

LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

COACHING BIVOCATIONAL MINISTERS
FOR GREATER MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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ABSTRACT

COACHING BIVOCATIONAL MINISTERS FOR GREATER MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010

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The purpose of this project is to explore the benefits of coaching as a technique to better equip bivocational ministers for greater ministry effectiveness. The author of this project was a bivocational pastor for twenty years and has written on bivocational and small church ministry. Five bivocational ministers in the United States and Canada were coached as part of this project, and this paper will describe the issues that were addressed in the coaching relationship, the benefits the bivocational ministers enjoyed as a result of coaching, and the lessons learned.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Bivocational ministers represent a large percentage of current ministers in many denominations. A 2005 study of pastors within the Church of the Nazarene found that twenty-nine percent were identified as bivocational.¹ Approximately half of Southern Baptist pastors are now bivocational, and this does not include the many other bivocational ministers serving in staff positions within their churches.² Many denominations are unable to track the number of their bivocational ministers due to reporting and coding issues within their denomination's tracking systems, but they report a significant number of bivocational ministers are now serving in their denominations.³ Each of these denominations anticipate the number of bivocational ministers serving their churches will increase in the future.

Many of these bivocational ministers are well educated. In 1992 the Midwest Career Development Service surveyed 106 bivocational ministers representing churches from the Presbyterian Church, USA, the American Baptist Churches, USA, the United

¹ Kenneth E. Crow, "Faith Communities Today 2005: A Survey of Congregations of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States," Church of the Nazarene Research Center (June 2006), http://www.nazarene.org/files/docs/factnazarenereport_2005.pdf (accessed September 8, 2008).

² Norm Miller, "Welch: Bivocational pastors crucial to evangelizing America," *BP News* (March 15, 2005), <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=20354> (accessed August 20, 2006).

³ Richard Bruesehoff, Evangelical Lutheran Church of American; Diane Brenneman, Mennonite Church USA; Marcia Clark Myers, Presbyterian Church, USA; Herb Cassell, The United Methodist Church; and Nick Novak, The Episcopal Church, interviews by author, July, 2008.

Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church and the Christian Church (Disciples). They found that “ninety-six percent were college graduates, 33 percent had master’s degrees other than seminary, 96 percent were seminary graduates, and 20 percent had doctorates.”⁴ However, in a 2004 survey of 110 bivocational ministers in the American Baptist Churches, USA conducted by this author it was found that twenty-seven finished their formal education at high school. Although a high percentage of bivocational ministers do have a college and seminary education, many lack formal theological training. Only twenty-two ministers in this author’s survey had a Master of Divinity degree. Regardless of the education level achieved by bivocational ministers, they face problems unique to their call that are often not addressed in seminary.

Number of Bivocational Ministers Expected to Increase

Patricia Chang has studied the clergy supply in American churches and found that there is not a shortage of clergy, but there is a shortage of pastors willing to serve smaller churches.⁵ As an example of this, Diane Brenneman, former bivocational pastor and retired Denominational Minister in charge of the data base for the Mennonite Church, USA, noted that “Only 10% of Mennonite pastoral candidates for the 2004 national Registry were open to serving in bivocational arrangements and we need at least 50% of our pastoral candidates willing and able to work part-time or in two vocations.”⁶ Smaller

⁴ L. Ronald Brushwyler, “Bivocational Pastors: A Research Report,” (Westchester, IL: Midwest Career Development Service, 1992), 2.

⁵ Patricia M. Y. Chang, “Assessing the Clergy Supply in the 21st Century,” *Pulpit and Pew: Research on Pastoral Leadership*, 2004, <http://www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu/chang.html> (accessed June 10, 2006).

⁶ Diane Zaerr Brenneman, “The Bivocational Pastor: Toward a Healthy Part-Time Arrangement for the Fully-Valued Pastor and the Fully-Engaged Congregation” (DMin thesis, McCormick Theological Seminary, 2007), 3-4.

churches will find it increasingly more difficult to find seminary-trained pastors to serve them. Such churches will find themselves choosing between closing their doors, using lay leadership, sharing pastors with other churches, or calling a bivocational minister. Many are choosing the last option.

Bivocational ministers used to be found in only the smallest churches, but this is no longer the case. Historically, churches averaging eighty to one hundred people were able to find a fully-funded pastor to serve them, but these churches are also finding it more difficult to call such pastors. It might be said that small churches are now getting larger. Lyle Schaller has predicted that by 2018 many of the 225,000 churches now averaging under 120 in worship will be served by bivocational ministers and bivocational teams.⁷

There are a number of reasons for the increasing numbers of clergy unwilling to serve in smaller churches. Much of it is due to financial realities. A 2005 study by Auburn Theological Seminary found that the average student loan debt for seminary students rose from \$11,043 in 1991 to \$25,018 in 2001.⁸ This same study predicted that if the current trends continued eighty-four percent of Master of Divinity graduates would have student loans in excess of \$54,000.⁹ These figures include only the student loan debt incurred by these graduates and does not include any other debt such as credit card,

⁷ Lyle E. Schaller, *Innovations in Ministry: Models for the 21st Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 21.

⁸ Anthony Ruger, Sharon L. Miller, and Kim Maphis Early, "The Gathering Storm: The Educational Debt of Theological Students," Auburn Theological Seminary, *Auburn Studies*, no. 12 (September 2005), 5. http://auburnsem.org/images/publications/pdf_14.pdf (accessed September 10, 2008).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

vehicle, or personal loans. Few small churches will pay salaries sufficient to handle this amount of debt and provide for the other needs of the pastor's family.

Rising health care costs are also a factor in the unwillingness of clergy to serve in smaller churches. It is not uncommon for insurance for a minister's family to cost a church \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year, and many smaller churches cannot afford to pay those amounts. Some formerly fully-funded pastors choose to become bivocational simply to work for a company that can provide medical insurance for his or her family. Their alternative would be to leave their present ministry for a larger church that could provide insurance.

Many seminary trained pastors are not comfortable serving in a smaller church. They have been trained to create programs that will grow a church but often find they have not been trained to minister in a smaller church in which change is difficult to accept and often even more difficult to implement. Tony Pappas notes, "One of the hardest transitions for ambitious and well-trained small-church leaders is the mental one. It is difficult to view the small-church world as legitimate, as having a different integrity, a validity of its own, once one has been 'conformed' to rational, future-oriented, programmatic, and quantitative thinking."¹⁰

Background

To give some background on the author, he served as the bivocational pastor of Hebron Baptist Church near Madison, Indiana for twenty years before being called to serve as an Area Resource Minister for the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky. In his current ministry role he serves 77 churches, one-half of which will

¹⁰ Anthony G. Pappas, *Entering the World of the Small Church* (Herndon: The Alban Institute, 2000), 71.

average less than 50 people on Sunday morning. Even as a judicatory minister he continued to be bivocational as he managed a small family-owned business until recently selling it. Since 2000 the author has had five books published, three of which focused on bivocational ministry and the other two on small church issues. He has recently accepted a part-time position as a Senior Consultant with New Church Specialties and will focus on working with their judicatory clients in the areas of bivocational and small church ministry. As a pastor and judicatory minister he has addressed the issues bivocational ministers face and helped other bivocational ministers work through these issues. He has received training as a coach, has coached a number of pastors in the past, and plans to be certified as a coach once he completes this degree.

Statement of the Problem

This paper will address some of the problems experienced by bivocational ministers. Most of these problems fall into four general areas:

1. Clarifying the call to ministry
2. Cultivating the character of the minister
3. Creating authentic community between the minister and church
4. Connecting with the culture of the community.¹¹

In addition, bivocational ministers consistently report that one of their biggest challenges is managing their time and trying to balance the various demands on their lives. There are at least five areas that demand the time of the bivocational minister: his or her relationship with God, his or her family, ministry needs of the church, demands of his or her second job, and self-care. If time is not set aside for each of these legitimate

¹¹ Steve Ogne and Tim Poehl, *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 29-49.

needs the minister will experience unnecessary stress and face the risk of physical illness, burnout, and depression.

We will address these issues by entering into a coaching relationship with a minimum of five bivocational ministers who will be recruited through this author's blog and monthly e-newsletter to bivocational ministers. As in any coaching relationship we will permit the person being coached to identify the issues that need to be addressed in his or her life and ministry. Each person will receive three months of coaching (six sessions) and will be asked to assess their experience and note whether or not it was helpful to their ministry effectiveness.

Definitions

There are some terms that will be used throughout this paper that need defining. The first is bivocational. This author defines a bivocational minister as one who serves in a paid ministry position and has income from another source. This may be from a full-time job, a part-time job, or a pension. It does not include income from a working spouse nor does it include pastors who serve more than one church and receives a salary from each church.

A second term is fully-funded. This is a term widely used in the Southern Baptist Convention and replaces the term full-time. The terms part-time and full-time are not helpful when referring to ministers, and many bivocational ministers prefer using bivocational and fully-funded when referring to ministry. A fully-funded pastor is one who receives all his or her income from the church he or she serves. This term is preferred as all ministers are called to serve God and their churches full-time.

Coaching is the third term that requires defining. Gary Collins provides a helpful definition of coaching. He writes that “*coaching is the art and practice of guiding a person or group from where they are toward the greater competence and fulfillment that they desire.*”¹² Coaching always works from the agenda of the person being coached, and he or she sets the direction of the coaching relationship.

Statement of Limitations

This paper will not advocate that coaching is preferred to a seminary education but will recognize that many bivocational ministers may not be able to pursue a formal seminary education due to financial and time constraints. Even those who have received a seminary education will profit from a coach to help them work through the issues and the unique challenges they currently face.

Second, there will be no attempt to describe in detail the coaching process. There will be a general overview of the process in chapter 3, but because each person being coached is different it would be very difficult to describe that process in detail.

Because coaching requires confidentiality, this paper will not identify the persons being coached except in very general terms. Names and cities of these persons will not be included in the paper. They will be notified in advance that their issues and comments will be used in this paper, and they will be asked for permission for them to be included in this project.

This paper will not address all the issues these bivocational ministers may be facing. The person being coached will set the agenda for each coaching session, and each will determine how they will derive the most benefit from that session. We will also be

¹² Gary R. Collins, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential Into Reality* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001), 16.

unable to address all possible solutions to their issues. One or two solutions will be identified and specific actions that might resolve the issues will be taken by the person being coached. Part of each coaching session will include a discussion about the action steps the person being coached agreed to take and the results of those actions. Such follow-up is necessary to ensure accountability which is a vital component of coaching.

Theoretical Basis for the Project

For much of the history of this nation bivocational ministry was common. Luther Dorr notes that “Baptists and Methodists in particular owe a deep debt of gratitude to the farmer/preacher and the school teacher/preacher of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These men followed the people to the frontier and supported themselves in order to preach the gospel.”¹³ Doran McCarty believes that bivocational ministry was common among Baptist churches until the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board began to encourage churches to move to fully-funded ministry in the late 1930’s and early 1940’s.¹⁴ Fully-funded ministry really became the norm in more recent times, and bivocational ministry began to be looked upon as a second-class ministry. However, bivocational ministry never went away but continued in many small rural and urban churches.

Of course, bivocational ministry goes back even further as the Apostle Paul supported his ministry by making tents (Acts 18: 2-3). William Barclay notes that this would be in accordance to the custom of the time that required every rabbi to have a trade

¹³ Luther M. Dorr, *The Bivocational Pastor* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 24

¹⁴ Doran C. McCarty, ed., *Meeting the Challenge of Bivocational Ministry: A Bivocational Reader* (Nashville: Seminary Extension, 1996), 16.

in order to support himself. Barclay writes that this “meant that they never became detached scholars and always knew what the life of the working-man was like.”¹⁵

Despite the biblical and historical precedent for bivocational ministry, such ministry has not been widely supported in more recent times. Few resources have been developed that address the specific concerns bivocational ministers have. Denominational meetings and activities are often held during the time that most bivocational ministers work their other jobs making it impossible for them to participate. In the interviews with denominational leaders previously noted not one could identify anything intentional their denomination was doing to identify persons called to bivocational ministry despite the fact that each of them recognized that bivocational ministry would increase in their denomination. Only the United Methodists required some education before assigning a bivocational minister to his or her first church. Some of the other denominations offer some training opportunities for their bivocational leaders but have no systematic way of encouraging them to take advantage of such training. Resources continue to be developed for the large church and the megachurch, but little assistance is currently available to those who serve as bivocational ministers.

It is very telling that no denomination has a staff person with exclusive responsibility for its bivocational ministers and churches. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention had a bivocational ministry consultant until 2003 when Leon Wilson retired from the position. For twenty-one years the NAMB had a person in that position, but at a time when the numbers of bivocational ministers are expected to exceed the number of fully-funded ministers in that

¹⁵ William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, rev. ed., The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 135.

denomination they have refused to fill that position.¹⁶ A number of Southern Baptist state conventions do have persons assigned to work with their bivocational ministers, and several judicatories in other denominations also have persons who relate to their bivocational leaders, but no denomination has an individual assigned to that task.

It is also difficult for bivocational ministers to have relationships with fellow ministers due to their work schedule. Many clergy meetings occur during the daytime when bivocational ministers are more likely to be at their second job making it difficult for them to build relationships with other clergy. They may also find that some fully-funded, seminary-trained clergy view bivocational ministry as a lesser ministry. Feeling isolated from one's denomination and fellow ministers can lead to significant stress for the bivocational minister.¹⁷ Such isolation can lead the bivocational minister to experience burnout and even depression. Christian psychotherapist Archibald Hart writes

The loneliness of ministry, although essentially positive, can shape the minister toward being cut off from support systems. It can keep him from having close confidants with whom problems of the work can be discussed. It is a psychological fact that one cannot resolve conflicts or clarify issues simply by thinking about them. Self-talk and introspective rumination with no outside input leads inevitably to distortion and irrationality, whereas talking things over with someone else can help to clarify issues and remove distortions. Every minister needs close confidants – staff, family, other ministers, trusted laypersons in the congregation – to help in this clarifying process. If steps are not deliberately taken to develop these trusting and supportive relationships in each pastorate, the loneliness of leadership responsibility will lead to isolation and a distortion of reasoning – and this spells depression for many ministers.¹⁸

¹⁶ Connie Davis Bushey and William Perkins, "Bivocational ministers ask NAMB for office to support their work," *Baptist Press*, June 7, 2006, <http://www.baptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?id=23417> (accessed August 21, 2006).

¹⁷ Steve Clapp, Ron Finney, and Angela Zimmerman, *Preaching, Planning, and Plumbing: The Implications of Bivocational Ministry for the Church and for You – Discovering God's Call to Service and Joy* (Fort Wayne, IN: Christian Community, 1999), 63.

¹⁸ Archibald D. Hart, *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1984), 18.

This is where coaching can benefit the bivocational minister. Ministers cannot continually use their families as sounding boards for all their issues. Most bivocational ministers do not work with other staff ministers, and we've already seen that it can be difficult to maintain relationships with judicatory leaders and other ministers. A coach can be a safe person with whom the bivocational minister can clarify issues.

Statement of Methodology

This paper is designed to assist bivocational ministers by providing a resource that will help them address the issues and challenges they face. This thesis project will address some of the common problems of bivocational ministry, examine the coaching model and how it could assist bivocational ministers, and focus on five bivocational ministers as they work through a coaching relationship with the author.

The author writes a blog on bivocational ministry and sends a monthly e-newsletter that goes to bivocational ministers and judicatory leaders throughout the United States and Canada. Both of these will be used to find persons who would like to be in a coaching relationship with the author.

1. Chapter two will examine some of the problems faced by many bivocational ministers.
2. Chapter three will examine the coaching method and compare it to consulting, mentoring, and counseling. The advantages and methodology of coaching will be explored.
3. Chapter four will describe the coaching experience with five bivocational ministers. It will look at the issues they raised for discussion, the actions

they took, and the results of those actions on their churches and in their individual lives.

4. Chapter five will study the conclusions reached by the persons who were coached. They will be asked to rate the effectiveness of the coaching model as to its ability to enable them to address the issues that were challenging them.
5. Chapter six will summarize the results of this project, note any conclusions that were reached, and make recommendations about the use of coaching as a method of assisting bivocational ministers.

Review of the Literature

There have been few books written specifically about bivocational ministry. This author found only four books written on this topic published between 1980 and 1999. By far the most helpful of the four was *Meeting the Challenge of Bivocational Ministry: A Bivocational Reader* edited by Doran McCarty. This book is a compilation of articles addressing bivocational ministry. McCarty wrote this book to meet the need of Seminary Extension which offers a class on bivocational ministry but had no textbook for the course.¹⁹

One of the frustrations this author had as a bivocational pastor was the limited resources available that spoke to the challenges faced by bivocational ministers. In 2000 he published his first book on bivocational ministry titled *The Tentmaking Pastor: The*

¹⁹ McCarty, 3.

Joy of Bivocational Ministry.²⁰ This was followed by two more books on the subject that were released in 2004 and 2007.

Other authors who have written about bivocational ministry within the context of small church ministry are Anthony Pappas and Lyle Schaller. Pappas was a bivocational minister for several years and now serves as the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. He is a strong proponent of this form of ministry. Schaller recognizes the challenges faced by bivocational ministers but also believes there are numerous advantages to such ministry.²¹

Time Management

A primary concern of bivocational ministers is how to balance the many demands on their time. It is anticipated at least one of the persons who will be coached will want to address this issue. There are a number of helpful books on this subject but perhaps none as helpful as Richard Swenson's book, *Margin*. He notes that "*Margin is the amount allowed beyond that which is needed*. It is something held in reserve for contingencies or unanticipated situations. Margin is the gap between rest and exhaustion, the space between breathing freely and suffocating."²² Throughout the book he insists that we must build margin into our lives or our lives will be filled with unnecessary stress. In our society today margin will not exist in one's life unless one is intentional about creating it.²³

²⁰ Dennis W. Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor: The Joy of Bivocational Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000).

