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For Adventist Chaplain at London Olympics, Pins are Tools of the Trade

01 August 2012 London, United Kingdom [Ansel Oliver/ANN] Six days a week during the Olympics, Richard Daly takes the Underground here to Olympic Park in East London, where more than 100,000 spectators swarm nine game venues.

Daly, a Seventh-day Adventist minister, is one of 60 chaplains volunteering at the games site. For the first week of competition he’s assigned to serve the media, along with 11 other chaplains who take turns staffing a media prayer room throughout the day.

He sometimes gets stopped while walking around Olympic Park, and it’s not always because he resembles a competing athlete. It’s usually for his extensive collection of pins on the lanyard around his neck holding his credentials.

"Wow, so many pins," says a volunteer ahead of him in the lunch line. "That’s an impressive collection," says another. Later outside, a woman shouts from the middle of a crowd walking to an arena, "You don’t have any Adidas pins to trade, do you?"

Here at the Olympics, trading commemorative pins is a serious hobby and well documented in local and international media. An NBC cameraman said he was doing a story on the custom as he captured footage of Daly negotiating with a trader wearing a vest festooned with pins from these games and Olympics past.

One pin he regularly shows to game goers is his Olympics “Faith” pin, a great conversation starter, he says.

“See this one, have you seen this one yet? Are you a person of faith?” he asked a security guard before inviting her to consider someday visiting the prayer room.

Daly, 45, pastors the Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church south of London, and is spending his annual leave to volunteer here. He said working the Olympics is an opportunity to offer a ministerial presence at one of the world’s highest profile events.

“At one of the world’s highest profile events. An NBC cameraman said he was doing a story on the custom as he captured footage of Daly negotiating with a trader wearing a vest festooned with pins from these games and Olympics past.

A religious center among journalists draws little traffic, even with its strategic location across from the media gym. They’re mostly a secular bunch, Daly said, and constantly dealing with deadlines. While most won’t attend a service, some will come to write prayer requests on a card, which chaplains will later pray for together.

On Tuesday morning a few followers of Islam trickled in and out for prayers. A religious center among journalists draws little traffic, even with its strategic location across from the media gym. They’re mostly a secular bunch, Daly said, and constantly dealing with deadlines. While most won’t attend a service, some will come to write prayer requests on a card, which chaplains will later pray for together.

On Tuesday morning a few followers of Islam trickled in and out for prayers. The room has folding chairs, cushioned ottomans and two semi-private prayer areas behind white room dividers. On the wall is the Olympics logo with added words of inspiration, such as “determination,” “courage,” and “excellence.”
For Adventist Chaplain at London Olympics, Pins are Tools of the Trade ...

http://www.ted-adventist.org/news/for-adventist-chaplain-at-london-oly...

Because few come in, Daly goes out. Most of his connections happen in the cafeteria where people relax and open up about their life. That’s Daly’s opportunity to affirm their faith or offer a word of support, perhaps even an introduction to Christianity. Proselytism isn’t allowed, but he can explore their own faith with them or invite them to seek a deeper spiritual life.

Next week he’ll work with athletes. If that assignment is anything like past games, he’ll wait for athletes to come to him instead of going out to meet them, said Davide Sciarabba, an Adventist chaplain who served at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy.

In Italy, Sciarabba would meet athletes who came to pray with chaplains in the interfaith center. Though rare, a few athletes have asked him to pray for them to compete well, something Sciarabba said he wouldn’t do, imploping of the athlete: “What if your opponent comes five minutes later and asks for the same thing?”

Daly said people are surprised to learn chaplains are at the games; however, his attempts to prove it Tuesday morning failed. “No, [I’m not] surprised at all,” said a woman sitting on a park bench with three friends.

A female security guard monitoring the entrance to the NBC broadcast studio said, “There’s chaplains everywhere – at hospitals, at work, even at the cemetery there’s chaplains.”

It could be because the Church of England – the Anglican Church – has made workplace chaplaincy a priority. So says Christopher Jamison, a Catholic priest also serving as a chaplain in

Prioritizing chaplaincy could also increase awareness of the denomination. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a small minority in Britain and little known in most areas. “SDAs are way down there,” Daly said. “Seventh-avenue church?” said Kaye Wren from Birmingham, asking Daly of his religious affiliation, before admitting she hadn’t heard of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

At the Adventist Church world headquarters, Chaplaincy Ministries Director Gary Councell said Adventists “must rethink and expand how we do ministry beyond traditional paradigms. Jesus mingled with all types of people in His day. Chaplaincies are a way of mingling in the greater community, of extending ministry beyond the four walls of a church.”

