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Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

ASSISTING FIRST-POSITION LEADERS IN TRANSITION TO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ROLES

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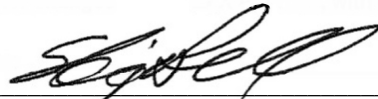
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requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

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Date Received: December 1, 2011

ASSISTING FIRST-POSITION LEADERS IN TRANSITION TO EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY ROLES

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

G. ALEXANDER BRYANT
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ABSTRACT

Assisting First-Position Leaders in Transition to Executive Secretary Roles

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Doctor of Ministry

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2011

This final project is designed to provide assistance from a biblical perspective to those transitioning into the role of executive secretary, a second-leader position, after having led from a first-leader position. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization, there are several structural levels, which form a hierarchical structure. Individuals who are selected for the position of second leader usually are chosen from among those who are first leaders in a lower level of the church organization.

This transition to second leader creates unique and specific challenges for most persons. Many struggle with understanding how to lead from this position as second leader after having become accustomed to the role and responsibility of being a first leader. It is the objective of this project to look at the leadership role of the executive secretary, the second leader, from a biblical perspective and provide some guidance and insight on balancing loyalty and leadership, support and strength from this unique position.

This project will be presented in three parts. Part One will deal with the contextual environment in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in which the executive secretary functions. It will focus on the organizational structure of the denomination and the role and function of the executive secretary. Part Two will present a theological understanding of the Church and the Body of Christ, as it relates to functions and roles within the body of believers. It will provide biblical examples of second leaders and how they operate. Part Three will apply the theological understanding of the Body of Christ and the biblical examples in Scripture to the role of the executive secretary. It also will contain an implementation strategy on how first leaders can use these principles and successfully transition into a second-leader role.

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INTRODUCTION

In American society, there are a plethora of leadership styles and models. Many of these leadership models have been designed around one person ruling at the top and everyone else beneath that individual. This is evident in our government. An example would be the president of the United States; in state government, it would be the governor; and in a city, it would be the mayor. When one views the business world, there is the comparable model of “president” or chief executive officer (CEO), who rules with others answering to those in this top position. There are similar structures in many Christian communities. In the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) denomination, we have an analogous system. There is generally one person at the top who functions as what can be considered “first leader,” and others follow. The roles of “first leaders”—such as bishop, senior pastor, president of the organization, or chief executive leader—all follow this model. The emphasis of this leadership model is on the person at the top of the pyramid. This is not the model of leadership for Christ’s church but a perspective on how leadership operates in some segments of the denomination.

There is a plethora of literature to guide these SDA first leaders into their new assignments. For the purpose of this discussion, “first leaders” are defined as those who serve the organization as the primary leader. These are leaders who are at the top of an organization, church, or region.

There is another type of important leader who also serves the government or an organization. They are the vice-president of the United States, lieutenant governor of the state, vice-principal of the school, assistant coach of the basketball team, and the list

could continue. In this project, people who fulfill this role are called “second leaders.” Second leaders are those who have a specific leadership responsibility in the organization but do not guide the entire entity. In the church, such leaders would be referred to as associate pastor, youth pastor, or vice-president of the organization. In the Seventh-day Adventist denominational structure, the second-position leader is known as the “executive secretary” and is the focus of this ministry project.

Like many other second-position leaders, not much is written for those transitioning into this unique role. In the case of the executive secretary, the job description generally is not complete, simply due to the nature of the position. There are specific job assignments, yet many of the assignments often depend on the particular president or the organizational needs.

In addition to job descriptions being somewhat incomplete, many of the executive secretaries transitioning from their roles are coming from first-leader positions. They were serving as senior pastors or the first leader of some ministry prior to accepting their current assignment. Frequently, they struggle with understanding how to lead from this position as second leader after having become accustomed to the role and responsibility of the first leader.

For this reason, the purpose of this project is to assist first leaders in transitioning to the role and second-leader position of executive secretary. Most of these leaders never have worked in the administrative branch of the SDA Church and need a thorough orientation for quick acclimation to their new assignment. The greatest challenge for

these individuals is learning how to lead with the distinct leadership expectations, inherent in the role of executive secretary.

In the Seventh-day Adventist denomination the president holds the highest position, and the title suggests this person's role and relationship to the organization. However, the role of executive secretary is not so easily defined. The title itself does not automatically characterize the function and responsibilities of the secretary as does the title of the president. The secretary's role is defined as the keeper of organizational records and statistics along with a host of other duties. Secretaries grapple to find their identity in the organization and seek to determine how they can best serve the Church in this unique role. While the SDA denomination prescribes some basic functions, much of the practical execution of the position is determined by the entity in which executive secretaries find themselves. Although there are some similarities, there can be significant variations; and in some contexts, no job description has been developed.

This approach leaves a lot of room for mistakes, conflict, and even discouragement. It can place executive secretaries in a very tenuous spot concerning their role and function. Some feel that their function should simply support what the president wants. Still others are very unclear about their roles. As a result, the ministry the organization provides does not reap the full benefit of the gifts God has given to the Church through these second-position leaders.

This is a vitally important subject in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination due to its impact on the mission of the Church. In many cases, the executive secretary and others who lead from the second position are not utilized to their fullest potential and are

not challenged to grow in the same way as first leaders. Consequently, the denomination is underserved and does not benefit fully from the leadership abilities of the executive secretary. Therefore, it is critical for executive secretaries to realize the denomination's need for their position and to learn to balance being a supportive yet strong leader within their organizational context. It is equally important for the denomination to become more proactive in nurturing executive secretaries as they transition into this crucial role, in order to preserve them as a precious human resource.

The denomination has the opportunity to intentionally develop specific models that can aid the executive secretary in this transition. These models, if properly executed, will work towards building healthier environments in which leadership from the second position can take place. It also will aid in reversing some of the erroneous perceptions of the executive secretary position in some communities. The paradox is that most presidents of local conferences overwhelmingly come from this position. Since many presidents are former executive secretaries, they have unique insight into the challenges that come with serving in that position. If they can see the need for the full utilization of the executive secretary as a leader, then as presidents they have the ability to implement the change. Overall, it is in the organization's own interest to assist individuals through this transition.

First, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination must recognize the difficulty in transitioning first leaders into second-leader positions. The difficulty arises from not having proper role models on how to lead from the second-leader role. Some of the struggle stems from the executive secretary's view of leadership and power. It is a view

that is shaped by the society around us. It is primarily a skewed perception of leadership based on power. When leading from the first position, this erroneous perception of leadership often is not confronted.

When the positional power of the first position is no longer present, a second leader is forced to confront a different reality in leading. In the midst of this situational dynamic, the denomination has an opportunity to be more proactive in assisting in these difficult transitions, not only for the benefit of the denomination as an organizational structure but also with regard to the Christian tenets of brotherhood (cf. Psalm 133:2). These transitions from first leader to second leader are a part of the culture of the denomination and can be used effectively as an avenue to help facilitate change and foster a culture in which not only second leaders but the broader Body of Christ can be better equipped and empowered for ministry.¹

My interest in this topic arises from the unique assignment I was given nearly three years ago. After twelve years of functioning as the president of the Central States Conference and seeking to connect the SDA Church with its community in that area, I was assigned to serve as executive secretary of the North American Division covering United States, Canada, and Bermuda. During my time as president of the Central States Conference, I began doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in order to become more effective at connecting the Church with community. While my earlier education at SDA institutions provided a firm foundation for proper biblical views of leadership and the gospel, I desired to understand the vast community of non-believers residing in my

¹ In church situations, where the senior pastor functions as first leader, lay leaders and active members of a congregation can experience the second-leader dynamic as well.

conference, their search for spirituality, and the ramifications of postmodernism and globalism currently influencing people today.² When receiving the assignment of executive secretary, I brought my ministry passion for connecting the SDA Church with its community—except now the “community” is even more diverse culturally, racially, and with respect to its openness to the SDA style of evangelism.

Since I feel it is important to finish what I start, I continued toward completion of my doctoral degree at Fuller. An unexpected and inadvertent benefit from having made this out-of-the-box and unusual decision to attend Fuller is that I was exposed to methods other denominations were presently pursuing in their ministry outreach. I enjoyed being exposed to different viewpoints. As my role changed and my ministry passion crystallized, it afforded me many opportunities to dialogue with other faith groups concerning their denomination’s organizational structures. This not only provided a perspective regarding possible change, but it also arrived at a time when the Adventist Church in North America has been confronting the need to adapt its solid approach to biblically based truths in an ever-changing society without compromising its essential SDA principles and identity.

In my new assignment, I interact with all the executive secretaries in North America. This allows me the privilege to provide orientation, training, and assistance to those who are coming to the role much like I did, from the first-leader position. The

² Some courses that offered this perspective were Craig Nelson Detweiler, “ODTC-709: Theology and Pop Culture” (lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, summer 2008); Glen Stassen, “ODET-701: “Ethics/Renewal/Discipleship” (lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA summer 2006); David Augsburg, “OD755: “Managing Conflict” (lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, winter 2004).

North American Division secretary convenes annual meetings for executive secretaries in their territories to provide training and professional development.

Since the role in which I served prior to this assignment was as a local conference president, a first-leader role, I am uniquely qualified to address the transition from first leader to second leader. Helping others to do the same is exactly what I have been doing for the last two years. This has positioned me to experience specific insights and foster a passion for dealing with the topic of this paper.

The content of this project will be structured in three parts. Part One will describe the general ministry context of the organization in which the executive secretary serves. This part of the discussion will supply demographic data and information as a backdrop for the denominational structure and culture. In addition, important data along with helpful insights will be presented for those currently serving as executive secretaries.

Part Two will establish biblical and theological foundations for the second-leader role and this new ministry initiative. It will review ecclesiological literature of the Church in light of the impact of the role of second leaders within the Body of Christ. The purpose will be to offer a biblical perspective for those transitioning into the role of executive secretary, the second-leader position, after having led from the first-leader position. To enhance receptiveness by these individuals, this biblical and theological foundation for such leadership must be sound and clearly articulated.

Part Three deals with the ministry strategy, practical steps to transitioning the first leader to the office of executive secretary, and project implementation and evaluation.

The goal is to expand their biblical understanding and demonstrate modern-day examples of true leadership in the second-leader position. Since the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is a church organization, it is imperative for the model for executive secretary to be based firmly on biblical principles.

The purpose of this project was to provide practical steps and suggestions with a biblical foundation to those individuals transitioning into second position leaders after having been a first position leader. It is designed to assist the secretary to operate in the leadership culture that currently exists with biblical principles and with a biblical rationale. This project accomplishes that objective. However, during my study and reflection on this subject a broader area of focus has emerged. That area is a theology of leadership in general and its implications to the broader context in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

It would be helpful for all leadership in the SDA Church to have at its root a biblical basis of understanding and operation. It was not the purpose of this project to cover the broader theme on the theology of leadership. The secretary operating from biblical principles will have a positive effect but in order for substantive change to take place the leadership structure of the SDA church must change and must be based on the Scriptures. This is the larger picture for the denomination. I will continue my study of the theology of leadership as it relates to the entire structure. I will complete this more general study and include it in the workshops for executive secretaries.

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEXTUAL ENVIRONMENT AND ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

This chapter is designed to describe the Seventh-day Adventist denominational structure and context in which the position of executive secretary functions as second leader. In addition, it seeks to identify the type of individuals who generally are called to the role. This understanding uncovers the apparent and inherent potential for conflict and difficulty that occur when transitioning into this second-leader role, irrespective of the level in the SDA organizational hierarchy.

Seventh-day Adventist Organizational Environment

The organizational environment in which an executive secretary operates requires clarification. In doing so, the ministry challenge coming from the organization itself can be seen more clearly. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide organization with approximately seventeen million members in over two hundred countries.¹ It divides the globe in geographical units called “divisions.” There are thirteen altogether. One is

¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Archives and Statistics* (Silver Spring, MD: Secretariat Department, 2010) second quarter.

called the North American Division which comprises the United States, Canada, and Bermuda. This will be the location of this ministry project.

Most of the North American Division membership resides in the United States. In fact, 95 percent of its members live in this country. The other 5 percent resides in Canada and Bermuda. The United States population is just over 310 million.² The North American Division has over six thousand churches and companies with a membership of just over 1.1 million members.³ When comparing the population with the membership, it yields a ratio of three hundred to one.

The North American Division has an annual gross income from offerings of nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars.⁴ The division is average when measured according to membership size and when compared to other divisions around the world. Its membership is just over one million. Some divisions exceed two million, whereas others total one-half million.⁵ Even though it is average in size, financially it provides more than half of the world budget. While most of the global SDA Church is overwhelmingly populated by people of color, this division has a Caucasian majority, according to the 2005 statistics.⁶ Most believe that when the statistics are completed for

² U.S. Census Bureau, "Data Finders," <http://www.census.gov/> (accessed September 1, 2011).

³ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Archives and Statistics* (Silver Spring, MD: North American Division Secretariat Office, 2010) spring quarter.

⁴ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists *Treasury Statistics* (Silver Spring, MD: Treasury Office, 2009) fourth quarter.

⁵ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Church, *148th Annual Statistics Report* (Silver Spring, MD: Office of Archives and Statistics, 2010).

⁶ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Archives and Statistics* (Silver Spring, MD: North American Division Secretariat Office, 2005), fourth quarter.

2010, there will be no majority race in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

The 2005 statistics revealed that 51 percent of the North American Division's membership was of non-Hispanic Caucasian descent, 34 percent was of African descent, 11 percent was of Hispanic descent, and 4 percent was of Asian descent. The growth of the division is coming from the ethnic minorities and the immigrant groups. They represent nearly 60 percent of all baptisms in the division.⁷ The demographics reveal that the Adventist membership in North America is significantly more diverse than the general population. In the general population, non-Hispanic whites are nearly 70 percent, while blacks are 11 percent, and Hispanics are about 10 percent. In fact, the ethnic profile of the Adventist membership is very close to what the U.S. Census projects for the American profile in 2030.⁸ These shifts in population trends will impact leadership in the denomination. Each culture brings its own style and nuances to whatever community they join.

As the presence of minorities and various cultural groups continue to grow, inevitably they will influence the leadership roles and functions within the division. They will bring their own uniqueness and perspectives to the positions of first and second leader. The percentage of immigrants in the Adventist Church is more than double the rate for the general population in the United States and significantly greater than the percentage in Canada. The SDA has a larger percentage of immigrants among its

⁷ North American Division SDA, *Archives and Statistics*, 2010, third quarter.

