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**Re-examining Session Format**

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10 February 2011 Riga, Latvia [Guntis Bukalders, ted/NEWS] Dr. Pardon Mwansa, the Vice-President of General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church visited the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) on the 25th and 26th January 2011...

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Al Waad Channel Viewers Exceeds Expectations

15 February 2011 Beirut, Lebanon [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] The first of February 2011 was the day that marked the launching of Al Waad Channel (Hope Channel in Arabic), reaching the countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

After two weeks of broadcast, Al Waad Media Center, based in Beirut, Lebanon, has received numerous emails and thousands of visits on their website. The media team has been working hard to reach an audience of potentially more than 300 million Arabic speakers in the region with the message of love and hope. The focus of the programmes is to offer a better life in this world and a promise of an eternal life to come.

A recent viewer’s response revealed that many Arabs are welcoming the Al Waad broadcast with open arms. The feedback indicates that the quality and content of the programmes are of high calibre.

“We never expected viewer feedback to be so immediate and so positive,” says Amir Ghalil, Director of Al Waad Media Center. He continued, “this is an indicator for us to continue working hard in producing programmes which will present the Adventist Hope in relevant issues such as health, morality, education, family, and business ethics.”

The Al Waad website received over 4,200 hits and more than 40 emails during the first two weeks of its broadcast. “These figures have exceeded our expectations,” continues Amir Ghalil, “people want to know more about Jesus. They want to learn how to live a healthy life, have a happy family. They want to read the Bible.”

Here are a few excerpts from emails that have reached Al Waad Media Center:

“Thank you for the new TV channel. The name of Al Waad gives me hope and a promise. The programmes are so inspiring. I don’t like the condition I’m in right now, and I thank God for coming across your channel because I have discovered the true religion. I want to know more about Christ. I want to believe in Him. Can you help me?”

Another viewer writes: “I would like to know more about Christianity. Can you please send me a Bible, and any other book that will help me get a deeper look into this religion? It seems to be a religion based on forgiveness and love.”

A lady writes: “Thank you for the beautiful words that you say on Al Waad. They are words of guidance that help us walk in the right way. After I watched your programme, I now believe that the family should be closer together, where all the members sit together during meal time and worship time. I want to read the Bible to my family.”

“This is wonderful news to hear that people have already expressed their satisfaction in the quality of Al Waad programmes and interest in knowing more about Jesus as the only hope for human race. I want to praise God for it and thank the Al Waad team for their hard work and creativity to share the present truth in the context relevant for Arabic people,” says Dr. Bertil Wiklander, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division, which the Middle East region falls under.

As the Al Waad team celebrates the first anniversary of the media centre, they are more inspired and motivated to work for those souls who are seeking to know Jesus and to live a better life through Him. Please visit www.al-waad.tv/en to see a glimpse of some programmes.

The Al Waad Channel is the newest member of the global Hope Channel, the Adventist Church’s official television network. [tedNEWS]

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Many Adventisms?

15 February 2011 Binfield, United Kingdom [Helen Pearson, BUC NEWS] The cryptic title, 'Many Adventisms?' coaxed about sixty people to leave the comfort of their armchairs on Tuesday evening, 15 February for Newbold's first Diversity Lecture of 2011.

Dr. David Trim, a founder member of Newbold's Diversity planning team and a former student and teacher at the College, is a keen student of Adventist history. Next month he will move to the United States having recently taken up a new appointment as Director of Archives and Statistics at the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters. From the outset of his lecture he stressed that the question of diversity and unity in a Seventh-day Adventist context is not new. From their earliest days, Adventists have always argued vigorously. Currently, different members are discussing matters like inspiration, sexuality, creation and ordination – issues that have a significant capacity to disunite them.

The early part of the lecture was devoted to a discussion of the Biblical model of unity. Dr. Trim asserted the importance of unity described in the prayer of Christ and exemplified in the Early Church whose unity and sense of community was crucial to its growth. He moved on to describe the opposition to organisation to create unity expressed by the first Adventist leaders and their complete u-turn from their early belief that "the first step of apostasy is to get up a creed... and the second is to make that creed a test of fellowship..." Once Conferences were organised in order to facilitate the process of evangelism, Adventists, led by Ellen White, "deliberately rejected an authoritarian, hierarchical structure of organisation and governance. Instead, they adopted a flexible structure that devolved much responsibility and authority to local and regional levels." All this was an expression of their commitment "to avoid becoming Babylon."

Eventually, Dr. Trim's historical journey brought him to the present day. He suggested that the church contains multiple camps on issues like morality, theology, hermeneutics, relationships to the wider world and behavioural patterns – and within those camps shades of opinion varying through all shades of grey – not just black and white. He suggested that the terms, 'liberal' and 'conservative' are too polarising to describe the diversity in Adventism. "We need a more richly textured conceptual framework," he said.

Dr. Trim proceeded to his final question: "What are the limits of tolerable diversity?" For answers he referred to Ellen White’s 1890 description of four ‘landmark doctrines’: the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, the work of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the seventh-day Sabbath and the non-immortality of the soul. "It was the loss of only these which God’s people should, with most determined zeal, resist." Dr. Trim observed, "So many of the things... that cause bitter controversy... are matters about which we should always cordially agree to disagree." ‘Cordially’ was the key word here. Dr. Trim concluded by suggesting that there are far too many people keen to assume the prophetic mantle and tell their brothers and sisters that they are wrong. Instead he urged the importance of unity among Adventists and the need to engage in positive dialogue, bearing and forbearing as they continue to search together for present truth. Lecture available on Vimeo. [tedNEWS]

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Eye-opener meetings for Antillean Churches in the Netherlands

13 February 2011 Rotterdam, the Netherlands [Cherrel Francisca, tedNEWS] “Inspirational, an eye-opener, practical, insightful, tremendous” were the words used by church members to describe the special programme organised for the Antillean Community in the Netherlands.

On the 12th February 2011, the Rotterdam International church of Seventh-day Adventists was the host church for a compelling meeting on how to understand the postmodern people of this age, minister to their needs and make worship service relevant in our age. More than 400 people from different parts of the Netherlands attended the meeting and afterwards were inspired and motivated to go and connect with people outside the church in order to help them see the relevancy of Jesus Christ.

The main speaker was Dr. Miroslav Pujic, Director of Ministry to Postmoderns at the Trans-European Division, who presented a variety of insightful teachings and recommendations regarding the evangelism to postmoderns in a very inspirational way. This was greatly accepted by the immigrants living in the Netherlands who had been in great need to understand the postmodern society that surrounds them in order to be able to minister to their needs.

Church members were completely open and receptive to new ideas and expressed the need for more meetings of this kind. Some were so excited that they requested for Dr. Pujic to make an appointment that same day for the next meeting. Both young and old could see ways to approach postmoderns, how to be spiritually fit, and new ideas to consider in worshipping today in our churches.

The music was very inspirational, with adults and young people joining together to form a praise team that encouraged the whole congregation to participate in a very appealing mixture of yesterday hymns and today’s praise songs. Young people were particularly impressed, motivated and enthusiastic; they were the first to approach Dr. Miroslav personally to ask him whether he would be able to come again.

We praise God for the enthusiasm that we saw among the participants and for a very blessed day. We hope the Lord will continue to bless both the leaders and members that were present, and that new horizons could be reached as the church in Holland moves forward as a united front by facing the challenges together and seeing wonders happening in the church. [tedNEWS]

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Not Left to Stand Alone

10 February 2011 Cairo, Egypt [BUC News, tedNEWS] Having successfully arranged the evacuation of non-essential ex-patriots among the Adventist staff based in Egypt during the current unrest, Field President Pastor Llew Edwards, along with his wife Karin, needed to consider their own position.

Egypt is a country of 85 million people and among them is a small group of 700 Adventist members, 12 pastors, and 13 churches. Pastor Edwards reports, "No one, to my knowledge, has been involved or hurt in the present events." He states that the churches outside of Cairo and Alexandria are meeting regularly and reports that "one of the Upper Egyptian pastors has told me that as soon as the events in Cairo began he started a series on prophecy and his meetings were full each night."

Reporting on events last weekend, Llew states that the two churches in Cairo were both open for worship, as was the church in Alexandria. Pastor Anwar Eskander, Executive Secretary and Heliopolis pastor, reported that though attendance was not at its normal level, nevertheless a good number attended at each venue. At Nile Union Academy, where some 30 plus staff and Sudanese students remain, services were held both Friday night and Sabbath morning. Llew says, "It is a very great privilege to witness their courageous and joyful faith."

No churches have been damaged or affected by the troubles. There was an attempt to break in and rob a church in the city of Assuit, Upper Egypt, but the pastor reported that an army unit quickly arrived to capture the men and there was no damage done.

With the exception of Llew and Karin, all 'foreigners' working in Egypt are now in the safety of other countries outside of Egypt. Most are in Athens, some in Beirut and a couple are in Canada and Latvia. Llew and Karin share accommodation with an Egyptian pastor and his family in the Egypt Field Office in Heliopolis. There is also a Sudanese family and four Egyptian girls staying in flats and guests rooms in the church complex. Each night Llew seeks to join Pastor Anwar in going out into the street and talking with the vigilante street guards. Most of them are Muslim with a sprinkling of Christians. These are made up of men and youth, mostly teens, armed with their assorted clubs. There is an occasional person who, in assuring Llew of their safety, lifts his jacket to show him a revolver. Llew says, "In the absence of any other form of law and order, I am personally grateful for these community vigilantes for the security they give us as well as our office block and neighbouring church building. There are other areas within walking distance where I am told looting and arson of some buildings has happened." Llew notes the importance of making good friends with non-Adventist neighbours. He says that "in a time of trouble they may become a great blessing."

