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The first group, realising that in the summer heat of 35°C they would really need to get some advice related to their health, combined this approach with some health checks. This group was checking blood pressure and body fat, and gave advice to people about how to live a healthier life. One local medical doctor wanted to try the health check, and she was delighted by the professionalism offered and pointed other people in their direction.

Another group went into the local park where there was a lake. During the extreme heat there were lots of mosquitos in the park and the forest nearby. Adventist youth offered people mosquito repellent to make a more pleasant crossing of the park. Many people smiled and thanked God because of this simple, but very useful act of kindness.

The third group served in the train station. In the heat, people were in need of cool drinks and refreshments. This group of young people prepared cups of water and small slices of watermelon for the travellers. In one instance some young people decided to ride on the trains and serve the travellers and this resulted in many smiling faces. Many locals felt that at last, something really nice was happening in their town.

A fourth group based their ministry on the need of servicing bicycles. One of the group members was a cycling country champion, so he started servicing bicycles and giving useful advice to young and old, engaging in conversation with all who came to this station. During their hours of service there were people constantly coming with their bikes. Many people were so happy to find out that the nice young people were Seventh-day Adventists, who finally stepped out into the town making themselves visible and useful to all, rather than living inside the four walls of their institution.

There were times when queues developed at the service stations. While taking part in these ministries, many conversations developed, and the Adventist young people could testify naturally about who they were serving others, thus pointing to Jesus Christ and His love. Lots of conversations and interests were developed which will be followed by more acts of service, listening and then Bible studies.

These young people were studying in the Relay Youth course run by the Institute of Youth Evangelism of the Trans-European Division led by Paul Tompkins. The aims of the Relay course are to train young people in the core teachings of the Bible, Discipleship and Youth Outreach in order to be more effective in reaching out to people, and making a lasting positive impact on their community. [tedNEWS]
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European Pastors United to Make God Known

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The meetings will use the theme “Making God Known in Europe”. The leaders of the church want to understand and plan how they can improve their methods of making God known in the postmodern culture of Europe. The theme is rooted in the biblical concept of the “Mission of God” which includes an emphasis on God wanting to be known as God among the nations and peoples of the world.

“This is an important element in the Plan of Salvation and is integrated with the cosmic Great Controversy between good and evil” says Dr Bertil Wiklander, TED president, and continues, “God wants relationship with his created beings and for that purpose he created the world and will heal and restore the world (see Revelation 21:1-5). Therefore, he has called the Church to make him known. Making Him known in Europe is our great calling and challenge. By fulfilling the task of making God known in our countries we not only fulfill the calling God has given the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the end of time, but we are actually going to meet the needs of people in Europe”, concluded Wiklander.

Pastor Janos Kovacs-Biro, TED Ministerial Association Secretary outlines for us the purpose of this large conference:

First of all, it is a theological and professional upgrade for all pastors. The best theologians and practitioners will lecture and give presentations on how to be more effective in making God known and help local churches and church members to do the same.

Secondly, this is a place where many pastors can get new visions and ideas to improve their ministry.

Thirdly, this is the place where pastors and spouses meet their colleagues from 25 different countries for exchange of experiences, fellowship, prayer, encouragement and to worship together. It creates a deep sense of belonging to a large, international family of believers.

Fourthly, this is an ideal opportunity to re-focus the mission and sharpen our tools to make God known in Europe.

The entire programme will be streamed. You can visit our website at www.ted-adventist.org to enjoy the programme. In addition to the streaming we will produce daily tedNEWS bulletin, EPC video news, and upload photos. You can all follow us on Twitter and join us on Facebook.

This is going to be an extraordinary conference having excellent speakers such as Wintley Phipps, Mark Finley, Lowell Cooper, Dennis Meier, Derek Morris, Chris Oberg, Sigve Tonstad and many others presenting different topics under the theme “Making God Know in Europe”. We will worship together and praise God every morning and evening. The Sabbath will be very special, commencing with communion on Friday evening. For more information please see the programme on the TED website, www.ted-adventist.org. [tedNEWS]

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LIFEconnect decided to get involved and celebrate the online community by arranging a “Torch Relay”. A camera was passed around and people from different parts of the country were asked to join the relay. As the country celebrates its Olympic dream and looks past it towards its uncertain future, we asked each person to record their greatest hope and greatest fear. Each participant recorded a short message and some of them have been posted on www.lifeconnect.org.uk.

Every Friday a new message from a different part of the country is posted online and the online community has the opportunity to connect, respond and share. We support each other’s dreams and help each other face their fears. We explore life together online.

