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Managing Time

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Watermelon for a Cigarette at the Exit Festival

18 July 2012 Novi Sad, Serbia [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] Every year in July, the city of Novi Sad, Serbia is host to one of the largest and most awarded international festivals of music which is held in the Petrovaradin Fortress. More than 200,000 people come from all over Europe to listen to famous musicians from around the world. The festival has maintained its mission, popularity and significance which is most eloquently illustrated by the fact that it has received many prizes from important institutions around the world. During this year’s festival, there were more than 400 performers on a total of 22 stages.

Apart from music, different type of programmes were provided every afternoon relating to tourism, games, workshops as well as providing some basic necessities for the participants who were staying in tents at the camp.

A group of young people from the Adventist Church in Novi Sad, part of the Youth Association known as Relay, took part by providing something different to thousands of young people at the EXIT festival. “We wanted to be of help to very tired people by providing a free massage, but also organising workshops to teach people how to play the guitar and the harmonica” says Djordjija Nikic one of the organisers of the Relay programme. Another very popular attraction was a programme called ‘watermelon for tobacco’. When asked what that meant, Nikic explained “that this was an invitation to people to give up one cigarette for a slice of watermelon and they could come back as many times as they wanted”.

“In this way we want to help people stop smoking, but also, as it was very hot we provided very juicy and sweet watermelon as refreshment” concludes Nikic. All the members of the Relay team were wearing a T-shirt with a slogan ‘Find Your Exit’.

When the participants were asked how did they like what the Relay team was doing for the participants of EXIT, their answers were very simple: “fantastic, brilliant, it was helpful, thanks a lot, come back next year…”

Pastor Janos Kovacs-Biro, a representative of the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (TED) who provided training for the Relay youth initiative said that “Relay provides a platform for connecting with people through practical acts of service. The participants are meeting some of the immediate needs of people around them. Relay puts the principles learnt from Jesus Christ into practice, and this has a lasting impact. This is genuine and practical Christianity: sharing hope and showing love.”

It was clear that the Relay Youth Association team was very busy throughout the festival; staying up long hours to serve and help many guests both local and from abroad. This was a perfect example of what is called ‘acts of kindness’.
Newbold College of Higher Education Annual Awards Ceremony 2012

16 July 2012 Bracknell, United Kingdom [Maria Rosenquist, tedNEWS] Dr Philip Brown led the 2012 Newbold College Awards Ceremony on Sunday 15 July in his first awards ceremony as principal of the College. Dr Brown opened the proceedings by welcoming the 67 graduands as well as the many family and friends in the audience, and Pastor Patrick Johnson, Senior Pastor of the Newbold Church, followed by the invocation.

Councillor Mrs Jennie McCracken, Mayor of Bracknell Forest Borough Council, and her consort Councillor Iain McCracken were generous to re-join the Newbold College community again at the Awards Ceremony on Sunday. They had spent the previous Wednesday evening attending Newbold’s end-of-year staff dinner. Newbold was also honoured to have the presence of the Wokingham Town Mayor, Councillor Peter Lucey, and Wokingham Town Mayoress, Elaine White, as well as Wokingham Town Deputy Mayor, Councillor Martin Bishop, and Wokingham Town Deputy Mayoress, Yvonne Bishop.

In the Mayor’s Remarks, Cllr Mrs Jennie McCracken said that the importance of education cannot be underestimated for the opportunities that it can yield. She thanked the students for their hard work, the parents for their commitment and the Newbold staff for their absolute dedication. This was followed by a musical item, beautifully sung by tenor soloist Daniel Ilyes, a former student at Newbold and a member of the College choir; a performance that really caught the spirit of the day with its message of God’s blessings.

The guest speaker at the Awards Ceremony was Ms Kristel Tonstad, a graduate of La Sierra University and Harvard University. Ms Tonstad currently works as an advisor at the International Law and Policy Institute in Oslo and is a member of the ADRA Norway Board and the Newbold College Board of Governors. In her address, which was entitled ‘Our Fragile Earth, Our Kingdom Calling’, Ms Tonstad focused on Amos, Micah and Isaiah and their concern for justice in society. She read from Isaiah 61.1, ‘The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the humble, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release to those in prison’. Ms Tonstad said that responding to your calling is not some distant idea, it means labouring in the Lord here and now and it has a central part in our Seventh-day-Adventist heritage of preparing students for service in whatever shape that may take.

Dr Marko Lukić responded on behalf of all the graduating students and acknowledged the responsibilities laid on them; he vowed that they would ‘remain supportive of the ethos of the College and true to the teachings of Jesus Christ’. Marko is the first Newbold College student to be awarded a PhD through our research degrees programme. Along with a number of other Newbold students, Marko attended the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David degree ceremony on Friday 13 July and then returned to Newbold on Sunday 15 July to have his achievement recognised by Newbold College.