²¹ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Church is Different* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 95.

²² Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 91-92.

Small Churches

Whether the pastor is fully-funded or bivocational small churches have the same unique issues. Understanding these issues is essential to successfully coaching the leaders of these churches. One very helpful book is Glenn Daman's *Shepherding the Small Church*. In the second chapter he discusses fifteen characteristics of a small church that every leader of such churches needs to understand.²⁴ Later in the book he discusses the importance of vision in a small church and the role of the pastor in discerning that vision. He writes, "The role of the pastor in small churches is not to determine the vision, but to facilitate the process, to lead and guide the people as they develop the focus of the church. When the church realizes the pastor is not going to dictate his will to them but listens to their desires, then the pastor will be given more authority and power within the church."²⁵ Bivocational ministers need to learn this lesson well if they wish to provide effective leadership to their churches.

Coaching

Another important source of information for this project is the books written about the coaching model. In addition to numerous secular books that promote this model there is a growing list of books that focuses on coaching from a Christian perspective. In her book *Christ-Centered Coaching* Jane Creswell defines Christian coaching as

²³ Ibid., 71.

²⁴ Glenn Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church: A Leadership Guide for the Majority of Today's Churches* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 43-51.

²⁵ Ibid., 232.

“Christ’s Vision and Mission + Scriptural Principles + Christ’s Presence + High Standard of Excellence as a Trained Coach = CHRISTIAN COACHING.”²⁶

Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl have written an extremely helpful book, *TransforMissional Coaching*, which focuses on ministry in a rapidly changing society. They define transformissional coaching as coaching that enable transformation to occur in the life of the person being coached which will lead to missional ministry.²⁷ They recognize that a new approach to equipping leaders will be needed to help them move from a maintenance mindset, which would describe many smaller churches, to a missional one. “That approach will be personal ministry coaching – coaching that will pull together training and experience with context and reality.”²⁸ Coaching bivocational ministers from a Christian perspective will be essential to help them develop their maximum effectiveness for the Kingdom of God.

Summary

The numbers of bivocational ministers are increasing throughout nearly every denomination, and it is expected that those numbers will only increase. Many of these bivocational ministers have a college and seminary education, but some do not. Regardless of their educational background, they face unique challenges as bivocational leaders and often face them with little support from their denominational leadership or from their fellow ministers. Coaching is a method by which they can be supported and helped through their personal and church-related issues. In the following chapter we will

²⁶ Jane Creswell, *Christ-Centered Coaching: 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders* (St Louis: Lake Hickory Resources, 2006), 14.

²⁷ Ogne and Roehl, 7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

take a closer look at bivocational ministry and some of the issues faced by those who are called to that work.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES OF BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY

Challenges Faced by All Ministers

Bivocational ministers face the same challenges that confront all ministers. They are expected to be prepared to preach two to three sermons a week, visit church members and prospects, be available to counsel persons needing assistance, serve as the church administrator, and meet various other expectations that will vary from church to church. As leaders they will be responsible to make decisions that will have long-term impact on the church. Much of what they do will be done in isolation from other people. Few pastors collaborate with others in the selection of sermon topics and even fewer involve others in their sermon preparation. Because of the expectation of confidentiality in counseling pastors find it difficult to share that burden with other people as well.

Rejection of Absolute Truth

The twenty-first century has brought additional challenges to all ministers including those who are bivocational. One example is the postmodern world that denies the existence of absolute truth. Pastors find it difficult to preach the truth claims of the gospel to this generation. In fact, for a person to claim to know truth is to invite suspicion from this postmodern generation.¹ However, this does not mean that pastors need to

¹ Graham Johnson, *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-first Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 26.

dilute their message to be more attractive to postmodern people. Those who are seeking God want a minister and a church that is clear about its doctrinal beliefs.² The challenge for the minister is to be able to relate that truth to the culture in which the listener lives.³

Social Issues

Ministers today face a multitude of social issues that previous generations of ministers never had to address. In the United States numerous states have passed or are considering passing laws that would legalize marriage between same-sex couples. Some countries have passed laws that make speaking out against homosexuality a hate crime, and there are activists in the United States that would like to see such laws enacted here. Some main-line denominations now ordain homosexuals to the ministry, and many others debate this issue at their national meetings. Many churches are struggling with how to receive homosexuals who may wish to attend their worship services and perhaps become members of their churches, and they are looking to the minister for leadership in this decision.

Another issue that many churches have not addressed is AIDS. In his workshops this author challenges attendees, “What will your church say to the young unmarried couple a member of your church has been inviting to church for months when they want to put their HIV-infected baby in your church nursery? Perhaps a tougher question is what will you tell your church members who don’t want that baby in the nursery with their babies?” These are difficult questions that many churches have never considered nor

² Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 45.

³ Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, eds., *Is Your Church Ready?: Motivating Leaders to Live an Apologetic Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 44.

are they prepared to minister to people infected with AIDS or HIV. Again, pastors are expected to provide leadership.

Although there are many social issues ministers today are expected to address we will look at just one more. How will our churches minister to the twenty-nine-year-old grandmother?⁴ Will the typical Young Married class in many of our churches address the issues that will minister to and provide hope to a twenty-nine-year-old grandmother? What can our churches do to prevent twenty-nine-year-old grandmothers? These three social issues seldom needed to be addressed by previous generations of ministers, but they do need to be addressed in our churches today. Ministers, whether bivocational or fully-funded, will be expected to lead these discussions.

Rapid Changes in the World

A third challenge confronting ministers today is the speed with which changes are occurring in our society. For instance, it took 1,500 years from the year 1 A.D. for knowledge to double. It doubled again in only 250 years, and by 1900 it had doubled a third time. Today knowledge is doubling every two years.⁵ Some are predicting that by 2010 knowledge will double every eleven hours making much of what we have learned in the past obsolete.⁶

Partly as a result of this rapid increase in knowledge many careers will also become obsolete or they will change dramatically. Leonard Sweet predicts that “The only

⁴ Lyle E. Schaller, *It's A Different World: The Challenge for Today's Pastor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 180-196.

⁵ Timothy JohnPress, “Staying ahead of change requires perspective,” *Austin Business Journal*, September 6, 2004, <http://www.austin.bizjournals.com/Austin/stories/2004/09/06/smallb2.html> (accessed December 20, 2005).

⁶ Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Mañana* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 92.

thing that is predictable is that the average person can now anticipate eleven job changes during a typical working life. No matter what your profession or company, you will need to reinvent yourself at least every seven years.”⁷

Ministers are not exempt from this need to reinvent themselves. The demands of ministry and the expectations people have for ministers is changing. This requires that ministers be committed to life-long learning, and part of that learning can come through coaching.

Challenges Unique to Bivocational Ministers

Time

Bivocational ministers consistently identify time management as their number one issue. While all ministers fight the time issue, bivocational ministers struggle even more with it due to the fact that they have another full-time or part-time job that requires a certain number of hours each week. There are five primary areas of life that bivocational ministers must balance if they want to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and an effective ministry: God, family, ministry responsibilities, second job, and self-care.

God

In the midst of all the demands on a minister’s time it is often easy to neglect one’s own personal relationship with God. Bible study may be limited to preparing a sermon or lesson to be taught rather than for one’s own personal spiritual development. Busy schedules crowd out time for prayer and seeking God’s direction. Because they hold down jobs during the week and minister on evenings and weekends few bivocational

⁷ Ibid., 93.

ministers are able to enjoy a Sabbath. Eugene Peterson notes two reasons for keeping the Sabbath. “The Exodus reason directs us to the contemplation of God, which becomes prayer. The Deuteronomy reason directs us to social leisure, which becomes play.”⁸ Both praying and playing help us grow in our relationship to God and are essential to maintain balance in our lives, but the bivocational pastor may struggle to find the time to do either.

Family

Bivocational ministers often feel pulled in many different directions, and their families can easily be neglected. It is important for them to remember that God has never asked His servants to neglect their families in order to serve Him. God has ordained the home and given us responsibilities that no one else can fulfill. Churches will have many pastors who will lead them over the years, but every minister should be committed to being the only husband his wife will ever have and the only father his children will know. When the family is strong the minister’s work will be more effective and both the church and the family will benefit.

Ministry Responsibilities

Bivocational ministry does not mean that it is permissible to provide second rate ministry. Bivocational ministers will be expected to provide pastoral care to the church, reach out into the community, preach and teach, provide leadership and develop lay leaders in the church. They will be responsible for many of the administrative tasks in the church. Although the minister will be responsible to see that many of these tasks are done, it does not mean that he must do all of them. Many of the ministry tasks in a

⁸ Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 74-75.

bivocational church can be delegated to others if people are trained to do them. Church members can be trained to visit shut-ins when the minister cannot. They can be taught how to order church supplies, mail newsletters, and reach out into the community to minister to the unchurched who live there. Bivocational ministers must learn to delegate tasks, but first they must train people so they can fulfill those tasks.⁹ The minister who does these two things will do much to relieve some of the stresses related to time.

Second Job

Bivocational ministers work in many different jobs. Some are business owners who enjoy a measure of flexibility in their work hours while others are required to punch a time clock in a factory. Some work part time and others full time. Some, such as law enforcement personnel, may work differing shifts and even be required to work some weekends. Regardless of the type of work performed, this job will require a certain number of hours each week that will not be available for any other purpose. There is nothing the bivocational minister can do about this since this job likely provides most of the income for the family. The bivocational minister must be sure to not yield to the temptation to use the time that is supposed to be spent on the second job for ministry purposes. Calling church members or preparing sermons on “company time” sends a poor message to co-workers and supervisors and could result in termination.

Self-care

Perhaps the greatest risk for bivocational ministers is the temptation to not take care of oneself. Because there are so many demands on his time it is easy to neglect the self-care that every person requires. The bivocational minister may deprive himself of

⁹ McCarty, 198.

adequate sleep and exercise and develop poor nutritional habits. Continuing education may be ignored. There may be little time to develop friendships with other people. A lack of self-care can lead to health issues, burnout, and even depression.¹⁰ If this happens, the church, the minister's family, and the minister all suffer.

Priority Management

Herb Miller explains that "Time management is rarely a church leader's major challenge. *Priority management is the real issue!*...Ministry effectiveness requires sound 'priority hierarchy' judgment: Which tasks should come first at a given moment – ahead of all the others?"¹¹ A business leader expresses the issue well: "Time management has nothing to do with the clock, but everything to do with organizing and controlling your participation in certain events that coordinate with the clock."¹² A decision to do one thing automatically means that many other things must be left undone, and such decisions require that the leader determine priorities in his or her life. Only by determining what will have priority at a given time can a bivocational minister choose how his time will be invested.

Self-esteem

In a survey of bivocational ministers in the American Baptist Churches, USA a few ministers expressed a great deal of bitterness that they were bivocational. One wrote on his survey "I find myself often angry that I completed an M. Div. yet my first parish

¹⁰ Hart, 15-18.

¹¹ Herb Miller, "What Counts Most in Time Management?" *The Parish Paper*, December 2000,1.

¹² Myers Barnes, "Executive Time Management – A Guaranteed Solution," *HousingZone*, May 9, 2001, <http://housingzone.com/probuilder/article/CA466541.html> (accessed April 15, 2009).

cannot pay a respectable wage.” Others mentioned the lack of respect they often feel from fully-funded ministers and denominational leaders.¹³

Because success and worth are often measured by numbers many bivocational ministers struggle with feelings of inadequacy and may even question their call to the ministry. They may ask, “If God has really called me to the ministry why has He not called me to a larger church with more opportunities to minister.”¹⁴ Other people may question whether bivocational ministry is real ministry and may refer to it as “part-time” ministry. If the bivocational minister hears this often enough and begins to believe it he may experience some identity problems. After all, wouldn’t a real minister leave his secular employment and serve the church full-time?¹⁵ Such doubts can be very damaging to the minister’s self-esteem.

It is vital for the bivocational minister to realize that although he may not be a full-time pastor, he is a full-time minister.¹⁶ There is never a time when the bivocational minister is not a minister including when he is at his second job. His ministry is not less than that of a fully-funded minister nor is it greater. It is simply the call God has placed on his life at this present time. Bivocational ministers need to remember that

Every assignment is holy ground because Jesus gave Himself for the people who live there. Every place is important because God wants you to accomplish something supernatural there. Every situation is special because ministry is needed there. Like Queen Esther, you have come to the Kingdom for a time like this.¹⁷

¹³ Dennis W. Bickers “Survey of Bivocational Ministers in the ABCUSA,” 2004.

¹⁴ Bickers, *The Tentmaking Pastor: The Joy of Bivocational Ministry*, 14.

¹⁵ Dorr, 74.

¹⁶ McCarty, 213.

Believing this can do much to help the bivocational minister see value in his work and maintain a healthy self-esteem. Bivocational ministers must learn to ignore the critics and the self-doubts that will come into their minds and keep their focus on God's call on their lives.

Lack of Support

One of the factors that contributes to poor self-esteem is that many bivocational ministers do not receive much support from other ministers or from denominational leadership. Some fully-funded pastors still view bivocational ministry as a second-class ministry at best. They question the commitment of anyone who claims to be called to the ministry and yet continues to work at another job. They may be troubled with the bivocational minister who lacks a seminary education, especially if they sacrificed to obtain theirs. It is also true that some fully-funded ministers are jealous of bivocational ministers because they perceive that these ministers may enjoy greater freedoms in ministry because they do have a second source of income.

Historically, denominational leadership has come from large churches, and they tend to bring a large church perspective with them when they work with smaller churches.¹⁷ Many cannot understand why anyone would want to remain in a smaller church, and like the fully-funded pastors, they may question the commitment of the minister who chooses to be bivocational. They often fail to take into consideration the work schedules of bivocational ministers when they plan denominational meetings or

¹⁷ H. B. London Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *The Heart of a Great Pastor: How to Grow Strong and Thrive Wherever God Has Planted You* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994), 20.

¹⁸ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Church is Different*, 60.

training events, and then they complain when their bivocational ministers do not attend these meetings.

Denominational and judicatory leaders may also focus much of their time and energy on their larger churches that provide more of the revenue to the ministries of the denominations. A judicatory leader confessed to this author once that he chose to live where he did because it made him closer to the larger churches in his district and he knew he would be spending more time with them than with the smaller churches. Sherry and Douglas Walrath believe that “Many pastors of small congregations wish both seminaries and leaders in their denominations would look upon ministry with small congregations as a ‘specialty’ (much like family practice in medicine). They believe such an attitude would encourage more respect for pastors who serve in small churches.”¹⁹

Fortunately, some judicatories are beginning to assign staff persons with the responsibility to relate specifically to the smaller churches and bivocational ministers in their districts. The American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region has a staff person with that assignment for the region. This author carries that portfolio for the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky. Ray Gilder is the Bivocational Ministries Specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Kentucky Baptist Convention has three field representatives to assist their Directors of Missions as they serve the bivocational ministers in that state. As more judicatories begin to recognize the valuable ministry provided by their bivocational ministers and find new ways to relate to these individuals it will help raise the self-esteem of these ministers.

¹⁹ Anthony G. Pappas, ed., *Inside the Small Church*, (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2002), 29.

Nature of Smaller Churches

Another challenge for bivocational ministers comes from the nature of the churches they typically serve. Most bivocational ministers will pastor smaller, family churches. Small churches are not miniature versions of larger churches which can be a shock to a pastor fresh out of seminary. It is not uncommon for the first church a pastor serves after seminary to be a smaller church. Sociology professor Patricia Chang points out that the majority of seminary students were raised in large churches and want to serve in similar size churches.²⁰ To compound the problem, they soon realize that their seminary education prepared them to serve a suburban or urban church,²¹ not the rural or small town settings where many smaller churches exist. They are ill prepared for the unique challenges that such churches present.

Poor Self-Esteem

Earlier we examined the problem of poor self-esteem experienced by some bivocational ministers. The smaller churches they typically serve can also have the same problem. Some believe that poor self-esteem is the number one issue facing small churches.²² Steven Burt and Hazel Roper state that “Small churches allow outside forces and people (some very important to them) to shape them. In the process, their own God-given self-image is distorted, if not buried.”²³ Lyle Schaller notes “If there is something

²⁰ Patricia Chang, “The Clergy Job Market: What are the opportunities for ministry in the 21st century?” *Hartford Institute for Religion Research*, http://hrr.hartsem.edu/leadership/clergyresources_clergyjobs.html (accessed December 3, 2008).

²¹ Lawrence W. Farris, *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2000), 2.

²² Ron Crandall, *Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church*, ed. Herb Miller (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 42.

approaching a universal beginning point for small-membership churches seeking to plan for tomorrow, it is strengthening the self-image.”²⁴

A number of factors can lead to a church developing poor self-esteem. The rapid pastoral turnover experienced by many small churches is often one factor. If a husband and father abandoned his family every four or five years we would likely consider it to be a dysfunctional family, and yet this is the experience of many small, family churches.²⁵ These churches eventually begin to feel they aren't good enough to keep a pastor.

This author served a church as a bivocational pastor for twenty years. After about six months into that ministry a deacon began his answer to a question in a Sunday school class by saying, “Well, our pastor will soon be leaving us for a better church.” A review of the recent records of that church revealed that their pastors stayed there for an average of twelve months, and the church had developed the mindset that they were not good enough to keep a pastor. That poor self-esteem impacted every aspect of the life of that church, and it took several years to overcome it.

Small churches that used to be much larger can also suffer from poor self-esteem. Thirty people sitting in a sanctuary built for six hundred will find it hard to avoid remembering better days when much larger crowds gathered each Sunday and the church offered a full range of programming options. It may also be nearly impossible to properly maintain the larger facility with the reduced membership, and long-term members will mourn the decline in the appearance of their building.