Why are they still in Egypt? Llew was recently in conversation with some British friends who work for the Anglican community in Cairo. He stated that "their view was that their priority was not safety, but what was best for the work of the gospel in Egypt – none of them were or have evacuated." He then received a phone call from a pastor who expressed surprise that he did not yet evacuate. Llew responded to him, "When I told him that I presently saw no need for evacuation, his words amounted to "Thank you pastor – that is so encouraging because it seems that so often when there is trouble the foreigners run away and leave us nationals to stand alone."

The Adventist Church in Egypt is very grateful for the prayers of 'the saints' around the world. Llew has shared with his members the numerous emails, phone and Skype calls, and assurances of prayer from churches and members all over the world. Last Sabbath he told worshippers at Nile Union Academy, "I am sure that around the world there may be around 10 million people praying for us here in Egypt. The result? The meeting burst into cheers and clapping. Llew concluded, "We are grateful for the encouragement of the prayers of the saints." [tedNEWS]
Re-examining Session Format

10 February 2011  Silver Spring, Maryland, United States  [Elizabeth Lechleitner, ANN]  Just six months after the Seventh-day Adventist world church’s largest business meeting, General Conference Session planners are already mapping out the global denomination’s 2020 convention.

Planning for the event typically begins 10 years beforehand, meaning the location for Session 2015 was announced in 2006 after a host city selection process that included a search for venues, proposal reviews, bidding cities and site visits.

The Adventist Church’s administration will not vote on a location for the GC Session 2020 until October, but some at the world church headquarters are discussing whether a downsized GC Session is on the church’s horizon.

As Adventist Church membership has grown, so have Session venues. “Today, a potential host city must boast a covered stadium able to seat the estimated 70,000 who attend peak weekend meetings,” said Sheri Clemmer, associate meeting planner for the world church. The site must also offer adjacent convention centres and nearby accommodations for at least 6,000 delegates and Session support staff.

Session traffic typically wanes on weekdays. Daily business meetings -- where key decisions are actually made -- are often sparsely attended, except by Session delegates and a few faithful spectators. Instead, guests often crowd the exhibitor’s hall or participate in the many activities held alongside the Session.

Pastor Pardon Mwansa, the world church general vice president who chairs the church’s Session Planning Committee, said some church officials are questioning the continued need for “camp meeting-style” Sessions -- as much spiritual retreats as business meetings.

“We don’t need a crowd to elect leaders. We don’t need a crowd to change policy,” Mwansa said. Others have asked whether a downsized Session might open cities outside of the United States to hosting duties. Of the 59 Sessions since the Adventist Church was established in 1863, only three were held elsewhere, stated Mwansa.

The format of the church’s largest business meeting can only be re-examined during a vote taken at Session itself. While no such proposal exists, church administrators have “talked informally” about what shape future Sessions might take, said Lowell Cooper, also a world church general vice president. “As the church grows, the potential for [Session] to become an even more complex and costly event increases, forcing us to consider what it is we need to achieve at Session, and what is optional,” Cooper replied.

Whether that discussion will lead to more Sessions held outside North America is debatable, church leaders said. But church administrators who attended the 1995 Session in Utrecht, Netherlands remember the long train rides and less than ideal facilities. “Some delegates -- and that includes me, I was a union president that year -- were traveling for at least two-and-a-half hours every day one-way to get from our hotel to the convention centre,” said Mwansa. “We had to start off as early as 5:30 a.m.”

An early morning might not seem insurmountable, but factor in jetlag and delegates assigned with making some of the church’s arguably toughest and most pivotal decisions can become exhausting. “The key factor is how to best facilitate the business of the church,” he said, suggesting that a rested body and clear mind help.

Also central in determining where the GC Session is held is its budget. Getting audio-visual equipment, support staff and delegates to the location is expensive, claimed Verland Erntson, controller for the world church’s Accounting Department. In 1995, the world church spent $5.8 million footing the bill for the Session in Utrecht, not including airfare for support staff. Five years later, the Session in Toronto, Canada cost more than $1 million less. Even last year’s Session venue in Atlanta, Georgia -- which totalled $5.5 million -- cost less than Utrecht. “It is a surprising statistic to see,” Erntson said.

However, downsizing Session just to accommodate overseas host cities is an idea with “little traction” so far, Cooper said.

In 2005, then world church President Jan Paulsen asked regional church presidents to choose a venue other than world church headquarters to host Annual Council, one of the church’s biannual business meetings. “Even for that smaller meeting, most of them preferred to come here -- they were used to it, and it was convenient,” Mwansa said.

While holding the Session outside North America might serve as a symbolic recognition of church growth elsewhere, recent spikes in membership are already acknowledged in practice, Mwansa said. The church’s representative system “shifts in a powerful way the decisions and the future of the church by virtue of the fact that those delegates exercise their regional mindsets,” Mwansa concluded.

Regardless of where the Session is held, the global scope of the event is not lost, nor are the voices of membership heard in shaping the church’s agenda.

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worldwide drowned out, church leaders agree. Delegate selection criteria for the session gives no advantage to the region hosting the event, Cooper confirmed.

The local pride that comes with hosting the Session is, at least for now, reserved for residents of San Antonio, Texas. Their city will host the church's next Session in 2015; and as for 2025?

If church administrators are "courageous enough" to conclude that the Session is fundamentally a business meeting, they must ask how to most efficiently conduct it, Mwansa said. "Then the outcome will be different," he speculates. [tedNEWS]

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Islam, Ishmael and Ghana

9 February 2011 London, UK [Rubina F. Arthur, BUC News] A large Adventist presence among the Ghanaian community in the UK may disguise the presence of a growing Muslim community – as large parts of northern Ghana have a high population of Muslims. Islam is the second largest religion in Ghana so it was appropriate that on Sabbath, the 22 of January, Pastor Petras Bahadur shared with the London Ghana church a message that "The children of Ishmael must come".

As the SEC Coordinator in charge of Adventist Muslim Relations, he delivered a series of Biblical texts that specifically look at the significance of the role of all Abraham's eight children. Pastor Bahadur, who also happens to be the Associate Director for the Adventist Muslim Relations of the General Conference, voiced concerns about the lack of presence of people with Islamic origins in the mainstream Adventist church. He attributed this to modern Adventists not maximising the prophetic role in which the Lord placed upon the church. Speaking exclusively to the London Ghana News Reporting Network, Pastor Bahadur said, "We are finding it difficult to talk to our Muslim brothers and sisters about the love of Christ because we do not know our identity. As modern Adventists, we often find ourselves defending Christianity in general rather than our unique identity as people of the 'Book' who are followers of Christ. Our identity has almost become fake!"

Pastor Bahadur gave five tips to help demystify the fear of talking to people of the Islamic faith. He said that rather than focusing on doctrine and what truth we can share, we should instead think about sharing the love of Jesus in more practical ways such as giving and helping the needy. He then challenged, "We need to grasp our [prophetic] Adventist identity and not just a general Christian identity, since we have a message for the whole world, including Christians from other denominations." Things then got more detailed as Pastor Bahadur suggested that we should have an understanding of the Quran when talking to Muslims. He said, "There are many things in the Quran which can be found in the Bible and we must demonstrate our knowledge about these rather than hurrying to preach." His last two points focused on adopting and utilising eastern cultural habits and hospitality – similar to the ones depicted in the Bible – and learning to ask spiritually related questions rather than rambling on about Biblical knowledge. He argues, "This will show that we are interested in them as a people and not just showing off what we believe as truth."

Sister Ann, a member of another church in East London has tried and tested these tips. Accompanied by two friends from the Asian community who are actively seeking to be followers of Christ, she testified about how selfless Adventists ought to be in order to fully make the love of Christ known. She said, "Being practical about God's love can mean letting go of some, if not all, of our resources to help others who may not be related to us or our faith. We have to focus on Christ and demonstrate what He expects of us."

According to the 2001 census, a quarter of the population of the London Borough of Newham, the area where the London Ghana church is situated, is Muslim. Most of them originate from South Eastern Asia, with the official figure at 60,000, although it is anticipated that this could be much bigger in reality (COMPAS, Centre on Migration Policy and Society). This places the church in a unique position in terms of truly portraying the character of Christ in the whole community. Mr. Kwabena Kyere, newly elected coordinator for Adventist Muslim Relations at London Ghana, stated, "Muslim relations within our church are a very new concept, which we are all learning to grasp. There are however a few people within the church who come from Islamic backgrounds and we aim to work with these individuals as well as the Personal Ministries department."

Mainstream Christianity in Ghana now is greatly dominated by 'One Man' churches. This is a major reason for people in Ghana to turn towards Islam, which is generally seen to be stricter. In addition, with more tourists visiting places like the Old European 'slave castles' located within the central region of Ghana, the political argument that Christianity is 'the religion of white masters' keeps cropping up. It especially is argued about with people like the Nation Of Islam's Louis Farrakhan – very admired by some Ghanaians as a good role model. This gives the Adventist Church a real challenge to show the true Gospel both in Ghana and within their communities in the UK. Reflecting on such a challenge, Rubina F. Arthur, part of the London Ghana communication team, says, "Thank God however for charities like ADRA Ghana, whom, although not allowed to 'preach' per se, can show the love of Jesus to local communities across the country."

The hope is that Pastor Bahadur's message has not fallen on deaf ears and that come 2012, the Olympics will not be the only thing to come and stay in Newham. More so, it is the hope that the children of Ishmael will also come to London Ghana church and all the Adventist churches in the local vicinity to leave an everlasting legacy to the glory of God.

[tedNEWS]

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Focus on Revival and Reformation in the Baltic Union

10 February 2011 Riga, Latvia [Guntis Bukalders, tedNEWS] Dr. Pardon Mwansa, the Vice-President of General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church visited the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) on the 25th and 26th January 2011. The purpose of his visitation was to explain the new General Conference initiative in revival and reformation. The following day, Dr. Daniel Duda, Education Department Director from the Trans–European Division (TED) of Seventh-day Adventists, spoke about the mission of the church and re-thinking of Adventism.

