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Mission to Cities Initiative Highlights Spring Meeting Opening

02 May 2012 Silver Spring, United States  [Ansel Oliver/ANN and Miroslav Pujic/tdNEWS] Top regional Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders identified 24 cities that will receive targeted outreach efforts, the next step of a plan voted by church officials last year to focus on urban area ministry worldwide.

During the opening of Spring Meeting – one of two annual meetings of the global Executive Committee – leaders stated plans for renewed outreach in a mega city in each of the denomination’s 13 world divisions. Some divisions identified several cities.

Dr Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division (TED) expressed the commitment of the division to focus on the urban ministry: “In the TED we are committed to be engaged in a long term outreach process in order to reach the cities within our Division. London was chosen in cooperation with the British Union Conference as the city to start this initiative. By the God’s grace, we believe that we will be able to make thousands of disciples of Jesus Christ using all our resources and human potentials.”

Pastor Janos Kovac-Biro, evangelism director at the TED who is in charge of this initiative shared the plans and the first steps which will be taken in implementing this programme: “From September 2012 all the TED departmental leaders will join forces together with the British Union leaders and pastors serving in London to mobilise the existing church membership to effectively reach out in the most relevant way for their neighbours. In the autumn of 2013 all the representatives of the TED Unions and Fields will be coming to London for a field school of outreach and be part of the diverse evangelistic process planned for London. After the training they will share the experiences and methods of work with their fellow workers in their home country.

The spiritual work in Europe is complex and needs continuous connection with God and careful preparation”, concluded Kovacs-Biro.

E G White saw the importance of working in the capital of United Kingdom: “London has been presented to me again and again as a place in which a great work is to be done... God wants His people to work. To every man - and that means every woman, also - He has given His work, and this work each one is to perform according to his several ability.” (GC Bulletin, April 22, 1901, p. 396).

The worldwide urban ministry focus will start next year in New York City, with a representative from each division attending part of the four-week initial outreach.

“IT's not just an event, it’s God's comprehensive plan for reaching big cities,” said Adventist Church president pastor Ted N. C. Wilson. “New York will be a symbolic launch.”

Meeting at the church's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, leaders reminded Spring Meeting delegates of the world’s changing demographics, which led to the voted plan last year. “For the first time in history, more than 50 percent of the world’s population live in cities,” said pastor Mark Finley, an assistant to the president. “About 70,000 people every day move from rural areas into cities.” [tdNEWS]
GET ACTIVE - Day 1 - Cycling Join Patricia Femea as...
AWR Honours Swedish Radio Workers

02 May 2012 Gothenburg, Sweden [Tor Tjeransen] The Swedish radio workers Siv Molin and Anne-Maj Sandström were honoured with the Adventist World Radio (AWR) Award of Merit on April 30. Senior Vice President for AWR, Greg Scott, presented the awards at the close of a four day training event for radio workers from Sweden and Norway held in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gothenburg.

Commenting on the importance of radio work in secular societies like Sweden, Greg Scott said: “This is a mission field just like any country in the 10/40 window. To reach the people of these societies is just as difficult as reaching a Muslim.”

Both Siv Molin and Anne-Maj Sandström have been pioneers in radio work in Sweden. Siv Molin, who turned 80 last year, is still active in the radio work in Stockholm and full of enthusiasm for the possibilities of presenting the gospel through radio.

“I don’t know if I am worthy of this”, Siv Molin said when she was called to the front to receive the Award of Merit. Later on she said that she was totally surprised by the honour. She admitted that she had been uncertain if she should come to the training event, but after receiving the award she felt full of joy. “Imagine if I had stayed at home and missed this,” she said with a big smile.

Anne-Maj Sandström works in the radio station in Gothenburg. She has endured frustrations of dwindling support for radio work, she has seen the ups and downs of it all, but through it all she has served the church and her local community faithfully. “You have been amazingly faithful,” Greg Scott said at the presentation of her award.

The citation on both awards read: “For more than 33 years of unselfish, faithful and dedicated service to the radio ministry in Sweden.”

The Adventist church operates four radio stations in Sweden. At www.awr.org you will find a large selection of podcasts produced by Adventist radio stations around the world. [tedNEWS]

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World Religious Freedom Congress Calls to Avoid Secular Society’s Lead

24 April 2012, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic [Mark Kelchner/Adventist Review; tedNEWS] Addressing nearly 900 delegates and guests at the Seventh World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association, Denton Lotz, a noted Baptist minister and IRLA president, summarised the purpose of this three-day event: “We're here today because we believe that freedom of religion is basic to all human rights.”

That view, sadly, is not shared in many parts of the world, something Lotz said made holding the sessions even more important.

"It's incumbent upon us to work together that we live together in harmony and concord," Lotz said to an audience of leaders from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other communities. "We don't need religious wars."

While the main congress theme, "Secularism and Religious Freedom – Conflict or Partnership" may seem far removed from lands where persecution is active, Lotz took a different view.

"Most people worldwide suffer from a lack of religious freedom. Seventy percent of the world lives in places of religious repression," he said.

Speaking to an audience that included Seventh-day Adventists, Mennonites, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Mormons and Scientologists, among others, IRLA secretary-general John Graz noted the world congress is a multifaceted event.

