

Questions for Aaron Adame 1-22-17

1) Could you please summarize any differences you see on line in the education, doctrinally or otherwise, between Hope International University (that we are very familiar with) and your present University.

- a. I don't know much about HIU (though, we do have a guy on our staff at Harvest who also is a professor there). I went online and looked at some of the values and doctrinal positions. I did not see anything different on there that would be of concern. The only noteworthy thing was their first core value: "To remain Christ-centered, biblically based and focused on serving the Church (love it) while maintaining the values of the Restoration Movement." Obviously, a point for HIU is to maintain their history and the tradition of the Restoration Movement (of course, we talked about this when I was up there). I attend CBU, which is a Southern Baptist College. At this point in the history of both academic institutions I would say that their goals are the same. I am not a Southern Baptist; however, I would have no problem signing the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. It is a rather open document, welcoming a variety of expressions that maintain *theologically conservative convictions*.
- b. Regarding academics, now I can't say this from personal experience, but I do know that CBU is much more recognized here in SoCal for their Christian Studies. I know that HIU is a good school with a lot of great degree programs. However, the Christian Studies faculty at CBU is top in their field. Furthermore, the program that I am in is even more rigorous of a degree program than just a Christian studies Degree and not offered at most universities. Furthermore, CBU's Christian Studies Department is the number one ranked school among Southern Baptist Universities.
- c. In short, I think HIU is a good school doing a good kingdom work and I hear good things. I saw nothing on the website that would make me think otherwise.

2) Describe your training and/or experience in the areas of leadership and management.

- a. Training: I have probably personally read just under 10 books on leadership over the last few years. Early on in my education I had an internship semester completely devoted to leadership. In this final semester of my degree program, I am in a class with the dean of the School of Christian Ministries (and one of the greatest examples of a leader I have ever met) called "Pastoral Leadership." I have also attended a few seminars on leadership over the years.
- b. Experience: Aside from the academic and theorizing aspect of leadership (books, seminars, and classes), for the last 11 years I have served in various leadership roles at my church. I served as a volunteer leader in youth ministry (discipleship groups, leading evangelism teams, organizing retreats, and assisting in establishing local High School Christian Clubs). I was also a worship leader. In this role I led the band (which if you're a musician, this is like herding cats, sometimes), created song lists, and lead the congregation in worship. I also started a satellite campus, which is

almost entirely a leadership position. I lead all the ministries and administrative aspects of the campus—ultimately, I was the final person responsible for that campus, both in its inception and in its maintenance and growth. Currently, serving as the High School pastor, I lead a staff, roughly 30 college-aged volunteers, and preach, teach, and counsel a group of around 200 students. Being at a large church has its pros and cons. But one positive for me is that I have been able to experience leadership at a high capacity, even at the lower levels of ministry.

- c. Personality: I absolutely believe that leadership is learned and cultivated. But I also believe that some people are more naturally wired and gifted in leadership. I would say that I am a natural leader who works really hard at being a better one. Most books that you read on leadership will leave out what I believe to be the most important part of leadership: Teachability. A leader should always be learning and growing; when they stop doing that they have stopped leading.

3) Please bullet point your major truth doctrines: such as Virgin birth, Salvation requirements, baptism etc.

- a. *Please see attached document for a “personal” statement of faith. I have adapted this from looking at various other churches’ examples.

4) How do you see the Holy Spirit and His work in the world today?

- a. *Please see attached Statement of Faith.

5) What is the main purpose for meeting together as a church each week? Who is the target of the service and what is the goal?

- a. *Please see attached Statement of Faith.
- b. I will elaborate here that the “target audience” of a Sunday morning church gathering is the believer and local church member. Sunday morning is for the equipping of the saints, the spiritual formation of the believer toward Christlikeness, and the worship of God in all things (preaching, song, prayer, ordinances, financial giving, serving, and using of spiritual gifts). Secondly, the Sunday gathering should also be a place where unbelievers may feel welcomed, engaged, and evangelized both in the preaching and by the congregation.

