Adventist Heritage

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Adventist Church Celebrates 20 Years of Official Work in Albania

16 June 2012 Tirana, Albania [Julian Kastrati, tedNEWS] The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albania celebrated the 20th anniversary of its official work in the country. Although Adventist presence dates back to the 1930s, the first church was organised in Tirana in the spring of 1992. This was a result of the evangelistic meetings held by Pastor A. David C. Currie from Australia, at that time Ministerial Association Secretary at the Trans-European Division (TED) based in the UK. Pastor Currie was commissioned by the TED to start the church in what previously had been the most atheistic and isolated country in Europe and probably the world.

The special jubilee Sabbath programme will be long remembered as a joyful event where church leaders, distinguished guests as well as lay members took an active part in worship, giving praises and thanks to the Lord for the extension of His kingdom in Albania. To start off, a video collage depicting highlights from the history of the local churches and groups as well as ADRA Albania there was shown. This was followed by Pastor Currie’s presentation on history of Adventist Church in Albania, highlighting the inspiring Albanian Adventist heroes of faith.

“On this blessed Sabbath, we express our appreciation to all workers who have served the Lord in the Land of Eagles for the past 20 years”, said Pastor Leo N. España, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albania, as he handed special certificates of appreciation to Dr Bertil Wiklander, TED President, as well as other distinguished guests in recognition of their long-term, dedicated service for the fulfilment of the Great Commission in Albania. Earlier on, Clarissa España, spouse of Pastor España, presented a beautiful pictorial consisting of an artistic painting featuring key events and places of Adventist Church in Albania.

Dr Reinder Bruinsma, former TED Executive Secretary, then led the congregation in a prayer of blessings for the local pastoral families, after which, Pastor Branko Bistrovic, President of the Adriatic Union Conference, which incorporates Albanian Mission, welcomed the main speaker for the event, Dr Wiklander, who addressed the audience of over three hundred participants.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church that re-opened its work 20 years ago here in Albania believes that life indeed has a meaning, and that discovering its meaning brings us into a deeper relationship with God, the Creator of life” said Dr Wiklander in his inspiring sermon entitled “The Mission of God”. Evoking a motif from the writings of Ellen G. White, Dr Wiklander both challenged and motivated the audience by appealing: “This is what we are: Through our loving communion, God will manifest the final and full display of his love.”

The day couldn’t conclude any better than with a beautiful baptismal ceremony in the afternoon, where 6 precious people from Tirana, including a Member of Parliament, were baptised, adding to a total of 15 baptisms in Albania this year alone. Following the final appeal by Pastor España, another 10 raised their hands as they decided to follow Jesus Christ. “My past is behind me, my worries have ended,” said Alba Spahi, one of the baptismal candidates who found the Adventist church through the Internet. “Now I am at peace because I am with the Lord, and He shall never forsake me. Now my life is meaningful, very meaningful!”
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Adventist Church Leaders Meet the Minister of Culture in Albania

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Minister Bumçi thanked the guests for the role the Seventh-day Adventist Church has played in igniting and enriching the spiritual awakening of the Albanian people, following four decades of a repressive and atheistic communist regime. "I take the opportunity to express our gratitude to your church and its humanitarian agency, for their 20-year contribution to Albanian society at large", said Mr Bumçi.

Dr Wiklander complimented Mr Bumçi and the Albanian Government for the exemplary freedom of conscience level as well as the admirable inter-faith harmony existing in Albania. He then proceeded by briefing the Minister about who Adventists are how their fundamental beliefs, including the Seventh-day Sabbath, are based solely on the Bible. In this context, Dr Wiklander presented to Minister Bumçi a special edition of the Thomson Study Bible in the Albanian language, which the Minister accepted gladly. Dr Wiklander also assured Mr Bumçi of the willingness of the Adventist Church to engage in dialogue and have good relations with all other denominations present in Albania.

