



ILLINOIS Focus



Ron Aguilera, President

FIVE QUESTIONS CHURCH LEADERS SHOULD BE ASKING



should be? Is our church growing both spiritually and in numbers? Churches that are stuck and not bearing fruit hate this question. I don't believe healthy churches are necessarily big churches, but healthy churches are growing churches.

work? This question arises out of my understanding of Ephesians 4:12-13. Growing churches challenge people to use their gifts. It is the leader's job to equip others so that the efforts of a few will be multiplied.

As an aside, an unpopular related question is, "If a church has not had a baptism for 5, 6, 7 or 8

Those are the five questions that popped to my mind. I love the church. I love the mission God has given the church, ecclesia, the

Recently, I was talking to a colleague and he asked me a thought-provoking question, "What questions should church leaders be asking?" As I thought about this, here are some leadership questions that came to mind:

QUESTION ONE: When was the last time I heard from God? Am I doing what He called me to do? This is a question the Apostle Paul asks in Acts chapter 6 and is a great reminder that it's possible to be doing a ministry without doing the ministry God has called us to do. In other words, just because we are doing something, does not mean we are doing what God is asking us to do.

QUESTION TWO: What should our church be known for in our community? If we could come to agreement on this, we would make great progress. What does the rest of the community know about your church? The answer will go a long way in determining whether or not you're really accomplishing your mission and vision.

WHICH LEADS ME TO QUESTION THREE: Higher learning. Cognitive Genesis. Are you clear on your mission? On your vision for what the church

years, is it really a church?" Not according to the New Testament.

QUESTION FOUR: Does your church have a clear discipleship plan? Is there a clear process to help people take steps in their faith journey, with the ultimate goal of becoming fully committed disciples/followers of Jesus? My observation is that many churches have not established a process beyond Sabbath morning. This is critical to being faithful to our mission.

QUESTION FIVE: Are you empowering the people of God to do God's

movement to which God has called us. We must be about the Lord's business. That is our calling. That is our mandate. So, what are the questions you are asking as a leader in the church?

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There is the logical and traditional form of leadership represented by a short command: “follow me.” Then there is the leadership style that promotes empowerment and collaboration: “work with me.” This form of leadership is largely used in the business context, as leaders assign responsibilities and encourage decision-making in a manner that holds all participants equally responsible. This approach to leadership puts those in charge, and those they lead, on an equal playing field with the overarching message, we are a team.

Empowerment has become a popular buzzword in many workplaces in recent years, as well as within church leadership. Empowerment can be defined as, the act of giving one’s power to another so that he or she may feel free and inspired to do good work. Jesus exhibited this kind of empowerment when He encouraged Peter to feed and care for His sheep, to tend to his flock just as He would (John 21). In reality, Jesus shared His role as leader with Peter. We see Jesus engaging Peter in a way that reaffirms His belief that Peter is responsible, trustworthy, and capable of leading (John 21:15-17). Jesus exemplifies what it truly means to humble one’s self, and say to another, “you too, can do great things.” When the ego is at play, it becomes difficult to share one’s power in this way. We are often ruled by the false narrative that we as leaders are responsible for enforcing rules, demanding outcomes, and reproaching less than ideal work. Jesus teaches us a different approach to leadership, wherein the leader becomes the nurturer of skill and determination, rather than enforcer of judgment and punishment. This approach to leadership, the one that empowers and nurtures, is the true form of, “having your back.” To lead is not to take by the hand and pull forward, but rather, to stand behind, and say, “I’ve got your back.”

**“ RATHER, TO STAND BEHIND, AND SAY,
I’VE GOT YOUR
BACK ”**

There is no doubt that leadership can be draped with the veil of self-indulgent power, and to some, this veil can be intoxicating, even addictive. The decision to lead by empowering others can be threatening to the core of a leader because the act of relinquishing control is often scary. There was a time when leaders were convinced that their job was to exert power over others. Thankfully, we have seen a shift in this kind of thinking. The



Leading from **BEHIND**

Ismael Gama, MBA, MA
Senior Vice President &
Chief Mission Officer
AMITA Health

practice of humility teaches us that the empowerment of others is the most effective way to lead. As Bill Gates said, “As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.” As we move forward into a new generation of leadership, we must take with us the message that leading from behind is the embodiment of compassion through Christ.

Empowerment grants us an opportunity to inspire others by giving purpose, direction, and intention for common goals. When we adopt a new approach and part ways with what is familiar, we take a step forward into the unknown, to do so is an act of courage and faith. As we take this next step forward in leadership, I invite you to do so with this same courage and faith. It can be difficult to hold back the natural impulses to intervene by taking back control, but we must remember to be patient with ourselves as we begin a new chapter.