"These lectures were right on time as many churches are seriously thinking about the need for revival," said Latvian Conference president Viesturs Rekis. “In plain and simple words, Dr. Mwansa explained the process and aim of a true revival, reminding us that a relationship with Jesus Christ is central in the life of every human being.”

"These seminars were of great help to the ministers and administration by sharpening the focus of the church and re-thinking our strategy of how to better fulfil the Lord's given mission in today's environment in Lithuania. Each minister will have to re-think how they can better educate and motivate church members for ministry in the local environment. This will help the administration to address the real need—how to improve the ministry to our ministers,” said Bertold Vinston Hibner, the president of the Lithuanian Field.

Estonian Conference president David Nõmmik stated his opinion about the training: “The messages delivered by Dr. Pardon Mwansa and Dr. Daniel Duda to the church ministers in Estonia were simple, logical, effective, practical and Christ–centred.” And he continues: “I like the idea that in order to be in the process of re-thinking, which is a challenge for us, we should ask the right questions. Questions concerning personal, spiritual, and church life, and God's will, can help us define the ultimate aim of a minister. He can then help us to understand "why do I do what I do the way I do it.”

After the presentations, pastors shared their impressions of the event: “We are inspired and encouraged,” said Gintaras Nekis. Mantas Kucinskas shared, “This is really a very profitable meeting, after which nobody can stay indifferent to the Lord's calling and to not endeavour all the possibilities that were mentioned.” “We'd like to have more of such high level trainings,” said another pastor.

"It was a good experience to meet Dr. Pardon Mwansa,” said Baltic Union Conference President, pastor Valdis Zilgalvis. “He is an experienced leader, good theologian and balanced teacher. His lectures about the role of a pastor in all three countries were excellent.” Pastor Zilgalvis said that he is thankful to the General Conference and the Trans-European Division for caring for churches in the Baltic countries. “Dr. Daniel Duda is an outstanding teacher and he is always accepted by pastors in our countries and the way he challenges pastors to think deeper about Adventist Mission and our Message is quite remarkable.”

We hope that by the grace of our Lord, our conference ministers, and with the help of church members, we will find the answers on those basic questions concerning the purpose and mission of our church and how to accomplish the task that God has entrusted to us. [tedNEWS]

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Al Waad Channel Launched

2 February 2011 St Albans, United Kingdom [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] The staff of Al Waad Media Center in Beirut, Lebanon watched intently as they stood together to witness the event that they had been looking forward to for over two years. The first of February 2011 was the day that marked the launching of Al Waad Channel (Hope Channel in Arabic).

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church this is a dream come true. “We have seen the fruit of our labor finally being broadcast to over 350 million Arabic speaking people around the world”, says Amir Ghali, Al Waad Media Center Director. “Needless to say, the staff joined together in offering a prayer of thanks and gratitude to God, who made it possible for Al Waad Channel to be on the air; this is nothing less than a true miracle,” Ghali concludes.

A portfolio with a variety of programmes is presented on Al Waad Channel. The programmes deal with all aspects of life: spiritual, family, health, youth, music, children, cooking, and more. These programmes go in harmony with the Adventist teachings, which are concerned with the well being of humankind.

Al Waad Media Center, which produces programmes for Al Waad Channel, is located on the beautiful campus of Middle East University in Beirut, Lebanon. The center adopts a philosophy of respect and understanding toward those who belong to the majority religion of Islam.

“It is our intention to build bridges of trust and understanding with our Muslim neighbours,” comments Basma Muneer, Content Manager at Al Waad Media Center. “By God’s grace, we aim to be the trusted Arabic Christian TV channel in the Middle East.”

“It is my sincere prayer that Al Waad Channel will be a blessing to millions of people around the world, and that through this ministry many people will accept Jesus as their personal Saviour,” concludes Ghali.

Al Waad Channel is part of the Hope Channel global broadcast network.

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Bibles for the Sudanese

2 February 2011  St Albans, United Kingdom [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] Last week, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Sudan purchased some 6,000 Bibles from the Bible Society in Khartoum in different languages such as Arabic, English, Nuer and Dinka for the local people. The purchases of the Holy Bibles have encouraged efforts to share what wholesome attributes for cheerful living lie in its pages. This ancient book in the hands of the Sudanese people will bring wisdom and values that they could practice in their daily lives and make a positive impact within their families and community.

"It is something unprecedented in the history of the church in Sudan that such a large number of Bibles were purchased at once. This effort will enormously support the work of the church in sharing the love of God with the people of Sudan," says Dr Miroslav Didara, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sudan. [tedNEWS]

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Pastor John Velimir Bogdanovic Stevens, Sr. held a series of daily lectures at the Grand Hotel in downtown Pristina, Kosovo. The lectures were translated into Albanian and accompanied by wonderful video presentations. All lectures were recorded for the local TV channels, including the two cable providers IPKO and KUJTESA that insured coverage throughout all of Kosovo. The lectures aired daily at a very desirable time slot of 21:00 local time and were replayed every following day at 16:00.

The series of lectures were advertised through several media channels - on the radio (RTK), in the daily newspaper Koha Dijore (Daily Times), on billboards and through distributed flyers featuring the lecture titles. Many complimentary copies of Pastor Stevens’ book Amazing Prophecies of Hope were given away. Free copies of Ellen G. White were also given out. Both books were translated into Albanian.

The series of lectures were concluded with the baptism of a young married couple that attended every lecture. These two newly baptised believers were Roma Gypsies, an ethnic group in Kosovo. About twenty others that attended the lectures expressed interest in studying fundamental biblical principles, and another six were later baptised.

The baptism of these local people in Kosovo, where Islam is now 98% dominant, shows very clearly the presence of the Holy Spirit and its influence in these evangelistic programmes. In another story later revealed, a refugee couple from the Middle East was being housed at the government-appointed Adventist Church refugee shelter (where the official ADRA headquarters in Kosovo are also located) for some time that overlapped the lecture series. Refugees M. and S. attended the first lecture which dealt with the subject of the last ruler of Babylon and was entitled “Mene, Mene Tekel Upharsin”. When Pastor Stevens asked the young man if he understood the lecture, he said that he did; furthermore, he revealed that he was one of the world’s few experts in Ancient Semitic languages and was in fact a Jew descending from the tribe of Benjamin.

The couple later shared that the fact their long journey led them to being housed in an Adventist church in Pristina at the same time the lecture series was taking place was enough proof of God’s leading role in their lives. Their experience from these events convinced them that God was continuously revealing His perfect plan for them.

Not long after the couple directly felt God’s leading through their past experience, a friend from their home country joined them in Pristina. After studying the basic Biblical principles, the young businessman also asked to be baptised and that day, instead of a business suit, he wore a bright grin that showed his joy and excitement at his baptism.

In total, eight people have been baptised since the series; the cable TV broadcast of the series has yielded 63 addresses of interested families that could potentially be a link to even 250 believers!

One of the viewers that contacted the church wrote the words, “I am yours!” The doors are open for evangelism in Kosovo. Jesus’ words of “The harvest is full, but the workers are few” are being fulfilled. [tedNEWS]

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Adventists Safe in Egypt

31 January 2011 St Albans, United Kingdom [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] The Egypt standoff intensifies as the unrest goes into the seventh day of anti-government protests. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a number of denominational schools and congregations there. Pastor Llewellyn R. Edwards, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Egypt, shared with us what the situation is regarding members, church properties and the work of the church: “The members are courageous and services were conducted in the churches last Sabbath in spite of the turmoil in the country. The Nile Union Academy, the boarding high school operated by the church, has been closed temporarily. Most of the students have gone home but some, that have nowhere else to go. They will remain at the academy. Although there has been gunfire nearby, they feel safe and also feel that they have support of the local community.”

According to a local source, although there is a risk from random looters, foreign workers are safe and do not need to leave. Travelling to the airport is difficult with checkpoints manned by local militias every 50 meters.

“We have talked with local militias and they told us that they are here to protect the community”, says Pastor Edwards, and continues, “you are part of the community and you have nothing to fear; we will protect you.”

As the unrest situation in Egypt continues, two Seventh-day Adventist run schools are suspending classes. The properties have not been affected by the riots, although several apartments nearby were looted, according to a local source.

“We have evacuated AVS volunteers as a precaution,” says Audrey Andersson, Executive Secretary of the Trans-European Division, and continues, “we need to remember our members, pastors, people of this beautiful country and the government in our prayers.”

Unfortunately, clashes are reported to have left over 150 people dead since rallies began, with thousands more injured.

[tedNEWS]

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European Financial Woes Reflected in Adventist Church Operations

28 January 2011 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States [Arin Gencer, ANN] With unemployed members and decreased tithes, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe has been struggling to contend with the global financial crisis.

Particularly in Greece, Spain and Portugal -- countries whose unemployment rates are among Europe's highest and where the financial crisis has been particularly dire -- the global Protestant denomination has been forced to make adjustments, striving to do the same work with less.

"With faith in our Lord Jesus Christ we are doing the best we can," said Apostolos Maglis, president of the Adventist Church in Greece, which has already seen the adverse effects of the country's debt crisis on the church body. He anticipates these will spill over into 2011.

Since receiving a bailout last year from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, Greece has introduced a number of austerity measures to significantly reduce its public deficit, spurring several protests and strikes from unions.

The Adventist Church's Greek Mission, which consists of 10 churches, has seen the turmoil impact the church in various ways. These include a decrease in tithes -- down 20 percent at the end of 2010 relative to the previous year, for the first time in a decade, Maglis said in an e-mail.

