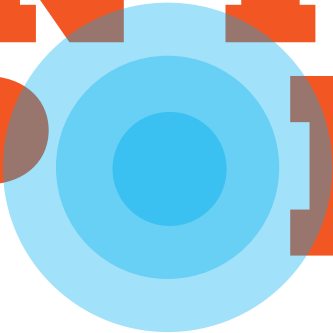




# RIPPLES IN THE POND



Influencing future leaders

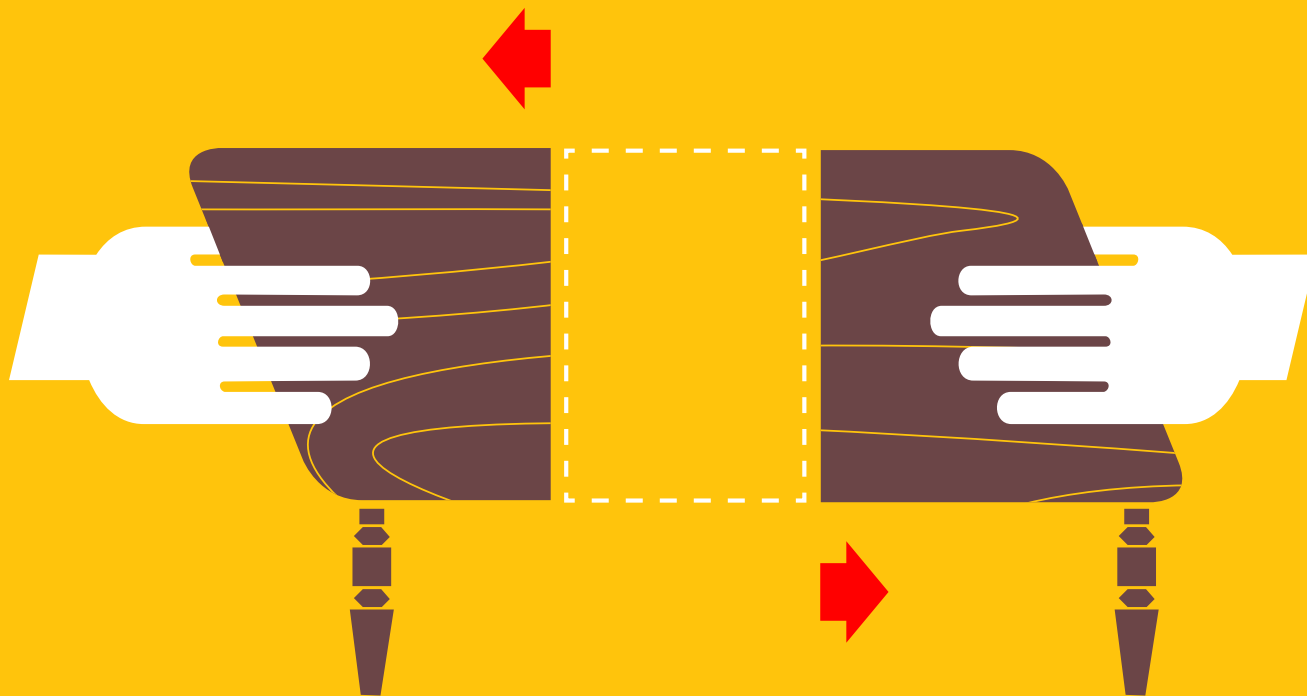
# W

**Webster's defines a mentor as "a trusted counselor or guide."** Others interchange the word *mentor* with *coach*, *discipler* or *trainer*. What does it mean to mentor, and why is it important? ¶ There seem to be many different definitions and expectations. For this issue of *EFCA Today*, we're defining mentoring as taking a proactive role to develop and unleash someone in his or her God-given gifts and abilities. When that individual then turns around and mentors another, we create ripples of influence that are never-ending. ¶ Believers are most familiar with spiritual mentoring, often called discip-

ship. Sadly, though, many believers seem strangers to what might be called skill mentoring—exploring and strengthening gifts and talents in the context of day-to-day life and work. ¶ For leaders across the EFCA, the application is crucial: If you're a gifted teaching-pastor, whom are you training in those skills? If you are a whiz at organizing children's ministry volunteers, have you passed along any of that know-how to another? And in your life outside the church, whom are you taking under your wing to encourage and mentor in the abilities with which you've been gifted? ¶ In this issue, numerous EFCA leaders discuss the role of skill mentoring in the church. We can't tackle everything, so we're leaving some great questions for you to address on your leadership teams: How do you recognize someone who would be a "good fit" for you to mentor? Do you have to have been mentored before you can mentor others well? Does everyone have something to offer? ¶ And most important of all: How do we stay connected to the Holy Spirit in the midst of our great mentoring plans? ¶ Take a look around. Someone, somewhere, is waiting for your investment of time and prayer and wisdom. Pass on a legacy. Create some ripples. ▶

