A Blessed and Prosperous New Year for All Our Readers!

We are already far into the new year of 2012. The shift of year invites us to focus on the future. This is significant for leaders because we have a special relationship to the future. It is that new dimension in which our visions and plans materialise. It is that steadily approaching dimension which brings surprises and challenges but also solutions which we must be able to manage and steer in a positive direction. It is that unknown dimension for which we need to be prepared. All leadership development points to the future. The future will determine the quality of our work – it will tell us if we have succeeded or failed.

This humble electronic publication seeks to assist you in this experience by raising various important topics and issues that impact your leadership. It is our hope that you will benefit and be blessed by what you read here in the coming year. But more than that, it is our hope that you will experience success in your leadership, that your visions may become realised and your organisation will achieve its goals.

As church leaders in particular, we anticipate growth in the world and healthy and sound church fellowships that are open to the world in order to bring new people into our midst and expand the kingdom of God. This is a vision given us by God who continues – also in 2012 – to accomplish His mission of leading the world to the great goal of eliminating evil, suffering and death, and to bring about a new heaven and a new earth where He will be our God and we will be His people (Revelation 21:1-4).

On behalf of those of us who work on this publication: May God bless you in the name of Jesus Christ and pour out his love into your hearts through the Holy Spirit whom He has given us! And may 2012 be your best year ever!

Bertil Wiklander
Recognize the importance of the inner life. The inviting exterior only hides inner decay. This is the tragedy of leaders failing to might be as attractive as newly to glisten in the sun but the inside is full of corruption and excess. Religious leaders (See Matthew 23:13 to glisten in the sun but the inside is full of corruption and excess. Religious leaders first priority for leadership. of character and the visible aspects of leadership. This inner work is accomplished by worship, devotion, prayer and reflection about ethics, morals, and values.

When the bridge opened there were many skeptics who claimed that such a large structure could not long remain suspended by cables. It could not bear the strain of traffic or wind and weather. Before long it would collapse into the river. Yet for well over a century it has served as a major transportation artery connecting the boroughs of Brooklyn and Manhattan.

During the early stages of constructing the New York tower progress was not apparent. Local citizens complained about the passage of time and the absence of any visible development. In response, the Chief Engineer wrote: “To such of the general public as might imagine that no work had been done on the New York tower, because they see no evidence of it above the water, I should simply remark that the amount of the masonry and concrete laid on that foundation during the past winter, under water, is equal in quantity to the entire masonry of the Brooklyn tower visible today above the water line.”

The Chief Engineer’s statement illustrates a vital truth about leadership: it is the work that is done inside the heart and mind, where people cannot see, that determines whether a leader will stand the tests of time and circumstance. It is the inner life, where only God sees, that informs, stabilizes, sustains or weakens and determines whether a leader will stand the tests of time and circumstance. It is that which the Lord can do for you. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you.

Building beneath the surface is the most important work that any leader can do. On another occasion Jesus spoke about the influence of one’s life. “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” —John 7:37,38 NKJV

What Jesus is saying is that if you want your life to be influential the first thing is to make sure it is connected to the right source. Perhaps the leadership principle that is most important for spiritual leaders is that “when you guard your secret life with God, your public life will take care of itself.” Jesus assures us that if we are connected to Him, the visible effect of our lives, however small, will be a blessing to the world.

Far too often news headlines these days describe the moral downfall of persons who have hitherto carried enormous responsibility and enjoyed public trust. And then to everyone’s amazement the corroded inner life of such a leader is exposed—perhaps an act of financial fraud, failure to tell the truth in a moment of crisis, unfaithfulness to a spouse, or the cancerous effects of a private habit such as pornography. Leaders of religious organisations are not immune to public failure. The environment of power and the accolades of colleagues can easily blind a person to the risks that accompany position and prestige. It requires the inner life to anchor the public life.

How then do we attend to the inner life, the character-building work that is so essential to survival in public leadership? It happens primarily in what we do with our quiet time—those moments of the day that are reserved for feeding and focusing the mind. Those periods in private when we wrestle with huge questions: what kind of person do I want to be? for what purpose am I living? to whom do I turn for mentoring? what are the values by which I live? It is a myth that a crisis develops character. It does not. Crisis only reveals character. The urgent lesson for leaders is that in changing times, in moments of crisis, strength comes from one’s spiritual disciplines. These habits are not developed on the spur of the moment. They yield their fruit only when carefully cultivated with consistency and honesty.

And there is a marvelous assurance that the inner life of dependence upon God will have its beneficial effect in one’s public life. Jesus affirmed that in His statement about a person, who believes in Him, becoming a river of living water. Ellen G White cautioned and encouraged leaders that, “It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you.”

