

## **Church and Clergy Coach Accomplishing More with Less**

*A Travel Free Learning Article*

By

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In tough economic times, not to mention tough leadership times, effective leaders are essential to keeping the church, judicatory, or denomination moving forward. I have been exploring, and experimenting for some time with the role of a *Coach in Residence*. What I'm discovering is that the coach approach often allows tasks to be accomplished or projects to be moved forward through the short-term, focused services of a Christian leadership coach working with an on-site leadership team.

I'm currently working, as part of my ministry through The Columbia Partnership, as a Church and Clergy Coach for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of NC. We are discovering more can be accomplished with less full-time staff, revenue, time and energy. Permit me to share a framework we are currently working with for the next year.

Effective churches for a 21<sup>st</sup> century world are those who pay attention to the context, streamline their organization to maximize their energy, budget and resources, and mobilize their membership inside and outside the walls of their church building. These are not unknown challenges for many churches. The unknown seems to be how to move from where or who we are without losing our identity and integrity. How do churches move into the challenges confronting them to reach a new generation?

These are the issues a coach loves to work with when the leaders and congregation are open to the Holy Spirit and exploration. The skills of a Christian leadership coach are a keen synthesis of deep listening on multiple levels, posing powerful and well-timed coaching questions, keeping a focus and alignment with the mission unique to the leader or group being coached, and moving them to find and take the next steps in forward movement. Coaching is not just about talking. In fact, we often say "you haven't really coached until there is action".

As a church and clergy coach I have the distinct privilege of watching the Holy Spirit move in people's lives in some very powerful ways. What fun! I also have the honor of walking with leaders and congregations who choose to face the unknown with faith, their fears with courage, and their challenges with intentionality. Walking with persons into these and other steep learning curves, within a confidential coaching relationship, has proven to bear abundant fruit more quickly than any skill set I have ever been taught.

Being coachable and determining coachability is key and essential for a meaningful coaching relationship to bear fruit. This is determined by assessing their openness to explore, openness to change, and willingness to discern the movement of the Spirit in their midst rather than just following their personal agendas.

Coaching is about asking powerful questions more than offering advice or counsel. That is left to consultants. Coaching is more about moving forward than unraveling the past. That is for counselors. When that chemistry is present, coaching may just be the most effective toolkit to tap into with a leader, pastor, church or group. Some of the powerful questions I'm working with these days seek to move churches to live out a missional lifestyle and ministry. What might be some powerful coaching questions a coach would use with churches on a missional journey? Consider:

1. What's working?
2. What's not working?

3. How does what you do and who you are line up with your divine mission?
4. What's missing?
5. What adjustments is the Holy Spirit calling you to make now?
6. What is needed to make the needed shifts?
7. Who can help make this happen?
8. How does our God evaluate our effectiveness in today's mission field?
9. What would please Jesus more?
10. Who is God calling us to be now?
11. How does this differ from who we have been?
12. What kind of leader do I need to be to make this happen in the next 6 months? 1 year?
13. How would we define success for our church?
14. How successful are we being in light of this definition?
15. What is needed now?

These are just 15 of the powerful coaching questions a missional leader or church might wrestle with in these days. Which three of these questions most resonate with you? What's that about? How will you discover the answer? A more thorough overview of the coach approach can be found in my new book ***Making Shifts Without Making Waves: A Coach Approach to Soulful Leadership***. This book is available at [TCP Resources Store](#).

### **Important Things to Know**

Eddie Hammett is a Ministry Partner with The Columbia Partnership. He is a certified coach with the International Coach Federation. He is also Church and Clergy Coach with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. Recent books of which he is the author or co-author are ***Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60***, ***Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age***, and ***Making Shifts Without Making Waves***. He is available for speaking and coaching with leaders, congregations, denominations, and parachurch organizations.

The Columbia Partnership is a non-profit Christian ministry organization focused on transforming the capacity of the North American Church to pursue and sustain Christ-centered ministry. ***Travel Free Learning*** is a leadership development emphasis of The Columbia Partnership. For more information about products and services check out the web site at [www.TheColumbiaPartnership.org](http://www.TheColumbiaPartnership.org), send an e-mail to [Client.Care@TheColumbiaPartnership.org](mailto:Client.Care@TheColumbiaPartnership.org), or call 803.622.0923.