Dr Bruinsma highlighted the significant contribution that the Adventist Church has made worldwide towards the promotion and fostering of religious liberty. He made a kind suggestion to Minister Bumçi regarding the prospect of him participating as one of the main speakers in an international religious liberty conference, which Mr Bumçi not only agreed to, but rather positively asked in return: "why not host [the conference] in Albania?"

On behalf of ADRA Albania, Mrs Kastrati informed the minister about the considerable contribution of ADRA Albania, as the first non-for-profit organisation that entered post-communist Albania, in various relief and development efforts and projects since 1991. She shared more information about the latest project relating to the civil society empowerment such as Roma people inclusion and integration, as well as community service.

Pastor España kindly notified the Minister about the Sabbath jubilee event, as he made an exposé of Adventism in Albania, with its roots going back to the 1930s. He reassured Mr Bumçi that Adventist pastors and lay members are committed to serving the Albanian people and praying regularly for the country’s authorities, as the Holy Bible counsels to do so. Subsequently, Pastor Kastrati thanked the Minister for the excellent relationship that the Church in Albania has with the country’s Regulatory Body for Religious Denominations.

In closing, Mr Bumçi was presented a joint certificate of appreciation by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albania and ADRA Albania in recognition of his contribution to religious liberty and promotion of humanitarian faith-based values for the Albanian people.
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Revamped Adventist Study Center to Expand Research Capacity of Church

14 June, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States [Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN] Seventh-day Adventist historians say a recent overhaul of the church’s research facilities signals a new commitment to deepening members’ historical understanding of Adventist identity and the denomination’s history.

The church’s Office of Archives, Statistics and Research (ASTR) opened a new research center at Adventist world church headquarters last week, with a reconfiguration of existing space that allows the office to accommodate four times as many external researchers as previously.

High-density shelving houses publications and periodicals, while rare historical photos decorate the walls. More photos, video- and audiostreaming, CLICK HERE...
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Among photos of notable Adventist historians on display is an early color photograph of the former missionary to India and world church President W. A. Spicer, after whom Adventist-run Spicer Memorial College in India is named.

“It’s nice to have a color photograph of one of our pioneers and remember that they were fully rounded people, and not living in black and white or sepia,” Trim said.

Another photo shows a meeting of the world church’s Executive Committee from 1958.

“As one guest observed, there are neither women nor anyone other than [Caucasians], so in some respects the church has changed,” Trim said. He added that Adventist world leaders meeting at a table in a sparse room is telling when many top leaders from other denominations would likely have met in “lavish, well-appointed” rooms.

“I think that says a lot about he Seventh-day Adventist Church,” he said.

As the 17-million member denomination continues to grow worldwide, Trim said he hopes the research center will help ground church policy and guide decision-making.

“We are keen that Archives, Statistics and Research not only takes things in, but also contributes to the wider mission of the church, and especially in helping the people [at world church headquarters] in making policy and strategy,” he said.

The expansion of research facilities is “a sign of our determination to lend some richness to our own understanding of what we’re doing,” Trim added. [tedNEWS]
Adventist Musician Receives an Award from the Swedish King

12 June 2012 Stockholm, Sweden [Rainer Refsbäck, tedNEWS] Herbert Blomstedt has been awarded the ‘Seraphim Medal’ by the royal house in his home country Sweden. It was thought that he would receive it from His Majesty’s hand on Friday, June 15, but the King will have to wait, because Herbert Blomstedt is, despite being 85 years old, a busy world conductor. The medal he is receiving is a recognition "for exceedingly outstanding contributions to Swedish musical life and culture" according to the release at kungahuset.se. Seraphim is the highest honour one can receive from the royal house and it is being awarded very sparingly.

Herbert Blomstedt says to the Swedish Union church paper: “I am of course delighted, but I have become used to not pay much attention to such corruptible things as my old colleague Eugen Jochum in Munich would say: 'It ends up in the metal container', however this time it is pure gold.”