6) How will you approach the role of encouraging / training the congregation? Great question

- a. I believe any pastor “messages” encouragement through his words and his actions. I feel like I have an approachable personality, and I work hard at trying to be even more approachable. Of course, primarily the encouragement will come from the preaching and subsequent conversations. But a person who is an “encourager” is someone who is always looking for opportunities to give praise and recognition to others when applicable. I strive to be this type of pastor, both now and in the future.
- b. Training is something that I am passionate about. I believe that most Christians don’t evangelize their neighbors and co-workers primarily because they have not been trained to do it. Parents struggle to relate to and disciple their kids (at all stages of development) because they lack the training to do what God called them to do as parents. In one sense, training is the essence of discipleship: Jesus said in the great commission, “teaching them to observe all that I command...” – this is training. We need to be trained in obedience of Christ and how to relate Christianity to a lost world. A pastor’s primary job, as described in Ephesians 4 is to equip saints to do the work of ministry. Therefore, my job is to be a trainer.
- c. So let me answer the question directly: The only thing that I see that exists at Canby now for training and equipping is the Life Groups (which is excellent for training). However, I would like to look at these groups and audit what it is they are actually doing and accomplishing. Secondly, I would love to offer classes (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) at the church that focus on a specific area of the Christian life. There could be multiple classes going on at once, each focusing on a different topic and taught by a group of people. I have way more ideas in this area but I will keep it brief.

7) Do you have expectations for yourself personally to be involved with foreign or local missions?

- a. Missions, as I define it here, is the intentional joining on to God’s mission in the world, locally and globally, by reaching the lost with the gospel, seeking social justice for the poor and oppressed, and creation care, all to the glory of God. So short answer is, yes. If I am not about missions then I am in the wrong business. I have done enough missions/evangelism work to not only say that I am passionate about living a life on mission but also stirring others up to be passionate and equipped to also live a life of mission.

8) What is the primary purpose or reason for the Sunday message/sermon?

- a. The primary purpose for the Sunday sermon is to glorify God (That’s the easy Sunday School answer). But this is done by faithfully and winsomely expositing and applying the truths of God’s Word to people’s lives. The Word of God is the Revelation of God. Therefore, if people are to know, believe, and put faith in this God, then it is going to come through his Word. Not only that, but the Word of God

is a light that shines into men's hearts, revealing their true selves so that they can see their need for God and what it means to follow Him with their whole lives. Furthermore, preaching helps to bring the whole church together through one unified voice and message. Preaching creates unity in vision and also in doctrine. Preaching helps to shape the worldview of the congregation. The Sunday sermon is used to bring about transformation in people's lives as the Holy Spirit works on the hearers' heart. This is only done when the word of God is preached faithfully.

9) What is your plan for overseeing the paid Staff (associate pastors, Children's Coordinator, Nursery Coordinator, office Mngr, receptionist) including their spiritual and professional development?

- a. This is something that I would need to demonstrate patience in. However, with this said, I would without question meet with the team regularly: once a week for a formal meeting, in the morning for prayer, once a month for a staff devotion and meeting, and regular (perhaps quarterly) events (for example, a lunch or dinner or day trip)—This last one would most likely also include the elder team.
- b. Beyond these formal meetings, I believe in having an open-door policy. I have always been able to develop a culture that makes the people I have worked with comfortable to come to my office whenever. I have my moments of being busy, but I also know when to make time. I currently work directly with around the same amount of staff people that Canby has (not including the other pastors and staff members at Harvest).

10) How will you delegate or assign the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Pastor vs the associates in such duties as baby dedication, counseling, marriages, funerals, hospital visitations, etc.?

- a. At this point I do not know what the current process is for this. But I would assume that the pastors (worship pastor and NextGen Pastor share the responsibility in the roles listed above—if not, honestly, that would need to change. If they currently do then, great! The biggest thought that I have going forward with this is what NEW role Ken will be taking. So that is something that we will have to talk through. All-in-all I have no problem delegating responsibilities and assigning roles to people. This would first be based upon ministry positions. But then I would also consider gifting and desire.

11) Given that your current church leadership model is quite different from Canby Christian, how will you adapt to being a member of a leadership team where all Elders are shepherds, overseers and pastors?

- a. Yes, I do work in a structure that is a lot different than Canby; however, I do know some churches and pastors locally who serve their congregation through a similar leadership structure. I have talked with them on many occasions about how it works for them. I know that I will continually have them as a resource when questions arise.
- b. Furthermore, the way that I operate within my own authority structures are a lot more in line with Canby's structure than Harvest's. So I believe that the transition will be very easy for me. Actually, I think that the leadership model at Canby (this is with what limited knowledge that I have of the structures and the elders themselves) is a very healthy model. There is a common phrase for leadership structure "elder led, congregationally ruled" that I desire to implement and it seems that Canby already has that in place.
- c. Personally, I am a fairly adaptable person. I know how to get into a situation and assess what is going on and make the necessary adjustments. I had mentioned before that I was planning on church planting and when I was developing that I was planning on implementing polity much like Canby's.