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Ellen G White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 146

Brooklyn Bridge is a famous landmark spanning the East River in New York City. At the time it opened (1883), it was the longest suspension bridge in the world — 50% longer than any previously built. For several years the towers were the tallest structures in the Western Hemisphere.

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The Chief Engineer’s statement illustrates a vital truth about leadership: it is the work that is done inside the heart and mind, where people cannot see, that determines whether a leader will stand the tests of time and circumstance. It is the inner life, where only God sees, that informs, stabilizes, sustains or weakens and corrodes the visible aspects of leadership. This inner work is accomplished by worship, devotion, prayer and reflection about ethics, morals, and values.

Today one hears a lot about leadership strategy, leadership vision, the marketing and communication of leadership ideas. The risk is that a person may spend all his/her time on these leadership concepts and forget that character-building is the first priority for leadership. Jesus spoke in graphic terms about the contrasts between the outer and the inner life. (See Matthew 23:13-28) The outside of cup and platter may be so clean as to glisten in the sun but the inside is full of corruption and excess. Religious leaders might be as attractive as newly-painted tombstones in a well-manicured cemetery but the inviting exterior only hides inner decay. This is the tragedy of leaders failing to recognize the importance of the inner life.

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**A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES**

Victor Pilmoor
Treasurer, British Union of Conferences

It is canny how ideas converge to capture our attention. Among Heathrow’s advertising graffiti last week was the strap: HSBC - the Bank that sees a world of possibilities.

During a training event this month, school governors were introduced to the idea of ‘possibility thinking’ - what happens when a student believes that they are an A-grade student? What happens when teachers perceive their students worthy of the A-grade? It would appear that the students cease to operate from a basis of fear, or in a spirit of competition, they become adventurous and creative, they begin to live into their possibilities. They live into the person they want to be. Teachers find new respect and passion for those they teach and find common purpose with their students.

Coincidently one of the themes in our Trans-European Division meetings was ‘thinking possibilities’. We were challenged to think of 82,000 members all inspired to speak of God’s grace, people in twenty nations speaking to needs and conflicts of their communities, we spoke at length of the coming Christ who will overcome in the face of the saga of controversy during the last six thousand years of human history. We spoke with passion about recognising possibilities, gifts for service and leadership, in every person both male and female.

Ben and Roz Zander, in their inspiring ‘The Art of Possibility’ write as follows:

“The action in the universe of possibility may be described as generative, or giving, in all senses of the word - producing new life, creating new ideas, consciously endowing with meaning, contributing, yielding to the power of contexts. The relationship between people and environments is highlighted, not the people and things themselves. Emotions that are relegated to the special category of spirituality are abundant here: joy, grace, awe, wholeness, passion and compassion.”

“Are you more likely to be successful overall, if you participate joyfully with projects and goals and do not think your life depends upon them...resources are likely to come to you in greater abundance when you are generous and inclusive and engage people in your passion for life...In the universe of possibility, you set the context and let life unfold.”

“The leader of possibility invigorates lines of affiliation and compassion from person to person in the face of a tyranny of fear”,... we can exercise this kind of leadership wherever or whatever we are.

Clearly, when we think possibility with respect to our neighbours, we see them not as enemies to be conquered, or heathens to be converted, incorrigible secularists, but people created in the image of God who could grow into disciples of Christ. People like James and John, common fishermen, to whom Jesus simply said: follow me. The same people who years later described the vision of their experience: for we beheld his glory, full of grace and truth.

Thank you for seeing possibility in the people you serve by offering them hope in these times of despair.

Improbable, but with possibility!

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**INVITATION TO LEAD**

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth...”

*Genesis 1,26 (NIV)*

God is the Ultimate Leader, and He calls every believer to lead others. God could have arranged His creation in any number of ways, but He chose to create human beings who possess spirits and the capacity to relate to Him and follow Him, yet who are not forced to do so.

When mankind fell into sin, God could have executed a plan of redemption that did not include sinful people, but He has called us to participate and to lead others as we follow Him. God made that clear from the beginning when He stated, “have dominion” (Genesis 1,28).

The call to leadership is a consistent pattern in the Bible. When God decided to raise up a nation of His own, He didn’t call upon the masses. He called out one leader—Abraham. When He wanted to deliver His people out of Egypt, He didn’t guide them as a group. He raised up a leader to do it—Moses. When it came time for the people to cross into the Promised Land, they followed one man—Joshua.

Every time God desired to do something great, He called a leader to step forward. Today He still calls leaders to step forward for every work—both large and small. 

*Leadership Promises for Every Day*

*The Maxwell Leadership Bible*

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**THINKING POSSIBILITIES**

seeing possibilities

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Leadership Development Journal: Dr Bertil Wiklander, chief editor;
Raafat Kamal, assistant chief editor; Esti Pujic, editor

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Questions or Comments?? E-mail us at: opub@ted-adventist.org

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