Don't miss it, it's for you!

20 August 2012 Rogaska Slatina, Slovenia [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS]

On Tuesday, 21 August, at 20:00 CET - Central European Time, the Trans-European Division will begin 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.

We will stream all the programmes on our website. For more information about the programme, please click here. In addition to the streaming, we will produce daily the tedNEWS bulletin, EPC video news, and upload photos. You can also follow us on Twitter and join us on Facebook.

The meetings will use the theme “Making God Known in Europe”. 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. Share this information with other people in the Adventist Church. [tedNEWS]
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For Adventist Chaplain at London Olympics, Pins are Tools of the Trade

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 Addidas pins to trade, do you?"


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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.

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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.

"We want to provide a service and have a presence here," he said Tuesday morning while walking among crowds of smiling people lucky enough to score tickets to games.

From the park’s security entrance gate it takes Daly almost 20 minutes of walking to reach the prayer room, located on “High Street,” a row of cafes, banks and service stores. For the 20,000 broadcasters, journalists and news photographers here these two weeks, High Street is the on-site shopping center located between the International Broadcast Centre and the Main Press Centre.

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...
08 August 2012 St Albans, United Kingdom [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] We don’t want you to miss out on something extraordinary that is taking place in Rogaska Slatina, Slovenia from 21-25 August 2012.

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

27 July 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States [Shelley Nolan Freesland, tedNEWS] Adventist World Radio (AWR) has completed the installation of the first Seventh-day Adventist radio production studio in Albania. After celebrating the 20th anniversary of the church just last month, church members and leaders are looking forward to sharing the gospel with their countrymen on a broader basis through media.

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.

“Whatever opportunity [the apostle Paul] saw, he used it to divert people towards Christ, and I think that’s what the arts can do,” Weir said Sunday night following the last of four performances of the show in locations around the city.

Weir’s theatrical production underscores church officials’ call for members to serve in the community during the Olympics, which has drawn hundreds of thousands of international visitors and extensive media coverage to London.

“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 | TED Ad...

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.”

Frauenfelder, who is affiliated with the Avondale College Church and Gateway Church in Australia.

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.

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.

Even before the games began, several members were among the thousands who participated in the Olympic Torch Relay.

In Ealing in West London, the torch was carried by Tyler Saunders, an alternate on the British Paralympic basketball team. In Nottingham, the torch was carried by 16-year-old Leon Squire, a promising young soccer player and sprinter who has committed not to compete on the biblical seventh-day Sabbath. In Scotland, the Faiifley Adventist Church youth choir was invited by the city council to sing gospel songs as the Olympic Torch Relay procession passed by. And Racquel Robinson, also 16, a member of Balham Adventist Church, carried the torch on July 26.

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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Olympic Flame Witness Climaxes in London


As the 8000 mile Olympic flame tour of the British Isles hit London this week, Adventist church members were well prepared to take the opportunity to share their faith with both Londoners and tourists lining the route.

"This is the best welcome we have had," commented members of the Olympic procession as they crossed the bridge into the Borough of Hounslow on Tuesday, 24 July. The sun was out in full force as Adventurers and Pathfinders lined the street. Pastor Maureen Rock, who was invited by the council to attend, was very enthusiastic about the opportunity for her churches to be part of the community celebration. "It's important that as a church we can take part in community celebrations and that people see that Christians can have fun too." Pastor Rock also invited other Adventist congregations in the area to be part of the day. Borough Councillor, Ruth Cadbury, expressed that the council was happy to welcome the churches to take part, citing that it was important for faith groups to be included. Church members and pastors alike were happily chatting with passers-by as the Pathfinders practised their drum roll. As the torch approached, the drum core led the festivities, and police, officials, entertainers and the torchbearer alike greeted the Adventurers and Pathfinders as the disciplined youths and for the inspiration of his peers through his coaching of the Junior Teams. 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.

And it is not just in Hounslow were 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.

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 up the Gospel Commission and utilize these public events as outreach opportunities," stated an excited Pastor Des Boldeau.

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]
Democracy in Time

01 August 2012. Copenhagen, Denmark [Bjørn Krøll, 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. We cannot afford to be indifferent—we need the love and healing of the gospel as much as anyone. We cannot 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.

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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!

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3 Great Leaders Grow, p. 119.

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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