

## **Developing leaders who develop more leaders**

### **By Bob Young**

Many of you know that a primary focus of my continued involvement in ministry and mission—now in a seventh year after my “official” retirement from salaried employment—is the development of healthy churches. Several factors are essential to church health. One aspect of healthy church function is the development of indigenous leadership. In the churches of Latin America, and in many U.S. churches—especially Hispanic churches, one of the more difficult challenges is developing and sustaining effective, biblical church leaders.

Establishing biblical organization in the churches is a significant step, but the structures must facilitate the mission of the church rather than frustrating it. Structures are support systems. If a church with elders is no more effective than it was without them, something is wrong with the leadership model. If the leaders do not facilitate ministry by the members, focus the mission, and develop spiritual maturity, something is wrong with the leadership model. Biblical leadership is relational, personal, present, enfolded, and reciprocal.

In my work, indigenous leaders are raised up by mentoring—spending time, maintaining contact, counseling, advising, and modeling. When leaders exist in a local church, an important part of their work is to be available to mentor future leaders. Current leaders should be able to answer the questions of succession—who is my replacement? Who are the next generation of leaders?

To all church leaders, I encourage you to identify the relational aspects of your calling. Who are you constantly in touch with as you lead? If you do not maintain contact, you may not be leading. You may find it helpful to analyze your own personal leadership by making three lists—those you are seeking to influence; those you are actively, diligently investing in; those you are personally discipling. The first group is ever-expanding and ever-changing as you establish new relationships as part of our daily Christian walk. The second group represents closer relationships and an increasing investment of time, energy, effort, and resources. Those in the third group can be described as your “Timothys.”

Every leader should be able to make these lists relatively quickly. Every leader should be able to name the members of the third group without hesitation. Let’s lead people, not just an organization!