

An Invitation to Coaching in Christ – A Redemptive Process

When William H. Willimon became a bishop in his United Methodist denomination, he worked with a coach to help him be faithful in his new work. “He has the gifts,” Willimon wrote, “for how to ask me the right questions, he has patience with my ineptitude, he offers me encouragement when I’m discouraged and just the right criticism when I need wise evaluation.”

This is a tough time to be a minister. Congregations are often in conflict and declining. Colleagues are often busy and distant. Pressures are building. The way forward can be confusing. Yet there is a reluctance to seek support. There is even confusion about where to go for support. Like Willimon, you can find redemptive support in coaching.

Engaging in coaching with someone who shares your faith, your experience, and your aspirations can refocus and revitalize your confidence in your mission and ministries. Everyone can all use a bit – no, let’s face it, a lot – of that kind of support.

Over the past 20 years, coaching has gained broad credibility as a profession. According to the largest accrediting body, the International Coach Federation (over 22,000 members worldwide), coaching is a way of partnering in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires people to maximize their personal and professional potential. It helps people clarify aspirations, identify possibilities, hone strengths, tackle barriers, and flourish faithfully.

From research done by the ICF in 2010, the following were the top benefits achieved from coaching, translated into a church context:

- Improving individual and/or team discipleship
- Expanding vocational opportunities
- Improving congregational management skills
- Increasing self-confidence and capacity in mission and ministry

The Meyer Foundation, in its *Daring to Lead 2011* report, concluded that the coaching leaders greatly improved their effectiveness in their organizations. It is, from their research, the most effective form of continuing education in terms of organizational improvement.

The process and impact of coaching has some interesting parallels to the approach Jesus took with his disciples – more questions than answers, more faith in his disciples than they had in themselves, a greater emphasis on possibilities than on problems, and a profound patience in working through challenges to develop capacities.

Coaching in Christ can be a redemptive process – helping you see afresh (re-deem) the possibilities that Jesus Christ is opening up for you in your mission and ministries.

For more information, email canadianministries@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 289.