to get from the CC stage to the UC stage is the trick. Most retreat before they get to the UC stage. The reason is that the route from CC to UC is unpleasant: we must become incompetent for a time and must do so in the eyes of people who regarded us as competent; we must abandon attitudes and practices that worked rather well

A. What should Happen with a New Skill (with coaching)



B. What Actually Happens with a New Skill (Without coaching)



and were efficient in favour of attitudes and practices which are uncomfortable and which make us temporarily inefficient. We must disconnect the neurological ruts we once created so that we do not have to think before we act-in other words, we must unlearn-so to be able to begin the long process of forming new neurological ruts." 2

Making changes in the way you function or learning new skills usually requires intentional support. We have often found with our clients that they are aware of their leadership shortfalls, e.g. time management, interpersonal skills, planning process, decision making etc. Most have even read books or attended seminars to address their weaknesses but still they struggle. A common reason for their lack of progress is that they have given up to early in trying to learn new skills or approaches.

Coaching provides for the clients a non-threatening relationship where they can find emotional support to keep trying when they fail. The coaching relationship also provides accountability for the client and helps them remain focused in their pursuit of better ways to lead. Coaching provide the emotional 'grunt' that is needed to enter areas that are unfamiliar to us.

The church invests significantly in training but still has a way to go in providing effective coaching to its leaders. Jesus modeled to us that in preparing a group of men to establish the Christian church that he spent time with them on a one-on-one level. I look forward to the day when every leader in every church feels supported in their ministry by another. May be we will double our effectiveness!

1. Public Personnel Management (Making training stick Winter 97, Vol. 26 Issue 4, p. 461, International Personnel Management Association).
2. Why Training Doesn't Stick: Who Is to Blame? Anne Grodzins Lipow Library Trends Summer 1989 page 64, 65.

## **Coaching Approaches**

Here is a list of methods for adding coaching to your training events:

1. *Offer Coaching:* Make coaching part of your training package. At the minimum, offer it as an option.
2. *Pair-up Participants:* Invite participants at your seminar to pair-up for ongoing support of each other.
3. *Mentors:* Organise beforehand a list of possible mentors that participants can work with.
4. *Previous Participants:* Share names of previous participants who can act as mentors.
5. *Conference Directors:* Where appropriate, use the conference directors as coaches.
6. *Senior Pastors/leaders:* Use experienced pastors or leaders to provide coaching.

# The Unspoken Issues of Burnout

It sneaks up on you and when it hits, you just want to disappear. Burnout is not an easy issue for leaders to talk about. For most of us we try and put on the 'everything is good' mask. However, leaders who are suffering burnout are at risk of falling over and leaving ministry.

The following material comes from one of our network member who shares his story of burnout. I asked him to write as openly as possible about his experience and how coaching has assisted him in his recovery.

This leader's experience is not an isolated occurrence but representative of many church leaders we have worked with over the last three years. It is a fact that "...one third of ministers have experienced periods of depression caused by their work." Depression goes hand in hand with burnout.

In raising this issue I am not only challenging administrators to rethink what support they are providing their workers but I am also challenging each one of us to take responsibility for our own self-care and the importance of looking out for our colleagues.

## Burnout – Does Coaching Help?

If the literature is correct (and there is no reason to assume it isn't) then burnout affects 50% or more of Christian leaders today. That means 50% of the people reading this, if they are in ministry, are suffering from mild to serious burnout. In other words it is an epidemic and it is wrecking havoc on churches and Pastors' personal/professional lives. Can this situation be salvaged?

First, church leaders and pastors themselves have to acknowledge that it is a real problem. We all know instinctively that sticking our collective heads in the sand and hoping that it will simply go away just does not help. Yet what programs do you know of that have been specifically developed by church administrators to help one manage and recover from burnout? There are none that I know of.

Dedicated men and women work to meet the needs and expectations of their employers and the members of their congregations and in the process, use up their emotional and physical reserves and 'burnout'. When they do, we express our sadness or sorrow and move on. But nothing changes.

It's a bit like running a car on empty; sooner or later it is going to run out of fuel and stop, and it could do irreparable damage. The problem with 'burnout' as I see it, is that many try to work through it hoping that it will go away.