The mission expects that number to further drop to 35 percent lower in 2011, he added. The economic challenges represent yet another hurdle to the Adventist Church in this part of the world, where evangelism already faces considerable obstacles, including the dominance of the Orthodox Church and the inability to conduct public religious programs, Maglis said.

"Many members lost their work and are unemployed," Maglis said, preventing them from paying rent and buying basic necessities. Several churches are collecting and distributing food to individuals in need, he added, "but this is not enough."

He described two recently launched evangelistic programs -- one training people to be missionaries at work; the other, showing members "how they can bring a friend to Jesus." He said both have led to a record 56 baptisms in the past year and brought membership to about 570. The Greek Mission's baptism goals set for this year now must contend with reduced funds.

Officials in the Spanish and Portuguese unions say they are experiencing similar problems, which are not limited to the Adventist Church or even Europe. The church's North American Division has reported slight but consecutive drops in tithe in 2008 and 2009, a decline attributed to U.S. economic woes.

The "delicate" economic situation in Spain -- where the unemployment rate is the second-highest in Europe, with 3 million people out of work -- has put the Adventist Spanish Union of Churches in a difficult position since 2008, said Juan Andres Prieto, the union's treasurer.

"The same thing that is happening in society is happening in the church," Prieto said, citing, as an example, a congregation of about 60 or 70 members, all of whom are jobless.

The Adventist Church has a savings policy: Whatever they don't bring in, they don't spend. And although they continue trying to serve the church in the same way with fewer resources, certain things have been affected, Prieto said.

Since November 2008, the union has suspended its practice of giving financial assistance to new groups just starting to rent meeting space, he said, and has even reduced occasional aid to established congregations. Union salaries have been frozen since that time as well.

In an attempt to meet the challenges of the day, the union has proposed a voluntary program that would take 2 percent of pastors' salaries to create a reserve fund for supporting church members in need.

Similarly, Portuguese church leaders are finding it difficult to perform certain activities, such as launching new congregations or establishing communities in certain areas, said Rui Filipe Dias, treasurer for the denomination's Portuguese Union of Churches.

Unemployment in that country is at about 10 percent, he said.

"The biggest difficulty I've seen is supporting all the needs of our members," Dias said, adding that the union typically sees offerings decline in the midst of a financial crisis. "Their needs are much greater than in a normal situation."

"We are depending on the goodness of God to guide us," Dias added. (Ted Ad

http://www.ted-adventist.org/news/european-financial-woes-reflected-in...
We are depending on the goodness of God to guide us, Dias added.
It's the Thought That Counts

27 January 2011 Southampton, United Kingdom [Rosemary Lethbridge, BUC News] "How can we help you?" is usually what our church says to the community. This question has led The Watering Hole church plant in Southampton to participate in a whole variety of community programmes and events. As a result we have discovered that our community has a more positive view of our church and some are now even exploring our faith. However, the tables were turned on us last week when the Chair of the local Community Association approached plant leader, Rosemary Lethbridge and said, "we would like to help you." Each year the Association chooses a charity to fund raise for. She added, "We have decided and voted that The Watering Hole will receive any money we raise in 2011."

Rosemary states, "Delighted as we are to benefit from extra funding it is the thought behind it that really encourages us. It is the knowledge that our community values the part we play in making a difference in the community and is willing to use of their time and talents to raise both our profile and financially assist the work."

In addition to the regular house church services, Bible studies and small group meetings The Watering Hole plan to continue relationship seminars and the debt and benefit advice centre throughout 2011. With a beaming smile Rosemary adds, "We are also part of the BIG wedding celebrations at the end of April." The Watering Hole is a place for the community. They will once again chair and lead events for National Parenting Week and coordinate local volunteers for National Volunteer Day. "This is just natural for us," Rosemary adds, "Both these events are great ways for any church to be part of their community." [tedNEWS]
Mayor Thornhill was impressed by the openness of the planning stating that the architect should be congratulated on a positive design that makes the building stand out for the public and also gives greater access for areas like the book shop. "I shall be telling my colleagues to come and shop here," she quipped looking at the shelves of books and health food products, adding, "I never knew there was a shop here. This is a great service for the public."

A committed Christian herself, the Mayor stated that when she came to office she heard demoralising stories about the decline of Christianity in the Watford area. She therefore made a conscious choice to try and visit all the churches in Watford. As a result she says, "I have been wonderfully surprised by the size of the active Christian community here." A regular attendee at events like the Stanborough Park church toy service and the ADRA shoe box appeal she was very positive about the work of the Adventist Church both in the Watford community and beyond.

Staff equally enjoyed her personal visit as she interacted with them and discovered more about the church. Thelma Hodges, ADC Office Manager found her to be "very friendly and approachable," adding that "she appeared genuinely interested in what the staff were doing." Bert Smit, CEO of ADRA-UK said that "the brief visit of the Mayor to the new ADRA offices at the BUC was a nice surprise." She has been a friend of ADRA for a number of years, in particular in helping to promote the annual shoe box appeal locally. Bert noted that, "our work needed no introduction and she was very interested to see the map of the various countries where the agency is currently working."

While she unfortunately cannot be at the official opening herself she expressed delight that such a wonderful building has arisen out of the ashes of the fire that devastated the BUC office in November 2008.

During the tour Pastor McFarlane was able to answer many of her questions about church structure and services provided by both the headquarters office and the two Adventist churches in her town. He shared with her that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK is a vibrant Christian community well beyond her 'patch' in Watford and that the new church headquarters is not merely a place where the staff work but is a gathering place for members of the church and the local community. Understanding this, the Mayor equally complemented Pastor McFarlane on the openness of the visual access from St Albans Road. The high fence has been replaced by a low wall that allows members of the public to see part of the beauty of the park and by so doing come to understand that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is an open and welcoming organisation.

A photo gallery from the visit is available in the BUC Picture gallery, [tedNEWS]
Reflections on Seventh-day Adventist Leadership

There is a growing awareness in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that Leadership Development is very important and that, not only are pastors leaders, but they are the most important leaders in the Church – I use “pastors” in a broad sense here, including all believers who in some way “lead the flock”.

What is required of a Seventh-day Adventist church leader today? What should a leader be like? What should a leader do and how? How does a leader grow and develop his/her gifts for leadership, which Paul makes reference to in Romans 12:8?

Today, leadership is difficult, demanding and exhausting. Leaders face new challenges and more decisions at a faster pace. We are expected to make quick choices, prioritize what is most important, delegate that which we don’t have time to do, and maintain checks and balances by working effectively in teams.

The matters we were trained to deal with are no longer there. The rapid cultural change has led to a crisis in leadership. One Christian author says that “the major challenge for leaders is not only the acquisition of new insights and skills, but also unlearning what they already know. Today’s leaders need the courage and ability to risk their false sense of confidence and to surrender their predetermined, “wired” responses, and outdated and inaccurate mental maps.”¹

We are being challenged to change, learn, and grow as an on-going commitment in life. How do we do that?

It helps to begin with a general definition of “leadership”. There is much talk of various “leadership styles” these days. But more important than style is substance. We need to know what leadership actually is before we can know the best style in which to do it.

The definition I propose has been proposed by Edwin Locke and captures the essence: “Leadership is the process of inducing others to take action toward a common goal.”² With this starting-point, leadership includes four parts:

1. Leadership is about relationships:
   Leaders must know how to inspire and relate to their followers. If you have no followers, you are not a leader.

2. Leadership is a process:
   Leaders must act and set events in motion. Just holding a position of authority does not make you a leader.

3. Leadership is persuasion:
   Leaders induce or persuade followers to take action. Leaders influence followers by inspiring their trust, acting consistently, and motivating them by words and deeds. Examples of the tools of leadership are: legitimate authority, setting an example, setting goals, team-building, and communicating a vision.

4. Leadership is purpose-driven:
   Leaders act in order that the organisation achieves its mission.

According to this model, church leadership may be defined as “the process of activating church workers (members, volunteers, employees) for the mission of the Church”.

This leadership has a fundamental spiritual dimension. Every area includes cooperation with God and following God. Leaders count on God to change people in order to achieve God’s purpose. This happens by the leader’s and his followers’ faith and by the power of the Holy Spirit working in them. Because of that, we say that our work as leaders is “God’s work”.

This spiritual dimension comes across very strongly in J. Robert Clinton’s definition of leadership: “A Christian leader is a person with a God-given capacity and the God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God’s people toward God’s purpose for the group.”³

Spiritual leadership must impact visible reality. If it is not happening through the leader’s actions of persuasion and an active response to them by his followers, it becomes a “spiritualised” leadership which remains in the leader’s heart, takes place in his office, and is seen at best in his spiritual attitude. There is such leadership in the church. I am not impressed by it. This is leadership that abdicates from its responsibility with the excuse of “leaving all things to God”.

As a ministerial secretary, I once visited a pastor. I asked him to show me his plan for his work. He said: “I intentionally do not have a plan, because I feel I need to leave space for the Holy Spirit to do his work.” This man’s ministry was highly unproductive, although he prayed day and night. His problem was that he was self-centred and therefore irresponsible. He prayed to God about himself, not his responsibility or the people he was to lead. And nobody else in his team, or in the conference, knew what he was doing and why. Others could not relate to his work. He remained a lonely leader with no followers, although he was very “spiritual” in one sense. He longed for God. But He was not a spiritual leader, because he misunderstood true spirituality. He did not see that true spirituality is always action-oriented. It impacts the real world. It impacts God’s people and those who seek him.