LIFEconnect is an online community, a place where people can feel at home and share what is important to them in their journey. As communities stand together at the side of the road to cheer on the torch, why don’t you join us as we pass the camera along! Log on, watch the videos, join the conversation and make LIFEconnect your virtual home! [tedNEWS]

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Dates: September 20-30, 2012
Cost: 350 Euros plus airfare
Application Deadline: 31 August, 2012
Target Participant Age: 18-35

More information can be found at: http://www.ted-adventist.org/news/short-term-mission-trip
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Olympic Adventist Roundup – UK Style

05 July 2012 London, UK [Victor Hubert/Colin Stewart] With the Olympic torch currently being carried across the UK in the run-up to the commencement of the London 2012 Games, Seventh-day Adventists are joining in the excitement and enjoying the opportunity to witness. Special books have been published, events planned and church halls opened to the public. Members are part of Olympic hosting and greeting teams.

As a diverse Church, Adventists are already pulling out their flags in crowds and communities all over the country, showing their support for the Olympic Torch Relay. On day 1 of the torch relay, LIVE: St Austell, a Cornish church plant was in town, while by the time the torch reached Scotland, the Faifley church youth choir were invited by the local council and the Church of Scotland Minister to sing gospel songs as the torch went by. In Nottingham, 16-year-old Leon Squire, carried the torch. A keen footballer and sprinter, Leon gave up a potential career with Lincoln City and in athletics in order to keep the Sabbath. He also has health issues but was delighted to represent his church and his school. Adventists are among many different denominations and churches that are maximizing the opportunity to be a part of the celebration and to share Jesus.

Although sport is the biggest aspect of the Olympic Games, the festival is much bigger than that. From as early as June, Horley-Gatwick Adventist church started a programme of community gospel singing and a cultural kitchen to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. Following a great response and support from the community, they too have been invited back for the torch relay.

Youth Community Cafes have opened up in Chatham, Kent and Walthamstow, East London. Here neighbours and friends are welcome to watch the Games, engage with church members and enjoy refreshments. The Central London church will have a myriad of programmes and an open café running throughout the games.

Members will not be short of literature to share during the games. A special edition of Life.info magazine, 30,000 ‘Olympic Edition’ Steps to Christ, and a small book, “The Christian Race” by Croydon Pastor and Olympic Chaplain, Richard Daly are just part of the resources the church is making available.

Churches are also getting ready for the Games with sport and fitness programmes. Evangelistic teams are also in action with programmes running through the Olympic period. Adventist musicians and concerts are planned and some church members will be singing in the Olympic choir during the opening celebrations. This kind of witness is not just from inside the UK. Former Australian Youth director, Graeme Frauenfelder, an Adventist clown, is spending almost three months in the UK, sharing his creative talent to bring joy and laughter to everyone as he shares the gospel in his ‘heart Olympics’. Two special Days of Fellowship on
the first two Sabbaths in August will focus on 'Ignite the Flame' and 'Torch Bearers'.

Olympic drama will not just be on the field. Specially commissioned by the South England Conference of the Adventist Church, Mervyn Weir has developed an inspiring theatre performance that highlights important Gospel themes in 'Beyond Gold'.

Church members across the UK have also taken the opportunity to be involved in an Olympic Green Sabbath initiative. This promotes the idea of both being healthy and being visible in our communities. Members committed to walk at least one mile to and from church. Churches have used this opportunity to become more environmentally friendly including making clothes collections and recycling, car sharing, walking to church and much more. The aim is to produce many more 'Eco-Christians' as we care for our bodies and our environment while reaching out to our communities.

The aim of the Olympic Outreach team has always been to help the Church make this the biggest evangelistic outreach ever in the UK. However, while plans are being made for the summer, churches have also taken on the watchword 'legacy'. This summer is just the beginning of something big.

For more on Olympic Outreach programmes download the official Adventist Church Olympic Outreach app for the iPhone or visit www.live-uk.org. [tedNEWS]
Mark Finley Returns to Belgrade

28 June 2012 Belgrade, Serbia [Marija Trajkovska, teoNEWS] Pastor Mark Finley and his wife, Ernestine, met with two hundred pastors in Belgrade, Serbia from 19-23 June 2012 to share their insights and experiences of evangelising in a postmodern society. They had a one-day field school with the pastors, elders and other church leaders from the local churches across the Union sharing their ideas on the topic ‘Evangelism in the Postmodern World: Reaching People for Christ in the Twenty-First Century.’ After those meetings, they met with the Union leadership and departmental directors to discuss plans for the future urban evangelism.