# CREATING A SPACE AT THE TABLE

Extending your legacy through mentoring • BY KRISTEN KIMMEL



# W

**We are all created in God's image.** Which means we each have powerful gifts that, when used, reflect the glory of God. But how do we both develop those talents and invest them in others? Four and a half years ago, T.J. Addington hired Lindsay Norman as his executive assistant. He recognized then that the 23-year-old would be a valuable addition to his role as EFCA senior vice president, and also to the EFCA at large. Immediately, he started investing in her potential. Today, Lindsay still reports to T.J. but now carries the title—and greatly increased responsibilities—of director of special initiatives for ReachGlobal.

T.J. mentors everyone who reports to him, reflecting his personal commitments to “prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” and to entrust what he has learned to others, who will pass it on (Ephesians 4:12, 2 Timothy 2:2). T.J. insists that mentoring is not just an optional detail of leadership; it is a biblical mandate and a vital necessity for the future success of any organization.

“Every church and organization is one generation away from decline,” he says. “Raising up the next generation is the only way we avoid that. And that is not accomplished by simply preaching. It is influencing people one to one. There is a whole generation of young people like Lindsay who have competency, the raw stuff, and are just waiting for somebody who will develop, empower and release them.”

Lindsay says T.J.’s mentorship has been one of the most pivotal elements to her growth as a leader. (Tim clarifies that he focuses on Lindsay’s work development: “I’m not Lindsay’s spiritual advisor; I’m not her marriage counselor.”)

After feeling under-utilized in her previous job, Lindsay applied for the position as T.J.’s executive assistant because she recognized him as a supervisor who would focus on her development.

“I knew I could do more,” she says. “The downfall is that because I was young and a female, that automatically put me on the slow track at many places. But T.J. really looks at a person, regardless of age, gender or race, and wants to invest in their potential.”

## MENTORING 101

The first step T.J. took to mentor Lindsay was an informal one: He came alongside her, asked a lot of questions and discovered Lindsay's unique gifts.

"Mentoring is not about growing another *you*," T.J. says, "but about helping people understand how God designed them. Mentors need to help mentees know how they are wired and get them to where they are working in their strengths."

Without Lindsay recognizing that she was being mentored, T.J. started building into her life. Understanding her competency, he entrusted her with more responsibilities and invited her to "shadow" him in his role. Despite Lindsay's age and lack of experience, T.J. also asked her to sit in on and contribute to meetings, giving her access to situations and people she would otherwise not have.

"I can't tell you how empowered and challenged I feel when a leader asks me to come around the table and give my opinion," Lindsay says. "When you're treated like a trusted colleague, you start expecting more of yourself."

Tim invites Lindsay's input, he explains, "because she has a perspective I'm not going to have. I'm 53 years old. I want various perspectives around the table. *I learn a lot.*"

Lindsay's skills continued to grow, until T.J. eventually reached a crossroads: "Lindsay is a high-capacity person," he recognized. "She needed a bigger challenge."

## YOUR SUCCESS, MY SACRIFICE

Although T.J. could not afford to hire other administrative help, the choice seemed clear. In January 2009, Lindsay's role officially changed, and T.J.

chose to go without administrative support.

"Mentoring is intentionally helping someone become all they can be," T.J. reiterates. "That means being more interested in their development than in my own needs."

As director of special initiatives, Lindsay is charged with growing  
(continued on page 16)

**"Mentoring is not about growing another *you*, but about helping people understand how God designed them."**



## IT'S A STEWARDSHIP ISSUE

by Dr. Bob Rowley



Surprisingly, most senior pastors don't seem to invest in their staff but just expect them to do their jobs. For example, I

was taking a D.Min. course on leadership five years ago, and the prof asked me to share with the class the gist of what I had written in a paper on coaching.

