

What pastors and congregations are saying about congregational coaching.....

As a result of our congregational coaching with Eddie we have experienced tremendous missional movement in touching our immediate community for Christ and, specifically, using the apartments that our church acquired in 2007 as a hub of ministry targeting the working poor, college students, and senior adults to meet educational, vocational, medical, and spiritual needs. Ministries such as work with the unsheltered homeless, a monthly medical clinic, an after-school program for children, college student work, a community garden, and the hiring of an Oakmont Community Center Minister who lives in the apartments are among a few examples that have emerged and/or been enhanced as a result of Eddie's coaching and from the influence of our weekly spiritual formation groups at Oakmont.

Dr. Greg Rogers, Pastor
Oakmont Baptist Church, Greenville, NC

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Process

The three-step process of orientation/reality check, assessment/discovery, and interpreting data/discernment worked well. The openness of the process as well as the adaptability to our context was refreshing. While a step-by-step guide would have alleviated some fear for the majority of leaders, I appreciated the way the method employed by Eddie stretched us beyond our comfort zones and linear ways of thinking. The staff and leaders were impacted the most. The impact was greatest in the area of being forced to come face-to-face with the realities of the world in which we live and the position of the church. The impact was also great in regards to the hope, excitement, and energy that were produced because of the journey. Likewise, relationships were depended and new ones began.

I would highly recommend this journey for congregations seeking to understand the reality of where they find themselves in order to discern ways to move forward beyond the four walls of the church.

Randy McKinney, Pastor
Longview Baptist, Raleigh, NC

First, I would like to offer my thanks for your guidance, your candor, and your expertise as Longview completes this discernment process in the coming weeks. One thing that has become clear to (most) all of the folks that have participated in the visioning sessions with you is the difference between a consultant and a coach!! :)

I have been doing some thinking as to what this has meant to me over the past couple of months. Although I haven't been able to participate in every action that has been recommended to complete the process, it has been very thought provoking, and really paradigm shifting in how I have thought about 'church'. And I guess that's the real objective, to shake 'conventional' beliefs and notions to the core, in order to reshape the mold of how our church interacts with those in the church community--those that live in the same physical vicinity as the church location, those that church members interact with on a regular basis, AND those that church members may simply encounter

intentionally or unintentionally. The key result of this to me has been the idea of expanding Longview's sphere of influence through utilizing the conventional 'strengths' we have, but also realizing that culture today (use of social media, busy lifestyles, falling 'regular' churchgoers) will make it hard for our church to grow in huge numbers (and also this really shouldn't be our metric of church 'success'), but presents huge opportunities to develop an expanded sphere of influence. And these opportunities--and new methods of interaction--must be embraced, because change is REAL, it's HERE, and it ain't going back to the 1960s, as some undoubtedly would like to see. And only those churches that embrace the opportunities given by the brave new world of 2011--and future--cultural mores are going to thrive in what our ultimate goal should be...simply, to have as much influence as we can in bringing people to a closer relationship to Jesus Christ. And to realize that, as much as we would like new members to fill our pews and our coffers, future 'success' for Longview won't be measured in the number of people that are members of our church, but will be measured in far less quantitative and definitive metrics.

Josh Spencer, Deacon

The greatest contributions of our coaching process were that it helped us focus on our future instead of our divided past, and it gave us three important priorities on which our highly diverse congregation could agree to focus. At the beginning of the process we were healing from a church split, and many in our congregation thought that we needed to discern the problems that caused people to leave and fix those problems.

Furthermore, our church members were pulling in different directions and advocating many different priorities.

Through our coaching process we identified many possible priorities, but Before we began we had a considerable amount of skepticism from some members about the coaching process. They believed that it was like a consultative process in which someone would come in, identify our problems, and propose changes. After that, we would promptly shelve the proposed changes. But the coaching process was different in that while we got a lot of good direction from Eddie, he led us to diagnose problems ourselves and come up with our own proposed changes. He would tell us what he thought when we asked him to, but he didn't push his opinions. we were able to develop a consensus on three that were most important.

Robert Prince, Pastor

FBC Waynesville, NC



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