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“Forgiveness is not forgetting; rather, forgiveness is remembering in a different way and from a different perspective.”

May Ministry

It's been more than three months, but I can't have enough of the May issue of the *Ministry* magazine, “The Pastor and Family.” I know normally you receive letters immediately, but mine has taken three months to finally write since I believe you are a godsend.

I am a young pastor in Kenya who is also pastor's kid (PK). I have served as the regional PK coordinator for close to seven years. I would say I am a literal PK enthusiast about issues on the pastor and his or her family. The reason I write this email is that recently, with the help of my conference, I organized a PK camp meeting. When close to 30 PKs gave their life to Christ, it dawned on me how easy it is for a pastor's family to reach out to other pastors' families rather than anybody else. Information on PKs has been handled so well by this magazine that I wish I could give a copy to every pastor. Blessings once again for your May 2017 issue!

—John Kabira Wakabira, pastor

Bring back the romance (July 2017)

I greatly appreciate this timely and well processed article [“Bring back the romance”] on a relevant, yet greatly neglected aspect of our spiritual growth. Before my retirement from ministry, I also faced the same challenge in our churches. We seem to focus on nonrelevant issues and neglect that which is essential. Trying to restore prayers in prayer meetings and other assemblies was a difficult task, often met with great resistance. This thought-provoking and well-written article does an excellent job in helping us to refocus

on and relocate this lost art in our quest to reclaim our relationship as children of God. I pray that it will not only catch the attention of the ministers but also inspire and motivate them towards restoring our churches back into “God's house of prayer and worship.”

—Manny Dasappa, retired pastor, South Africa

Seventy times seven (July 2017)

I liked the article “‘Seventy times seven’: How we misinterpret Peter's question and Jesus' answer” by Roy Adams, which was published in the July 2017 issue of *Ministry*.

The author is accurate in feeling that “forgiveness” is applied—expected—almost demanded—relatively thoughtlessly by Christians (and others) in our time.

It is distributed as if it were a magic pill or “stardust” to anyone, including those who don't ask for it and quite possibly never will.

At times the statement is made that it will make “me” feel better—nothing about the perpetrator admitting the wrong that's been done (perhaps terrible in the damage inflicted)—nothing about genuine life-changing repentance.

—David Robert Black, pastor

I appreciate Roy Adams's sensitivity to abusive situations people can find themselves in, and how repeated forgiveness without accompanying change on the part of the abuser can actually prolong the abuse. I also like his awareness that victims of extreme evils should be allowed time to grieve as they gain strength and understanding to begin the forgiveness process. This

article is a very thoughtful reflection on Christ's advice to Peter to forgive “seventy times seven.”

To support his ideas, he comes to the conclusion that “we misinterpret Jesus and distort the whole concept of forgiveness when we insinuate that His answer to Peter's question encompasses the whole gamut of human situations that confront us.” So, allow me to offer another interpretation of what Jesus may have meant when he shared these words with Peter.

Forgiveness is a process of healing, not a single event. This is especially true when the hurt is deep either physically or emotionally. By that I mean we don't simply say the words “I forgive” and everything is better. Deep wounds take time to heal, and memories linger and need to be dealt with on multiple occasions as they continually come up in our thoughts. Each recalling of the event needs forgiveness applied again. With this in mind, Jesus told Peter that you may need to forgive this event not once, not seven times, but seventy times seven.

I do not believe He is saying that if a person hits you once, and then again and again, you need to forgive that person at least 490 times. Rather, He may be saying that when you have been hit by someone, forgiving that person for the one offense may take multiple times of repeated forgiveness as the pain and memory continue to reoccur. The goal of forgiveness is to reduce the intensity and frequency of the memories, not to erase them.

Forgiveness is not forgetting; rather, forgiveness is remembering in a different way and from a different perspective. And that can take time. However, with repeated forgiveness, memories and perspectives do begin to change. And over time, the painful event will no longer dominate and control your life, but you will start to take back control of your life as you move through forgiveness from victim to victor.

—Dick Tibbits, email

Pavel Goia, DMin (ABD), is the editor of *Ministry*.



The prayer of the Servant

One day in college in Bucharest, Romania, the dean came to me and said, “You are missing school every Saturday. We know you are an Adventist, but in this country there is no God. The next Saturday that you miss school will be your last day in college. You will be expelled.” I prayed for two days and nights asking God to save my education—but with no answer. Then I asked my dad for direction. He answered, “You said you want to serve God, didn’t you? If that’s still true, then you need to change your prayer style. There are many things that God’s servants should do, but I recommend you start with three vital points:

1. **“Sacrifice your will to God’s will.** Your prayer should mirror that of Jesus: ‘“nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” ’ (Luke 22:42).¹ Don’t pray only routine or crisis prayers; make prayer a lifestyle, make it the breathing of your soul. If you love God more than anything else, then He comes before a job, before a house, before education—even before family. ‘“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” ’ (Luke 14:26).

2. **“Seek first God’s honor and His plans.** Before you ask God for help, look for the things that would benefit His kingdom and plans. Worry for His work, and let Him worry for your work. ‘“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). Make sure that in all your prayers you put God, His kingdom, and His plans before your plans, and then learn to trust and wait on Him for all your needs. Pray that God will do whatever is best for His honor.

3. **“Serve the people around you.** Love the people at school more than

your education. You need to love them as much as you love yourself, so you need to pray for them as much as you pray for yourself. They don’t know God. They are communist. But you are not there by chance. Remember, nothing happens by chance. God put you there for a time like this. You are there that they may know God through you. Do not misrepresent God by living a self-centered life. Therefore, pray that God will do with you whatever will help those people learn about God.”

This was tough counsel, but that night I prayed and told the Lord I was prepared to follow the advice I received from my father. Instantly I had peace. I didn’t know how God would answer, or whether I would be expelled from school, but I knew that God heard my prayer. The next day was a Friday; it was to be my last day of school. As I approached, the school secretary asked me whether I was friends with the country president, Nicolae Ceaușescu. I thought she was joking. She asked whether I had any friends, relatives, or connections in the government. My answer was a simple “No.” She then told me that early in the morning, the president had given an order. Starting that Saturday, to save energy and help the economy, all schools in the country were to be closed every Saturday.

I called my dad and told him the great news. He said, “If you want to serve God, remember, don’t ever try to have Him serve you. Jesus came to serve; do the same. Honor Him, and He will honor you.” I understood from that day that leaders are called to sacrificial service.

This issue of *Ministry* considers what it takes to be effective in leadership throughout the life cycle, from internship to retirement. God calls us to service. Jesus gave up heaven to

Leaders are called to love God and His work more than self and love people and serve them.

serve and save. Moses was willing to lose his own salvation to serve and save others (Exod. 32:32). Paul said that he would rather be anathema, cut off from Christ, for others’ sake (Rom. 9:3, ASV). It has been well said that “Service Leadership is the powerful force that occurs once a person **discovers their heart to serve, answers their call to lead, and summons their courage to engage.**”²

Leaders are called to love God and His work more than self, love people, and serve them. It begins with a close relationship with God. “Without this daily communion with God no human being can gain power for service.”³ I pray that *Ministry* will be a blessing and a tool to support your service for God. ✎

1 Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture is quoted from the New King James Version.

2 “What Is Service Leadership?” Kiwanis, accessed October 10, 2017, kiwanis.org/clubs/member-resources/service-leadership/what-is-service-leadership.

3 Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1967), 85.

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The crucial ingredient in pastoral leadership¹

If God is love and we have not loved, how then shall we lead?

It is often assumed that leaders should be tough as nails. Frederick Taylor, father of scientific management, developed an approach during the industrial revolution that still influences the management styles of businesses across the world today. Essentially, Taylor threatened the workers' security until they worked like machines. The mantra echoed: "Work faster and better, or we will find someone who can."

But the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" (13:2b).² Herein lies the most powerful component of being a leader who moves people: leaders must love those whom they lead.

Oftentimes, as pastors, business leaders, or even parents, we become so overcome by our priorities and responsibilities that we forget to show compassion to others. We become so focused on the end goal that we use language that can damage a healthy working environment.

Organizational needs must be presented lovingly. When a task needs to be completed, a kind tone of voice makes all the difference. It must be made clear that it is the worker who matters and is needed most. They are not cogs in a machine. When leaders love, better relationships are

developed, intrinsic motivation is instilled, and productivity improves.

First, allow me to explain what kind of love I mean. The love articulated in 1 Corinthians 13 (often read at weddings) serves to define the kind of love in which Spirit-led leaders should operate. Love is selfless as it "seeks not its own" (v. 5). It "rejoices in the truth" (v. 6) and does not sugarcoat anything. Love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things" (v. 7).

A love-driven leader must mirror these characteristics. Although we aim to meet a certain profit or goal, our mandate as followers of Christ is to model the character of Jesus in all that we do. God is motivated by love: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). The Cross is proof of God's generous, sacrificial love. We are to demonstrate that same "giving" love to others, especially those we lead.

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

Everything we do—whether it is leading a team at work or ministering to the family at home—should be done in love and obedience to the Lord. Leaders serve God by serving others.

Lead with love, lead with intention

Love involves more than emotion. It requires intention and action. One does not love by accident.

Love-driven leaders understand how to speak the truth in a way that brings about growth, not pain. The apostle Paul was honest to the Corinthian Christians in addressing their problems in the church. He also urged them to speak truth to one another and dispel sinful behavior so that they could be like "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8).

When we fail to serve God in the way He intended, God disciplines and corrects us. He does not shame us or make us feel guilt, nor does He leave us on our own to learn the right way. Like the love-driven leader that He is, God not only gives us direction but also guides our steps. He provided the perfect example in Jesus Christ. We know authentic love through what Christ did for us. We can aim to imitate that kind of love-driven leadership in ministering to those we lead.

When we are honest in our words and actions, we act lovingly: "The Lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son" (Heb. 12:6, NIV). Speaking the truth in love requires the right word choice. For love-driven vocabulary, use the Ephesians 4:29 test: "Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for

building up, that it may give grace to the listeners” (MEV).