¶ I did so, and when I finished, one student was incredulous that I would take time to coach staff members. He asked if I expected him to have a monthly coaching appointment with the church janitor as well. ¶ Personally, I view it as a stewardship issue. I am not saying a senior pastor should coach every staff member, but I am saying that every staff member should be in a coaching relationship. What's needed is the implementation of a coaching plan, where every staff member and every ministry leader is in an up-and-down coaching relationship.

¶ If the church values the priesthood of the believer and has an Ephesians 4 equipping philosophy, then mentoring and coaching are natural.



Bob Rowley is superintendent of the EFCA Texas-Oklahoma District. "I owe an inestimable debt to the many mentors and coaches who have enriched my life over the past 30-plus years," he says, "and I want to pass that forward."

the diversity of ReachGlobal's mission and integrating prayer into the mission. She also serves on the directional team of ReachGlobal, a group of 13 individuals who set direction for the international mission. While only half the age of most people in similar positions, Lindsay knows that T.J. fully trusts that she will accomplish these goals.

Lindsay is proof that potential leaders grow when they are allowed to take on stretching assignments without micromanagement. Rather than giving persistent instruction, T.J. relies on a teaching technique that Jesus modeled: He asks a lot of questions.

"Using Socratic dialog is exceedingly helpful in a mentoring relationship," T.J. explains. "The human tendency is to want to *tell* people and not to dialog with them. That doesn't help people grow.

"With good people, you need to be clear about the boundaries you've given, but then let them figure out how to meet the challenge. They will do it differently than I would."

Lindsay says it's rare that T.J. tells her, or other staff members who report to him, what to do. "Every time I get told what to do or how to do it, I think, *I can't make that decision myself.*"

"Holding out a mentee with an open hand is a risk for a mentor," Lindsay admits. "Failure's probably going to happen if I am trying new things. But T.J. has assured me that I *can* fail. If I do, we can do an 'autopsy without blame' and then move forward."

T.J. and Lindsay have a standing meeting once a month to

check in on a deeper level than the day-to-day. Lindsay gives an update of roadblocks she is facing and where she needs support. The meeting also provides an appropriate place for T.J. to provide honest, private feedback.

While mentoring is a gift of time and commitment, T.J. knows it's worth it. "The test of my leadership is not what happens when I'm here," he says, "but what happens when I'm gone. Have I raised up godly, smart, effective people who can carry on in my absence?"

"I am convinced that the most powerful legacy we will ever leave are those individuals we have equipped, who in effect keep the ripples of our lives moving out on the pond of life."

Lindsay has not only been equipped through Tim's willingness to mentor but also inspired to take on mentees of her own.

Obviously, Tim went further than inviting Lindsay to sit at the table; he encouraged her to use her voice at that table, which has made all the difference to Lindsay's growth as a leader and to her understanding of who God made her to be. ■

 To learn more about T.J. Addington's commitment to mentoring and to access practical how-tos, read his book *Leading From the Sandbox* (order from NextStep Resources at 800-444-BOOK or [www.nsresources.com](http://www.nsresources.com)).

Kristen Kimmel is a writer with Journey Group, based in Charlottesville, Va.



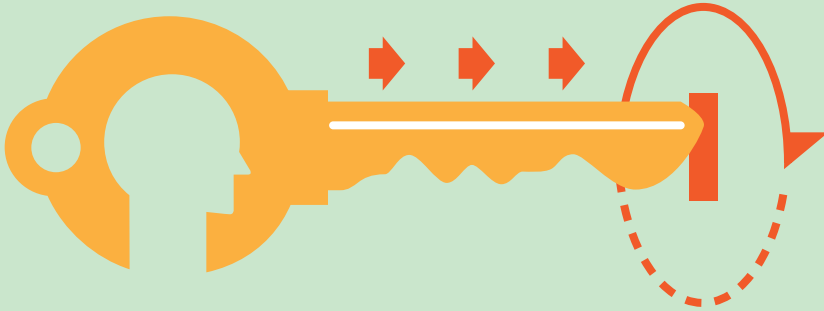
**"With good people, you need to be clear about the boundaries you've given, but then let them figure out how to meet the challenge."**

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Lindsay Norman and T.J. Addington have both grown as a result of their four-plus-year mentoring relationship.

# WHERE DO I START?

If you're not already  
in a mentoring relationship . . .



