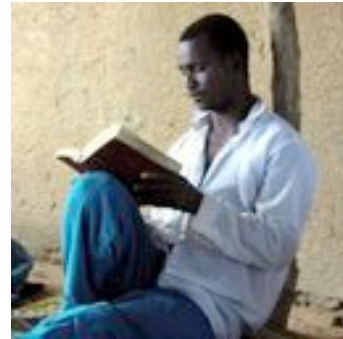


The Path for Developing Local Church Leaders

by Robert E. Logan with Tara Miller
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Tyler has read the book of Acts. And that's what he's trying to create right here, right now, in his own urban, 21st century neighborhood. He's trying to plant not just a church, but a church that lives up to the potential of its biblical heritage, a church that grows through conversions and multiplies into more and more churches, advancing the Kingdom of God. It's a good vision, it's a biblical vision. So why isn't it working?



Samuel pastors an existing church. He has a vision to see his church revitalized, to move it toward health and growth. He wants to equip believers to do the work of the ministry, raising new leaders who will use their gifts to reach out into the harvest fields. To move toward that goal, he's asked Sarah, one of his staff members, to oversee leadership development. Yet he knows he needs to remain involved as well—it cannot simply be delegated. How can he fully empower her while still taking care of all of his other areas of responsibility? Samuel wonders if someday the church might be able to develop enough new leaders to parent a new congregation. But most days, the routine tasks of ministry crowd out the vision.

The adventure of the great commission, the living out of the great commandment, people coming to Christ, and living out their faith and calling. These are the visions that keep us going, the pictures we can see with the eyes of our hearts, if not yet with our own eyes. We get glimpses, tastes, enough to keep us going and give us hope, but we do not yet see the full fruition of the all that potential we know is out there.

Why not? We've prayed. We've called on the Holy Spirit. We've attended seminars. We've read books. We've adopted strategies. Yet challenges and obstacles along the way prevent our vision from materializing. What is missing?

Need leaders?

Tyler wants to plant a church that will go on to plant more churches. What does he need? He needs new converts who will become disciples. He needs people to disciple them. He needs new leaders to start new small groups for those disciples, and he needs some of those leaders to develop further into pastors for those new churches he envisions growing out of his.

Samuel wants to see his church revitalized so it becomes healthy enough to begin planting other churches. What does he need? He needs a way to develop leaders... a holistic approach that guides people from conversion through discipleship and into leadership. He needs a way to empower Sarah so leadership can be developed through several levels of the organization. He needs to cast a vision, and he needs to support Sarah through the process of gathering a team and working with that team to accomplish the vision.

Tyler and Samuel both need leaders. How can they develop more leaders?

Seminars by themselves don't cut it. Materials by themselves don't cut it. Consider: the early church had no seminaries, no libraries, no internet, no seminars, much less money than we do. And these are all helpful resources for ministry, advantages we have that they did not. So what other resources did the early church have for developing leaders that we are not making use of? Resources that allowed them to make such astonishing strides forward?

Visionary, biblical ministry requires a face-to-face relational development process that's holistic. People investing in people. This was the pattern of the early church. Jesus investing in the disciples. Barnabas investing in Paul. Paul investing in Timothy. One person at a time. Starting slow, but gaining in power and momentum as the yeast works through the whole batch of dough. From a few people, invested in deeply and holistically, a movement is born.



We all long for that. For someone who will listen, guide, be there, ask us the questions that no one else asks. Care, pray, support. And once we have that, we long to offer it to others. That kind of relational connection is like gold too precious to hoard. We are compelled to give it away, investing in others as we ourselves have been invested in.

Consistent coaching delivered is what's missing. Coaching is the missing ingredient for developing leaders. Let's back up. Coaching? That's exactly what we've been talking about. Although the word coaching is relatively new, the practice is not.

Coaching is no less than the kind of relational investment just described, and it has been practiced in a variety of ways for thousands of years.