Another time, an elected president was invited to sit with the nominating committee and give advice on the candidates to be nominated to form his team. He declared: “I can work with anybody, because I am open-minded and it is God’s work, so he will do it. You may choose whoever you like.” Of course, everybody in the committee thought highly of this man’s tolerance and great faith, while incapable and totally unsuitable persons were nominated to make up his team! Five years later, after conflicts, lack of quality work, and no good team spirit, he was not re-elected because, although being considered a spiritual man, his leadership lacked efficiency. He failed to take responsibility for carefully selecting his team. Why? Maybe he feared personal conflicts, the danger of exposing his personal preferences for or against people,
Reflections on Seventh-day Adventist Leadership

and the politics in his church, and resorted to a spiritualising attitude which always means failure in taking responsibility for the real world.

Of course, there are specific situations when we can do nothing but asking God to intervene, when we are desperate and there are no options. But we must be careful not to abdicate from our responsibility too soon. God has chosen to work through us, and we must do our work well, so that he can add his blessing to what we do.

In Leadership for Dummies (1999), it is underlined as the first and fundamental characteristic of a leader that there is a willingness to assume responsibility or ownership. Spiritualised leadership is not good enough. Why? It abdicates from its responsibility and authentic faith in God. Such leadership was the repeated temptation Jesus resisted from the Devil, namely, testing God by abusing his leadership role. Jesus said: “Don’t put God to the test by abusing your position”, which implies that we must not abdicate from our responsibility and say that God will fix it. Such behaviour means, in fact, that we bury our God-given talent in the ground. It is not leadership for the real world. We know that God performs miracles and that he has all the power in the universe. But we also know that we have been asked to use our brains and abilities and gifts to serve him faithfully and that, if we do that, God will add his blessing to it. And this is particularly important in light of Seventh-day Adventist leadership values.

In Adventism, based on instruction from Ellen White, the biblical view of man and the biblical view of work are of central importance. We say that man is not merely a spiritual being but a being in whom harmonious growth depends on an interaction between spiritual, mental (intellectual and emotional), physical and social dimensions. And, as far as work is concerned, it is God’s way of forming our character, developing it and refining it, in order to bring glory to the Creator. Something happens to us when God’s power, God’s gifts, and God’s will are allowed to pour out through us to the world. We change. We become like the Creator. We learn to create new things, and new things do not occur without change and growth. Spiritualised leadership fails to allow us to grow, which is God’s plan for us.

It is therefore an essential Adventist value that the spiritual dimension does not function in isolation from the human effort and its impact in the real world. Our ideal of spiritual leadership, therefore, is being so close to God in our faith that we hear his voice, act according to his will, and seek to achieve his purpose, so that God is performing his acts through us. This will only work if we are humble and see ourselves as God’s servants. “Servant leadership” is therefore a better term than “spiritual leadership”, because it draws attention to both our attitude and actions as leaders.

Before I proceed, let me prevent a misunderstanding. Just as there are leaders who spiritualise their work, putting all responsibility on God and doing little or nothing themselves, there are of course those who fail by the opposite extreme, i.e. by seeking to do everything themselves and not relying on God at all. God does not enter into their strategies, job descriptions, committees, decisions, conversations and speeches. While working in the church, they see God and his mission as a decoration, a romantic atmosphere which is put on at times, but when that is over the “real work” begins, and that is the human effort.

This is so obviously mistaken for us that I don’t need to spend time here on the obvious dangers of such a view. Emphasising the human effort and forgetting that we are doing God’s work is to fail as leader. Failing in this way is the great temptation for the gifted, well-educated, and hard working leader. There is only one remedy for it, and that is the gift of Christ’s humility (see Philippians 2:3-11).

Another factor leading to this kind of failure in leadership is where the leadership culture is governed by the concept of dictatorship, i.e. the strong and absolutist leader who concentrates all power and initiative to himself. Ultimately, this leadership is based on fear and an enormous misunderstanding of who you are – you think you are better and more perfect than you really are. Jesus taught us in clear words to shun such leadership:

“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” (Matthew 20:25-28)

The system of leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is therefore not the presidential system but the committee system (see TED Working Policy D 05).

“The fruitage of [the Seventh-day Adventist concept of church] is a representative and constituency-based system. Its authority is rooted in God and distributed to the whole people of God. It recognises the committee system. It provides for shared administration (president, secretary, treasurer) rather than a presidential system. It recognises a linkage of entities (church, conference, union, General Conference) that binds the believers together in a universal fellowship. It assures essential unity of purpose and mission. While the integrity of each entity is recognised (church, conference, union), each is seen to be a part of a sisterhood which cannot act without reference to the whole.”

Adventist leaders, therefore, are team leaders and lead so that the whole church is recognised and benefits from their leadership.

Another reason for team leadership is that the leader does not have all knowledge and wisdom. A leader must humbly see his/her own limitations. What the leader lacks can be compensated for by his/her team.

In order to work in a team, the leader needs to have a sound self-esteem and dare to be open. Prestige and position in the system becomes irrelevant in the midst of team work, although, of course, in the end some people have a formal responsibility for what takes place.

A decision will be better founded and have greater success if we have taken the time to involve the team around us, before we go to action. That is why consensus is a virtue in church leadership. It is based on Philippians 2:1-5 which puts
the model of Jesus Christ as the greatest value for us.

Philippians 2:1-5
“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...”

In order for leadership to work, therefore we must be deeply connected with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Our devotional life is the key to such leadership. So, care for and cultivate your faith!

In conclusion, applying our model of church leadership helps us see that, by our faith and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we perform leadership in four ways in the church:

1. Church leadership is about relations:
Leaders achieve the mission of the church by inspiring, elevating and leading the people in their organisation, so that they do their assigned work exceptionally well and with joy. This requires an organisation, where it is clear to everybody what their role is – an organisation which is dynamic, flexible and effective enough to accomplish the mission. It also requires a culture, where Seventh-day Adventist values and particularly the value of mission set the tone. Adventist leaders, therefore, need to be effective organisers, peacemakers, and builders of Adventist church culture.

2. Church leadership is a process:
Leaders take action and something happens. They change people and the organisation through their actions. Leadership is not static but dynamic. It strives for excellence and constantly asks if there is a better way to do what we do, in order to achieve the mission. God is active in this process. It is therefore an Adventist tenet that “we must walk in the increasing light”. This requires that we see ourselves as leaders functioning as agents of change, God’s change.

3. Church leadership is persuasion:
Leaders persuade or induce their followers to act, by various means, for example, by their legitimate authority, by how they manage relationships and conflicts, by the example they set, by goal-setting, encouragement and evaluation, re-organisation, team-building, and by communicating a vision. In all of these activities, the leader draws on his personal faith and draws on his biblical values. This requires skills in transparent communication, ability to inspire others, and being a team leader.

4. Church leadership aims at the mission of the Church:
Leaders need to define what this mission is and what it means to themselves and the organisation they lead.

The way God has defined the church’s mission is essential. We find that He has allowed variety in the wording of our mission. Various biblical authors at various times say it in various ways. Jesus taught his disciples a mission to the world which we have in at least four versions, in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:45-49/Acts 1:8, and John 14-17. Luke then describes the fellowship of the first church in Acts 2:42-47. The mission of the church comes out in numerous instructions on church order in Paul’s writings. And it has a special significance for Adventists in John’s apocalyptic vision in Revelation 14:6-13, where we have found our eschatological mission defined.

But even today, we say it in different ways. The General Conference says it in one way. The Trans-European Division says it in another way. Unions, conferences, churches and institutions say it in yet other ways.

So, obviously, a mission statement can be worded in different ways, although the mission remains the same. The choice of statement reflects what the leader and his team feel should have priority at a specific point in time. For us as Adventist leaders, however, I have found no better wording than the one written by Ellen White in The Acts of the Apostles (p. 9):

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through his church shall be reflected to the world his fullness and his sufficiency. The members of the church...are to show forth his glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be manifest... the final and full display of the love of God.”

If we believe this, a Garfield cartoon becomes pertinent (see adjacent box).

If we have no goals in our work, how will we know when we have failed? How do we know when and where we need to
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The leader needs to have God's mission for the world in his/her heart, apply it to his/her work, and communicate it to the followers. This requires a rich personal devotional life, including prayer, Bible reading, fellowship, and witnessing. It requires the skills of a visionary, a strategist, a goal setter, a decision maker, one who is able to show the direction and keep the organisation focused on God’s mission. If you don’t have these skills, build a team of people who have them, pray together and listen to each other. And God will speak through His spirit and lead you all the way!

*By Dr. Bertil Wiklander, the President of the Trans-European Division*
King James Bible's 400-year reign

05 January 2011 Washington DC, USA [Mark A. Kellner - The Washington Times] Its cadence is found in the speeches of Abraham Lincoln and the lyrics of Paul Simon. Renowned narrator Alexander Scourby and country music legend Johnny Cash have recorded spoken versions of the text. It's estimated that 1 billion copies have been printed since the first volume rolled off the press in 1611.

The King James Version of the Bible, also known as the "Authorized Version," marks its 400th anniversary in 2011, and by any measure, it has had a lasting impact on the world and on the language into which it was sent. The "authorized" moniker comes from a title-page declaration that this Bible was "authorized to be read in churches."

"The sheer poetry of the King James Version, not to mention its almost half-millennium of absolute authority, militates against its slipping into obscurity any time soon," declared Phyllis Tickle, longtime religion editor at Publishers Weekly magazine.

Even noted atheist Richard Dawkins has praise for the volume: "You can't appreciate English literature unless you are to some extent steeped in the King James Bible. There are phrases that come from it — people don't realize they come from it — proverbial phrases, phrases that make echoes in people's minds," he said in a video released by the King James Bible Trust, the British organization that is one promoter of the 400th-anniversary celebrations due next year.

"Not to know the King James Bible is to be, in some small way, barbarian," Mr. Dawkins added.