²³ Steven E. Burt and Hazel Ann Roper, *The Little Church that Could: Raising Small Church Esteem* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000), vii.

²⁴ Schaller, *The Small Church is Different*, 58.

²⁵ Ron Klassen and John Koessler, *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 34.

The absence of youth can lead to esteem issues for churches. Because they see youth as the future of their church the absence of youth is an indicator that the days of their church may be drawing to a close. This is even more disturbing when their own young people are no longer interested in attending the church in which they were raised as children.

A lack of resources is a common problem among smaller churches that can impact the self-esteem of the church. Many smaller churches constantly face limited finances and limited numbers of people willing and able to serve. As a result, few activities occur at the church and even less ministry in the community. The absence of activity is demoralizing and leads to poor self-esteem and even less activity.

Family Dynamics

Small churches are often called family churches for a number of good reasons. It is not uncommon for a small church to consist of only one to four families nor is it uncommon for these families to intermarry with one another. Such churches can have a large percentage of its members related to one another. A problem in the family can quickly become a problem in the church with both sides seeking to bring the pastor to their side. Such efforts at triangulation can be very destructive to the church,²⁶ and must be resisted by the pastor. Unfortunately, this can lead to both sides identifying a common enemy in the pastor resulting in a shortened tenure for the pastor.

Most small churches identify their friendliness as one of their strengths, but first time visitors to the church may disagree with that assessment.²⁷ Such churches are

²⁶ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 134.

friendly to members of the congregation but outsiders often find it difficult to break into that circle of relationships. Persons really do not join a small church but must be adopted into the family, and this includes the pastor. Regardless of whether or not one is a member, until adoption occurs that person will continue to be seen as an outsider and precluded from much of the decision making processes of the church.²⁸

As a result, few pastors of smaller churches will be able to provide leadership in their churches until they have stayed at the church long enough to earn the trust of the congregation and be adopted into the family. George Barna's research has found that "Many pastors experience their most productive years in ministry between their third and fifteenth years of service."²⁹ Much of this productive ministry occurs because the pastor has earned the trust of the church, and it is more willing to follow the pastor's leadership. This author's experience has been that the smaller the church and the more frequent pastoral turnover the church has experienced the longer it takes for the pastor to earn that trust. This creates enormous stress for the pastor because he is expected to lead and yet forbidden to lead because he remains an outsider.³⁰ The matriarchs and patriarchs of the primary families will provide the leadership in such a church until the pastor earns the right to do so and is adopted into the family.

²⁷ Glenn Daman, 45.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁹ George Barna, *Today's Pastors: A Revealing Look at What Pastors are Saying About Themselves, Their Peers, and the Pressures They Face* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 37.

³⁰ Leith Anderson, *Leadership That Works* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 62.

Resistant to Change

Due to the family nature of small churches they are notoriously resistant to change. The viability of small churches is found in their relationships,³¹ and small churches will want to know how any proposed change will impact those relationships. In many cases, they will choose to protect the existing relationships rather than adopting a proposed change that might damage those relationships. It isn't the change that people resist; it is the potential for loss that might occur if the change is implemented.³²

This author was once asked to speak to a small, dying church about exploring some much needed changes. During a question and answer time an individual spoke up and said she was excited about what she was hearing until it was said that if the church begins to make changes it might lose some people. She said, "I looked around and didn't see anyone I was interested in giving up." The church rejected the proposal, and the pastor soon left for another church.

Proposed changes also imply that something is wrong with the way the church is currently functioning, and this implication makes many small church members uncomfortable.³³ Many of them have a vested interest in the current way the church operates. Long time members fear their roles might change if the church begins to function differently, and an even greater fear is that they may not even have a role in the changed church. For some it is the only church they have ever attended, and they assume

³¹ Jill Hudson, *When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21st Century Church* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004), 94.

³² Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 11.

³³ Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry*, Rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 209.

the church is functioning as it always has and always should. They fail to realize that their older church has probably undergone many changes in its history.

Such persons will almost always resist any proposed change even if they admit that their church is struggling. Instead of accepting changes they will insist that “things will return to normal if the church can simply continue to do what it has always done but in greater quantities or with superior quality.”³⁴ They will continue to resist change until they believe the advantages of the change will be greater than the disadvantages of not changing.³⁵ Even then change will normally not happen quickly. Clay Smith reminds us that “Significant changes in the life of a congregation usually take three to five years to put into place.”³⁶

This resistance to change can be very hard on a visionary pastor who wants his church to have a positive impact on its community. He entered the ministry to make a difference in people’s lives, and he doesn’t want to wait three to five years before anything new can be attempted. It is likely he will view the church’s resistance to change as apathy or a lack of concern for the surrounding community and fail to realize that their resistance may be due to their fear of how the change might impact the existing relationships in the church.

³⁴ George Barna, *Turn-Around Churches: How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 38.

³⁵ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 58.

³⁶ Pappas, *Inside the Small Church*, 59.

Limited Resources

Many smaller churches struggle financially. George Barna reports that Christian adults age eighteen and older gave an average of \$1,426.00 to their churches in 2007.³⁷ Based on this figure, a smaller church with an average of forty adults attending services would have an income of \$57,040.00. Out of this would come the pastor's salary and benefits, any other salaries that might be paid to other workers, utilities, mortgage or rental payments (if any), repair and upkeep, supplies, funding for current ministries, and denominational and/or mission support. Such a church would find it difficult to find the funds for new ministries or programming even if the church did want to start something new. Salary increases for the pastor may be few and far between. Some bivocational ministers report never receiving a salary increase despite staying at their church for several years.³⁸ Building maintenance may be deferred resulting in unattractive facilities that are discouraging to the members and a turn-off to prospective visitors.

Pastors of such churches need to know that in most churches money is not the problem. In fact, there may be funds hidden from the congregation by treasurers who have appointed themselves as protectors of the church.³⁹ Discovering such money can open up new opportunities for ministry. Even if there are no hidden accounts, the church is still not hampered by a lack of funds. If an emergency arises in such churches there always seems to be enough money appear to respond to it. The cause of the financial problems in most small churches is either a lack of stewardship training or the lack of a

³⁷ The Barna Group, "New Study Shows Trends in Tithing and Donating," April 14, 2008, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/18-congregations/41-new-study-shows-trends-in-tithing-and-donating> (accessed January 1, 2009).

³⁸ Dennis W. Bickers, "Survey of Bivocational Ministers in the ABCUSA."

³⁹ Crandall, 76.

vision. If the only thing the church will spend money on is to pay their current bills, that is all the money that will be given. However, people will give to a shared vision and such a vision will usually result in greater giving if they've been taught solid stewardship principles.

Limited resources include more than just money. Smaller churches have fewer people available for service, and too many of them are not involved in any meaningful way in the life or the ministry of the church. Such churches may have no more than a handful of active members willing to be involved. A common complaint among these individuals is that they are overloaded due to serving on various committees and their involvement in other activities in the church.

Most small churches need to review how they currently operate. Many committees and boards exist because the church constitution requires it or because their former size and structure required such organizations. However, these organizations may no longer be needed and currently accomplish little that adds real value to the church. Eliminating such committees and boards would allow people the time to serve in ministries that would make a difference in people's lives and perhaps grow the church. However, small churches still need to limit what they attempt to do due to their limited people resources. A handful of ministries done by people who have the gifts and passion to do them with excellence is preferred to trying to do too many things and doing none of them well.⁴⁰

Summary

Bivocational ministry is not for the timid or weak-hearted. In addition to dealing with the problems all ministers face, bivocational ministers have some unique challenges

⁴⁰ Barna, *Turn-Around Churches*, 78.

due to their other occupation and the nature of smaller churches. They often find there are few resources to assist them with these challenges. Many of them are trying to serve with no formal ministry training or education, and those who do have the benefit of seminary may find they are ill-prepared to serve in their current ministry. Poor self-esteem and discouragement are often experienced by many bivocational ministers. They need someone to come alongside them to encourage them and help them find answers to the challenges they face. Such a relationship will have to fit within the limited time frame most bivocational ministers have available. A coach could be that person.

CHAPTER 3

COACHING

If it is difficult for bivocational ministers to benefit from a relationship with their judicatory leaders and fellow pastors where can they turn to for assistance when they are struggling with a ministry or life issue? Furthermore, if they have a seminary education but feel that education did not prepare them for the unique challenges of bivocational ministry, where can they find the help they need? A final question that might be asked is if a bivocational minister is enjoying a healthy ministry but wants to develop that ministry even further, where can he turn to for assistance? One possible answer to all three questions might be with a coach.

An Overview of Coaching

When many people think of a coach they think of someone who leads an athletic team. However, a better way to understand a coach is to think of the old stagecoach that enabled people to go from where they were to where they wanted to be, and this is what coaching does. “In essence, coaching reduces to three parts: getting a handle on where the person is at present, focusing on what he or she wants in the future, and finding ways to get there.”¹

¹ Collins, 58.

Coaching has existed throughout time, but some trace modern day coaching to Tim Gallwey's book, *The Inner Game of Tennis*, first published in 1972. Gallwey believed that the player's internal state was more important than how the player held his racket or anything the opponent did. Removing or reducing the internal obstacles would enable the player to improve his game far more than making technical changes in his game.² Gallwey's theory met much resistance when it was first published, but some saw the value in this approach. Sir John Whitmore formed a partnership with Gallwey a few years after the book was published and started a number of businesses that coached athletes in several sports.³ Today, many athletic coaches have adopted this perspective and will spend as much time focusing on the mental aspects of the sport as they do on the mechanics.

Businesses started to see the value in this coaching philosophy as well, and business leaders began to seek out personal coaches to help them develop strategies that would benefit their companies. Many of these leaders were persons who were already successful but were frustrated in their ability to do even more with their lives. They realized something held them back, and they looked for coaches who could help them identify these limitations and move forward with their lives.⁴

Training for Coaches

As a result of this desire individuals began coaching these business leaders, and the coaching industry took off. A problem soon developed as there were no criteria for

² John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing People, Performance, and Purpose*, 3rd ed. (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2002), 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴ Joseph Umidi, ed., *Transformation Coaching: Bridge Building that Impacts, Connects, and Advances the Ministry and the Marketplace* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2005), 311.

who was qualified to be a coach. There were no formal training programs or accreditation for coaches. Anyone could call himself or herself a coach regardless of their abilities or qualifications. Although there are still no legal requirements that must be met before one can become a coach, there are numerous training programs and organizations that offer credentials to those who meet their criteria.

Coach U began in 1992 to offer training and certification for persons interested in being a coach. Since then they have trained over 16,000 coaches in 51 countries.⁵ The International Coach Federation started in 1995. They have now credentialed nearly 5,000 coaches and currently have 17,000 coaches affiliated with their program working in over 95 countries.⁶ Both offer credentials for three levels of coaches: the Associate Certified Coach (ACC), the Professional Certified Coach (PCC), and the Master Certified Coach (MCC). Each level requires additional training hours and additional hours spent coaching clients. Although these are two of the primary training and certification organizations there are numerous others. Nearly all are independently and privately owned, and the training can vary widely among these different companies.

Types of Coaches

There are coaches today for just about anything one can imagine. Executive coaches (sometimes called leadership coaches) work with leaders in business, industry, government, and the financial sector. Many large corporations now provide an executive coach for their top management personnel as one of the benefits they receive in their position. This is not just a perk for these top leaders; research has shown there is a

⁵ CoachInc.com, "Corporate Fact Sheet," <http://www.coachinc.com/coachinc/Media/Fact%20Sheet/default.asp?s=1> (accessed April 20, 2009).

⁶ International Coach Federation, <http://www.coachfederation.org>. (accessed April 20, 2009).

positive return on investment for coaching these leaders. Joy McGovern and her colleagues at Manchester Consulting conducted a study of 100 executives who had completed their coaching between 1996 and 2000. Among their findings was that there was an average return on investment of 5.7 times the cost of the coaching. This resulted in an average return of nearly \$100,000 to the companies studied.⁷

In addition to executive coaches, there are life coaches, ministry coaches, career coaches, wellness coaches, and numerous other forms of coaching. However, all coaching ultimately becomes life coaching.⁸ A life coach is one “who helps others find focus and direction for their lives and careers.”⁹

Coaching lets people see a vision of a better future and helps them make changes in how they live and function so that they make that vision a reality. Coaching helps people who are stuck around an issue or in a way of behaving by providing them with new tools and approaches that propel them out of their rut. Those new tools and approaches enable them to behave more effectively in their lives and at work.¹⁰

Philosophy of Coaching

Coaching is different than consulting, counseling, or mentoring. Consultants are generally experts in their field, and their clients look to them to solve their problems.

⁷ Joy McGovern, et. al., “Maximizing the Impact of Executive Coaching: Behavioral Change, Organizational Outcomes, and Return on Investment,” *The Manchester Review*, Volume 6, Number 1, 2001, 7, <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/docs/04ManchesterReviewMaximizingImpactofExecCoaching2.pdf>, (accessed April 18, 2009).

⁸ Umidi, 314.

⁹ Collins, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 268-269.

Mentors are also normally seen as experts, and their clients hope to learn from the example of the mentor. The word mentor comes out of Greek mythology which tells the story of how Odysseus entrusted the education of his son Telemachus to his friend, Mentor. Odysseus told Mentor, “Tell him all you know,” illustrating the limitation of mentoring. The person being mentored can only learn what the mentor knows.¹¹

Counselors typically try to help their clients to look to the past to find healing or solutions for their problems.¹² Counseling tends to be more reactive than proactive.

This does not mean that a coach’s client may not need the services of a counselor or a consultant or a mentor. A conscientious coach will watch for signs that such specialties are needed and will refer the client to such persons when needed. At times, a coach may even switch hats during a coaching session and function more as a consultant or mentor, especially if he or she has some expertise in the area being discussed. When this happens the coach should explain that he or she is switching hats for a moment to help the client gain understanding. Unless they are specifically trained as counselors or therapists, coaches should not provide counseling to their clients but should refer them to qualified counselors.

Coaching does not dwell on the past but looks to the future. A coach will meet the client where that person is in his life journey and try to help that individual improve the skills and knowledge needed to move forward with his life.¹³ Coaching begins with the premise that the person being coached already knows the steps he or she need to take but

¹¹ Whitmore, 11.

¹² Linda J. Miller and Chad W. Hall, *Coaching for Christian Leaders: A Practical Guide* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2007), 94.

¹³ Daniel Harkavy, *Becoming a Coaching Leader: The Proven Strategy for Building a Team of Champions* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 36.

is reluctant to take those steps or has not yet realized what those steps are. By asking questions the coach challenges people to think through their situation and develop their own solutions. It is not the responsibility of the coach to find and recommend solutions to the client's problems. The coach's responsibility is to listen to the person being coached and help them find their own solutions.¹⁴ Once that happens, the coach will then hold the person being coached accountable to do what he or she said they would do.¹⁵ A person has not been coached if he or she has not been held accountable for their actions.

Tony Stoltzfus explains, "We can build people or we can solve problems. Transformational coaching is about building people. This approach is a far more powerful method of producing leaders, and yields long-term results."¹⁶ Stoltzfus believes that coaching has value even beyond helping the client make the best possible decision. He writes, "I'm much more interested in helping people become great decision-makers than in helping them make a right decision. If they make a good choice, I've influenced that one situation. But if I help them grow in their ability to make great choices, *I've affected every decision they make for the rest of their life.*"¹⁷

Qualities of a Good Coach

Coaches do not have to be experts in their field. In fact, some believe that experts can find it difficult to coach because it becomes more difficult for them to withhold their

¹⁴ Miller and Hall, 76.

¹⁵ Tony Stoltzfus, *Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach* (Charleston, SC: BookSurge Publishing, 2005), 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

expertise.¹⁸ Such persons will be tempted to become advisors rather than coaches and begin to function more as consultants. A person can function very well as a coach in an area in which he or she knows little about as long as they can ask the right questions of the person being coached.

Persons who have a desire to teach often do not make the best coaches. Coaching is more about facilitation than teaching. A good coach draws the answers out of the person being coached rather than trying to put those answers in that individual.¹⁹

A coach does need to be a person with a big heart who has a genuine concern for people and their dreams.²⁰ It is possible to be technically correct in the coaching approach, but unless one also has a real interest in the person being coached he or she will have little impact on that person. An effective coach will be one who sees people in terms of their potential, not their performance.²¹

The most effective coaches are persons who are good communicators, and an important piece of that communication is the ability to listen. Persons being coached will almost always tell the coach what the primary issue is, but the coach must be actively listening before he will hear it. Such listening is also important to demonstrate support to the client and to build the coaching bond.²²

Another key element of communicating is the ability to ask powerful questions that force the client to think through the matter. Such questions should be open-ended to

¹⁸ Whitmore, 42.

¹⁹ Laurie Beth Jones, *Jesus, Life Coach* (New York: MJF Books, 2004), 229.

²⁰ Harkavy, 22.

²¹ Whitmore, 13.

²² Collins, 59.

force the client to respond in some depth with the answer. This also ensures that one does not merely address the surface issues or presenting issues but that the client is forced to go deeper and begin to focus on the root cause of the challenge.²³ Such questions will often begin with what, when, where, how and who. Most coaches try to avoid asking why questions (such as "Why did you do that?") as such questions suggest fault or blame, and that is normally not helpful in assisting the person being coached to move forward. Listening and asking powerful questions are so important to the coaching relationship that Miller and Hall believes those two elements should consist of half of the coaching conversation.²⁴

The best coaches are naturally optimistic, positive people who can inspire those traits in the ones they are coaching. Persons being coached have often felt stuck for some time and need encouragement to envision a better future. Such encouragement is unlikely to come from a coach who is often pessimistic and stuck in his or her own ruts. A coach must believe in the potential of the person being coached if he or she is to help that person see that same potential in himself.²⁵

Coaches must be comfortable confronting their clients and giving them honest feedback. Accountability is a key element in good coaching, and at times there must be a willingness to confront the person being coached. Every coaching session must end with some steps that the person being coached has agreed to take before the next session, and if they fail to take those steps the reasons for that failure must be discussed. Clients who fail to keep their appointments and call at the designated time must be confronted. If such

²³ Creswell, 7.