"This congress is about religious freedom, but it is not a religious event," Graz said. "We are all here together. We represent different faiths, different religions and different churches. We are different, but we are respectful of each other."

With the theme of "Secularism and Religious Freedom -- Conflict or Partnership," speakers and delegates tried to negotiate the challenges of a world which is increasingly hostile to a variety of religious expression in the public square.

Dr Miroslav Pujic director of the ministry to secular and postmoderns at the Trans-European Division was one of the speakers who talked about the historical development of secularism and he shared few ideas how the media, especially social media, could be used in a promoting religious freedom.

"Secularism is manifesting itself in a wave of anti-discrimination measures in Europe that are pushing anti-discrimination laws and practices which do not permit any religious exclusions" says Raafat Kamal, Religious Liberty director at the Trans-European Division, and he added "the rise of secularism has contributed to a diminishing role of religion in the public square, and a marked increase in skepticism towards the free exercise of faith. When societies become neutral towards religion, we see less and less protection of religion and religious activities."

"While standing for separation of church and state, IRLA leader Lotz issued a call for religion to avoid following a secular society's lead. "When religion becomes secular, I believe it is the greatest challenge to religious freedom, allowing secularism to define what a religion believes," Lotz told delegates. "When we allow the secularization of our faith to transcend the transcendent, it loses its meaning," he added."
Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson challenged believers to grasp the opportunities for open discourse that a secular state preserves. Although acknowledging the inevitable conflict between the values of believers and that of secular culture, Wilson said, "We have to accept this tension as part of a free society. We have to accept the challenges and find appropriate responses, through God’s leading."

Wilson drew a distinction between “radical” or “extreme” secularism—which seeks to exclude religion from the public sphere—and “secular governance,” which remains neutral toward religions and protects the religious freedom rights of minorities.

In a statement read to delegates, the country's president, Leonel Fernandez Reyna, offered “a most cordial welcome to the Dominican Republic, a land of freedom. The Dominican Republic is a place of freedom for Christians, Muslims, Jews and people of other faiths.” [tedNEWS]
Pastors in England Discuss Postmodernism & Outreach

24 April 2012 Bracknell, United Kingdom [Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist] South England Conference ministers in the provinces gathered at Newbold church on Wednesday 18 April 2012 to discuss postmodernism and outreach to the majority population. A presentation on postmodernism by Dr Miroslav Pujic, Trans-European Division Ministry to Postmoderns director, shared some identifying aspects of how a postmodern mindset operates, and highlighted several challenges for the Church when using more traditional evangelistic methods for outreach. He noted that a postmodern mindset responds better to a relational outreach rather than programmes. Dr Pujic concluded by urging the pastors to “always start the conversation with Jesus.”

“The presentation brought out some wider principles as we try to reach a secular society,” stated Southampton pastor, Douglas McCormac. Pastor Sam Davies cares for Bedford and Milton Keynes church and appreciated the presentation: “It brought alive what we are doing, and helped me rethink my approach to the wider community.”

The afternoon debate on reaching the majority population of the UK displayed a passion among the pastors to find methods to reach this people group. In small groups the pastors discussed threats and opportunities, what has worked where, class differences and cultural diversity within the majority population, and how our Church can become better in reaching this specific group.

Pastor Theo Rios cares for the English and Portuguese speaking churches in Peterborough. He called for a programme to be developed by Church leadership. Other pastors expressed that work had to be done in a local context. Youth worker Steven Hulbert shared how it is by developing authentic friendships in the local community that churches grow. Pastor Kwesi Moore expressed that the day had given him an “awareness of how little we understand of the enormity of the task, and how important it is that we can share a deep love for people, regardless of cultural context, colour or philosophical perspective.”

Pastor Ian Sleeman, who organised the meeting, commented: “I wanted to share my hopes and dreams for evangelizing the majority population. We have had the discussion many times before,” and he added, “but it was good to hear the other pastors’ frustration and perceived opportunities, and together I hope we can find a way forward.”

To learn more about the discipleship strategy in reaching postmoderns please go to www.lifedevelopment.info and for the resources please look at this web site, www.tedmedia.org [tedNEWS]
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Conference on Adventist-Muslim Relations in Sarajevo

24 April 2012 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina [Lidija Djordjević-Runić; tedNEWS] Over one hundred participants gathered on 23-25 March 2012 in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) for a Mission Conference. The conference was organised by the conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Adventist Mission department of the South-East European Union Conference (SEEUC). It was attended by leaders and members of the church from all districts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as delegates from other conferences of the Union.

The main speaker of the weekend conference was Petras Bahadur, the Adventist-Muslim Relation associate director in General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (GC). Instead of pointing out differences Bahadur’s approach is to find common grounds. He believes that the key to the ministry to Muslims is found in our identity, which should be utilized for building bridges. Most Muslims are unaware that the Seventh-day Adventists are the end-time movement group of Christians who actually have much in common with Islam. Bahadur used the Koran to illustrate that this book actually points to the Bible and encourages every Muslim to read it. The Koran also highly appreciates Jesus and points to him as the only sinless prophet.

The participants were eager to learn more about the means of fulfilling the mandate of Jesus by reaching out to over six million Muslims in the South-East European Union. Union president, Djordje Trajkovisi, reminded us: “God does not have other hands but ours to do His work!” Laszlo Gallusz, Adventist Mission (AM) director at the SEEUC, reminded us that the basic missiological principle is that God reaches people where they are – and this principle applies strongly to the “how to” of the AM relations.