Whether it's called discipleship, leadership development, or pastoral training, it's all part of coaching. People are not divided up neatly into sections labeled "ministry," "personal," "skills," or "dreams." Those qualities are all woven together in us and the seams are not clear. Aiming toward the holistic development of each person, coaching is the central thread that runs through each stage along the way.

A word on coaching

Coaching is the process of coming alongside a person or team to help them discover God's agenda for their life and ministry, and then cooperating with the Holy Spirit to see that agenda become a reality. Coaches come alongside to help, just as Barnabas came alongside Paul, and then Paul came alongside Timothy and others. By encouraging and challenging others, coaches empower them for ministry. Barnabas may never have been in the starring role, but without him many others would not have been able to accomplish the great things for God that they did. Through his investment in people, his impact was exponential.



The goal of coaching is helping someone succeed. And what is success? It's finding out what God wants you to do and doing it. Given that definition, success will certainly look different on different people, but it will all be tied into accomplishing biblical mission. Far from a top-down program designed to accomplish pre-conceived ends, coaching empowers each individual believer to listen to the Spirit and act in accordance with the mission they sense God calling them toward. Coaching is essentially listening to the Spirit and taking action accordingly.

What makes coaching so powerful?

People are at least twice as fruitful when in coaching relationships. Good coaching empowers people to discern God's will and take the appropriate next steps for their personal and ministry development. Consider some of the benefits and functions of coaching:

- Provides encouragement for the journey
- Cultivates wisdom and strategic insights
- Discovers breakthrough opportunities
- Maintains focus on the truly important
- Transforms vision into reality

Coaching is the core discipline for effective leadership development. Quality coaching is central to everything else you deliver-- it creates a pipeline of new leaders and new initiatives who will contribute in varying ways to overall mission of the church. Some of the potential applications include:

- Discipleship of new Christians
- Personal and ministry development for emerging leaders
- Pastoral and leader development

- Follow-up after seminars or training events
- Cultivating church health (e.g. NCD)
- Starting and multiplying new churches

And coaching is flexible enough to be helpful in a variety of ways, depending on the needs of the people involved. Coaching can take place one-to-one, in triads as peer coaching, and in network clusters. Whatever form it takes, coaching is central to how we create new leaders.

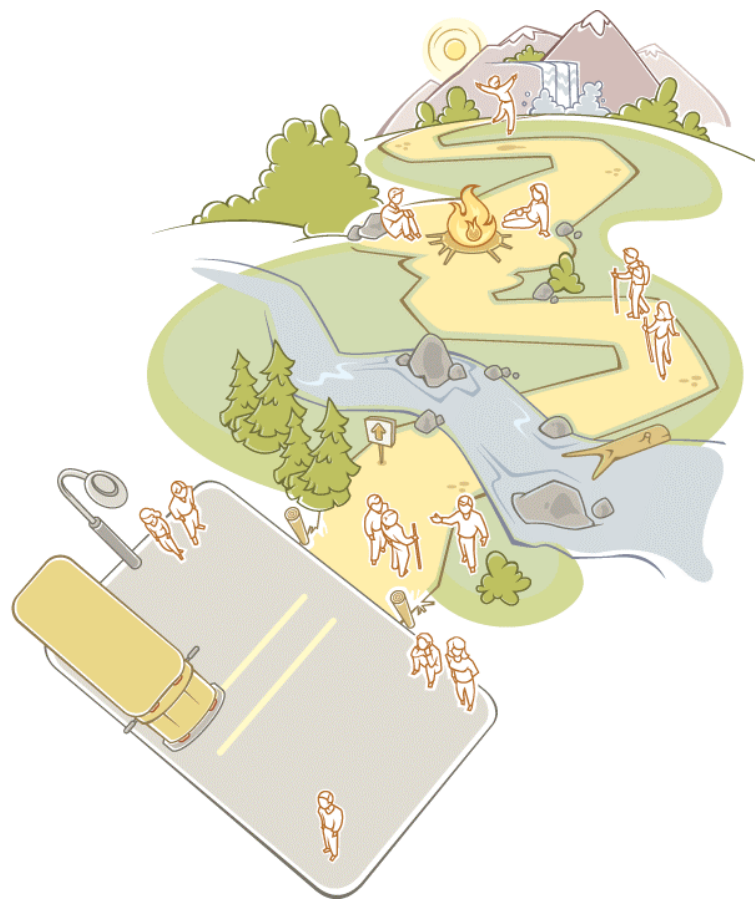
The Path

Whether our end is planting a new church or developing leaders within the context of an existing church, a similar path begins to emerge.