Before speaking, ask yourself, “Will these words build up?”

Zig Ziglar said, “You don’t build a business—you build people—and then people build the business.”³ Apply this mentality to all facets of your life. Build

a leader has a remarkable impact on establishing a loving, nurturing work environment.

Lastly, leaders who lead with love and intention do not turn off when they go home. I heard someone once say, “Home is where I don’t have to guard my words and actions. My home is my

people to fulfill God’s plan for them and help them discover their God-given potential.

The journey to fulfilling one’s potential begins with realizing one’s potential. I remember a pastor once pointed out a man to me and said, “He’s thirty-eight and has lots of potential.

If God is love and we have not loved, how then shall we lead?



yourself and build the people around you, especially those you lead.

Furthermore, evaluate the thinking behind your words. I believe bad thinking leads to bad speaking. We must allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to pure thoughts. When faced with an issue, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit to provide discernment and enable us to speak restorative words into a situation. Proverbs 25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

Spiritually disciplined thinking, which is careful and untainted by false interpretations or influence, generates “fitly spoken” words. The language of

castle, and I don’t have to be on guard all the time.” The opposite is true.

Leaders who are truly motivated by love lead well in every environment, whether at home, in the workplace, at church, or in personal relationships. Never let your intention fade for the purpose of comfort. When you consistently demonstrate effective, love-driven leadership, you leave behind a legacy wherever you go.

Love-driven leadership seeks out potential

God has a plan for every person you lead. Your responsibility is to lead

What that really means is, he ain’t done nothing yet.”

Leaders can play an important role in helping a person realize and ultimately fulfill their potential. At the root of this process is a person’s spiritual condition.

There are certainly people who have moved far away from God and their God-given purpose and yet are talented and successful. However, they are doing so well only in their own eyes. Without God, human potential is limited: “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). God can direct our paths

and provide favor along the way, and a Spirit-led leader can be instrumental in that journey.

To have an influence over a person requires having a relationship with them.

In the same way that relationships are mutually beneficial, influence is also a two-way street. If we want to be influential leaders, we must be willing to be influenced by the needs of those we lead. Recognize a person's potential and demonstrate love by working to help that person fulfill their potential. A team must feel that their leader genuinely cares about them. Because the leader generates a culture of meaningful relationships, a matrix of influence will manifest.

Prioritizing relationships will also lead to strong work efficacy. Part of relating to a person is understanding why they do what they do. If we can determine the tendencies of our team members, we are better positioned to handle behavioral issues that can

hinder our team, such as self-sabotage, the imposter syndrome, insecurities, and fatalism.

Because we lead people, not robots, we must understand their strengths and weaknesses because this is key to recognizing a person's potential. Operate in your strengths as a leader, and encourage team members to operate in their strengths as well. Doing so draws on our potential and propels success.

I take comfort in knowing that God knows me more than I know myself. If I listen to His voice, He will lead me to the lane in which I work best. God will also guide me in leading others to their lane so that they, too, can thrive in what they do.

Leader love bears, believes, hopes, and endures

Love-driven leaders endure trials and refuse to be overwhelmed.

Jesus was unbothered by a storm that threatened to shipwreck Him and

His disciples. When they frantically woke Him up, He remained composed and calmed the sea, saying, " 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' " (Mark 4:40, NIV).

Becoming overwhelmed will not change the situation. It is also a form of focusing on the self. Jesus encouraged His disciples to be concerned about the needs of others and to demonstrate love to them in action. When we feel paralyzed with stress, we tend to concentrate on our own needs and what we require from other people. However, when we serve others, we feel good about ourselves and reclaim our motivation and sense of purpose.

Overall, we need to stay afloat in the midst of a storm. Rebecca, our office manager, created an object lesson for the overwhelmed. She wore water wings to work! It was a way to symbolize that floatation devices are always available for the overwhelmed. Rebecca also succeeded in bringing

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laughter into the chaos. Loving leaders seek opportunities to help their team weather the storm, even if it means wearing water wings in a professional work environment.

As Christians, what keeps us afloat is the Holy Spirit. When we are grappling with too many tasks and not enough time, when a plan gets thrown off course and the team begins to drown in work, do what the disciples did. Do all that you can do in the situation, but also trust the Lord to help your team. Pray for guidance, discernment, and peace. Loving leaders do not rely on their own strength; they rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit. They have faith in the God in them and the God in their team members.

Our ability to endure any challenge is a function of our mind-set. Solomon says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). Our success is predicated on how we think about our

teams and our projects. When we trust in the Lord, we stay afloat and endure. When we have faith in His design in us to be creative, we thrive. Leaders who love their teams allow space for innovation because creativity is a God-given quality. The Holy Spirit helps us see possibilities in everything around us. We are born to create.

Let love remain

Success in leadership involves strong, genuine work relationships, a language that builds up a team, and the faith to remain calm in the midst of chaos. But none of these healthy work qualities would lead to the success that God intended if they were not motivated by love: “If I give all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Cor. 13:3, MEV).

As we saw in John 3:16, our God is a God who gives, and we are to do the

same. Instead of blithely enjoying the privileges of being in authority, serve your team in the same self-sacrificing way that you serve God. Let love be the motivator.

Love-driven leaders pursue success—but not at the expense of their team. They pursue excellence—but not above being ambassadors for Christ in their conduct. Love-driven leaders are motivated by a desire to bring glory to God.

As we lead with the heart of God, we are ever reaching beyond our own beliefs and opinions to a higher standard, the Word of God, and the example of Christ. ☑

1 This article is based on Steve Greene, *Love Leads* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2017).

2 Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are from The King James 2000 Bible, copyright © Doctor of Theology Robert A. Couric 2000, 2003.

3 Zig Ziglar, AZ Quotes, accessed October 2, 2017, azquotes.com/quote/729932.

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Seven rules for pastoral interns

An article by Anisa Purbasari Horton, in a recent issue of *FastCompany Leadership Newsletter*,¹ caught my attention with this introduction: “Entering the workforce for the first time can be a shock to the system. Here’s what you need to know.” That sentence evoked a flashback to my own career entry more than 40 years ago. I was a new Christian. Parallel to my conversion experience was a sense that God was calling me to pastoral ministry. As my calling matured, I took the necessary step of entering college to prepare for professional ministry. Over time, I also developed a vision of what life would be like serving God’s people and leading them forward to accomplish Christ’s mission for the church. It was this dream, and the romantic idealism that shaped it, that set me up for my own experience of “shock to my system.”

I was unprepared for the realities I was facing as a young and spiritually immature pastor—imperfect members, imperfect conference leaders, imperfect churches—each combined to collapse my dream and violate my idealistic picture of life as a pastor. My guess would be that good people likely dropped a word here or there that should have tempered my vision, but for whatever reason, I was unprepared for the

realities of serving as a minister of the gospel. My sense of calling was severely challenged by this disillusionment. If not for the grace and patience of a loving God, and the love of His people, I would likely not have survived in professional ministry. I passed through that dark valley, and four decades later I am able to declare, “I would not wish for any other lifework than the blessing of serving God’s people as a minister of the gospel.”

Back to the newsletter article. It shares seven rules and gives a commentary on each. As I read them, I found myself wondering whether I might have benefited from an understanding of these words of counsel as I began my ministry so long ago. Therefore, I am going to list each of Horton’s seven rules and add my own commentary on each, with contextualization to pastoral ministry.

Rule no. 1: You are there to do your job

The first rule begs an important question, “What is my job?” There is no official job description that can serve as the standard by which a pastor can be evaluated. *The Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Handbook*² serves as a comprehensive guide for the work of a pastor. However, 281 pages cover a lot of territory if you are struggling

to embrace the essential work of a pastor at the entry level. Horton states that “the rules that truly matter in the workplace are often not written anywhere—they’re simply things that those who have been in it for a while consider to be obvious.”³ Forty years of pastoral and ministerial work likely qualifies as “in it for a while,” so I will share my list of the essentials:

1. Love your people—unconditionally. Love them to a depth that compels you to say, “If necessary, I will die for them” (John 10:11, 15).
2. Point them to both the Living Word and the written Word—always.
3. Model and encourage the devotional disciplines of Jesus.
4. Walk in the Spirit—with integrity.
5. Give hope and rebuke judgmental attitudes and behavior.
6. Be there—for your family, church family, and community.

This list is not comprehensive, but it reflects the essential elements that come to the surface in my experience. In your search, seek out respected spiritual leaders for guidance in the essential work of a pastor and then embrace the work of ministry with energy and commitment. Respectfully ask your conference leaders for clarity regarding their expectations of your

work. In the end, you have to decide what is important. Never allow yourself to fall into a reactive mode of pursuing someone else's agenda—be vigilant to remain proactive. Know your job, and be faithful to do it.

Rule no. 2: It is up to you to figure things out

The context of pastoral ministry compels me to adjust this rule in order to avoid an individualistic concept of being a leader. “You” are *involved* in crafting or discovering solutions to the challenges in ministry; but rather than coming up with the solution, you are charged to lead a community process, formal or informal, that addresses the challenges you encounter. This concept is as old as the earth itself. “In the beginning God (plural) created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). The suggestion that man be created in the image of God (v. 26) reveals a collective planning process that involves the community of God. This conversational, community-based approach to leadership was incorporated into the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is revealed in the practice of community or committee-based decision-making. Leaders in the church identify and analyze the challenges and then craft recommendations to the appropriate committee or constituent body charged with making the decisions.

The absence of “terminal authority”⁴ as a legitimate function of the pastor does not minimize the value of this rule. Your participation in the process of “figuring things out” calls on the ingenuity and creativity of the local church. When properly pursued, it allows for the design and delivery of customized ministry (service, evangelism, Christian education, etc.) suited especially for the context of your community. Such creativity avoids a reactive ministry that depends upon mass-produced ministry models that are not guaranteed to be a fit for your church or community context. The problem and the solution belong to the community you lead.