To get his summer job, Daly had to apply two years ago and undergo a half-hour interview, which he said had little to do with his faith. “No, [I’m not] traded it. [tedNEWS]

Adventist Chaplain Richard Daly chats with Kaye Wren and her son Matthew on Tuesday, July 31. They are from Birmingham and came to Olympic Park hoping to get tickets to an event at one of the nine venues.

Daly said he’s often confused for an athlete in Olympic Park and in surrounding shops. It’s because of his fit physique and a white Team Great Britain coat, which he bought at a gift shop to guard against the rainy drizzle. He’s even reluctantly signed a few autographs to oblige fans who refuse to believe he’s not on the national team.

Sometimes he’ll wear a minister’s collar, even though Adventist ministers don’t wear them. He says it better serves others, allowing them to more readily identify him as a chaplain.

“When you become a chaplain, spiritual care is the priority, not your denomination,” he said.

Still, if anyone does ask what church he’s from, he discusses his denomination and shows its logo. It’s a pin on his lanyard.

He hasn’t traded it. [tedNEWS]
European Pastors’ Conference
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The Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (TED) based in St. Albans, United Kingdom, will hold the European Pastors’ Conference (EPC), a type of event that takes place every five years. This gathering of all the division’s pastors and their spouses will be for spiritual growth, further education, and fellowship.

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.

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 a remarkable 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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New Studio Installed in Albania

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Albania has a difficult history. When it became a communist country after World War II, most forms of worship were outlawed, many properties owned by religious groups were nationalized, and in 1967 the country's leader pronounced Albania the world's first atheist state and closed all churches and mosques. During this period, Albanian Adventists faced severe challenges – including imprisonment and torture – as they attempted to worship and witness.

Since the fall of communism in 1991, Albania began allowing private religious practice. Seventy percent of the people are Muslim, with the remaining either Albanian Orthodox or Roman Catholic. Albania has been attempting to catch up with the Western world, but is still one of the poorest countries in Europe.

The new radio studio is located on the ADRA Albania compound in Tirana. The project was made possible through a partnership between AWR and the Trans-European Division (TED) of the church: the TED contributed the funds for renovating the space, and AWR provided the recording equipment.

AWR’s global resource engineer, Daryl Gungadoo, traveled to Albania to do the installation and conduct training. It is common to encounter technical problems during such installations; in this case, one of the challenges was the supply of electricity, which fluctuated between 196 and 290 volts. This problem was solved with the addition of a high-quality UPS (uninterruptible power supply).

AWR broadcasts through a variety of media, so local church leaders are able to consult with AWR and choose the best medium for listeners in their area. “In Albania, I noticed that most people listen to local FM radio, rather than shortwave,” Gungadoo says. “There are dozens of local radio stations, but since people generally view radio as entertainment, most of the stations broadcast music nonstop, with occasional breaks for news flashes. However, Internet growth has been exponential, rising from 0.1 percent of the population in 2000 to 43 percent in 2010. Facebook is very popular among the youth, and smartphones are becoming more common.”

Now that the studio is fully operational, the Albanian Mission will hire staff to begin producing programs. The planned implementation stages illustrate how radio newcomers are able to establish and expand their presence. First, the producers will create weekly programs that will be broadcast as podcasts through awr.org and iTunes. After additional training for producers, technicians, and pastors, the team will aim to produce daily programs and explore the possibility of leased time on local FM radio stations. If all goes well, the potential may exist to eventually establish a full 24/7 Adventist radio station.

AWR president Dowell Chow says, “I am very pleased that the studio in Tirana is now ready for production. We look forward to a positive, innovative, and effective outreach program in Albania as a result of this new approach.” [tedNEWS]

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In London, Olympics Outreach Impacts Community Members

30 July 2012 London, United Kingdom [Ansel Oliver/ANN] Spiritual applications from sports are hard to miss, says playwright Mervyn Weir.

That’s why the Seventh-day Adventist Church member incorporated stories of Olympic greats into his latest production, from “The Flying Scotsman” Eric Liddell to the father of runner Derek Redman who helped his injured son across the finish line at the 1992 Olympics.

Weir’s play, Beyond Gold, is one of several Seventh-day Adventist outreach events held in and around the city of London during the Summer Olympic Games. Weir said he wrote the play in hopes that audiences would think of their own spiritual development in light of the festivities surrounding them during the next two weeks.