This conference was an eye-opening experience. A member of the Adventist church in Sarajevo, who is married to a Muslim, spoke of this conference as an answer to her many prayers! Her husband attended almost all of the sessions of his own initiative. He commented in a private conversation: “This is a positive development in the Adventist church. We need more of these meetings in order to get to known each other.”

Bosnian conference president, Stevan Mirčeta, was very enthusiastic about bringing Bahadur back to Bosnia. He commented: “This conference was an important first step, but not the only one, and definitively not the last.” At the end of the conference Mirčeta made an appeal and many came forward for a special prayer of dedication for ministering to our Muslim neighbours. May God help us to put into practice what we learned!

For more information about the work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, please [click here]. [tedNEWS]
Organizational Leadership Development Process

The church needs people who continually experience learning and growth as they go about their ministry. Such persons develop as leaders who in turn create positive transformation. They integrate learning and change with their experience. They in turn disciple others who grow as leaders, experience meaning in their service, and contribute significant organizational change.

Such leadership development is an on-going process in which the following eight conditions are established and nurtured. The eight conditions form a cyclical system; each condition promotes the others. Effective integration of this model means that leadership development becomes hard to distinguish from usual ministry. Leadership development is experienced while actually doing ministry, accomplishing and adapting, rather than a distinctive program.

Church organizations and their leaders can intentionally foster this process. But they need to understand that these conditions must be integrated into the on-going life of the local church or the ministry entity rather than seen as a particular program delivered in seminars or workshops. It is not that leadership workshops are not needed. They can draw attention to the process I describe below. And they can provide skill training that enhances specific ministry skills. In hierarchal organizations this model for leadership development requires promotion of a leadership development process within the local church, not one imposed from the top down to the local church.

**Condition One: Rethinking Mission**

Organizations (including the local church) seeking renewal typically attempt to clarify their mission. The organization has to get its mission straight.

Rethinking mission means an organization identifies and embraces -- within its idea of mission that it is a creative relational network in which personal transformation of its members is realized. No longer is mission seen in terms of output alone; mission becomes developing people who learn and change while doing ministry.

In hierarchal organizations positional leaders at some level must experience this resolve. Attitudes about evaluation held by these positional leaders then extend to how a member is changing in their important relationships while they go about ministry. Evaluation of mission becomes weighted toward how people are learning and changing while experiencing ministry.

**Condition Two: Interrelatedness**

Experience, learning, and changing are seen as parts of a whole process in this leadership development model. They are cyclical and internal, not linear or imposed from outside the community. That is what is meant by interrelatedness.

It is essential that persons who serve religious organizations both understand and nurture this reality. Learning, changing, and doing happen where people are in relationship with one another and working together in their primary community; that is where leadership development takes place.

Every system is in relationship with a broader system. So, though leadership development occurs in the setting of the local church, provision of counsel, assistance, and mentoring from an entity in the broader community such as a conference organization is helpful. That interrelatedness requires positive relationships between the church and the organization.

Experience, learning, and changing are interrelated dimensions that require intentionality from within the primary organization and constant renewal.
Condition Three: Theoretical Reflection

Significant theological reflection on the nature of leadership is mutually experienced in the on-going life of a healthy church or church organization. Relational processes of seeking meaning-making in the context of doing ministry provide the best ground for that theological reflection.

The vehicle for such activity is highly relational group interaction. I am suggesting these relationships be intentionally fostered. Highly relational groups should be created, and time for mutual reflection around scripture and ministry experience should be scheduled in the ministry context.

Condition Four: Theoretical Learning

Leadership is everyone’s opportunity, so all members of the church or organization should be equipped to critically think about their assumptions regarding the nature of leadership. Theoretical foundations for leadership understanding should form the foundation for this dimension of the leadership development process. Pastors or other positional leaders too often approach learning on this level as their domain without realizing the value to members throughout the organization.

Theoretical learning in the church or church organization can be accomplished by reading groups, annual workshops, and continuing education standards. These activities should be intentionally implemented and designed to foster theoretical learning regarding the nature of leadership.

Condition Five: Reflection on Leadership Practices

People experience leadership through specific behaviours they observe in their community including building shared vision, practicing solid integrity, challenging the status quo, empowering people, demonstrating abundance mentality, and relating to diversity. Attitudes are interpreted and formed as these practices are observed.

Think again about the cyclical nature of leadership development. It is certainly true that the heart of a person changes through theological and theoretical learning in the community. But an additional step is needed. That step is the skill of reflection. The opportunity for leadership behaviours to generate change within the heart of members of an organization is proportional to the skill and time devoted to reflection.

Reflection on leadership practice means identifying behaviours, analysing, and critically thinking. Relationships in religious organizations between peer leaders, managers, and positional leaders should foster conversation that is reflective, aside from evaluation regarding productivity. Additionally, continuing education should provide emphases on leadership practices involving skills in reflection.

Condition Six: Experiential Learning

The ministry itself provides a transforming opportunity within an organization. This condition is distinct from reflection on leadership practices in that it grasps the value of what might otherwise be seen as ordinary work having nothing to do with leadership or its development. People have the capacity to find meaning and experience change as they go about mundane activity.

