



Dan Hotchkiss **Senior Consultant, Author, Seminar Leader**

Your objectives are the first consideration

Dan Hotchkiss asks, “What difference do you want our work together to make in your congregation?” Clarifying your objectives is the first step. Then Dan writes a proposal. “I want to become available to you as a full partner, doing what we need to do to get results.” Typically Dan works with clients for several months to a year or more, seeing them through a customized process of discernment, planning, and action. Normally the contract includes unlimited phone and e-mail coaching for designated leaders and a flexible schedule of on-site visits. Dan’s commitment is to help you to achieve your goals, rather than to spend a certain amount of time. “I like to set up the consultation so that I am fully a member of the team, and so that we share responsibility for moving the work along.”

Dan's areas of Focus

Dan has consulted with hundreds of churches and synagogues across the American religious spectrum on a wide variety of issues. Some areas where Dan is currently focusing his writing, teaching, and consulting include:

Planning

Healthy congregations have a clear sense of vision or mission that shapes who they are and what they do. In planning, it is often more useful to build on strengths than fret about weaknesses. Planning can be anything from choosing a short-term project that can be successful quickly to a long process of “holy conversation.” Dan helps congregations to choose the planning process that is right for them at a given moment. He leads the Alban seminar on planning, “Shaping Holy Conversations.”

Governance

Dan often helps congregations to move beyond frustrating and ineffective ways of managing the work of boards, clergy, and staff. Good governance starts with clearly defined roles and authority; it succeeds when lay and professional leaders lead ministry together as collaborating partners. How much time does your board or committee spend managing programs? How much time do your program leaders (paid and volunteer) spend seeking approval for choices they could be trusted to make on their own? True partnership begins with clear role boundaries, effective delegation, and a constructive system of accountability. Dan can help you whether you want to sharpen leaders’ skills, reorganize to grow, or consider an entirely new

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model for governance.

Clergy Coaching

Dan coaches his colleagues through regular conversation, homework assignments, feedback, and evaluation. Coaching begins with a no-charge conversation about the potential client's needs, anxieties, hopes, and objectives. Optionally, Dan will come to the client's place of work to "shadow" for a day, enabling him to observe the client's leadership style. The coaching conversations, which can take place on the phone or in person, typically happen monthly for an hour over a six-month period. Coaching clients can contact Dan by phone or e-mail to check in about issues as they arise.

Financial Assessment

Financial communication is a challenge for many congregations. Dan will examine your financial and giving records and provide a report answering the questions you identify, such as: Is our budget sustainable? Where are we headed? Do we depend too much on a few givers? What stewardship strategy will best move us toward our goals? Should we worry about debt? Are we handling invested reserves and endowment funds responsibly? How can we encourage members to add to these funds? A financial assessment can stand alone or serve as part of a larger planning process.

Dan is open to ideas for creative consultations that do not fit into any category.

Publications

- *Ministry and Money: A Guide for Clergy and Their Friends*, 2002, Alban Institute
- *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership*, 2009, Alban Institute
- Numerous articles on fundraising, mediation, planning, ministry, and technology

Background

Prior to consulting for the Alban Institute, the Reverend Dan Hotchkiss served congregations for twelve years and the Unitarian Universalist Association for seven. He has been a full-time Alban consultant since 2001. His areas of special interest include strategic and financial planning, congregational governance, clergy leadership, and social justice ministries.

Education

- B.A., Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio
- M.Div., Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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