“We have encouraged our churches to make use of the Olympics as an opportunity to be part of an active part in the community they are called to serve,” said Kirsten Oster-Lundqvist, an Adventist pastor and Communication director for the denomination’s South England Conference.

While scores of members are joining thousands of other Christians serving at festivals and game venues, several Adventist congregations are opening their doors to host events. The conference Teen Department is sponsoring a teen camp for inner city youth at the New Life Adventist Church in North London.

The Bedford Central Adventist Church held a community breakfast for more than 200 people and offered health screenings and literature. Member of Parliament Richard Fuller attended and invited congregants to be even more involved in the community.

Some Adventist operations are adjusting due to conflicts with the games, Oster-Lundqvist said. The weekly homeless ministry is unable to serve its weekly meal in the streets of Waterloo Bridge – a high-density homeless area – and will move the meal to the Advent Center at the Central London Adventist Church.

Some congregations are adapting their services to include sermons based on biblical texts relating to sports. For the next two Sabbaths, visitors to the Wimbledon Central Adventist Church will receive mock gold medals. “Hopefully they’ll see the medal and remember where they got it from and come again,” said Wimbledon Pastor Sam Neves.

Though a few churches are holding a traditional evangelism series, many members are going beyond their sanctuary doors to seek unique service opportunities.

“I think we’re at our best when we get out into the community,” said Victor Hulbert, Communication director for the church’s British Union Conference, based in Watford.
In London, Olympics Outreach Impacts Community Members

More than 50 youth joined the Youth Federation on Friday night for street preaching at the Stratford Underground station, a railway stop near Olympic Stadium. Others have distributed some 30,000 copies of Life.info magazine, sponsored by the church here.

The South England Conference is a sponsor of More Than Gold, a Christian organization using the games as a catalyst for ministry and outreach.

A church member making his third appearance at a Summer Olympics is Graeme Frauenfelder, who operates a clown and youth development ministry. Over the next several weeks he and other members of the Fusion Youth and Community UK will dress as clowns and talk to people in Olympic venues and parks, hoping to bring joy in addition to some silly fun.

"It's become a very special way for me to connect with loads of people," Frauenfelder said while waiting for a bus to Oxford, not in costume. "People can be more playful with us and more friendly than if I just walked up to them to say 'hello' as a stranger."

The group of nearly 80 people sponsors community festivals – instead of holding a social at a church, the group takes it to a park.

"The whole point is to get people out of church and into the community, being the salt and light of the world," said Frauenfelder, who is affiliated with the Avondale College Church and Gateway Church in Australia. Already he's spoken at several Adventist schools and trained teens to conduct ministry with him in parks. He sometimes dresses as a clown, while other times opting for a tiger outfit.

"It's more than silliness," said Frauenfelder. "We create acceptance. We don't want to just tell people about the kingdom of God but model it. For a moment they can have a holiday from their problems."

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Others mingling among the community during the Olympics are members of the South London Portuguese Adventist Church in Brixton. They plan to hand out water and give away 100,000 free hugs over the course of the games.

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Church leaders say the public spotlight is renewing the church's focus on community outreach.

"I think in the past we've been content to hold evangelist meetings and invite people in," said Terry Messenger, Executive Secretary of the South England Conference, home to about 22,000 Adventist Church members.

"We haven't been as forward in getting out into the community," Messenger said, "but I think that's changing."

This year’s Olympics are held from July 27 to August 12, followed by the Paralympics from August 29 to September 9. [tedNEWS]

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The next day 25 members of the Willesden Adventist church accompanied the torch relay through the Borough of Brent and gave out 1,200 special Olympic editions of LIFE.info magazines along the route and also at the Celebrate Brent big party at the King Edward VII Park in Wembley afterwards. "It was great to see the members take part, engaging the community in health outreach. While people exercised in the park to workout checks. As clearly seen in a BUC News video report, taking the lead in Hounslow helped the churches to build relationships with the local community and with each other through outreach. "The members were true ambassadors for Christ" concludes Pastor Rock.

And it is not just in Hounslow where members have been active. The same evening, Tyler Saunders, a 29-year-old Paralympic hopeful and member of Chiswick Adventist church, carried the Olympic torch through the streets of Ealing. Tyler was heralded as a local hero, and was selected by Lloyds TSB to be a torchbearer for his commitment and dedication to his sport (basketball), and for the inspiration of his peers through his coaching of the Junior Teams within his club. "I used to play able-bodied basketball in school," said Tyler "and then I found out about the wheelchair game through word of mouth and discovered a local team that trained not far from me." Friends and family gathered for this proud moment, to see Tyler wheel down the streets carrying the torch. According to his father, being born without his left leg has never stopped Tyler from striving for achievement, and his actions have clearly been an inspiration to others.