Unfortunately, Herbert cannot attend the medal ceremony at the Royal Palace on June 15. Although he will soon be 85 years of age he is still very active as a conductor in the world and cannot come to Sweden until the end of August. On 1 September, Herbert will conduct the concluding concert at the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm.

Dr Bertil Wiklander, President of the Trans-European Division, has known Herbert since childhood and remarks: "This is an outstanding recognition of the genius of the artist Herbert Blomstedt and his services to Swedish culture and music. But we who know Herbert personally also know how he has always seen his music as a way to bring glory to God and through the blessing of the Sabbath which has brought him rest and recreation in a life of work that often has destroyed the health of his colleagues. I am thankful to God that his life and contributions have been recognised in this way."

The Seraphim Medal should not be confused with the ‘Order of Seraphim’ which is only given to government heads and members of the royal family. The Seraphim Medal was established in 1748. The medal belongs to the Order of Seraphim, but after 1974 the award was placed directly at the King's disposal. It is awarded a person who has made him or herself exceedingly merited by humanitarian actions or general social benefits. King Carl XVI Gustaf has only awarded the Seraphim Medal to twelve persons since 1973. The last time, in 2008, it was awarded the professor and UN diplomat, Sture Linner. Prior to that, in 2004, it was awarded to the jurist and public official, Hans Blix.

Herbert Blomstedt, the son of pastor Adolf Blomstedt, well-known to many Seventh-day Adventists in Sweden, is Sweden’s most successful conductor in the world. He made his first performance in 1954 as conductor of the Royal Philharmonic, and over the years he has been the Chief Conductor of the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, the Danish and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestras, Dresden Staatskapelle, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and has conducted many other orchestras in Europe as well as across the world. Over the years, Herbert Blomstedt has generously contributed both to the music scene and the area of education within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sweden and in the world. Earlier this year, he received a special award for these efforts at Loma Linda University.

Photos: Larry Becker/LaSierra University

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Australian Coroner Rules Dingo Indeed Took Baby in 1980

12 June 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States [Ansel Oliver/ANN] Today’s ruling from an inquest into the 1980 disappearance of a baby of Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Australia could mark the final chapter of a legal saga that for years tormented the family, divided that nation and marred the image of the religious denomination there.

A coroner in the Northern Territory city of Darwin ruled that nine-week-old Azaria Chamberlain, daughter of Michael Chamberlain and Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, was taken by a dingo from a campsite near Ayers Rock, now known by its Aboriginal name, Uluru.

The disappearance of the infant created a living nightmare for the family, who endured years of public taunts and accusations of taking their own child’s life. Some accused the Seventh-day Adventist denomination – then relatively little-known – for encouraging such heinous acts. Chamberlain-Creighton was convicted of murder, for which she spent three years in prison before new evidence reversed her sentence.

The incident became recognized internationally with the release of the 1988 film “A Cry In the Dark,” starring Meryl Streep.

Today’s ruling, delivered by Coroner Elizabeth Morris at the Darwin Magistrates Court, is the fourth subsequent inquest of the case. According to Australia’s ABC News, she noted that there were reported dingo attacks on other children in the months preceding the incident and that a dingo lair was found in the area. She then delivered an amended death certificate.

Later this morning, Chamberlain-Creighton addressed the media outside the court, saying, “Obviously we're relieved and delighted to come to the end of this saga…. No longer will Australia be able to say that dingos are not dangerous and only attack if provoked. We live in a beautiful country but it is dangerous and we would ask all Australians to be aware of this and take appropriate precautions and not wait for somebody else to do it for them.”

Azaria would have turned 32 yesterday, her mother said. The Chamberlains divorced in 1991 and have both since remarried.

Michael Chamberlain also addressed the media, saying, “Today, I heard Coroner Morris speak for the dead on behalf of the living. This battle to get to the legal truth about what caused Azaria’s death has taken too long. However, I am here to tell you that you can get justice, even when you think that all is lost. But, truth must be on your side. I cannot express strongly enough how sacred human life is and must be protected at all costs. And I cannot express strongly enough how important it is to pursue a just cause even when it seems to be a mission impossible. If you know you are right, never give up on getting it right, when the serious issue could affect the life and livelihood of others.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s South Pacific Division, based in Wahroonga near Sydney, released a statement welcoming the finding, calling the decades-long ordeal “one of the most egregious miscarriages of justice in Australia in the modern era.”

