In the preceding articles, we have already looked at how Mentoring and Coaching can be accomplished in the context of a variety of Discipleship Relationships, including:

1. One on one
2. Small groups [4-5]
3. Medium groups [8-14]
4. Large groups [20-50]

Most people are familiar with the one on one and small group models, which most people in coaching circles have employed for years. But it is less known that the same "probing-leading" question approach that expects people to participate in evaluating and internalizing concepts that is characteristic of coaching, may be used in larger groups especially medium sized groups of teams, home fellowships, and even large groups of a small congregation.

In this article we'll look at coaching medium groups such as teams and also small congregation sized groups within the Church including micro-congregations such as home fellowships. Such groups provide some interesting opportunities to flesh out Imago Dei [who we are as being made in the Image of God] and Imago Christi [who we are as a living image of Christ] as we seek to live out our invitation to be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God [carrying out the mission of Christ or Missio Dei]. These groups provide excellent opportunities for Disciple Makers to disciple others in growing and strengthening the Church, as they lead by example. Larger groups have the added advantage over the one on one approach as they allow relational interactive development and vicarious learning opportunities within a secure and safe group environment.

Acknowledging that we have so many challenges internal and external to our Christian communities, it is helpful to understand some of the character and relational obstacles we need to overcome. The following commentary will first identify the "*5-expressions of our Pride-Driven World*" and *Leadership and Self-Deception,* a book by the Arbinger Institute. We will then provide some examples of how these concepts are expressed in real life.

A. THE FIVE FORMS OF EXPRESSION OF A PRIDE DRIVEN CULTURE:

In a nice article posted online on the website ministry "Facts Of The Matter Daily Devotionals – November 25, 2014 edition," the author made insightful commentary on some major difficulties we now face in our culture in general, because the general culture has significantly infiltrated the church. These thoughts follow well from an article from the Billy Graham Association publication "Decision Magazine" on the need for the Church to provide a counter-cultural influence in our social setting, while remaining more actively engaged in developing authentic disciples… the link to this article follows [http://billygraham.org/decision-magazine/march-2011/be-separate/].

Below is a copy of the Facts of the Matter devotional, and most of us will be able to recognize ourselves in these 5 descriptions. If we're honest, we know we need God's transformational help as noted in Romans 12:1-2 to overcome our character deficiencies.

We live in a society where the powerful, the beautiful, and the bright usually get the recognition, the accolades and the promotions. Ours is _a pride-driven world of self_ that takes on _at least five forms of expression_:

1. <u>Self-Promotion</u> – In our effort to command center stage, we have become masters at crafting just the right image, and uncommonly adept at manipulating people and circumstances to support it. Thus, we artfully name-drop, apply pressure at strategic moments, flatter, pout, and intimidate others. The Scriptures, however, do not allow us the luxury: "_Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not_..." Jeremiah 45:5a, see also Genesis 13; Romans 12:16.

2. <u>Self-Pity</u> – As a people, we have nurtured a "victim mentality" by refusing to take responsibility for our lives... common excuses include: "_No one appreciates me._" "_No one understands me._" "_I had a rough childhood._" "_They took advantage of me._" By way of contrast, consider St. Paul's response to his severe victimization: "_We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed... As servants of God... we are known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything._" 2 Corinthians 4:8-9; 6:4b, 9-10. See also 1 Kings 19:10; Job 10:1.

3. <u>Self-Sufficiency</u> – A prevalent attitude affirms that "... _with enough guts, brains and raw hard work I will make it happen!_" While God affirms a can-do spirit, He despises self-sufficiency that is rooted in pride: "_In his pride the wicked does not seek Him; in all their thoughts there is no room for God._" Psalm 10:4. See also Genesis 6:5-6; Psalm 138:8; Proverbs 3:34; 11:2; 16:18; Isaiah 2:11-12, 17; 14:11-15; 65:2; Romans 1:21, 28; James 4:6.

4. <u>Self-Righteousness</u> – Another prevalent attitude affirms that... "_There are a lot of people out there doing a lot worse stuff than I._" "_I'm doing the best I can._" "_I lead a clean, moral life._" But God takes this a step further... "_There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one._" Romans 3:10-11. See also Isaiah 64:6; Luke 18:9-12; Romans 3:10-17; 10:1-4; Philippians 3:9.

5. <u>Self-Worship</u> – many affirm their right that... " _if ya got it, flaunt it! Right? 'Cause if you don't toot your own horn, who will?_" "_Herod... delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, 'This is the voice of a god, not of a man.' Because Herod did not give praise to God [but kept it for himself], an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died._" Acts 12:21b, 23. See also 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Daniel 6:6-9; James 4:5-6; 1 Peter 5:6.

The only hope... the only focus... the only option for the sincere follower of Christ is to climb up on the

cross with him and die. And then allow Jesus life to transform us moment by moment, and to live through our life – Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20.

On one hand, God affirms that we are made in the Image of God (Genesis 1:26-27); and being a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:4-5; Hebrews 2:6-7). This is who humanity was created to be before the Fall. In Christ, we are the emerging image of Jesus Himself; becoming increasingly transformed into His nature and likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is what Scripture says we are as children of God. [Follow this link to more on this topic http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.2%20-%20Discipleship%20Studies%20-%20Jesus'%20Mission%20of%20Redemption.pdf .