With the blessing of good weather, the ceremony was followed by refreshments outside the church centre. Two of the graduands, Fernanda Iniguez and José Caceres were married just the day before, and so were celebrating their graduation as newly-weds. Fernanda said that they both plan to pursue further study to build on the foundation of their Business Management degrees, and that their long-term goal is to start their own business together.

Wherever life’s journey takes them next, whether it be in the direct

[Foto: Asun Olivan] Ms Kristel Tonstad, a graduate of La Sierra University and Harvard University

[Photos: Asun Olivan] Fernanda Iniguez and José Caceres
employment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or serving Him in another field, we wish all the Newbold College graduates of 2012 heartfelt congratulations. Dr Brown said, ‘we wish all God’s blessings on each graduate as they continue to serve Him in an ever-changing world. May you choose to let Him lead you daily – in His way, in His time and for His purposes.’ [tedNEWS]

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100 Trained for the Mission Forward

16 July 2012 Belgrade, Serbia [Laszlo Gallusz, tedNEWS] In the last ten months, two schools for lay members training were held in the South-East European Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SEEUC); one in Novi Sad, Serbia and one in Skopje, Macedonia. About one hundred lay members were trained during these two weekends in various aspects of evangelistic work. The programme comprised fifteen modules, taught by teachers from Belgrade Theological Seminary, church administrators, pastors with vast experience in evangelism, and guest lecturers. While a theoretical basis was a fundamental element of the training programme, the focus was on the demonstration of different ministry models and providing tools for lay members to use in their local contexts. At the end of the programme, the local missionaries were expected to implement those approaches and ideas with which they felt comfortable, in their allocated territory.

As a ‘Finale’ of the local missionary training programme, a camp was organised on the mountain Zlatibor for about one hundred participants from 3–12 July 2012. The main speaker of the event was Dr Daniel Duda, Education Director at the Trans-European Division (TED). This camp was a fine opportunity not only for training, but also for swapping experiences between local missionaries. The training sessions were combined with outreach activities on Zlatibor, where there were a lot summer tourists. One of the outreach activities was a Health Expo held in the centre of the town on the mountain. Many personal contacts were made leading to great witnessing opportunities.

The climax of the camp was the awards ceremony where Pastor Djordje Trajkovski, President of the SEEUC, addressed the local missionaries, challenging them to build peace in this restless world thus demonstrating the love of Christ. Upon receiving their certificate, all the participants had an opportunity to address the group in one sentence in which they stated the ministry which they will develop in their local community. During the camp, the group read the book of Acts from the Bible, which inspired them to ask the question: ‘Lord, what is your plan for my life and where would you like to see me in terms of ministry?’

Arvai Svetlana from Bačka Palanka stated that she has experienced the Lord’s presence in a very special way during the camp and upon her return to her local church, she would work on implementing the ideas she had learned. Similarly, Bojan Bakić, a young church elder from Ruma, said that after the training he would go home with a much clearer picture of what he can do for the Lord and in which direction he is supposed to lead his local church.

Mihajlo Gurev, President of Macedonian Mission, concluded that these missionary training schools were providing more than just theoretical knowledge. They are bringing a fresh perspective on the possibilities the church has in Macedonia.

[tedNEWS]
Managing Time

16 July 2012 The Netherlands [Wim Altink] Are we managing time or is time managing us? Are we in command of our schedule of activities or are the duties pushing and commanding us?

In this short essay I will share five practical insights on how we as pastors and leaders can avoid being slaves of our diary and the expectations of others.

1. Determine our personal tax

This sounds too good to be true. It is government which determines our taxes! In setting our own tax, I refer to the amount of work we can handle considering our own physical, mental and spiritual strength. Some of us can work 80-90 hours a week for a considerably long time without wearing out. Others know that their workload capacity lies at a maximum of 50 hours a week. A pastor in the Netherlands, who takes care of 4 churches in a large district, has set for himself the limit of 50 hours. He is faithful in not going over his own tax. He is able to continue through muddy waters and difficult times in some of the churches, because of this. Before that (crossing the 50 hours tax frequently) he had severe health problems.

2. Determine our personal schedule

Make sure that every week you have scheduled a day off. This is 'holy' time, do not squander it. Defend it with all your might and if there is any reason to work on that day, make sure you have created another day off. When it comes to daily appointments it is essential not to overbook your own diary. Open space in our schedules is like wind on a sunny Spring morning. We need to avoid only sitting in meetings, dialogues and conferences. It is healthy to – now and then – have only one appointment a day. The rest of the day you will enjoy time to walk around in the office and talk with the cashier, and the Bible correspondence coordinator. You will have time to handle that unexpected phone call. You will have time to read that article which has been staring you in the face for some time.

3. Determine our professional priorities

Working in a team (as leaders in an office), or as pastors within the setting of church board members, it is essential to set your specific task and share this with the rest of your team. As leaders we like to do many things at the same time and tend to forget that we are part of team in which we find colleagues willing to do what we cannot do. I try to focus on three priorities in my work. I did this as a local pastor, and now also as a president. At the moment these are for me: (1) fostering a healthy climate concerning unity within diversity; (2) developing a strong stewardship concept; (3) stimulate leadership development.