Pastor Finley was in Serbia in 1988 for the first time, where he held an evangelistic programme under the theme ‘The Dimensions of Life’. Many people attending the meetings made a decision to come closer to God and some made a decision to be baptized.

This time he held a new series of programmes, ‘A Man for All Times’, which lasted four days. The topics ‘Never Alone: Someone You Can Trust When the Whole World Falls Apart’, ‘Life with Purpose’ and ‘Hope for Today, Tomorrow and Forever’ brought a new hope and sense in the lives of many people that attended the programmes. Every night many people deeply and earnestly responded to the calls to follow Jesus Christ.

The last day of the programme was a true celebration for more than a thousand people gathered in the main Belgrade Seventh-day Adventist church. The greatest joy of the day was the decision of four people to follow Jesus Christ and be baptized.

Both, church members and visitors, expressed their desire for Pastor and Mrs Finley to return to Belgrade and hold a longer programme. The suggestion was to have these meetings in New Belgrade, part of the capital city with a growing population of businessmen, young people and students.

Serbia is part of the South-East European Union Conference (SEEUC) where we have a very dynamic church and over 8000 member. For more information about the church is Serbia, please visit their website: www.jieu-adventisti.org.

[teoNEWS]

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Improving and Growing Yourself to Improve, Grow and Serve Your Church Organisation

28 June 2012 Bracknell, UK [Philip R Brown] In The Twelve Absolutes of Leadership Gary Burnison recounts the story of a farmer whose donkey fell into a well. The farmer frantically thought about what he could do as the stricken animal cried out to be rescued. With no obvious solution, the farmer regrettfully concluded that because the donkey was old and the well needed to be filled in anyway, he should give up the idea of rescuing the beast. Instead, he should simply fill in the well and hope the poor animal would not suffer too much.

The farmer asked his neighbours for help and they all began to shovel earth into the well. When the donkey realised what was happening, he brayed and struggled. Then, the noise stopped. The farmer looked down into the well and was astonished at what he saw. The donkey was still alive and was progressing towards the top of the well. By shaking off the dirt instead of letting it cover him, he could step on the accumulating soil as the level rose. When the donkey reached the top, he stepped over the edge and gave the farmer one last look. “Now who’s the jackass?” the donkey remarked, and trotted happily away.

This story offers a key insight for those seeking to be effective Church leaders, who must have and demonstrate learning agility. The latter can be defined as the ability to learn from experience and to apply that learning to new situations. Learning agility is not the same thing as having a high IQ or EQ (emotional intelligence). Rather, a Church leader with learning agility can excel at absorbing information from his or her experiences and applying it to the present – thereby creating an agile Church organisation that also learns, grows and adapts.

Yes, learning as a Church leader is often about adapting, being open-minded, and being willing to find solutions that are not always obvious. As a Church leader you cannot expect to learn from things you are NOT doing! Consequently, there can be times when you should expect to fail. Such situations demand that you choose not to blame yourself but rather to learn. In fact, it has been said that the only real failure is failing to fail. A Church leader who fails to fail from time to time could either be unaware of what is going on or simply be acting too cautiously.

So how do you improve and grow yourself in order to improve and grow your Church organisation? One key requirement is your own preparedness to maintain an open and curious mind. In their book Great Leaders Grow Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller suggest that for a leader growing is like oxygen to a deep-sea diver - without it you die. Unlike the diver, you may not physically die – but if you stop growing, your influence may well erode, and over time, you may even lose the opportunity to lead at all.1

The failure to grow has sabotaged the career of more Church leaders than just about anything else. Hence, your capacity to grow is crucial in determining your capacity to lead. If you wish to improve or grow your Church organisation, then you too must continue to improve and grow. Blanchard and Miller have utilised the acronym GROW to remind leaders of the key ingredients for fostering their personal and professional growth:
G = Gaining Knowledge – this ingredient includes knowing one’s own strengths and weaknesses; knowing the people one leads on a deep level (personally and professionally); knowing one’s industry extremely well; having a high level of mastery of the principles and practices of leadership; and having a detailed, written personal development plan.

R = Reaching Out to Others – this ingredient includes always looking for ways to invest in the growth of others; having ongoing mentoring relationships with emerging leaders; frequently seeing and seizing teachable moments; frequently sharing with others what one has learned; and developing a high level of mastery in communicating one’s point of view on leadership.

O = Opening Your World – this ingredient includes constantly looking for opportunities to grow at work; seeking new experiences outside the workplace; having a mentor(s) who helps you grow; always looking for additional opportunities to lead; and seeing every day as an opportunity to learn and grow.