Experiential learning requires recognition of the value of the ministry. Such a culture will produce self-directed reflection on how ministry is done, how it may improve, and what it means to contribute through ministry. A culture of experiential learning is produced by affirming experimentation, valuing the learning failure provides, providing peer feedback, offering coaching, and performance reviews that emphasize the learning that is taking place while doing the ministry itself.

Condition Seven: Training

Skill training for a wide range of ministry skills such as strategic planning, conflict management, managing meetings, managing change, communication, financial administration, human resource management, or other specific ministry challenges should be provided in the context of the church in an intentional and professional manner with affirmation given by endorsement or certification of the specific skills pursued.

Condition Eight: Feedback

A 360 degree assessment tool that provides feedback from peers, those served, and those that a person reports to should be applied no less than every fourth year to provide feedback to the leader. The growth of the organization around important values can be measured and interpreted as the transforming impact of leadership. We need to listen to the voice of others who can affirm our strengths and help identify our areas of challenge.

Conclusion

These eight conditions are integrated dimensions of an on-going transformational leadership development process creating positive change for organizations. The process must be experienced within the ministry of the local church or other organization and is on-going. In hierarchal organizations, the role of supporting leadership development from one organizational level to another is to provide consultation and guidance in establishing the process.

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Skip Bell, DMin
Professor of Christian Leadership,
Newbold Appoints New College Chaplain

23 April 2012 Bracknell, United Kingdom [Newbold College, teoNEWS] Pastor Paul Goltz has been appointed Newbold College Chaplain from the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year. “The Newbold College community stands to benefit from Paul’s warm, caring manner” Dr Philip Brown, Principal, said this week. “He knows how to accommodate those who might have different theological views and recognizes that student needs can be different from those of regular church members.” “Paul has a clear passion to share Christ and His love and compassion and he is clearly committed to and passionate about the ministry of Chaplaincy,” Dr Brown added.

It is likely that Paul will commence as College Chaplain at Newbold College in mid-August. He will come with relevant professional and pastoral experience, evidenced most recently in Australia in roles as regional youth coach for the South Queensland Conference and in tent maker ministry as a Queensland Police Officer and school liaison officer as well as previously as senior pastor (South Queensland), chaplain and senior pastor (Sydney), Youth Director (Tasmania), Associate Youth Director/University Students Chaplain/State Pathfinder Director (Western Australia) and senior pastor, youth pastor and chaplain (Victoria). Paul’s qualifications include a MA (Religion) with a Youth Ministry emphasis from La Sierra University and a BA (Theology) from Pacific Union College - Avondale College.

In reflecting on his call to ministry Paul said “I first felt the call to ministry as a young person at the South Queensland Big Camp when I heard Pastor Leonard Barnard speak of his flying missionary adventures in New Guinea. After completing a trade qualification, I was encouraged to pursue my calling to ministry by our conference Youth Director. I attended Avondale College in 1986 where I was heavily involved in campus ministries and as a student dean. I realized that God definitely wanted me to serve Him in a pastoral capacity.”

Paul’s personal mission statement in ministry is “to value people as God values them, inspiring them to join God’s revolution and to use their gifts creatively both corporately and individually, to reach out across the cultural divide, speaking the language of the people, with the power of the Holy Spirit to introduce people to Jesus saving grace.”

Paul is married to Sonya (a registered nurse and currently studying for a Master of International & Community Development). Paul and Sonya have two children – Daniel (18) and Karlie (12).

Newbold College looks forward to welcoming the Goltz family on campus later this year. [teoNEWS]

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Job Vacancies at Newbold College

Newbold College is a student-centred, inclusive and innovative college of higher education operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is located about 40 miles west of London, United Kingdom. We are seeking to make the following full-time appointments from 1 August 2012:

Director of Student Services
Dean of Men
Dean of Women

The Director of Student Services is a senior management position providing vision, leadership, planning, direction, and review of student services operations. The position manages and oversees support programmes necessary to ensure student success and a quality campus life; supports the academic mission and the strategic plan of the College; and plans and implements opportunities for student growth and development. The position also develops policies and procedures for student services and student life programmes; assesses student satisfaction, student growth and development; oversees the family housing community; and supervises the Student Services team and support staff.

The Dean of Men and Dean of Women are full-time, live-in professional positions which oversee the comprehensive living and learning environment of Keough House (Men's Hall of Residence) and Schuil House (Women's Hall of Residence), and provide an environment in which the Christian home life of the students living on campus can be protected, fostered and strengthened.

For further information about these positions, including selection criteria and the application process, please visit: www.newbold.ac.uk Informal enquiries about the positions should be addressed to the Principal, Dr Philip Brown, on +44(0)1344 407400 (e-mail: pbrown@newbold.ac.uk). Applications are invited immediately, with a closing date for all positions of Friday 25 May 2012.

Please note: Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have right to work in England.

We are also seeking to make the following full-time appointment from 1 July 2012:

Cashier

The Cashier is a full-time position and applications are invited from persons who have an accounting qualification and excellent track record in: processing payments; preparing cheques, BACS payments and cash for banking; maintaining daily checks on cash, and managing cash floats; reconciling cash on hand accounts and credit card transactions; maintaining a purchase ledger and liaising with suppliers; issuing statements for internal telephone accounts; and customer service work.