In regard to the 5 forms of Self-Expression listed above… many call them "the nasty case of the normals" because they are so prevalent in Fallen human nature. However, God's plan is for personal transformation of the Inner-Being – Romans 7:22; Ephesians 3:16, so that we increasingly become a more perfected image of Christ Jesus. Having the standard of Jesus for which we strive to attain firmly in mind, an effective coach can remind others of this standard and call attention to positive and negative growth in maturity. [See the other Authentic Discipleship articles on coaching]

B) LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DECPTION:

This is an interesting book that provides thoughtful insight as to how each person in either a leader or follower capacity can fall victim to relational distortions and self-interest. Proverbs 16:1-4 here quoted from the Amplified Version stipulates:

> THE PLANS of the mind *and* orderly thinking belong to man, but from the Lord comes the [wise] answer of the tongue. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the motives (the thoughts and intents of the heart). Commit your works to the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him, as He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will], and so shall your plans be established *and* succeed. The Lord has made everything [to accommodate itself and contribute] to its own end *and* His own purpose—even the wicked [are fitted for their role] for the day of calamity *and* evil.

The reality is that each of us, no matter how noble, open minded, and tender hearted we think we are… we're subject to bind-spots [thinks we can't see or understand from our perspective], and self-deception… believing we are better that we really are, or that we see things clearer than we really do. Think of this book as a relational 14-Step process, and realize we have the helping presence of the Holy Spirit who wants to lead us into clarity, wholeness, and freedom. A brief outline of the material of self-deception includes:

1. "Self-Betrayal" – occurs when we know the thing we should do, and fail to properly do that thing. Self-betrayal leads to self-deception which places us "in the box" where we see ourselves as justified in marginalizing and even denigrating others because we have a superior view and

understanding of what is right or wrong.

2. When you find yourself "in the box" you can no longer focus on desired mutual results.

3. My own influence and success will depend in being out of the box where I see other's needs and expectations as equally important and worthy as my own.

4. You can only get out of the box when you cease resisting and marginalizing others.

5. Realize that I will never be perfect, but I can have the reasonable expectation to be better than I am now. This applies equally for others.

6. Take the time to understand the elements impacting my view of things, and care enough about others to take the time to see things from their perspective.

7. Don't expect to solve other people's issues or problems, focus instead upon yourself and what you can reasonably control.

8. Don't look to identify where other people may be in their own boxes, focus instead upon the box you are now in.

9. Don't accuse others of being in the box… you can't see this deficiency until you've been adequately trained to understand what it is and how to recognize it. Focus on yourself instead.

10. Don't give up on yourself when you discover that you've been in the box yourself… keep focused on seeking to respond better.

11. When you find yourself in the box, admit it to yourself and apologize to others. Then keep moving forward expecting to be more alert and responsive in the future.

12. Don't focus on what others have done wrong. Instead focus on what you can do to help.

13. Don't worry whether others are helping you or not, focus instead on understanding yourself and helping others.

14. Take personal responsibility for being in the box, and be aware of any damage you have inflicted as a consequence. Use these as opportunities for accepting healing and guidance, and as a life training example for those we interact with.

While these may seem like common sense, the problem is that we really can't see our own problem because our vision is veiled… this is the problem Proverbs 16:1-4 speaks to. As Christians, we have the Spirit to lead us into truth and healing, which non-believers lack. Though non-believers can learn techniques as listed in this book, techniques lack the transformational power of the Spirit.

Conceptually, the 5-Expressions of a Pride Driven World, and the 14-elements of Self-Deception affect all relationships, but especially those within a collaborative team.

C) EXAMPLES OF PRIDE DRIVEN TEAM AND SELF-DECEPTION IN LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS:

1. NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT AMID LEADERSHIP FAILURE AND TEAM DYSFUNCTION:
   The purpose of this example is to discuss observations and an analysis of the dynamics of a "Corporate America" team in a functioning context. The example I chose is one in which I directly participated,

along with three other senior managers under the direction of a regional president of a major California corporation. These managers had long operated as a work group, but not as collaborative as expected. We were now required to forge a more integrated and cooperative team relationship. The occasion for this particular meeting was to deal with significant internal management issues stemming from dysfunctional and self-centered leadership, which was impeding our ability to meet critical corporate production goals.

    a. Background:

        i. I have worked in "Corporate America" throughout the past thirty-five years, mostly as a senior manager and department head. The position I have had through most of this time was Vice President of Operations. I have worked with a wide variety of organizations including small start-up companies, small and medium sized private companies, and large public Fortune 500 companies. In this particular occasion, I had been hired by the regional president to help him fix three of his organizational problems – poor customer service operations, poor acceptance of our organization by the local building industry, and the ongoing dysfunction of his pre-existing senior management. The management team problems were primarily due to a lack of an integrated team mindset between the forward planning, construction, and sales & marketing departments who operated with corporate minded goals, but with individual evaluation and rewards. For the purpose of this discussion, I will refer to the participants as "Tony" (regional president), "Bill" (forward planning VP), "Dale" (construction VP), and "Allison" (sales & marketing VP).