W = Walking toward Wisdom – this ingredient includes consistently telling oneself the truth regarding one’s leadership; actively seeking feedback from those you know to be truth tellers; having a group of people you trust to give you counsel on important issues; having mastered the art and discipline of asking profound questions; and being fully committed to a lifelong pursuit of wisdom.2

Blanchard and Miller maintain that a leader’s capacity to GROW determines their capacity to lead! Further, improving yourself as a leader is crucial in seeking to improve and serve your organisation. Interestingly, it appears that in most organisations the best leaders choose to serve others. Servant leaders are normally those whose goals are focused on the greater good. In The Secret: What Great Leaders Know and Do, Blanchard and Miller offer a helpful description of the ways in which a leader can SERVE. They utilise the acronym SERVE to highlight key leader behaviours:

S = Seeing the Future – Servant leaders envision and communicate a compelling picture of the future. Leading always begins with a picture of a preferred future.

E = Engaging and Developing Others – Servant leaders recruit and select the right people for the right job while creating an environment where people wholeheartedly invest themselves in achieving the vision.

R = Reinventing Continuously – Servant leaders possess a never-ending focus on improvement. Progress is impossible without change.

V = Valuing Results and Relationships – Servant leaders generate positive, measurable results, and cultivate great relationships with those they lead. Ultimate success always includes people and performance.

E = Embodying the Values – Servant leaders live in a fashion consistent with their stated values. People learn more from what a leader does than from what a leader says.3

Your willingness to keep learning as a Church leader can make a powerful statement to your entire Church organisation. A Church leader learns more lessons when mistakes are made than when successes come easily. Consequently, as a Church leader you should have a heightened realisation that you are not invincible or irreplaceable. The reality is that one day you will leave your current Church organisation. When you do, will your Church organisation be in a substantially better place than it was before you inherited it?

To improve, grow and serve your Church organisation you need to continue improving and growing yourself. An improving, growing and serving Church leader chooses to empower and inspire people to align with a greater purpose in order to improve and grow their Church organisation. Remember the story of the donkey – the day you (or your Church organisation) stops learning becomes the day you (or your Church organisation) may start dying!

3 Great Leaders Grow, p. 119.
The Art of Leadership – Some Reflections

28 June 2012 St Albans, UK [Bertil Wiklander] A colleague recently reminded me of Peter Drucker’s distinction between management and leadership:

‘Management is doing things right – Leadership is doing the right things.’

It made me think again of the real nature of leadership. What helps us know how to do the right things? See here the fruit of some of my reflections:

Art and Wisdom

Leadership is the practice of an art. It is not an exact science and it is not accomplished simply by implementing rules.

Leadership is based on wisdom acquired by making mistakes and learning the right lessons from them.

Character

Leadership is best learnt and exercised by persons with certain personality traits.

Leadership comes from feeling good about yourself – avoiding self-destruction and not being over-sensitive to criticism, being humble and yet fearless and bold.

Leadership requires being energetic, persistent and self-disciplined and yet constantly encouraging others.

Abilities

Leadership comes from being able to listen to, having empathy with, and reading the minds of other people.

Leadership comes from being able to see the big picture while understanding how its elements relate to the whole.

Leadership is not lost in the detail of things and never micromanages.

Leadership comes from being able to focus on the essence in every given situation – a leader knows the difference between what is important and what is trivial.

Leadership comes from being able to bring a group together that acts toward a common goal.

Leadership comes from being able to communicate well – articulating your thoughts clearly while adapting to different kinds of situations and audiences.

Attitude to My Leadership Role

Leaders understand their central role in the process of inducing others to act toward a common goal – and know how to master this role.

Leadership is about relating so well to others that you are being followed.

Leaders lead by their actions, not their positions.

Leaders influence others by inspiring their trust, acting consistently, and motivating them by words and deeds.

Leaders lead by legitimate authority, setting an example, setting goals, rewarding success and dealing with failure, organisational restructuring, team-building, and communicating a vision.

Leaders act so that the organisation achieves its mission while all feel they were part of it.

By Dr Bertil Wiklander, President of the Trans-European Division
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.¹ 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.2

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.” 3

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 disciplership 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.

2 of 3 7/13/2012 11:39 AM
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

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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: 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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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 president 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?

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The Art of Leadership – Some Music

BBC TV Focuses on Adventist Best Practices on Denominational Integration, Internet Conference Focuses Option Business as Usual is not the

Jan Paulsen Receives Order of Merit

Australian Coroner Rules Dingo Indeed Took Baby in 1980

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Business as Usual is not the Option

Internet Conference Focuses on Denominational Integration, Best Practices

BBC TV Focuses on Adventist Music

The Art of Leadership – Some
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 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. [teuNEWS]

References


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

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