Indeed, many of its phrases have entered everyday use, among them: "my brother's keeper," "salt of the earth," "give up the ghost," "scapegoat," "an eye for an eye," "casting your pearls before swine," "scarlet woman," "writing on the wall" and "the blind leading the blind."

"A house divided against itself," Lincoln's signature sentiment, was translated that way 250 years before Lincoln was elected president.

Geof Morin, communications director for the American Bible Society, whose New York headquarters will host a King James Bible exhibit next year, called the King James "still relevant" in the age of Twitter and Facebook.

"It was the Bible staring Thomas Jefferson in the face," Mr. Morin said. Its words, he added, were "in the speeches of Abraham Lincoln. It's the language we still use today. It's part of the American psyche, of how we see ourselves as a nation."

But before the KJV — as the version is known by many readers and scholars — came into America's consciousness, it had to arrive on the scene at all. That happened following a contentious 1604 meeting at Hampton Court palace, when a young James VI of Scotland, newly crowned as James I of England, was trying to iron out differences between the Church of England and a dissident sect known as the Puritans.

Putting the Scriptures into English could be a dangerous practice: 16th-century translator William Tyndale was executed. After Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church, and established the Church of England under the monarch, there were some efforts to approve a complete English-language Bible.

Henry authorized production of what came to be known as the "Great Bible," while the 1583 "Bishop's Bible" followed during the reign of Elizabeth I. In Geneva, English-speaking exiles who opposed Mary I's moves to reconcile with Rome produced the "Geneva Bible," whose translation and margin notes took a decidedly anti-monarchist and anti-clerical stance.

The Hampton Court Conference was drifting into sectarian arguments, historians note, when Puritan leader John Rainolds (also spelled Reynolds), took the bold step of addressing James and asking for a new translation of the Bible, since the previous Bibles "were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original."

By almost all accounts, James was delighted: He didn't like the Geneva Bible, and the earlier versions weren't fully up to his standards of scholarship. As a boy, James had immersed himself in Greek and Latin, among other intellectual pursuits. He hardly had known his parents and was installed on the Scottish throne while just a year old with a regent in charge.

It took seven years to create the volume known as the KJV. And while the title page stated it was "newly translated out of the original tongues," the actual work drew more on an earlier English version, said Larry Stone, a former vice president at Thomas Nelson Publishers and author of "The Story of the Bible," a new history of the Scriptures published to coincide with the anniversary.

The translators "were told to follow the 'Great Bible,'" Mr. Stone said in a telephone interview, "and they would compare the translation of the 'Great Bible' with the Greek and the Hebrew. If they wanted to change [the wording], it would change for several reasons; either the 'Great Bible' translation was not accurate, or they could say the words better."

And because the 'Great Bible' drew on Tyndale's translations, the 16th-century "thee" and "thou" entered into the King James Version, even though they were long departed from common usage.

Would James I, the only English monarch to ascend the throne as a published author, be happy his eponymous Bible has survived this long?

"I actually think he would be somewhat pleased, because of its longevity," said David Teems, author of "Majestie: The
A strong believer in the "divine right of kings," Mr. Teems explained, James was determined "his Bible would reflect his reign, unite realms of Scotland and England. His desire was to unify, and to unify all of Christendom."

While that didn't happen, the impact of the KJV is without question: It quickly displaced the Geneva Bible as the Protestant standard in the English-speaking world, and was often the primary "reader" for generations.

Evangelists from Charles Finney to Billy Graham preached from it; Paul Simon derived the phrase "workman's wages" in his song "The Boxer," from reading 1 Timothy, he once told Rolling Stone magazine.

Author Joe Kovacs, whose 2009 "Shocked by the Bible" explored the lesser-known stories and facts of the Bible text, said he chose the King James to quote in his book because "it's the most well-known and frequently quoted translation."

Beginning in November, Thomas Nelson Publishers, which sold 329,000 printed copies of the King James Bible between July 2009 and July 2010, has mounted a major campaign to promote the text, with a website, www.kjv400celebration.com, and national marketing campaigns.

The firm also is working with the History Channel to promote the anniversary.

"To me, the 400th anniversary, is not just about KJV, but about the Bible. The fact that it is a historic milestone gives us the opportunity to go beyond and look at the impact of Scripture. It's not a translation story; it really is a Bible story," said Carla Ballerini, Nelson's bible group marketing vice president.

Despite the language changes and continued research of the past four centuries, the King James Version retains a great deal of authority, said Alister McGrath, head of the Center for Theology, Mission and Culture at King's College in London.

"The KJV is a surprisingly reliable translation, even though some minor translation changes are necessary on account of advances in our understanding of the manuscript tradition over the last 400 years," said Mr. McGrath, whose 2001 "In the Beginning" was a history of the KJV's development.

However, "the day of a single dominant biblical translation is past," he added. "In many ways, the KJV held a monopoly in English from about 1700 to 1950, as no other translation was seen as being significant over that period. Nowadays, there are multiple [English language] translations."

That may be the case, but there may be life in the older text yet: Compare its "Give us this day our daily bread," found in Matthew 6:11, to the rendering in "The Message," a popular modern version: "Keep us alive with three square meals."
Individualism Shines Through Americans' 2011 New Year's Resolutions

As the calendar shifts from holiday celebrations to January, a new survey from the Barna Group explores what Americans describe as their New Year's resolutions. The nationwide survey of 1,022 adults provides a snapshot of people's personal growth priorities for 2011, when they make such commitments.

The Role of Resolutions?
Making New Year's resolutions is a common experience, but Americans report achieving mixed results. Nearly two-thirds of the nation’s population (61%) has made New Year’s resolutions at some point in their lives. More than 90 million adults (41%) say they will make such personal pledges in 2011, representing roughly two-fifths of the nation’s population.

Yet, only one out of every five (19%) is “definitely” planning to make resolutions, which may be a reflection of either the half-hearted effort many put forth or a recognition of their past failure to follow through on such goals. When asked to describe their experience with resolutions during 2010, only one out of four Americans (23%) who had made resolutions found those commitments resulted in “significant, long-term change” to their behaviors or attitudes. More commonly, Americans described their 2010 resolutions as resulting in “minor change” (29%) or “no change” (49%).

Another reason people may struggle with keeping their resolutions: they try to achieve personal change on their own. Among those who are making New Year's resolutions, most said they were not planning on having “accountability or a support system in place” to help them stick with those commitments.

What (or Who) Gets Attention?
When it comes to the types of resolutions people make, Americans not surprisingly focus on self-oriented changes. Among those planning to make resolutions, the top pledges for 2011 relate to weight, diet and health (30%); money, debt and finances (15%); personal improvement (13%); addiction (12%); job and career (5%); spiritual or church-related (5%); and educational (4%). Personal improvement responses included being a better person; giving more; having more personal or leisure time; organizing their life or home; and having a better life in general.

While people concentrate on themselves when making priorities for the New Year, it is telling that so few Americans say they want to improve relationships with others. There were virtually no mentions of volunteering or serving others; only a handful of comments about marriage or parenting; almost no responses focusing on being a better friend; and only a small fraction of people mentioned improving their connection with God.

David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, explained these findings: “Only 9 out of more than 1,000 survey respondents – that’s not quite one percent – mentioned that one of their objectives for next year was getting closer to God in some way. Even in the rare instance when people mention spiritual goals, it is often about activity undertaken for God, rather than a personal pursuit of God or an experience with God.”

As further proof of Americans’ self-oriented concerns, Kinnaman pointed out that “virtually none of the survey respondents mentioned anything about becoming more green. Despite the significant attention environmental issues receive, virtually no one connects their New Year’s resolutions with personal responsibility in this area.”

Perspectives on Resolutions
Kinnaman put the findings in context: “Americans maintain a love-hate relationship with New Year’s resolutions: millions of people make them, but they rarely report success as a result. This research underscores that most humans want to experience some sort of personal change in their lives, but achieving such objectives is both difficult and uncommon.

“Maybe most problematic, Americans hinge their efforts at personal change by focusing almost exclusively on themselves, rather than realizing that lasting change often comes by serving and sacrificing for others. Churches and faith communities have a significant opportunity to help people identify what makes for transformational change and how to best achieve those objectives – especially by relying on goals and resources beyond their individualism.”

Americans’ Experiences with Resolutions

| % of all Americans | 61% of Americans have made New Year resolutions in the past
|                   | 41% of Americans plan to make some type of resolution in 2011
|                   | 19% definitely plan to in 2011
| % of those making resolutions for 2011 | 23% experienced significant, long-term change from resolutions made last year
|                   | 29% had minor change from resolutions last year
|                   | 49% saw no change

Resolution Reasoning
Who is most likely to make these resolutions?

- 30% weight, diet and health
  - women, upscale adults, churchgoers, Catholics, Boomers
- 15% money, debt and finances
  - Mosaic & Busters, divorced adults, downscale individuals, Democrats
- 13% personal improvement
  - upscale adults, middle middle, political independents

Facts about Resolutions

Younger adults are far more likely than older adults to make resolutions. Perhaps less affected by past failed resolutions, younger adults emerged as far more likely than older adults to make personal commitments for the New Year. Among Mosaics, 44% plan to make at least one resolution for 2011, which was second only to the 51% among Busters (ages 27 to 45). Boomers (ages 46 to 64) and Elders (ages 65-plus) were comparatively unlikely to expect to make any resolutions (39% and 26%, respectively).

Disengaged adults do not bother with resolutions. Those who have never made New Year’s resolutions exhibit a disconnected profile in other areas of life as well: they are likely to be non-voters, unchurched adults, atheists andagnostics, and those never married.

About the Research

This report is based upon telephone interviews conducted in the OmniPoll℠ (part of the Barna Poll from the Barna Group). This study consisted of a random sample of 1,022 adults selected from across the continental United States, age 18 and older, December 11 through December 19, 2010. The interviews included 200 among people using cell phones. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with the aggregate sample is ±3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Minimal statistical weighting was used to calibrate the aggregate sample to known population percentages in relation to several key demographic variables.