Rule no. 3: Feedback will not come automatically

Feedback is essential to personal and professional growth. During the educational process feedback happens regularly because it was intentionally built into the process. In the context of pastoral ministry, feedback or evaluation is often scarce, and caution should be exercised in making assumptions based on such feedback. The minister of the gospel has to be proactive in pursuing an agenda of meaningful and carefully designed feedback. A simplistic approach to growth metrics is sometimes applied to describe the pastor's effectiveness.

For example, to make baptism totals meaningful, the pastor or church must measure evangelism results *and* discipleship effectiveness by reporting what measures were applied to intentionally grow new members toward maturity. How many remained bonded to the church after six months and/or one year later? This feedback process requires the church to thoughtfully explore *the why and how* questions regarding retention. Counting and reporting only the raw results of mission efforts without considering ongoing realities results in misleading statistics and lost opportunities to learn and grow. In addition, it degrades the generative duties of the pastor to teach and equip—not just baptize.

The minister of the gospel as a professional must implement feedback loops on all aspects of ministry—evangelism, discipling, preaching, finance, plant services, and so on. Intentional feedback, evaluation, and processes that allow for the adjustment of methodology will strengthen the mission profile of the church.

Rule no. 4: Attention to detail is extremely important

My perception, after many years of being a minister of the gospel, serving pastors and teaching pastors, is that many pastors are not detail-oriented by nature. Many years ago, as my ministry challenges became more complicated,

I began to have a recurring dream that involved my answering the phone and hearing a person ask, “Where are you?” to which I responded, “At home. Why?” Only to have the person on the other end of the line respond, “You are supposed to be at the funeral chapel. We are waiting on you!” After which I awoke in a sweat but grateful that it was only a dream. But in reality, it was not only a dream; I had reached the limit of my ability to intuitively manage my time and ministry events. I solved it by disciplining myself to use a calendar and log, and the anxiety disappeared along with the bad dream.

The interdependent nature of the church allows us to benefit from one another's gifts. We become whole, collectively, because the Holy Spirit has promised that outcome. My experience has produced a testimony that allows me to confess my lack of giftedness in the area of detail. Graciously, the Holy Spirit has always provided persons in my life who handled the details wonderfully well as long as I maintained clear and open conversation with them. We have also been blessed with incredible technology that enhances our abilities to address details well beyond our natural ability. Both of these resources make it possible to stay on top of the details of organizational leadership.

Rule no. 5: Understanding how you fit in the bigger picture goes a long way

The pastor is a part of a managed organization (conference or mission) that was created by the church community to enhance the effectiveness of its mission. The organization includes supervisors and employees who are subject to lines of authority. The pastor, subject to the authority of the conference administrators and executive committee, is sent to lead a church or district, neither of which is designed for being managed—but is rather, a group of free individuals who can come or go as they please. The minister of the gospel has no legitimate control authority over the members of the church. Consequentially, a way must

be discovered or developed that allows responsible leadership behavior with the conference, associated church organizations, and the local church. A clear sense of this reality and the need to develop relationships at all levels is critically important if the pastor is to successfully address all aspects of the portrait of the church.

While relational leadership is the only legitimate option in the local church, the development of healthy relationships at the conference level and beyond allows the managed nature of the organization to take a back seat to quality, respectful relationships between pastor and conference leaders. In turn, it is incumbent on conference leaders to treat pastors as professionals rather than as employees. Working toward a healthy collegial relationship creates a positive context for the growth and effectiveness of the pastor and the churches served.

Rule no. 6: Companies are not obliged to consider your needs and interests

“As an employee, your job is to bring value to the company, and at times, that might mean putting their needs ahead of yours.”⁵ This is a delicate rule! Our conference organizations should be compassionate and caring toward their pastors. But are these organizations “obliged to consider their needs and interests”? The needs and interests of all ministers of the gospel are addressed by policies that attempt to establish parity among those who serve the organization, but this is not so different from the secular corporate context from which I borrowed these seven rules. There are occasions when leaders in the secular corporate context make exceptions to policy. They address unique situations on behalf of the employee and grant exceptions if they believe doing so would be in the best interest of the organization. But this is true also for the conference and those who serve

the church in a professional capacity. These exceptions should be seen as an act of grace or kindness, not as an entitlement.

I was the recipient of such grace by a conference many years ago when I was passing through a dark and difficult valley in my life. I remain amazed and humbled by the generosity they extended to me and my family. I feel that I would cheapen their gift to me if I thought the exception was an entitlement. It rests upon each of us to be careful stewards of our lives and resources. Again, such an attitude is intended to be mutual or reciprocal. The application of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23) rests upon the corporate church as much as upon the pastor and should influence the quality of the relationship.

Rule no. 7: No one will care about your career as much as you

Unmet expectations are the tinder of disappointment and bitterness. If this is true, then we should be careful to build our expectations upon a solid foundation. Pastoral ministry is a unique career path. My early disappointments in ministry were very much influenced by the faulty expectations I conjured up in my imagination. It was unwise of me to assume that my leaders would be perfect Christians in all their leadership behavior or that my members would be consistently cooperative and encouraging. If my maturity had been fully formed, I would not have included such in my vision. Expectations must first address personal responsibility. If a pastor assumes that the church organization should be taking care of her or him from the cradle to the grave, there will likely be disappointment.

The pastor is the primary steward for self and family. The church organization is primarily the steward of the organization and its mission. “The pastor is our first concern” would be a lofty expression that would play well in

certain gatherings, but more than 40 years of service as pastor, administrator, and seminary professor have taught me that the organization and its institutions are the primary stewardship focus of the organization. Recognizing personal responsibility to plan for the education of children, budget for the family, and prepare for retirement can release us from attitudes of entitlement.

The pastor’s stewardship of self and family is impacted by their specific calling of God. Ministry has more than one career path, and that decision is not the responsibility of the conference. Decisions of whether to move or not are always difficult, but the ultimate decision remains with the pastor, and so do the consequences. Home ownership, retirement strategies, investments—all fall upon the primary steward of self and family. Build your expectations upon the reality that you are the steward.

Conclusion

These seven rules provide a skeleton upon which to build a life in professional ministry. There are likely “bones” missing that you feel should be addressed. Reflect on it and add them. My purpose in this exercise, using Horton’s framework, is to contribute ideas that might positively impact the early experience of a minister of the gospel and beyond. Press forward, and enjoy all that God has prepared for you in service to Him and His people. ❏

- 1 Anisa Purbasari Horton, “New Graduates: These Are the Unspoken Rules of the Workplace No One Tells You,” *FastCompany Newsletter*, May 12, 2017, fastcompany.com/40419679/new-graduates-these-are-the-new-unspeken-rules-of-the-workplace-you-need-to-know.
- 2 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009).
- 3 Horton, “New Graduates.”
- 4 Stanley E. Patterson, “Terminal Authority as a Function of Community,” in *Called: A Digital Magazine for Clergy* (Spring 2016).
- 5 Horton, “New Graduates.”

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Finding Ezra: Embracing the leader that you are

Is this it? Is this all ministry is going to be for me?" A pastor blurts out an audible prayer as he stares out the window. Six years out of seminary, he is now two years into his second church. Not that everything was bad. People say: "Your sermons are really speaking to me." Or, "Thank you, I feel like I've really grown through your ministry. Thanks so much for being our pastor."

But there are the other voices. Ones that say: "Where do you think this church is going? What are we doing? Where's the vision? It feels like we're stagnating." As the pastor hears these voices in his head, he says: "When did it become a bad thing to just learn the Word of God and live it authentically? If I hear one more person say 'without vision the people perish,' I'm going to . . ."

Another pastor in a different town stares down at his cup and says, "Is this it? Is this how it's going to be for the next few decades or until I quit and get a *real* job?" He is eight years out of seminary and deep into his second church plant. He loves getting teams together, casting vision, and seeing the energy build. And God has used him.

But there are voices. Like those that say: "I love the vision of this church and the things we're doing. But I have to find a church where I can grow spiritually." As the voices echo in his mind, he says, "If I hear one more person say, 'I'm not getting fed here,' I'm going to . . ."

You could look at those two stories and say, "The pastorate is tough. We all have our strengths and weaknesses,

and we all have to work through it. And, hopefully, in time we'll each find a decent seat on the right bus."

But here lies my question: What could happen if the two pastors I just described found each other and were able to work together? Both are effective leaders. What do we gain by having these pastors off in their corners, alone and discouraged? The church needs both kinds of leaders. In fact, these leaders display two core, biblical qualities of leadership that we need if we are to be the vital churches we have been called to be. And when these two forms of leadership are working together in synergy, they can be virtually unstoppable.

Whatever your leadership tendencies may be, my purpose is to encourage you to embrace the leader that you are and to make your leadership work through creative synergies with other leaders around you. To show you what I'm talking about, let's look at two leaders who put their synergy to work.

Ezra and Nehemiah led Israel during an extremely challenging, pivotal moment. The cause of rebuilding the nation had floundered.

Ezra

Ezra arrived first on the scene. As soon as he got there, he was stunned. All the evil that had brought about the downfall of the nation and the destruction of Jerusalem a generation ago had come back—it was as though Israel had learned nothing and run headlong into another round of disaster. So what did Ezra do? He did not scream and yell

and pound his fists. Instead, he did what every Israelite should have been doing. He went into public mourning. He went straight to the house of God, ripped his tunic down the front, thrust his hands toward heaven, and prayed aloud. In my mind, I hear him shouting as he starts his prayer with, "I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you . . ." (Ezra 9:6, NIV). In time, a great crowd of people of all ages gathered around him and joined him, weeping.

And with the help and support of key leaders of Israel, Ezra led the nation in turning back from disaster.

What do we say about Ezra as a leader? He led from the core of who he was. In other words, he led by example. There was an integrity about him that others respected and wanted to emulate. The heart of his leadership is summed up in Ezra 7:10. He devoted himself to the study of the Law of the Lord, to do it himself and to teach it. He was an effective teacher who was able to identify the crisis and put words to it that people understood and were challenged by.