To empower others, one must feel empowered themselves. There is a passage from Joshua 1:9 which demonstrates how God empowers Joshua through leadership. God says: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is within you wherever you

go." This is the promise of empowerment: No matter what kind of design I make, or path I follow, God is always with me.

I have a picture in my office of a shepherd leading a group of sheep. The interesting thing about this picture is the position of the Shepherd. The shepherd is not ahead of the sheep but behind. The shepherd's herding dog is right next to him, looking up at his face waiting for a command. There is an article from the *Harvard Business Review* on, "Leading from Behind" by professor Linda Hill. She talks about the work of a shepherd and how they lead from the rear of the flock. Linda Hill says, "This style of leadership allows the more nimble and agile to run ahead so that others can follow. Leadership as we move forward into the future will require us to "Lead from Behind."

Nelson Mandela said, "It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. The people will appreciate your leadership." (Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, 1995, 22)

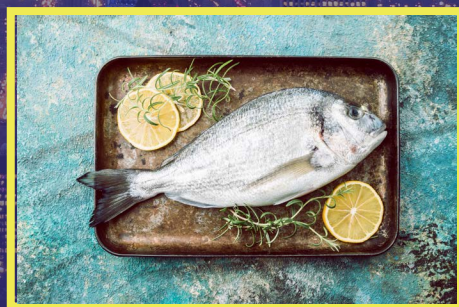
We are called to lead His flock. My prayer is that we practice leading from behind as we empower women and men to flourish in God's grace.

-Ismael Gama



Me contaba un amigo que al preparar un pescado al horno, su esposa le cortaba la cabeza al pez. A él le parecía raro porque la charola era grande y entraba todo el pez. Él se acerca a la esposa y le pregunta: ¿Por qué le cortas la cabeza al pez? La esposa lo mira, mira al fallecido pez, mira a la ventana y vuelve a mirar al esposo para contestar: Pues no sé, así me enseñó mi madre.

Uno de los más grandes errores que cometemos en la vida es no saber el porque de las cosas que hacemos y eso nos afecta en todo pero en especial en la iglesia. ¿Por qué hacemos lo que hacemos? ¿Por qué lo hacemos como lo hacemos? Por veces visitando a iglesias y a pastores me encuentro con esa situación: hacer cosas pero no saben porque las hacen.



Es urgente saber contestar una pregunta: ¿Porque hacemos lo que hacemos? Si no tenemos eso claro lo que naturalmente va pasar es que trabajamos mucho pero los resultados son pocos. La consecuencia de trabajar mucho teniendo pocos resultados es la frustración, el desánimo o mismo la depresión. Pero no para en eso. Al fin el resultado es que honestamente comenzamos a creer que el trabajo no se puede hacer o pasamos a contentarnos con resultados mediocres y casi inexistentes.

El Poder Del “PORQUE”



Rubén Bullón,
Associate Ministerial
Director and
Hispanic Coordinator

Tristemente una de las cosas que más escucho como evangelista son pastores y líderes de iglesias diciéndome: Aquí la predicación del evangelio no es fácil. Aquí nos cuesta mucho ganar una persona para Cristo. Es asustador cuantas iglesias están acostumbradas – porque elijo no creer que estén contentas o satisfechas – a resultados pobres y mediocres.

Es asustador ver iglesias usando textos bíblicos para justificar su fracaso como agencias ganadoras de almas. Excusas como: “somos la puerta estrecha” o “Es difícil seguir a Cristo” o mismo “los otros no predicán el evangelio eterno”, son comunes en labios de líderes/pastores de iglesias que no crecen ni avanzan.

Si queremos avanzar en todo en nuestra vida, pero en especial con nuestra iglesia necesitamos tener claro nuestro porque, nuestra misión, nuestro propósito.

En la iglesia el porque debería ser: porque Cristo nos ha dejado una misión que es predicar el evangelio a todo el mundo. Basado en ese porque deberíamos movernos, planear, trabajar. La predicación del evangelio debe ser el centro de la vida de la iglesia y su principal

razón. Basados en eso déjame hacerte algunas preguntas: ¿Que estamos dispuesto hacer por ese porque? ¿Qué cambios crees que deberíamos hacer para ajustarnos a ese porque?

Cuando una iglesia, un líder o un pastor no entienden la importancia del porque entonces la rutina, la costumbre y las tradiciones pasan a dictar todo lo que hacemos y naturalmente regresamos al punto donde todo esto comenzó: frustración.

Te dejo algunos consejos

- 1- Deja claro tu porque – Es una claridad de rumbo que nos hace llegar al destino final
- 2- Reevalúa tus métodos – El porque se mantiene pero los métodos pueden ser adaptados o reajustados.
- 3- Dedícate a tu porque – Con tu porque claro, basa todas tus decisiones en ese porque. Elige caminar, hacer o planear basado en ese porque. Eso hará con que tu trabajo sea más efectivo.