For further information about this position, including selection criteria and the application process, please visit: www.newbold.ac.uk Informal enquiries about the positions should be addressed to the Bursar, Mrs Berit K Lisle, on +44(0)1344 407403 (e-mail: blisle@newbold.ac.uk). Applications are invited immediately, with a closing date for this position of Friday 25 May 2012.

Please note: Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have right to work in England.
'Green Sabbath' Produces Eco-Christians

07 April 2012 London, United Kingdom [SEC Communications/Colin Stewart, Olympic Outreach Team] "Green Sabbath was rejuvenating and refreshing after getting into the 'green' mentality. The song that played on my mind was 'How Great Thou Art' especially on our walk to church in the morning," said Marilyn Le Feuvre, Communication leader at Horley Gatwick Adventist church.

As part of an initiative to get church members more focused on caring for our environment, Sabbath, 31 March was dubbed 'Green Sabbath' across the British Isles. Many churches were enthusiastic about getting involved and fully embraced the 'green' – even if it wasn't their colour!

Horley Gatwick church were preparing on the Friday, setting up fruit and water for those walking to church in their green coloured outfits the next morning. They also decided to decorate their church in green to depict the extent to which we should be caring for our environment. Their motto for the day was 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rejoice!' In addition to their collective 65 miles walked, the church collected clothes for one special 9-year-old boy and for the nearby Gatwick Men's Detention Centre.

On the other side of the M25, the Beckenham Hope Community church members walked to church in their tracksuits and black 'Hope Community SDA Youth' T-shirts with the aim to 'meet at least one unchurched person' during the journey. Pastor Simeon Esson came to church in his tracksuit, along with his congregation, and discussed how we can look after the earth that God blessed us with, basing his message around Revelations 11:18, "It is time to destroy all who have caused destruction on the earth." (NLT)

In Cambridge and Haverhill around 60 people walked and rode to church and back to their cars including one young man who participated in his wheelchair!

Leytonstone church did more than walk in their green 'Leytonstone SDA' T-shirts. They also came together on Saturday evening to combine 'Green Sabbath' with Zumba! Zumba instructor, Giselle De Siun-Morris, led three sessions stating, "I do lots of different things and it's great, this was the best place I've ever been to!" This enthusiasm was seen on the participants' faces as well. Each person, from the age of 4 to 70, thoroughly enjoyed the exercise class, so much so that Leytonstone plan for a repeat session.

"The original concept of Green Sabbath was to promote exercise, fitness, and health, by walking to church, but the community would also benefit by having more parking spaces," states Pastor Colin Stewart – originator of the 'Green Sabbath' initiative. He is delighted with the response but sees it as just the beginning for a celebratory year that includes the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the staging of the 30th Olympic Games. He says, "Millions of people are already being inspired by the Games to become fit and healthy. Adventists, having such a prominent health message, should lead the change." That is certainly true for Stratford church – the nearest Adventists to the Olympic stadium – who are transforming their building to serve the community during the Olympics – and who recognise that 'on foot' may be their only way to church during the Olympic period.

The Olympic Outreach team are now in the forefront of continuing the strong efforts in promoting fitness and health for ourselves and evangelism as we prepare for the biggest opportunity to use both avenues this summer in the UK. Look out for more information and the next Green Sabbath this summer, and visit the live-uk.org website to see how close members can move towards a 1 million mile goal by the end of the year.

A selection of photos from various 'green' churches can be seen on the BUC website.
see/hear

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about $14 billion. The denomination currently receives about $2 billion annually. That's according to this year’s edition of the Global Tithing Index (GTI), which is a report measuring 2010 statistics of tithing faithfulness per capita across countries.

The GTI is published privately by Claude Richli, associate publisher of the Adventist Review and Adventist World magazines. Though not an official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the annual ranking can help administrators compare countries in similar regions and uncover trends.

This year’s GTI introduced a new measurement called the Total Tithe Potential, which shows the total tithe that should theoretically be received in a country if all Adventist Church members were faithful in tithing 10 percent of their income. The total tithe potential for 2010 was about $14.1 billion. The same year, the Adventist Church received about $1.9 billion in tithe.

The GTI is an instrument that aims to level the field in comparing tithing faithfulness across countries that have economic disparity. It measures tithe per-capita by comparing a nation’s measure Gross Domestic Product with the aggregate tithe volume per country divided by the number of members on church rolls.

Eritrea and Switzerland again topped this year’s annual ranking, followed by Austria, Denmark and France. The GTI also indicates increasing faithfulness among members in countries such as Brazil, which in 2010 was responsible for about half of the gains in world tithe.

This year’s edition also offers stark evidence of how an audit of membership rolls reveals a more accurate gauge of members’ financial support. Nations that had big gains in ranking on the index this year – including Togo and Bolivia – were areas that Adventist Church leaders have recently conducted membership audits.

Togo jumped to number 7 on the ranking, up from the 38th spot last year. Richli attributed the jump entirely "to the courageous decision on the part of its leadership to drop all missing members," he wrote in the report.

In 2010, Togo reported 5,343 members, a 52 percent drop from 11,028 the previous year. That move, Richli said, showed that active members in Togo were as faithful as their counterparts in affluent countries. The church’s action in Togo, however, puts a spotlight on the "obvious need" for membership audits in many countries, Richli wrote.