That said, he was not necessarily a strong strategist or tactician. In fact, you will notice that most of the leadership activity was executed by leaders who gathered around Ezra. While Ezra did some of the directing, his key contribution to the solution was to identify the problem clearly and present the big picture of what Israel needed to do. He said, "Now then make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers and do his will" (Ezra 10:11, ESV).

Nehemiah

Then came Nehemiah. He mourned and grieved in repentance, much like Ezra. But Nehemiah was drawn to action through a different path. Jerusalem's infrastructure was so destitute that Israel could not function as an autonomous nation. Not that Nehemiah cared only about bricks and mortar. He realized that the material devastation of Israel was a manifestation of spiritual

the Law, left many Israelites owing large amounts of interest to their wealthier counterparts (see Nehemiah 5). And faster than imagined, by the grace of God, under Nehemiah's leadership the wall was completed and Jerusalem became a real city that could no longer be abused or ignored by its enemies.

So what about Nehemiah as a leader? He was a visionary who intuitively saw what needed to happen for

in Ezra/Nehemiah: "Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep.'" (Neh. 8:9, NIV). For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

And so under Ezra and Nehemiah, there began one of the most significant revivals in the history of Israel. And not



When it comes to leadership, no one is the complete package. But God created you to be the kind of leader you are for a reason.

rebellion and devastation from which Israel had not recovered. Right away, Nehemiah knew what his part was in this. If Israel was ever going to come into its own as a nation, Jerusalem must have a wall.

When Nehemiah arrived, he analyzed the situation and then worked with leaders to execute a brilliant plan whereby the wall would go up all around the city at the same time, so there would be no breach as the wall grew. This happened mostly through family groups each taking responsibility for certain sections of the project. Along the way, Nehemiah dealt with intense opposition. He also worked to correct an administrative evil that, contrary to

the nation to move forward. And, while others may see the same problem and long for a change, Nehemiah put longing into action. He was a directive leader who was strategically and tactically strong.

Standing together

When the wall was completed under the leadership of Nehemiah, the nation was moved by the need to realign their hearts with God. And who did they turn to? Ezra, the scribe. And in Nehemiah 8, Ezra opened the Word of God to the great assembly, and people were thunderstruck by their guilt and by their need to repent and come to God. And then comes one of my favorite parts

only was Israel's heart renewed, but the walls of its great city were restored.

Clearly Nehemiah and Ezra were two very different leaders. One was a God-loving master executor of vision. The other was a teacher who led by the example of his godly life. As we look at what God led the two of them to do together, one thing we cannot deny is that both kinds of leadership are needed. If you do not have Nehemiah, the wall will never get built. And without Ezra, you will never have anything worth building a wall around.

Making it work

There are more implications to this than I can cover in one article, but let

me offer some applications. I believe that once you have run the gauntlet of the leadership assessments (Strengths Finder, Golden, SIMA, etc.), one thing becomes clear. In the church there are two leadership inclinations that are essential, namely, Nehemiah and Ezra. And while there may be some leaders who have a dynamic synergy of the two tendencies inside them, most of us tend to be in one space or another along the Ezra-Nehemiah spectrum.

In the United States, we have seen a pendulum swing of popularity between the two styles. For the longest time, most churches would have been delighted to have a gifted Ezra as their pastor or leader. But since the 1980s, as culture has changed and there has been growing concern that the church does not execute well in regard to her mission, there has been a significant shift of attention toward Nehemiah leadership. Individual churches may

trend back and forth, opting for one model of leadership over another, based on perceived needs at the time.

Having said this, my aim is not to fix the world but to encourage you. Whether you are an Ezra or a Nehemiah trying to figure out your place in ministry, I want to offer you hope. I believe whichever leadership tendency you have, the Ezra-Nehemiah synergy can be made to work for you and your people.

Wherever you are, if you are a Nehemiah leader, you want to cultivate and raise up an Ezra or two around you. Be open to entrusting some pulpit time to them. Your church needs them as it needs you. God can use the two of you in ways that may not happen otherwise.

If you are an Ezra leader, can you find a Nehemiah in your congregation who shares your heart for the church and has strategic, tactical gifting?

Develop a relationship with that leader and let that leader coach you and give you a loving “kick in the pants” when needed. If you cannot find a leader like that in your congregation, is there someone outside your church who can help you with Nehemiah-type coaching?

If you are a non-staff leader in your church who serves alongside a pastor, celebrate and enjoy your pastor’s gifting. And, rather than trying to push him or her in a certain direction or wishing he or she were different, look for ways to bring leaders with complementary gifts around him or her.

My last piece of advice for you would be to embrace the leader that you are. When it comes to leadership, no one is the complete package. But God created you to be the kind of leader you are for a reason. And, as you bring complementary leaders around you, beautiful things can happen. ❑

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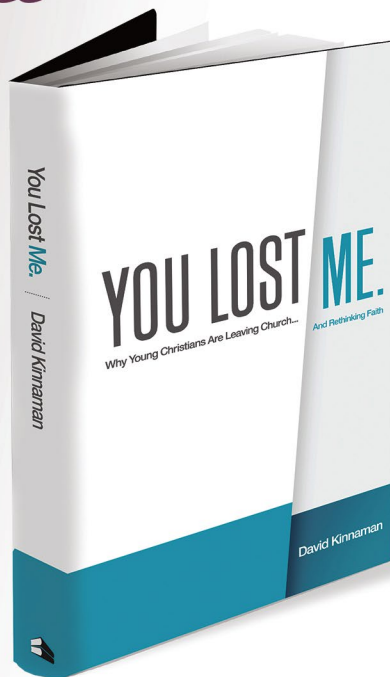


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Ethics, stewardship, and the illusive hidden agenda¹

Centuries ago, a friend of Jesus' came to a crossroads experience with God. Things were not turning out as well as he had hoped. He had spent time with Jesus—a lot of time. They traveled and dined together. He was a religious man, part of the inner circle; he was smart, ambitious, and talented, trusted and admired by others. He had seen some amazing miracles at the hands of Jesus. What he did not know, what he refused to recognize, was that he had a demon. Eventually that demon would lead him to compromise his integrity, lead him into deceitful actions, and ultimately destroy everything he had hoped to gain. The damage from such compromise hurt not only him but others as well.

In the book *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White shares some intriguing and instructive insights about Judas, the betrayer:

- Judas had not always been corrupt enough to do such a deed.
- He had an insatiable appetite for money until it became a ruling motive of his life.
- He felt a desire to be changed in character and wanted to connect with Jesus, but he did not come to the point of surrendering himself fully to Christ.
- He cultivated a disposition to criticize and accuse.

- He looked upon his brethren as greatly inferior. He saw himself as the one with business acumen—the one they really needed.
- For Judas, material solutions were the logical solutions, not the kind of solutions that Jesus offered, such as those in His sermon regarding the Bread of Life.
- Feeling highly qualified but unappreciated, he paid himself from the meager funds gathered for the poor. He did this because it was logical to pay himself back for the time and sacrifice he had given in service for others.²

Judas was dominated with thoughts about himself; his own ethics, ideas, disappointments, hurts, and frustrations took center stage. His worldview was no bigger than himself: it was all about him! He had not learned to give of himself or of his means without expecting something in return. In the end, the path Judas followed led to the unethical and manipulative behavior that eventually brought his own destruction.

Self-centeredness in an organization

Dee Hock, founder and CEO of the Visa credit card association, noted four character traits that could lead to personal demise and even take down

organizations that the association had been hired to help prosper. The four, often misdirected, personal attributes that Hock observed at work in the business world are as follows:

1. *Ego*—a strong sense of “self-importance”
2. *Envy*—a feeling of discontentment because of the possessions, qualities, or “luck” experienced by others
3. *Greed* (avarice)—a manifestation of subversive greed for wealth or material gain
4. *Ambition*—a determination to achieve success or possessions at any price³

Unfortunately, these self-centered personal characteristics are seldom kept in isolation. Marianne Jennings, an attorney internationally known for her work in the area of corporate ethics, warns that “the moral fiber of an individual matters if the company is to have an ethical culture.”⁴

Decades earlier, Ellen White presented a similar thought when she wrote, “True Christian principle will not stop to weigh consequences. It does not ask, What will people think of me if I do this? or how will it affect my worldly prospects if I do that? With the most intense longing the children of God desire to know what He would have them do, that their works may glorify Him.”⁵

Pressure from social expectations and financial needs must bow to a higher standard. A guiding ethical principle, simply stated by Jesus, moves the attention from self-centeredness to self-integrity: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12, NIV).

Redefining what is right

It is when circumstances seem to be overwhelming, however, when the efforts of others seem inadequate, that taking matters into our own hands appears to be the right thing to do. Such was the case in the time of the judges. Having forgotten what the Lord had done in the past, God’s chosen people turned away from Him and toward the idols of their day (Judg. 2:10–13). The Lord raised up leaders, referred to as judges, to save His people from their own schemes, but “they would not listen” to the judges. “They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways” (vv. 16, 19, NIV). Without their Guide, “everyone did as they saw fit” (Judg. 17:6, NIV). Circumstances, rather than God, defined what was right. Personal integrity was sacrificed for selfish interests, and the corporate whole paid a terrible price. Not all selfishness, however, is visible on the surface. Motives are often not immediately seen, but their effect is harmful nevertheless.

Transparency and the hidden agenda

The daunting question haunts many organizations, “Why do good, smart, sincere, people do dumb things?” So often they have an ulterior motive, sometimes called a “hidden agenda,” which suggests that a less-than-transparent position is necessary to accomplish a desired result. As Jennings points out, “No one wakes up one day and decides, ‘You know what would be good? A gigantic fraud!’”⁶ The person’s pietistic or spiritual objective, such as the one Judas had in betraying Jesus, takes priority regardless of the immediate cost. The hope is that time will prove that the individual was right after all. The end, it is felt, justifies the means. Such ethical

reasoning inevitably leads to a moral collapse and impacts many in its wake.