        ii. The company is well known for being very progressive in its management practices requiring each employee to submit to detailed personality analysis and several training and evaluation sessions with the corporate psychologist as a requirement of hiring. Each employee then received follow up training and evaluation on a quarterly basis where employees throughout the state congregate and participate in group activities. The intention is to create a more unified and collaborative corporate identity based upon a better understanding of the individual's personality and operative approach, how each person according to this personal understanding integrates and interrelates with different personalities, and culminating with the expectation that knowledge will promote a better understanding of ourselves and others, which will result in a more integrated team mentality.

    b. <u>Observations:</u>

        i. The deadline was quickly approaching and our regional goals were in great jeopardy of not being met. Although we had made substantial team improvement over the past six months, the looming deadline caused Bill, Allison and Dale to revert to old stand-alone habits. Tony called an emergency meeting of his senior staff. The meeting began with Tony setting the stage by reminding his managers of the corporate goals and objectives. He then reviewed the current challenges faced in achieving them, and he provided a brief

evaluation of some of the problems/dysfunctions he had observed in his senior managers. He reiterated that he needed and expected their cooperation to come up with an action plan that they would each commit and be accountable for to achieve their goal. It was a great introduction that properly set the stage of the issues and expectations.

ii.   The major problem I observed was that after his introduction, Tony left the meeting. In doing so he demonstrated that he had no stomach to walk into the messy part of our dysfunction with his managers; that instead he preferred to set the stage and let us figure it out on our own. It was Tony's stated expectation that each person was a professional and thus would get beyond their own petty differences to forge a collaboration alliance that would win the day.

iii.   Following his eloquent introduction, Tony concluded with a rather stern warning that this was a "make or break" moment for this team and our office in general. Tony informed the group that he expected a solution on his desk in the morning, and that a follow up meeting would be held to conclude the matter at 9:00 AM the next morning. There was a not too subtle reminder that there would be consequences for failure. With a functional team, this might have been a reasonable impetus toward change, but with the known dysfunctions of this group, it was a pipe dream… especially when he put Bill in charge of running the meeting.

iv.   Bill is an old friend that I had previously hired at three different companies in a supporting position under my supervision, but now he was placed in the most senior seat of our team. Bill is an intelligent, articulate, and extremely knowledgeable manager, but he is also a "curmudgeon" by his own description given to heavy-handed tactics. Bill is self-confident and can be as charming as a cat in heat, and as miserable as a bull in a china shop. Bill is not just a "can do" person; he is an "I'll get it done at all costs" person.

v.   Allison on the other hand, has little self-confidence and not nearly enough experience for the position in which she has been placed. As Bill tends to resort to bullying with fear and intimidation to achieve his ends, Allison wants to be the person you like that you hope will do OK. Allison is a poor manager – she is unorganized and scattered, she tends to inadequately instruct or direct her subordinates, and then she blames everyone else for the failures. Bill tends to be an angry manager, and Allison tends to be a fearful and dispassionate manager – neither are effective leaders.

vi.   Dale is another type all together. He is one who knows how to run field activities because that was where he had spent most of his career, but now that he is a senior manager he is expected to lead and hold others accountable, which he cannot do. Dale has little stomach for conflict, remains dispassionate and detached, allows the events to progress unattended around him, and then he finds a way to put the best spin on the situation and hopes the ball lands in someone else's court.

vii.   While I tried to remain hopeful for some progress, I was very concerned as to how we

would generate any meaningful movement and commitment that would result in a reasonable action plan.

viii. The meeting started reasonably well with each participant reviewing their department status and what each would need to achieve to reach the desired team goal. There was an understanding of where we were as individual departments and as a group. We spent an hour and a half getting through this part of the meeting. When we moved to the next part of the meeting where we would need to forge a team approach with each department manager committing to shared values and specifics to move us forward, the meeting quickly decayed into chaos.

ix. As Bill was forcefully moving to capture commitments, Allison retreated to reasons why she couldn't perform, and Dale just sat there unengaged and in denial. When I spoke about an incremental completion analysis that would provide the substance for an agreement, Allison looked for any reason that would excuse her for responsibility in achieving any specific results, and Dale sat without comment.

x. With mutual commitments elusive, Bill focused on three field managers who were most critical in the area of the greatest performance obstacle. I suppose Bill concluded that at least they could come to agreement as to whom to blame. These three men were attempting to solve the problems that Dale was directly responsible for creating, and Bill as Dale's supervisor was indirectly responsible for. Neither was willing to accept responsibility or to be accountable for the problem. I argued that these three field managers had been reassigned from other successful projects and as yet did not have adequate time in their new roles to make a significant difference, especially since the obstacles came from a combination of issues from the various departments that they didn't create and had no control over. Furthermore, the three were heroically expending themselves working twelve-hour days six days a week, and without adequate support from the senior management. Additionally, they were not present at the meeting and it was unfair to focus on what they had not done without representation. Rather than affixing blame, I attempted to move the conversation into what we could now do. I argued that given the time frame, these field managers were the only reasonable hope for accomplishing our stated goal as there was only a month remaining to make our goal. I asked the senior management group what each could do to rally around them and provide reasonable support for our mutual success.