²⁴ Miller and Hall, 22.

²⁵ Collins, 47.

failure occurs more than once they need to be questioned about their commitment to the coaching process. Some coaches are not comfortable with such confrontation, but these coaches do their clients a disservice by not holding them accountable for their actions. Stoltzfus reminds coaches, “You can be very direct with your clients as long as you honor them and allow them to make the decisions about their own lives. Being a coach does not mean being a softie or a pushover. A coach knows how to challenge clients while keeping responsibility with them.”²⁶

It is important that a coach remains flexible. Because the client sets the agenda for each coaching session the coach seldom knows what will be discussed in each session. An issue that had never before been discussed may have occurred in the client’s life in the days preceding the coaching session, and this becomes the issue the client wants to discuss. The coach must be able to adapt to the changing needs of the client.

A good coach will understand his or her personal coaching style and learn how to become more effective within that style. During his coaching training this student took the Personal Coaching Styles Inventory²⁷ and learned he is most apt to use a presenting style. The other options are directing, mediating, and strategizing styles. All four styles have strengths and weaknesses, and it is helpful to understand what those are. Presenters are able to communicate well and motivate others, but they also prefer speaking to listening and typically do not like to solve problems. Since listening is a key element in a coaching relationship presenters must intentionally ensure they do not dominate the

²⁶ Stoltzfus, 207.

²⁷ Corporate Coach U, *PCSI: Personal Coaching Styles Inventory*, Version 2005 (CoachWorks International: Dallas, 1995).

discussion. Problem solving is also essential, and presenters will have to work at staying focused on helping the person being coached look for the solutions to his issues.

Qualities of a Good Coaching Client

A coach does not have to agree to coach everyone who requests coaching. It is important that the coach try to determine how ready a person is to receive coaching. A person who may be ready to be coached is one who is dissatisfied with life and uncertain how to move forward into the future.²⁸ This does not mean that the only persons who need or seek coaching are those who are having problems in their lives or careers. In fact, the best candidates for coaching may be those who are doing well but believe they can do even better.²⁹ These are persons who are motivated to move forward with their lives, and such persons are more likely to follow through with the actions steps identified in the coaching process. “Choosing to be coached makes a powerful statement about a person’s readiness to move forward in life, ministry, or work relationships, or in a myriad of other arenas. For coaching to be successful, the person being coached needs to be ready and willing to engage in a coaching relationship.”³⁰ A person not willing to take action to improve his life, his business, or his ministry should not seek coaching.

A person may seem to be a good candidate for a coaching relationship, but when that relationship begins the coach may discover that the client is not committed to the process. The client may often fail to keep appointments or not follow through with the action steps. The client may want to enjoy the benefits of coaching but is not committed

²⁸ Collins, 35.

²⁹ Ibid., 265.

³⁰ Miller and Hall, 13.

to the hard work that brings such benefits. Such persons need to be challenged, and if they remain uncommitted the coaching relationship should be terminated.

It is possible that circumstances have changed in the client's life that makes it a bad time for them to be coached. A parent or someone else may have developed health issues that demands more time from the client. They may have some other crisis in their lives suddenly develop. Although this may be a perfect time for them to receive coaching, they may not have the energy or time to commit to it, and that coaching relationship can be suspended for a season.

Soon into a coaching relationship the coach may realize the client is not ready for coaching because he or she needs other forms of assistance such as counseling to address emotional difficulties that are holding the client back. The ethical coach will refer the client to a qualified counselor or therapist and may suspend the coaching relationship until such time as the client is better able to benefit from it. It is also possible that a coach will realize that the person being coached truly does not know what to do and needs a teacher or a consultant to help him take next steps.³¹ Such a person needs to be referred to the appropriate person who can give direction and guidance. Coaching would be inappropriate in such situations.

Christian Coaching

There are many coaches who approach coaching from a purely secular perspective. They challenge their clients to put themselves at the top of their list and make their own self-care their top priority.³² These coaches may encourage their clients

³¹ Ibid., 19.

³² Cheryl Richardson, *Take Time for Your Life: A Personal Coach's Seven-Step Program for Creating the Life You Want* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 12.

to address their spiritual needs as well, but this is often tacked on almost as an afterthought. One's relationship with God certainly is not at the top of the agenda for these coaches. Gary Collins would argue that "Christian values aren't attached to coaching like a caboose hooked to the end of a train." He correctly insists that such values must permeate the life of the Christian coach and the relationship that coach has with his or her client.³³

In practical terms, what does it mean to have our coaching revolve around Jesus? It means that we commit all our coaching (and our lives) to his lordship and direction. It means that through Scripture reading, prayer, and worship we seek to be men and women who know him and are sensitive to the leading of his Holy Spirit. It means that we seek to be clear on our values, politely declining to coach anyone who wants our services for the purpose of developing behaviors or lifestyles that are clearly inconsistent with Christian principles. We don't judge but we do maintain our integrity by deciding what is right and living in ways that are consistent with that decision. Having Jesus Christ at the center means, as well, that we commit to praying for our PBCs [Persons Being Coached] and asking God to change their lives, working as he desires through our gifts and training.³⁴

Man is not at the center of Christian coaching; God is. It is God's dreams for the client's life, family, and career that is sought by the coach and the one being coached. "Our assignment as coaches is to look at people from God's point of view, in terms of their destined place in the Bride of Christ. We want to instinctively tune into their God-

³³ Collins, 22.

³⁴ Ibid., 67.

given capacity, their untapped potential, the fleeting glimpses we see in them of the image of God – and consistently relate to them in those terms.”³⁵

Available Training for Christian Coaches

We earlier noted a couple of training programs available for coaches, but there are some that are uniquely developed for Christian coaches and ministers who want to be able to use coaching techniques in their ministries. Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, began the first credentialing program in a theological institution in the United States. Their program enables the graduate to become certified with the International Coach Foundation. The school also offers a Master of Arts in Specialized Ministry Coaching Track. This 60 hour program includes seven classes dealing with various aspects of coaching.³⁶

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary began offering a Ministry Coaching track in its Doctor of Ministry degree in 2008. This track, which consists of eight coach training courses in addition to the doctor of ministry courses, is also designed to meet the certification standards of the International Coach Foundation. The seminary has partnered with The Columbia Partnership in Hickory, North Carolina which will provide the adjunct faculty.³⁷

³⁵ Stoltzfus, 52.

³⁶ Western Seminary, “Master of Arts in Specialized Ministry Coaching,” http://www.westernseminary.edu/AcademicPrograms/PDX/MASM_coaching.htm (accessed April 21, 2009).

³⁷ Golden Gate Theological Seminary, “New Doctor of Ministry in Ministry Coaching to be offered,” <http://www.ggbts.edu/news.aspx?item=15> (accessed September 4, 2008).

The School of Divinity for Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia offers a Ministry Leadership Coaching concentration in its DMin program.³⁸ Auburn Theological Seminary has an Auburn Coaching Institute that trains persons in coaching and provides coaches for ministers and churches to assist in their development.³⁹ As coaching becomes more familiar to Christian leaders it is anticipated that more seminaries will begin offering classes in coaching.

There are also privately owned coaching centers that offer training from a Christian perspective for persons who want to become coaches. While there are many such centers the following are three examples of what is being offered. The Hollifield Leadership Center in North Carolina partnered with Jane Creswell to create Valwood Christian Leadership Coaching to offer training and certification for Christian coaches.⁴⁰ The Coaching Center at the Green Lake Conference Center also provides training and certification for Christian coaches. Co-directors Jan Judd and Sandra Wimpelberg lead the training at this site.⁴¹ Suzanne Goebel created the On Purpose Company to provide coaches for church and business leaders. This company also offers seven coaching courses that lead to certification. Two of the courses are “Biblical Foundations of Coaching” and “Coach Approach to Evangelism and Discipleship.”⁴²

³⁸ Regent University, “Professional Concentrations,” <http://www.regent.edu/ACAD/schdiv/academics/dmin/concentrations.shtml> (accessed April 21, 2009).

³⁹ Auburn Seminary, “The Auburn Coaching Institute,” <http://www.auburnsem.org/about/coaching.htm> (accessed April 21, 2009).

⁴⁰ Hollifield Leadership Center, “Valwood Coaching,” <http://www.hollifield.org/valwood> (accessed April 21, 2009).

⁴¹ Green Lake Conference Center, “The Coaching Center,” <http://glcc.org/glcc/files/conferences/Coaching%202009.pdf> (accessed April 21, 2009).

⁴² The On Purpose Company, “Coach Training Courses,” <http://theonpurposecompany.com/id76.html> (accessed April 21, 2009).

Models of Coaching

As one might surmise, there is no one model of coaching. A number of different models have been developed over the years that have proven to be effective. The three mentioned here are among the more popular.

Five-Step Coaching Model

Executive coach Susan Battley uses a model she calls the Five-Step Coaching Model. These five steps are

- Define – Identify your coaching goals.
- Assess – Analyze your business or professional situation.
- Plan - Develop a detailed plan to accomplish the goals.
- Act – Begin to execute the plan.
- Review – Evaluate the results to determine if the goals were achieved.⁴³

GROW Model

John Whitmore made this a popular model for coaching. It is the model selected by IBM that is used for coaching their employees. The GROW model consists of

- Goal setting for the session and for short and long term.
- Reality checking to explore the current situation.
- Options and alternative strategies or courses of action.
- What is to be done, when, by whom, and the will to do it.⁴⁴

⁴³ Susan Battley, *Coached to Lead: How to Achieve Extraordinary Results with an Executive Coach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 85-86.

Coaching Conversation Model

This is another popular model used by a number of coaching organizations. It was originally developed by CoachWorks International and is the model taught by Corporate Coach U.⁴⁵ This five step model will be used in this thesis project. The steps are

- Establish focus to determine what the person being coached wants to address in each session.
- Discover possibilities to determine the outcome desired by the person being coached.
- Plan the action to determine what needs to happen to achieve the desired outcome.
- Remove the barriers that would prevent the person being coached from succeeding.
- Recap the conversation to ensure both the coach and person being coached understands what needs to happen before the next coaching session.

One can quickly see there are similarities in the different models. All begin by setting goals and determining what needs to be addressed in the session. They each require a plan of action that will be taken by the person being coached, and they each have an accountability piece to ensure those actions are taken.

⁴⁴ Whitmore, 54.

⁴⁵ CoachInc.com, "The Coaching Clinic," <http://www.coachinc.com/CCU/Programs%20and%20Services/Clinic/default.asp?s=1> (accessed April 24, 2009).

Team Coaching

Although this study will focus on coaching individual bivocational ministers it is also possible to coach groups and teams of people, and this could be very helpful when trying to coach a bivocational minister who is having problems related to ministry. Working with the entire leadership in such churches could have a much greater impact than just working with the minister. Suzanne Goebel believes that team coaching can result in a much greater impact on the organization than coaching individuals due to the synergy that occurs during the experience.⁴⁶

Coaching a group of people can also be more challenging. A coach might be a good match for some members of the team but not other members, and in such cases there needs to be some honest discussion between the coach and the team before deciding to move forward.⁴⁷ There are times in a coaching situation the person being coached needs to vent, and this can be difficult in a group setting. The coach cannot allow one or two persons to derail the process with their personal issues and frustrations.⁴⁸ Accountability is also more difficult when coaching teams. The coach must ensure that each action is assigned to a specific individual and not the responsibility of the group.⁴⁹ Despite the challenges of coaching teams this can lead to much greater ministry potential in a bivocational setting.

⁴⁶ Suzanne Goebel, "Coaching Teams and Groups," This is a workbook used to train the staff of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky on October 17-18, 2006. (Woodstock, GA: On Purpose Ministry, 2006), 25.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 51.

Summary

Coaching can be a powerful tool to assist bivocational ministers become more effective in their personal lives and in their ministries. There are a number of organizations, both secular and Christian, that offer training and credentialing for those who wish to become coaches. Coaching is not the same as mentoring, consulting, or counseling. Each of these have their place, and the person being coached may need the assistance of one of these other helpful tools, but coaching is different. Coaching is primarily about looking forward and begins with the belief that the person being coached already knows what he or she needs to do but requires help in identifying the steps that should to be taken. It is important that the coach remains positive during the coaching process and is able to see potential in the person being coached. It is equally as important that the person being coached is committed to the hard work that coaching requires if it is to be effective. There are numerous models of coaching that can be used, and each of them have proven to be effective when working with individuals and groups.

CHAPTER 4

THE COACHING EXPERIENCE

The Selection Process

This student publishes a monthly e-newsletter for bivocational ministers and a blog. Notices were placed in each of these publications asking bivocational ministers to volunteer to be a part of this coaching experience. Anyone interested in being coached was encouraged to apply, tell a little about their current ministry, and share how they believed having a coach could benefit their ministries. Eleven persons responded asking to be considered. Five were selected based upon their responses.

Each person to be coached was sent a Coaching Agreement, a Life Satisfaction Indicator, and a Coaching Introduction Questionnaire. Copies of each of these may be found in the appendices. In addition, each was required to complete an on-line assessment at www.uniquelyyou.com. In this they were asked to complete the “Combining 9 Spiritual Gifts with 4 (DISC) Personality Types” assessment. Completed forms and the assessment were to be returned to the coach prior to the first coaching session. Some chose to not complete the forms or the assessment and were replaced by others who wanted to be coached.

The five persons finally selected are all bivocational and are either pastors or interim pastors. All serve in various Baptist denominations. One lives in Canada, and the others live in New York, Kentucky, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. To ensure confidentiality they will only be referred to by letters.

Pastor A

Background

Pastor A has served his present church as the interim pastor since 2006. On the Life Satisfaction Indicator he scored very low in his relationship with his wife, fun and hobbies, and indicated that he had no friends or social life outside of the church. He also indicated that he was very dissatisfied with the condition of his home. Finances and personal health were also concerns he noted on the Life Satisfaction Indicator.

On his questionnaire he noted that his biggest challenge in ministry was time. He felt he was unable to give the church the time they needed. Pastor A also expressed much concern about his own pastoral abilities. He stated, "If I could be more of a pastor, many of the other things might fall into place." Associated with this was his frustration with his own personal spiritual development. A greater frustration was in his relationship with his wife who does not seem to be very supportive of his ministry. His wife is currently a student, and when she is involved in classes he feels that he is at the bottom of her priorities. The final question on this questionnaire asks what the person feels most passionate about, and Pastor A responded, "I don't know. I have been so busy for so long I don't know or understand passion anymore."

His Uniquely You profile identified his primary spiritual gifts as encouraging/exhorting, serving/ministry/helps, and teaching. His DISC scores rated him as a high S/C. Pastor A found this report to be very interesting, and he and his wife both felt that it was accurate.

Coaching Sessions

Session One

After spending a few minutes getting to know one another and building relationships Pastor A wanted to focus on what he feels is a lack of a strong personal spiritual life. He believed that if he could improve in that area many of his other problems would improve including the relationship with his wife. Like many bivocational ministers, much of his reading and study time is for sermon preparation and not for his own personal development. He felt two hindrances to this would be to find something he would find interesting and the time to read it. As we spoke he noticed on his bookshelf Phillip Keller's book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. Since he had not yet read that book he decided that he would begin with it.

He was able to identify an hour on Monday night, 7:00-8:00, for his reading. As part of this reading he will write a brief overview of what he has read to help him rediscover God at work in his life. He agreed to ask his wife to help hold him accountable to this reading schedule. This time of reading and personal development will be his assignment that will be discussed in the next coaching session.

Session Two

The Monday evening time for personal growth and development is working well for Pastor A. Since the last coaching session he has purchased some more books that he will use for this time of growth, and he reports that he already senses a measure of calm in his life since beginning this devotional time.

At a recent meeting of the church there was discussion about how to fill all the empty seats in the sanctuary, and this is what Pastor A wanted to focus on in this

coaching session. He was asked to identify some possible actions that might work well in his church and community, and he was able to identify several.

- The church could invite the community and show the video *The Case for Christ*.
- He would look into using an evangelism program available through their denomination.
- The church would use the Vacation Bible School children as a prospect list for the church to intentionally reach.
- He would talk to a young couple whose child recently joined the church about how the church might be able to reach out to their friends.

Pastor A stated the church had an upcoming board meeting, and he planned to ask three questions:

- What are we as a church willing to do to grow?
- What are we willing to give up to grow?
- How can we impact this community?

In this session he also admitted he was frustrated that his judicatory leader would not return his phone calls. He wants to ask for assistance in trying to transform this church but feels the denominational leaders are not interested in working with them.

His assignment before our next session would be to obtain the answers to his questions from the church board and to talk to the young couple about how the church could connect with their friends. He stated that he felt somewhat energized now since he at least had a plan for trying to move the church forward.

Session Three

Pastor A was very excited as the coaching session began. He had contacted his judicatory leader who attended their board meeting and discussed with them some information on growing vital churches. The board is enthusiastic about a program offered through their denomination and will begin working through that process in the fall. The church will also begin a young couples group that will reach out to 20-30 year olds. This ministry originated with the Christian Education committee and not from the pastor. Pastor A felt this demonstrates the church is serious about wanting to reach out to the community, and he admitted he felt more positive about the church than he had felt in some time. A young man, recently graduated from college, will be asked to lead this group.

Pastor A does have some concerns about this group which he wanted to discuss in this coaching session. These concerns were:

- He feels such groups can become cliquish over time.
- He is concerned the young man will lack the knowledge to answer some questions that will arise from the group.
- He is concerned that the young man may lack the confidence to lead the group.
- He is concerned about confidentiality issues as he was in a small group once when that was violated.
- He is concerned that they will offer this and no one will show up.