Research suggests that there are three primary aspects of transparency that every organization should practice: (1) information disclosure, (2) clarity, and (3) accuracy in their communications with stakeholders.⁷ The degree to which these three principles are practiced is a statement about the integrity of the organization and its leaders. Transparency

can be painful, and if the revelation is new and not pleasant, it can prompt an angry and, at times, a threatening response. Yet true transparency will present as objectively as possible the full truth so that right decisions can be made. Ellen White addressed one challenge this way: “Many times when the Lord has opened the way for brethren to handle their means to advance His cause, the agents of Satan have presented some enterprise by which they were positive the brethren could double their means. They take the bait; their money is invested, and the cause, and frequently themselves, never receive a dollar.”⁸

The intentions may be good, but speculation, a lack of full disclosure, and the belief that the end justifies the means can lead both the organization and the individual to an ominous, if not destructive, end. The desire to accomplish good while compromising truth by distortion or partial revelation assumes we know better than God—an assumption that Judas also made. There is a better way.

A great need

The Bible makes it clear that personal integrity impacts the effectiveness

of the leader and what God can do through the leader for His people. Joseph, Samuel, and Daniel were men called to their posts at historically critical times. Such is the need today. The challenge is clear. “Men of tried courage and strong integrity are needed for this time, men who are not afraid to lift their voices for the right. To every laborer I would say, In all your official duties, let integrity characterize each act.”⁹

Pressure from social expectations and financial needs must bow to a higher standard.

Such counsel is needed. True, lasting, effective, and visionary leadership is not dependent on human devising. The effective leader is God’s steward, not only of His material resources but as an example by revealing the highest level of ethical forms of motivation and practice.

Judas had much to offer; unfortunately, things did not work out as he had hoped. Much can be learned from his sad example. ❧

1 This article is based on Larry Evans, “The Steward and Ethics,” *Dynamic Steward* 19, no. 3 (July–September 2015), 29.

2 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), 716–722.

3 Dee Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Pub., 1999), 193.

4 Marianne Jennings, *The Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse—How to Spot Moral Meltdowns in Companies . . . Before It’s Too Late* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 35.

5 Ellen G. White, *My Life Today* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), 256.

6 Jennings, *Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse*, 4.

7 Andrew K. Schnackenberg and Edward C. Tomlinson, “Organizational Transparency: A New Perspective on Managing Trust in Organization-Stakeholder Relationships,” *Journal of Management* 42, no. 7 (2016): 1784–1810, journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0149206314525202.

8 Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1940), 235.

9 Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1948), 141.

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Want better church board meetings?

What if your church board meeting was your favorite meeting each month? What if you could hardly wait until the leaders of your local church gathered to share what God has been doing the last month and to pray and plan together for the next month?

The book of Acts describes the gatherings of the early church leaders in these ways:

- “They were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1, NKJV).
- “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4, NKJV).
- “With gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:46, 47, NKJV).
- “They went to their own companions and reported all” (Acts 4:23, NKJV).
- “They raised their voice to God with one accord” (Acts 4:24, NKJV).
- “Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word” (Acts 4:29, NKJV).
- “When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31, NKJV).
- “Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41, NKJV).

How can our church board meetings better reflect the leadership gatherings during the early church? Here are three ministry models to move us in that direction. They are effective for church school, organizational, and institutional meetings as well. Remember that a good model can make our difficulties easy and light.

1. Love and pray for each church board member and their family

Pray for some specific blessing for each one in the days leading up to the meeting. If board members are not succeeding in their personal walk with Jesus; their relationships, including family; and the ministry and mission Jesus has called them to, then you will have a hard time accomplishing the Great Commission where God has placed you. But if you are praying for their success and victories in these areas, you will see breakthroughs in their lives and the lives they influence.

2. Simplify the agenda

During my first church board meetings as a young pastor, I had no clue what to expect or how to lead. In the years since, I have simplified the church board agenda in advance to include five sections.

Vision, Bible study, and prayer. This section sets the tone for the entire meeting. We usually do one of the following during this time.

- *A short devotional* reminding us of our mission and message. This can be given by any of the church leaders.
- *Bible study.* Read a chapter around the circle with each person reading a verse, and then we share verses that spoke to our hearts.
- *Prayer time.* Short prayers by several people.
- *Watch and apply a Transforming Your Church* video clip.¹

Huddles. Through the years I encouraged my elders to mentor other church board members, but it rarely happened until I added a 15-minute agenda item to the church board called “huddles.” During this time, all board members get into their huddle with their designated elder/mentor. In these groups of 3 to 7 leaders, they share with each other what is going well in their life and ministry, how they have seen God at work during the past month, what challenges they face, and how they are trying to address the challenges. The huddle is a place of fun, fellowship, collective help, encouragement, and prayer. It is a place where basic discipleship and small group life is modeled for the rest of the church family.

Reports. After huddles the church board returns to the larger circle. Now it is time for reports. This can be one of the most exciting times of the meeting.

- *Soul-winning report (5–7 minutes):* Stories and statistics are presented about what the Lord has done to move His work forward in the areas of new baptisms, new groups started, and new churches being planted.

- *Ministry reports (2 minutes each):* This report is given by any who have something fresh to add. Once again, the emphasis is on short stories (or statistics) or new groups that have started that are being mentored by a church board member.

- *Clerk's report (5–7 minutes):* This report includes the following plus votes:

1. *Minutes of the previous meeting.* (A copy of the minutes has usually been sent to church board members a week in advance along with a notice of the meeting.)
2. *Church calendar.* We quickly review the calendar for the next two months. We use the online Google Calendar.
3. *Membership changes, if any:* baptisms, professions of faith, transfers, deaths, and dropped memberships. Anything voted in this area goes as a recommendation to a church business meeting.

- *Treasurer's report (5–7 minutes):* We briefly review whether financial stewardship is strong enough to support our ministry and mission expenses or if we need to adjust something. Note—if finances dominate your church board conversations, read and apply the principles in these articles: “Shifting Your Focus to Increase Tithe and Offerings”² and “Our Church Is Financially Broke.”³

Recommendations. This is a time when church leaders can make specific recommendations for their area of ministry that impact the larger church.

- The head deacon might make a recommendation that relates to the building. The Sabbath School superintendent might make a

recommendation for new Sabbath School teachers or assistants. A board member might make a recommendation for a major purchase from the area of the budget they oversee. No recommendation should take longer than three to five minutes. After a brief discussion, either a vote can be taken or the item can be referred to the next church board meeting if there is a need for prayer and reflection before voting.

- This “Recommendations” section of the church board meeting is where some churches derail. There may be a few church board mem-

next church board meeting if it is something important.

- Insisting on recommendations that can be voted up or down or easily modified and voted moves the church toward solutions and celebrations and away from problems and frustrations.

Circle prayer and group hug. At the end of each meeting we all stand and join hands in a circle. Then we each pray a one- to two-sentence prayer around the circle. After that we take two steps forward, forming a tighter circle, put our arms around the person on each side of us, and on the count of three we all hug

*The Lord can help us
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bers who think the board meeting would be a place to bring problems and dump them on the group. This results in long discussions, frustration, and few answers. What is the solution? If anyone brings a problem to the church board, they should be asked immediately: “What’s your recommendation?” If they do not have one, then move on immediately to the next recommendation. The person presenting the problem can bring a recommendation to the

entire circle of people and say “Grug” (short for group hug) and then, “When you have the Lord and you have each other, what else do you need!” We end united in Christ, joyful and happy that the Lord has led us one more month!

3. Add tools to your leadership tool box

No leader is perfect, but if you have more tools in your leadership tool box, the Holy Spirit can guide you to use the right one at the right time. Here are some tools that can help.

- *Secret ballot* for very sensitive issues or if there is a bully on the board.
- *Straw poll* (nonbinding) to see whether your church board team is clearly leaning one way or the other; and if so, you do not need more discussion on a topic.
- *Prayer break* for wisdom on decisions and recommendations.
- *Church business meeting*. Every third church board meeting (once a quarter) we designate as a church

business meeting, where every member is notified and encouraged to attend. At this meeting, we handle any major issues that need church-wide attention.

- *New church year orientation*. At the beginning of the church year, we have a new church year orientation for church board members and group leaders (Sabbath School, ministry, Bible study, and other groups) to hear each other's testimonies and share vision together.

This provides spiritual bonding of leaders for the new year.

- *Set blocks of time* on the church board for major items such as setting goals, building teams/huddles, scheduling the calendar, and agreeing on the budget.

The Lord can help us have beautiful, inspiring, unifying church board meetings that help us move forward rapidly with His work in these last days.

Inspired insights on church board meetings⁴

1. ***“Ministers should avoid long committee meetings.***—A minister cannot keep in the best spiritual frame of mind while he is called upon to settle little difficulties in the various churches. This is not his appointed work. God desires to use every faculty of His chosen messengers. Their mind should not be wearied by long committee meetings at night; for God wants all their brain power to be used in proclaiming the gospel as it is in Christ Jesus.
2. ***“Those who do not attend committee meetings tend to be critical later of how things are done.***—They say, ‘Oh, it is only a business meeting.’ But all who have the mental capacity ought to be anxious and determined to understand how the business matters are managed. Some who have given up the faith have made very false statements in relation to the workings of the cause and the management of its business. Had these attended the business meetings, and listened attentively to the proceedings, they would have understood how the work was conducted in all its branches, and could have borne testimony to the strict integrity that characterizes every department. The enemy

could not then have urged in the insinuation that there were things kept back that the people were not permitted to know. Those who take no interest in the business meetings, generally have no real interest in the cause of God, and these are the ones who are tempted to believe that the management of our various enterprises is not just what it should be.