12) **What are the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership structure at CCC? (Feel free to ask any clarifying questions that you would like)** – *I will answer this acknowledging that I have limited information on the details of the leadership structure, but this is how it appeared to me.*

- a. Strengths:
 - i. First, I think it is Biblical. The current "business models" of church structure aren't sinful, I am just not convinced that they are Biblical. I think when you read through the New Testament, especially Acts and the epistles, seeking to discover what leadership structures existed then, you would see a plurality of elders who over see a congregation of people that all participate in the work on ministry. Of course, there were always people assigned to lead in certain ways, but not in the "CEO" or "Business" model with one guy at the top. Jesus is the head of the church; we serve under him by serving his people.
 - ii. Secondly, I liked the high level of investment from the elders. I was genuinely shocked and blessed to see the high level involvement that the elder team seemed to have. In ministry (we all know) finding volunteers is a perpetual problem. So seeing how much you all love the church and are willing to "spend and be spent" for the work of ministry at Canby was a real blessing to see.
 - iii. Thirdly, the burden doesn't fall just on me. The church is too important to rest on the shoulders of one person. There is too much to do for a single pastor to handle, so there needs to be a team of leaders filling the roles in service of the church.
 - iv. Fourthly, I liked that there is not a "board of directors." The model I am currently in has an external advisory board that oversees the budget of the church and

helps to keep certain “key” leaders accountable. I feel like this puts them at a disadvantage to know and see what is actually happening at the church. At Canby though, this is all run through the elders who actually serve there. But, with them not being on staff, it also means that they are not “bought” or “in need” of the church to survive. So it is not likely that the other elders will be “yes men.”

- b. Weaknesses: With so many strengths, it is hard to find a weakness, especially with what little knowledge that I have of the actual workings of the elder team and the leadership structure. But I will hypothesize some potential things (and this is me being nit-picky).
 - i. The most obvious weakness is what you are trying to change by bringing in a new senior pastor.
 - ii. Identifying and Training leaders. I am not sure if there are young leaders being identified and trained up from within, but this could be a weakness if it isn't happening. And they don't have to be young, but simply identifying new leaders to serve.
 - iii. Elder walls. The very common criticism of elder run churches is that there is a lot of talking and not enough doing. And that they end up holding back what the senior pastor wants to do because of envy or simply to demonstrate authority. I didn't get the sense that this was the issue at Canby, all the elders seemed very godly, humble, and encouraging. I only say this because structures like this are criticized and thought to be a hindrance to moving forward if not done right.

13) What is your method of protecting your “family time” and setting boundaries so as to not allow Ministry work to invade personal life?

- a. First I am thankful that you asked this question. It is easy for the church to think that the pastor needs to do everything, sometimes at the expense of his family—Family time is so critical. My method starts in my own heart. First, I am not a people pleaser. I know how to say “NO” to things. And I don't feel the need to be at “everything.” I know how to delegate responsibility so that I can prioritize my time and investments—beginning with my family.
- b. In all the years of ministry this has never been an issue in my marriage. Both Michelle and I have talked a lot about it. We know what ministry is like and we have a healthy balance of life and ministry.
- c. I will add that what I loved about Canby church was how little “programming” they had throughout the week. I think this is great because what happens a lot (and it is happening bad at Harvest) is that the program becomes more important than the people; the church function over the family.

14) What are your goals for further education beyond the upcoming BA completion?

- a. I do plan on continuing my education and earning an MDiv. I haven't decided yet what that looks like. But I do know that it will be a lot slower process than what I have been doing the last four years. I believe it is good to always be learning and growing. If I stop learning and growing then so will my ministry. A pastor is to be a constant learner, modeling it for his people that they also need to be learning and growing in their walk with Christ and how to relate the gospel to a changing world. Depending upon how that goes, I might even consider pursuing a PhD in the future. Lord willing.

15) How do you protect yourself from sexual temptation? Would you plan to have an accountability / encouragement relationship with someone(s)?