⁸ Paul Richardson, *Demographic Survey of the Seventh-day Church in North America* (Silver Spring, MD: Center for Creative Ministry, 2008), 5-7.

membership in North America than other denominations of one million or more adherents.⁹

Adventist church members in North America are more likely to be employed in professional and managerial occupations than the general population. They are somewhat less likely to work in retail, sales, clerical, technical, and office occupations. The percentage of Adventists employed in blue-collar occupations is about half that of the general population in the United States. The occupational profile is shaped by issues related to Sabbath observance. Sabbath observance is the practice of keeping holy a twenty-four-hour period of time, from Friday sunset until Saturday sunset. This includes refraining from work or any secular activity during this interval of rest. Historically, many blue-collar and retail jobs require work on Friday nights or on Saturday. As a result, Adventists have moved from these jobs to other occupations.¹⁰

Half of the church members in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America are outside the work force. Retirees compose 35 percent, while 8 percent are full-time homemakers. Another 5 percent are full-time students, and 2 percent are unemployed or on disability.¹¹

The majority of Adventist church members in North America have a college education. Baby Boomers and Generation X are more likely to possess academic degrees. Nearly 40 percent of Adventist members have college diplomas, while only 16 percent of

⁹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁰ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Demographic Survey* (Silver Spring, MD: Research Center, 2008), 216.

¹¹ Ibid, 27.

the general public in the United States and 10 percent in Canada hold such higher degrees of education.¹²

In addition, the Seventh-day Adventists membership tends to reside in the rural communities. Over 50 percent of the members live in rural America, whereas 82 percent of the general population lives in the urban centers of the division.¹³ This has significant implications as leadership pre-evaluates the manner in which it advances its mission. Another demographic statistic to take into consideration as the division observes the context in which leadership must take place is the aging of the SDA Church in North America. The median age of members in the Church is fifty-one, but in the general population it is thirty-six in the United States and thirty-five in Canada.¹⁴ The SDA researchers and statisticians refer to this as the graying of the Church in North America. About 38 percent of the SDA Church's members are over sixty years old, as compared to 16 percent of the general population.¹⁵

This is the context in which leadership must strive for effectiveness. The aforementioned statistics provide some evidence to the leaders of the division that everyone is needed and every gift must be maximized. It is an optimum time to evaluate the use of leaders, and especially second leaders, in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in North America.

¹² Ibid., 31.

¹³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴ Ibid., 9.

¹⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a representative form of ecclesiastical government and operates between full sessions on what is called a “committee system.” The committee has legislative, executive, and supervisory functions. The legislative authority is restricted by the constitution. The committee system is based on biblical examples and represents the need for more than one individual’s wisdom and perspective. For instance, SDA structure heeds the wisdom of Proverbs 11:14, which states: “In a multitude of counsel, there is safety.”¹⁶ In the use of the committee system in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, authority is shared and executed by the elected officers who are responsible to the executive committee, which in turn receives its authority from the organization’s constituency when they are in session.

This occurs from the level of the local church to the highest administrative levels of the SDA denomination. Its premise is the Body of Christ. Therefore, when the SDA body comes together, it represents the greatest authority at whatever level of the denomination. In the local church, it is a business meeting. At other levels of the denominational structure, it is a constituency meeting. In between those meetings are smaller groups that convene, which are known as executive committees and boards at the local church level. The authority of all entities resides in these committees.

The constitution intentionally states that each officer is ultimately responsible to the executive committee. This same document governs all denominational church entities and clearly reads: “It is the duty of these officers, in consultation with one another, to carry forward the work according to plans, policies and programs voted by the

¹⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quoted is from the *Holy Bible: King James Version* (Nashville: James Winston Publishing, 1993).

constituency and/or the conference executive committee.”¹⁷ The constitution validates the committee system, which is where the authority lies in the denomination. It further suggests that officers have a joint responsibility in moving the work forward. It is important to distinguish the Seventh-day Adventist denomination from some other faith groups. For example, while the structure may be hierarchical in design, the power and authority are just the opposite. The authority of the church lies with the larger body of believers through the representative form of government. The extent to which this larger body of believers participates in the church governance is the extent to which they exercise ownership and effect change in the SDA denomination.

The Role of the Executive Secretary

The SDA constitution states: “The secretary, associated with the president as an executive officer, shall serve under the direction of the executive committee. . . . The secretary shall report to the executive committee of the conference after consultation with the president.”¹⁸ These statements provide substantive insight into the structural and organizational intent of the denomination. The design of the position of executive secretary is to provide a significant role in the operation of the organization. Even though this is clear in the constitution, there still exists a tendency towards a presidential system for some.

¹⁷ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2007-2008), 155.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Neither the constitution nor general policy addresses how the officers are to interrelate. The president is designated as the first officer.¹⁹ Since there is a first, it is implied that there is a second officer. In the governance of the SDA Church, it is agreed that the secretary is the second officer of the organizational units of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Role of the General Conference Executive Secretary

The highest executive secretary level in the denomination is at the General Conference level, which is the SDA denominational entity that oversees the entire world field. In terms of operations, the specific assignment and responsibilities are more narrowly focused but spiritual leadership flows over to the other aspects of the organization despite specific assignments. One example of this is the function the executive secretary carries in the executive committee of the General Conference. In all other entities in the denomination, the executive secretary serves as the automatic vice-chair of the executive committee and leads the meetings in the absence of the chairman. In the General Conference, the vice-president exercises leadership in the absence of the chairman. Another example is the selection and processing of missionaries to foreign lands. This involves medical clearances, matching needs of the mission posts with the gifts of individuals, relocation of families, and hundreds of other details. It is an important task but can sometimes overshadow visionary leadership opportunities. Since the secretary can be bogged down in the details of the operations, he or she is not available to lead the organization in broader denomination-wide initiatives.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The primary function of the North American Division (NAD) secretary is to create, maintain, and guide new policies as well as interpret existing policies for the churches and all lower level organizations—namely, the unions and conferences residing on the North American continent.²⁰ An idea for a policy can come from any source. However, to become a policy it must flow through the Office of the North American Division Secretary. The secretary then nurtures it through several committees to determine if it has merit. If a policy is determined to have merit, it continues through a committee process where it is converted into policy language and taken to the North American Division executive committee for approval or disapproval.

An example of this is the latest policy on a group of employees generally hired by the local church or local school, called “locally hired employees.” An attorney that works for the denomination contacted the NAD’s Secretariat Office and said local conferences were not treating the locally funded employees fairly across the division. As a result, an investigation was launched. This idea was nurtured by my office to form guidelines, which were voted last year by the executive committee and are being recommended as policies to that committee this year for consideration. Additionally, policies regarding sexual abuse were created and nurtured through the Secretariat Office in the same way. All policies of the North American Division are processed through the Secretariat Office. Some are created there, while others are cultivated there. It is a major function of this office.

The NAD executive secretary also interprets the meaning of policies for the various entities across the division territory. Sometimes there are questions because the

²⁰ General Conference Secretariat Office, *Division Secretariat Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Secretariat Office, 2011), 13.

policy is not clear or there may be a nuance the policy does not explicitly address. There are times where policies may appear to conflict, and clarification is needed. Of the nine unions, fifty-eight conferences, six thousand churches, and thousands of employees, the office of the executive secretary at the division is the final step in seeking to understand the nine-hundred-page policy book.

The Role of Union the Conference Executive Secretary

The focus of this project will be the nine union executive secretaries that cover the entire North American Division and the fifty-eight conferences that are a part of those union territories. Among the union secretaries, there are four blacks and five whites yet no women. Among the fifty-eight conference executive secretaries, there are two women, one Hispanic and one Caucasian. The remaining fifty-six positions are held by men. There are four Hispanics, twelve blacks, and forty Caucasians.²¹

The traditional role of the union executive secretary is to facilitate policies, human relation issues, and legal matters facing the organization. Besides these tasks the extent to which union secretaries take on other leadership functions depends in large part on their relationship with the president. In secular organizations, this level in church governance would be called “mid-level management.” This governance structure is deeply rooted in the culture of the denomination and has been in existence since the early 1900s. The actual policy manual of the Church states clearly that all of the levels have to

²¹ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Employee Service Records* (Silver Spring, MD: Retirement Department, 2009).

be maintained, even though some flexibility can be granted due to unique circumstances in different parts of the world field.²²

The Role of the Conference Executive Secretary

The conference level is the lowest organizational level other than the local church. More inconsistency regarding the role of the executive secretary exists here than at any other level in the SDA denomination. There are several reasons for this wide disparity. First, and foremost, there exist a variety of needs due to the uniqueness of each of the fifty-eight conferences. Second, most of the current presidents have served as executive secretaries and therefore possess distinct philosophies as to how the second leader should be utilized to serve the organization.²³

Another reason for the varying roles of the executive secretary at the local conference level is the overwhelming administrative needs of the conference. In some cases, the challenges are so demanding that a president has to solicit the aid of the secretary to manage the issues that a president alone may do in another conference. Some conferences have as many as sixty thousand members populating 136 churches. Another might have only five thousand members in a total of thirty-three churches.²⁴ In both situations, normally there are only these two lead officers and a treasurer. For this reason, in a larger conference, it becomes necessary for a president to utilize the secretary in unique ways. These might include chairing committees such as a board of education,

²² North American Division SDA, *Working Policy*, 37.

²³ North American Division SDA, *Employee Service Records*.

²⁴ North American Division SDA, *Archives and Statistics*, 2010, third quarter.

meeting with local churches for processing the hiring of pastors, and the planning and execution of major gatherings—all of which are normally duties a conference president might undertake. This creates a vast difference in the role of the executive secretary from one local conference to another. In some conferences the aforementioned duties are the job description of the local executive secretary, but in others it is the function of the president.

In addition, some conferences have well-developed job descriptions; in others, there is very little in the way of specific details regarding official duties. The varied situations increase the difficulty in creating a standard, consistent template to govern the role of the executive secretary. This is the challenge in attempting to have one model for all executive secretaries transitioning from first-leader roles to second-leader roles.

Despite the various ways conferences may utilize executive secretaries, there are some very standard functions along with other responsibilities assigned by the president. This includes consulting with the president and taking minutes at the conference executive committees.²⁵ The nine-hundred-page SDA policy book additionally states that the secretary “shall also be responsible for providing information as may be requested by the president or by the Executive Committee.”²⁶ The challenge with the standard job functions is that they do not automatically lend themselves to visionary leadership or leadership that will help congregational ministry in any significant way. The routine job functions that constitutionally are assigned to the executive secretary focus on the operational details of the organization, with little to no mention of visionary leadership that impacts congregational ministry. There is a danger in the secretary being so narrowly focused on policies and operational details that

²⁵ North American Division SDA, *Working Policy*, 182.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

the larger picture of ministry can be lost. Without constant contact with the larger picture of ministry, the executive secretary can lose sight of the real purpose of the position.

This is not true in all cases. There are instances where the executive secretary is very much involved in the visionary leadership of a conference. However, there is a need for a more deliberate and systematic approach denominationally to ensure that the executive secretary remains part of the visionary leadership of the organization. It should not be left to the insightful and forward thinking of just a few presidents and conferences; rather, the denomination needs to play a more active role in nurturing leaders while they inhabit the executive secretary position. Currently, there is nothing to prohibit this, so more can be done to encourage visionary leadership from the role.

The organizational structure and culture do not provide enough direction and support regarding exactly how the executive secretary fits into the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the various levels. With the limited amount of information provided in the policy by the denomination, and with the title of the office not lending itself to defining the role of the executive secretary, differences in exactly how the position functions can occur from organization to organization. These limitations lead to various understandings of what the role is within the larger structure.

For example in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, the secretary is used in a different manner than the Dakota Conference executive secretary. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference has over thirty-six thousand members and several vice-presidents as a part of the administrative team. On the other hand, the Dakota Conference has just over forty-two hundred members with no other administrators but the president,

secretary, and treasurer. As a result, the use of the executive secretary is quite different. In Georgia-Cumberland, the vice-presidents chair the meetings in the absence of the president. In the Dakota conference, the executive secretary chairs in the absence of the president. In Georgia-Cumberland Conference, camp meetings and other major gatherings are planned by the president and vice-presidents; however, in Dakota it is planned primarily by the president and secretary. In Georgia-Cumberland, the role of the executive secretary is consistent with the constitutional assignments of the role—namely, agenda preparation and the taking of minutes. In the Dakota conference, however, there are more widespread leadership opportunities.²⁷ These differences reflect various organizational structures and the specific needs of each. This is very essential and helpful because it allows each community to shape and mold the position to meet its specific needs of leadership. Despite these differences, there needs to be a thread that defines the position not just from a functional perspective but from a leadership perspective that is consistent from conference to conference, so new executive secretaries from the start know and understand what is expected of them and how they are allowed to grow.

In addition to this apparent silence in the policy book, there has been no formal orientation on how to lead in this position. There is no systematic approach for providing orientation for the executive secretary on how to exercise leadership gifts from the second-leader role. There are presentations on policy and the latest issues but nothing on

²⁷ Edward Wright, president of Georgia-Cumberland Conference, interview by author, Calhoun, GA, August 15, 2011; Neil Biloff, president of Dakota Conference, interview by author, Pierre, South Dakota, August 16, 2011.

leadership as an executive secretary.²⁸ Some conferences provide limited orientation, and the division does orientation. However, there is a difference in performing functions such as taking minutes, preparing agendas, and making sure the details have been done and essential leadership. Essential leadership includes setting the direction for areas of the organization and having an active role in shaping the emphasis and the future of it.

It is clear that the ministry context for the executive secretary is challenging even from the perspective of organizational structure. The secretary reports to the executive committee but in consultation with the president. This consultation can be somewhat challenging, because it creates some ambiguity regarding the relationship to the president. It appears clear that the secretary does not report to the president but consults with the president before reporting to the executive committee. However, it does not address issues such as differences of opinion, distinct points of view, or what the relationship between the officers should be. Each organizational perspective is left to be interpreted within and by its own community.

Selection Pool for Executive Secretaries

When the local conference searches for an executive secretary, it almost always selects a successful senior pastor or someone from a first-leader role to serve in that capacity.²⁹ This is also true at the next highest level, the union, where seven of the last nine union executive secretaries elected were previous conference presidents or some other first-position leader. One was the editor of a church magazine, and the other was

²⁸ For example, traditional “Training Orientation of Executive Secretaries Curriculum” covers legal insurance, human resources, and policy instruction, but nothing on leadership from the second position.

²⁹ North American Division SDA, *Working Policy*, 182.

the ministerial director of his union. This pattern is not as consistent at the next two higher organizations, the division, and the General Conference.