En la historia inicial el señor va a preguntar a la suegra porque le cortaba la cabeza al pez. Ella le dijo que así había aprendido de su madre también. Preguntó a la abuelita y ella con sencillez le contestó: en mis tiempos las charolas no eran grandes así que para que entrara el pez le cortábamos la cabeza. Ella tenía un porque. La hija y la nieta hacían sin saber el porque. ¿Nota usted la diferencia? Y usted, ya tiene claro cual es su porque?



“KILL AND EAT”

John Grys, Executive Secretary

More than one person gets knocked off their horse in the book of Acts. Chapter 9 tells the well-known story of Saul coming to terms with the One he persecutes. He needed light and a fall to come to his senses. And yet, as we know his story, it took much more than that for Saul to become Paul.

The less-known leader who gets knocked off his horse we find in the following chapter. No, there isn't a physical horse, but, like Saul, there is a light and there is a voice. And... it occurs around a potluck. Yep, you read correctly, a potluck led to a fall. (I'll refrain from any comments here!)

Every leader gets knocked off a horse. And the words reverberating in the mind of Peter are as follows, “Kill and eat.” And we can tell by Peter's response that he is just as stunned as Saul. Perhaps even more. The richness of this text and the limitations of space do not allow me to pursue this passage further. So, let me focus here.

What Peter was unaware of at that moment, he was being prepared to experience. And I find in this moment, in these two worlds about to collide, a powerful window into leading in these times. For, approaching his town, approaching his residence (a whole other story), were those

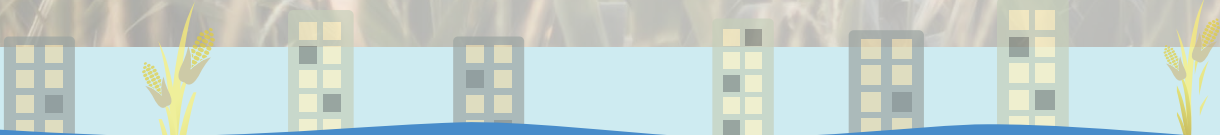
people, those “Others” he had been taught all his life to shun and reject—to not associate with in the least. All of Peter's life, experience, learning, and knowledge up to this moment had not prepared him for who stood outside his door. This kill-and-eat moment became necessary if the emerging church of Jesus His Savior would be able to enter into a resurrection future.

If Peter, so close to that resurrection moment, still needed to go beyond his mental models, paradigms, and worldviews, for the church to meet what lay beyond that door, I can't help but think that we, two-thousand years past that resurrection, likely need the same. The church needs to be knocked off her horse. The transforming moment of Saul becoming Paul and Peter opening a door for the “Other” must also visit we who claim to follow that same Jesus. Saul's experience required a fall. Peter's experience, yes, even post-Resurrection, required a fall.

And this sobers me. For the church of Jesus to embrace who lay beyond the door, a requisite fall must occur. For the church of Jesus to move beyond Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 1.8), a fall became necessary. As the Resurrection God knocked Saul off his Damascus Road and Peter off his Exclusionary

Road, so, today, I wonder if we require a certain type of fall. Is it possible that all Saul and Peter had known up to that point would be insufficient for who lay outside their doors?

Is it possible that all we have known, experienced, studied, and pursued up to this point in ecclesiastical history, in congregational history, is insufficient for those outside our doors? Is it possible that for the church today, wherever it may be expressed, we must experience something other than we have been? As has been said, yesterday's answers cannot provide for tomorrow's questions. Both Saul and Peter needed to see the familiar in ways so unfamiliar that nothing would ever be the same again. In the world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, the frames of reference and the deeper points of reference are insufficient—just as they were for Saul and Peter. Somewhere, perhaps on a roof or around a potluck, a voice calls today, “Kill and eat.” Unbeknownst to us, there are those beyond the door waiting for a response. How shall we answer?

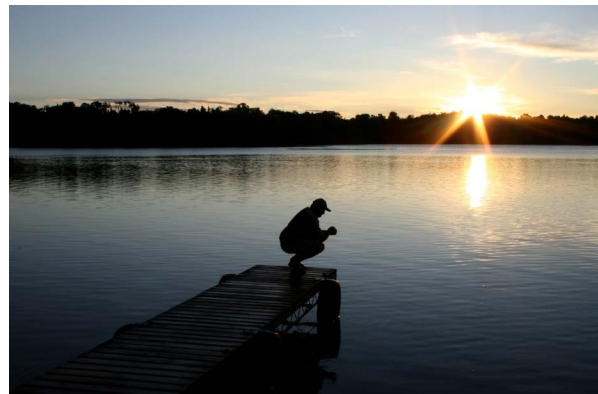


INTRODUCING...