Members of Ilford church were also in on the act as the flame passed the outside of their church on the route between Redbridge and Bexley. Members handed out around 700 goodie bags to spectators including a bottle of water, sweets for the children, and the book 'Your Friends, the Seventh-day Adventists'. Members sang inspirational songs outside the church gates to encourage the crowd before the torch passed, the Pathfinders and Adventurers waved their flags and the Ilford Drum Corps played their drums. Serena Francis states, "Ilford church certainly made their joyful presence known..."
The London Live Community Choir were not waiting for any torch but kicked off their Olympic celebration in Notting Hill on Sabbath, 21 July with a concert in a packed venue. “Rather than just talking about community, we are in the middle of community” said Pastor Paul King-Brown, reflecting on the weekend and the Sunday performance at the Westway Notting Hill Community Festival in particular. He was especially glad to see how the non-believers in the choir not only enjoyed performing at the church concert on Sabbath, but also gladly accepted the invitation to sing in a church on a Sunday morning.

In a gathering of friends, community members and random people simply walking in off the street, more than 200 people filled the church for the Sabbath afternoon performance. As with their three previous concerts, £500 raised at the concert was donated to the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust, which works extensively with young people and poverty in the local West London area. Pastor Paul’s short gospel message during the service tied well into the Olympic theme of community, and he reminded all the attendees that the church comes together every Sabbath afternoon, and that everyone is welcome. Sunday saw the choir ministering to another congregation that worships in the same venue, followed by a performance in the park for Westway Development Trust’s Community Festival.

For a selection of photos from these events visit the BUC Picture Gallery. [tedNEWS]

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Democracy in Time

01 August 2012. Copenhagen, Denmark [Bjørn Kraft, tedNEWS] It is Denmark’s National Day the 5th of June 2012. The wind is blowing cold from the north. We are in the center of Copenhagen and in front of us is Christiansborg, the Castle where the Danish Government is located. In front of the Castle we see a flock of people from Iran hunger striking with banners and posters. Behind them is a model of a Burundian refuge house standing. ADRA has made a model in full scale and beside that is an ADRA photo exhibition of nine triangle towers with 27 pictures from Malawi. “HIV is not for children” it is called. On the staircase to the castle we find more than 600 children eating bagels. Confused? – The children are loading up for a very big event. In a few minutes they are going to perform the ADRA supported Musical “Democracy in Time” in front of the Danish Parliament directed by Aunt Andante.

It is ten minutes to twelve and all the children are in place excitingly waiting for the Danish Prime Minister, Helle Thorning Schmidt, and the Minister of Education, Christine Antorini, to show up together with Felix Smidt, a famous TV-host. The two Ministers are going to speak before the Musical starts. With enthusiasm Felix is announcing the event. ADRA is getting a lot of positive credit and after that the Prime Minister talks in a clear and simple way about the assets of democracy making it understandable for the children: “Imagine that you could not do what you wanted and say what you wanted? That is unfortunately the reality for many children around the World. They don’t learn how to read and write, and then it is very difficult to be informed of what is going on in the World and it is not possible to get an education.”

After the Prime ministers speech the mike is taken over by Christine Antorini who urge the children to use their rights and make their points: “Children shall be taken good care of and be free to express themselves” she says among other things.

Then the musical is on. Two small sweet girls start singing, the band joins them and then all 600 children are singing all their best. The sun starts to shine sending light and warmth over the scenery. It was a great experience for the many people that showed up and a very big experience for all of us that had been working on this event to make it a success. Through this event many children and teachers has become aware of the good work that ADRA and the Adventist are doing. [tedNEWS]

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Abide with Me

01 August 2012 Washington State, USA [Wayne Blakely/Record] In addressing the United Nations prayer breakfast, Ravi Zacharias, the Christian apologist, asked the question: "How do you reach a generation that listens with its eyes and thinks with its feelings?" It's a profound question that should not simply be addressed to leaders outside the Church, but to each of us in the Church. As earth's history is rapidly approaching its conclusion, many of us have come to accept "feelings" as our guide to "truth". And in no area is this more true than in the field of human sexuality.

