



Transforming People  
Impacting our World

## Evangelical Free Church of Crystal Lake

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**Dr. Robert O. Page**  
Senior Pastor

Dear Friends,

I've been involved in pastoral ministry for more than 30 years. Something happened a few years ago that opened my eyes to the need for One-to-One mentoring. My wife, Linda, and I were counseling with a husband and wife who were trying to put their marriage back together after his marital infidelity. When his affair was in its early stages, this man was in a growth group in our church with 5 other men. I led this growth group! During one of our counseling sessions, the husband asked me this question, *Pastor, why didn't I get it?*

He was asking, *What is wrong with me that I could have been in the Word and in fellowship with other brothers in Christ and yet I would have such duplicity in my life?* That question began to haunt me such that I decided to do an inventory of my own discipling efforts. As I reviewed my life journey, I discovered some things that were surprising and shocking. They have to do both with the **product** and the **process** involved in discipleship.

Our church's mission is to **transform people to impact their world through Christ**. The transformation we seek produces Christ-likeness. II Corinthians 3:18 says, *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* Our desire is to see God's people become conformed to the likeness of His Son--to become Christ-like so they are living the Christ-life.

In 1978 I began discipling men one-to-one as I was serving a rural church in Nebraska. The first two men I ever disciplined were a school teacher and an auto mechanic. My strategic desire at that time was to equip these men to be the next generation of leaders in this small town church. In that congregation, I had noticed that the men who were my father's age were not effective spiritual leaders. Perhaps it was because of the impact of the Great Depression or World War II, but they were great servants who, unfortunately, lacked in Bible knowledge and true Christ-likeness. I was determined to change that by discipling these two men and then have them help me in discipling other young men.

Do you know where those first two men I disciplined are today? The teacher is the country leader for Evangelical Free Church missions in the Philippines and the auto mechanic is an administrator at Wheaton College. God had an entirely different plan in mind for them, but other men that the three of us did disciple are today's spiritual leaders at that rural church.

In the late 1980s growth groups became the rave. Guilt trips were laid on pastors challenging us to multiply our time and efficiency by discipling five or six at a time instead of just one. And I bought into it. So after 11 years of discipling one-to-one, I spent the next 13 years discipling men in group contexts.

But now, as I scour the landscape of the men I have been privileged to pour my life into, I have come to a startling discovery: **the men I disciplined one-to-one have a far greater depth of maturity--they have had more significant walks with Christ--and they are in more responsible leadership positions than those I disciplined in groups. The product was so much better through one-to-one mentoring.**

By and large the men I disciplined one-to-one have not faltered in their faith. And I there are at least two reasons for that:

1. In one-to-one mentoring Scripture memory was always included. God's Word changes human hearts. As we are told in Psalm 119:9, 11 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.* God's Word is indeed powerful and active, sharper than a two-edged sword--and when it is hidden in our hearts, it continues a good work into the future.
2. Men oftentimes will not expose their hearts and their struggles in a small group situation like women will. Men tend to be enormously guarded. And yet in one-to-one mentoring, it happens. I am seeing it happen with the men I am mentoring right now.

It's because of these observations, that I have become convinced that one-to-one mentoring must be an essential component of our discipleship process within our church. As a result, we have revised our church's Philosophy of Ministry to specifically include one-to-one mentoring as a significant building block. Our church uses the One-to-One **RealFaith** materials from *LifeBuilders*, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

As we have let people know about the availability of this ministry, it is the men who are jumping on the bandwagon. One-to-one works well with their difficult schedules and travel commutes here in the Chicago suburbs. They can do it on their lunch hour or on their way to work in the early morning, and not feel like they are neglecting their families.

Beyond that, I think that one-to-one mentoring has the attractiveness of ministering to the soul of the "under parented" man who never connected with his own father. So many of our men have this father wound because of an abusive or absentee dad. This mentoring is being used of God to mend those hurts. I truly praise God for the impact this ministry is having on our church family as now well more than 150 people are involved in one-to-one mentoring, with about 65% of those being men.

I am seeing some of my pastoral staff, elders and other spiritual leaders grabbing hold of one-to-one mentoring to the point that some of them are into their third or fourth generation of men who are being transformed through the power of God's Word and these life connections. I personally am doing one-to-one mentoring with a young man who was the drummer in a secular rock band and whose hair used to change colors, from blue to red to green to blond, from week to week. He has become like another son to me and recently he made the determination, together with his other band members, to change the direction of their music so that it brings glory to God and proclaims His message of Gospel truth. Someone commented to me recently that they can't believe how much this young man has changed in the last two years. He is now mentoring a young businessman in our church as spiritual reproduction continues. To God be the glory, great things He is doing!

*Pastor Bob*

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