xi. Rather than bringing reason to the discussion, Bill turned on me and asked why I was defending "these clowns?" I reminded Bill that these men did not create the problem, that senior management inaction was the bigger problem, and that these poor men were just killing themselves to work us all out of the dilemma we created. At this point the meeting might as well have ended, as Bill went into an hour long tirade about how "he will never quit, and never give up, and he would inflict pain and suffering on any person

or party not willing to shoulder their responsibility, etc., etc." It was the most disgusting rant I have ever seen as Bill went on and on hardly even breathing between sentences. In the meantime, Allison and Dale completely retreated not wanting to become the focus of his anger.

c. Analysis:

   i. The meeting was doomed the moment that Tony left the room as his leadership was our best hope to moderate a team solution. Tony abdicated his rightful leadership position and failed to lead through the inevitable difficulties that he knew were to follow. He realized his staff was dysfunctional and he knew Bill's temperament, yet he chose to have Bill lead the work group into a team mindset… a poor decision at best. Ironically, we had previously spent two hours each week at our senior staff meetings for more than a month working though Patrick Lencioni's book The Five Dysfunctions of a Team in a halfhearted effort to create a team framework. In the book the heroine (Kathryn) was willing to put herself on the line and in harm's way to forge a team, but in our corporate setting Tony was unable or unwilling to do so. As a result, three senior managers fell back into their old defensive postures – defending their own departmental turf and being totally uncooperative in working collaboratively toward mutually defined and beneficial ends.

   ii. I repeatedly attempted to move the discussion toward a middle ground where meaningful dialogue and collaboration could occur, but I lacked authority that would move them past their discomfort zone. The difficulty in this situation for a coach is that you cannot force or direct a team to any certain end, you can only *influence* them toward a motivated self-interest. As a coach, you can only go so far in bringing a resolution; the responsibility for the outcome is squarely in the hands of those we seek to influence. This group as defined will not move to an end they perceive as threatening when leadership abdicates the leadership role. Due to our work in Lencioni's book, each senior manager understood the point of the five dysfunctions, but rather than shoulder the responsibility for their own failures, they preferred a rationale to blame others while justifying their position.

   iii. The point of this study effort was that knowledge alone does not lead to a transformative team situation. Team members have to assume risk and be willing to commit to something bigger than themselves for which they assume an accountable portion of the team responsibility.

   iv. While our group had been trained in effective team dynamics, none of the three were willing to take the personal risk in areas for which they had no personal control; they would not help the other without confirmation they would be helped in return and or excused for failure. There was no cooperation, no dialogue… only monologue and diatribe. It was one of the most frustrating meetings of my career. Not only did we fail to make any progress moving toward a team mindset, we lost ground becoming an even more dysfunctional work group; even to the point of being prepared to tie the blame to

the ones least responsible for the failure, and also most likely to be our only hope going forward. I resigned shortly afterward, detailing my observations. I was never contacted by Tony, I never had an exit interview. It was a dismal experience.

    d. <u>Conclusions</u>:

        i. Coaching such a team requires the active engagement of the most senior oversight. There are many times to successfully delegate responsibility for a desired outcome, but correcting a dysfunctional team should never be relegated to the team itself. There needs to be active oversight to keep the team focused, to ensure all are participating, to point out and redirect self-interest in preference for the common good, and to ensure all parties remain respectful and collaborative.

        ii. The senior oversight should have sufficient understanding of the nature and character of the team members, and authority to keep them properly engaged and focused.

        iii. Senior oversight reinforces the importance of the process.

        iv. Long ago a senior leader remarked to me the value of "getting all the liars in the same room." Everyone has a perspective they believe to be right and appropriate. Having the senior oversight present to "call bull-crap" is crucial in many groups. Once a new pattern of behavior is established in the group, then it is appropriate for senior oversight to delegate with regular follow up reporting meetings to observe the crucial decisions made and the efforts of conformance to them.

        v. When senior oversight is absent or uninvolved, and the team dissolves into self-interest groups, it is the failure of the oversight to properly lead the team.

        vi. If the senior oversight is unable to attend crucial meetings, especially at the beginning of the resolution process, the meeting should be postponed to make sure all can attend and be properly led.

2. **POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN A MATURE WELL-INTEGRATED GROUP:**

The purpose of this example is to discuss observations and an analysis of the dynamics of a ministry team in a functioning context. This example is one in which I directly participated as a ministry leader to discuss the essentials for team functioning in my specifically assigned ministry context.

    a. <u>Background</u>:

The ministry I have involved with for the past six years is co-leading a "Home Church" fellowship. In my personal leadership style, I take always employed more of a coaching-facilitator role in both my business as well as in our home fellowship. Effective coaches undergo evaluations of their personal style of coaching and mentoring. One such evaluation is the "Personal Coaching Styles Inventory." In this inventory, I scored a very balanced 25% director [guidance], 30% presenter [explanation/teaching], 27% mediating [collective engagement], and 18% strategizer [focused on a particular outcome]. This balanced approach is typical of me as I have consistently demonstrated this on other such inventory analyses I've taken.

    b. <u>Observation</u>:

Interestingly, in business and ministry I have moved to a more natural coaching approach when leading groups through the years, preferring facilitating thought and discussion, involvement by all, and moving the dialogue along appropriately. This particular home fellowship is comprised of five married couples that are very mature Christians with the stipulated desire to remain "in the deep-end of the spiritual swimming pool." We have a very interesting mix of professions and personality types, and we enjoy having different people lead meetings for the mutual benefit we derive. Of significant importance is that we all view our home fellowship as our major church involvement, where we know one another well and purposefully collaborate well.

c. <u>Analysis</u>:

PART 1: In his book <u>The Five Dysfunctions of a Team</u>, author Patrick Lencioni presents a fictional narrative in the form of a fable describing the problems most teams need to surmount in order to create a working team identity as opposed to a group of more loosely affiliated individuals who work together.

   i. In his book, Lencioni details elements of a dysfunctional team:

      1. The most fundamental dysfunction is an "Absence of Trust" which results in the group symptom of a lack of vulnerability among the team. Teammates that do not trust each other will not make themselves vulnerable for fear they will be exploited for the individual gain of another. Trust among team members is the single most important element for teamwork.