Elders are those born before 1946; Boomers are the generation born from 1946 to 1964; Busters are individuals born between 1965 and 1983; and Mosaics are adults born 1984 or since.

“Downscale” individuals are those whose annual household income is less than $20,000 and who have not attended college. “Upscale” people are those whose annual household income is $75,000 or more and have graduated from a four-year college.

Barna Group (which includes its research division, the Barna Research Group) is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization that conducts primary research, produces media resources pertaining to spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries. Located in Ventura, California, Barna has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984.

If you would like to receive free e-mail notification of the release of each new, bi-monthly update on the latest research findings from the Barna Group, you may subscribe to this free service at the Barna website (). Additional research-based resources are also available through this website.

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The Vision and Direction of Trans-European Division

My mental picture of the desired future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division is quite simple:
I see an active church at the end of time with strong spiritual motivation to extending itself into the world while breaking down barriers. This is not happening in the backyard, but the world sees and feels it.
The Church in my vision functions by simultaneous acts of 'reaching' in a threefold relationship: church members connect with God, the world, and each other. They reach up to God through spiritual formation (nurture). They reach out to the world by faithfulness to God’s mission, bringing the gospel to the world, providing works of service, and revealing God’s love in their life (mission). They reach across by building each other up in love and respecting each other’s differences (community).
I see the Church as a worldwide group of individuals belonging to different peoples, nations, and tribes, and with different languages, standing close together and ‘reaching’ with their hands:
Lifting up their hands to God, they break down the barriers of human solitude, blindness, and selfishness, accepting God’s sovereignty and following the will of the Creator and Father of all. Lifting up their hands to God, they accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour who removes sin, evil, and death. Lifting up their hands to God, they receive daily power, wisdom, faith, hope, and love from the Holy Spirit.
Extending their hands to known and unknown people in the world, they break down barriers of faith, race, and social conventions, as they connect with the rich and the poor, the young and the old, men and women, people near and afar, friends and enemies. Humbly and yet obstinately and generously, they make God known and present him through their lives so that people are attracted and drawn into relationship with God and his believers. They meet people’s needs and offer friendship to all. Their lives find meaning in ‘imitating God’ (Ephesians 5:1), being doors to communion with God. Embracing with their hands all their family members in God’s family, knowing they are children of God, they break down human barriers and fulfill the Christian vision of spiritual unity and caring love (Philippians 2:1-5).
The sign that the Church is fulfilling its calling is the members’ joy and thanksgiving. When they are gathered for worship, the service explodes in hymns of praise and joyful celebration of the day fast approaching when God will be acknowledged by all as the One he already is: ‘one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all’ (Ephesians 4:8).
I pray and work to let God accomplish this vision through me and the people I have been given to work with. I am confident and full of enthusiasm. Greetings with Romans 15:13: ‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit’.

Dr. Bertil Wiklander, the President of the Trans-European Division
Revival and Reformation

TED Response
to 'God's Promised Gift' and 'Initiatives of the GC R&R Committee':

Spiritual Growth in Life and Godliness
TED Initiatives 2010 – 2015
Proposal to the TED Executive Committee 14th November, 2010

The apostle Peter, one of Christ’s disciples, said in his second letter:

‘Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness … For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ (2 Peter 1:2-3, 5-8)

In the following section in verses 10-15 Peter underlines how extremely important the Christian disciplines are for the Christian life. This is not a way to earn salvation or God’s acceptance – those gifts are by faith and God’s grace – but, rather, it is a matter of strengthening our faith and growing in life and godliness, in order to live close to God and change into more and more Christ-like personalities.

As a special Messenger to the Seventh-day Adventist community of believers, Ellen White said that ‘A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.’¹

She also defines revival and reformation in the church as a work by the Holy Spirit:

‘A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganisation, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.’²

In the light of (a) the teachings of the Bible, (b) the counsel of Ellen White, (c) stimulated by the initiatives of the General Conference documents on ‘God’s Promised Gift’ and the ‘Initiatives of the GC Revival and Reformation Committee’, (d) the concept of ‘Stewardship in a Changing World’, and (e) as we enter a new five-year plan for mission, Tell the World, we commit ourselves and encourage all leaders, committees, pastors, members, youth and children to make spiritual revival and reformation our first work through the power of Christ – in his cross, resurrection, heavenly mediation and soon return.

May the Holy Spirit fill our lives and energise us all to take every opportunity to help, heal and save that which has been lost.

We commit ourselves to support and promote the following initiatives to encourage our churches and organisations to make spiritual growth in life and godliness our first work:

1. Making prayer a fundamental part of our daily life (1 Tim. 2:1)
   - Praying alone
   - Praying in groups of two and three (Matthew 18:20)
   - Praying in our families
   - Praying in church fellowships
   - Praying in chains via the Internet
   - Participating in the worldwide Adventist days of prayer and fasting

2. Making Bible reading a fundamental part of our daily life (Ps 119:105)
   - Following a Bible reading plan
   - Using a pocket Bible during the day
   - Apply the book as a whole principle to the reading of verses
   - Use Bible Study Guides and other study tools to enhance the reading
   - Engage in a Bible study group either for nurture or outreach
   - Learning how to give Bible studies to seekers

3. Study and apply the biblical disciplines for spiritual growth
   - Understanding the biblical disciplines by a handbook to be produced by the TED
   - Practising a multitude of spiritual disciplines
   - Apply biblical disciplines as a means of strengthening coping skills (peace of mind, stress management, etc.)
   - Apply biblical disciplines as a means to enhance relationships

4. Being available and engaged in at least one outreach or mission project where I lead one person to Christ
   - Small group
   - Sabbath School Class
5. Participating in spiritual worship, celebration and fellowship

- Home congregation
- Via TV, Internet or Radio
- Small group or Branch Sabbath School
- Church Plant

¹ Review and Herald, March 22, 1887.
² Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902.
How Perfect Is "Perfect" or Is Christian Perfection Possible?

Edward Heppenstall

To be right with God is the most vital thing in life. Apart from all we do, all we have, what about us as creatures standing before our Creator? How do we stand with God? Paul declares that the only way to be right with God is to be clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Phil 3:8, 9)

The Sinner's Only Hope

The perfect righteousness of Christ is the only answer to the sin problem in any man's life, the only possibility of living like Christ here and now. "Our righteousness"-the best we can do and are in ourselves-are "as filthy rags" (Isa 64:6). Rags because they do not cover us, and filthy because they leave us in our defilements and our sins. Many sincere Christians express dissatisfaction over the fact that they continually fall short of perfection. Many admit of continual failure in the spiritual life, of repeating sins again and again, of giving way to habit patterns contrary to the life of Christ. When they read the command of Christ: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt 5:48), the effect is both condemnation and discouragement.

In almost all the great revivals believers have sought in one way or another to attain to perfection of living. They have longed for it, prayed for it, and worked for it. But the testimony of all great Christians is that they have never attained to it; that the more they strived and the closer they came to Christ, the deeper was their sense of inadequacy and inherent sinfulness. While their lives bore testimony to victory over sin, at the same time they felt a deeper sense of their own need and unworthiness. Ask Peter, James and John. Ask Martin Luther and John Wesley. Ask the noblest souls that the Christian church has ever seen, the most zealous spirits that mankind has ever produced. With one mighty chorus and with one accord they exclaim with Paul:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:12-14)

If there is one central truth borne out in Scripture in the experience of all true believers who have come to know the saving power of God, it is this: that the only perfection, the only
sinlessness they have ever seen or known has been that of Jesus Christ, the only perfect and sinless man; that because of this Jesus is the whole of their salvation, the whole of their righteousness and perfection. To be a genuine Christian means faith in Christ, fellowship with Christ, faithfulness to Christ, and fruitfulness for Christ. Faith means that man has no perfection and no righteousness of and in himself; that man trusts wholly and solely in Christ.

Biblical Perfection

One of the hindrances to living the Christian life successfully is failure to understand what the Bible teaches on the nature of sin and perfection. A grave misapprehension lies at the root of much of the false teaching on this subject. The Bible, in applying the term "perfection" to believers, never means "sinlessness." There are at least nine different Hebrew words and six Greek words translated "perfection." Noah is said to be "perfect in his generations" (Gen 6:9). Of Asa, the King of Judah, we read: "But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days" (1 Kings 15:14). "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). "We speak wisdom among them that are the perfect" (1 Cor 2:6).

The Bible writers are not saying that these men are sinless. The meaning is that of spiritual maturity, full grown spiritually, ripe in spiritual understanding, whole in response to god, keeping nothing back. A "perfect" Christian is one whose heart and mind are permanently committed to Christ, cannot be moved. Noah, Abraham, and Job were all declared to be "perfect" men. Yet the history of their lives shows that they were far from being sinless.

If one's view of sin is shallow enough, sinless perfection would not be an impossible achievement. It is a defective view of sin that leads to a wrong understanding of perfection. If sin simply means a deliberate, willful doing of what is known to be wrong, then no Christian should commit this kind of sin. But if sin includes also a man's state of mind and heart, man's bias toward sin, sin as an indwelling tendency, then perfection presents a totally different picture.