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Unfortunately, Richli said, about one-third of countries surveyed contribute less than 10 percent of total tithe potential. He said that figure "clearly shows that in those countries, church rolls are vastly inflated."
Two advisors on the project are business professors at the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies, a graduate school in the Philippines and directly affiliated with the Adventist Church’s world headquarters.

“In looking at the GTI reports over the years, it’s been evident when church administration has taken clear steps to address issues in financial governance and membership records,” said Ronald Vyhmeister, director of the business program at AIIAS and a consultant to the GTI.

“This year again the membership record issue stands out as an issue that quite evidently needs to be addressed in many parts of the world,” Vyhmeister said.

Other trends noted in this year’s report include tithing in Europe, which shows a mixed picture. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom and Norway, show a gradual improvement following the start of the recession, but countries such as Spain show that the recession is severely affecting giving there.

Also, three countries ranked in the denomination’s Southern African Union – South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland – confirm that their rise in previous years was not due to a statistical distortion; each are among the top 20 countries, ranking solidly in the middle of the Western countries.

See the full report here: [http://www.aiias.edu/gti/reports.html](http://www.aiias.edu/gti/reports.html)
Emotional Intelligence: The Most Important Leadership Quality?

Arriving in a new district or taking up a new position in an organisation is always fraught with anticipation, uncertainty and worry. This was particularly true when my husband took a pastoral position in an area with which he was not familiar. Shortly upon arrival, one well-meaning church member offered him very insightful advice. He said: ‘You cannot tell the people from our region what to do; you can only invite them to follow you’. What are the leaders’ characteristics that will inspire others to follow?

There is no shortage of literature identifying the most pertinent qualities that every good leader ought to have. We are told that amongst other traits leaders should possess cognitive strength, analytical reasoning, technical skills, inspirational motivation, vision, integrity, fairness, confidence and emotional intelligence. It is to be expected that a highly intelligent pastor or head of a department who oozes with confidence will generate respect from his congregation or his team. However, there are some indicators to suggest that it is in fact emotional intelligence, or as some termed it emotional literacy, that separates ordinary leaders from those capable of great things. What is more, it has been suggested that an ‘emotionally illiterate’ leader is often accompanied with emotional numbness and inability to respond to the emotional needs of others, is a significant shortcoming of those called to lead others.

Emotional intelligence, a concept that emerged in the 80s, has gradually entered into the vocabulary of psychologists, counsellors, life coaches and other professionals and it seems to be here to stay. However, what is emotional intelligence or emotional literacy? One of many available definitions suggests emotional intelligence to be ‘effective awareness, control and management of our own emotions and awareness and understanding of other people’. This human quality has captured the imagination of researchers resulting in what appears to be a convincing argument for the benefits of emotional sensitivity whilst pointing to the shortcomings in the case of its absence.

The far-reaching consequence of limited, or even non-existent emotional awareness is documented by an evaluation of the leadership qualities of past American presidents. Following the analysis of public communication, organisational capacity, political skill, vision, cognitive style and emotional intelligence of eleven presidents the authors acknowledge that ‘in the world of imagination it is possible to envisage a cognitively and emotionally intelligent chief executive, who happens also to be an inspiring public communicator, a capable White House organiser, and the possessor of exceptional political skill and vision. In the real world, human imperfection is inevitable, but some imperfections are more disabling than others.’ Having identified several presidents who despite some noteworthy historical achievements are responsible for ‘the most unhappy episodes of the twentieth century’ the authors reach a bold conclusion: ‘Beware the presidential contender who lacks emotional intelligence. In its absence all else may turn to ashes’.

This strong statement is not surprising given that an absence of emotional insight appears to have a profound effect not only on the leaders’ ability to understand his or her co-workers, but it is also responsible for the inaccurate appraisal of self. Daniel Goleman identified self-awareness as the first quality possessed by emotionally literate leaders. This includes ‘having a deep understanding of one’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs and drives.’ What is it that is making me happy, fulfilled and content? What, when and who brings the worst out in me? These are just some of the questions that need answering in an attempt to become an emotionally aware individual. Those people, the author continues ‘are neither overly critical nor unrealistically hopeful. Rather, they are honest with themselves and others.’

A good starting point in becoming in tune with self and others is a systematic appraisal of ones own strengths and weaknesses. This soul-searching exercise is not about naming what I should or ought to be good at; instead it seeks to identify the areas in which I do particularly well, the skills I accomplish with ease, and the tasks that capture my imagination. It is about the input that generates positive feedbacks from those I know are honest with me. Having identified all of my strengths, my limitations need careful and sincere consideration. Which aspects of my job make me very anxious or do not result in a positive response from others? What would those closest to me identify as my weakest point as a leader? Do I need help with any aspect of my life? Conducting an accurate evaluation of one’s weaknesses has the potential to contribute to a realistic approach to the challenges that any job brings. This is expected to include utilising strengths appropriately whilst being careful when engaging in the areas recognised as weaknesses. Furthermore, identifying appropriate strategies that will address the weaker aspects of my own performance is also an important aspect of this self-discovery.
An additional benefit of being aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses might result in increased confidence as well as in the readiness to acknowledge one's own limitations. I have recently been asked to teach and work closely with a young, sharp and very intelligent scholar who is leading some 'cutting edge' work in his area of expertise. It would be dishonest of me to omit the fact that I was concerned about being intimidated by him, but quite the opposite happened. In addition to his enthusiasm and his superior handling of knowledge, his readiness to freely identify areas which he apparently 'knew little about', and his modesty about his expertise made him not only approachable but also stimulated learning. This is not surprising because genuine humbleness, not unlike empathy, to be discussed next, is a quality that has enabling properties.