      2. The next dysfunction is a "Fear of Conflict" which results in the symptom of an "Artificial Harmony", due to the mistaken notion that all conflict is dangerous. In a healthy team, team members with an underlying trust are free to engage one another in constructive criticism.

      3. When these two dysfunctions are operative, they result is the further dysfunction of a "Lack of Personal Commitment" and the result is the symptom of "Ambiguity" or perhaps better stated poorly defined individual expectations. When people do not buy in to the group process, they tend to dance around on the periphery where they think they are safely unengaged.

      4. Ambiguous commitments give rise to the fourth dysfunction of the "Avoidance of Accountability" with the resulting symptom of having "Low Standards" of performance.

      5. As a result of these preceding dysfunctions, the final [fifth] dysfunction is the "Inattention to Results." When this occurs it has the symptomatic result of an excessive concern for individual "Status and Ego" rather than a group or team identity.

   ii. The genius of Lencioni's paradigm is because the symptom is evidence of the dysfunctional problem, you can fairly easily identify the symptom to verify the dysfunction and work back down the hierarchy to discover what health (if any) exits in

the team, and then take corrective measures. In the teams that I have led, trust is always the first major obstacle, and my team members unilaterally want evidence that they can trust me before they will venture out and trust one another. Having demonstrated the integrity that makes one trustworthy over time has aided me in forging new teams as I encourage my team members to contact those with whom I have previously worked. Once a potential team has some outside confirmation as to my integrity and team commitment, trust becomes much easier. Without such a history of personal experience, trust can be extremely challenging to develop in a reasonably short period of time.

PART 2: In the book The Wisdom of Teams, academic researchers John Katzenback and Douglas Smith explore success stories from a number of organizations to suggest principles that operate in different types of team situations. Although I really enjoyed the case studies of each team, I remained unconvinced that these academics properly identified the real team related issues as their focus was strictly on team performance from the corporate Chief Executive Officer's position rather than the health and development of the individual team members. Their effort focused on using teams for specific performance ends, as opposed as a means to grow the people themselves while getting things done. In spite of this criticism, I felt they very correctly identified the primary success mandate in team performance, which is having the oversight leadership outside of the team unequivocally supporting the team effort. Without this support, few teams will ever form from the typical working groups that precede the functioning team.

i. The authors adeptly pointed out an observable hierarchy of all functional groups… from lowest to highest involvement:

1. Being a "Working Group" of minimally interacting co-workers, where cooperation exists but interdependent team dynamics has not been established.

2. Being a "Pseudo-Team" or a group that fails to develop into a true team for their inability to focus on collective performance and values, and in accepting personal risk for the greater good of the team.

3. Being a "Potential Team" where they have a performance objective but not a clear purpose, goals, or discipline, and the proper complement of people and skills to develop into a real team.

4. Being a "Real Team" that has a small number of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, with well-defined goals, and a working approach for which they are willing to accept personal risk and mutually accountability.

5. Being a "High Performance Team" where the members are deeply committed to achieving the corporate defined results while remaining deeply committed to each other.

ii.   In the organizations in which these groups existed, the group was the means to an end defined by the most senior executives rather than being an end in itself, and I believe this demonstrates a major limitation in how the authors approached this study. They were primarily concerned with demonstrating to "Corporate America" how teams can be employed to achieve corporate success. While it may be acceptable in Corporate America, I have a problem with the CEO mentality that has invaded our church leadership. I am more an advocate of a shepherding model of teamwork that grows individuals within the team, rather than just getting work done. Pastor Daniel Brown of Coastlands Church in Aptos, Ca. properly observed that as a minister it is better to "use a job to get people done, than use people to get a job done." The former is Christ centered shepherding; while the latter is corporate CEO mentality.

iii. This approach is a major problem for the Church, however in spite of this deficiency the authors pointed out many helpful insights on group/team functioning including that not every effort requires a team. There are many tasks at hand where a "working group" of staff peers in an existing hierarchy may function better than a more self-directed team. This does not take away the point the authors were making about the leveraged ability that multiple talented individuals can provide for problem solving in a team setting where truly amazing results can emerge. The authors also properly point out that the effort and resources required to establish such a high performance team may not be necessary for every organization or task situation. Shepherding leadership should evaluate their circumstances, as often a more moderated approach is more desirable.

iv.   I also found Katzenback and Smith's five "common sense" and five "uncommon sense" findings particularly useful in providing a rough framework for team dynamics.