Selecting highly successful senior pastors, conference presidents, and other first leaders as executive secretaries illustrates the caliber of leaders who are recruited. They are not just first leaders but first leaders who excel in their profession. At first glance, it may appear to be unwise to make such a move. However, there are two reasons to consider. First, the selection pool that is used to select presidents consists of executive secretaries from the same organizational level. In fact, twenty of the last twenty-three presidents selected were recruited from the executive secretary position. Second, strong executive secretaries are needed, since it is the pool from which an overwhelming number of presidents are recruited. If they are highly successful in their previous roles the chances are they also will be successful in their current roles and whatever roles they may hold in the future.

When a Senior Pastor Is Selected as Executive Secretary

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination in theory and practice functions on a committee system as it relates to governance. For this reason, at the local church level the church board meets every month. However, the senior pastor represents the authority of the church leaders as first leader in between board meetings and functions as the chairperson of the board in most cases. In the search process for an executive secretary, the selection committee often chooses a senior pastor who has been very active in leading a congregation in a shared vision for service and mission. These first leaders often will receive an invitation to be the second leader for the local conference. As first leaders, it

has been their privilege to build a shared vision with the congregation. They also have had the responsibility to set the agenda and lead the congregation to reach whatever heights God sets for them. Pastors of this caliber have demonstrated their first-leader capabilities and abilities. This experience is what many pastors bring to the executive secretary position.

When pastors are cast into unfamiliar roles as second leaders, they often become exasperated.³⁰ Limited orientation is provided for their new function and role and none at regarding how to adapt their present leadership passion and capacity to a second-leader assignment. These leaders have shifted from the primary role of vision casting to a more supportive role. The executive secretary role still shares in developing a vision, but it occurs from a different vantage point. In some cases, the secretary's vantage point is more as a participant offering suggestions rather than a leader shaping the suggestions and ideas of others to create a shared vision. However, in others the secretary is specifically assigned to strategic planning and given the responsibility in leading the organization to a shared vision. This assignment grows out of the community in which the secretary conducts their ministry. The role of the secretary is unique, even though a shared vision may emerge. From a leadership perspective, the role of primary leaders differs in that the influence of the first leader on a group usually exerts the most impact. While the executive secretary carries considerable weight as well, this new dynamic is an uncomfortable position for previous first leaders recently turned second leaders.

³⁰ Roger Bernard, secretary of Central States Conference, interview by author, Kansas City, KS, January 9, 2011; Jorge Ramirez, secretary of Potomac Conference, Staunton, VA, July 1, 2011.

In some cases, these senior pastors have no previous professional experience in the position of second leader from which to draw. Many never have served as associate or youth pastors under anyone. These posts help leaders learn submission to another's leadership and how to yield an idea or a perspective to that of another. They learn to exercise their leadership and work within certain parameters. Some struggle with many practical questions, such as balancing assertiveness with submissiveness. Others look to balance blind loyalty with following intelligently, while trying to couple unity with strong leadership. Second leaders want to be seen as having a mind of their own but also desire to support the president, since as former first leaders they understand the value and necessity of such backing and encouragement.

Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, authors of *Leading from the Second Chair*, have coined a term to describe the ambiguous reality in which the executive secretary exists as "living in the paradoxes."³¹ These are the strange circumstances of leading and following at the same time. It is seeking to know when to be supportive and when to share an opposing viewpoint with the primary leader. In this way, the executive secretary's unique role involves a special set of tensions.

When a Conference President Is Selected as Executive Secretary

A conference president often is called to serve as its executive secretary at the next higher level of the organization, which is the union. Local conference presidents are ultimately accountable to their executive committee. However, there is no one person to

³¹ Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass A. Wiley Imprint, 2005), 3.

whom they are answerable. They chair their own boards. It may be tempting to think that union presidents are the supervisors of conference presidents but they serve only as advisors or counselors. In contrast, all the employees in the conference work under the supervision of the president. As conference presidents lead and build a shared vision they can shape the conference culture as the first-position leader.

Conference presidents have a great deal of autonomy within guidelines given by their executive committees. They are able to be very successful in advancing the work of the Lord by building up God's Kingdom. Some have demonstrated exceptional administrative talent and skill in motivating and designing formulas for success in their territory. These first-position leaders have been skillful in growing their conferences. Success as a first leader attracts selection committees who have been formed to choose second leaders. While looking for a leader who can serve in the current situation, often these selection committees also seek a person who one day can assume the first-leader position again.

Unfortunately, the moment former conference presidents accept the executive secretary assignment they immediately step into the paradox of tensions. These second-position leaders' mental model of leadership comes from being presidents. There they had a wider range of freedom in collaborating with others in casting a vision for the organization.³² The second leader may have a very significant role in helping shape and cast the vision or they may have little. This is totally dependent on how the community has designed it and empowered the secretary. There are few places these executive

³² Ibid.

secretaries can turn to receive help for their newfound dilemma. One place an executive secretary can receive understanding and assistance is from those at the next higher level in the same position. Some executive secretaries grapple with the thought of defining success from this position. They are challenged with sharing their ideas of doing things a better way yet struggle with maintaining deeper involvement without appearing too aggressive.

Second-position leaders find themselves in the midst of a tremendous transition with little assistance in finding proper equilibrium. They are not only first leaders but the very strongest kind of first leaders. The denomination is uniquely situated to provide assistance to this group of leaders. It can prove helpful both to the individuals involved as well as organizationally, because it has the privilege of calling this group of leaders together and setting the agenda to address this and other similar issues. It also can provide an environment to change the structure that can help in this transition to the second-leader position.

Secular and Corporate Views of Second-Leader Positions

For years the SDA Church has followed and adopted leadership views from secular organizations. What now is becoming evident in corporate leadership writings are blatantly spiritual and biblical principles. Many secular authors do not identify them in that manner; but when the principles are examined, that is what is unveiled. For example, Jim Collins, a consummate researcher of corporate companies, has identified the characteristics in leaders that have made their organizations great. In his book, *Good to Great*, he writes that good chief executive officers possess traits such as humility,

selflessness, and ambition for the company which exceeded their own personal interest.³³ Collins labeled such CEOs as “level five” leaders, because they were modest in their style and not flamboyant.³⁴

Likewise, Collins extols the virtues of the second-position leaders in an organization. He does this by issuing the metaphor of having the right people on the bus, and in the right seats on the bus—all of which speaks to the value that great organizations place on their second-position leaders.³⁵ These humble leaders were not only valuable but indispensable to the company. In the examples mentioned by Collins, second-position leaders had a deep sense of being part of the company; and, he states that this dynamic in others was prevalent throughout great companies. There was a culture not just to agree with the boss but to “argue and debate even sometimes violently in pursuit of the best answers.”³⁶ However, after a decision was made the team members of the great companies supported it wholeheartedly and stood behind it.

In the previous paragraph are hints of principles that have their roots in Scripture. The principle of unity (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:5-6) and passion (cf. Philippians 1:20-21) for one purpose can be evidenced through the selflessness (cf. Acts 2:42-45) of the various individuals involved. There is also the tension of those in the second-leader position, sharing their ideas passionately but knowing theirs is not the final word. Nevertheless, they risk opening their mouths because there is an environment which welcomes honest

³³ Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001),30.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

and open dialogue and an expression of appreciation for each person's contribution (cf. Acts 9:26-31). These second leaders walk away with a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment (cf. Acts 9:26-31), genuinely supportive of the eventual outcome because their voice has been heard and they were full participants in the process.

Collins urges organizations to put their best people on their biggest opportunities and not on their biggest problems.³⁷ Organizations will grow to be better by properly positioning people in the organization. He argues that the brightest talent should be positioned to focus on the areas of the organization that have the best opportunities for growth. Others in the organization can handle the myriad of problems that confronts it but the brightest talent should be utilized to lift the company to higher heights. These principles can be of great value in the SDA Church's organizational structure. The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has a wealth of experience and knowledge in the executive secretary as a human resource. However, if the executive secretary position is modified somewhat to help the organization become stronger this would involve changing its current culture.

There is quite a bit of literature that is being produced by secular authors extolling spiritual virtues of leadership. While Part Two of this discussion offers such a literature review, here it is worthy to mention Jack Kahl, who emphasizes the virtue of leadership that comes from the heart. He says, "Leadership begins with a choice to serve others."³⁸ This emphasis goes to the essence of leadership. Leadership denotes the idea of service

³⁷ Ibid., 63.

³⁸ Jack Kahl, *Leading from the Heart* (Westlake, OH: Kahl and Associates, 2004), 2.

and at its roots is not ever about the leader; rather, it embodies the notion of doing something for others. True leaders deliberately accept the responsibility of putting others before themselves. A leader's decision to serve others comes from the heart. It implies patient thought and intentionality. There is no manipulation or striving for gain. Kahl talks about a pure motive of service that springs from within a person's inner being. In essence, Kahl's language is wrapped in spiritual tones and is exactly the language of Christ (cf. Philippians 2:6-8; Luke 22:25).

In the midst of this executive leadership quandary, there is an opportunity for the SDA Church to take the lead in establishing leadership patterns after the example of Christ and certain corporate models that fall in line with His teachings. If the great companies have separated themselves from their competitors by using the principles of Christ's Kingdom, then the SDA Church is in an even better position to do so. If corporate companies have found Christ's way better, albeit unintentionally, then the SDA Church can delve into these practices and benefit from them as well.

CHAPTER 2

THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SECRETARY ROLES AND GOALS

The purpose of this chapter is to define the role of the North American Division executive secretary with regard to individuals in the second-leader position throughout the organization. First, it will examine how this position has been viewed traditionally throughout the SDA organization. The discussion will reflect how the person who holds this post is uniquely placed to bring change to second leadership throughout the SDA structure in North America. Finally, this chapter explores how present SDA structure currently lends itself to radically changing the perception of the executive secretary as second leader. This topic is a passionate priority for me, as I currently hold the position of executive secretary for the North American Division.

Duties and Responsibilities of the North American Division Executive Secretary

There are many roles for the executive secretary of the North American Division. These include training and orientation for union and conference executive secretaries, policy development, agenda preparation, and processing of minutes for various committees. However, due to the underlying ministry need to make the most use of the

second-leader role and help those former first leaders who hold them to bear more fruit for the Kingdom of Christ, this section will focus on the North American Division executive secretary's role of training and orientating the executive secretaries at other levels of the SDA organizational structure.

Training and Orientation

Training and equipping the executive secretaries at the union and local conference level is a primary responsibility for the North American Division executive secretary. During the general training process, the regular functions and duties for local conference executive secretaries are presented. At present, there have been two separate training events for executive secretaries, which are sponsored by the North American Division Secretariat Office. The current training segment for new secretaries has been in existence for two years. It covers the functions of the office of secretary generally and seeks to address the issue of leadership from this position. There is also a second training segment, which involves general workshops for both experienced and inexperienced secretaries. These general workshops are comprised of updates on legal matters, new policies, the latest retirement amendments, and relative organizational trends and changes. This training segment has been in existence for more than fifteen years

In the past, the conference secretary was trained to serve in dual roles as both the treasurer and secretary. In those days operations were much simpler, and the merging of the positions resulted in some cost savings to the organizations. However, over time the SDA Church has grown, and the world has become more complex. Therefore, the denominational administration has been expanded to meet current demands. As a result, it

is often not deemed advisable to leave the functions of the secretary to be cared for by the treasurer, who already carries a full load of administrative and financial responsibilities. It is now the norm in North American Division conferences to elect a secretary as one of the executive officers.¹

The local conference position of executive secretary came into being after the administrative functions of the conference for many years were divided between the president and the secretary/treasurer. The executive secretary's functions are not assigned uniformly in each conference or other church organizations. Although the Model Constitution and Bylaws offer a broad description of the responsibilities of the secretary, the concrete list of responsibilities differs from one conference to another based on past practice, conference bylaws, the actions of the conference executive committee, or the administrative committee in the respective conferences.²

Some of the key responsibilities are standard, but the execution of them can vary for conference executive secretaries as they work very closely with their respective presidents. The executive secretary provides leadership, direction, and coordination in a collaborative manner consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the conference. Executive secretaries are primarily responsible for general administrative and management functions. This position has direct responsibility for matters related to policy review, counsel, and statistical management. The executive secretary records the official proceedings of all conference executive and administrative committees and furnishes

¹ North American Division Secretariat Office, *A Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2009), 155.

² *Ibid.*, 13.

copies to members of the executive committee and to the union conference. The executive secretary collects any data desired by the president or the executive committee.

People holding the position of executive secretary need such qualifications as may be agreed upon by the conference constituency in session or the executive committee in the event of a vacancy. They serve as an executive officer and vice-chair of the executive committee. Executive secretaries need to have good conceptual skills, the ability to grasp the complex situations that can occur in the organization, and be able to focus on problem solving in a way that generates vision and strategy. The person usually is thought to have a personality that fits well into the office and the leadership and management style of the first officer. Executive secretaries are trained to approach their work with a high level of professionalism.³ There are several additional responsibilities of the executive secretary as stated by the *Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat*.

Understanding the key responsibilities, significant tasks, and potential for improved function of the executive secretaries in the North American Division is important in order to provide proper training, equipping, and orientation to those who will occupy the position. One of the significant functions of the office of the executive secretary is to represent the conference to the corporate Church and the general public in counsel with the president. In this representation, the executive secretaries are called on to attend meetings of the corporate SDA Church. They are called upon to work effectively with people at all levels of the conference, including administrators, department directors, associate and assistant directors, and other office staff personnel. In addition, they need to be adept at working with the executive committee members and

³ Ibid., 14.

sub-committee members of the conference organization. They also may be asked to make public statements on behalf of the conference to the media or general public.

Another function of this second-leader position requires knowledge and current application of management theory and practice. Executive secretaries are expected to have management abilities and skills that will assist in the smooth operation of conference activities. They also are expected to maintain a program of continuous performance improvement in determining and achieving the conference's strategic initiatives each year.

There are specific functions and responsibilities that are assigned to the executive secretary by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Beyond preserving official actions and minutes of executive committees, maintaining membership records, and distributing this data along with resolutions and agendas, the executive secretary position is responsible for the distribution of the North American Division, General Conference, and Union working policies. The process of annually updating the conference's sections of the *General Conference Yearbook* is one of the functions of the executive secretary.⁴ The executive secretary oversees the conference calendar of activities and ensures the distribution to all of its entities.

All conference statistical information and data—such as church membership, baptisms, missing or dropped attendees, and apostatized or deceased members—are all maintained and processed through the office of executive secretary. To assist in the ease of operation and facilitate the collection of data, the executive secretary is expected to provide in-service training and support services for church clerks in their division,

⁴ Ibid., 13.

conference, or union. In addition, all independent transfers and calls are processed by the executive secretary. This includes the processing of interdivision and inter-union travel requests for service of persons in the local conference.

Other more general expectations of the executive secretary include speaking requests from churches and schools; organizing camp meeting assignments, workers' meetings, and pastoral gatherings; and providing officer training for the division and its churches, conferences, or unions. The executive secretary also serves as vice-chair of the executive committee. Constituency preparations, such as delegate counts and the organization of an event, are usually functions of the executive secretary.