This pastor was able to identify some steps he could take to address these issues.

- He can obtain resources for the young man to help him lead the group and answer any questions that might arise.
- He will talk to the young man about confidentiality issues.
- He and the young man will personally invite people to become part of the group and seek direction from them about what they would like to receive as part of the group.

Before our next meeting Pastor A will talk to the young man and work with him to resolve these concerns. He will also ask if the young man has any concerns or questions about the group that he can address.

Session Four

Pastor A was very excited about how things are going in the ministry and in his personal life. He is having some work done on the home, his wife seems much happier and supportive of his ministry, and good things are happening at the church. He spoke to the leader of the new young couples group, and the leader agreed with his concerns. As they spoke Pastor A felt more confident about this individual's ability to lead the group.

His focus for this coaching session was how to ensure he and the church leaders did not grow weary from all that was happening in the church. He and some leaders will soon attend a ministry presentation offered by their judicatory. The church will soon begin an eight week series on Growing Vital Congregations, and Pastor A wants to make sure the leadership is on board for this series. When questioned how he could make sure the leadership would participate in this series, he identified two things he could do. One is to ask each of the eight deacons to lead one of the sessions. He would consider it a positive if half of them agreed. He will also ask the deacons to divide the congregation

into eight groups and each of them personally invite persons to attend these sessions. Prior to the next coaching session he will meet with the deacons and ask them to do these two things.

Session Five

Pastor A continues to feel very positive about how things are progressing at the church. All eight deacons agreed to lead one of the sessions at their upcoming training series. The church moderator helped convince them of the importance that each of them be involved.

In today's session he wanted to focus on how he could minister to a family whose young wife and mother had been diagnosed with cancer on her tongue. It is a very fast growing cancer, and the prognosis is not good. The husband is very angry this has happened. Although he is the son of the moderator, he and his family seldom attend church. Pastor A has a superficial relationship with this family which he believes will hinder his ability to effectively minister to them.

He agreed that taking the moderator with him for his first visit with this family might serve as a bridge between the family and the pastor. He understands he will have to be flexible in his ministry with them until more is known about how the disease will progress. When asked he was able to identify some resources to help him better minister to this family. A nearby cancer center has a chaplain on staff that Pastor A will contact to find how he can best serve this family. He also plans to contact some local pastors with more experience to talk to draw from their experiences.

His project to accomplish before the next coaching session was to make initial contact with the family, the chaplain, and other ministers in the community. He was also

reminded that the next session would conclude the agreement, and he should be considering what would be most helpful to him as these coaching sessions ended.

Session Six

Pastor A was a few minutes late making his call for this session. Some men from the church were helping him replace windows in his home and improve the landscaping. He was very excited about the work being done on his home and the willingness of others to assist him.

He noted the church was near the end of their study of “Growing Vital Congregations” and felt this had been a very positive experience for the church. The church has decided to continue with their mid-week meetings to continue the discussions that had grown out of this study and for Bible study. Church leaders informed him this would not have happened a year ago in their church, and Pastor A stated his belief that the encouragement he received from this coaching arrangement played a major role in making this possible.

In the previous coaching session he talked about a young woman with a cancer diagnosis. In the initial diagnosis she was told she had little time to live. She went to a cancer specialist for surgery, and the tumor was found to be benign. He had been able to begin ministering to this family and was hopeful that a relationship had begun with them.

Although this was the final coaching session, Pastor A did not want to focus on anything new. He spent the time talking about his belief that this opportunity had given him a new level of confidence in ministry due to a new level of comfort within himself. He now knows he is not alone in doing bivocational ministry and that he is gifted to do

bivocational ministry. He also learned how important it is to take time for himself and his family.

In the first session he identified a troubled relationship with his wife, a sense he had no time for himself, a frustration at the condition of their home, a lack of relationships with other people, and a general sense of uncertainty regarding ministry. In today's session he stated that after only three months of coaching all of these had been turned around. He was reminded that during future challenges he should remember how God had worked in his life during this three month period, and that he should feel free to contact his coach in the future if he begins to feel stuck. The coaching session ended with the coach praying for Pastor A.

Pastor B

Background

Pastor B is a former bivocational youth minister who resigned from his position due to being unable to meet the expectations of his pastor. The pastor had expectations for this position that could only be met by someone serving as a fully-funded youth minister. To avoid problems Pastor B decided to resign and seek another ministry opportunity.

Pastor B is a Licensed Practical Nurse and wants to earn a nursing degree and become a Registered Nurse. He has felt for some time that God was calling him to a pastoral role and is interested in becoming a bivocational pastor. Four years ago his wife divorced him as she did not want to be married to a minister. The church he was serving at the time terminated him due to the divorce which has caused him to struggle with his sense of call and has created trust issues with churches. He carries a lot of pain as a result

of the divorce and the way the church responded to him. He also understands that many churches will not consider him for the pastorate due to his divorce.

He has since remarried and seems to have a very healthy home life. The only thing he scored low on the Life Satisfaction Indicator was fun and hobbies. He indicated that he spends so much time with his work and family that he seldom takes time for himself.

His Uniquely You profile identified his primary spiritual gifts to be teaching, prophecy, and evangelism with pastor/shepherd only one point behind evangelism. His DISC scores rated him as a high C/S/D. He felt the assessment was accurate.

Coaching Sessions

Session One

Pastor B wanted to spend our first session looking at the possibility of serving as a bivocational pastor. Although he feels called to such ministry he is concerned that the timing may not be right. Because of his divorce, termination, and the issues he encountered as a youth minister he has a strong fear of failing. This has caused him to struggle to even talk to a church about their pastorate. He was asked to identify some roadblocks to becoming a bivocational pastor, and he named four:

- The distance he might have to drive as he already drives several miles a day to work, and he doesn't want to move any further away from his children from his first marriage.
- A large seminary is located in the community in which he lives which provides student pastors to many of the local smaller churches.

- The visitation schedule he has with his children varies which impacts his schedule.
- Many churches will not consider him due to his divorce.

We discussed some people he could talk to who could help him sort through his thoughts, and he identified three people: his grandparents, an uncle who is in the ministry, and his wife. Prior to our next coaching session he will talk to each of these people. He also agreed to begin reading John Maxwell's book, *Failing Forward*.

Session Two

Since our first coaching session Pastor B was able to talk to his father, his grandparents, and his wife about his call to the ministry. The grandparents and his father believe he has been called into the ministry but feel that he should complete his Registered Nurse training before accepting a pastorate. His wife also believes God has called him into the ministry but talked to him about some reservations she has about being able to live up to the examples she has seen in other pastor's wives. Despite those concerns he wanted to focus on how we would go about looking for a bivocational church.

He was asked to describe what he would like in a church that called him as their pastor. He responded he would be most interested in a church that:

- Already had children present so his children would have a community of children in the church.
- Is within forty-five miles of his home.
- Is conservative but not legalistic.
- Has a choir in which his wife can sing.

- Is bivocational.
- Offers a long-term opportunity for ministry.

When asked how we could find out if a church possesses these traits he admitted that he really didn't know how to learn that information and needed some guidance. At that point it became important to switch from coaching to mentoring for the remainder of our session. We discussed the importance of developing a good set of questions that could help him learn that information. He was able to identify a number of questions he could ask a search committee.

Pastor B identified two projects he would complete before our next session. He would continue to work on developing questions he will ask search committees, and he will have his wife talk to a wife of a bivocational minister to gain her perspective on that ministry.

Session Three

His wife was not able to talk to the wife of a bivocational pastor as they realized they did not know any. He was referred to one living in his community that he and his wife could talk to about the benefits and challenges of bivocational ministry. He had prepared a list of questions to ask search committees, and he had updated his resume and sent it to two judicatory leaders asking that he be considered for a bivocational ministry position. Pastor B was very excited that he had found a nursing position that did not require evening and weekend work. He felt this opened up the possibility that he might be called to a church.

His focus for this session was on the possibility that a church might be willing to call more than one bivocational pastor. He was asked to identify the advantages and

challenges of a church doing this. One advantage he mentioned was that it would reduce the likelihood of people worshiping the pastor, and another advantage was that one would be able to be at the church if the other wasn't because of a changing work schedule. The disadvantages he noted was that the pastors would have to maintain a sense of humility and be willing to work together as co-pastors. He admitted that not all pastors could do that very well. Prior to our next coaching session he and his wife will meet with the bivocational minister to whom he was referred.

Session Four

Once again he failed to talk to the bivocational minister living in his area. He first said he had not had the time to do so but later admitted his reason for not talking to him was his fear about going back into the ministry. A great deal of time was spent addressing his fears.

Pastor B said that his previous wife left him because she did not want to be married to a minister. Although his current wife is supportive she is reluctant to be involved in bivocational ministry because she has never been exposed to it. He is fearful of losing her if he returns to the ministry. He also admitted that he carries a lot of pain due to the way his previous church treated him after his divorce, and he is concerned that another church would treat him the same if he encountered a problem in his life.

He was asked if he believes God has called him into ministry, and he replied he is certain of it. Pastor B understands that he either has to follow through with that call or live in disobedience to God.

Pastor B had been reading one of the books this student wrote¹ and was interested in the chapter on longevity in the ministry. All of his previous ministries have been of short duration, and he doesn't want to continue that trend. He was encouraged to list some attributes that could help him remain at one church for a lengthy period of time, and he identified several:

- A good fit between the minister and the church. He does not believe his previous churches were a good fit for him and is hopeful the questions he has developed will help ensure a better fit between him and the church.
- A good support system including family and peers
- A preaching plan
- The ability to build relationships with church members
- A commitment to staying when things become difficult
- A healthy relationship with his spouse and family
- A commitment to personal growth

He identified three things he would do before our next session. Pastor B and his wife will meet with the bivocational minister and his wife so they can discuss bivocational ministry. He will look into the local bivocational ministry fellowship that exists in that community. His third project is to talk honestly to his wife about his fears of returning to ministry.

¹ Dennis Bickers, *The Bivocational Pastor: Two Jobs, One Ministry* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2004).

Session Five

Once again, Pastor B and the bivocational minister were not able to make contact, but they have made an appointment to meet during this next week. Pastor B did talk to his wife about his fears and found a great deal of support from her. One of the judicatory leaders he sent his resume to has made it possible for Pastor B to fill the pulpit in one of his churches, and this had Pastor B very excited.

For our time together he wanted to focus on his resume. Specifically, he was concerned about how to address his divorce and how to let a church know he is interested in having a long-term pastorate with them. He offered to read his current statement regarding his divorce which seemed very adequate. After answering several questions he decided to leave his current statement in his resume.

Pastor B was challenged to share some ways he could let a search committee know that he wanted a longer ministry with their church than he had in previous churches. He shared several statements that would help convey that information to the committee.

He was then challenged to think about what else he wanted a search committee to know about him after they read his resume. This question led him to decide to include his references instead of merely stating that references were available upon request. Finally, he decided to include a preaching DVD with his resume.

Pastor B was reminded that our next session would conclude our time together. He was encouraged to think carefully about what he would want to address for that session. Prior to that he will rewrite his resume and send it to some churches in his area

and to the judicatory leaders he previously sent his old resume. He also planned to keep his appointment with the bivocational minister.

Session Six

Pastor B was finally able to meet with the bivocational minister, and he found this meeting to be very helpful. The minister was upfront with some of the mistakes he had made as a bivocational pastor, especially in areas affecting his family. Pastor B appreciated this minister's honesty and the warnings he provided. He also rewrote his resume and sent it to churches seeking pastors in his community and to two judicatory ministers in surrounding counties.

For our final session Pastor B wanted to discuss how he could be involved in promoting bivocational ministry. One result of our coaching sessions is that he now feels strongly that bivocational ministry will be the future for many smaller churches, and yet he believes it is not promoted or respected as much as it should be. He wanted to discuss how he might be able to promote it and help prepare persons for bivocational ministry.

During this session he recognized one way to prepare people would be to offer Bible and leadership training in his church. This could be patterned after Seminary Extension or he could even offer Seminary Extension classes in his church. He was not certain if he would offer these classes to persons outside of his church but believed that he would. One advantage to opening up the classes to others that he identified was the possibility it could be easier to attract persons to teach the various classes. He also believed that he might open the training to persons of other denominations but understood this could lead to doctrinal differences if persons outside of his denomination taught some of the classes.

Pastor B concluded our time together talking about how emotionally difficult some of our sessions were for him. He had to address issues that he had refused to address in recent years, and he was forced to talk to people close to him about some of these issues. However, he did believe that this was a growing opportunity for him that would make it possible for him to return to ministry.

Pastor C

Background

For the past seven years Pastor C has served a number of churches as a bivocational intentional interim pastor. Most of the time he has found this to be an enjoyable ministry, but his present church has been very challenging. He scored very high on every question on the Life Satisfaction Indicator.

Pastor C has served one church as their pastor and was unethically dismissed from that position. This brought a lot of pain to him and his family, and he took some time off from ministry to heal. Part of that healing process involved his family and he is working with a therapist to resolve their pain.

His Uniquely You profile indicates his primary spiritual gifts are pastor/shepherding, teaching, and administration. His personality type is a D/S/C. He believes these assessments are accurate, and his comments and responses in the coaching sessions showed him to be a person who is driven to excellence and very focused on completing the tasks he is assigned. He comes across as rather forceful and yet is mature enough to know that he cannot force his views on the church he is serving. In every session he was frustrated with himself for his inability to lead this church to a healthier

place as he had done with the other congregations he had served. He admitted he found it difficult to identify the positive influences he was having on this congregation.

Coaching Sessions

Session One

In the first session Pastor A wanted to focus on his frustration with interim ministry. He normally changes churches about every eighteen months and does the same things he did in the previous church. He would like to stay in one place long enough to see the fruits of his efforts. The frustrations he feels in his current position is partially driving his interest in moving to a pastorate rather than continuing in interim ministry.

Pastor A stated that his present church had been conditioned by previous pastors to treat their pastor as a hired hand. There was a lack of discipleship in the church and little respect for the position of pastor. Whenever he has tried to address this problem he is told he is just the interim, and the church will wait until the church calls a pastor before attempting any change. As a result of the issues in the church it has seen its attendance decline in the past ten years from 225 people on Sunday morning to 108 people. Church members insist they want the church to return to its former size but resist every proposed change that might make that possible.

He agreed that much of his frustration is due to a sense of personal failure because this church has not responded to his leadership as previous churches had done. Much of the time in this session was spent trying to encourage Pastor C. He was scheduled to meet with a judicatory leader the day after this coaching session. At that meeting he will ask what steps he needs to take next in working with this church.

Session Two

Pastor C met with his judicatory leader and discussed his frustrations with his present ministry. The judicatory leader shared those same frustrations. Unfortunately, this judicatory leader does not have a good working relationship with this church and is also unable to effectively minister to them.

It was hard for Pastor C to focus on a specific issue to address in this session. One item he did mention was that the church has very nice facilities but is struggling to take care of them due to the unemployment in the area. When he was asked for his recommendations he suggested the church begin to sell some of their property, and this was not received well. A controller in the church was especially opposed to this idea.

He identified this woman as one who is making it difficult for this church to move forward. He has found that no one in the church will oppose her. He has seen that the few who have stood up to her have never been successful. Although he would like to challenge her authority in the church he understands he would not have the support of the congregation and would be unable to oppose her.

As in the earlier meeting Pastor C struggled with feelings of failure because of his perceived inability to help this church. Prior to the next coaching session Pastor C agreed to identify 3-6 achievable goals he could meet in this church. He was encouraged to consider lesser goals than was attained in previous churches due to the differences in those congregations. With each goal he was challenged to list at least one intentional action he could take to achieve the goal.

Session Three

Pastor C was very frustrated at the start of this session. His wife had developed some health issues and needed a biopsy. Tests indicated everything was benign. His frustration was the result of the church's concern that if his wife was ill he might not be able to minister to the church members. They were more concerned with having their own needs met than they were in supporting him and his family during their time of need. He understands now why previous pastors exhausted themselves while serving this church and why one pastor's wife had a deep dislike for that church before her husband left it.

He was able to set some goals for his ministry to this church. Those goals are:

- Help the church create their profile for pastoral candidates to consider
- Create opportunities for community building outside of worship
- Work on his personal profile
- Introduce care teams in the church who can provide care if the church does call a bivocational minister
- Help the church understand the bivocational model

For this session Pastor C wanted to address what might be next for his ministry. He would like to leave interim ministry and become a pastor. Some of the benefits of becoming the pastor of a church he identified were

- He would be less lonely as he could be with other pastors and develop relationships with church members. He is unable to do these two things as an interim.
- He could see the long-term fruits of his work.

- He could be more connected in the community.

Pastor C was also able to see several challenges to becoming a pastor.

- His wife has a very respected position in her company and would be reluctant to move. There are very few fully-funded churches in the area in which he currently lives.
- He is responsible to care for an aging father and a physically-challenged sister and would be unable to move very far from his current home.
- He lives in a very conservative region and believes he would have trouble finding a church as he is more moderate in his theology.

He was then challenged to think about serving as a bivocational pastor. He wasn't sure what he might do outside of pastoral ministry. When it was noted he was gifted as a teacher and seemed to have an interest in teaching, he admitted he had often wondered if that could be something he could do. As possible options were explored he was surprised to learn that he might be able to do adjunct teaching on-line or teach an intensive class for a week. Prior to the next session he will talk to a couple of adjunct instructors he knows to learn more about how to pursue that possibility.

Session Four

The two adjunct instructors he tried to contact were away on vacation. He left messages for them and hoped to talk to them soon.