Think of accomplishing ministry initiatives as hiking a path. To even get to the path, the motivation has to be there to leave the parking lot. The parking lot is where we sit and decide whether we want to make the journey up the path. What path do we want to travel and why? What are the costs? Will it be worth it to go there? Who will want to go with us? Those who decide the journey is worth it leave the parking lot and arrive at the trailhead.

At the trailhead, our guide gives us an overview of the trail. Where exactly are we going? What kind of terrain can we expect along the way? Who else has made the decision to join us at the trailhead? What are the major milestones we will pass along the way? And then we confirm our decision to hike the trail by taking the first step.

At the beginning, our guide leads the way. We follow, matching their pace, taking notice of their technique, imitating them. After all, they know this trail; they have hiked it before. The guide provides some initial direction: "We are starting slow in



order to get used to the altitude. Sometimes people want to start strong, but haven't yet gotten used to the terrain and air and run out of energy before our first break point."

Soon, the instructions taper off and we are walking alongside the guide. We begin to gain confidence; we can do this. We check in with the guide only periodically now. The terrain gets rougher and begins to go uphill. Some of us begin tripping on tree roots. Most of us are beginning to breathe hard. Finally, over the next ridge, a campsite comes into view and the guide calls for a break: "We'll stop here, build a campfire and cook dinner." Sighs of relief are heard all along the path. We need rest, we need refueling, we need a chance to catch our breath.

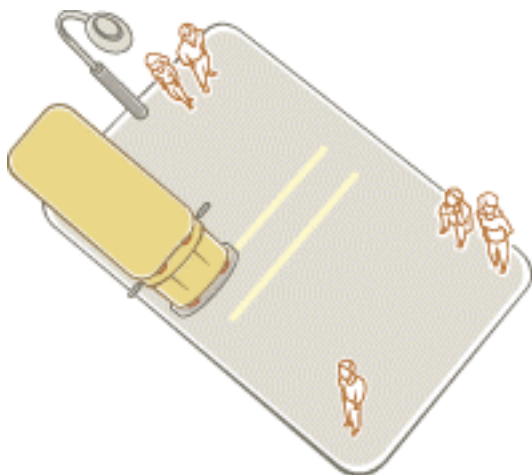
As we all sit down around the campfire ring, rehydrating with our water bottles, fellow journeyers begin asking each other questions: "How did you avoid those tree roots?" "How did you handle the altitude?" "Where did you get those shoes?" Tips are exchanged and adapted to the needs of the hiker. The conversation becomes sprinkled with laughter as common struggles are shared-- and somehow seem less daunting in the sharing: "Oh, you struggled with that last hill too? I was afraid I'd be the only one out of shape." "No, I probably would have stopped in that last valley if I'd been hiking this trail alone. But I'm feeling ready to head out again now." After dinner and sleep, they start out again the next morning.

Smaller breaks scheduled throughout the day provide a great opportunity to discuss questions with the guide and celebrate progress: "We've arrived at the waterfall. This is the one I told you about at the trailhead. Isn't it glorious?" Longer breaks in the evening provide time for stories to be exchanged over the campfires and relationships to be forged with fellow journeyers. The consistent pattern allows for recharging, learning, and connection when people need it, providing structure for the journey

At last we arrive at the destination. Everyone can feel the sense of accomplishment. "It was hard but we did it!" "Aren't you glad we didn't stay in the parking lot?" "There were times I thought I wasn't going to stick with it, but I'm so glad I did." Congratulations are exchanged all around and energy is running high. We begin exchanging plans for future hikes. "Hey, some of us are going to hike a 14er next month. Want to join us?" "That sounds great, but I've always wanted to hike the Grand Canyon. I think that's next on my list." "What about you?" "Me? I want to take my nieces and nephews along next time-- I bet they'd love this!"