3. ***“The same persons should not serve for years on the same boards and committees.***—Piety is needed. Less self-confidence and far more humility must be seen. The work of God has come to be looked upon as a common thing. It would have been much better to have changed the men on boards and committees than to have retained the very same men for years, until they supposed that their propositions were to be adopted without a question; and generally no voice has been lifted in an opposite direction.
4. ***“Committees should not be made up of those who have no spirit of self-denial.***—When our brethren keep on the board, men whose hearts are as hard as stone, men who have not hearts of flesh, what can you expect? How can these men know what those sacrificed

in the building up of the work. They have no spirit of sacrifice themselves, and how can they understand the experience of those who dressed cheaply, and who denied self, who placed themselves in any position that the cause of God might prosper. They know nothing of this, it is Greek to them.

5. ***“The committee meeting should be just as much under the dictation of the Spirit as the prayer meeting.***—I wish to say to you that the business which may be carried on at this meeting is just as much a part of the service of God as is prayer. The business meeting is to be just as much under the dictation of the Spirit as the prayer meeting. There is danger of our getting a sentimental, impulsive religion. Let the business transacted at this meeting stand forth in such sacredness that the heavenly host can approve of it. We are to guard most sacredly the business lines of our work. Every line of business carried on here is to be in accordance with the principles of heaven.
6. ***“When God’s presence is recognized in committee meetings, it will safeguard against imprudent speeches and domineering attitudes.***—Let God be recognized as

the supreme Ruler of His heritage. Let every man place himself under His control. Let Him be recognized in all our assemblies, in every business meeting, every council, every committee. He sees all that is done, and hears all that is said. ‘Thou God seest me.’ Let these words be kept ever in mind. They will be a safeguard against imprudent, passionate speeches, against all desire to domineer. They will repress words that should never be spoken, and resolutions that men have no right to make—resolutions that restrict the liberty of human beings.

7. **“Satan attends every committee meeting, trying to impress minds to make objections that will delay the work.”**—The very thing that the Lord had impressed upon the minds of His servants that ought to be done has not been done at the right time, because these men advanced their own ideas under

the suggestions the devil had put in their minds to hinder the work of God and to disgust those who would see the work of God move. There have been suggestions made by themselves which have carried, which God never put into their minds. Satan attends every board meeting, every business meeting, every committee meeting, and if he can impress anyone’s mind to make objections or to throw in suggestions that will delay the work hours and weary out those who are called upon to attend these meetings, he is wonderfully pleased. He has had his way in the matter. And the business which should be pushed through with dispatch, yet in an intelligent manner, is made tedious and to drag along because of the human, unsanctified elements in the character of some who are placed in responsible positions, who do not

have knowledge when to speak and when to keep silent.

8. **“Only the church, not the board, disciplines members.”**—‘And if he shall neglect to hear them,’ what then shall be done? Shall a few persons in a board meeting take upon themselves the responsibility of disfellowshipping the erring one? ‘If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.’ Let the church take action in regard to its members.” ❏

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- 1 See “Transforming Your Church,” Texas Evangelism, accessed October 5, 2017, www.texasevangelism.com/transform.
 - 2 See Dan Serns, “Shifting Your Focus to Increase Tithes and Offerings,” *Dan Serns* (blog), May 10, 2015, danserns.wordpress.com/2015/05/10/shifting-your-focus-to-increase-tithe-offerings/.
 - 3 See Dan Serns, “Our Church Is Financially Broke,” *Ministry*, June 2016, www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2016/06/broke.
 - 4 Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995), 251–253.

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The Power of the Word

It was my senior year in high school. My father had recently committed suicide. I was coping by consuming violent video games, pornography, and even dabbling in drugs and witchcraft. Abuse from my past was a burden I constantly carried.

I was raised in a home that professed Christianity. I knew that God was real and powerful, but why was I not feeling His power in these times of darkness? I grabbed my Bible and headed outside. Making my way to a large oak tree that had fallen, I began to read the book of Job. Surely I could relate to this guy!

I came to verse 21: “‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD’” (NKJV). That

is when I saw a black snake poking its head out from under the log. I paused. Was Satan challenging these words? I read the passage again. As I whispered the name of the Lord, the snake came within three feet of me and stopped, as if it were confronting me. I read the verse once more with confidence, and with a loud hiss, the snake fled back under the log. It may sound strange, but this experience opened my mind to the power of God’s Word.

Two years later, desiring a fresh start, I left to serve for a year as a student missionary in the Philippines. But I found myself bound in sin and addiction. One day, I lay on a wet floor covered in sand and mud. A typhoon was raging. Gripped by sexual sin, I cried out, “Please, Lord, take these addictions away.” By God’s grace, I have been free from the slavery

of pornography since that time. The flesh still calls out to me, but I thank our Savior that His Spirit is working in me more each day.

Are you struggling with sin? If you call on Him, He will hear and rescue you. He taught me that the same Word that brought the world into existence is found in the promises of Scripture. Read, believe, and claim it. It is the very essence of power and provides freeing love. ❏

—Seth Hill is coordinator for data strategy and millennial marketing, *Adventist Review*, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

Revival & REFORMATION

Bruce Manners, PhD, is a retired pastor residing in Victoria, Australia.



Questions for pastors as they prepare for retirement

The worst thing a pastor can do when preparing for retirement is nothing. Retirement needs thought and intentional preparation.

As a pastor, I had not thought much about retirement, and any thinking tended to focus on having enough money. I did not know how much was enough but figured we (my wife and I) would somehow survive.

Then, in my early 60s, I was asked to write a book about preparing for retirement. That is when I began to understand that preparing for retirement deserves a whole-of-life approach. The book, *Retirement Ready?*,¹ became a four-year writing project. It took research, but I learned most by interviewing professionals within and outside the “industry” and academics who study retirement.

That said, I make no claims of being an expert in this field, but I have learned how individuals can create their best retirement. The following is a series of questions that could help you as you plan your retirement.

What is your plan?

What do you plan to do in retirement? There is a growing trend for individuals to plan to work beyond

retirement age. Is that your plan? Full-time or part-time? Or both by gradually reducing your hours? Does your conference allow or encourage this? When will you have a discussion with your president or ministerial secretary?

What will you do in retirement? One way to begin thinking about this is to work out how many hours a week you currently work. Is it 40 hours, 50, 60? More? When you retire, you gift yourself this many hours a week. What will you do with them?

You need a plan: “Retirees who had a game plan for both the fiscal and the often-neglected nonfiscal aspects of retirement and who frequently revisited and updated that plan were the most satisfied with their lives.”² You need a plan that gets you out of bed every morning looking forward to the day.

To help with your plan, analyze your passions, interests, and priorities. What are they? How will they fit into your retirement life?

Add to that your bucket list (the things you want to do before you kick the bucket!). And remember that the simple act of writing down your goals will help you achieve them.³ Review them from time to time.

When I interviewed researcher-academic Joanne Earl from Flinders

University about retirement, she told me that many ask about how much money they need for retirement.

“I say to them, ‘Wrong question.’ The question is: ‘What do you want to do when you retire? Who are you going to do it with? What sort of activities are you going to do? What would a typical week look like for you?’ That should then drive a lot of other decisions, including where people live.”

How will you prepare financially?

It is difficult to be too specific about finances in a magazine with a worldwide spread. Many countries have government pension plans available that support retired people. But there are also countries where no government support exists at all.

Pastors in both situations need to evaluate how they will cope financially after they finish receiving a wage. Those in countries with little or no government support may find it quite difficult. The question will be, Are you able to put aside some money now for then?

Those in countries where an option exists of government support (a pension, perhaps) along with the expectation that you are responsible

for helping fund your retirement may need a financial planner or financial advisor.

A registered financial advisor will understand the complexity of the retirement or pension system and changes that may come. Financial advisor Melanie Tull told me that the Australian government rewards retirees who put their money in the “right structures.” That may also be the case elsewhere.

As a rule of thumb, whatever your situation, you should be thinking seriously about your finances for retire-

of ministry make it a chore to continue to work? That would make it difficult.

Are you talking to your spouse?

When I interviewed sex therapist Bettina Arndt about the kind of issues couples face as they age, I asked what she found was the biggest sexual issue. Her answer surprised me. She said that sex was too often the “classic elephant in the room when couples become anxious about their sex life and stop talking about it. It is incredibly important that people learn to talk about sex.”

by 100 percent in the United States and 25 percent in Australia. The fastest-growing divorce rate in the United Kingdom is among baby boomers.⁴

Will we retire at the same time?

Fewer than 20 percent of couples in the United States retire at the same time.⁵ If you and your spouse retire at different times, how will that work for you? What will the retired one do while the other continues to work?

What are our plans in retirement—together and separately? This is where you dream together. Dream and share. Some things you will naturally want

As a rule of thumb, whatever your situation, you should be thinking seriously about your finances for retirement about 15 years before you expect to retire—and working on a plan to fund your retirement.

ment about 15 years before you expect to retire—and working on a plan to fund your retirement. That plan would include being debt free before retiring.

Being debt free also means owning your home before retirement. About 25 years ago, my wife and I noticed several older pastors retiring without owning their homes who then struggled financially. That was incentive enough for us to set the goal of owning our home before retirement—a goal we thankfully achieved.

You may be able to work on into the retirement years. That will keep an income stream flowing, but what happens if you become ill? Or if you discover that, as you age, the pressures

If couples do not talk about their sexual problems, frustration exists. If there are sexual issues—for whatever reason—they need to be talked about. Sex is a natural part of a healthy marriage and sometimes needs to be worked on.

Here are some other questions couples need to talk about:

How is our marriage? When you come to the retirement zone (before and after retirement) there is a risk that the marriage may be in trouble. Couples in the 50 plus age group are divorcing at an increasing rate. Marriage therapist Bryan Craig pointed out that over the past 20 years the divorce rate has increased

to do together. Others are personal interests. As a couple, we are kept busy with various projects, but we reserve Sundays and Wednesdays to do things together—on Sabbaths we care for a Sabbath School class together.