Empathy has been acknowledged as an important dimension of emotional intelligence that, whilst most easily recognisable, is frequently absent from the repertoire of essential leadership skills. And yet, an empathetic leader might be able to prevent the team and individuals from becoming overwhelmed, disillusioned, and even depressed in the course of duty. He or she will not remain silent about the professional challenges or personal hardships his co-workers are going through. Showing genuine interest in his or her workforce will be an integral aspect of the leadership style employed by an emotionally literate leader. Empathy discussed here however is not an 'un-businesslike' sentimental style of leadership, but a leadership capable of taking notice of employees circumstances, feelings and ability 'in the process of making intelligent decisions’. These leaders are in tune with ‘the messages beneath the words being spoken’. This will also include unequivocal respect for others as well as commitment to understanding the way culture impacts upon human interactions.

As a social work academic I am frequently involved in attempting to teach students to be both aware of their own feelings as well as being sensitive to the needs of those they will be working with. Positive regard for every individual alongside a related set of traditional values that, amongst others, includes acceptance, a non-judgmental attitude and a respect for people are deeply embedded in the knowledge base and skills passed on to social work students. Despite the noble intentions and genuine motivation of most students, this approach to training often feels as though one is trying to teach budding social workers to create a beautiful master-piece by 'painting by numbers'. As a Christian who teaches at a State University I often question whether it is indeed possible to develop those qualities through education and training alone? Could it be that identified leadership techniques, including the emotional intelligence, might remain just a mechanical exercise without drawing on the power available to those who have a meaningful spiritual life?

There is no doubt that many Adventist leaders are known for their excellent leadership that includes the vast repertoire of skills expected of an effective Christian leader. Equally, as most leaders know, in the 'hustle and bustle' of pursuing the common goal, it is very easy to overlook one's own emotional needs alongside the needs of co-workers. I have attempted to argue that a leadership that is committed to developing the emotional intelligence that includes keen knowledge of self and dedication to the understanding of others has the potential to overcome this omission. I would like to conclude by acknowledging that emotional intelligence that draws from Christ's example and uses his power in achieving this goal will give real meaning to this important leadership skill. After all, He was the ultimate leader who only needed to say: 'Follow me', and the rest is history. [tedNEWS]


Dr Lidija Godina, Senior Lecturer, Applied Social Sciences at University of Bedfordshire

Leadership Development Journal - March 2012
Building Beneath the Surface - The Leader's Inner Life

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

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

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

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

Today one hears a lot about leadership strategy, leadership vision, the marketing and communication of leadership ideas. The risk is that a person may spend all his/her time on these leadership concepts and forget that character-building is the first priority for leadership.

Jesus spoke in graphic terms about the contrasts between the outer and the inner life. (See Matthew 23:13-28) The outside of cup and platter may be so clean as to glisten in the sun but the inside is full of corruption and excess. Religious leaders might be as attractive as newly-painted tombstones in a well-manicured cemetery but the inviting exterior only hides inner decay. This is the tragedy of leaders failing to recognize the importance of the inner life.

On another occasion Jesus spoke about the influence of one’s life. "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" —John 7:37,38 NKJV

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

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

How then do we attend to the inner life, the character-building work that is so essential to survival in public leadership? It happens primarily in what we do with our quiet time—those moments of the day that are reserved for feeding and focusing the mind. Those periods in private when we wrestle with huge questions: what kind of person do I want to be? for what purpose am I living? to whom do I turn for mentoring? what are the values by which I live?

It is a myth that a crisis develops character. It does not. Crisis only reveals character. The urgent lesson for leaders is that in changing times, in moments of crisis, strength comes from one's spiritual disciplines. These habits are not
developed on the spur of the moment. They yield their fruit only when carefully cultivated with consistency and honesty.

And there is a marvelous assurance that the inner life of dependence upon God will have its beneficial effect in one's public life. Jesus affirmed that in His statement about a person, who believes in Him, becoming a river of living water.

Ellen G White cautioned and encouraged leaders that, "It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you."¹

Building beneath the surface is the most important work that any leader can do.

¹ Ellen G White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 146

By Lowell C Cooper, General Vice President, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Leadership Development Journal - January 2012
A World of Possibilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for seeing possibility in the people you serve by offering them hope in these times of despair. Improbable, but with possibility!

By Victor Pilmoor - Treasurer, British Union of Conferences of the Seventh-day Adventists
Leadership Development Journal - January 2012
As a leader in God's church, you will probably be asked on some occasions to deliver a sermon to a different audience and/or congregation. Wanting to do your task well, you will inevitably ask: How do I do this well? What is a good sermon? As a member of a local church and listener to sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, you ask that question too.

Is a good sermon a matter of taste, similarly to a good meal or music? Is it that our personal upbringing, culture, taste, how we are psychologically wired and other things, determine which sermons we consider to be good and which perhaps bad and boring? Any preacher who ever preached a sermon is aware of the enormous variety of different people's perceptions in his/her audience.