Since the sexual revolution broke out in the West, society has been pressured over and over again to abandon sexual standards based on Christian ideals. First we were told that sex outside of marriage was not only morally acceptable, but a healthy part of human development. Then we were told that the idea of a lifetime commitment in marriage was an oppressive anachronism. It was a short line from there to adopt the posture that human life so inconveniently created outside of stable relationships was expendable. And then came the gay rights movement with the message that homosexual sex is not only natural, but morally good.

I, like many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, believed the new message of sexual liberation. After almost 40 years living an active gay lifestyle, however, I have come to a very different conclusion. I've seen friends die, I've heard the heart cries of people caught in complete hopelessness that comes with a cold permissiveness, and I've heard over and over again the love of my Father calling me back to a life of obedience. Today I know that the opposite of "homosexuality" is not heterosexuality as many are inclined to believe—rather it is holiness. It is the holy and wholly encompassing love of God that can fill the gaping chasm in our lives and give us the healing we all so desperately need from the sin that plagues all of us.

The narrative formed by gay rights activists, however, is finding an echo among those in the Church who believe by ignoring or excusing sinful behaviour, they are extending love. They are not. It is true that God loves us just the way we are, regardless of our sin, and every person—homosexual, heterosexual or asexual—can be deeply thankful for that. But it is not true that God leaves us desperately mired in behaviour that destroys us physically, emotionally and spiritually. Jesus desires something more from all who have been born with a sinful nature. He wants us to develop an intimate relationship with Him and invite the Holy Spirit to bring about change in our lives. But the change He promises us is not about making a gay person straight, any more than it is about making heterosexuals who struggle with lust into asexual beings who have no desire at all. No, it is more complex than that, but no less remarkable.

When I immersed myself in getting to know Christ and submitted my will to Him, many amazing changes began to take place. He took over and revealed His perfect plan—a plan completely consistent with His revealed word, not a plan based on subjective feelings and emotive appeals that is at jarring odds with His revelation. He promises that as we trust and abide in Him, we become more like Him. The more we love Him, the more we are drawn to His holiness.

For decades many same-sex attracted people have experienced silence on the topic of homosexuality by the Church. In that silence, many have left the Church without knowing what God desires of them. Some have come to question whether or not God even loves them, accepts them, whether they are so broken they cannot be saved. Some have been treated like lepers—shunned, scorned and neglected as if their sexual temptations are somehow more sinful than everyone else's. Others believe that God loves them, but begin to wrap God around self and live according to subjective truths rather than responding to God's love with a desire to obey Him.

But praise God, there are those who have been reached through divine intervention and are claiming His victory and healing today. I am such an individual, "as were some of you". Today, God has a ministry through me. He preserved me, and precious others, for such a time as this.

Often, it is not until we are cornered in the dark, that we are able to hear that still small voice. Humility, while frequently painful, can reveal light that seems to have been hidden by deception. When I was finally humbled before God, I recognised the voice of the Holy Spirit. My heart broke before God and I fell to my knees weeping and seeking His forgiveness. Where much is forgiven, there is much love, and today I love my Lord with my entire heart, soul and strength.

The clarity of what God revealed became awe-inspiring. Not just regarding homosexual behaviour, but with regard to all
sin and His request of us to lay it at His feet, seek and live in His righteousness. It’s a lot more difficult than it sounds. But it is rewarding beyond any earthly pleasure. Temptation remains my reminder of how much I need Jesus and how I immediately must call upon Him to be in charge of my mind and my decision-making. But temptation is not sin—sin occurs when we give in to temptation rather than trusting in our all-powerful Saviour.

We are living in a world in which evil often appears to triumph and in which accepting God’s standards often makes us a laughing stock, or worse, actively hated. I know that by writing this piece, I will be mocked, my character will be attacked, and I will receive yet another wave of hate mail. It is the least I can do for a Saviour who suffered much more on my account.

Today, gay rights supporters often label anyone standing for a life of obedience to God a “bigot” or “homophobe”. They are the kinds of pejorative labels designed to marginalise and silence God’s call for obedience. I don’t believe that homophobia is the support of biblical sexual principles, but rather it is the refusal to reach out and share the love and gospel with the LGBT community. What kind of cold indifference would result in people who know God’s truth, who know His last day call to a loving, holy relationship, remaining silent as millions of people reject God and continue in sin? That isn’t love; that is a fear of homosexuality that is so strong, you prefer to see men and women lose their souls for eternity rather than have the strength of character to give an honest witness of grace, love, repentance and salvation.