The responsibilities listed are not intended to be exhaustive nor do they apply to every secretary or every situation. Rather, this serves as a broad list of an executive secretary's responsibilities, which are included in current training sessions. There are several factors that may affect the list of duties. If a conference or union has vice-presidents, then some responsibilities the secretary normally assumes may be assigned to that position. The conference size also affects the types of duties that are assigned to a secretary. Another factor is the skill set of the individual executive secretary and the skill set of the president. Secretaries may come from a background where they have acquired a certain set of skills—for example, conflict management—which the president does not possess at the same level in that area. For this reason, the president may assign that specific responsibility to the secretary. Ultimately, it depends on the leadership style and the security level of the president.

Invariably, training and orientation include basic management training, since the local union or conference executive secretary is an individual who carries management roles. Executive secretaries generally have some responsibilities in defining a strategic plan that is consistent with the organization's mission, visions, and values. They communicate the mission, vision, and values throughout the division, union, or conference under their jurisdiction. It is an executive secretary's responsibility to fulfill the vision by providing the framework to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan. Local division, union, or conference executive secretaries often are tasked with the integration of resources and programs within the area of their responsibilities that are consistent with the plans of the organization.⁵

One of the key roles of the executive secretary is to interpret and enforce policy. Functioning in this role sometimes brings about a misperception of the executive secretary, in that some can view the executive secretary as the policy "guru" or enforcer. Since the responsibility of executive secretaries is to ensure adherence to and execution of the policies, their prevailing values and attitudes are based on the need to follow policy and preserve the organization. While this alone is not a negative function, there exists the very present danger of placing policy over people. It can sometimes subtract from the person being viewed as a leader. In many cases, people in the pews or lower-level leaders might perceive the policy enforcer as insensitive and not flexible in dealing with struggles of employees and other constituents.

While it is true that this position is designated with ensuring the organization complies with denominational policy, this aspect of the role need not be the essence of the

⁵ Ibid., 15.

job. This is particularly crucial, if executive secretaries have great potential to bear more fruit in their second-leader role. Not allowing these capable second leaders to seize the passion and potential of their positions undermines and marginalizes the broader leadership role executive secretaries can exercise for the benefit that the SDA denomination.

Perception and Culture of the Executive Secretary Role: Positioning for a New Emphasis

While the current second-leader position focuses on function and assisting the first leader, the SDA is primed for a new emphasis within the North American Division: to enhance the perception of the executive secretary position into a true leadership role within the organization. Current potential exists to create a more consistent perception of the office of the executive secretary, especially as it relates to leadership. This already is happening in the culture of some conferences and unions.⁶ As mentioned earlier in this project, my ministry passion is to broaden the perception of executive secretaries to be able to use their leadership gifts in such a way that enables them to be strong leaders yet loyal and supportive, independent yet humbly accountable, all while remaining confident in whatever way God desires to use them.

The role of division secretary is uniquely positioned to help create a culture among secretaries where the implementation of policy is viewed as the executive secretary's action

⁶ For example, in the Iowa-Missouri Conference, president Dean Corridan empowers his executive secretary with the broader leadership duties of chairing committees, meeting with congregations on pastoral selections, and maintaining pastoral accountability. These broader assignments facilitate the constituents in viewing the secretary as a true leader. Corridan says his constituents have mentioned how they view the secretary as a significant part of the leadership team of the conference. Dean Corridan, interview by author, Silver Spring, MD, November, 2010. Also, in the Southeastern Conference in Florida, Hubert Morales created an environment for his conference to view the executive as a significant leader by giving the executive secretary leadership functions at camp meetings and major conference functions along with managing church conflict. Hubert Morales, interview by author, Tampa, FL, June 2011.

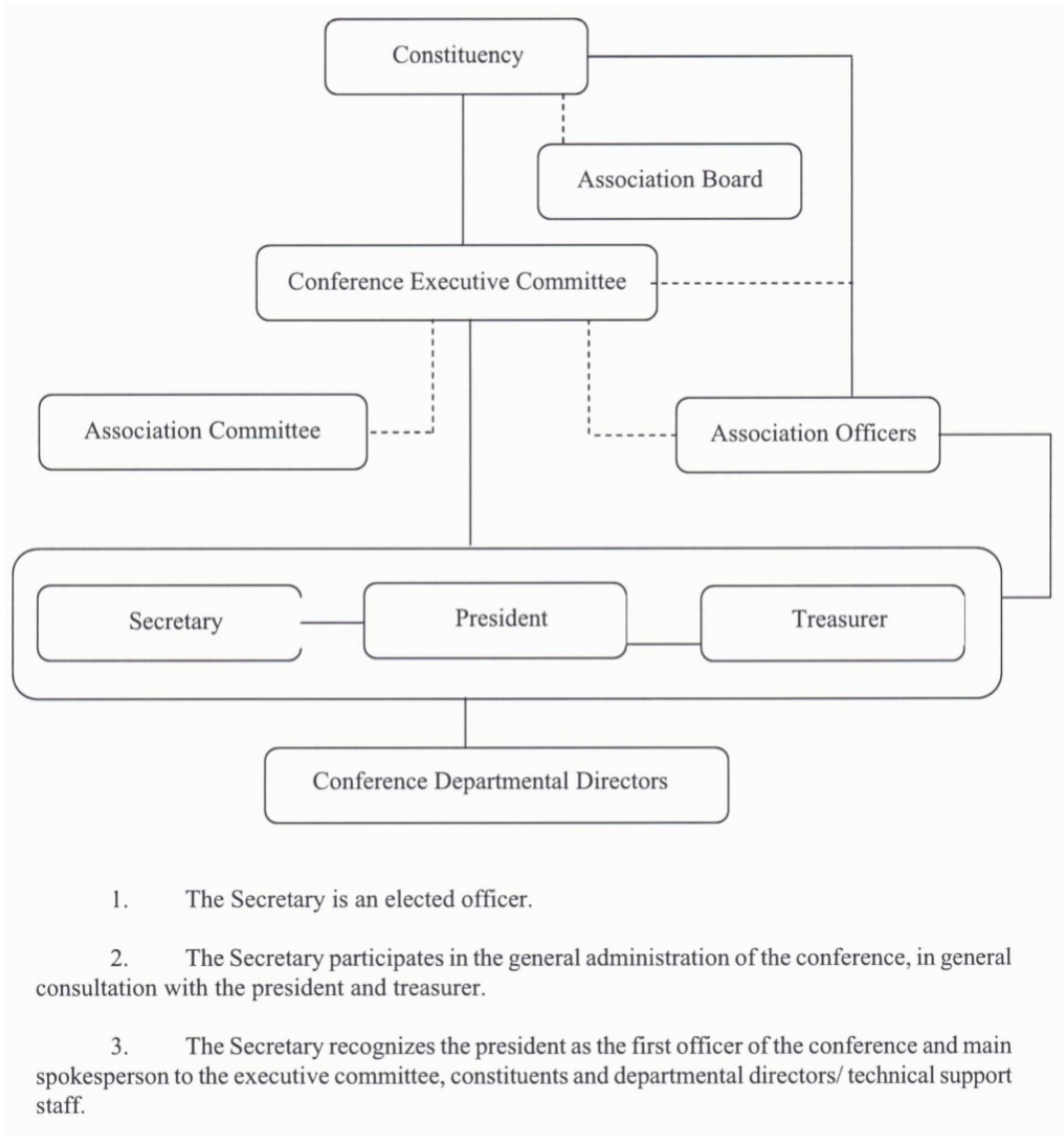
of becoming a “servant” to constituents and not their “master.” The executive secretary does the instrumental and necessary job of helping to link people with division policies and the mission of the organization. Since members in the pews and lower-level leaders can view executive officials as the staunch policy enforcer, another goal is for policy to be used and seen as a tool to assist people in ministering Christ in their community and not as a hammer to impede them. Policies need to be presented in the most positive of lights, with executive secretaries conscientiously and patiently explaining the application and rationale, as policies are meant not only to serve the organization but also the individual.

Another way the SDA structure currently is primed to reap increased benefit from its second-leader positions is by better defining the manner in which an executive secretary fits into the administrative structure of each organizational unit (division, union, conference). The constitution aptly paves the way by mentioning the role of the executive secretary and its basic reason for being; however, it falls short on determining how this position actually interrelates with the office of the president. The constitution states, “The executive secretary is the second officer of the conference and is also vice-chair of the executive and other official committees.”⁷ The executive secretary works under the direction of the executive committee and the president. Together with the secretary, the president, treasurer, and any additional persons with status as an administrative officer comprise the administrative team for an organization (see Table 1). Frequent consultations, characterized by open and frank expressions of opinion, are vital. Hopefully, an administrative consensus can be reached on

⁷ North American Division Secretariat Office, *Working Policy* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2010), CB27.

important matters. If not, once a decision has been reached, it is generally expected that officers will endeavor to support the position adopted.

Table 1. Organizational Relationship of Executive Officers⁸



Since executive secretaries often are privy to very confidential information, a shepherd's heart is important. Aside from this, the secretary also may have the

⁸ North American Division Secretariat, *A Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat*, 20.

responsibility of disseminating negative information. Likewise, this needs to be presented with a spirit of love for the Church and the individuals involved.

In the executive secretary's relationship with employees and constituency, those who hold the second-leader position self-represent but also provide representation for the administrative group. While exercising leadership, it is important for executive secretaries not to depart from the agreed-upon position. Doing so can possibly result in confusion and dissension or render the officer ineffective on the administrative team. However the executive secretary's leadership takes shape, responsibility in representing the larger view is important. Table 1 offers an overview of executive officers, how they relate organizationally, and where the secretary falls within this structure.

Since the context and role of the executive secretary reside with the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, shaping a fruitful perception and culture of the position necessarily requires a biblical and theological foundation. In the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, it is more useful and persuasive to have a biblical rationale for anything that potentially involves any significant change. To accomplish this goal, the shift in thinking must begin with the executive secretary.

There are some well-entrenched, unhelpful perceptions that exist in certain organizations within the division today. Some view the position as that of a "yes" man. This is a person who does not exercise independence of thought but simply does whatever the president desires. In secular environments this behavior would be termed as a "company" man. In this mindset the person does not oppose the organization for any

reason and supports the company line on nearly all issues, rarely risking to offer original thought even if it might contribute a benefit to the overall good.

Above and beyond these duties, executive secretaries are responsible to the president, from whom they will receive other assignments. The relationship with the president determines the kind of role executive secretaries will play as they transition into their position. To a large extent, this dynamic influences their significance to the organization. If the president sees them as one with marked abilities, evident loyalty, and trustworthiness, the executive secretary can become a major leader in the organization.

In order for the SDA denomination to reap the benefits of the leadership capacity first leaders bring when they transition into a second-leader position, executive secretaries must be seen as second leaders who are competent and exercise good judgment. They do not serve presidents well just by telling them what they want to hear. They must be the president's best advisors. As former first leaders, executive secretaries understand the value of this; and as former second leaders, many presidents understand the tension of how difficult it is to balance support and loyalty with providing a distinct perspective. How the advising happens as well as when and where they advise the president is important.

Executive secretaries need to learn how to support the president as conscience allows and how to avoid, if at all possible, public debate with the president. However, in a more private setting, executive secretaries can risk to be freely honest and offer their best advice and opinion to the president. It is necessary for executive secretaries to evaluate their viewpoint on any given situation, determine if their viewpoint opposes that of the president, and seek to discern if the difference is a matter of principle or

preference. If they determine it is one of preference, then this is the dividing line of when to yield their preference as second leader to that of the first leader. This will assist the president in seeing the executive secretary as one who has opinions yet understands the role of the president and is humble enough to yield those opinions to the leadership of another. This can create an environment of greater trust from the president. This trust can open the door for the president to commend greater and broader responsibilities to the executive secretary. The assignment of greater responsibilities would increase the other people's perceptions of the executive secretary.

There will be times when president and secretary do not agree. This is one of the deep challenges facing all who serve in this second-leader position. However, when the second leader can support the position of the first leader, it only can enhance the relationship.

North American Division Executive Secretary Survey

In order to ascertain specific information about the mindset and thinking of those currently serving as executive secretaries, a recent survey was conducted by the North American Division Secretariat Office at the local conference and union levels of the denomination. This survey was intended to determine how many came from first-leader positions and their perceptions about their role. In addition, the survey was designed to quantify the difficulty in making the transition from first-leader to second-leader positions.⁹ Of the sixty-eight executive secretaries presently employed, there were forty-five respondents. For those who currently serve in the office of secretary, 91 percent

⁹ North American Division Secretariat Office, *Executive Secretary Survey* (Silver Springs, MD: North American Division Secretariat Office, June 2011).

transitioned from first-leader roles. In total, 66 percent of respondents found it either “challenging” or “very challenging” to transition into their second-leader roles, 55 percent acknowledged having to make some change in how they lead, and 43 percent had to make major leadership adjustments. Only one respondent stated that no change was required.

The statistics provide several interesting points to consider. Since there were an overwhelmingly high percentage of respondents who found the transition challenging, it may mean there is a need to examine assumptions in defining leadership. Perhaps the view of leadership has been too closely associated with a worldly view and not a biblical view. The survey statistics can lead a person to ponder not only the view of the second-leader position but the view of the first-leader position as well, since an overwhelming percentage said they saw themselves more equipped to be first leaders instead of second leaders. The perception one has of both positions adds to the level of difficulty in making the transition.

When asked if their community’s perception of the executive secretary position was that of a leader or a supporter of the president, 88 percent said “supporter,” and 93 percent stated that the responsibility of setting vision is the role of the president and not the secretary. When asked if the president creates an environment and encourages opposing viewpoints 96 percent said “yes,” but 75 percent felt their gifts and temperament were better suited for the first-leader role. The survey revealed that most secretaries did not see the position as a leader. This is highly significant because this is not only how others see the position but actually how the individuals holding the position see themselves. Although they might view the position as both “leader” and “supporter,” the respondents’ reluctance to link the position with strong leadership is telling. It offers

insight on the general perception of the position and how it does not truly reflect the capacity of the persons holding the position. Overall, this demonstrates a need to revisit how the position of executive secretary is conceptualized and how leadership is viewed.

Finally, the survey indicated that over 51 percent received less than four hours of orientation for their new roles. In most cases this orientation came from the president, and in some they were told to read the policy book and to become familiar with it. Providing only four hours of orientation to people who have limited experience even working in a conference office, and often no experience at all, puts them in a very vicarious position. When people are new to a leadership role or organizational culture, they are in need of a great deal of orientation and training in order to see how both they and their gifts fit well within the whole. There are over nine hundred pages of division policies, conference policies, office protocol and procedures, and forms of records and statistics executive secretaries must master to be efficient at their assignments. This alone highlights the need to have a central entity and a central person to provide the training and orientation for executive secretaries, since apparently it is not getting done at the local level.