A lot could be said about what is a good sermon, good preaching. For this article, let me just highlight two.

**Good news not good advice**

In my last church, one of my members came to me and said: “Pastor Duda, I am so disappointed with you. You have been our pastor for two years now and you have not preached against women wearing trousers yet!” Obviously, her idea of a good sermon was that it should tell people what to do (and not to do).

However, from my experience as a pastor and administrator, most people know what to do; they are just not very good at that. My problem is that I already know that I am not what I ought to be; I know I am doing things that I ought not to do and that I am leaving undone things I ought to do. Like most people, I do not live my life crippled by moral indecision, paralyzed for lack of good advice. Our problem is not moral indecision, but moral impotence (Rom 7:21-25).

That's why the remedy cannot be just good advice about what we ought to do, but good news about what God has done – “What the law could never do, because our lower nature robbed it of all potency, God has done: by sending his own Son…” (Rom 8:30). Thus remedy and good preaching is not good advice about what we ought to do, but good news about what God has done. Ultimately preaching is about God, and what he has done, not just about us and about what we ought to do. Surely, our understanding of who God is and what he has done has implications for our lives. Our problem is not moral indecision, but moral impotence (Rom 7:21-25).

If preaching is to be proclamation and not mere moralizing, the ethics of our preaching must be rooted in the theology of our preaching. We cannot make sense of who we are and what we ought to do, unless we first know who God is and what he has done. Otherwise our imperatives become only pious moralizing, compounding in our hearers their burden of guilt.

There is a temptation for leaders (and not only for them!) to use preaching to tell people what to do and not to do and thus straighten them out and “force” them to follow what we consider good and useful. But this can easily border on spiritual abuse. A good sermon will inspire people and help them to do what is right and not just tell them what to do.

**Seeing yourself as part of God's story**

Preaching is kerygma, the proclamation of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Preaching therefore must be biblical, or it is not preaching at all. The talk may be interesting or edifying, but it is not preaching. The sole source of our knowledge, of what God has done, comes to us through the text of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

However, the fact that a sermon is rooted in a particular text or passage is no guarantee that what we are saying is authentically biblical. It is not the frequency of quoting the Bible (or EGW) that makes it biblical. For a sermon to be biblical, it must be rooted not only in a specific Bible text or passage, but also the immediate and wider context of the passage and in the cosmic sweep of God's story as a whole.
I have been teaching Homiletics for over 20 years. In my enquiries with pastors, theology students and members about the sermons which they remembered after a year, 5 or 10 years, or even more after the first time they heard them, I found one common denominator – a memorable sermon was one that somehow “clicked” the Bible material with the current experience of the listener.

The Bible did not come to us as a collection of proof texts, system of fundamental beliefs, a recipe on how to know God’s will, or seven rules for successful leadership. It came to us as a story that has its beginning and its climax. Thus good preaching must recognize not just what God has revealed to us, but how he has revealed it. The gospel that we preach has come to us through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments telling God’s story. This needs to be connected to our story, which is part of the bigger story.

The stories of the Bible are not merely illustrations of the revelation of God, they are the revelation. Biblical truth is the Event (not just cerebral doctrine) and the Event is what God has done in our creation and recreation (salvation), in what He is doing now and in what he is yet to do before the story ends.

Good preaching is telling and retelling God’s story and our stories from creation to the Second coming (not in one sermon hopefully!). The Bible speaks about this special type of remembering (OT zakar, NT anamnesis), a remembrance which does not merely call to mind the things past, but makes them real, present, potent and demanding here and now.

The gospel is no longer the story of something that God did once for all, far away then and there. It is now also the story of our world, our society our culture, our individual lives in all the complexity and strange mixture of glory and shame.

That’s why we need to do not only the exegesis of the Bible text, we need to do the exegesis of life. If we have no idea where people are today, the complexities of their lives, the demands of their environment and allurements of culture in which they live, then even the most brilliant exposition of historical details of Ezekiel is not going to connect with them. However theologically sound, however exegetically accurate, however historically informative, however interesting and inspiring it may be, until the saving acts of God which He accomplished once for all then and there have become embedded in our experience, our culture, our history, our individual lives, we have not preached. We might have delivered a religious talk, but not a sermon, and certainly not a good sermon.

A good sermon is not just remembering His story, it is also the remembering of ours. And when our story becomes part of His story, His bigger story, we have a good and a memorable sermon. The two stories are not two anymore, they have become one as we begin to live, however imperfectly “in Christ”. As the apostle Paul put it: “the life that I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

We preach the good news that in Christ God’s kingdom has come, a new kind of life has been made possible here and now, a new kind of humanity has been born, a new kind of community has been established. The critical and decisive battle with the power of darkness has been fought and won, not by us, by what we do, but by Christ and what he accomplished on the cross of Calvary 2000 years ago. The war is not yet over, but the outcome is no longer in doubt.

Our personal future may be uncertain, but the outcome is not unknown for those who know the story of God. We know for sure how His story will end. Paradise lost has been regained and will be restored by Him. And we all can be a part of it. That’s what good preaching is all about!

By Pastor Daniel Duda, Education Director, Trans-European Division

http://www.ted-adventist.org/features-and-analysis/good-preaching-what-...