- a. Again, a great question. Sexual temptation has never been higher in our society and it is critical for a pastor to maintain integrity in this area. In the public arena, I protect myself by not having any type of "established" relationship with a woman. Obviously, as a pastor I need to learn how to work with women and even serve them spiritually. But I do not become "friends" with them. I don't do private counseling with women. I will meet a woman once for counseling, with the door open and after notifying someone working around me, but I will not meet with them again alone. Next time will be with their spouse (if they have one) or I will delegate them to another competent woman to counsel her. I don't ride in a car alone with a woman. I don't usually even go in an elevator alone with a woman. I don't go to lunch with a woman alone. I don't text, call, private message, or email women. My wife has full access to my phone.
- b. I have a couple close friends that occasionally get together and keep up on how we are doing in that area. My wife and I are in a small group that meets once a week. We have been meeting with them for over two years. We are all very close and occasionally in that time we split off, guys with guys and girls with girls, to talk about any issues. It is a safe space to talk.
- c. This is one thing that I would be actively pursuing if we moved to Canby. Looking for accountability in my life. I don't care how old or young you are, we are always in need of accountability.

16) As a relatively young leader, new to CCC, what would you see as positives or negatives re your youth?

- a. Being young (if 32 is still considered young) means that I still have so much time in ministry to invest in a city and church. Some young guys are impatient, but my age allows me to be more patient, knowing that I have many years of ministry ahead of me, but still having the energy and passion to improve. Being a "new" leader at a church has both its positives and negatives. Negatively, it means that I have to build trust with people. I don't expect to have immediate clout simply because of my title or position. Being new means I need to spend a lot of time in the beginning to

build trust. Positively, I think that a church with a young leader communicates that they are thinking about the future. Young leaders are more in a position to see the horizon of incoming cultural change. I think that older leaders have to fight against resting in the past... young leaders are still trying to impact the present and the future.

- b. I will add that I do not try to make my age a factor. I am not saying that “younger is better” nor do I say that being older is bad... because this isn’t always the case. However, I always refer to what Paul told Timothy, “don’t let anyone look down on you for your youth, but be an example...” So I have sought for years to be an example of godly leadership and spiritual maturity.

17) You mentioned that you and Michelle have been wanting to live in Portland. Canby is quite different from Portland. From what you saw of both, would you be content living in or near Canby?

- a. Portland is great. But we want to be somewhere where we can make a significant impact. City life is great. But it isn’t the most practical place to raise a family. As we drove around Canby, we would be more than content to live there. Ultimately, we only want to be where God wants us... We could be living on the cliffs of Maui, but if it isn’t where God wants us, we don’t want to live there.

18) What role would you say that corporate prayer should play in the church as a whole? Do you have any vision for how to organize prayer ministry in the church?

- a. I am not sure how the ministry of prayer works currently at Canby. But I definitely think that prayer should be a significant piece of the actual church service. I think it should be a significant part of our elder meetings. It should also be a huge part of the Life groups... Members should be praying for each other as well. It can be said that the single greatest blessing in this life as a believer is that we have access to God, by faith, through Christ, in prayer! So we should take advantage of this as often as possible. Change is only going to happen when we earnestly seek God in prayer.

19) What is the greatest strength that God has given you for serving in the role of Lead Pastor?

- a. I had to “phone a friend” on this one... Daniel (He is my oldest Christian friend, I met him only two months after being saved and now we work together—he as the college pastor and I as the High School Pastor). When I asked him he immediately told me that my greatest strength is my passion. That term is a little subjective, but what he means, and I think I understand because my wife tells me this too, is that whatever I do, I do it 100%. I am all in. When I am playing golf, I play to the

highest level. In school, I go to learn and earn A's. In ministry, I serve long and efficiently. I love my family with passion and I am passionately connected with my friends. To the best of my ability I try to never settle for mediocrity. As a matter of fact, a part of my conversion shows my passion. Before I was a Christian I was passionately against religion. But when I was converted, I immersed myself in the gospel and ministry in the church. I am passionate about seeing people come to Christ, grow in Christ, and be used by Christ. So, in short, I would say that my passion is my greatest strength. Passion "looks" differently from person to person. But I think any intuitive person would know and see when a person is passionate.

20) What is the greatest weakness that you bring into the role of Lead Pastor?

- a. The **greatest** weakness (really I think it is the most obvious weakness) is that I have not ever served in the role of a lead pastor. So there is a measure of *uncertainty* that goes with applying for the position; however, I am not *unclear* as to what I am called to do and that, by the grace of God, things will be great. When David killed Goliath, he hadn't done that before, but he had killed a lion and a bear and God delivered him in each of those instances, why would God not be faithful here—especially since he had a clear call on his life? Each step and transition in my life and ministry has always been a step of faith, but by the grace of God He has given me enough experiences to say, why would God not be faithful here, too? But I boast in my weakness, that God's grace might shine all the more.