**Not every mentoring relationship is a formal one.** But consider these steps for getting started:

1. **Look around you**, at the people already in your sphere of influence. ¶ *To find a mentor:* Consider in what areas of your life you most wish to see growth: spiritual, physical, relational, financial, intellectual, leadership ability or specific professional skills, etc. Pick one to start with. (“Leadership ability” contains many subcategories all its own, so be specific.) Whose mastery of that area of life is something you want to emulate? ¶ *To find a mentee:* Who either reports to you or looks to you for advice or leadership? What might you have to offer, to help them grow into who God has created them to be? Consider the categories noted above. ¶ If you're still not sure whom to ask, talk with the leadership of your church for suggestions.
2. **Pray.** God might have someone else in mind to be your mentor, or He might redirect what you have to offer to someone else.
3. If God gives the go-ahead, **initiate.** Offer a specific topic and timeframe. ¶ *With a potential mentor:* You might say, “You are an example to me in [this area], and I'd love to learn from you. Would you consider mentoring me for the next six months in this area—meeting once a week?” ¶ *With a potential mentee:* You might say, “I appreciate the [working relationship/ friendship/ special connection] that God has given us. As I've prayed about it, I've wanted to invest in you [in what way? be specific here], to see you grow even more in this area. Would you be interested in meeting once a week for the next six months, to talk and pray more about it?”
4. If the person declines, return to point 1, but **don't give up!**
5. If the person agrees, **coordinate** an exploratory meeting, where you can both clarify expectations: desired outcomes, amount of structure, handling of expenses, support from spouses for the time commitment, exit framework if expectations are not being met.
6. If you decide to move ahead, **enjoy** the process. At the end of the agreed-upon timeframe—unless God clearly guides you both to continue—warmly express your appreciation and aim for closure. ¶ *With your mentor:* Articulate how you have grown. Then, start praying about the next area of your life God might want to touch, and ask Him for another mentor. ¶ *With your mentee:* Clearly communicate what you've seen God do in his or her life and what you're praying for the future. Then, begin praying about the next person whose life you can influence. ■



## THANKS FOR TAKING A RISK ON ME

by Rev. Dave Thomas



In the late '70s and early '80s, Kansas City Youth for Christ, now YouthFront, identified student leaders

and provided opportunities for teens to be on the frontlines of kingdom work. ¶ One strategy was to have students take ownership of their campus' Bible Club, with adults serving as sponsors or advisors. My experience on the leadership team for my high school gave me a sense of responsibility for a “flock.” We could not expect anybody else to communicate the gospel to our classmates; God had given us that mandate. ¶ The summer before my senior year, I sensed God's call to vocational ministry. God used the adults who had observed my involvement—both leaders in KCYFC and in my local church—to confirm and encourage my pursuit of that path. ¶ I have now been ordained in the EFCA for 15 years and have the opportunity to coach other leaders—all because Kansas City Youth for Christ and Fairview Baptist Church took the risk challenging a run-of-the-mill kid to develop into a multiplying leader.



Dave Thomas is pastor of adult ministries at Southern Lakes EFC in Elkhorn, Wis., where he takes seriously the stewardship of the slingshot—to propel others further than he has been propelled.