More than ever before, leaders, pastors and teachers need to be educated by those who have experienced and chosen to live a redeemed life in Jesus. As He directs our hearts under His influence, we can all become the “new creation” as described in 2 Corinthians 5:17. By recognising His glory and authority we can choose to be called out of darkness and live in His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).

The Church cannot afford to be afraid of LGBT people—we are, after all, just people. You can’t afford to be indifferent—we need the love and healing of the gospel as much as anyone. You can’t afford to be so prudish you fail to discuss openly the issue of sexual behaviour. Everyone, everywhere is talking about it, and when the Church is silent, when you are silent, it isn’t neutrality or prudence, it’s cowardice and indifference.

That said, this issue does require thought and care. Calling LGBT people horrible names or expecting people to somehow magically transpose their sexual orientation is not the right approach. Shunning or shaming is also very damaging. Accepting, loving, caring, while always honestly representing God’s call to an obedient life for all of us—that is the way Christ treated all sinners, and it is the path we must follow.

God is on the move. He is holding back the four winds. He is revealing His truth. He is calling His beloved sinners to come home. I frequently teach in my presentations that we cannot share what we do not have. By engaging in an intimate relationship with Jesus, amazing changes occur. When we are living in a continual walk with Him, those we encounter will see Jesus in us and have a desire for the life He offers all.

Let those who you come in contact with see Jesus in your eyes and through your demonstration of His love. Live the love that draws the sin-sick soul into a relationship with Jesus. Christianity is not about “listening with our eyes, and thinking with our feelings”. But it is also not simply a prayer in the morning, evening and studying the Sabbath School lesson either. Victory and healing of all sin is in the continual, constant abiding in Him that results in a lifetime promise of true freedom, true acceptance and true love.

By Wayne Blakely

Wayne Blakely lives in Washington State, USA, where he works as an account executive. He has written for the Adventist Review and presented in a number of venues on the Christian approach to sexuality. He operates the <www.knowhislove.com> website.

This piece was originally published in the South Pacific Division Record, <www.record.net.au>
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 with 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.

Fernanda Iniguez and José Caceres were married just the day before, and so were Marta Almara and David Orchard. The guest speaker at the Awards Ceremony was Ms Kristel Tonstad, a graduate of La Sierra University and Harvard University.

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 Lukic 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
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.

Mihajo 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]

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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 fulfillment 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
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 regrettably 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.
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
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 disciplship 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.

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2 of 3 8/9/2012 5:29 PM
Research carried out as part of a DMin dissertation: "Bringing Home Our Adventist Prodigals: A Strategic Plan To Reclaim Youth In The Trans-European Division." (Andrews University 2009)


3 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

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Leadership Development Journal - May 2012
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 ongoing 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 behaviors 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 behaviors 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 behaviors, analyzing, 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 ongoing 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 ongoing. 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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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 very anxious or do not result in a positive response from others? What would those closest to me identify as my weakest point as a leader? Do I need help with any aspect of my life? Conducting an accurate evaluation of one’s weaknesses has the potential to contribute to a realistic approach to the challenges that any job brings. This is expected to include utilising strengths appropriately whilst being careful when engaging in the areas recognised as weaknesses. Furthermore, identifying appropriate strategies that will address the weaker aspects of my own performance is also an important aspect of this self-discovery.
An additional benefit of being aware of one’s own strengths and weaknesses might result in increased confidence as well as in the readiness to acknowledge one’s own limitations. I have recently been asked to teach and work closely with a young, sharp and very intelligent scholar who is leading some ‘cutting edge’ work in his area of expertise. It would be dishonest of me to omit the fact that I was concerned about being intimidated by him, but quite the opposite happened. In addition to his enthusiasm and his superior handling of knowledge, his readiness to freely identify areas which he apparently ‘knew little about’, and his modesty about his expertise made him not only approachable but also stimulated learning. This is not surprising because genuine humbleness, not unlike empathy, to be discussed next, is a quality that has enabling properties.

Empathy has been acknowledged as an important dimension of emotional intelligence that, whilst most easily recognisable, is frequently absent from the repertoire of essential leadership skills. And yet, an empathetic leader might be able to prevent the team and individuals from becoming overwhelmed, disillusioned, and even depressed in the course of duty. He or she will not remain silent about the professional challenges or personal hardships his co-workers are going through. Showing genuine interest in his or her workforce will be an integral aspect of the leadership style employed by an emotionally literate leader. Empathy discussed here however is not an ‘unbusinesslike’ 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 beworking 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.

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8 Ibid.

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