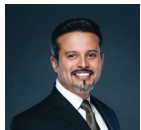
Matthew Healy recently began at the Illinois Conference as Property Manager. He has lived in Chicagoland his whole life. He and his wife Shelly, the PreSchool teacher at Hinsdale Adventist Academy, have two teenage daughters. He enjoys woodworking and playing the guitar, but most of all spending time with family. Matthew has been involved in the construction industry since 1988, and for the last 20 years as a finish carpenter and custom stair builder. Matthew came to know the Lord 19 years ago. He says, "It's easy to share the gospel with people when I realize we're all sinners in need of a Savior."

CAMP MEETING**"KNOWING JESUS INTIMATELY"**

Come away from your busy lives
and spend a quiet moment at
Camp Akita,
enjoy intimate time with God,
and have fun with your family.



Highlights of Camp Meeting 2019 include:

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

Elden Ramirez has made it a priority to uplift the character of Christ and our Heavenly Father. He currently serves as the President of the Montana Conference.

MEETING AREA:

The new Pathfinder Training Center will be complete and this will be the first campmeeting that we will enjoy meetings in a permanent structure! Thank you for your support which makes these developments possible.

ACCOMMODATION:

Please note that accommodations are very limited. Plan to bring your tent to camp or come for the Sabbath. The campgrounds are spacious and peaceful. There are also local hotels in the nearby towns of Knoxville and Galesburg.

ACTIVITIES:

At Camp Akita you can be as quiet as you like or as active as you please by choosing from these great options:

- ☐ swimming ☐ canoeing ☐ climbing tower ☐ hiking ☐ zip line ☐
- ☐ pony rides ☐ frisbee golf ☐ seminar ☐ crafts ☐ archery ☐

www.ilcsda.org/campmeeting or call 630-856-2880.



Stacey DePluzer
Assistant to Youth Director

SUMMER CAMP: WHY NOT?

For some, the idea of sending their child to a sleep-away summer camp is incomprehensible. But what if we told you that it might actually benefit them? The American Camp Association lists 5 reasons why sending your children to summer camp could be really good for them. They say that attending summer camp helps campers to: develop independence, experience outdoor childhood fun and adventure, relax, get unplugged, and become better at making and keeping friends. Let's unpack those reasons:

DEVELOP INDEPENDENCE When you send them to camp, your children are getting the chance to learn how to thrive on their own. You give them the opportunity to strengthen their confidence and independence by not having to rely on you. Instead, they are given the space to think through various situations (under the guidance of our well-trained staff) for themselves, and then make their own decisions.

EXPERIENCE OUTDOOR CHILDHOOD FUN AND ADVENTURE Oh, the joys of childhood—sand castles, arts and crafts, lunch tables, nights around the campfire under the stars, songs that are permanently engraved in your head... those are the days we all long for. Sending your child to camp provides them with the chance to make those same memories. Memories that will last a lifetime.

RELAX Just like us, kids tend to find themselves stressed over many different things. From competitive sports, to A+ report cards, the pressure can definitely weigh on them. Summer camp is the place where a kid can be a kid.

GET UNPLUGGED Living in the world of technology, many of our kids don't know how to have fun without a phone in their hands or headphones on their ears. Camp is a place where they can learn and understand that life has so much more to offer than the internet.

BECOME BETTER AT MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS The bonds that our campers make at camp are bonds that tend to last. After a week or two of living together, laughing together, and just experiencing life together, kids learn to see a side of people they don't always have the chance to see. They are able to understand that there are people just like them that come from all different walks of life, and for them that isn't just exciting... it's important.

At Camp Akita, we want to give our campers every chance and opportunity to make all five of these reasons a reality. We'd love to have your children join us. Together let's experience the difference Summer Camp can make for them, for this life, and the life to come. See you there!

CAMP AKITA

DISCOVER JESUS. FOSTER FRIENDSHIP. CULTIVATE GROWTH.



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Did you know...

...that both this magazine, (the *Illinois Focus*) and the *FYI*, a weekly e-newsletter for employees and friends of the Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists from the desk of the President, Elder Ron Aguilera, is available by email right into your in-box? Go to the Illinois Conference website, www.ilcsda.org, and there on the homepage is a link to subscribe. Pass this information on to your interested family and friends and stay informed of the latest in the Illinois Conference!

Presenting Jesus **IRRESISTIBLY!**



Connect with us on Facebook!

www.ilcsda.org

Phone: 630.856.2850

Fax: 630.734.0926

Email: info@ilcsda.org

Address:

619 Plainfield Road
Willowbrook IL 60527

Illinois Focus Editor: Shona Cross
Design: Heather Lanphear