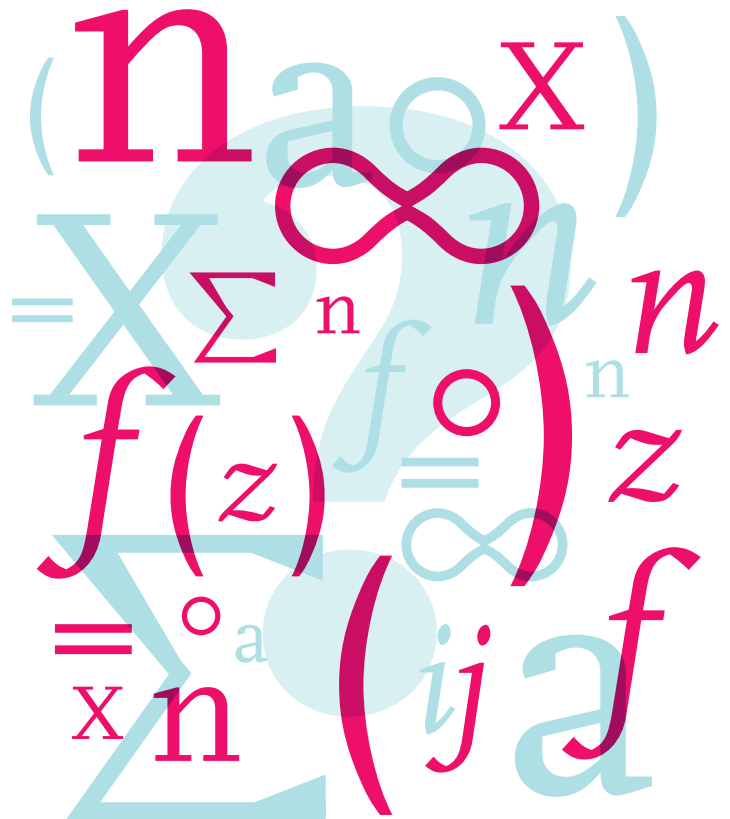
# CONVERSATION ON A COMPLEX EQUATION

Mentoring, women and the local church • BY TIM ISAACSON

# M

entoring women, especially in leadership skills and roles, brings up important, complex issues within the EFCA when the action expands beyond traditional roles of wife and mother. Each of these issues (mentoring, leadership and women in the church) is itself complex. Together, they become even more so. ¶ This became evident in a phone conversation among three women in different parts of the country, from different backgrounds, different professions and different places in life. Two are married and one is single. One has grown children, one is raising an infant and toddler, one has no children. One is African American and two are Caucasian American. ¶ One works primarily in the local church, another is a tenure-track professor

at a university, and another serves full-time in urban ministry. Two are in established churches, one is moving into church planting. Each is doing district-level, national and/or international-level work within the EFCA. ¶ What they all have in common are leadership gifts and experiences with mentoring in the EFCA movement. They bring perspectives that are both insightful and uncomfortable, and that will hopefully spark a larger conversation in our churches.



## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

What became absolutely clear as the women interacted was the need for and importance of mentoring in all venues of life. Angel Adams Parham, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of sociology at Loyola University and a member of Castle Rock Community Church in New Orleans, where she serves as coordinator for the Outreach and Mission team—including the church’s development and oversight of its work in Haiti. She is also a board member of Vision of Hope Ministries, part of the EFCA.

Angel describes mentoring as an investment—an investment in an individual to help develop that person with specific skills for specific tasks. In the church, those specific skills can take on the dimension of discipleship, but not necessarily to the exclusion of other areas of life. It’s crucial at the outset to be precise about the focus of any mentoring relationship.

One of the key ingredients to successful mentoring relationships among women in the church is intimacy, says Bette Jo Nienhus, who wears multiple hats, including: registered nurse, EFCA RESOUND mobilizer for the Great Lakes district, seminary teacher for women’s ministries and member of Liberty Bible Church in Chesterton, Ind., where her husband is senior pastor.

“Without this, mentoring doesn’t happen,” Bette Jo says. “It’s just practice, without life change. Intimacy is a commitment to an open, honest relationship.”

Yet intimacy isn’t essential when mentoring is more about professional development or skill acquisition.

“I have to be able to say what is on my mind without being guarded,” agrees Ruth Arnold, “and be willing to be challenged in all parts of my life. This kind of mentoring is deeply spiritual and formative, but not ‘intimate’ in the emotional sense.

“*Intimacy* is a word with a lot of baggage attached, and it doesn’t really describe what mentoring is about when someone of the opposite sex is doing the mentoring.”

Ruth serves on the executive team of 2nd Mile Ministries in Jacksonville, Fla., and is a member of Eastside Community Church, where she has served on the leadership teams for women’s ministry, high-school ministry and college-age ministry. Ruth has been mentored by her pastor, and she describes the mentor-mentee relationship as personal and professional, but never intimate.

Angel was intrigued, asking Ruth if she preferred being mentored by a man or a woman, and a lengthy conversation followed.

## LISTEN IN

Mentored by a man or a woman?

**Ruth:** “It’s not about gender first and foremost, but about experience and competency. For me, it is solely based on their qualifications for helping me in my calling.”

**Bette Jo:** “For your task in leadership, you need someone who will help you in that specific leadership role. But a man can’t speak into being a woman and what it means to balance those responsibilities. Women have unique things to give other women.”

**Angel:** “I would prefer to have a woman as a mentor, because I am trying to balance a demanding professional career with the value I hold about what it means to be a wife and the mother of young children.”