4. Determine the quality of our working time

Our responsibilities tend to be far reaching and ‘heavy.’ The Dutch tradition of the ‘sacred’ mid-morning break, is not just to have time to drink but also to socialize. Many issues are beginning to be resolved in a relaxed atmosphere.
Seeking humour in our work will make things lighter and more pleasant. Meeting with fellow workers around a dining table makes good progress and if you enjoy meeting people in their work setting, why not go there and visit them, instead of having them coming to you? When we go out and meet fellow believers where they are, it gives an important signal to those we meet and maybe, we can enjoy managing by walking around.

5. Determine a sense of working-time satisfaction

Our work is never finished and by the time we think we can quit, we realise that this e-mail needs to be written today, and that article I promised to hand in is too close to a deadline to ignore. With our own lap-tops we always take the office with us wherever we go. This is very handy and practical but we never close the door of the office, so to say. Managing time means that we plan our writing and speaking appointments in such a way that we avoid too much time pressure and when we have finished a certain project, we should be able to close the door behind us. I have promised myself, after finishing writing this essay, to sit in the sun for 10 minutes. The weather is just gorgeous.

Managing time is not a goal in itself, it is an instrument to create a balance in our lives. Managing time will help us to be in command of our lives and not to be governed by meetings and the expectations of others. Travelling around my two most essential working instruments are the Bible and my diary. To which a fellow pastor said: “and in fact my diary is most important. I can always buy a new Bible, if I lose it, but I can never replace my diary.” Well, that is true, isn’t it? When we have determined our do’s and don’ts and when we have put that in our diaries, let us be faithful to our own plan. As the old saying has it: “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.”

At the end of the day, when we, falling more often than we like to admit, are managing our time, we are doing more than just that. Because we have reached a reasonable level of balance between work and private life, we are showing to others that we have found our fulfilment in doing our different tasks. We feel content being ministers, nurses, doctors, teachers and in enjoying our calling, we are planting seeds for young people to hear the same calling. They are attracted by people who feel satisfied because there is a kind of harmony between our work load and our working strength. I hope that we can be such people. Managing time will surely help us in that direction.

By Wim Altink, MDiv, President, Netherlands Union Conference

Used with permission from Leadership Development Newsletter – March 2009
Acts of Kindness Make a Difference in Outreach in Poland

12 July 2012 St. Albans, United Kingdom [Janos Kovacs-Biro, tedNEWS] During the first week of July 2012 Adventist young people assessed the needs of the inhabitants of the Polish town Podkowa Lesna. They found out where people are and what type of needs they have. After prayerful consideration and using their creativity, the Adventist youth responded to some compelling needs. 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.

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

12 July 2012 St. Albans, United Kingdom [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] The Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (TED) based in St. Albans, United Kingdom, will hold the European Pastors' Council (EPC) from 21-26 August 2012 in Rogaska Slatina, Slovenia. This gathering of all the division’s pastors and their spouses will be for spiritual growth, further education, and fellowship. This type of event takes place every five years.

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 2012 Camera Relay

12 July 2012 Watford, United Kingdom [Andrew Willis, tedNEWS] For seven weeks the Olympic torch has been travelling around the United Kingdom. Along the relay route communities have come together to celebrate the individuals carrying the torch. When the flame is lit at the opening ceremony on the 27th July attention will be focused on the elite athletes and national superstars. Until then, the torch is passed on from one local hero to another for 70 days, all of them fulfilling a dream.

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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Short Term Mission Trip

Get involved in an exciting short term mission opportunity to Estonia. The Trans-European Division Youth, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) departments are coordinating the first annual short term mission trip in September, 2012. Participants this year will be involved in a church construction project in Jõhvi, Estonia. Construction and building work experience is not necessary but would be very helpful. If you’d like more information or an application form please contact Karen Plaatjes kplaatjes@ted-adventist.org or Judy McKie jmckie@ted-adventist.org.

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

Contact

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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 regretfully 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.

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.

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.

By Dr Philip R Brown, Principal, Newbold College

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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*
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.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 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.

2 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.

Such leadership development is an on-going process in which the following eight conditions are established and nurtured.

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.

Theological 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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**Leadership Development Journal - April 2012**

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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 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, sharp and very intelligent scholar who is leading some 'cutting edge' work in his area of expertise. It would be dishonest of me to omit the fact that I was concerned about being intimidated by him, but quite the opposite happened. In addition to his enthusiasm and his superior handling of knowledge, his readiness to freely identify areas which he apparently 'knew little about', and his modesty about his expertise made him not only approachable but also stimulated learning. This is not surprising because genuine humbleness, not unlike empathy, to be discussed next, is a quality that has enabling properties.

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

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

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

7 Ibid.

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