You might be surprised what other questions come up as you talk about these four areas of your life.

How will you stay healthy?

What are you doing now to be healthy when you retire? You will want to be healthy as you go into retirement rather than get there and try to recover.

I suspect I do not have to belabor here the advantage of a plant-based

diet and avoiding fats and sugars; the benefits of exercise; the importance of sleep; and regular medical checkups. They are all important.

You should also check your family history to find out what negative health possibilities there may be. This can be helpful. I discovered how helpful when, a few years back, two days of serious headaches led to MRI scans and the revelation that I had had a minor stroke.

It took several weeks to discover I have atrial fibrillation (AF)—irregular heartbeat. It is probable that a clot formed during a missed beat and went to my brain, causing the stroke. It would have been helpful to have known that AF runs in my family. It is now well under control, but I have added it to my conversation at family gatherings.

What about your brain? Mental lapses are more frequent in people

40 years old and older. I was relieved when clinical psychologist Deanna Pitchford told me, “Forgetting is a normal part of aging.” It is natural and not a sign of dementia.

The good news is this: “Our brains do gradually age along with our bodies, but we all possess the power to slow, stop, and possibly reverse the brain aging process.”⁶

The question is, What do you need to do now to arrive at retirement in as healthy a state as possible?

How positive is your attitude?

If you wanted to rank attitude, health, and money, I suggest that money matters. But health matters more. There is not much value in retiring to be the richest person living in a nursing home bed. And attitude matters most. If your money and health

are gone, a positive attitude will keep you going.

Psychologist Kendra Cherry says, “Positive thinkers cope more effectively than pessimists.” They tend to look at what they can do to fix the problem. And they “look at the situation realistically, search for ways that they can improve the situation, and try to learn from their experiences.”⁷ This is healthy.

And a positive attitude toward aging will help you live longer. More than 1,000 people above the age of 50 in Oxford, Ohio, USA, were surveyed on their attitude toward aging in 1975. In 1999, another researcher checked the death records to see what this attitude did for length of life. Those with a positive attitude toward aging lived an average of 7.6 years longer. That is a huge difference. It is more than if they had been able to cure cancer within the group.⁸

Ellen White on pastors in retirement

The concept of retirement as it is now known was not a widely practiced or understood concept in Ellen White’s time. Only in the 1920s did retirement begin to spread widely through a variety of industries in the United States (she died in 1915). The expectation—and her expectation as found in the compilation from her writings *The Retirement Years*—was that pastors would continue to work until physically unable to.

Having recognized that, she makes several comments about aging pastors. She urges “our old and tired laborers” to rest but to “keep the armor on till He [God] bids you lay it off.”¹⁰ She told G. I. Butler, “Let us—you and Brother Haskell and I—grow old gracefully”¹¹ and later tells him, “I greatly desire that the old soldiers, grown gray in the Master’s service, shall continue to bear their testimony.”¹²

Aged and worn pastors have counsel “of the highest value.”¹³ “It is better, far better, to die of hard work in some home or foreign mission field, than to rust out with inaction.”¹⁴

Old pastors should boast not of past glories, “but show what you can do now. Let your works and not your words praise you.”¹⁵ They should encourage and never speak “lightly or disparagingly” of younger pastors.¹⁶ And they are warned that the “inclination to criticize is the greatest danger of many.”¹⁷

To Stephen Haskell (73 years old; she was 79) she wrote that neither of them should be under “continual strain.” She encouraged him to avoid “taxing labor,” to keep in a “rested condition” with sleep in the daytime to be able to think more clearly so that his words would be “more convincing.”¹⁸ ❏

1 Ellen G. White, *The Retirement Years* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1990), 16.

2 White, *The Retirement Years*, 23.

3 White, *The Retirement Years*, 24.

4 White, *The Retirement Years*, 33.

5 White, *The Retirement Years*, 39.

6 White, *The Retirement Years*, 40.

7 White, *The Retirement Years*, 48.

8 White, *The Retirement Years*, 73.

9 White, *The Retirement Years*, 125.

What will you do with your calling?

I was talking to a pastor in his mid-50s who has a demanding but successful ministry. He surprised me by saying he would love to retire. He would like to volunteer to care for a small country church while renovating houses.

I asked the obvious question: "Why don't you?"

"What do you do with the calling?"

Good question.

Retirement does not mean you are giving up on your calling. It will bring change. As a retired pastor, I am involved in my church, but I am home most nights, I no longer chair major meetings, and I am no longer the go-to person for church issues.

The advantage of retirement is that you can mostly choose to do the ministry things you enjoy. Or work on ministry projects close to your heart. Or follow or even create ministry opportunities.

No two retirements will be the same, but I find that I am now more focused on my skills and giftedness in retirement than I ever could be in pastoral ministry. There is incredible satisfaction in this. And that, I believe, can be the experience of most pastors.

Your retirement is *your* retirement. It will be what you make it—it needs thought and planning.

I remember the father-in-law of one of my pastoral colleagues advising me to retire as soon as I could. That is what he had done—at 65. He had been a pastor-evangelist and departmental director in two divisions.

He told me his retirement years had been the best of his ministry and he had traveled widely, speaking overseas and at home without the administrative pressures he once had. He had just flown to the east coast of Australia after doing a series of meetings on the west coast. He was in his early 90s.

Reality check. Ministry can be difficult. Some pastors find that their ministry has burned them out and they need to withdraw in retirement to recover. Retirement allows you to do that. Take the time you need. Seek the help you need. Do the things you need to do to stay close to God.

I cannot think of anything more tragic than the comment from an elderly, retired minister involved in a University of Florida study. He was asked whether he engaged in spiritual activities. He responded, "Well, not as much anymore, I'm retired."

The researcher reported, "He ended up not being very spiritual at all."⁹ How sad. ☹

- 1 The book is intentionally secular and published by the South Pacific Division Signs Publishing Company. The idea started as a request from literature evangelists for such a book. It is also available in Adventist Book Centers and secular bookshops in Australia and New Zealand, and online at bookdepository.com.
- 2 Frederick T. Fraunfelder and James H. Gilbaugh, *Retire Right* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2009), 15.
- 3 Ashley Feinstein, "Why You Should Be Writing Down Your Goals," *Forbes*, April 8, 2014, forbes.com/sites/ellevate/2014/04/08/why-you-should-be-writing-down-your-goals/#3525d8af3397.
- 4 Paul Clitheroe, "Retirement and Its Impact on Relationships," *ipac*, November 21, 2011, ipac.com.au/blog/retirement-and-its-impact-on-relationships/#sthash.sWXrefYB.dpbs.
- 5 Miriam Goodman, "How to Avoid Living Unhappily Ever After in Retirement," *nextavenue*, March 6, 2013, nextavenue.org/how-avoid-living-unhappily-ever-after-retirement/.
- 6 Gary Small, *Two Weeks to a Younger Brain* (Palm Beach, FL: Humanix Books, 2016), 1.
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- 8 Lea Winerman, "A Healthy Mind, a Longer Life," *Monitor on Psychology* 37, no. 10 (November 2006): 42, apa.org/monitor/nov06/healthy.aspx.
- 9 Cathy Keen, "Religious Orientation Influences Elderly's Fear of Death, Study Shows," *University of Florida News*, April 18, 2006, news.ufl.edu/archive/2006/04/religious-orientation-influences-elderly-fear-of-death-study-shows.php.

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▶ Local church apologizes publicly to its pastors

AUSTRALIA—The South New South Wales (SNSW) Conference session began with a reconciliation ceremony and a public apology from a church to its ministers.

Griffith church publicly repented and apologized for the way they had treated their pastors in the past, extending their apology to the conference and their fellow churches.

“We have sinned against God, the South New South Wales Conference, our sister churches, and the ministers who have come to minister to us along with their wives and families,” said a statement, signed by the church members.

The letter drew comparisons with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their rebellious criticism of Moses, as well as being based on Daniel’s prayer of repentance.



Photo: Adventist Record

The statement was voted by a church business meeting and presented at the constituency meeting. It was run in the church bulletin for

several weeks, giving all members and regular attendees a chance to read and sign it. [Jarrod Stackelroth | *Adventist Record*]

▶ Pastors’ summit on abuse draws hundreds

Spenccerville, Maryland, United States—The North American Division (NAD) live streamed the editnow Pastors’ Summit on Abuse. Pastors and church leaders from across the division, in person and online, attended the first-of-its-kind event, which was dedicated to sharing information on how to recognize and prevent abuse at church events and in the lives of church members. Presenters also shared legal definitions of abuse and what church leaders should do in reporting cases.

Hundreds of questions and comments were sent to the editnow social media team throughout the day. Most of these questions were answered by the presenters (after their lectures), attorneys, pastors, and Adventist Risk Management representatives.

Daniel R. Jackson, president of the North American Division, stated,

“I pray that wherever we find abusive behavior, we will deal with it in a Christian way—we will not ignore it. We have to help end abuse. It is our Christian mandate. We have to inform ourselves. We have to inform our people.”

Presenters and topics included **Kiti Freier Randall**, “Child Abuse”; **David Fournier**, “Child-to-Child Bullying”; **Lola Moore Johnston**, “Teen Dating Violence”; **Mable Dunbar**, “Intimate Partner Violence: Pastor/Ministry Response”; **Mark Chopko**, “Pastors’ Legal Responsibilities Regarding Abuse” and “Pastoral Care for the Abuser”; and **Mike Tucker**, “The Bible Says—Debunking Scriptural Support for Abusive Relationships.”

Tucker, who is speaker/director of Faith for Today Ministries, started his presentation by stating that “abuse

never stops on its own. . . . Statistics on abuse in our church are just as bad as in society.”

Tucker received the most applause during the two-day event as he elucidated several biblical passages, describing how some common interpretations are inaccurate. “Scripture does not require you to stay in an abusive relationship,” he said.

A different group of presenters spoke for the Spanish-language lectures on day two. These experts spoke on the same or similar topics as their English counterparts.