**Ruth:** “That is a really good point about how mentoring is linked to your position in life, in the context of marriage and family. For me,

(continued on page 20)



## A MENTOR FOR EVERY STAGE

by Gary Kniseley



Last year, I began praying about various people with different giftings who might help me grow as I

enter a new phase of life and pursue being a senior pastor. I want to take advantage of every opportunity to be chiseled into God’s masterpiece. ¶ As I prayed for the right mentor, God brought to mind an ex-EFCA pastor who was attending our church. He was healing from a previous ministry, and I was touched by how God had humbled him and how He was remaining faithful to his wife, family, church and spiritual restoration. He is daily ministering to me. ¶ I believe in mentors and plan to have one each year of my life. There truly is safety in the multitude of counselors!



Gary Kniseley is pastor of children’s ministries at Lao EFC in Rockford, Ill., where he oversees children and family spiritual health. In addition to being mentored, he strives to always have two or three young men in whose lives he is intentionally investing.



Ruth Arnold



Bette Jo Nienhus



Angel Parham

I don't know other women in my same position. I am not married or a mother; and I don't know any women who are in circumstances like mine—professional women needing high-level leadership skills for use in a ministry context with men working for them.

“Too often, we don't think of women as having leadership gifts or valuable things to offer. As a result, we are not seeking to identify women, equip women, or employ or engage women in roles of strategic planning, vision planning, shepherding, etc. This is not about being an elder or pastor but about serving in key positions of influence.”

**Angel:** “My background is with African-American Baptist Churches that are evangelical. They are [theologically] similar to the EFCA when it comes to leadership roles such as senior pastor. However, they seem very different in terms of women working full-time, being professionals, having children and being in ministry.

“What I have gleaned from the EFCA is that there is a home focus, even for those working part-time. In ministry they are in traditional roles such as children's ministry and women's ministry. There just don't seem to be many who are full-time professionals and mothers in the church, whereas it is much more common in the African-American church.

“I have found this a little frustrating. There must be other women like me in the EFCA (I don't expect my small church to be able to meet every need), but if there were some kind of network across the country to find other women, it would be great.”<sup>1</sup>

**Bette Jo:** “A starting point is being willing to identify women who can be leaders and championing that opportunity—intentionally pursuing and inviting their insight.”

**Ruth:** “I don't think there are many women in my church who think they have anything to offer the church, even though they lead their children every day and have skills, insights and abilities that are never engaged. We have to intentionally reach out and invite them in and also develop them.”

**Bette Jo:** “Young women in our church who did not grow up in Christian homes or have godly role models say they want to

live a godly life but don't have a clue what it looks like. There are a lot of women looking for others to walk through life with them, to help them decipher what life is all about.”

**Ruth:** “So many young women want to just hang out with older women. Yet younger women are afraid to initiate because of rejection, and many older women don't appreciate what they have to offer.”

**Bette Jo:** “We operate more out of fear than the privilege and responsibility we have to pass on what we know.”

## INDIVIDUALIZED MENTORING NEEDS

Each woman's circumstance—age, ministry, marital status, age of children, primary workplace—shapes her need for mentoring and being

mentored. Yet what's unequivocal is the importance of taking a personal interest in others and helping them develop in their various callings—as wife, mother, professional and leader.

Any hesitations about how and when to open our lives to others speaks of fear, a fear that too closely echoes the isolation and disconnectedness of the world—one that is all the more alarming given the clear biblical teachings to the contrary.<sup>2</sup>

May this one conversation trigger many others, as we explore what it means to connect with each other and bring a Christlike influence. ■

<sup>1</sup> If you'd like to connect with other women who are growing as leaders and take part of a continuing conversation on this topic, let us know: [www.efcatoday.org](http://www.efcatoday.org). <sup>2</sup> John 15:12, Ephesians 5:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13 and 1 Peter 4:10, among many others.

Tim Isaacson is pastor of Open Table Community EFC in Chamblee, Ga. ([opentablecommunity.wordpress.com](http://opentablecommunity.wordpress.com)). His passion for this topic stems from being a pastor of many truly gifted women in his congregation, and his own quest for seeing them fulfill their high and holy callings.