The survey exposes the need for the denomination to take a very serious look at orientation and training in this vital area of church leadership and governance. It reveals the assumptions about the paradoxical life of the executive secretary, as they are perceived by a significant number of these second leaders. The basic assumption is this: the executive secretary is not a leader but rather a supporter of the president. Therefore, the implication is this: first leaders chosen as executive secretaries must give up leadership in order to be an effective second leader. This tension is what is so challenging

to these robust men and women of God. Often they see the very qualities that landed them the position as now being called into forfeiture in order to do their job.

Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal’s “Four Frames” for Analyzing and Evaluating Perceptions

Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, researchers of organizational behavior, offer some helpful tools that can be applied to the role of executive secretary. They call their tools “frames” and offer an organization or an individual a mechanism to look at situations from four perspectives: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. These frames provide an excellent opportunity to step away from one’s natural inclination to analyze a particular situation or problem. They assist in viewing the role of executive secretary from a different perspective yet one that still lies within the SDA tradition. In their book, *Reframing Organizations*, Bolman and Deal utilize their “the four frames” and write:

There are many ways to label outlooks—mental models, maps, mind-sets, schema, and cognitive lenses to name a few. We have chosen the label *frames*. In describing frames, we deliberately mix metaphors, referring to them as windows, maps, tools, lenses, orientation, and perspectives because all of those images capture part of the ecumenical idea we want to convey. As a mental map, a frame is a set of ideas or assumptions you carry in your head. It helps you understand and negotiate a particular “territory.” The territory isn’t necessarily defined by geography. It could be a sport, an art form, an academic subject, or anything else you care about.¹⁰

The mechanism of frames provides a superb tool for executive secretaries to analyze their role and position from a different perspective than that which they have used in the past. It

¹⁰ Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 12.

allows them to reshape it in such a way to fulfill the SDA-mandated function yet employs the key leadership gifts and potential for which they were chosen in the first place.

Frames can act like compasses to provide guidance to steer through certain situations. They serve as instrument to pull one away from their natural view of things and forces one to look at it from a different perspective. It keeps an organization from the natural inclination of thinking one approach or one solution fits every situation. In their analysis of frames, Bolman and Deal further state:

Like maps, frames are both windows on a territory and tools for navigation. Every tool has distinctive strengths and limitations. The right tool makes a job easier, but the wrong one just gets in the way. One or two tools may suffice for simple jobs, but not for more complex undertakings. Managers who master the hammer and expect all problems to behave like nails find organizational life confusing and frustrating.¹¹

This statement speaks so specifically to the work of the executive secretary and the need to have varying perspectives on any given situation. This allows the secretary to exercise better judgment and flexibility with various situations that may arise. In some situations there is no specific policy or rule that applies but the secretary must use a combination of principles to arrive at the best solution.

Executive secretaries too often get trapped in viewing their position and acting simply from an organizational mindset in order to fulfill the minimum function designated by the *Handbook*. The very nature of this position epitomizes what Bolman and Deal refer to as “the structural frame.”¹² The structural frame is when an organization or individual views a given situation strictly from a mechanical viewpoint. In this frame, the analysis of

¹¹ Ibid., 13.

¹² Ibid., 41.

the situation is always in the light of the policies and the rules of the organization.

Circumstances are viewed from the perspective of what a particular policy says. There is no flexibility, based on the dynamics of a situation and the human dilemma. In this frame, the organization frequently is accused of putting policy above people. The executive secretary too often is perceived in this light. Since one of the major roles of the position is the implementation of policy, it is an ever present temptation to see situations simply from this structural perspective. This is the natural frame from which the secretary operates.

A view from the structural frame suggests that the current position operates almost exclusively within the structural frame. From this standpoint, protecting the organization and the enforcement of policies are the primary purpose of the position. It is designed to create policy and maintain them for the good and the preservation of the organization. The advantage is that it maintains consistency and stability. However, it is very rigid, lacks flexibility, and stifles creativity and innovation. As a result, there is little room for an emphasis on the human factor and relationships.

The second frame mentioned by Bolman and Deal is the human resource frame.¹³ In this frame an organization views a situation from the perspective that relationships are the most important factor. They are primarily concerned about the individual. The organization is secondary. The organization or individual mostly is concerned about the creation and maintenance of a sense of family throughout the company. Human needs are the focus of the organization. In this frame the organization is concerned with the employees having a sense of empowerment.

¹³ Ibid., 111.

When executive secretaries see a situation from this standpoint they will look to see what is best for the individual and not what is best for the organization. In this frame, policies are secondary and do not have a great deal of significance. In the human resource frame, the executive secretary would be an advocate for the needs of the individual. This frame allows the executive secretary to have a different perspective than what policy might afford. It broadens the view. This does not mean the decision will be made from this frame, but this view informs whatever decision is made. Acting from and considering this lens, executive secretaries can change their perspective of the position from being just a policy guru and caring only for the good of the organization to being a minister and caring for people. It also can help constituents not only see the executive differently but the position as well.

The third frame mentioned by Bolman and Deal is the political frame. This is the viewpoint in which power is the most significant factor. In this frame, the organization thrives from competition and organizational politics.¹⁴ There are always hidden agendas and deals being made. Favoritism and special arrangements in such an environment prevail. This frame thrives on a win/lose strategy. It is difficult to admit, but some SDA entities operate frequently out of this frame. In this environment, one might hear phrases like this: “We can’t lose this one” or “We must win at all costs.” From this frame, some might say that at times they view the Seventh-day Adventist denomination as maintaining the organization at the cost of people and other entities of its structure. Since executive secretaries through policy are the keepers of the organizational gate, they often are seen as operating out of this frame. Sometimes due to fear of setting a precedence or being

¹⁴ Ibid., 181.

sued, we operate as a denomination from a win/lose mentality. However, we have the ability and opportunity to effect change. We have the chance to lead the organization from a win/lose mentality to a win/win mentality.

The fourth frame mentioned by Bolman and Deal is the symbolic frame. This frame is identified with meaning, culture, and inspiration.¹⁵ It is the frame that evaluates and seeks to make sense of situations. Scott Cormode, an author that has done in-depth study on Bolman's and Deal's frames, conducted a comprehensive analysis on the symbolic frame. In *Making Spiritual Sense*, he states that this frame gives an organization the very best opportunity for change,¹⁶ which connects very intimately with the values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the biblical principles. This connection is very powerful due to the significant spiritual component. In the SDA structure, a new spiritual understanding makes it possible for change to take place. It is for this reason that viewing the executive secretary position from the perspective in *Making Spiritual Sense* illuminates one's thinking in a most effective way. In his book, Cormode explores more deeply this symbolic frame. Executive secretaries must look for the spiritual foundation and must make spiritual application to their role and function as well as to the organization as a whole. The symbolic frame offers an opportunity to make spiritual sense of the organization and its policies and to share that understanding with others.

The challenge for executive secretaries is to make meaning or spiritual sense of policies and the rules that govern the organization's behavior. First, they must make

¹⁵ Ibid., 240.

¹⁶ Scott Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 9.

spiritual sense for themselves, so they can make spiritual sense of an issue for everyone else. This frame must not be manipulated to serve one's own purpose. One example of a value that can be used for the purpose of policy is that of unity. The unity of the Body of Christ must be the prism through which all policies are filtered. If policies were viewed from this perspective, they could be set in a new light. The approach to problems would be different. While policies are not sacred in and of themselves, they do have underlying principles that are sacred. When the policy stops serving that underlying principle, it is no longer good for the people or the organization. Through the lens of a symbolic frame, such a policy can be eradicated.

Table 2. An Overview of the Four Frames Model¹⁷

	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Metaphor for organization	Factory or machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theatre
Central concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationship	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic leadership challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

As seen in Table 2, these frames by Bolman and Deal can provide the executive secretary a new window through which to interpret and bring spiritual meaning to the

¹⁷ Bolman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 16.

policies of a division, union, or conference to its membership. Some frames may seem clear and straightforward, while others seem puzzling, but learning to apply all four can deepen an appreciation and understanding of organizations. Galileo discovered this when he devised the first telescope. Each lens he added contributed to a more accurate image of the heavens. Successful managers take advantage of the same truth. They reframe until they understand the situation at hand. They do this by using more than one frame, or perspective, to develop both a diagnosis of what they are up against and strategies for moving forward.¹⁸ Using these frames can afford executive secretaries an additional tool to see a new perspective of their situation.

Within the SDA tradition, rules, policies, standards, and standard operating procedures limit discretion and help ensure predictability and uniformity. Rules govern conditions of work and specify standard processes for carrying out tasks, handling personnel issues, and relating to the external environment.¹⁹ The leadership capacity of the executive secretary, the basic reason why he or she is chosen for this position, can move rules and policies beyond this point. Executive secretaries have the opportunity to help others to reframe their perspectives and attitudes, essentially equipping them for greater ministry through the framework of the SDA organization. Understanding the frames can assist in this endeavor, since each of the four frames has a unique way of structuring the question or situation. In this way, a more comprehensive view of a given task or role can be experienced.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ Ibid., 51.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will examine several books that have been selected to bring light to the subject of this project. There are several important contributions that will be identified, which influence the solutions to the ministry challenges identified in Chapter 1. The literature has been divided into three main sections. The first section addresses the essence of leadership. The second discusses how God shapes leaders, and the third informs a theological understanding of the Church.

The Essence of Leadership

In this section of the of the literature review, the focus is on viewing leadership. It will examine spiritual models of leadership in general and from the second-leader role specifically. In a spiritual leadership model, biblical principles and God's role in shaping men and women for leadership communicate the essence of leadership.

Bonem and Patterson's *Leading from the Second Chair*

Bonem and Patterson offer meaningful reflections for individuals serving in second-leader roles in their book called *Leading from the Second Chair*. This book was written

specifically for second leaders working in the church and is significant due to the unique position in which people exercising second-leader roles operate. Bonem and Patterson identify such individuals as “second chair leaders.”¹ They emphasize the rewards of leading from the second chair, even though there are challenges. As mentioned earlier in the project, the authors employ the phrase “living in the paradoxes” to identify the general ambiguity to the tensions that exist in second-chair leadership.²

Bonem and Patterson present three paradoxes the second leader must learn to negotiate.³ The first is the subordinate-leader paradox. This paradox puts second leaders in a role where they are expected to lead in a given situation and yet submit at that same time. Negotiating this paradox involves understanding that although we lead, we may not be the final voice in a given situation. First leaders may ask second leaders to alter their plans or decision. For many, the mental image of a leader involves one who is free to set direction and determine actions for oneself without the oversight of a supervisor. However, mature and effective second leaders do not hold this view. They realize that the first chair is not an adversary. An effective second leader is able to lead without being at the top of the pyramid. More importantly, they understand that their authority and effectiveness as a second chair depends on healthy subordinate relationship with the first chair.⁴

The second paradox is called the “deep and wide paradox.” This paradox describes when second chairs by virtue of their roles have more specific assignments than

¹ Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 2.

² Ibid., 4.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

the first chair. The first chair may have just a working knowledge of a specific area of ministry, but the second chair needs a deeper knowledge due to their detailed tasks. They are required to be narrower in their focus and to go deeper. However, at the same time, they also are asked to maintain a broad organizational perspective. Some who struggle with this necessary depth and breadth often resent their restrictions, feel that their role is too narrow, and see the more detailed work as beneath them. On the other hand, they may fall to the other extreme and flourish in the specific tasks but fail to see or concern themselves with the big picture. When a concern arises, they usually view it solely from the impact it may have on their particular area of ministry.⁵ However, as a leader in the organization it is incumbent for second chairs to have a broader overview of the entire organization that supersedes their specific responsibility.

The third paradox is defined by the tension between contentment and dreaming. This final paradox seeks to balance a second leader, who must stay satisfied with the present without losing the ability to visualize what could be and how God may be leading in the future. Second leaders may have a vision of where God wants their specific ministry to be lead, but sometimes the first leader may not be at the point of embracing it yet. In such situations, second leaders must remain content and mesh their dreams into the present reality of the corporate vision. The second-leader position, Bonem and Patterson argue, does not require one to give up on individual or corporate dreams. They caution second chairs not to let their dreams become myopic and narrowed to just one's own area of responsibility. Furthermore, they advise second leaders not to place their

⁵ Ibid.

visions in competition with the plans of the first chair. Mature and responsible second chairs tend to assist in shaping the organization's direction and blend their individual dreams with the broader vision.⁶

It is essential for the health and effectiveness of the second leader to understand and master the art of navigating these three paradoxes. Bonem and Patterson's identification of the paradoxes offers a brilliant way to assist second leaders who are transitioning from the first-leader role. It provides an in-depth view of some of the challenges the second leader faces and tenders helpful counsel on how to navigate through the difficulties the paradoxes create. The points they discuss identically parallel the issues and dilemmas the executive secretary often faces. For this reason, this resource contributes significantly to the subject this project addresses.

The authors' emphasis on long-term strategies for the second chair, such as being content to remain in a second-leader position over the life of one's ministry, does not apply in the same manner to the Seventh-day Adventist faith tradition. This tradition historically has not been one where any leader stays for a long period of time in a particular post. Frequent movement to other assignments is a part of the culture. Therefore, their strategies about staying for long periods of time will not apply as much in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are not as relevant because in many cases the denomination views the second-leader role as one that prepares a person for primary leadership in another context.

⁶ Ibid., 5.

Bolman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations*

Regarding the essence of leadership and how second chairs can re-evaluate their view, *Reframing Organizations* by Bolman and Deal surfaces some very key points for the role of the executive secretary. The main theme of this book is to assist an organization or a leader to look at situations from distinct perspectives in an effort to reframe them. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the authors use frames to label outlooks, mental models, mindsets, and cognitive lenses. Some organizations and leaders tend to view circumstances solely through the lens of their own leadership style or perspective. The authors present an approach that pushes an organization or leader to assess a situation from another standpoint, which often distinguishes itself from the leader or organization's own natural or cultural inclination. For this reason, they identify several frames that can be used to achieve this uncommon vantage point. Bolman and Deal's seek to assist people with the goal of gaining additional insights and thereby making better decisions. The authors have employed the use of four frames to accomplish this task: structural, political, human resources and symbolic frames. While this topic was introduced in Chapter 2, the discussion below centers on how frames inform the essence of leadership.