During his presentation, Alfonso Valenzuela, pastor of the San Bernardino Spanish church in California, said that every minister must recognize when there is some type of abuse and report it to the authorities.



“Even if you do not want them to, [the victims] will come to you,” he said. “If you don’t have the counseling education, refer them to professionals.”

To watch the presentations, visit facebook.com/enditnowNAD/. Those who attended the entire day, in either Spanish or English, are eligible for continuing education credits. [Kimberly Luste Maran, North American Division News]

“I pray that wherever we find abusive behavior, we will deal with it in a Christian way—we will not ignore it.”



Photo: Pieter Dansteeg, North American Division News

▶ Pastoral leaders respond to crisis in Las Vegas community

Las Vegas, Nevada, United States—In the midst of a hurting community, local Seventh-day Adventist churches steadily moved into place to aid those

affected by the Las Vegas shooting that took 58 lives on October 8, 2017.

The Paradise and Mountain View Adventist churches opened their doors

to the community to pray with those affected by the event.

“People from around the world are reaching out to Las Vegas, and



our church is doing likewise,” said **BJ Boles**, senior pastor of the Mountain View Church.

Those from the churches who are trained in counseling have been volunteering their time in the area’s hospitals. **Peter Neri** and **Neat Randriamialison**, senior and associate pastors of the Paradise Adventist Church, were among several pastors who spent time counseling victims and their families.

considering such overwhelming—and unexpected—need.

“We weren’t ready for this kind of disaster,” said Neri. “We could be doing so much more.”

Leon Brown, president of the Nevada-Utah Conference, agrees that there is very limited understanding of this kind of crisis—and, thus, a need for a different kind of readiness and planning. “We must step up our game

Church members joined the long lines of blood donors at Red Cross blood drives, and ministered to the mourners who come by. In addition to supporting the victims, churches are also supporting the first responders and law enforcement.

The local pastors are coordinating additional visits to the hospitals to speak to and pray with those who are still waiting for their friends and family members who are being treated.



Photo: Faith Hoyt, Nevada-Utah Conference

“These people need prayer and someone to talk to,” said Neri. “They have been very receptive to praying with us.”

Neri and Randriamialison visited the Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center early Monday morning. For hours, the pastors listened to the stories of those waiting in the auditorium and prayed with them. Though their ministry was well received, the pastors feel it was a small contribution

so that we can be better prepared for disasters like this,” Brown said.

Responding quickly to this need, regional leaders have already initiated discussions with local pastors to better understand crisis readiness and disaster preparedness. **Jerry Waggoner**, director of Adventist Community Services for the region, began work Monday to improve lines of communication between Las Vegas churches and the entities involved in disaster response.

Carlton P. Byrd, speaker/director of Breath of Life, who held a two-week evangelistic campaign in Las Vegas, commented, “God will be with us during this most difficult time, but as our revival theme says, the time is now! Now more than ever, we sincerely believe that this is an opportunity to extend God’s love to Las Vegas residents and share His message of hope and healing from the study of His Word.” [Faith Hoyt, Nevada-Utah Conference | Pacific Union] 



Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development

by Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016.

Christian leadership development and discipleship are two integral components of the mission of the church that have received significant attention from practitioners and scholars in recent years. Within the last three decades several authors (e.g., Bill Hull, Michael Foss, Randy Pope) have elaborated on important aspects of Jesus's method of discipleship and leadership that had earlier been highlighted in Robert Coleman's seminal work, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (1963).

In *Designed to Lead*, Geiger and Peck build on this body of research by emphasizing two main ideas: (1) it is crucially important for the church to develop leaders that can serve in all spheres of life, both in religious and secular domains, and (2) discipleship is essentially God's chosen method for leadership development; therefore, our strategy and philosophy of equipping Christian leaders should not be divorced from discipleship.

Geiger and Peck passionately contend that the church has been designed by God to develop leaders who can be deployed to benefit humanity in all spheres of life—in the home, church, community, business, and government. Accordingly, they state, "Because a local church exists to serve her community, to bless the world, to be a light to the nations, then the leaders developed in each local church are developed for much more than each local church" (7).

The book presents an argument that suggests that the church should be the best place for leadership development. The notion that the church is the best place to train leaders for the world is a revolutionary thought that can have enormous missional impact when concretely implemented. The church, in its modern and postmodern existences, has been accustomed to

training missionaries to evangelize the world; however, the concept and practice of intentionally equipping leaders to serve the world in secular capacities has not been given the kind of bold attention that is presented in this book.

In this regard, the authors have articulated a subtle and audacious approach to strategic leadership that is simultaneously advancing the mission of the church while altruistically benefitting secular society. The authors substantiate their argument by highlighting theological evidence indicating that leadership development is inextricably connected to discipleship and that the local church is uniquely designed to develop the best kind of leaders. What is refreshing is Geiger and Peck's emphasis on the local church developing leaders to serve in secular domains and the way they highlight the unique capabilities of the church to accomplish this mission.

For example, they suggest that one quality that makes the church unique is the influence of the Holy Spirit. Leadership can be facilitated in various institutions of the world, but the church offers Spirit-led leadership, which is far more effective than what the world can offer. In the authors' view, Spirit-led leadership is the best kind of leadership because it seeks to fulfill the values of God's kingdom. Geiger and Peck also observe that in most secular organizations, leaders work with paid employees who can be motivated by monetary compensation or be terminated; however, leaders in the local church must, of necessity, work with volunteers and, as such, the leaders are forced to develop a variety of skills to successfully motivate and lead the volunteers.

The authors do not presume that once pastors and churches understand

the importance of leadership development they will automatically implement a strategy to develop leaders. Their experience and research indicate that, by and large, leadership development is not being implemented in a systematic way in most churches, even in cases where the pastor believes it should be a priority. Hence, there needs to be more than a *conviction* concerning the importance of leadership development, there needs to be a *culture* whose experiential beliefs and values are conducive to mentoring leaders, followed by a *construct* that outlines various levels of competencies and the pathway to reach them. This solution sees the main responsibility of the pastors as that of equipping the congregation for ministry rather than the members relying on their pastor and paid professionals to perform ministry for them.

This book is certainly worthy of perusal and contemplation. The strengths of the book are that it provides a compelling case for viewing the local church as a unique center for developing *and* discipling leaders that can serve in both secular and religious domains, and that it proffers a pragmatic discussion on the importance of creating a transforming culture and viable constructs for equipping leaders in the church. Thus, for its passionate appeal to implement a biblically based, missional, and civic-minded leadership development strategy in the local church and for its clear and practical approach to achieving this goal, I give this book high recommendations. ▣

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God's desire for us: A healthy spirit, mind, and body

How likely are you to take medical advice from a doctor whose open lifestyle betrays the very advice he or she is giving you? Would you really be prone to accept smoking cessation counsel from a physician who smokes two packs of cigarettes per day? Many people would not. While the

depression. Poor physical health and poor health habits are associated with diminished mental health, namely sub-optimal function in thinking, behavior, feelings, responses to stress, or interacting with others. Persons in good health and high fitness have a better mood, greater resilience, and less anxiety than those who are not fit or not in good general health. But how do we do it?

We need to do what the apostles did—learn from Jesus. He loved people! He loved them enough to tell them the truth in as winsome a way as possible. He went where His Father sent Him, where the people were, and He mingled with them. Christ worked with the crowds tirelessly, bringing gems of truth to them in a way they could understand and relate to. Jesus' concern about people's spiritual condition was paramount. He was concerned about their hearts and minds. But Jesus was also concerned about their bodies. He went about healing people of all manner of illnesses. So, too, we should care about the entire person: spirit, mind, and body, beginning with ourselves.

Paul prays: "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it" (1 Thess. 5:23, 24, NIV). This text implies at least the following: God is willing to set us entirely apart for His purpose; the complete and entire person (body, mind [psyche], and spirit) is to be kept blameless at Jesus' coming; and that it is God, the One who calls us, who will do this. So, what are we required to do to satisfy Paul's prayer? Surrender and submit to God's plan for our entire being: spirit, mind, and body.

God is amazing! He took lowly fishermen from Galilee, called them out to be with Him, disciplined them, and developed them into apostles—fishers of men and the founding members of His new church. He did His work for them, in them, and through them then; He is doing the same work for us, in us, and through us today. One or more of His modern-day fishers collaborated with the Holy Spirit and fished each of us out of the world. God's Word to us today is, " 'Come, follow me,' . . . 'and I will send you out to fish for people' " (Mark 1:17). This applies to pastor-disciples, elder-disciples, deacon-disciples, homemaker-disciples, and plumber-disciples. All of us must be about the art and science of fishing for men and women for God's kingdom.

Biblical anthropology is clear: the living organism is not an aggregate assembly of body, mind, and spirit but, rather, an integral entity of interconnected, inseparable dimensions. Misuse of the body shortens our useful time for and our usefulness in God's service. All dimensions of us need care and attention; all are important in their own right. Spiritual development is essential, but we must not neglect our minds and bodies. We should love God and His children enough to be as healthy as we can be. We should strive for the best physical condition possible because our "physical" connects to everything else.

Let us cooperate with the One who calls us to faithfully keep blameless our spirit, soul, and body unto His appearing, and, by God's grace, our physical health, mental soundness, and spiritual vitality will afford us the influence that we need as twenty-first-century fishers for people. ❧

*"We should love
God and His
children enough to
be as healthy as
we can be."*

doctor is not expected to be "perfect" or even the ultimate role model for healthy behavior, people naturally look toward healthcare professionals to practice what they preach, if only in public.

Health personnel, especially physicians, have vast amounts of knowledge and information at their disposal, and the expectation is that "those who know better are expected to do better." If this is true for the practitioners in the medical field, is it not also true for the "doers of the Word"? Our special fishing work is to help people be prepared to meet our Maker. Is this just a "spiritual" preparation, or is there more?

Studies show that individuals afflicted with chronic disease are more prone to emotional distress and clinical

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