

ECN Starts Center for Empowerment Coaching for Christian College

By Tim Cosby

As most of you know, I started coaching professionally in 2009 after 13 wonderful years on staff at Bella Vista Church. I could never have imagined what God would do in the space of 2 ½ years! Six months after starting my private coaching practice, Terra Nova, I hired Mike McGervey to be my business coach. After about 5 months we started Empowerment Coaching Network with the goal of training people in churches to coach. Since June of 2010 we designed a 16 hour skill based training process that equips people with the skills and confidence to start coaching, we published our first book: *Coaching Based Ministry*, and we have equipped over 170 Christian leaders to coach.

We knew that it was going to take more than just the two of us to accomplish the mission God gave us, so we began to seek a strategic alliance with an organization that could help us reach more people with our coaching training. God did that late last year when the President of a local Christian college attended one of our training workshops. Let's just say that God had bigger plans than we did. Grace Bible College has contracted with Empowerment Coaching Network to start the ***GBC Center for Empowerment Coaching***. We'll celebrate a formal launch this fall but we're officially underway.

What is the purpose of the CEC?

We don't just coach people; we train people to coach! The Center will provide skill-based coaching training that is affordable, accelerated and accessible. Our primary target is the church because we believe coaching is the most effective process for guiding spiritual transformation, personal growth and leader development. And we want to be the best provider of peer-coach training in the nation.

Why Grace Bible College?

We were approached by the President of Grace late in 2011 to dream with him about the best way to help GBC create a culture of coaching on their campus, and also to reach out to churches and the West Michigan community with coaching. President Kemper and some of his leadership team experienced the power and process of coaching firsthand and saw it as an effective tool with which to equip their students, staff, faculty, supporting churches and surrounding community.

We can't think of a better base of operation for coaching than a Christian college, where the Center can equip people with both academic and non-academic coaching training. Grace will have over 500 students in both undergrad and Adult Online programs this fall, and they want the Center to be positioned to meet the growing need for coaches and coach training in the coming years. Some of you may know that coaching is exploding in the business world and is just now beginning to impact churches and Christian organizations. We are excited about bringing this kind of skill based coaching training to the church, and we believe the need for competent coaches will continue to grow.

Who owns the Center?

Grace Bible College owns and operates the Center, so it will fall under their 501-C3 non-profit status. They are contracting the services of ECN to staff and run the Center, and we will license all of our training programs to be used by the Center. Eventually the Center will be staffed with employees hired by GBC but during its development our ECN team will provide the leadership and program development needs of the Center.

Who will staff the Center?

Mike McGervey – Director of Instructional Design and Training

Wayne Schaaf – Director of eLearning

Tim Cosby – Executive Director, Trainer

Kim Gleason – Assistant Trainer

We are preparing additional trainers and coaches to assist us as the Center develops.

Where will the Center be housed?

GBC is planning to provide office space in the Jack Dean Administration building where students and staff will have easy access to coaching services.

What will the Center offer?

ECN Level One Training (church and corporate)

Initially, the Center will offer the 2-day ECN Level One Training: Developing the Heart and Skills of a Coach. This 16-hour skill based training has been effective in equipping over 170 leaders to coach, since our pilot in August, 2010. This basic training will remain the core of what the Center offers. Because the Center belongs to GBC and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and by the Commission on Accreditation of the Association for Biblical Higher Education, our training can be counted toward the State Board Continuing Education Units required for all Michigan teachers. We are also seeking certification from other professional accrediting organizations that require continuing professional education for their members, such as attorneys, accountants and social workers. We also have a corporate version of our training and hope to offer our first corporate training this fall.

JobsConnect Training

We are seeking a grant to begin the marketing and delivery of our JobsConnect coach training program. This 1-day training provides coaches with the process and resources to begin coaching people in churches and organizations who are unemployed. Recent studies have shown that between 10% - 20% of people in a given church are either unemployed or seriously underemployed. The average length of unemployment in Michigan is just over 40 weeks. Social agencies and churches have shown an interest in incorporating this coaching based ministry in their organizations, so we are seeking some grants to enable us to develop this program to reach the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time.

Coaching Certification

We will also be offering a 6-month coaching certification program, beginning September 2012, for our Level One graduates who would like to coach on a more professional level. This program will be delivered online in both synchronous and asynchronous formats. If you are interested in becoming equipped to coach at a professional level, please contact me. (616-443-9190)

Academic Coaching Course offerings

We will be offering our first under-grad course as well as our Adult on-campus cohort course in January, 2013.

Beginning September, 2013, we will be ready to offer our Adult Online Coaching course through the GBC Adult and Online program, which is currently serving over 200 students worldwide.

Where will the training workshops be held?

Family Christian Stores has been partnering with ECN since 2011 to serve as the primary public training site for our workshops. They will continue to serve in this capacity as the Center is developed. Grace Bible College will also provide on-site training space and we are working with several other local social agencies who have offered to provide training space. The Center will also bring their trainings to organizations that have more than 12 people to be trained at one time. We will also offer online training options as we develop more coaching programs.

What other services will the Center offer?

1. One-hour workshop on Coaching Based Ministry for churches and Christian organizations.
2. 30-minute (free) presentation to explain the benefits of our Level One training for leaders in church and business.

3. Consulting services for churches and organizations who want to create a culture of coaching. This will incorporate our Coaching Based Ministry Benchmarking Assessment Tool to help leaders identify and close the gaps in their ministries through a coaching process.
4. Speaking engagements suitable for church or civic gatherings.

Where do we see the CEC in 5 years?

Grace would like for us to design coaching curriculum for a future online Master's program and a Coaching Based Ministry major for traditional students.

We will be developing additional Coaching Based Ministry "programs," similar to our JobsConnect coaching program. Areas under consideration are: Coaching Based Evangelism; Coaching Based Discipleship; Coaching Based Parenting; Coaching Based Social Ministry, to name a few.

Our dream is to design the Center in such a way that it can be replicated in other colleges and universities that want to create cultures of coaching. My dream is to have a Center for Empowerment Coaching in all 50 states, a goal that my grandchildren will perhaps help to fulfill.

What happens to Terra Nova Coaching?

Part of the agreement with the Center was that I would be able to continue coaching individual clients through my private coaching practice: Terra Nova. Because of the time and effort necessary to build a self-sustaining Center, most of my energies will be focused on directing and administrating the Center. My love for coaching has only grown over the last 2 ½ years, so I plan to keep coaching, though I will have to adjust my client load. I love to help leaders enter into the new territory of their life purpose with confidence and joy. If you or someone you know is working through a major transition and would like to experience the power of coaching to help them break through to the next level, I'd love to explore those opportunities with you.

What will happen to the Terra Nova Coaching Newsletter?

Because of my new responsibilities in developing the Center, I will be sending out a newsletter 6 times a year instead of monthly. Thank you for your interest in coaching as a subscriber to the Terra Nova Newsletter!

God bless you.