# ONE LIFE AT A TIME

## The biblical model of mentoring

BY REV. BRUCE MILLER

**Engaging in life-on-life impact is not merely a nice idea;** rather, it's a model from God Himself. The reality of mentoring is threaded through the whole Bible. ¶ Often, our greatest impact is not our direct ministry but the person or people we are influencing in the process of doing ministry. Think about some of the great leaders of the Bible. What would have happened had someone else not mentored them in the midst of doing ministry together?

Who led Israel to conquer the Promised Land? *Joshua*. Who mentored him? *Moses*. As great a leader as Moses was, he did not have the privilege of taking Israel into the land, conquering the enemies of God. *Whom are you influencing who might take a city for Christ after you?*



Who led 10,000 soldiers to war against Sisera? *Barak*. Who advised him on his battle plan and then, when he expressed reluctance, accompanied him into battle? Who also co-wrote a victory song with him? *Deborah*. Although Deborah did not lead the battle, nor is she mentioned in Hebrews 11 alongside Barak with those who conquered kingdoms, without her direction and presence, there would not have been a victory. *Whom might you equip for great battles?*

What prophet did the most miracles in the Old Testament? *Elisha*. Who developed him? *Elijah*. While Elijah performed many wonderful miracles, the Bible tells us that God enabled Elisha to do twice as many miracles with a double portion of God's Spirit. *Whom are you developing that God might use to do twice as many miraculous things as He has done through you?*

Who took Christianity all over the Roman Empire? *The 12 disciples*. Who developed them? *Jesus*. Remarkably, Jesus never traveled more than 50 miles from His home. Never started a church, school or any other organization. He simply poured His life into a few people, who then took Christianity all over the world. *Who will take the gospel to far corners of the world? You could be building into that person's life right now.*

Who wrote the most books in the New Testament and was the greatest missionary of his time? *Paul*. Who mentored him? *Barnabas*. Two thousand years later, Paul is clearly the more famous of the two, but who had the greater impact? Only God knows. *You may never write a book, but God may use you to invest in the life of a future author whose books will race around the world in dozens of translations.*

Look at yourself as Moses, Deborah or Barnabas. Who is the Joshua, the Barak, the Paul you are developing? Presence and duration are keys to mentoring. God only knows how the person you are mentoring today may serve Christ in ways beyond your wildest dreams.

Bruce Miller is founder of the Center for Church-Based Training ([www.cbct.org](http://www.cbct.org)), senior pastor of McKinney (Texas) Fellowship Bible Church and author of *Your Life in Rhythm*. He has several mentoring relationships, including 12 men in a "222 group" and individual mentoring with a pastor on his staff team.



## PASSING IT ON

by Rev. Chris Dolson



I was in the D.Min. program at Gordon-Conwell from '96-'99, which focused on preaching, where Haddon Robinson was the primary instructor. The impact that Haddon has had on my life—both then and in our interactions since—cannot be summarized in words. It is off the charts. ¶ In turn, what I have learned from Haddon I am passing along to others on my staff who are speakers. ¶ I'm also initiating conversations with staff members who are in their early 30s, because I recognize that I need to be passing the baton to this generation. The conversation might start off with me asking, "So, imagine that you are 44—do you want to be doing then what you are doing now?" And, "How can I help you think through these issues?" ¶ Then I listen to what they say and pay attention to their passions. I might probe with a few questions to challenge them to think about aligning their passions with their gifts, talents and abilities. I feel that our time is most valuable if they do more talking than I do.



Chris Dolson has served as senior pastor of Blackhawk Church since 1994. "Mentors are like good teachers," he says. "We can learn without them, but who would want to?"



**he role of the pastor is complicated**, the hours long, the expectations high. And when the rewards are equally high, pastors remain in their calling for years, shepherding, teaching and leading with all their heart. ¶ And mentoring. ¶ Some pastors view the word *mentoring* with suspicion, leery of escalating expectations. Others are a bit confused, unsure what *mentoring* even means. Besides, can a pastor really afford to invest the time that mentoring demands? ¶ Numerous EFCA pastors are equally quick to ask: Can we afford *not* to?

### FLEXIBLE MENTORING

One possible misconception to dispel: Mentoring doesn't have to mean that a pastor schedules an individual, hands-on meeting with every staff member every week.

Consider Dale Hummel, pastor of EFC of Naperville (Ill.)—a 2,500-member church with 26 staff members and nine pastors/directors, three of whom are direct-reports. “I believe that the senior pastor should be mentoring his direct report(s),” Dale explains, “and then see to it that a system is in place for all the others.