The structural frame emphasizes formal leadership roles. In a structural frame, the organization has a primary focus on employees fitting into a predetermined, even rigid organizational relationship. Leaders possessing a structural mindset generally manage by policies, rules, and hierarchical structure.⁷ In this frame an organization is quite

⁷ Ibid., 41-43.

regimented and exists to increase efficiency and enhance performance.⁸ The preservation of the organization is foremost and primary.⁹ In this frame even though not explicitly stated, people must adapt to the structure.

In the political frame, leadership embraces the idea that politics are a part of what takes place whenever people come together in any setting. A jaded view of politics constitutes a serious threat to individual and organizational effectiveness. Leadership through the political frame functions with some as winners and some as losers. It is simply the realistic process of making decisions and allocating resources in a context of scarcity in divergent emphasis. This puts politics at the heart of decision-making.¹⁰

In contrast to both the structural and political frames, leadership viewed through the human resource frame places a primary and positive priority on people. It has as its underlying philosophy that people are the most essential resource. This frame centers on how the organization affects the people it employs. Leaders with this mindset seek to shape policies and structures that are in the best interest of the people first and the organization second. The human resource frame centers on how characteristics of organizations and people impact what they do for one another.¹¹

Bolman and Deal's final frame is symbolic and is most applicable to a Christian organization. The authors state that the symbolic perspective focuses on how humans make sense of the messy and ambiguous world in which they live. Regarding the essence

⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 181.

¹¹ Ibid., 111.

of leadership, meaning, belief, and faith are central concerns. Meaning is not given to us. We have to create it. For example, many revere the flag of the United States while others burn it. The flag is symbolically powerful for both groups, but each finds very different meanings in it. Symbols are the basic building blocks of the systems and cultures that human beings inhabit. People live in cultures in the same way that fish live in water. Just as fish are said to discover water last, often our own cultural ways are invisible to us.¹²

Bolman and Deal argue that if an organization grows without reframing itself, inevitably problems will arise.¹³ They assert with growth there are always additional challenges and issues that arise. If an organization is not proactive in reframing itself then the challenges will overwhelm the organization; and its growth, effectiveness, and health of the organization will be stifled. This is a dynamic that applies to the second-leader role as well. Just as it is incumbent on the organization to reframe its governance to meet the varying demands of a complex society, it is also necessary for executive secretaries to reframe their leadership as the contextual role shifts from being a first leader to being a second leader.

The contribution this literature makes is the four-frame model, which already has proved useful in helping to analyze and evaluate the current perceptions of the SDA's traditional role of executive secretary.¹⁴ Bolman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations* is a true gem in that it provides a concrete tool through the four frames for leaders to obtain new and different perspectives. If applied with a reasonable degree of objectivity, it can

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴ See Chapter 2 for details regarding this portion of the discussion.

afford a second leader an analytic tool that could prove to be invaluable. For this reason, this project utilizes Bolman and Deal's four frames in Part Three to assist the first leader in transitioning into a second-leader position.

The information provided in this book can be helpful to anyone looking to gain multiple perspectives on a given situation. The limitation of the book is it did not necessarily expound on the symbolic frame from a spiritual perspective. It used more secular language and symbols. Therefore, the Christian reader must bridge the gap, extrapolate principles, and apply them to a Christian context. As one looks through the different frames, it is incumbent upon readers to remain objective in their view as they apply them. This is a challenge for many. However, if a person seeks to be objective, this tool can open new avenues to perspectives that provide meaning within an organization.

J. Oswald Sanders' *Spiritual Leadership*

Regarding the essence of leadership and how God shapes leaders, J. Oswald Sanders offers some helpful insights into the definition of a spiritual leader. In *Spiritual Leadership*, he seeks to take the reader beyond corporate and secular models of leadership with the purpose of illustrating spiritual leadership as only emanating from God.¹⁵ He acknowledges natural and acquired abilities. However, he urges that it is more than this that defines true spiritual leadership, which is something that comes from a deep and genuine relationship with God. Sanders makes three important assertions in *Spiritual Leadership*, which will be highlighted here.

¹⁵ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967).

The first is that spiritual leadership as a matter of superior spiritual power can never be generated on one's own.¹⁶ This spiritual power gives its possessors the ability to influence others not by the power of their own personality but by that personality irradiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Sanders insists there is no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader. Leaders are able to influence another person spiritually only because the Spirit is able to work in and through them to a greater degree than in those they lead. This principle is validated by the Bible, as will be shown in Chapters 4 and 5 of this project, and it is the key to understanding not only second-leader leadership but all leadership.

The second assertion from Sanders is that spiritual leaders are likely to be persons who have no desire to lead but are forced into a position by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the pressure of the external circumstances of which the individual has no control.¹⁸ He employs the examples of biblical characters such as David and Moses. Sanders believes that leaders are generally reluctant candidates to lead God's cause. He even goes further to say that people who are ambitious to lead are disqualified as a leader. In fact, he emphasizes that there is often a sense of unworthiness by people God chooses to call, but this call is not to be refused due to a sense of inadequacy. Sanders even shares a personal experience of God's displeasure when, due to perceived inadequacies, he sought to be relieved of the leadership to which God was calling him.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

Sanders' final assertion is that there is a difference between being given a spiritual position of leadership by human beings as opposed to being given spiritual authority by God to lead.²⁰ Sanders continues by arguing that the supernatural nature of the Church demands a leadership which rises above the human and natural to something that is above itself. Spiritual leaders are not made by the election of people or by their appointment. Simply holding a position of leadership in a church or organization does not constitute one as a spiritual leader.²¹ Religious position can be conferred by committees; but spiritual authority, which is the prime essential for Christian leadership, comes from God. God seeks out a person who has qualified in the secret place of His sanctuary. This resonates well with the Scriptures (cf. (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 75:5-6; Psalm 91:1-6; Acts 1:8).

Sanders' points on spiritual leadership are profound. Analyzing the above assertions that Sanders makes has leadership-altering impact from the perspective of the executive secretary. One specific point that contributes to the project is that spiritual leadership is more than a position; it is about spiritual authority. This spiritual authority or influence to lead can come while occupying any post, even the second-leader position. Essentially, leadership is more about how one leads rather than the position from which one leads. Another contribution Sanders makes to this project is that God calls and equips people for His service. It is true that God may use committees or human beings as His agents, but He does the divine calling (cf. Acts 1:24).

Sanders' assertions have a strong biblical foundation. The spiritual perspective of leadership only can be understood through an active relationship with God. God must

²⁰ Ibid., 20.

²¹ Ibid., 17.

give the leader the ability to see past the natural things of the heart (1 Corinthians 2:14). Second leaders must define spiritual leadership by God's definition and not their own. Neither can they rely on others for this definition. This includes the church environment in which they lead. Sanders' assertions could actually revolutionize the perspectives of leadership roles from the second- and first-leader positions.

Collins' *Good to Great*

Regarding the essence of leadership and God's shaping of a person's heart, *Good to Great* proves a key source because it highlights the traits of effective leaders. These traits parallel very closely with biblical characteristics of leadership. Collins uncovers in his study of successful companies the key values that have moved them from "good" companies to "great" companies. It was very inspiring to see how many of these values correspond very well to values SDA holds as a church organization.

One idea that Collins promotes is that "good" is the enemy of "great."²² He says being above average actually can work against a company or an individual, because it robs the organization or person of wanting to improve. This has led me to ask the following question in my area of influence: "This is good, but can it be better?" After reading *Good to Great*, I now ask this of any project—even of sermons. Some observers have wondered if I am becoming too consumed by such thinking. Perhaps I am, but given the biblical injunction of "whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might," (Ecclesiastes 9:10), I am much more concerned about being complacent. In my area of

²² Collins, *Good to Great*, 2.

ministry, I now witness others starting to ask themselves the same question. It seems to be a contagious dynamic.

The second point that Collins makes is that in every case where a company moved from “good” to “great,” the leader was not a harsh, driving, domineering, or self-consumed personality. The leader had a confident but low-key personal approach that put the company before selfish ambitions and interests.²³ This was quite insightful, since society often values just the opposite of this when it comes to successful company leaders.

Collins advises readers to avoid falling into the same trap as other organizations. It is tempting for organizations to fall into the snare of thinking a dominant, strong, overwhelming personality is what the company needs to get to a more successful level of operation. A healthier mindset means looking not just at what may be more outwardly appealing; but for the person who has inner qualities, such as humility and selflessness, this can help move the organization forward. This inward perspective concurs with what Scripture says, “Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks at the heart.”(1 Samuel 16:7). God looks at the inner qualities of a person more than the outward ones.

Cormode’s Making Spiritual Sense

While there were several authors whose works offer very excellent practical steps for the executive secretary’s embrace of essential leadership, Cormode’s *Making Spiritual Sense* advocates the importance of looking for the spiritual value and meaningful lesson in whatever situation that may arise. This is the core responsibility of spiritual leaders. It does not matter if they are first or second leaders. For this reason,

²³ Ibid., 18.

there are many concepts presented in this book that can assist those transitioning from first-leader roles to second-leader roles.

One that resounds is that of the essential duty of the spiritual leader to provide a spiritual context for people.²⁴ Basically, a leader can help people to interpret their context and assist them in finding spiritual meaning. Leaders must equip their members with the essential tools to interpret their context. They then can determine their own direction.²⁵ They often will not need to be led beyond that. This is a very interesting thought regarding helping first leaders make the transition into a second-leader role. Cormode's approach to leadership and helping people see the world differently is present throughout the Bible. In the Scriptures God and His leaders continually seek to help God's people to view things from a spiritual perspective. God says through Isaiah, "My thoughts are not your thoughts and my ways are not your ways" (Isaiah 55:8) In Luke 22:25-27, Jesus tries to get His disciples to interpret leadership differently by contrasting His leadership methods differently than the gentiles. In Matthew 5 Jesus seeks to help His followers see His Kingdom differently from what they had imagined and been taught. Cormode's approach really puts a new slant on leadership in that it takes what is present in a given situation and views it with spiritual eyeglasses firmly placed.

As a result of reading Cormode's *Making Spiritual Sense*, I already have begun talking with my staff about how to "make spiritual sense." Often within the SDA structure, people are so used to being told what to do, they almost do not know how to respond when given a Christian perspective and the freedom to move forward and make

²⁴ Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense*, 9.

²⁵ Ibid.

the decisions. However, due to SDA's embrace of biblical truths, this new approach has not taken long for individuals to implement, and they find it liberating. I have observed many under my leadership making good decisions, and some are even better than mine.

Cormode's second key concept is the method of how "meaning-making" leadership happens.²⁶ This phrase focuses on giving people tools to interpret spiritual meaning from life's situations. Cormode argues that leaders are not responsible just to interpret and provide spiritual context and framework; he emphasizes that how it is done is equally important.²⁷ People must be equipped with the vocabulary and theological categories to imagine a different way to interpret the world and let their actions flow from these new interpretations.

Wilfred H. Drath and Charles J. Palus' *Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice*

Closely associated to the previous book by Cormode is *Making Common Sense* by Wilfred H. Drath and Charles J. Palus, whose premise is helping people make sense specifically of what occurs in their community and using personal power to make their own decisions. The authors argue that this is not individualism, with people acting from their own personal experience solely, but rather people acting together in community with the understanding that they are connected to a social system.²⁸ Drath and Palus' approach does not assume that people need to be motivated and influenced by leadership.

²⁶ Ibid., 66-67.

²⁷ Ibid., 74.

²⁸ Wilfred H. Drath and Charles J. Palus, *Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice* (Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership, 1994).

Moving away from the notion of leadership as people who influence followers to follow, *Making Common Sense* views leadership as a process in which a community or a group of people collectively exercise their wisdom and gifts. In this model, leadership can change from one person to the next, depending on the need and the situation. The authors argue that the benefit disentangles power and authority from a single person, thereby strengthening the community or the organization.

This is a very interesting concept but not one that can be adopted in a straightforward way into the SDA realm. However, there are some points that can be helpful to a leader in transition. These include evaluating one's predicament from a practical point of view, seeking to determine how the community impacts one's leadership, and analyzing what the community is expecting from that leadership.

These concepts coincide completely with *Spiritual Leadership* by Sanders, who states eloquently:

When a man, in virtue of an official position demands obedience of another, irrespective of the reason or conscience, this is the spirit of tyranny. When on the other hand, by the exercise of tact and sympathy; prayer, spiritual power and sound wisdom one is able to influence and enlighten another, so that through the medium of his own reason and conscience is led to alter one course and adopt another, that is true spiritual leadership.²⁹

This statement compares the difference in leadership. The first position deals with leadership by force, while the other describes leadership through influence born of spiritual qualities. These include meekness and humility that overflow from a relationship with God. The latter is not a forced submission but a willing submission to one's leadership. The forced obedience based on factors of power never will make a person a

²⁹ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 52.

spiritual leader. In other words, if spiritual leaders must rely on intimidation, manipulation, or positional power to get people to follow them, then the use of these tactics confirms they are not a spiritual leader. On the other hand, if they are indeed a spiritual authority, they can lead from the power that God has provided and the methods He has given them. If one is able to accept the wisdom in this statement, then leadership can have just as much potency in the second role as in the first role.

How God Shapes the Leaders He Calls

The second cluster of literature utilized for this project focuses on the manner and methods God uses to prepare or shape individuals for whatever assignment to which He has called them. Collectively, they employ biblical examples of the hand of God at work modeling and shaping the lives of Old Testament and New Testament leaders. The resources that will be presented in this section are Carlyle B. Haynes' *God Sent a Man* and Reggie McNeal's *The Work of Heart*.³⁰

Haynes' God Sent a Man

In *God Sent a Man*, Haynes' essential message is that God uses trials and the circumstances of life to mold the hearts of His leaders. To do this, Haynes traces the steps of the life of Joseph, Jacob's son. One of his purposes is "to emphasize that whoever accepts the teaching of the Bible that God has a plan for his life, and keeps that before him always, is bound to see his most cherished dreams fulfilled and the will of God for

³⁰ Carlyle B. Haynes, *God Sent a Man* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 1962); Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000).

him completely realized.”³¹ According to Haynes, such people will recognize in common circumstances the tools that God uses to shape and mold and fit them for His destiny. Also, they will yield themselves to the impressions and convictions that come from above. The recognition of God’s hand leading a person’s life allows that person to rise above the difficult or uncomfortable circumstances inherent in a fallen, broken world. Through this lens, the trials and negative events transpiring in an individual’s life have a purpose and frequently do not have the same negative as often happens when God’s purposes through such circumstances are not identified.