Common-Sense Findings include:

i.   The hunger for performance is far more important than team building exercises, special incentives, or leadership profiles. A common performance passion helps galvanize a team.

ii.   Necessary team basics include size (not too large or small with 6-12 being ideal), purpose & goals (clearly identified and supported), skills (having a requisite compliment), a unified approach from most senior leadership, and accountability among the team members.

iii. Team basics apply to different types of teams – including teams that are formed to generate recommendations, teams that make or do things (work, sales), and teams that run things (management teams).

iv.   Teams formed higher up the management/executive hierarchy have greater challenges stemming from time demands/constraints, and ingrained individualism at the most senior levels.

v.   Organizational job descriptions, compensation, and performance evaluations

traditionally focus on individuals and not upon teams, thus shifting emphasis from individual to team accountability is difficult and will make team members uneasy.

Uncommon Sense Findings include:

i. Teams and teamwork are not the same thing, thus real teams form best when senior management make clear performance demands.

ii. Teamwork is fairly common, but true teams are more rare and high performance teams are extremely rare, thus management commitment and expectations need to reflect this.

iii. Hierarchical structures and basic processes are essential to large organizations, and teams in such settings are the best way to integrate across structural boundaries.

iv. Teams naturally integrate learning, relationship, and performance – which has great application for discipleship groups.

v. Many performance challenges exceed the reach of individual performance or even work-group performance, and teams can bridge this gap.

d. <u>Conclusion:</u>

In my corporate America, Seminary academic, and ministry learning experiences, I have found that I have learned more and better in an interactive experience where several minds grappled with issues and their implications. Different people see things differently and as a result they go to different places in attempting to grasp relevant concepts and their applications, and this diversity stretches all within the learning environment. The best learning experiences I have had are where the professor/teacher made clear their expectation that the class is a joint learning environment where we would all contribute and learn from one another, as opposed to a more strict lecture methodology (collaborative dialogue versus unilateral monologue). The implication for discipleship is clear where "one mind sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). In such a learning environment, a teacher/facilitator employing "Coach Approach" of strategic or powerful questions can help lead the group and the individuals that comprise the group, explore and experience greater depths of growth and relationship with God and each other. Once the process begins to bear fruit, the ongoing interaction is delightful as we challenge our self and each other in ways individual effort could never accomplish.

3. FAITH COACHING – ORGANIZATION VERSUS ORGANISM:

a. <u>Purpose:</u>

Evangelical thought has recently been far too focused on "church organization" (or form), and not sufficiently focused on the "Church Organism" (or the substance of the organic Body of Christ). This organization or institutional approach leads to a more programmatic organizational approach toward their congregants, where quantitative analysis of how much or how many preside. The Organism or shepherding approach leads to a qualitative relational integration approach encouraging Spirit Life Formation. The purpose of this example is to link some

concepts and to develop ideas moving toward a framework for qualitative Spiritual Formation in our congregations.

b. **Observations:**

Part 1: Leonard Sweet in his book entitled <u>The Gospel According to Starbucks</u> argued powerfully for an organizational framework centered around the encouragement and formation of relational community interaction.

   i.   Using an extended narrative approach from the Starbucks business manual, Sweet explains how Starbucks seeks to infuse passion and purpose into experiencing "Organic Community." Starbucks works as a viable business not simply because of the products they sell, but because of the relational experience they foster.

   ii. Sweet argues that it is the quality of participating in a community experience that keeps people coming back to purchase premium coffee drinks. Everything at Starbucks draws attention to enhancing the quality of the collective experience, which plays off the individual's need to experience and communicate in authentic community that keeps people coming back.

   iii. Sweet's argument applied to a Church setting seemed to me to beg the questions, "What is God? Is He a 'concept' to be considered? A 'reality' to be contemplated? Or a 'person' to engage in relational intimacy?" A concept is cold and distant and doesn't necessarily engage an individual or demand personal commitment. A reality may be true but is equally un-compelling as there are no reciprocal relational expectations or demands. A person evoking relational intimacy is another order altogether. Presuming God is such a Being that desires individual and relational context as Scripture demonstrates, then it is rational that we need to provide for a context where He may be experienced relationally, intimately, and authentically.

Part 2: The book <u>Faith Coaching</u> by authors Chad Hall, Bill Copper, and Kathryn McElveen points out that, "We live at the hinge of three contrasting mind sets: the waning Industrial Age, the cresting of the Information Age, and the emerging Experience Age."[1] They go on to explain that the culture at large and the Church in particular are struggling in their response to this changed reality, and this changed reality is most prevalent in relational engagement.

   i.   The modern church was built around "seeker sensibilities" where the church acted as the headquarters for spiritual information and pastoral leadership, which no longer resonates with post-modern thought. The modern church encouraged a more rigid "process and procedure" driven organization that mandated conformity with a one-size-fits-all strategy of information broadcast, download, and implementation. By contrast,

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[1] Chad Hall, Bill Copper, and Kathryn McElveen, <u>Faith Coaching: a Conversational Approach for Helping Others Move Forward in Faith</u>. Booksurge, 2009, pg 30.