In today's session Pastor C wanted to focus on an antagonist in the church. Pastor C had recently attended his denomination's annual meeting. Before leaving he had encouraged the church leadership to bring in a bivocational minister to learn more about

that option. The antagonist is telling the congregation they do not need to call a bivocational minister despite their limited finances.

His frustration in this session is that he feels stuck where he is currently serving. He is limited to how far away he can move due to family concerns, and there doesn't seem to be a church nearby that would be a good fit. He believes if he challenges the antagonist and loses he might be forced to resign and doesn't know where he would go. He admitted a confrontation is unlikely to resolve anything and does not believe he would find any support for such a confrontation in the congregation.

One solution he identified is to talk to the church moderator for his responses on how to handle this individual. After talking to the moderator he will schedule a meeting with the antagonist. At that meeting Pastor C will determine the appropriate next steps. Prior to the next coaching session he have these meetings.

Session Five

Pastor C did meet with the antagonist, but nothing was resolved. As expected, he found no support from anyone else in the church for his confrontation.

In today's session he wanted to focus on how he can help the church understand they cannot afford a fully-funded pastor. When asked if that was appropriate for an interim to be so involved in the search process he responded that his judicatory expected that from him. He believes the search committee wants to begin the search process before they are ready. Although he has voiced his concerns, the church refuses to listen to him. Once again he expressed a great deal of frustration.

At that point he was asked what he was doing to make himself whole. He was able to identify several things he continues to focus on. Pastor C is committed to helping

the church to become more missional. He is leading the church to a number of community ministries and outreaches which has caused some excitement in the church. The church does seem to follow his leadership in these areas and has started planning for these events. Pastor C believes if these are successful he will be able to leave this interim position with a sense of accomplishment.

Before our next meeting he plans to talk to his judicatory leader again about his concerns regarding the church wanting to move forward in their search for a new pastor. He will also talk to the church moderator about those same concerns.

Session Six

Pastor C was quite upset at the start of this coaching session. He had talked to the church moderator about his concerns with moving forward in seeking a new pastor, but the search committee was doing so anyway. He believes he left every church better than it was when he first went there, and that is not going to be the case with this church. He was very negative during the early part of the session with most of the negativity directed towards himself. However, when asked to identify some positive changes that had occurred in the church in the two years he had served there he was able to immediately identify three.

- The church members do not attack one another as they used to do.
- The church controllers have less power than they did when he first went there.
- The church members are better able to work together on projects.

It was pointed out that these are significant changes in only two years in a church that seems to have been very unhealthy. Pastor C was then asked if the challenges he is facing in this church might be an indication that he was called to this church not to

necessarily help the church but so he could work on some of his own issues. He admitted he recently began to question that possibility and admitted that the difficulty of this church had led him to make significant changes in his own life and ministry.

He has one more year left on his contract with this church assuming they do not call a pastor prior to that. Pastor C is committed to help them become a healthier church before they call their next pastor. He then expressed his appreciation for this coaching opportunity.

Pastor D

Background

Pastor D serves as a bivocational pastor in Canada. He was an atheist until the age of 34 and has now been a Christian for ten years. Since 2007 he has served as the bivocational pastor of a small church with an average attendance of twenty-five and works full-time as a manager of a movie theater. He is in his final year of his denomination's lay ministry training program.

His lowest scores on his Life Satisfaction Indicator were in the areas of his own personal spiritual life and growth, physical health, and fun and hobbies. His work and ministry leaves little time for a fulfilling personal life although he did score very high in his relationships with his wife and children. In general he seems very satisfied with his life.

His Uniquely You profile found him to be a very high D/C indicating that he is highly task-oriented. He admitted that he is not comfortable in the personal relationships aspect of pastoral ministry preferring to develop and lead programs. Pastor D states that he struggles in the areas of visitation and administration. He does have a close

relationship with the one deacon in their church and goes to this individual often for guidance and wisdom. He also meets with two fully-funded pastors in the area regularly and refers to them as his mentors. The profile indicated his primary spiritual gifts are evangelism, encouraging/exhorting, and administration/ruling. These gifts are confirmed by others in his church, but Pastor D does not believe he has the gift of administration.

Early in the coaching relationship Pastor D began to miss sessions. He contacted his coach the first time he was unable to make his session but then missed the next two sessions without informing his coach. Pastor D was asked if he intended to complete this project or if he wanted to end the coaching relationship and be replaced by another person. He indicated that he wanted to complete the project and was told that if he missed another coaching appointment without prior notification he would automatically be dropped from this project.

Coaching Sessions

Session One

Pastor D stated that his is the only church in a community of 1,500 persons. He indicated that he has three areas of concern about his ministry and church. The first is the large number of persons in the community that do not attend church even though many call themselves Christians. A second concern is the large amount of money the church has in its account. He wants the church to spend some of that money on ministry to the community. The third concern is how he can best minister to the community since he lives approximately thirty miles away. Pastor D decided to focus on his first concern for this session.

When asked to do so he identified two reasons he believed many Christians do not attend church. They have been hurt by the church in the past, and they see the church as irrelevant to their lives. Pastor D would like to find a way to reach out to these individuals and develop a ministry that would attract them back to the church. This is certainly in line with his high giftedness in evangelism.

On the night of this coaching session he was meeting with the church advisory board. He will ask them to help identify the inactive members of the church so he can begin meeting with them. He will also ask the board to help him identify people within the community to whom the church could minister. Finally, he was asked if the church had ever done a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. He was uncertain if they had done that, but in his work as a manager he was familiar with this analysis. If the church has not done this analysis recently he would lead the board in working on that as well. All of these would be his project before our next session.

Session Two

Prior to this session Pastor D led the church leadership through a SWOT analysis. He admitted he would not have thought of doing that in a church without being encouraged to do so. The board identified the strengths of the church as: a very caring core group, scripture led service, an excellent Christian Education program, Bible studies, ladies night out (one of the church's strongest programs), and the financial condition of the church. The weaknesses they identified was having a bivocational pastor living some distance from the church, a lack of gift assessment of the membership, a lack of intentional ministry, no youth program, and no program for men. Their opportunities were in using the church facilities as a community center, improving the stewardship of

the church, developing outreach ministries especially to those who have been wounded by churches in the past, and growing disciples in the church. They identified their primary threats as apathy in the church, broken relationships, people moving from the area, and resistance to change. Pastor D felt the church made a major step forward working through this analysis and was encouraged to not allow this to gather dust on a shelf but begin to use it to identify action steps the church can begin to take.

For today's session Pastor D wanted to focus on what he calls his holy discontent. Prior to becoming a pastor he spent a lot of time talking to persons about their relationship with Jesus Christ. As a pastor he spends most of his ministry time working with Christians and feels he has little time to share his faith with unbelievers. Part of this frustration also comes from the fact that he is now working forty-five hours a week in his other job due to cutbacks his employer has made. He is about to complete his lay ministry training and wants to explore his options for ministry. He was able to identify four options:

1. Remain bivocational at his present church
2. Increase the hours at his present church from fifteen hours per week to twenty-five
3. Serve two or three yoked churches
4. Pursue fully-funded ministry

He feels led to the fourth option because it would require him to continue his education, which he enjoys, and would allow him to focus his time in one place. He will soon meet with his judicatory minister to discuss these options, and he plans to discuss them as well with his mentors.

Near the end of our session he mentioned that he was having some relationship issues with some individuals in the church. One long-time member had recently resigned her position in the church, and he was uncertain why. Pastor D was challenged to find out why and begin to look for ways to strengthen his relationships with all the members.

Prior to our next session he will continue to address the holy discontent and work at rebuilding relationships. He also committed to talking to the individual who resigned her position to see why she had made that decision.

Session Three

There was an extended period of time between the previous session and this one due to Pastor D having surgery. This extended period allowed him to spend time talking to his wife and to God about his holy discontent. They decided to not address this issue until he completes his lay ministry training next year. He has been invited to attend his denomination's college and pastor a church in that area. Once he completes his lay ministry training he will talk with his area minister about his future options.

He was able to meet with the woman who had resigned her position and found that she had some differences with him. They were able to resolve those differences, and she has now returned to the church.

At their last advisory board meeting several decisions were made. The board decided to re-activate their weekly prayer meetings. This was discontinued in the past because people wanted to attend a Bible study but not a prayer meeting. The church deacon volunteered to host a video study in his home starting in late summer which satisfied the desire for a Bible study, and the prayer meeting was approved. Another decision was to begin an Alpha study for men only in an effort to reach out to the men in

the community. One negative at this board meeting is that an issue had developed between the church and the cemetery board that needed resolution.

The church is struggling to find a regular pianist, and Pastor D wanted to focus on staffing issues in small churches. He was encouraged to look at various options including eliminating some positions that may no longer be needed in the church. Two possibilities he identified to fill the music need is to continue to use different persons each week to play the piano and to look at using background music for some Sundays. Neither option is one that he favors, but he realizes his options right now are limited, and using these options at least eliminates some of the stress he feels trying to find a regular pianist.

Pastor D mentioned the church will soon do an evaluation on his ministry with them. This will become a semi-annual evaluation which he has requested. He will also do an evaluation on the church and was encouraged to look at Jill Hudson's book, *When Better Isn't Enough*, for guidelines on how to assess a congregation.

Prior to our next session Pastor D will meet with the music committee to address their issues surrounding worship, music, and the absence of a regular pianist.

Session Four

There was an extended period of time before this session as well. Pastor D developed an infection from his ankle surgery and had to have additional surgery. He believes that problem has been resolved and he looks forward to full recovery.

The issue with the cemetery board has been resolved, and Pastor D believes the revived prayer meetings were instrumental in helping to resolve those differences. He also credits the prayer meetings with helping resolve the issues the music committee was

addressing. Their regular pianist has now returned to the church and has agreed to play part-time for now.

Pastor D wanted to focus on two issues in this session. One is the lack of male involvement in ministry. Although the church is starting an Alpha program on Saturday mornings to address this, another issue has developed. His work schedule has changed requiring him to work until 3:00 am on Sunday mornings. If he commits to meeting with the men on Saturday mornings and working so late on Sunday mornings he is concerned he will be too tired to function well in the Sunday service.

His second issue involved the wife of the church deacon. Pastor D is concerned she is too involved in church activities and runs the risk of burn out. He wants to talk to her about stepping back from some of her church commitments but does not want to offend her. She does a good job in all she does, but he is concerned she is doing too much. He decided this would be the issue we would focus on for this session.

After discussing how she might respond he decided it would be best to first talk to her husband. Pastor D wants to enlist his support and see how she might respond to his concerns. He anticipates she will push back with concerns that no one else would step up if she began to back down from some of her commitments. He believes others will step up and have been reluctant to do so in the past because they did not want to seem to interfere with what she was doing. Pastor D decided it would be best to allow her to select which duties she would give up if she agreed to give up any, but he will still first speak to her husband.

One thing that came from this discussion was the realization that this small church is too structured for its size. Pastor D noted that the church has begun work on

developing a church constitution, and he wants to use this opportunity to eliminate some committees and boards that are no longer needed. He admitted that doing so would free people up to do ministry and potentially grow the church. Prior to our next meeting Pastor D will talk to his deacon, and if that discussion goes well will talk to the deacon's wife about his concerns.

Session Five

Pastor D kept this appointment although he was gone on vacation with his family. The discussion with the deacon went well, but the deacon encouraged Pastor D to not talk to his wife until he returned from vacation. While the pastor is on vacation the deacon will talk to his wife to get her reaction.

In this session Pastor D wanted to discuss an upcoming baptism at the church. This will be the first baptism the church has had in fifty years, and it is his first one. Everyone is excited, and he is concerned that it will not be the memorable event that it should be because of something he might do. The baptism will be in a small river that runs through the community, and he's afraid he'll do something like drop his Bible in the river.

When asked about his plans for the baptism it was obvious Pastor D had done quite a bit of preparation. It will occur immediately after the morning worship service at which time the two candidates, an adult woman and Pastor D's son, will share their testimony. At the close of the service the church will walk down to the river for the baptism as a public witness to the community. Following the baptism the church will host a community picnic, and that evening will kick off their first monthly movie night. Pastor

D is very excited about the potential outreach possibilities of this public event, but is also very concerned about doing something that would detract from the event.

He again admitted he was afraid he would drop his Bible in the river and lose an expensive Bible his wife had bought for him. He was able to identify a workable alternative: he would use one of the inexpensive pew Bibles the church has. His other concern is that he would drop one of the baptismal candidates or stumble with them while walking out into the river. He also identified a solution to this concern: using others to help escort the candidates to him. We both are looking forward to our final session at which time he will discuss the impact of the baptism service and the other events of the day on the life of the church.

Session Six

The baptism was almost washed out by heavy rains and flooding the previous day and night. Although the river was up Pastor D decided to continue with the baptism, and the flooding actually made it easier to do the baptism. He and the candidates did not have to walk so far out into the river to deeper water which eliminated the need to have assistants in the water. The church was packed with family members and people from the community who had not witnessed a baptism in the church in several decades. A young boy the church has sent to camp the previous two summers attended the service, and Pastor D believes this helped plant the seeds of the gospel in his mind. The community picnic was very well attended as was the evening movie. Because of the excellent attendance of the movie the church will proceed to have one each month as an outreach tool.

Pastor D reported that he approached his supervisor about having to work so late on Saturday nights and explained what the church wanted to do on Saturday mornings with the men in their community. He volunteered to work every Friday night if he could work the earlier shift on Saturday, and his supervisor agreed to his request. As a result, the church will go forward with their plans for the Alpha program. Already, the planning for this program has produced results. A man in the community, not a member of the church, has volunteered to cook breakfast each Saturday for those attending Alpha.

For our final session Pastor D wanted to discuss how to minister to a member of the church who has cancer. This individual is a very private person who does not want anyone to know he has the disease. Pastor D is aware of it because the man's wife told his wife and asked her to tell him. He wants to take this to the church prayer group but does not want to violate any confidences.

Pastor D decided to approach the man's wife to find out if her husband would be offended if he learned that the pastor knew of his illness. If not, then he would begin talking to the gentleman, begin ministering to him, and ask for his permission to share this concern with the prayer group. He would not do so without permission.

Pastor D concluded our session by talking about how helpful this has been to him. He felt he had learned much about pastoring a church and appreciated the fact that he was never told he should do one thing or another but was given the opportunity to learn how to think through issues to find a solution that will best fit his situation. He expected coaching to be more like consulting in which he would be told what to do and appreciated the fact that he was permitted to find solutions to his challenges.

Pastor E

Background

After graduating from seminary Pastor E served as a fully-funded pastor until he decided to become a bivocational pastor in 1984. He currently works as a teacher and a football coach and pastors a small church that was close to closing its doors when he became its pastor. The church continues to have financial struggles and is still working through some difficult issues, but Pastor E believes that it is slowly becoming a healthier church. There has also been some numerical growth. Much of his focus has been with the youth and children's ministries.

The highest scores on his Life Satisfaction Indicator were with his relationships with his spouse and children. His lowest scores were with his relationships with his extended family and fun and hobbies. Like many bivocational ministers, Pastor E finds it difficult to make time to do things for himself. One of his problems seems to be that he often commits to too many activities. This led to challenges in completing our coaching agreement as it was difficult at times to make appointments for our sessions due to his schedule.

Coaching Sessions

Session One

In our first session Pastor E wanted to focus on how soon he would be able to lead the church. He had served as the pastor for two and one-half years and had seen the church grow from an average of thirteen people to thirty. However, the deacons and trustees continue to come from the older members, and they are reluctant to share leadership with the pastor and newer members of the congregation. Previous pastors

served the church from seven to ten years until the one who preceded Pastor E. That pastor was only there three years, and his ministry created a great deal of division and nearly closed the church.

Pastor E understood that the lay leader's reluctance to share leadership with him is due to the issues with the previous pastor. He recognizes that he will have to establish trust with these lay leaders before they will entrust leadership to him, and that it will likely take longer for that to happen. Until then he will take changes he would like to see to recognized leaders within the church and seek their input and support. He identified these leaders as the deacon chairman and the moderator. Once he has their support he will encourage them to present these changes to the congregation.

The first issue he will take to these two individuals is introducing contemporary music to the church through the use of video and background music. He will also talk to the church board about purchasing a new video and sound system, and this will be done prior to our next coaching session.

Session Two

The board affirmed the purchase of a video system in the church and will probably purchase a new sound system as well. After this decision was made it was discovered there had been an accounting error in their financial report and additional money was available for this purchase.

In today's session Pastor E wanted to focus on the church's youth ministry. Although there is a great deal of activity with the youth he is not sure there is much spiritual depth. Pastor E believes some of the youth have a growing relationship with God but are reluctant to share that with other people. He was asked to identify some

characteristics he would like to see in his youth, and after he identified several he was asked how he might develop a youth program that would lead to the youth acquiring those characteristics. Pastor E feels that they need some activities that will stretch them out of their comfort zones, and he saw that they had a couple of activities already scheduled this year that could do that.

Pastor E also noted that one of his concerns is the number of youth who identify themselves as homosexual. He said this is a growing problem in the schools in his community. If young people do not fit other categories that are often assigned to young people they assume they must be homosexual and begin to identify themselves as such. This is an issue that he is constantly addressing with the young people he is ministering to.

At this point Pastor E began to express a lot of frustration and disappointment in his youth ministry. In answering some questions he acknowledged that the church had no young people when he began his ministry in the church. The first year he focused much of his energy to reaching out to young people. That year the church spent \$4,000.00 on youth activities, and Pastor E admitted that there were some youth whose lives were positively impacted by those activities. The remainder of this session was spent in encouraging Pastor E to see the positive results that have occurred with the youth in the past three years, and he seemed better satisfied when the session ended.

The project that he will work on prior to the next coaching session is to develop some specific plans for the youth ministry for the remainder of this year and to begin putting his goals on paper. In the past he has not written down his ministry goals although he has written down his goals for the other activities that he does.