Steps along the Path

The path serves as a model for developing leaders, whether your church is just getting started or has a long history. If you're a church planter, how do you develop and work with your core team? How do you extend people's development as the church grows? If you're an existing church pastor, how do you go about developing leaders? How do you ensure they're connected and resourced and challenged?



Motivation: the parking lot

The parking lot is the waiting place, a place for sitting and deciding whether to take the journey. Potential leaders in your ministry are deciding whether leadership is something they want to engage in. They'll be asking, "Will the end result be worth the time and energy I'll need to invest? Do I feel God calling me to this? Do I share the vision?"

As a planter, the parking lot is the place for recruiting an initial core team... people who will join you on the path, people you can develop as you guide them along the journey. These are the people you'll be

investing in as you teach them to invest in others. They'll need to be on board with the vision and commit to the process.

As an existing church pastor, the parking lot is the place for identifying those within the church with leadership potential, those you want to invest in with an eye toward them investing in others. This is also the place for the senior pastor and any other involved staff to count the cost, buy in themselves, and establish their own coaching relationships. The existing leadership will need to cast a clear and unified vision about what will be accomplished and what will be required. Once people have counted the cost and committed to the process, they leave the parking lot and move on to the trailhead.

Parking lot questions:

- What is the destination?
- What are the risks and rewards?
- What training and support is available?
- Is it worth the effort? Do we want to go?
- Are we willing to commit?

Initial orientation: the trailhead

At the trailhead, everyone gets a general overview of the process. That's where many initial questions are answered. What exactly are we wanting to accomplish? What will that look like? What other people or teams will I work with? This stage often, but not always, takes the form of an initial orientation. Events such as these are what most people consider training, but because it's only a small part of the overall training process, it's better described as orientation.



For a church planting core team, this orientation can take the form of a team retreat or a series of gatherings. Many initial questions can be discussed and addressed. What exactly do we want this new church to look like? What is our purpose, our mission, our vision, our values? How will we be different than other churches? Who will we reach? What will that look like? What other people, churches, or denominations will we be working with? What money will we need and how will we raise it? What church structures (governance, financial, etc.) will we eventually move toward? Will we move toward a formal launching of services or will we grow more organically? What will success look like?

For existing churches, an initial orientation of the first round of leaders is also necessary. They will be asking similar questions. What will leadership accomplish? What is the end goal? What will my role be? Which ministry areas will we be focusing on? Some churches may focus their leadership orientation around evangelism and reaching the harvest. Others may focus on a small groups method of outreach and ministry, making the orientation look more like a small group facilitator training. Yet another church may have everyone take spiritual gifts tests and engage them in different areas of ministry.

Whatever the initial orientation looks like, a few main principles must be followed:

- The content must match the desired outcomes.
- New leaders must be matched with a coach so a relational bond can be established at orientation.
- The planter's or senior pastor's presence at the orientation, even if he or she is not the direct contact or coach for the developing leaders, will go a long way toward creating support, unity, and vision around leadership development.
- Orientation must be a team event, as beginning in this more relational way sets the stage for working together for the rest of the journey.
- When the orientation is finished, specific next steps must be made clear so people can begin engaging the journey immediately.

Trailhead questions:

So where exactly are we going again?

Who else is going on this journey?

What do we want to accomplish?

What's going to happen once we get started?

What support is available along the way?