Post-Modern thought encourages an individual, authentic, experiential, and relational approach to spirituality with a more organic and individualistic approach to God and community.

ii. The question <u>Faith Coaching</u> begs us ponder is, "Where is the Spirit of God leading His Church? How can we catch up with Him and engage people authentically to move them forward in Faith?" To this end <u>Faith Coaching</u> argues that a coach approach is more suited for Spiritual Formation in the post-modern community. Coaching encourages people to think for themselves and to come up with their own unique solutions that they customize to fit their own unique situations. The coach approach they argue for encourages continued movement forward to the goals established by the individuals being coached. This approach encourages personal relational interaction and integration, which is key for qualitative growth and development.

iii. The authors go on to encourage coaching as the "Antidote to Industrialized Spiritual Formation."[2] In the coach approach… values conform thinking, thinking conform behavior, behavioral actions ensue that are evaluated producing incremental behavioral change, reframing thought, which leads ultimately to transformational learning and developmental experiences. This cycle of critical thinking and evaluation is a result of effective coaching.

iv. The blending of these thoughts in a "relational community format" has already begun with many churches who have developed their own "Coffee House Experience" which exists on the campus of the church to encourage people to hang around and interact socially as well as spiritually. Many local churches have dedicated space for these coffee houses including Santa Cruz Bible Church, and Twin Lakes Church among others that are open on worship days. However, while this is beneficial for weekend services, some church communities maintain operation hours seven days a week where Christians and non-Christians alike are encouraged to hang out on the church campus. Vintage Faith Church and Faith Community Church both in Santa Cruz are examples of the latter. However, none of these churches offer a planned Spiritual Formation interaction opportunity between trained coaching Baristas and coffee house servers. There is a wonderful ministry opportunity for either formal or informal coaching and mentoring between coffee house staff workers and regular patrons.

v. Additionally, most of these Christian coffee houses also provide free internet access to encourage people to hang around. This may provide another opportunity to add salt and light by having open computers available to encourage exploration with Spiritual Formation links provided in the menu. These computers could have internet content access limited to prevent abuses to questionable sites while encouraging exploration of targeted thought development. This would have to be done in a responsible and

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[2] <u>Faith Coaching</u>, pg 37ff

sensitive manner, but could be another approach to utilize these existing coffee house experiences to encourage faith exploration and growth, and then provide trained staff that could then follow up relationally.

c. **Conclusion:** Spiritual Formation is moving in new directions as our culture changes and adapts to new social realities. The church if it is to remain relevant and vital needs to change and adapt. This doesn't mean we change the message of the Gospel, as Scripture states the Gospel will always be offensive to worldly sensibilities. Rather, it means we realize how to engage the emerging postmodern society in a manner that is resonate and relevant with their thinking and world view. The church as an organization (or institution) is less relevant than the church as an organism (or relational Spiritual Body). The question for our church age is how much organization is necessary to care for the organism, and what forms should it take to encourage Spiritual Formation.

D. COACHING CONGREGATIONS – ENCOURAGING CONGREGATIONS TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

1. **Purpose:**
My experience with coaching has been extremely positive, and of those I know who have experienced it for themselves I know of none who did not enjoy or have a positive experience with it. Coaching as a ministry opportunity opens itself on several levels: coaching for Biblical Literacy, Spiritual Formation, for evangelism, for leadership development, and for professional development… these are only a few levels where coaching can be effective.

For the purpose of this example, we will focus on coaching for Spiritual Formation within a congregation – that is coaching people with the expressed purpose of moving them as disciples toward a deeper and closer relationship with God. Where Spiritual Formation and personal transformation occurs, intimacy is increased. The evidence being that Jesus' Nature is being formed in people's lives and where they find God showing up more consistently in their daily life. Particularly important is promoting the expectation that each member of the congregation will be challenged to accept God's invitation to move intentionally forward in their own Spiritual development. Complacency and ignorance are probably some of the worst obstacles to Spiritual growth.

a. In most congregations in America, the teaching pastor is solely responsible for all the study and preaching, and the church staff is responsible for the work of ministry. In our quest for control and theological purity, we have concentrated these responsibilities into the hands of a few people we know and trust. While qualifying teachers and ministers is not a bad thing, what has been lost is the reality that all believers are ministers of the Gospel. This is not what God had in mind. The church in the modern age is "Bifurcated" into Organism [the indwelled Body] and the organization [the corporate business entity]. While this in itself is not necessarily problematic,

the focus on organization over the Organism is definitely a problem. Jesus taught that all true believers are disciples who should be pressing on toward maturity. We as disciples are ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. We are ministers of the Gospel of Christ. As part of the Body, we each have a role to play – Romans 12:2-8. Paul clearly teaches that ministry is our individual and corporate responsibility.

b. In John's Book of Revelation, there are 7 Churches that are typical of all congregations. However, of particular interest here is what the Spirit said to the church of Laodicea… Revelation 3:14-22

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

c. As leaders in the modern era church… we have become complacent, we have become dull minded, we have become lazy and dispassionate. We need to hear the Spirit's invitation and respond anew as living sacrifices. Pastors need to engage their congregations as teachers and coaches, and help disciple the congregation to grow in maturity, and send them out to answer their mission invitation.

2. Discussion:

I have employed a coach approach to all areas of my discipling ministry as well as my leadership over corporate teams. I have found this to be a more successful alternative to the passivity of conventional information download study, or authoritative direction [telling people what to think and what to do, instead of teaching them how to study and discover their own ministry passion]. Information is helpful and useful, but information alone it is rarely transformational. Top down authoritative leadership limits both individual and team growth, as people need to grapple with the issues of the day personally to become mature.