“We hope and pray that the finding today is just one more step in the healing process for the Chamberlains and for our nation,” the statement said. “We hope the experience of the Chamberlains will inspire all of us to act justly and to stand up for those who are mistreated.”

Church officials also thanked attorney Stuart Tipple and other legal professionals who worked on the case for the Chamberlains, as well as the millions of Australians who stood against the public injustice against the family.
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“The ability of our legal system to recognize and correct mistakes is one of the features that make Australia a great nation. The inquest's finding today is a sign of our nation's strength and integrity,” the statement said.

Chamberlain-Creighton is writing a book for children and a book on grief and forgiveness, according to her website. She continues to conduct seminars and deliver speeches on stress, grief and the media.

Michael Chamberlain, now a retired teacher, earned a Ph.D. in education from the University of Newcastle in 2002. He is writing about his experiences in an upcoming book. [tedNEWS]

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Jan Paulsen Receives Order of Merit

06 June 2012 Rayse, Norway [Tor Tjeransen] All eyes were on the former world leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Ambassador Knut Vollebaek fastened the navy blue silk ribbon with the cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit around the neck of Pastor Jan Paulsen at a ceremony in Norway on June 2.

“I have been overwhelmed. It is such a big thing,” said pastor Paulsen afterwards.

It was a once in a lifetime event for all present at the ceremony which took place at the Adventist owned and operated Tyrifjord Junior College (Tyrifjord videregående skole) in Norway. The Royal Norwegian Order of Merit is one of the highest forms of royal honor given to civilians.

For Paulsen it was of special significance that the insignia of the Order of Merit were presented to him by ambassador Vollebaek. They have known each other from the time Mr. Vollebaek was appointed Norwegian ambassador to the United States in 2001, a position he held until 2007.

Ambassador Vollebaek, the High Commissioner for National Minorities in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), expressed gratitude for the opportunity to present Jan Paulsen with the insignia of the Order. Vollebaek was the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs when Jan Paulsen was elected President of the Adventist World Church. “I was very proud that a Norwegian national was elected to this position,” said Vollebaek.

The bishop of Oslo for the Lutheran Church of Norway, the reverend Ole Christian Kvarme, was one of the persons behind the nomination for the Order. Bishop Kvarme came to know pastor Paulsen during the bilateral dialogue between the Lutheran World Foundation and the Seventh-day Adventist Church which took place between 1994 and 1998 where both reverend Kvarme and pastor Paulsen were part of their respective delegations. During the four sessions three issues were discussed: 1. Justification by Faith, 2. Scripture and Authority in the Church, and 3. Eschatology. The background papers from the consultations were published in 2000 in the book Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation.

“These consultations brought us together and formed our friendship”, said Bishop Kvarme at the ceremony where the insignia of the Order of Merit were given to Dr Paulsen.

Bishop Kvarme noted that pastor Paulsen has been a courageous international leader and mentioned how Dr Paulsen has been a catalyst in developing educational institutions in West Africa. Dr Paulsen’s contribution in developing Adventist owned Babcock University in Nigeria to become a well-respected university not only in Nigeria, but the whole region is well known. The bishop also mentioned Dr Paulsen’s initiative in establishing the church’s response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic through the foundation of the Adventist AIDS International Ministry with an office in South-Africa as well as the cooperation with the World Health Organization in an effort to reach the UN Millennium Development Goals.

“You have performed your leadership as a committed Adventist, a devoted evangelical Christian and a distinguished international citizen of Norway”, said Bishop Kvarme.

Paulsen found it difficult to find words to express his feelings. He told the audience that the short reason given by the Royal Palace for appointing him a Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit meant a lot to him: “Service for the good of humanity.”