“I do skill mentoring with our staff at a general level, but one of the things I ask all of them to do is find a pace-setter in their field of primary responsibility. People who seriously run marathons will train with a pace-setter who runs just a bit faster than they do.

“I ask my staff to network at conferences, reach out to larger churches, read books and discover who's out there doing what they do but in a larger context that is not too foreign to our experience. Once they identify a few potential pace-setters, I encourage them to make contact and pursue these mentors.”

Mentoring also looks different depending upon the context and the people. For example, what if you're serving in an economically depressed urban community, with barely a paid staff member to call your own?

“One of the biggest mistakes I made earlier was to look for people who had the sophistication to lead programs and organizations,” says Dennis Hesselbarth, pastor of Hilltop Urban Church in Wichita, Kan., which has only two paid staff members.

“I've learned to assess people's gifts and capacities and help them

develop accordingly. We do very little one-to-one mentoring; we find that small-group/peer-group contexts help the most. We do more coaching—asking questions, helping someone discover their passion and supporting them as they do their own thinking/acting/working.”

And does mentoring look different to different age groups? “I’m from a generation that’s more formulaic in the way we’ve done church or discipleship,” says James Mendoza, 39, pastor of Vista Community Church in San Antonio, Texas.

“The generation following me doesn’t want that formal training. They do respect their elders, but it’s a peer relationship versus a clear leader-follower.”

Take John Barba, 23, a ministerial intern at James’ church who had asked James to mentor him. “We want life-on-life mentoring straight up without any beating around the bush,” John says. “It’s on a more relational level, as opposed to sitting in a room of three to five guys and going through a book on mentorship.”

Fortunately for John, his pastor regards mentoring as just a natural part of who he is. “I’m always learning—being around people who are one or two steps ahead of me,” James Mendoza says. “As I’m learning, my heart is to share with others who are wanting to grow, too, who might be two steps behind me.”

Regardless of the context and the limitations, the encouragement is to start first with those who report to you and then get involved, encouraging them to grow into their God-given giftings.

The obvious next question is: Who is mentoring the senior pastor? Good question indeed.

## PASTOR AS MENTEE

“We all still need to be mentored, no matter what age or stage of life,” says Eric Tober, who serves as associate pastor at Calvary Bible Church in Bourbonnais, Ill., after seven years pastoring at State College (Pa.) EFC.

“Whatever you do, don’t go solo,” he continues. “Ask God about the needs you see in your own life. You have to have somebody—if not many different kinds of people—whom you’re learning from.

“Howard Hendricks is famous for saying that we all need a Paul, a Barnabas and a Timothy—someone who is pouring into us (a mentor), someone who is an equal (peer) and someone we are pouring our lives into (protégé).”

Pastors turn to other seasoned leaders to sharpen their skills in speaking, leading, administrating and understanding principles of church growth.

“Work on building a relationship with someone who does what you do but does it better,” agrees Dale Hummel. “Take the initiative and be persistent in pursuing the relationship. Sometimes these folks aren’t other pastors but successful and godly business leaders.

“The best advice I received as a young man was: Find someone who does what you do and get close to them, even if you have to pay to clean their toilets!”

The day any pastor “outgrows” the need to be mentored, he adds, “that’s the day you stop growing spiritually and as a leader.”

True, the expectations associated with being a pastor are high. So if you think of mentoring as *just one more thing*, you’ll be overwhelmed. Your plate is already full. But when you think of mentoring as life-on-life learning—learning *from* others and gifting your learning *to* others—it’s as natural to pastors as breathing. ■



## CREATIVE MENTORING

by Carrie Kraus



Be creative in finding your crucial mentoring relationships. Consider what I call journal mentoring:

The mentee journals or blogs, and the mentor responds. The mentor can select a book, and the pair creates a schedule of reading, Q&A and response. ¶ Turn to Facebook to post your need for mentorship or your willingness to mentor. Create a flier or brochure and post it on bulletin boards at your church, Starbucks or even Panera Bread. Both Starbucks and Panera are open to Bible studies, mentor circles, book clubs, etc., in their place of business. ¶ Or create a book club. Select a book that reaches the audience that you believe you possess the skills, talents and giftedness to serve. I did this and was surprised by the interest from women not only in my church but also in the workplace.



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