Show-how training: the trail's beginning

Jesus taught his disciples through a relational process we call show-how training:

- I do, you watch
- I do, you help
- You do, I help
- You do, I watch
- You do, someone else watches

These five steps can be applied to virtually any ministry task or skill. Whatever someone's first steps are on their journey, a coach can guide them through this hands-on way of learning. Skills training and content must be layered throughout the path. To the degree that learning doesn't incorporate experience, it begins losing value. So getting people started doing something experiential immediately after orientation is critical to moving forward on the journey. This process also builds in a degree of quality control and troubleshooting. If something isn't working, it's best to have that become apparent early on so it can be changed.

During the early stages of a church plant, core team members will be entrusted with various tasks-- tasks for which they may or may not already have the skills. Tasks could include engaging with the harvest, planning community service events, leading small groups or conducting research on the target group. Whatever their agreed-upon role, now is the time to start doing it, while the planter coaches them along the way. The planter will model leadership and skills for the core team members, who in turn are expected to begin developing others and practicing those skills.

The process of developing leaders within an existing church will look similar. Show-how training can be used by a pastor or coach in any ministry area for which leaders need to be developed. Often the array of options is much greater within than within a church plant, and different pastors and coaches will be engaged in developing new leaders in different areas of ministry. Leaders can engage in on-the-job training through involvement in leading worship, preaching, leading recovery groups, leading ministry teams... all by taking incremental steps according to the show-how process.

Beginning of the trail questions:

- Is this the right direction? The right pace?
- What obstacles need to be overcome?
- What's the first goal/milestone?
- What's the best approach?



Ongoing coaching: checking in with the guide

Coaching forms the central thread of the leadership development structure, and ensures that the needed resources flow in at the appropriate times. Coaching takes place directly during the show-how training, in a more individualized fashion along the way as progress is made, and in a peer-coaching context within the networks. So in a sense, the whole journey is coaching. But underscoring

the importance of ongoing coaching along the way encourages consistent progress.

After show-how training, new leaders are gaining confidence. They feel more able to perform ministry tasks on their own. Yet they still need and want the support of a coach walking alongside them, expressing confidence and acting as a sounding board.

Whether the new leaders are working within an existing church or a church plant, they will be presented with challenges and will need someone to help them best meet those challenges. If they are leading a small group, a conflict will arise. If they are leading worship, they'll have a lot of technical issues go wrong one Sunday. Yet they will also have successes to celebrate. Their small group is ready to multiply. Their engagement in the harvest has resulted in a friend coming to know Christ. Now what? They need to coach to celebrate, provide resources, and help them take the next steps.

Through consistent check-in times, the planter/coach follows up by assessing progress, celebrating milestones, looking at next steps, and adjusting the plan where necessary. Ongoing coaching along the way encourages consistent progress and consistent quality in the development of new leaders. It also supplies the necessary relational support for new leaders to feel they are connected to something larger than themselves and to keep them tied into the vision. Without this support, new leaders can lose vision in less than a month.

Guide questions:

- What progress can we celebrate?
- What's the next intermediate goal?
- What mid-course corrections do I need to make?
- How can we improve?

Resourcing networks: campfire conversation

A network is a supportive, relational environment that facilitates personal spiritual growth and the accomplishment of biblical mission. Good networks mean we are not walking the path of ministry alone-- we are helping each other along the way. A good network is relationally committed, covenanting together and providing consistency for those who are a part of it. It provides support for those who are committed to traveling down the same path together.



Periodically, every team needs a breather, a time to sit down around a campfire, rehydrate, and share stories and experiences. The pastor or planter who pushes a team onward toward the vision without intentional breaks or rest stops will encounter serious negative consequences. People need these times to connect with each other, celebrate, commiserate, and re-energize. They need to feel a part of something larger, and they need to feel valued by their teammates.

Existing churches may call these campfire breaks many things: leadership community meetings, leadership team retreats, or leadership appreciation events. However, the event must follow the structure and purpose of a network or it can become simply another content-training time or a social event celebration. Core teams for church

plants can schedule these network times in as team retreats. In some cases, other people from outside the team may be included, such as an outside coach or a representative from the denomination or the mother church. In many cases, they can bring additional resources and perspectives to share with the team, refresh them, and help create energy and excitement about the vision and the path that lies ahead.