With his book, Haynes seeks to assist servants of God to see in every turn of their life the divine hand of God. In using the example of Joseph, Haynes illustrates how God did this for Joseph even while he was stranded in the pit. God’s hand guided Joseph. Haynes explains that God in His wisdom hides the future from His servants.³² If they could see what lies around the corner during the preparation for their next assignment, many would turn away from His leadings. Haynes continues to demonstrate how the impact of the pit, being sold into slavery, the prison experience all shaped Joseph to become the second in charge of all Egypt. If any step along Joseph’s previous journey would have been missed, then he may have failed to be fully prepared for the assignment God had been preparing him. Haynes states:

So the sequence of events and the train of circumstances that seems so cruel, so unjust, so uncalled for all had purpose in them. They were all a part of the working together of all things for good. They were all necessary for the carrying out of God’s plans. Joseph was in the right place in prison. He was there at the right time. Every step in the process was under providential control. And the

³¹ Ibid., 24.

³² Ibid., 48.

outcome, as we shall see, was supremely right. God knows what He is doing. He knows how to do it. He does not make mistakes. Every move is a controlled move. And when we place ourselves and keep ourselves in His hand, then only and there only can we be safe and assured. He is the God who sees to it.³³

In this way, it is critical for leaders to see their position or assignment as being given by God. Haynes emphasis lifts leaders above their myopic world and redirects their heart to where God wants it to be.³⁴ When leaders are surrounded by dire circumstances, not necessarily of their choosing, they must still see the hand of God.

The contribution this book makes to this project is the extensive illustration of the certainty of God's hand at work in every phase of one's life. The assurance that God is leading and shaping one's life with every assignment given is extremely valuable in the life of the second leader. It assists second leaders to see God has something of value at their current station of life. If any leader can look through this matrix—whether first or second leaders—the profound realization will exert a profound impact on their leadership. Leaders in transition, especially into role of executive secretary, have a unique opportunity for leadership introspection and to discover why this strange shift from first leader to second leader for a season is so necessary to becoming an even more fruit-bearing first leader.

McNeal's *A Work of Heart*

Another book that discusses the heart shaping that God does is *A Work of Heart*, written by McNeal. Through a revealing look into the lives of four Bible characters—Moses, David, Paul, and Jesus—McNeal specifically speaks an important message regarding how God shapes leaders' hearts to prepare them for their mission. To do this,

³³ Ibid., 87.

³⁴ Ibid., 52.

McNeal presents the impact of culture and a leader's worldview in the molding process. He encapsulates everything about the leader in his definition of culture. He includes one's call to ministry, connection to others, conflict that has been a part of one's personal life, and every aspect of one's existence that has sculptured personal being.³⁵ McNeal explains God's use of all of these aspects to shape the inner being of leaders. Each of them is of vital importance to the sculpting process of a person.

One key point of emphasis is God's use of other people in His servant's life to have a desired impact of shaping the life of a leader.³⁶ One such example is Moses, a leader who was somewhat disconnected from his people and family. Moses did not grow up with his father and was quite distant from his stepfather. God inserts into the picture Jethro, one who later would occupy a first-leader role over Moses as chief of the family. According to McNeal, the recounting of a leader's journey usually turns up a Jethro or two.³⁷ These persons are God's gifts to the leader to provide encouragement and guidance. They often fill a void in an area that is lacking.

According to McNeal, most often they come from outside the family structure.³⁸ God usually brings them along at critical points in the leader's life, often when there is unusual self-doubt or when God seeks to pull all the pieces together for that which He has been preparing the leader. These "God-sent Jethros" are generally very understanding of

³⁵ McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 73-75.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

the leader's concerns and do not come with condemnation but with unconditional love and support.³⁹ While creating this sense of unconditional love, they still offer a high degree of accountability for the leader.⁴⁰ This individual invests heavily in the leader without owning the leader, which allows individuals to feel free to follow their God-given assignment. This is God's way of using the "Jethro-types" to shape and mold the heart of His leader.

One of the interesting aspects of God's shaping of hearts is His use of culture as a tool. McNeal illustrates how God employs the cultural influences of leaders to shape them for a specific assignment. McNeal shows how God conveniently arranged for Moses to grow up in the culture of the Egyptians, the Hebrews, and then later the Midianites.⁴¹ Each one played a significant role in Moses' leadership as he carried out his assignment. McNeal also describes how David absorbed the heart cry of his people to experience stable national leadership and to be free from the Philistine threat.⁴² Later, he goes to analyze Paul's shaping process as the premier Christian missionary—all of which included Jewish, Roman, and Greek cultural conditioning.⁴³ Finally, Jesus shared the cultural influences of His fellow countrymen under the bondage of Pharisaic Judaism. The lives of these biblical heroes cannot be understood apart from their cultural context.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 73-75.

⁴² Ibid., 74.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

It is critical to understand that God does not necessarily seek to separate people from their culture. Rather, He often uses it to help shape them into the leader He needs for a specific assignment in this culture. McNeal writes: “God shapes the leader’s heart in order to amplify his own heart through the leader. Once captured by God’s heart, the leader is positioned to share God’s heart with God’s people. This divine intention is nowhere more apparent than in the way God uses culture as a method of heart sculpting.”⁴⁵

The contribution McNeal makes to this project is his illustration of how God uses the things around leaders, including the culture, to shape and mold them into the leader He desires for a particular assignment. This concept McNeal asserts can suggest that even the culture of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is being used by God to shape leaders. This includes the executive secretary position, since the heart of successful first leaders often struggle to acculturate into the new second-leader reality.

Ecclesiology

The third category of literature utilized for this project focuses on the theological study of the Church in order to provide a context for how the leader fits in to the Body of Christ. The resources that will be presented in this section are *The Church: Contours of Christian Theology* by Edmund P. Clowney and *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology* by Everett Ferguson.⁴⁶ Collectively they provide a biblical understanding of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁶ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church: Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1995); Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).

the Body of Christ and helps leaders to interpret their leadership role through the lens of ecclesiology.

Clowney's *The Church: Contours of Christian Theology*

In *The Church*, Clowney gives some helpful insights into the relationship of the head to the Body of Christ. In addition he expounds on the relationship of the body parts as they relate to the Church of God. Clowney seeks to position the roles and the value of the Church in its proper place and to define the Church's structure and organization from a biblical perspective. Clowney admonishes the Church to be cautious in borrowing structures from the business corporations, especially military ones. He believes that when Christians form their organizations to accomplish the Church's ministry, they have a responsibility to apply themselves to the teachings of the Scriptures on the form and function of the Body of Christ.⁴⁷

One of the points Clowney emphasizes in his book is that God calls the Church to be His people. Clowney not only speaks to the church corporation but also to individual disciples of Christ. Clowney develops his argument around Deuteronomy 7:7-8, where it states: "The Lord did not set his love upon you nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you." God chose His people simply due to His love for them. His choice stemmed from His good pleasure and not from human merit. God's great act of love for His Church gives Him the privilege of structuring the Body of Christ, according to His design and

⁴⁷ Clowney, *The Church*, 202.

plan.⁴⁸ This is essential to the main argument of Clowney's book. He believes that since the organization is the people of God, then God should have something to say about its structure.

According to Clowney, another purpose of God's election of a special people was so they could serve Him. In the Old Testament, God chose Israel to make known His salvation to all nations. However, God did not choose Israel that He might use Israel's prowess. God does not choose the spiritually fit. The Lord claimed Israel not just as His servant but as His firstborn son (Exodus. 4:22; Deuteronomy 32:10).⁴⁹

Clowney argues strongly that since the Church belongs to God, the government of the Church must begin with the Lord and His Kingdom authority.⁵⁰ Christ is the head of the Church. Therefore, His rule is unique and incomparable. A second principle is how the Church reveals the organic life of Christ's body.⁵¹ It lives as an organism and not just an organization. The third principle Clowney presents is that the Church is not like the kingdom of this world, because it is organized for service and not dominion. All government is stewardship, in that leaders are servant managers meant to use their authority only to advance the interests of those they represent and serve.⁵²

Clowney promotes the idea of the organic life of the Church and uses the analogy of the body presented by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. He says that the model of

⁴⁸ Ibid., 203.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 203.

⁵¹ Ibid., 204.

⁵² Ibid.

church order is organic.⁵³ He asserts that the distinct gifts in the Body of Christ do not divide but unite, for their exercise is mutual. The governing of a church is a shared responsibility. Without the support of the whole body, the work of those with greater gifts for leadership would not be effective or even possible. In the Body of Christ, believers submit to the authority of others while exercising their own abilities. Clowney refers to this as organic mutuality.⁵⁴ Organic mutuality requires the joint exercise of church authority. Therefore, this understanding sets the Church apart in its organizational structure from secular and corporate organizational models.

There are two major points from Clowney's book that apply specifically to this project of assisting first leaders into the role of second leaders. The first is the emphasis on the Church belonging to God; its government and authority center on Christ. If this understanding is valid and truly grasped in the SDA Church, then it genuinely can affect the manner in which first leaders and second leaders function. In fact, it would impact how SDA members view leadership as a whole. Since Christ's Kingdom is spiritual and not temporal, the power given to the Church and its leaders must be spiritual as well.

A second idea by Clowney that surfaces in this project is his emphasis on the concept of organic mutuality, which requires shared responsibility and authority. This concept is very significant as one examines the role and the transition into a second-leader role. It helps support the supposition this project presents in establishing the second leader as ordained by God and, while distinct, remains as significant as the first-leader role.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 205.

The limitation Clowney's book has in regards to this project's ministry challenge is that it never speaks to second leaders directly as a specific group. His emphasis is to all the members of the body and not any one subset. His book also does not address the misunderstanding of leadership, even as the first leader of the church. Nevertheless, the other principles he presents are clear and convincing as well as applicable.

Ferguson's *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology*

The Church of Christ by Ferguson evokes provocative reflection as one wrestles with the meaning of the Church in today's society. His primary thesis presents a biblical theology of the Church in the light of questions that come from a contemporary context. Ferguson argues that the expression of the physiological and anatomical importance of the head is misapplied when it comes to the Body of Christ.⁵⁵ Sometimes one can think of a head of state or head of a business when thinking about Paul's analogy in reference to the head (Ephesians 4:15). In this analogy of the body, the head is more aligned with the Jewish corporate personality, where the head stood for the whole.⁵⁶ The point Ferguson illustrates for Paul's use of "head" in Colossians 1:18 is this: "Christ is the head of the body," meaning the beginning, origin, or source.⁵⁷ This conveys the same idea that Christ is the head of the Church as He is the head of creation in the sense of being the source (Ephesians 1:22). The Church has its point of origin in Christ. It takes its rise from the saving work of Christ.

⁵⁵ Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 95 and 97.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

According to Ferguson, the Book of Colossians emphasizes the preeminence of Christ and the Book of Ephesians highlights the importance of the Church. Even with the exalted view of the Church in Ephesians, the superiority of Christ in this book is even greater. In Ephesians 4:4 the meaning of “head” means first in rank, leadership, or authority.⁵⁸

Another point Ferguson brings out can be found in his definition and understanding of *ekklesia*. He suggests that the word *ekklesia* refers to “assembly,” with a reference to what was done and not to where it was done.⁵⁹ The popular etymology deriving the word from “called out” is not supported by the actual use of the word in the biblical text. He argues the emphasis was on a concrete act of assembly and not a separation from others.

The central idea Ferguson raises in reference to *ekklesia* differs from the understanding that the SDA faith tradition holds. The Seventh-day Adventist denomination interprets “I” as the called-out ones in the Bible commentary. Adventists acknowledge *ekklesia* as originally referring to “assembly” or “congregation” with respect to Israel and a Jewish assembly. During the same time, *ekklesia* in Christian usage meant either the place of worship or the body of worshippers whether or not assembled together.⁶⁰

Due to Ferguson’s contribution, this project has sharpened my focus and understanding of *ekklesia* and its relevance to those God has called. His statement that

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁰ Francis D., Raymond F. Cottrell, and Don F. Neufell, eds., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. vol. 5 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 1996), 448.

challenged my tradition's view of *ekklesia* has helped me to have a better understanding of *ekklesia* and its impact on those God has called. However, Ferguson's definition does not go far enough to establish the Church in its unique role. The role of a church is not called out to assembly but to be different from the world around. It is due to this difference that believers are to separate from the world (2 Corinthians 6:17), even in our leadership and governance structures while remaining biblical. If this is not true, then it weakens the position of our organizational structures being different from any other.

CHAPTER 4

A THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's ecclesiology is multifaceted. The Church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (1 John 4:2). In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, they are called out to be separate from the world.¹ They come together in worship, in fellowship, and in the preaching of God's Word. Deeply imbedded in the theology and the culture of the denomination is the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The Church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word (John 1:13). Additionally, it is God's family, whose members are adopted by Him as children (Ephesians 1:5). They live on the basis of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:6). The Church is the Body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head (Ephesians 4:15). This community is the bride for whom Christ died for the purpose of sanctifying and cleansing (Revelation 21:9). At His return in triumph (Revelation 22:17), He will present this community to

¹ John Fowler, ed., *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing, 2005) 163.

Himself as a glorious Church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, with no spot or wrinkle but holy and without blemish.²

Due to its prophetic role the SDA Church, if it is to be authentically “the Church,” must be understood as a theological organization. It is this theological understanding that provides unity to the Church, allowing each member to exercise unique gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ. Effective church leadership, therefore, must be capable of guiding the SDA Church in developing its own theological identity so that all of the extensions of itself (local church, conference, division, theological educational institutions, and the like) will be authentic expressions of that theological identity. Only in this way can SDA church organizations provide a proper structural context within which and from which genuine Christian practice may be nurtured and guided in the world.³ If the Church is to develop leaders, the understanding of what it is to be the Body of Christ in today’s world must be the aim of such leadership development. This theological understanding forms the basis of all leadership development training in the Church.

Consequently, this chapter provides a theological context and environment for leaders operating in the Church. It presents the Old and New Testament perspectives of the congregation of God’s people and explains the New Testament’s view of how the roles and functions of the Church interact and interplay with one another. Also, it emphasizes the importance of each specific part, no matter how small. This chapter

² Ibid.

³ I am indebted to Joseph C. Hough, Jr. and John B. Cobb, Jr., *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 5-6, for their stimulating discussion of church leadership.

concludes by demonstrating God's view of the first leader, the second leader, and all who play a role in the His Church.

Old and New Testament Perspectives of the Church

Those who followed God in the Old Testament have had many names, such "people of God" (Exodus 18:19), "children of Israel" (Leviticus 19:2), and "the seed of Abraham" (Genesis 26:24). From the earliest times, God-fearing families in the lineage of Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, and Abraham were the guardians of His truth (Genesis 12:1). These households, in which the father functioned as the priest, could be considered as the congregation of God's people in miniature. To Abraham, God gave the rich promises through which this household of God gradually became a nation. Israel's mission was simply an extension of that which was given to Abraham to be a blessing to all nations, thus showing God's love for the world (Genesis 12:1-3).