There are three articles on Biblical Discipleship under the Leadership Development/Discipleship tab. Please look at these articles to bring you up to speed on how Jesus discipled. On the other hand, coaching through focused questions not only encourages but actually propels the individual toward spiritual formation. This transformative discipling experience compels people to individually contemplate what they know and to discover for themselves what they believe, and then with the

power of the indwelling Spirit to apply transformative concepts to their life.

a. Pastors employing focused questions are not merely for probing thought; but to help direct the corporate worship experience into greater relational dependence upon God. As pastors encourage dialogue between each congregant and God through probing and leading questions, they are invited to make an application of these thoughts and concepts into their own life. When teaching, pastors who employ probing questions invite their congregations into a journey of self-discovery where God shows up in surprising ways. Once the questions are posed and time allotted for the congregation to absorb the impact, the pastor then moves into answering the questions in open ended ways that encourage the congregation to complete the thoughts internally. This is a radically different approach to information download.

b. I have used this approach extensively over the years and I am still surprised about where such open ended dialogue manages to go in the process. Monologue is merely directing the congregation as to what they should know and do, while dialogue encourages personal evaluation and application. Such dialogue creates a collaborative learning experience instead of the more common monologue lecture. Monologue tends to be easier to ignore or lose interest in, and to counter this tendency many pastors tell stories or euphemisms to entertain and engage their audience. While popular, this is not the sort of teaching Scripture advocates. Instead, dialogue tends to keep people engaged because they are an active part of the process in promoting Spiritual growth.

c. Coaching from the pulpit to encourage a dialogue dynamic means the teacher/leader asks probing questions that initiates reflective thought in the congregation. Coaching in this form often becomes more of facilitating to keep the internal dialogue moving and then occasionally focusing it or even redirecting it when necessary. People not only seem to enjoy this approach more, they are far more likely to be engaged by it and to participate in making the experience personal.

d. One area that would be extremely useful in the local church is to coach for leadership development with the lay leaders… especially with the elder and deacon roles in the local church. With the trend of local churches toward non-denominational independent status, few have a structured leadership development and spiritual formation training process for church leaders, and fewer still have leadership oversight from outside the local church. As a consequence, vision tends to become myopic with many lay leaders not understanding the leadership roles of Biblical eldership and deaconry. The result is the decay of the Body of Christ into a corporate business model… this is not what the Church is supposed to be. Elders are teachers… theirs is Word ministry; while deacons are about service to the Body… theirs is doing the things that facilitate the corporate worship experience, and meeting the service needs of the Body.

e. It is important to keep in mind the "Bifurcated nature of the church" – this means that the church is divided into "organization" and "organism" entities. Organization having to do with the things necessary for the corporate body of believers to gather together, and organism having to do with

the Mystical Body of Christ – the supernatural Body of disciples joined by the internal Presence of the Spirit. Lay leadership follows the bifurcated nature of the church with eldership being engaged in Word ministry – that is in teaching, training, and in prayer ministry; and in contrast, deacons are engaged in service to the structure of the body – that is in meeting the organizational needs of the local church including property and facility management, budgeting and finances, staff management, and mercy ministry. Thus deacons focus in meeting the organizational needs of the church, while elders are involved in meeting the needs of the organism. The nature of spiritual formation in the mystical body of Christ develops in this bifurcated nature. Since most elder boards tend to get bogged down with organizational work, the work in tending the organism with Word ministry and Spiritual formation often gets neglected. Coaching in the roles of elder and deacon is a wonderful means to develop a more focused ministry and in more properly designating deacon and elder functions.

f. If elders are properly prepared for Word ministry and Spiritual Formation, they can meet with individuals within the congregation for one-on-one, small group, and medium group discipleship. This is how the church developed and promoted from within disciples and disciple-makers.

g. It is estimated that 80% of the resources in the typical church go into organizational uses; while only 20% goes to actually maturing the Organism of the church. This is a strategic error that renders the local church congregation dependent upon their leadership. It is no wonder that most churches are in decline because we aren't investing in developing our lay leadership for their ministry roles.

h. Another area where coaching can bring about great results is in the local church counseling ministry. It has been estimated that approximately 20% of the church will benefit from traditional counseling ministry, while almost 100% would benefit from coaching ministry. Many churches that engage in counseling ministries find that a disproportionate amount of staff resources go to a small contingent of individuals. Not that counseling should be abandoned, but rather outsourcing of the more difficult counseling needs to third-party services, and the development of a more robust approach in training and developing lay leaders as coaches is a better approach to minister to the body. Such a coach approach would serve several functions – It would develop lay leaders with specific giftedness in ministering to the body, and it would also place more members of the body in a structured relationship with lay leaders where their specific needs can be identified and addressed. The result would be a more organic community where people are ministering to others and people's needs are identified and addressed.

3. Conclusion:

Coaching for Spiritual Formation has many applications for the local church. I think that an understanding of the bifurcated nature of the church as organization and organism will allow for a better understanding of leadership roles and service, and more effectively employ the scarce resources most churches have. I believe that coaching based on a better understanding of the Biblical roles within the church may provide for more focused ministry thereby encouraging transformational life.