What God Expects of His People

There are some Christians who believe that it is possible in this life to reach a point in spiritual development, where the sinful nature is completely eradicated and therefore, no longer operative. The Bible does teach that the genuine Christian life is one of uniform and sustained victory over all known sin. The normal Christian experience should be one of victory and not constant defeat. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. (Rom 6:11-15)

There is one truth that every believer needs to learn who would fully enjoy complete salvation in Christ. It is the need to abide in Christ, to look continually to Christ, to depend wholly on Christ and His righteousness. God's method of salvation is not eradication of a sinful nature, but the counteraction of divine power through the Holy Spirit. Only by the continual counteracting presence of the Holy Spirit is it possible to be victorious over sin and the sinful nature within us. It is fatal to believe that if only we become totally surrendered to Christ, that the sinful nature is eradicated. The law of sin and death is still operating within us. It is something that remains in
us as long as we live. Victory over all known sin does not mean sinlessness. It does mean the
glorious opportunity in Christ to strive successfully against all sin and overcome it. But this is an
experience that must be maintained day by day through fellowship with and surrender to Christ.
The Christian life is a lifelong battle. So long as the believer abides in Christ, real holiness and
victory are possible. What we have in the every-day life is the counteracting power of God
against our sinful tendencies and our sinful natures.

O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God
through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the
flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,
who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom 7:24-8:2)

Salvation in Christ alone means that the bias to sin in human nature is too strong and
overwhelming to be dealt with apart from moment by moment trusting in Christ and in His
power to save. The law of sin and death is operating all the time. Deliverance comes by means of
a higher law, a higher power-the law of the Spirit, the mightiest power of God which counteracts
the law of sin in our members. Peter sank in the waves the moment he took his eyes off Christ.
He sank because he had the tendency to sink in water. The only thing that kept him walking on
top of the sea was the power of Christ momentarily exercised counteracting the gravitational
power to pull him down. So it is in the Christian life. There is always a conflict in this earthly
life between the flesh and the Spirit:

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh
lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the
other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not
under the law. (Gal 5:16-18)

The Christian must walk continually in the Spirit. Never in this life will the Christian arrive at
the place where he can dispense with the counteracting power of Christ against the sinful
tendency in his life. Only through the continual, day by day operation of the Holy Spirit is our
sinful nature counteracted. The sinful nature is not eradicated until the day of the resurrection,
until this "mortal shall have put on immortality." The Christian learns to live in the sphere of the
Spirit, not in the sphere of the flesh. The believer is never beyond the reach of temptation or the
possibility of sinning. But in Christ he is brought into a position of victory over all known sin.
Sin no longer has dominion over him.

Sinful Nature: Controlled But Not Eradicated

The greatest men in the Bible never claimed sinless perfection. They were all painfully aware
of the fact that they were sinners and remained so throughout their lives. So long as a man is in a
state of sin with a sinful nature still present in him, he will confess himself to be a sinner. The
Christian always recognizes himself to be a sinner in need of divine grace. If we say that we
have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful
and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have
not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10) We find here the
most solemn warning against the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life. The incontrovertible
meaning of this passage is that the man is a self-deceiver who claims for himself what the apostle
John dared not claim. The truth is not in him. The doctrine of sinless perfection leads to the
conclusion that both Christ and the Holy Spirit are unnecessary once this state of eradication of
the sinful nature is reached. Wherever the professed Christian claims to have the sinful nature
eradicated in his life, there is a corresponding loss of true dependence upon Christ. There is a break in the only saving relationship that man needs for victory. This allows people to sin and call evil good. It discourages those who strive to be like Christ, but fall short of this false idea of perfection. It is God's will that, having surrendered to Christ at conversion as best he knows, the believer will maintain that attitude that as fast as anything further is revealed to him contrary to the will of God, he will promptly give that up also. God will see to it that throughout the Christian life here on earth, there will be deeper insights into the sinfulness and selfishness of our own natures. There will be increased dependence, increased repentance, and prayer for forgiveness. The believer will never come to the place where he will not pray the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." By this increased insight, we shall continually need an increased "looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith." There are no limits to God's power. He is always willing and able to give us the victory. But man limits God by virtue of his lack of insight and lack of surrender. In proportion to the maturity and completeness of his knowledge will be the completeness of his surrender and victory.

By Grace Alone: True Meaning

The basic doctrine of the Christian faith is salvation by grace alone. This doctrine represents the final renunciation of either human effort or the human claim to perfection. Christ is our sole perfection, our sole righteousness. In ourselves we are never sinless. But so long as we look to Christ, sin and self cannot prevail.

The pretension to sinless perfection at any time in this earthly life is the root of spiritual pride and self righteousness. The Christian does not deny that the new life in Christ is capable of a new righteousness, of victory over sin. He only insists that it is not his righteousness, not his victory, but Christ's.

There will be no point in spiritual achievement in this life where one may rest with the certainty that he will sin no more, or that he does not stand before God as a sinner in need of divine grace and power. The Christian knows that there still remains in him a fountain of evil, a depraved nature.

Salvation by grace alone means that absolute perfection and sinlessness cannot be realized here and now. Righteousness by faith means that we look continually and exclusively to Christ; that we look away from ourselves and any hope in ourselves altogether in order to live out of Him alone. Genuine salvation directs us at once to Christ, to the only perfect life lived here on the earth, and to His redemption through the Cross. What is absolutely central is Jesus Christ. Man's victory over sin is exclusively the work of God in Christ, the continual control of the life by the Holy Spirit; that through daily union with Christ we actually participate in Christ's holy life.

The righteousness of Christ that saves is not the beginning of a new self-righteousness, but the perpetual end of it. It is a perpetual living in Christ from a center and source beyond us and our wisdom and power. We live continually out of a risen Christ and never out of ourselves. Victory is through the continual operation of the Holy Spirit, because the Christian life consists in the fruits of the Spirit and the power of God.
Leadership and Ordination of Women

In February 2010 the General Conference asked the world Divisions to carry out a survey among the leadership in their constituency to gain a clear understanding of their position on women’s ordination to the gospel ministry. As part of that process the following observations were shared with the divisions by the General Conference:

Observation #1: For more than three decades the Church has engaged in discussion about the role of women in the Church. After much study no consensus has been reached as to whether or not the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy advocate or deny the ordination of women to ministry. The Church has affirmed its purpose “to bring qualified women into a broader participation in church leadership and into increasing responsibilities for implementation of church programs.” In the course of these discussions, provision has been made for women to serve as church elders and pastors. The ordination of women as church deaconesses and elders has been approved “where the division found it applicable, or possible, or profitable in their situation.”

Observation #2: The doctrine of spiritual gifts (see Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 4:10, 11) teaches that God gives gifts for service to all without respect to race or gender. Included among the gifts are those of evangelist, prophet, teacher, and pastor. Seventh-day Adventists understand ordination to be the Church’s recognition and affirmation of a person’s gifts for spiritual leadership. Unlike the Roman Catholic view of ordination, the Seventh-day Adventist view holds that ordination does not confer an added gift or infusion of grace which bestows an authority from God that is not already present before the ceremony of ordination.

The outcome of the survey within the Trans-European Division was that while two or three unions were not prepared to ordain women due to cultural considerations, all thirteen supported women’s ordination in principle within the TED.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church within the TED faces extraordinary mission challenges where people are extremely resistant to the gospel and joining a church is an exception rather than the norm. To effectively meet this need the church needs to mobilize all members for ministry and outreach, including women, who constitute two thirds of the membership. Opening the doors for women in leadership and the ordination of women would strengthen the growth of the church in Europe.

Within the church and European society at large gender equality and excellence in leadership are priorities. In many of the TED territories it is, or soon will become, illegal to make any differentiation on the basis of gender.  

The TED has made significant progress with the appointments of a female Division Secretary, a woman union secretary in Finland, a union and a conference treasurer in Hungary, a conference.
secretary/treasurer in Iceland and Slovenia, a conference treasurer in the South Conference of the South-East European Union and principal and bursar at Newbold College. In response to a statement from the Women’s Pastor’s Council at Newbold in 2009 the then executive committee at its Winter Meetings in November of the same year voted to make the ministerial career paths for men (ordination) and women (commissioning) of equal value and transferable within the Division.

It is our Christian and moral obligation to promote and practice gender equality at all levels of our church organisation. However, the possibility remains that we may not be measuring up to our secular and legal responsibilities, which could leave the church open to legal action under equal opportunities legislation.

A two track approach to respond to these issues and enable the church to live up to its legal obligations in policy and practice is:

**Policy**

Policy and documentation should be reviewed to ensure that it is gender neutral, providing equal opportunities for both ordained (male) and commissioned (female) ministers.

**Practice**

To promote and encourage women in leadership it is necessary to create opportunities at grass roots level for women. The more women who participate in local leadership the more opportunities there are for participation in wider spheres of leadership. Research shows that women in ministry tend to:

- be offered and accept secondary ministerial roles to accommodate their family situations
- work part time because of the pressures of home, family and work
- take time out from ministry because of family commitments
- work in ministry on a volunteer basis or for nominal pay
- accept other alternatives such as chaplains, cyber pastors etc.

These practical issues should be addressed if any significant progress is to be made and to avoid possible accusations of discrimination.

**Recommendations**

1. To request that the study of the theology of ordination as voted at the General Conference Session in Atlanta is prioritized.
2. To request the General Conference to review and amend General Conference policies, so that the wording is gender neutral and that all leadership pathways are open to male and female.
3. To request the General Conference to grant a variance to the model constitutions and bylaws to accommodate the unique needs of the Trans-European Division with the insertion of “conference and union presidents should be ordained/commissioned ministers” in its policy language.
We feel that this is a matter of some urgency and respectfully request that this be dealt with as soon as possible but no later than General Conference Annual Council 2011.

4. To request the General Conference for permission to ordain women to the gospel ministry within the Trans-European Division thereby creating parity between female and male ministers and follow the same process and procedure as currently applies to ordained men and credentialed ministers.

1. The European Social Charter, which supplements the European Declaration of Human Rights states in Article 20 that there should be equality in all stages of working life – access to employment, remuneration and other working conditions, including dismissal and other forms of detriment, vocational training and guidance and promotion.


5. Zikmund, Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling, p. 84.