Campfire questions:

- What are others doing?
- How can I learn from them?
- What can I offer them?
- How can we support each other?

End of the trail: celebration at the destination

Eventually, the new leaders reach the end of the path—their destination. They may have gained competence in a particular area, or accomplished a specific goal such as multiplying a small group or launching a ministry team. The whole team may have accomplished something, such as the launch of the first service of a church plant. Whatever the specific goal, the end of the trail is a time for celebration. All of the hard work, the cost that was counted at the beginning of the trail, has paid off. Coaches, pastors, and planters need to be intentional about celebrating the successes and accomplishments at the end of the trail. When you climb a mountain, you don't immediately turn around and head back down... you stay there and enjoy the view.

The end of the trail is also a good place to look back and reflect, to glean learnings from their journey. Coaches, planters and pastors can ask good questions to help



people reflect intentionally on their experiences. What was harder than we thought? What did we handle well? What do we wish we'd done differently? What did we miss? Where did we run into the unexpected? And finally, what can we do with these learnings? How can we pass them on to others?

The end of the trail is also a good time to be thinking about future journeys. What are the next steps for us? The next goals? How do we want to be involved in growing, planting, and multiplying churches in the future? There are always new and different destinations... new paths, new journeys. They may be over different terrain, with different destinations or goals, and with different people alongside us. But until the whole world knows Christ, there will always be new journeys ahead of us.

Destination questions:

- What have we accomplished?
- What have we learned?
- What is the next opportunity?
- Who else can join us?

It's a marathon, not a sprint



We're always looking for the quick fix, the easy answer. But it's just not that way in life or ministry. There is no weight-loss pill that works without diet and exercise. There is no quick fix. We're in a marathon, not a sprint. But if we have a vision for developing leaders, a path to reach that goal, and encouragement along the way, those who are willing to make the commitment can get there. It may take time, energy, effort, but we can bring that vision into reality.

There is a cost. And we need to count that cost at the outset to determine if we really are committed to the process of developing and raising up leaders.

When Bob was 12 years old, he wanted to build a car to race in the Soap Box Derby. His father and the coach sat down with him and gave him this choice: "You can do it to have fun or you can do it to win. If you want to do it to win, here's what it's going to take. . . ." And they laid out the hours of hard work, the commitment. "We'll be here to help you, but you're the one who's going to do it. And you're going to keep redoing it until it's right. And you're not going to quit." Because of that strong, go or no-go discussion, Bob strongly committed to the process. He stayed with it through 12 hour days of standing in the heat of the garage, of working on it while the other boys were playing. During that time, he needed the encouragement of his father and his coach. But he also needed the commitment he had made to the process, or he would have given up.

If you are one of the committed, it can start with you. Not everyone needs to be on board. By starting with just those who are willing to do what it takes to move the vision forward, a strong team is formed. Movements always start small at the beginning and grow from there, picking up momentum along the way.

A few first steps

Get coaching

Not sure where to start? Connect with CoachNet for leadership coaching. We can come alongside you to help you clarify your vision, reflect on your options, and create and implement a plan for success.

Design your own path

Depending on your goals and your ministry context, your path will need to look different from others. We'd love to talk with you about how to design your own path—a customized approach that will work in your organization with your people. We help people work with flexible templates that change along with the needs and culture of each ministry. Talk with us and design your own path.

Learn to coach with excellence

The common thread of developing leaders is coaching. Do you need to strengthen your coaching skills? Do you need trained, quality coaches in your ministry? Do you want to create a reproducible coaching system? You'll want to check out CoachNet's coach certification program, available to both individuals and groups. Instead of providing a seminar and then hoping that the coaches-in-training develop high quality, CoachNet's coach certification creates a holistic system for training coaches: skills training, on-the-job coaching experience, coach mentoring along the way, skills assessment, and customized planning for continuing improvement. Connect with us for details.

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