Session Three

Pastor E set three goals for ministering to the youth this summer. The first goal is to have a big event each month during the summer. His second goal is to have two out of town events with about ten youth at each event. The third goal is to take the youth leaders to a two-day training event.

For this session he wanted to discuss how much education he needed for the ministry he's doing. Pastor E is 55 years old and expects to retire from teaching in the next three to four years. He is content to remain at his current church but is also open to moving to another place of service if God so leads. He has an Master of Religious Education with seventy hours plus an additional forty hours beyond that. He is interested in pursuing his Doctor of Ministry degree and has talked to Northeastern Seminary and Liberty Theological Seminary. One of his children is currently a student at Liberty, and he appreciates that school. He is currently submitting paperwork to Liberty for them to evaluate before he makes a final decision.

Pastor E was asked several questions about his desire to return to school.

- Do you feel you need additional education?
- Are there gaps in your training that you want to correct?
- Do you enjoy the learning process?

All of his answers indicated that it would be helpful for him to work on his Doctor of Ministry degree at Liberty, and he was encouraged to pursue that.

Pastor E will continue to submit his paperwork to Liberty so he can be accepted into their DMin program. He also committed to planning his fall ministry at the church and his fall preaching schedule.

Session Four

Pastor E did work on his preaching schedule and planned part of the fall programming for the church, but he was not able to complete the paperwork to Liberty. One person who sent in paperwork forgot to sign it, and that had to be returned for his signature.

This was a very difficult session as Pastor E had not determined any issue he wanted to address. After some prompting he finally said that the church needed to focus more on evangelism. That became the focus of this session. Pastor E identified several things that he could do to help the church begin to reach out to the unchurched in his community. He plans to make evangelism the topic of a series of sermons this fall. He also wants to begin a new women's Bible study and develop an outreach to the youth in the community. He feels the church needs to identify some intentional steps it can take to reach young married couples. When asked where he could get some tools to help the church become more evangelistic he replied that he had several items on his desk that could be used to provide evangelism training to the congregation. He will look at these items before our next session and identify some workshops that will help the church become more evangelistic in its efforts.

Session Five

Pastor E was excited at the start of this coaching session. The church was restarting the women's Bible study class and was starting a new children's ministry. A group of women were going to attend a Women of Faith conference, and he had scheduled several evangelistic efforts for the fall and winter.

He had also found a conference that he was taking his youth to that would help them better understand their sexuality. He continues to struggle with the young people who believe they are homosexual, and he believes this conference will help them address this.

For this session Pastor E wanted to address his trouble delegating to other people. He admitted to being a perfectionist who feels that others won't do the job as well as he will. This has been a life-long struggle for him, and he understands that the church will be limited until he is able to delegate responsibility to other people. He identified three potential problems if he doesn't learn to delegate.

- There is likely to be a breakdown in ministry if he leaves the church.
- The congregation will feel they are not trusted to do ministry.
- The pastor is more susceptible to burn-out.

He was able to list several things he needed to do in order to delegate tasks to other people.

- He needs to visit individuals in the church to better know them and their interests.
- He needs to give a gifts assessment to every member so both he and they will know their primary gifts.
- He needs to develop a structure of accountability and encouragement.
- He needs to begin sending people cards of appreciation to those who are doing a good job.

Pastor E will write an assessment of the church and discuss it with the church leaders for their feedback. Part of this assessment is to evaluate how he sees his first three

years at the church. He also wants to include his vision for the church in the next few years.

Session Six

Pastor E was thirty minutes late calling for this coaching session. He was busy addressing issues with his insurance company and forgot about the session. His final project was not completed due to him returning to his teaching and coaching responsibilities at the start of a new school year.

For this session he wanted to discuss his concerns about the church's ministry to young married families. He feels that most of these families are content to give the church one hour a week, but he sees little spiritual growth in many of these families and even less connection between the families. He would like to see more relationship building among these families but is not sure how to make that happen.

After being asked what these families had in common Pastor E thought that one thing they could do was to have a couple of father and son outings to a local minor league baseball stadium. Although he admitted he did not know some of the men very well he thought that most of them enjoyed baseball. He also felt that the women's Bible study would help bring the women closer together. A third thing he identified was to have some cook-outs for these young families.

Pastor E concluded the session by stating how helpful these coaching sessions had been for him. He wasn't sure what to expect when they started, but he found them to be very encouraging and something he looked forward to. These sessions gave him a chance to share his frustrations and his hopes with someone who had been where he is and who would understand what he is going through.

CHAPTER 5

STATEMENTS FROM THE PERSONS BEING COACHED

Each person who was part of this project was asked to submit a two-page summary of their experience. They were not provided with a form for this summary but were asked to state in their own words how being coached impacted their lives and ministries. They were asked to discuss what they perceived the strengths of the coaching process were for them and to indicate areas in which it could have been improved. Each gave permission for their reports to be included in this work. Their responses are included verbatim with no attempt to correct spelling, grammar, or sentence structure.

Pastor A

Perhaps it is best to track my relationship with Dennis before we explore any benefit I may have received from our coaching sessions. Dennis and I met at a Pastor's Conference in 2008 held at the Green Lake Conference Center of the American Baptist Churches USA. As a new bi-vocational pastor, I was eager to head Dennis speak on the challenges of this type of ministry. The beginning of his presentation dealt with the 'problems' of being a bi-vocational pastor. As I looked around the room, I knew we were familiar with the problems, what we were there for were solutions. I made my feelings known to Dennis and the rest of the class. After some discussion, arrangements were made to continue the presentation during the afternoon session.

In that second session I became more aware of Dennis' unique understanding of this type of ministry and his desire to assist those of us who engage in it. Dennis sent a request to his e-mail subscribers looking for a few pastors to coach via telephone interviews and email contact to see how coaching could assist a bi-vocational pastor. I replied, never expecting to be selected, and became one of those chosen for this project. The question remains, how did this experience enhance my life and ministry?

There were some questions we had to complete to give Dennis some sense of where we were in our personal, spiritual, and secular life. As I look at those questions now, and answer them again, I see a dramatic change in my outlook on these three aspects of life. Early in 2009 my wife and I were challenged with a variety of issues. They included health issues for both of us, mine was the possibility of cancer, and hers required a hysterectomy. There were issues with our children, my daughter had just taken a semester off from college due to health issues and my son had just been through post traumatic stress counseling regarding an event that he witnessed while on a mission trip. My secular work requires me to be at the store on Friday nights and all day Saturday, which makes additional work for the church difficult. Our house was way behind in a remodeling project which included having the building put on jacks and a complete basement installed underneath. Obviously, there were some things going on in my life at this time.

Then the coaching started. One of the things that challenged me the most that I always thought everything I did should relate to ministry somehow. Every book I read, every prayer I prayed, every event I attended needed to be part of my ministry. I was forever looking for a way to turn an encounter at work into a sermon illustration. Or how

could the book I was reading become a sermon series. One of the first things Dennis and I discussed was the idea of taking time for me to pursue an interest or a book with no other motive than MY personal satisfaction or amusement. My own personal spiritual growth was suffering also, so the first assignment was to read and journal on Phillip Keller's "A Shepherd Looks at the 23rd Psalm", which just happened to be a gift from my wife that previous Christmas. My first discovery was that God had planned for us to take time to rest and 'ruminate' just as sheep must do to 'put on weight and good wool'. I also involved some of the area ministers and our executive minister in the process of sending e-mail updates of our sessions which provided a feedback loop of support and encouragement to continue with the coaching.

About half way through the coaching process, one of our prominent church families went through a health crisis which I discussed with Dennis. Being separated from the area and knowing the family involved, Dennis was able to give solid direction. Although I never used the suggestions we discussed, the information was valuable for me in that instance and gives me a foundation to work from in the event of another similar situation. Another event which occurred about this time was one of my church members approached me after service on Sunday and asked, "Pastor, do you still have some work to do on your house?" I replied that I hadn't gotten anything done in the last few months. His next statement brought me to tears, "I have six men from the church who want come and give you some help. Make up a list of priorities that need to be done." You need to understand my house is thirty-five miles from the church, a forty-five minute drive one way, and these men were ready to give there time to help me. I was awed by the offer and responded immediately. Since that time, these church men have installed 8 windows and

applied 600 square feet of new vinyl siding in three separate trips to my home. What does this have to do with the coaching experience? Through this one act God has showed me that I am appreciated for my service as limited as it is, and I am making a difference in the people's lives in our church.

Probably the greatest benefit I received from the coaching was the affirmation that I am in the place where God wants me to be right now. With all the constraints of time and travel, I can still have an effective ministry at the Centerville Baptist Church. I don't get down on myself as much as I used to for not being at the church more often. I have come to understand that God's call on my life is this ministry at this time, and He will provide the training, support and comfort needed to carry out His mission. I am His servant, doing my best to fulfill His call on my life. The other major benefit I received from our brief sessions was that it was all right to take time for myself. Not everything I say or do needs to be church related. I can read a book just for me. I can take time off without feeling guilty about how it will affect the church. And I was reminded that God created us as emotional beings and understands frustration, anger, depression and those other emotions which sometimes keep us from seeing God.

As a post script to the coaching experience, the American Baptist churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware are hosting Dennis for a 4 day sweep of the region in October 2009. The Centerville Baptist Church has been selected to host one of his gatherings. I will be able to introduce Dennis not only as a leader in the world of bi-vocational ministry, but also as my friend.

Pastor B

I stepped into my coaching experience with the soon-to-be "Doctor" Bickers at an interesting and unique time in my life. I initially applied to take part in the coaching project after reading of it on Rev. Bickers' bivocational ministry blog, which I follow regularly. Dennis kindly informed me by email that by the time of my application, he had already selected the number of participants needed for the project. I was a little disappointed, as the project sounded like it could be helpful. I was wrestling through some issues as an intentionally bivocational student minister in a local church. I was struggling with boundaries and church expectations in a position (and with a fully-funded senior pastor) which was beginning to require nearly full-time hours and activities on a meager salary. It seemed to me that his experience and expertise in bivocational ministry would be helpful in working through those issues, but since the project slots were full, I worked through those issues prayerfully and with much counsel from my wise and wonderful wife and others. After speaking with the pastor several times on the issues and consulting with the church leadership, we agreed it would be best for me to step away from the young ministry position.

It was at that point that I emailed Dennis to let him know what had happened in my ministry. I figured he may even get an idea for a blog from my little, insignificant story! Instead, he emailed me back to ask if I would like to take part in the coaching project. Evidently, a couple of the initial participants had not followed through and he needed someone who would. I eagerly entered the project, seeing it not as an opportunity to work through ministry troubles or problems, but rather now as a chance to seek godly wisdom and some general direction in ministry. No longer was I in a ministry position

seeking help to deal with contradicting ministry philosophies - I was now seeking the face of God in where I belonged in the ministry period!

After completing the entry paperwork and signing on the dotted line (so-to-speak), I began to wonder what I had gotten myself into. I openly answered questions regarding my ministry goals, ministry past, and even a failed marriage in the ministry. I took a spiritual gifts survey which I feared would tell me I was not even qualified to take out the garbage at the church! Truthfully, I was at a place in life where I was really, genuinely struggling with my calling to ministry.

Along came my first telephone session with Mr. Bickers. We small talked about cutting the grass and such before cutting to the chase. Our first few sessions consisted of discussing my call to ministry, as well as going over some homework. Homework, you say? Yes, ma'am (or sir). That is part of the deal - the homework forces the mentoree (that's me, in this case) to do the difficult work for growth, not just chatting it up on the phone.

And difficult work it was! On several occasions "Coach Bickers" would challenge me to "do" instead of talk. He challenged me to work through issues Biblically, prayerfully, and intellectually related to my call to ministry, past pains from rough church experiences, and the "NOW WHAT?" in regard to seeking a ministry position. Did I always agree with everything Rev. Bickers said? No way! BUT, I did utilize his advice and wisdom to work through those tough issues. Many times, I realized I was looking at things through tainted lenses and that my coach was correct in his outside, objective view of my ministry. Other times, I took from the coach his wisdom, applied it to my life, and decided within myself that it was okay to have some different philosophies of ministry.

The entire coaching process was difficult work for me, as I was truly seeking to grow and to find God's direction for my life. The Lord used this opportunity to help me move from a point of insecurity and confusion about my role in His ministry to a place of dreaming again about the goodness of God in allowing me to be a part of his work. I again have a passion to serve Him. My thirst for knowledge has increased - I am enjoying reading about theology and ministry again! Most importantly to me, my wife and I are working together to actively find our role in serving the Kingdom and shepherding His flock!

Coaching has the potential to be a great tool for use in the lives of bivocational ministers. Its usefulness will very much be determined by the ability of the "student" to set aside his pride (a tough accomplishment for many of us in the ministry) and do the difficult work of learning and growing as a human, a Christ-follower, and as a minister of the Gospel. One must set aside all presuppositions and haughtiness and determine to be teachable. The "coach" must pull no punches in honestly, clearly, and lovingly communicating earned and learned wisdom to the "student." And then, at some point, much like me, the mentoree must just determine to stop talking and do...

Pastor C

Part 1

How are you doing? What would you like to talk about today?

These two questions clearly defined the coaching style and method of Rev. Dennis Bickers (Dennis from this point forward). As a Pastor, I am a professional caregiver. And like others in my profession, it is difficult to allow myself time to remove my collar, and let someone else return the care for which I hunger.

Before a session would begin, Dennis was intentional about making sure the PBC was comfortable. I found this means of offering care at the beginning of the sessions to establish trust by allowing me to relax and center my mind, while at the same time granting me the right to retain my integrity.

This was then further supported with the important question..."What would you like to talk about today?" What was on my heart, troubling my soul, mind, and spirit? What was the item I needed to struggle with and discern God's call and answer? While at the beginning, I struggled greatly with this question, in time, it became a little easier. And I do mean a little.

As and Intentional Interim Pastor, I am transitioning a congregation from being large to small. The realizations that they are not longer have a core group of 75 to do the work, but instead they have 15. Assisting themselves to see where their strengths are now weaknesses and the lofty goals can no longer be fulfilled has been incredibly taxing.

The result, there have been many times, during my call, in which I have found myself feeling more like I have failed in my calling. I was unable to see the victories and successes.

Dennis achieved this by helping me focus upon the situation I was wrestling with in the present. Helping me to discover the ways and means to taking action on the topics and issues I would disclose in our sessions. Raising my awareness to recognize the achievements I have made, and which God had made through me. He was consistently proactive in helping me, giving the support I required to work towards the goals I needed to set, and the growth journey God was taking me through.

From time to time, I would ask questions, or make comments as a colleague and not a person being coached. At times, this would be counter-productive to our sessions. Being that Dennis has expertise in small church and bi-vocational ministry, from time to time I would ask questions which would fall into these categories. Dennis, being respectful of my question, would honor and respond to them, but only for so long. He always found a way to bring us back to the coach and person being coached relationship.

Part 2

I am a Professional Intentional Interim Pastor. My entire career, since graduating from seminary has focused on transitioning churches from where they are to where the beginning point of where God is calling them to go.

My current position is a congregation which is in the transition of being a large vibrant congregation with large fully funded staff, to a small congregation, where staff are employed part-time, including the pastor. Being that I am accustomed to helping churches grow larger, not smaller, these elements of the transitional process were new to me. I sought counsel from Rev. Bickers to equip me to enable the congregation towards elements of health when they embrace their new pastor.

I struggled greatly with both the congregations' expectations, as well as mine own, to continue for the church to prosper under its current condition. Through the coaching process, Rev. Bickers enabled me to see that my expectations were too high resulting in my being overly difficult upon myself. I was also struggling with the stagnation of my calling.

While I have served seven congregations over the past 15 years, all of them were in a transitional process. Preparing churches to receive a new pastor, and move forward

with them. While I celebrate that they are all doing well, I also struggle with the fact that have little personal satisfaction for completing what I began. As a result, I am currently discerning Gods next step for me in my life. Coaching, positioned me to take a real look at my ministry, and asked the question, "Am I being called to a new area of ministry?"

The last area coaching helped me with, was coming to grips that I went from a healthy enjoyable call, to an unpleasant call. Churches have different cultures and personalities; each being founded in its community's history while at the same time being challenged to address the present and future needs. My current congregation is accustomed to being a church which puts on an elaborate production in everything they do; worship, pot-lucks, Christian education, outreach, financial support of missions. This has made the pastor more of a program director and less of shepherd. This has resulted in me personally being pulled out of my comfort zone countless times in my own personal style of pastoral leadership. Coaching helped me see why this was such a struggle for me, and how to recognize the good things which are taking seed both in the congregation as well as myself.

Pastor D

As a pastor new in the ministry (18 months), I will say that the coaching I received from Dennis Bickers was invaluable. First and foremost, the sessions we had were not question and answer sessions. Each session was a personal discussion about family issues, church issues,, and bi-vocational issues. I do not recall at anytime Dennis giving me an out right answer, "Robb, you must do this", or "Robb, you must do that". Dennis guided me down paths with his questions to me, gave me some insight from his personal ministries, and ultimately the path led to self-discovery.

Sometimes the path was a gentle one, others more forceful (there were times when the solution could only go one way). The advantage to the self-discovery process that Dennis lead me on helped me to become much more confident in my ministry. As the coaching sessions progressed, and I realized that these were not sessions for Dennis to solve the issues going on, I looked forward to the discussions differently. I came into each phone call with a sense of accomplishment, not one of doubt. I would not only bring the issues to the conversation, but I would also bring a number of solutions, know that Dennis was not necessarily leading me down the path anymore, but actually walking beside me.

This self-discovery process was a huge confidence builder to me in my ministry. Without realizing it (maybe), Dennis Bickers was not only coaching me in this new ministry I was in, but actually gave me confirmation that I was to continue in it.