As someone suffering burnout and recovering, let me tell you it doesn't just go away. It affected my confidence and self esteem. I really couldn't face conflict of any kind, or even decisions that could bring conflict. If I felt that a pending decision would bring conflict, then I would really struggle to make that decision. I really had no energy to visit people. I literally had to force myself to take on Bible studies, and to visit people in their homes, and I dreaded people ringing me and asking for advice. My management style was characterised by indecision. I found myself day-dreaming frequently about the bliss of retirement, even knowing that I couldn't. The harder you try to work through burnout the more entangled you seem to become in it.

Oversensitivity was another characteristic that seemed to plague me. It seemed that anything negative was aimed directly at me and that I was being attacked personally. I also had a profound sense of failure. I had let my family down, my church down and I had let God down. For many people the only way out is to quit. But is quitting really the answer? I thought that it would have to come to this. Ministry is full of stressful situations and I didn't know how to deal with them anymore, and this would reduce me to tears. So quitting seemed like the only way to go.

So it seemed to me that my unresolved burnout would lead one of two things, either a complete breakdown, or I would quit relieving the pressure from the job that was driving me down, physically and emotionally.

Now, I really didn't want to quit or to have a break down, so I could give myself a good reason to move on to something else. But I didn't know what to do or where to go to get help. That might seem a strange statement to some when you realise that we are in a helping profession that struggles to help pastors who need help.

I don't think that administrators are so callous that they just don't care. They probably just try to deal with each situation on a case by case basis. It seems that this approach, dealing with and helping those in burnout, is too ad hoc. There is no formalised process.

The other reason I didn't seek help earlier, is that no one wants to admit that they are not coping. Whether fairly or not, there is the perception amongst front line pastors that to admit you are not coping is seen as a weakness by administration, and it could affect your career prospects in future. For this to be remedied adequately there must be a cultural change, not only from administrators but also from the pastors in the front line themselves.

But realistically, how likely is it that this culture change will happen? Not very likely at all if pastors cannot speak to someone on the basis of complete confidentiality; and in my view, that is where the system breaks down. The administrator's solution to a non-coping pastor is generally to move them, and that does not deal with the issue at all. So in the wash-up pastors struggle on to find a way to cope and deal with their burnout.

Quite by accident, I was involved in a coaching program to grow my leaders in my church. I didn't know it at the time, but this program required a commitment for me to be coached. The last thing I thought I needed was something else to do, when I wasn't even coping with what I had to do now.

When my coach realised I was burnt out, he helped me to construct a program to bring more balance into my daily schedule, and to make sure that I took time out to care for myself by scheduling time to do things that I enjoy. It was much easier to open up to my coach as he was not a part of my conference team and confidentially was assured. Knowing that someone else understood how I felt and cared enough to help me work through a solution, made me realise that I didn't have to struggle alone. I think that it is the idea of struggling alone and the isolation that this brings, that worsens burnout and could drive people suffering from it into depression.

So will coaching resolve burnout? No, but it can and does help. Coaching will help you to work your way through it by helping you to realise where the imbalances are. Your coach can't offer you a magic pill. But he can (and mine certainly did) travel the journey with you and help you to find the path to healing and wholeness again.

So that brings me to the question, what does the church need to do to support its ministers?

Simply doing nothing is not an option and using existing structures hasn't worked so far. How can a ministerial secretary be the pastor's pastor while he is tied into an administration that determines and directs the career path of the pastor?

Having the ministerial secretary as the pastor's pastor could work if the position is modified to ensure that he can relate to his team in a strictly confidential manner as their coach; and the pastors can be certain that the information will be held in the strictest of confidence.

The first step in working your way through burnout is to admit that you have a problem and then take action to do something about it. Finding a coach in my view is one of the best ways to help you through it. It is working for me and it can work for you also. Why? Because when you realise that you are not alone and that you have someone you can count on to help you, it brings encouragement and hope.

From: A Recharging Pastor

## **Lost God's Vision? What Causes It?**

Input Problems:

1. Out-of-touch with God
2. Burnout
3. Poor leadership
4. Absence of accountability

Distorted Perspective:

5. Impatience
6. Broadening of focus
7. Egocentricity - Ignoring of values
8. Seduced by other vision, interests
9. Ministry become tedious
10. No evaluation of vision progress

Injurious Conditions:

11. Inappropriate structures/lifestyles
12. Extreme conflict
13. The vision becomes outdated  
(George Barna, Turning Vision into Action, Regal Books)

# 12 Things I Have Learned So Far About Coaching

After nearly three years of operating a Coaching ministry for leaders within the Adventist church community, I have learned a number of lessons about coaching.