“What matters is what we have done for our fellow men,” pastor Paulsen said in his address. He paraphrased Jesus’
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words in Matthew 25: “I was in prison, you did not visit me. I was struggling with HIV/AIDS, why did you shun me?” Paulsen then stated what may well be termed the philosophy of his ministry: “Serving our Lord is not about what we have said; it is about how we treat other people.”

Pastor Mark Finley, former Vice President of the General Conference, represented the World Church at the ceremony. He read a letter from the current Adventist World Church President, Pastor Ted N.C. Wilson, thanking Pastor Paulsen for his outstanding leadership. “Your commitment has inspired the church in its mission to reveal the loving character of Christ to all peoples” the letter from Pastor Wilson said.

The Order of Merit was founded by King Olav V in 1985 and is conferred on foreign and Norwegian nationals as a reward for their outstanding service in the interest of Norway or in service for humanity. The Norwegian Constitution of 1814 abolished all hereditary titles, but gives the King the right to “bestow orders upon whomever he pleases, as a reward for distinguished services”. No royal decoration will exempt the recipient from the common duties of the citizens of Norway.

Pastor Paulsen was the world leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1999 to 2010. He holds a Doctor of Theology degree from the University of Tübingen in Germany. Dr Paulsen began his ministerial service in 1953 in Norway and has served as teacher in Ghana and as teacher and college president in Nigeria. From 1976-1980 he was the Principal of church-run Newbold College in England which houses the main theological faculty of the church in the Trans-European region. For twelve years he served as the President of the Trans-European Division with headquarters in St. Albans, England.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has 17 million members worldwide and 4,700 members in Norway. Jan Paulsen lives in the Washington D.C. area, he is married to Kari (nee Trykkerud) and has three adult children.

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Join Patricia Ferreira as...
Never Give Up

Practical insights regarding reclaiming inactive youth

Stop your crying and wipe away your tears. All that you have done for your children will not go unrewarded; they will return from the enemies land. There is hope for your future; your children will come home. I, the Lord, have spoken. 

Jeremiah 31: 16-17 (Good News)

The loss of young people through the back door is a real issue for the church today. It is imperative that we take steps to make sure that as many as possible of those growing up in the church will remain to become active members. I also believe there is an overwhelming need to reach out to those who may, for whatever reason, have already become inactive over the years and reclaim them for the church.

In undertaking a doctoral level dissertation I undertook a pilot project at a local church. Although the numbers were limited, the findings were significant. The headline news is that over 90% of inactive youth responding to an initial contact, together with a short questionnaire, clearly still saw themselves as being Christian, and fifty per cent felt that they would one day return to the church of their youth.

So how do we help make this a reality? I think we would all resonate with the following assertion that the effective care of young people today must be seen as a) an immediate priority, b) a strategic priority, and c) a critical issue for all Christian leaders. I believe that the church – our church – has a limited window of opportunity which demands that the time for action is now.

Summary of Research Findings

A summary of the survey findings, that I personally conducted, revealed a number of interesting practical insights that can be summarized in the following ten points.

1. It is imperative that those who are inactive are followed up and not left to drift away unnoticed. From my limited sample, females seemed more responsive than males to cold contact, but males will respond once a real and warm link can be established.
2. In their early years, friends remain the top reason why young people enjoy attending church.
3. The early, mid and late teenage years are the focal point when youth make decisions for or against continuing church fellowship. The peak age bracket for becoming inactive, in this study, was between ages fifteen and twenty.
4. There exists a continuing contact system through the family. This usually remains intact even when a young person has left church fellowship.
5. The church is not seen as warm and caring and youth often see church members as being critical and narrow minded. The attitude of older members was expressed as the top area of dislike felt about the church.
6. There exists a disconnect between dedicating young children and baptism. Only a third of the group were baptized. We are clearly not discipling enough of our own young people while they are actively with us in the church.
7. Some young people may be very sporadic in their church attendance but do not consider that they have cut all ties with the church. Church attendance does not seem to be a major priority for some during their early twenties or period of tertiary education.
8. Virtually half of the group felt they would return to church one day. This provides hope in so many cases that all is certainly not lost.
9. Overwhelmingly the young people surveyed showed that they still felt that Christianity was relevant in their lives.
10. Each young person is unique and has their own story to tell. We must never treat them as merely statistics.  