The sessions were spaced far enough apart that results could be seen from the previous discussions. With each issue, time was required to implement the solution, and I had plenty of time to not only implement solutions, but to "report" back on the results.

Personally, I have grown exponentially because of these sessions. I have always been confident in the corporate world. New to the faith (10 year old Christian) and now new to pasturing, these sessions have helped me to humbly transfer some of that corporate confidence to ministry confidence.

My family has also grown with me from these coaching sessions. An increase in ministry confidence can only be noticed by those closest to you. My wife and children, benefited in the most positive way. Most importantly was in continuing to include my

wife (the wisest person I know), in my personal ministry decisions. The confidence growing in me, grew confidence in her as a pastor's wife.

My church benefited greatly from the coaching sessions. As we discussed issues and solutions, I felt accountable to Dennis. When I told him what I was going to do, I wanted to come to the next session with it being done. Because of this accountability, a number of potential "disasters" were averted at the church. I have a habit of procrastination, and these sessions help battle that!

What I learned most from the coaching sessions was not anything specific, but a generality. I received confirmation that I was indeed called to this ministry that I am in. I have been called to be a vocational pastor. I learned that This ministry can not be done alone, and that "coaches" or "mentors" are not a temporary group of sessions with a beginning and an end. I am thankful to Dennis for this insight, and have continued my mentorship training with two local pastors.

There is really only one component of the process that I feel could have been different. It is the component of prayer (an area that it seems men need a lot of guidance in). As blessed as the coaching sessions were (and I was VERY blessed), inviting God at the beginning of the sessions (which I did with "breath prayers") and then ending in a prayer of blessing would have benefited us both.

Pastor E

I believe I have a healthy attitude going into this coaching experience. I serve in small church in Western New York where most American Baptist Churches are not growing and seem to be in a downward spiral. I had read everything I could get my hands on in are of Bi-Vocational ministry and found your work very helpful. I have believed in

the concept of Bi-Vocational since I took Dr. Marsh class on ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. As a pastor and coach in small communities it gives me a platform to share the Gospel. Simple things like praying with the Football team before games at the local church in Wayland. Bi-vocational ministry takes the role of ministry into the community in a real sense.

I believe that coaching encourages ministry for which we are called involves development of primary relationships with people on a daily basis. Relationships override all theories of evangelism and outreach. Coaching is encouraged in the bi-vocational work and primary for all church ministry. It allows us to take the life of Christ to the world and fight the spiritual battles in real life situations. My wife and I have worked together as a family team in our ministry. It makes a united ministry effective at a number of levels in working with women and children my wife in queen. The strengthen our relationship is reflected in the work in the church. As the pastor my gifts of teaching and administration help the members of the church to be involved in the areas they are spiritually gifts. The coaching and mentoring model gave me an outside source of encouragement so I could be a more effective servant. As a pastor the mentoring on the phone and internet helped me with my role as planner and organization by giving me feedback to clear goals and ideas.

The concept of coaching fits very nicely in the model of new testament of discipleship. I have always used these principles in my sports coaching and work in the local body of Christ. The principles of coaching as supporter and encourager is very important part of the church in the 21st. The present model are churches are working through will not work much more. The only minister or pastor in a church working

himself to death and everyone on the sidelines watching him work will be the death of the church in America. My first week at my current ministry I told my church that we have to break the 80/20 rule. That 80% of the people watching 20% of the church working will stop or we will need to close our doors soon. They have followed my vision for our church and we have all been working to see God work in our body together.

Dennis your encouragement was very helpful. The Lord used this experience in my ministry and gave me a fresh perspective. I generally see myself as "face to face" person in terms of learning and teaching situations. The coaching sessions kept me focused on a monthly goal and kept me accountable to the mission I believe God has called me to. The flexibility of our meetings was very helpful. I live in a world that requires more and more meetings, which makes teaching an almost impossible task. Our meetings were to the point and directive in their purpose, this made them very effective.

Teaching is always a release for me and the coaching contract provided away to refocus and process my thoughts and prayers. Thank you for your support and encouragement over these months. The ministry at First Baptist is a daily challenge. I have felt a direction in what I am doing and this has reinforced my need to learn and grow in the grace of our Lord. I believe God put people in your life to encourage you daily and the coaching work with the mentor always came along at a time that gave me the leg up I needed for the week.

Coaching helps with my strengths in ministry. Coach helps encourage commitment to living the Christian life in community with my teams and at my church. The coaching helped give to me a relationship with support which I have very little time for in my life. Coaching refilled times in my life are limited. The weakness I fall into is

thinking I can do it on my own and I need to pray in a way that God can only have credit for the work of his ministry. I have been involved in ministry for 41 years in various forms. I have learned that God will lead into opportunities to serve if you make yourself available. My weakness is when I come in with ideas of my own and force them into the situation. Coaches a fresh perspective to the ministry. I am been in this community for 23 years which give me the credibility to live a life which people believe in. I can hardly go to store or to public event with out someone yelling "Coach" and giving me an update on there life. That to me is ministry which God has called all pastor to.

When I coach my teams I video my teams and share it with them for learning experience. Coaching gave me that video point of view with someone who had been through the battles in which I had gone through. Coaching is a gift of perspective in the role as teacher. Pastor have to stop being full of the position and start doing the work of ministry. It is time to get down and dirty for Christ. My best sermons are on the practice field daily. Sunday is a review for the congregation and a pep talk for them to get out of the pew and get busy for the Lord.

I see coaching as key to my growth in the ministry with involve the coaching principles. The role of Pastor/Teacher is primary goal. I would like to complete my M. Div and then the Dr. ministry program. The role of seminary is to help provide direction and support for helping me ministry to others in my community. The next twenty years I plan to preach every Sunday until the Lord takes me home. I would be 76 in 20 years so I would love to see the First Baptist Church of Canisteo become a growing Christ centered ministry. Every classroom full and families serving the Lord.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This project has explored the growth of bivocational ministers and why it is anticipated these numbers will continue to grow in most Protestant denominations. Bivocational ministry offers a number of advantages for many churches, especially those struggling to afford a fully-funded pastor, but it also has unique challenges for both the minister and the churches being served. These challenges present further challenges to denominational leadership and others who work with these bivocational ministers and their churches. The majority of seminaries are designed to educate ministers planning to serve in fully-funded churches; few offer specific training for bivocational settings. Many denominational leaders come from large church backgrounds and have a limited understanding of bivocational ministry. As a result, many bivocational ministers do not believe they receive sufficient support and respect for the ministry they provide, and denominational and other leaders who work with them are often frustrated at their inability to connect with these bivocational ministers and provide the assistance they need to be fruitful in their ministries. This project has explored using coaching as one tool that could prove to be beneficial in providing such assistance.

The Advantage of Coaching Bivocational Ministers

Each of the bivocational ministers who volunteered to be coached as part of this project brought various issues to the coach. Each had some unique challenges they were facing, and some challenges that were common to several of the persons being coached.

This illustrates that every bivocational minister is a unique individual serving in a unique situation and facing unique challenges. There is no one size fits all approach to working with bivocational ministers because every situation is different. This illustrates one advantage that coaching offers to those who work with bivocational ministers: the person being coached sets the agenda for each coaching session.

The bivocational ministers in this project presented issues ranging from family difficulties to being wrongly terminated from previous ministry positions. Some were seeking to determine God's will regarding future ministry options while others were struggling to identify ways to provide pastoral care to hurting members of their churches. Nearly all wanted help in balancing the many demands on their time. Many other issues were raised as well. Since the person being coached determines what will be addressed in each session there is opportunity for the person being coached to address the most pressing issue at that time in his or her life. Those challenges are addressed in real time. The coach does not have to be an expert in any of these problem areas or even to have had past experience with these challenges. The coach simply needs to be able to ask powerful questions to assist the person being coached to think through these challenges and find the solutions that will best address the challenge.

Another advantage of coaching bivocational ministers was discovered during this project. Most denominational leaders have discovered how difficult it is to bring bivocational ministers together for training. This is due primarily to the work schedules that most bivocational ministers have but also, to a lesser degree, to the fact that the experience of many bivocational ministers is that these training sessions seldom offer much value to their situations. Coaching does not depend on bringing together groups of

people but provides a one-on-one approach to helping solve the problems bivocational ministers face. Appointments can be made that will fit in with the busy schedules most bivocational ministers keep. Because coaching bivocational ministers can be done on an individual basis it again lends itself to addressing the specific needs the individual is facing.

Each coaching contract was for a specific number of sessions (six) that proved to be an advantage for both the coach and for the person being coached. It limited the amount of time that would be spent in coaching so the person being coached did not feel he was entering into a life-long commitment, but it also afforded sufficient time to address the most pressing needs facing the bivocational minister. The contract could also be extended at the end of the six sessions if the person being coached wished and the coach felt it would be advantageous to the person being coached. Most bivocational ministers involved in this project indicated the six sessions seemed to provide the right amount of time to work on their issues.

A fourth advantage coaching provided these bivocational ministers is the relationship they established with the coach. Each minister indicated they found the coaching relationship to be very encouraging to them personally and professionally. For some, it was the first time someone had indicated their bivocational ministry was important and that they should view their call to bivocational ministry as a valid call of God on their lives. The encouragement they felt is probably due to the personal relationship that exists between a coach and a person who is being coached. For once, someone is only interested in the issues the bivocational minister wants to address, and by working together solutions are often found to help resolve these issues.

Partially as a result of this relationship the bivocational minister who is being coached can experience genuine transformation in his or her personal life and in the ministry. Tony Stoltzfus explains that "transformation doesn't primarily come from classes, seminars, books or large-group ministry events (which are all informational), but through *significant relationships* that influence us and *pivotal life experiences*."¹ Such transformation was noted by each of the ministers who were part of this project, and it would be anticipated that others who entered into a coaching relationship could experience similar transformation in their own lives and ministries.

A fifth advantage that coaching provided is that it helped lift the focus of the bivocational ministers beyond their present circumstances. Some were frustrated with what they perceived as their lack of success in ministry, but when pressed to review their ministry each one admitted that it had been more fruitful than they currently believed. Each were challenged to think what their ministry could look like in the future once they had moved beyond their present challenges. It is easy for any minister, bivocational or fully-funded, to become stuck in the present difficulties of ministry and become discouraged. Asking the persons being coached to describe the changes that had taken place in their churches since their ministry began proved to be a helpful exercise that reminded them how their churches had benefited from their ministries. Equally helpful was asking them to describe what their future ministry could look like if they pursued the vision for ministry God was giving them.

¹ Stoltzfus, 33.

Challenges in Coaching Bivocational Ministers

One of the biggest challenges in coaching the ministers in this project was getting some of them to keep their appointments. Part of this was due to the busy schedules these ministers keep. One contacted the coach a day after the scheduled appointment to apologize for not calling but explained that a member of his church had been rushed to the hospital and put in intensive care. He had spent much of the evening with the family. The decision he made to spend that time with this family was affirmed by the coach, and he never missed another appointment.

Another bivocational minister missed three appointments in a row. Although he had a valid reason for missing the first one, he reported that he simply forgot the next two. He was told that if he missed another appointment he would be dropped from the project and replaced with someone else. He never missed another appointment.

Every minister contacted the coach at least once to reschedule an appointment due to unexpected changes in work schedules or other unavoidable conflicts. Early notification of a need to reschedule does not present a major problem, but it did extend this project out much further than originally planned. The six coaching sessions were originally scheduled to be completed in three months by having a session approximately every two weeks. Two of the bivocational ministers were still being coached six months into the project due to their schedules and the need to reschedule some appointments. It became difficult to hold these persons accountable to complete their assignments when so much time passed between coaching sessions.

Anyone who works with bivocational ministers knows the difficulties of working around their schedules, and any coaching relationship will have to take this into account.

However, every person being coached must be held accountable to keep their appointments or to reschedule at least twenty-four hours in advance. The simplest way to do this is to make it costly for one to miss an appointment. In a normal coaching relationship with a bivocational minister this coach would charge \$100.00 per session paid in advance. If the minister missed an appointment without a twenty-four hour notification that fee would still be charged except in cases of true emergencies. Knowing there was a cost involved would eliminate most cases of simply forgetting to call one's coach.

Another challenge often experienced was some bivocational ministers had so many issues to address they often didn't know which one they wanted to address first. Each session was scheduled to last approximately one hour, and in some cases it took fifteen minutes before the person being coached would settle on the most important issue he wanted to focus on for that session. Each were reminded at the end of each session to be ready at the next session to talk about one issue, but some struggled to do that throughout the entire project.

Some of the bivocational ministers in this project struggled with rather poor self-esteem which is not uncommon among bivocational ministers. Many serve in small, plateaued or dying churches, some lack training for ministry or theological education, and many have received little affirmation for the ministry they do. In some instances, this poor self-esteem caused them to be reluctant to complete their assignments due to the fear they would not do them adequately.

Coaches who work with bivocational ministers will need to keep this self-esteem issue in mind. Perhaps one of the greatest things the coach can do for a bivocational minister is to encourage him or her in the ministry. Help them achieve some victories in

their lives and ask questions that remind them of previous successes they have already enjoyed. Validate the call to bivocational ministry as a worthwhile calling of God upon a person's life. Compliment them on their completed assignments. Help them see the future ministry God has for them and for the churches they serve.

The Importance of Bivocational Ministry to the Kingdom of God

There is little doubt among most denominational leaders that the numbers of bivocational ministers will continue to increase and to grow in importance. The challenge is to find ways to help them be more successful in their ministries. Resources need to be developed that address the specific issues they and the churches they lead face.

Seminaries and Bible colleges need to develop programs that will train persons for bivocational ministry. Denominational and judicatory leaders must begin to discover ways to better relate to those currently serving in bivocational roles and ways to help identify persons who might be called to such ministry. Unless a large number of bivocational ministers are raised up and equipped for ministry we are likely to see a significant shortage of ministers willing to serve our smaller churches in the near future.

This project explored coaching as one way of assisting bivocational ministers become more effective in their ministries and in their lives. The responses from each of the persons who were coached as part of this project indicate that coaching can be a useful tool in equipping bivocational ministers for the work God has called them to do.

APPENDIX A

Coaching Agreement

This agreement is for coaching services to be rendered by Dennis Bickers (the coach) for the person being coached (or “PBC”).

Sessions

This coaching agreement is for ___3___ months with each session lasting from 30-60 minutes. There will be two sessions each month.

Most coaching sessions will be by telephone at an appointed time, agreed upon by both the PBC and the Coach. The PBC will telephone the coach at 812-265-5456. Local face-to-face meetings may be scheduled by mutual consent.

If questions arise between sessions, the Coach is available for e-mail contact at dbickers@roadrunner.com or for brief conversations by phone.

Commitments and Expectations

1. Both the PBC and the Coach will be honest and straightforward in their communication.
2. Both the PBC and the Coach will be on time for appointments.
3. The PBC will call at least 24 hours in advance to cancel or reschedule.
4. The PBC will set the agenda for each session (determine the major topics to be discussed).
5. The PBC commits to follow through on agreed upon action steps and assignments after each session.
6. Confidentiality will be maintained, except where permission is expressly granted for the Coach to share information with others or where confidentiality may violate legal obligations.
7. The coaching relationship will be reviewed after the third session by both the Coach and the PBC to determine its effectiveness and continuation.

Special Provisions

This coaching agreement is part of the coach’s doctoral work and the topics that are discussed in the coaching sessions and the actions of the PBC will be included in his doctoral thesis. It is also possible that this thesis will be developed into a book on bivocational ministry and coaching. Persons being coached will be identified only by their first name and the state in which they live in the thesis and potential book. The signature of the person being coached on this agreement provides your permission for the discussions of our coaching sessions to be included in both the thesis and potential book.

At the conclusion of the coaching session the person being coached will write a two to three page assessment of the experience and any benefits received from the coaching relationship. This assessment will be included verbatim in the doctoral thesis.

Investment

The investment for this coaching agreement will be _____0_____ per month. Payment must be made by the first of the month.

I agree to the terms and conditions noted above:

Signature of Person Being Coached

Dennis Bickers

Signature of Coach

Phone Number

812-265-5456

Phone Number

Date

3/20/2009

Date

APPENDIX B

Life Satisfaction Indicator

Name _____

Date _____

Please rate your current level of satisfaction with each of the following areas of your life. Place a number from 1 to 10 in the box for each item. A number 1 means that this area is entirely unacceptable to me in its current state, and a 10 means that you couldn't be happier with this area. Skip any that do not apply. Please know that your level of satisfaction may change from day to day, but do try to give your best overall assessment with this area of your life.

Personal spiritual life and growth _____

Career/Business/Ministry _____

Relationships with clients/parishioners _____

Quality of day-to-day life _____

Physical health _____

Mental/emotional health _____

Relationship with spouse _____

Relationships with children _____

Relationships with extended family _____

Friends/social life _____

Fun/hobbies _____

Physical environment _____

Condition of home _____

Condition of neighborhood _____

Condition of vehicles _____

Finances _____

APPENDIX C

Coaching Introduction Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

This form should be filled out by the Person Being Coached (PBC) prior to the start of the coaching relationship. Your answers will assist the Coach to better understand you and your current situation. You may give brief answers or complete this questionnaire on another sheet of paper.

1. What is your vision of your ideal role in your ministry or business?
2. Where do you see yourself five years from now?
3. What are the critical issues for your ministry or business in order to reach defined goals and objectives?
4. What does finishing strong mean to you?
5. What is the biggest challenge you've had in your ministry or business?
6. What did you do about it?
7. What is the biggest challenge you are facing right now?
8. What do you need to do most, right now?
9. What are you tolerating at this time?
10. What is your biggest fear?
11. What challenges keep you awake at night?
12. What responsibilities drain you of energy?
13. Which relationships deplete and frustrate you?
14. Which relationships energize you?
15. What are you most passionate about?

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