**1. *High achievers give high priority to coaching.*** People who are successful in their field tend to value coaching more than the rest. They understand the importance of accountability and focus. The exception is leaders who are suffering serious burnout. They utilise it well, once they get started. The majority of leaders, those between highly successful and struggling, tend to have an ambivalent attitude towards coaching. Most would see receiving coaching as a sign of weakness. There is a lot of education needed in order to change this attitude.

**2. *Friendship is the first factor for a successful coaching relationship.*** The emotional well being that comes from support, is the single most important contribution a coach brings to a client. Many leadership roles can be very lonely experience. There are many issues that it would not be appropriate for leaders to share with their team. A coach provides a trusting relationship where confidential sharing can occur. When leaders are able to share their stressors on a regular basis, their resilience is increased. It is often not so much solution that clients need but support.

**3. *How clients relate to you as their coach is a reflection of how they relate to their team members.*** The coaching relationship is often a mirror of a client's relationship with their team members. If they constantly forget appointments with you, then that is most likely going to be an issue in their day to day work. The coaching relationship provides real insights into the personal growth challenges of the client that need to be addressed.

**4. *The biggest change for most church pastors is to learn to focus less on their own doing and more on the doing of their team.*** The average church pastor lives a busy life, juggling a multitude of tasks. The end result of this diversity is a lack of focus on developing their key leaders. It is very easy for pastors to allow the 'urgent-important' to dominate. It is not so easy to find the time to coach leaders, to help members find their ministry place.

**5. *Most administrators see coaching as a luxury, not an essential practice that increases outcomes.*** Administrators tend to see coaching as of benefit for staff who are struggling. All clients that have been referred to us from Conference administration have been for this purpose. Even though there is much evidence for organisations to utilise coaching for increased productivity, more education is needed.

**6. *Change does not happen by just talking; it requires methodical planning and putting in place accountability.*** Most leaders know what they want to see happen, but do not find it easy to work out the detailed steps. This is not a lack of training, but simply a personality work preference issue. Coaching provides an invaluable help to leaders in working out the detail. The coach helps to identify and achieve agreement as to the specific strategic steps that needs to be taken. It has surprised me how difficult this is to do for some leaders.

**7. *There is no one who will not benefit from receiving coaching.*** When we first began introducing coaching to churches, I was unsure as to just how many leaders needed to be involved. Today I am convinced that every person in an organisation will benefit from having

some form of 'coaching'. The aim is to develop a coaching culture where such relationships are just a normal part of the leader's experience. If Tiger Woods still receives coaching from a golf coach he could beat every day, then it is probably true to say every leader will benefit from coaching.

**8. All leaders can improve their coaching skills.** Some people by personality are gifted for playing the coaching role. However, everyone can learn coaching skills and become more proficient at it. The difference is that those who are gifted for it will enjoy it more than those who are not.

**9. Solutions are often sitting under the client's nose.** I have always subscribed to the view that most solutions to people's problems are found within themselves and with their own context. This principle has been validated over and over again in our work with clients. Finding the solutions is more about the coach asking the right questions rather than their expertise.

**10. Coaching is both simple and complex.** Coaching, like counselling, for many people has certain mysticism about it. This may be warranted to a degree, as there are many skills and techniques to be learned. However, coaching can be looked at in quite a simple way, for coaching is really about providing a person with a 'supportive friendship'.

**11. Many of the barriers to greater success for clients are connected to self-mastery issues.** The need to develop better time management and to learn how to prioritise according to one's values, has been a recurring theme with many of our clients. This need has been very evident amongst younger clients, but also prevalent with experienced leaders. It is very easy for the training of leaders to be predominantly in organisational or ministry task areas, to neglect areas of self-mastery.

**12. Building a Coaching Culture.** Finding people to coach has not been a difficult thing. We have worked with a wide variety of people - church pastors, church planters, department directors, school principals, ARV managers etc. The greater challenge has been in developing a coaching culture within churches. A coaching culture produces a learning organisation. The coaching disciplines mean that leaders, both individually and collectively, learn more from both their mistakes and successes.