Key Points

There are a number of key points that can be seen from this and other studies. Here I will highlight just three.

The church needs a clear and effective discipling process for young people. This is as referenced in point 6 above. This year, being the Year of Discipleship, gives a window of opportunity to address this need for the Ambassador age group (16-21) through some pilot programmes in the TED territory. Additionally we will hold the first Youth Matters Symposium with the title “Discipleship that Lasts”, aiming towards establishing good discipleship models for Student-age Ministry.

The Church Warmth and Thinking Climates are very important. This is as referenced in point 5 above and is powerfully backed up by the European Valuegenesis Survey. (see graph)

It is quite clear that both on the Thinking Climate and the Church Warmth measures decrease with age and that we are currently not meeting the needs of our older youth.

The “thinking climate” measures to what extent a church stimulates its members to think, learn and ask questions. The “church warmth” measures how much a church is felt to be friendly, caring and an accepting environment. Both areas are of crucial importance in determining young peoples’ commitment to the church.

These areas can, and must, be readily addressed through a concerted relational ministry for young adults at the local church level.

Most definitely there are inactive members (please don’t use the term backsliders!) who will look to return at some point. Point 8 highlights this and the reasons, I believe, are centered in a number of issues involving the positive legacy of past church teaching, warm memories and a search for past identity. As one of the respondents to the pilot survey stated “I still carry and remember a lot of what I was taught every day.” Another reflected about a return one day and stated, “My departure from the church was a gradual one, if there is going to be a return, it’ll also be a gradual one.”

This was also found to be true in another study of returning Adventists who definitely expressed that they still had warm memories from their childhood. “Eight out of ten persons interviewed expressed memories of early Adventism that reminded them of happy times in the church.”

Roots and identity are a very powerful combination. The search for identity is not static and just as it is part of finding one’s own identity that pushes young people to challenge their value systems, and sometimes push them away, so too the reverse search for identity may well bring them back one day to their roots. Many young people who question their parents, values and beliefs ultimately accept them as their own.

Conclusion

The desired outcome is that returning “prodigals” will have a chance to return to a church that is ready and waiting to meet them. Such churches may vary in appearance from country to country but it is clear that any church that wishes to effectively nurture returning young people must make this a priority. In so doing they will need to have a well thought-out discipleship process in place, a warm climate that encourages spiritual growth and also an understanding of the need of many young adults to re-connect with their spiritual roots.

The good news is that no matter how long someone has been away returning always remains an option. Never give up, there is hope for the future.

Research carried out as part of DMin dissertation “Bringing Home Our Adventist Prodigals: A Strategic Plan To Reclaim Youth In The Trans-European Division.” (Andrews University 2009)


4 The TED Church of Refuge (CORe) initiative is dedicated to helping our churches to retain and reclaim young adults. For further information see www.churchofrefuge.eu

By Paul Tompkins, Youth Ministry Director, Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists

Leadership Development Journal - May 2012
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.

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.

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**

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**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.
Seminar on 'Sexual Abuse of Children'
Adventist Church Celebrates 20 Years of Official Work in Albania
Adventist Church Leaders Meet the Minister of Culture in Albania
Adventist Musician Receives an Award from the Swedish King
Australian Coroner Rules Dingo Indeed Took Baby in 1980
Business as Usual is not the Option
Jan Paulsen Receives Order of Merit
Never Give Up
Revamped Adventist Study Center to Expand Research Capacity of Church

Condition Three: Theological 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 just 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,
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 life’ that 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 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.’

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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, smart 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 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]

\[7\] Ibid.

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