

Mentors Help 'Process' Experiences, Says Editor

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Dr Andrew Goh, Honorary Editor of Impact magazine and Chairman of the Singapore Advisory Council of World Vision International, speaking Tuesday at CREST Christian Book Corner on the topic of spiritual mentoring. (Photo: The Christian Post)

Expressing her wish for the New Year, the movie star said she hopes to be lucky in love because she has had five divorces already.

That actress would benefit from her experiences if only she took time to reflect on them, suggested Dr Andrew Goh of Impact magazine.

Dr Goh drew on the example to highlight the importance of self-reflection. It is the 'number one' skill in mentoring, he added.

"If you don't process (life experiences) properly, it could be very bad," said the Nanyang Technological University PhD in Human Resource Personnel Selection. "If you have a good coach, what could be bad could be good."

The Bible points out that God is working for the good of those who believe in Him. Scripture records the story of Joseph the patriarch. Although he was sold by his older brothers into slavery, Joseph was not bitter. He understood that everything happened so he could become the prime minister of Egypt and save his family and others from a famine.

"God is permitting things to happen," said Dr Goh, a Riverlife Church and Bartley Christian Church (BCC) pioneer. "God is arranging appointments or disappointments, accidents, to shape us to what He wants us to be."

Although some life experiences could be painful, good mentors can help their mentee to reach a stage where they are glad to have had those experiences. Citing an example, Dr Goh said that nobody can comfort a widow like another widow.

Good mentors are especially needed in Singapore, which is 'very pragmatic', the Singapore Navigators pioneer emphasised. Singaporeans need someone to ask them what God is doing in their lives.

All Christians should be actively mentoring others, Dr Goh stressed. "If you have not disciplined (sic) anyone in the past twelve months, you are disobedient," he said.

The international speaker was addressing some 30 people on spiritual mentoring Tuesday at CREST Christian Book Corner. The talk was organised by the Singapore Christian Foundation to promote its new book on the life of the late Pastor John Willis of BCC, *An American We Are Grateful For*.

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It is also the duty of mentors to pose questions that cause their mentee to reflect. The Bible is filled with such 'powerful' questions, noted the former Youth For Christ Executive Director. Some of those questions actually changed the lives of the people addressed.

Dr Goh posed a question of his own. To those who wished him a Happy New Year, he would ask in turn: What's going to be new for you?

Another possibility is to get people to consider 'what if' questions. People who say they are too old to do anything for God could be asked what they would do for Him if they were not too old. Similar questions could be asked of those who say they have no time or no money or that they are not talented enough for ministry.

None of those things should hinder from Christian service. That is because God can use anybody who is available for Him, Dr Goh explained.

A third mentoring skill is intuitive listening. Listening skills like keeping good eye contact, making affirmative sounds, turning the head, tucking in the chin should be practiced. Beyond that, it is important to listen for 'the story behind the story', expressed the motivational trainer and management consultant.

Of Pastor Willis, Dr Goh said: "His very life was an influence." The American, who started his ministry at BCC at 62 years of age, would always carry Christian tracts on him to pass to those interested. Pastor Willis served in the Singapore church until his death on 10 April 2004, at the age of 99.

When the editor highlighted an observation that Singapore Christians are no longer distributing tracts, a female attendant remarked that the practice is forbidden. To that, Dr Goh pointed out that Christians can still distribute tracts as long as they are sensitive to other faiths. He also encouraged believers to pass good books on to others.

During a question-and-answer session, Dr Goh commented on the largely untapped potential in Christians who belong to the baby-boomer generation. Most of these people are financially self-sufficient, and willing to devote to a noble cause, he pointed out.

The speaker also remarked on the vast potential of overseas missions. Rather than fretting on the lack of interest in Christianity here, Christians can be part of God's work in other places.

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