The nation God brought out of Egypt was called "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). Its members were considered "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" and God's "holy people" (Exodus 19:5).⁴ In 1 Peter 2:5, the apostle Peter, uses this same language when he says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed in deed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices accepted to God by Jesus Christ." The apostle continues by saying in 1 Peter 2:9, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should bring forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." The Scriptures

⁴ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 165-166.

identify God's people with this language in the Old and New Testaments as being the same—in essence, those who follow Him. In the Old Testament they were referred to more as “a nation” (cf. Genesis 12:2; 2 Samuel 7:23; Exodus 33:13) and in the New Testament as “the Church” (cf. Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 1:2).

The people of God from the Old Testament and the people of God in the New Testament were headed in two different directions. The people of God from the Old Testament had strayed away from Him and were being rejected by Him (Matthew 23:37; Malachi 3:7-8; 1 Chronicles 7:14; Daniel 9:24). In the New Testament the Church is presented as the people of God who are being drawn to him and established by Him (Matthew 16:18). At the cross where Jesus sacrificed Himself, the missions of the two groups come to a climax: the first, that of the people of God gone awry, so centered upon itself that it was blinded to the very One who had given it its existence; the second, that of Christ, so centered on love for people that He perished in their place to give them eternal existence. While the cross signifies the end of Israel's mission, Christ's resurrection inaugurated the Church and its mission to be the proclamation of the gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ (Colossians 2:11-17). When the Jews lost the sense of their mission, they became just another nation and ceased to be God's witnesses to other nations. In their place God established a new nation, the Body of Christ, to carry forward His mission for the world (Matthew 21:41, 43).

The New Testament Church, closely related to ancient Israel's community of faith, is made up of both converted Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 11:17-18). In this way, true Israel is all those who by faith accept Christ (Galatians 3:26-29). Paul

illustrates the new organic relationship of these diverse peoples through the imagery of two trees: a good and wild olive tree, Israel and Gentiles respectively. The Jews who do not accept Christ are no longer the children of God and are represented by branches broken off of the good tree, while those Jews who received Christ remain attached (Romans 9:6-8). The Bible asserts that God's people are no longer identified by the physical blood line that they share but by the spiritual blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Gentiles are grafted in and are a part of the Body of Christ as certainly as are the Jews (Romans 11:24).

The New Testament Church differs significantly from its Old Testament counterpart. The apostolic Church became an independent organization, separate from the nation of Israel. National boundaries were discarded, giving the Church a universal character (Galatians 3:29). Instead of a national Church, it became a missionary Church, existing to accomplish God's original plan, which was restated in the divine mandate of its founder, Jesus Christ: "Make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).⁵

From its earliest days, the Christian movement was persecuted (Acts 4:3). Jesus was attacked by the religious and political establishment of His day from the moment He came to public attention. His death came about due to a conspiracy between the existing religious establishment with the political and military powers resident in His culture (John 19:4-6). In those first months and years after Jesus' death and resurrection, the Church appears actually to have been "the body of Christ" (Acts 2:41-42). All the members truly cared for one another. The members of the Jerusalem church, the first Christian organization mentioned in Scripture "held all things in common" (Acts 2:44).

⁵ Ibid., 166-167.

The stronger cared for the weaker. They worshipped daily and broke bread together, giving praise to God (Acts 2:46-47).

There are several references to Christ as the Rock or foundation of His people. This symbol is used to convey the thought that everything about God's Church, stands and rests on Jesus. Peter testified that Christ fulfilled this prediction not as a common pebble but a "living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious" (1 Peter 2:4). Paul identified Him as the only sure foundation, saying, "No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Referring to the rock that Moses struck, he said, "And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). These Scriptures reveal the understanding that without Christ, the Church has no existence.

Despite the grandiosity of Jesus' pronouncement, the Church was feeble and weak. It consisted of a few tired, doubting, self-promoting disciples; a handful of women; and a fickle multitude that vanished when the Rock was struck (John 19:25). Nevertheless, the Church was built not on frail human wisdom and ingenuity but on the Rock of Ages. Time would reveal that nothing could destroy His Church or deter it from its mission of glorifying God and leading men and women to the Savior (Acts 4:12-13).⁶

After Jesus' ascension, the leadership of the Church rested in the hands of the apostles. Their first organizational act, in counsel with other believers, was to elect another apostle to take Judas' place (Acts 1:15-26). As the Church grew, the apostles

⁶ Ibid., 164-165.

realized the impossibility of both preaching the gospel and caring for the Church's temporal affairs. So they turned the Church's practical business over to seven men whom the Church appointed. Though the Church distinguished between the "ministry of the word" and "serving tables," it made no attempt to separate clergy from laity in discharging the mission of the Church (Acts 6:1-4). In fact, two of the seven, Stephen and Philip, were noted for their effective preaching and evangelism (Acts 7 and 8).⁷

The Church's expansion into Asia and Europe called for additional steps in organization. With the establishment of numerous new Christ-centered fellowships, elders were ordained in every church to ensure stable leadership (Acts 14:23). When a major crisis developed, the parties involved were allowed to state their respective positions to a general council comprised of apostles and elders representing the Church at large. The decisions of this council were seen as binding upon all parties and were accepted as the voice of God (Acts 15: 1-29). This incident illustrates the fact that when it is a matter of issues affecting the entire Church, counsel and authority on a much broader level than that of the local church are necessary. In this case, the decision of the council grew from the agreement reached by the representatives of all parties involved (Acts 15:22, 25).⁸ The New Testament makes clear that as the need arose, God guided the leadership of His work. With His direction and in counsel with the Church, they formed a

⁷ Ibid., 174.

⁸ Ibid.

government that, if followed today, will help safeguard the Church from apostasy and enable it to fulfill its great commission.⁹

Christ's headship over the Church is based primarily on His mediatory work. Since His victory over Satan on the cross, Christ has been given "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). God has put "all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). He is therefore "Lord of lords and King of kings" (Revelations 17:14). Christ also is Head of the Church, because the Church is His body (Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 1:18). Believers are "members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (Ephesians 5:30). They must have an intimate connection with Him, because from Him the Church is "nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments (Colossians 2:19 RSV)."¹⁰

Christ demonstrates His authority in a variety of ways. He does it through the establishment of the Christian Church (Matthew 16:18). He also accomplishes this through the institution of ordinances the Church administers such as foot-washing, communion, and baptism (Matthew 26:26-30). He endows the Church with divine authority to act in His name and accomplish His purposes in the world (Matthew 16:19). Additionally, He sends the Holy Spirit to guide His Church under His authority (John 15:26) and designates within the Church special gifts. Individuals can function as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds), and teachers to prepare its members

⁹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁰ Ibid.

for service and to build up “the body of Christ” till all experience unity in the faith and reflect “the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7-13).¹¹

Christ exercises His authority through His Church and its specially appointed servants, but He never transfers His power. No one has any independent authority apart from Christ and His Word. Likewise, while Seventh-day Adventist congregations elect their officers to function as representatives of the people, their authority comes from Christ.¹² Their election simply confirms the call they received from Christ. The primary duty of the elected officers is to see that biblical instructions for worship, doctrine, discipline, and gospel proclamation are followed. Since the Church is the Body of Christ, leaders are to seek its counsel regarding their decisions and actions.¹³

As the Church began in its infancy, fragments of leadership components started to form. The leadership of the Church, to the best of biblical knowledge, consisted of several persons in different roles, placed in rank order. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians affirms this. He writes: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:27-29). It is important to notice that this ranking of leaders occurs in a theological context. Paul begins by describing the Corinthian church using the metaphor of “the body of Christ.” The predominant leaders of this divinely ordained institution are those persons who were actually called by Jesus to be His disciples. In

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 175-176.

addition, those who traveled with Him throughout His ministry were given high priority (Mark 9:2). Leadership roles were bestowed upon those who were personally trained by Him and entrusted by Him with the gospel (1 Timothy 1:2; 4:6-15). The leadership components of the Church grew organically from the needs that arose from its numeric growth (Acts 6:1-7). These leadership components seem to come from necessity rather than pre-determined human design.

The Impact of Persecution on the Leadership and Culture of the Church

The New Testament was written by and for persons who were being persecuted. The Christian movement in the first three hundred years of its life was a small fringe movement that existed outside the dominant culture. It was a counter-culture over and against the culture of the day. It managed to survive several waves of official persecution verging on genocide, in which attempts were made by the Roman political, religious, and military establishments to eliminate all Christians.¹⁴

During these first three hundred years, “the Christian movement existed only as a voluntary, countercultural movement, embraced by persons at their own risk. To be a Christian prior to 312 A.D. was to opt for a life outside the pale of respectability and against the stream of the dominant culture.”¹⁵ Persons affiliating themselves with the Christian movement had to assume personal responsibility for their own actions as well as for the life and work of the Church.

¹⁴ Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (New York: Friendship Press, 1982), 35.

¹⁵ Ibid.

During this early time, the Church felt solidarity with other oppressed groups and peoples: the poor, political outcasts, lower classes, and slaves. The apostles identified with the outcasts, with other prisoners, and even with their jailers (Acts 16:19-34). This counter-cultural movement was astonished when Cornelius, a centurion and part of the military establishment, was baptized and became part of the Christian movement (Acts 10:1-48).

The early Christians were vigilant about justice and liberty within the Church. Leaders sought to eliminate all status barriers among all groups and classes stating that in Christ, there is “neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). This concern expanded to their witness to the world, as in the incident with the soothsaying slave girl and her manipulative owners (Acts 16:16-24). Additionally, Paul sent the runaway slave Onesimus back to his owner Philemon, instructing Philemon to welcome Onesimus” no longer as a slave but more than a slave, “as a beloved brother” (Philemon 16).

The Christian movement spread and expanded in spite of the waves of persecution. Leadership was dispersed, with each Christian fellowship (or local church) discerning the gifts of its members and choosing persons to take various leadership roles (Acts 14:22-23). The apostles selected some leaders, based upon their giftedness, and laid their hands upon them, appointing them to their ministerial roles (Acts 13:3).

After the last of the apostles was taken from them by death, the early Christians chose other leaders (Acts 15: 22). These leaders were selected locally by each congregation (in most cases) and given the title of “bishop,” a Greek word meaning

“servant” or “head of a group of servants or steward.”¹⁶ This must have appeared to be a strange title to give to leaders in a world dominated by Caesar. During this era, the Roman empire ruled. They dominated by power, force, intimidation, and survival of the fittest. Therefore, when the Church emphasized its leadership through humility and servant-leadership, it was completely counter-cultural and not accepted by the society of its day. The predominant model of leadership at this time was a military model based around Caesar as the powerful dictator who dominated, controlled, and imposed his will upon others. A chain of command was established with Caesar at the top of the pyramid, his generals below him, with their officers next in line, and so on down to the lowly foot soldier.¹⁷

The early Church, from all that is known, inverted the organizational hierarchical pyramid. It manifested the example set by Jesus—who, as the head, humbled himself—when he washed the disciples’ feet and instructed the disciples that they were to be a community of servants (John 13:14-15). It seems the Church desired to follow suit. In the early phase, church leadership involved servanthood (Matthew 20: 27), participation in the common life of the faith community (Acts 2:44; 4:32), proclamation (Acts 4:31), identification with the oppressed (Acts 2:45), arrest and imprisonment (Acts 5:18), torture and suffering and often death (Acts 12:2).

Amidst the persecution of its leadership and members, the Church continued to triumph (Acts 8:1, 4). The outward attacks from political and religious foes seemed to

¹⁶ Eric W. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 39 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1970), 160.

¹⁷ Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1949), 111.

provide strength to the Church (Acts 9:21-22). Though these attacks created tremendous hardships, the Church continued to multiply (Acts 11:19-21). However, the instrument that appears to be most effective in negatively affecting the Body of Christ was its joining with the reigning political power. The Church began to compromise its principles as this union with political power began to take shape.

Probably the most insidious of all the changes that occurred was the identification of the Church with the emperor. Since the Church had been a victim of the power of Roman military oppression, one would think that the Body of Christ would have desired to avoid cooptation by the Roman government and that it would have continued to be vigilant in its pursuit of human justice and liberty. However, this was not the case. The prophetic aspect of the Christian witness was lost as church leaders permitted themselves more and more to be identified with the dominant political and economic classes of society. According to Douglas John Hall in *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, “The *modus operandi* of the church became the quest for power through proximity to power.”¹⁸ Church leaders succumbed to the values of Caesar. They sought mastery instead of servanthood.

Within a short span of time, the Christian movement was completely altered. It became Imperial Christianity, more closely identified with the State than with the early Christian movement.¹⁹ Although it continued to use the language of service, for the most part this language was liturgical and rhetorical. Unlike the Church born at Pentecost, the Church inaugurated by the Edict of Milan was largely committed to self-service. It was

¹⁸ Hall, *The Steward*, 36.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

during this time that the Church's mission became linked with the quest for power. The Church now became identified with the dominant classes and structures of authority in society.²⁰ It adopted a Hellenized understanding of sin as imperfect deeds and thoughts (rather than the Hebrew understanding of sin as brokenness and alienation from God), and emphasized a kind of higher morality.²¹ It became the bearer of foundational traditions of society, a place to satisfy the human need for mystery and ritual.

However, the Church compromised itself. It seemed unable to resist the lure of the environment around it, the more it closely aligned with financial, political, and military power. It did not seek to be independent of them. As a result, the message the Church preached seemed to alter so as not to offend these powerful alliances which it has made. Where "mission" once meant the spreading of the gospel of a crucified savior to the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20) "mission" came to mean the spreading of a Hellenistic understanding of morality wherever the armies of the Roman Empire and, later, the Holy Roman Empire went.²² The very use of the word "winning" reveals the concern of the Church with mastery, prominence, and power. The Imperial Church viewed itself as possessing truth, the way to salvation, and access to power in contrast to the gospel proclaimed by the early Church in which possessions were rejected and power was used for radical service (cf. John 14:6; Acts 2:45; Philippians 3:7-8).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 38.

Leadership in the Imperial Church took the form of the Roman Empire's organizational hierarchy, including all of the trappings of power.²³ At this point the Church became a political power that was joined with its religious power. The head of the Church was the pope, and his office was the papacy. The papacy became a major political force. Just as Caesar had his generals, the pope now had his cardinals. A hierarchical chain of clergy command took form. The clergy were among the few educated persons in society, and church leadership development was limited to these individuals. Clergy dominated the Church; and, there was no lay leadership.²⁴

Fortunately, during this fourteen-hundred-year period, there were certain people within the Church who resisted the shift into Imperial Christianity. Some remembered "that the servant is not above his master" (John 13:16). A few found imperial power and Christian servanthood incompatible bedfellows. However, these people were separated from one another and almost submerged in Western history and the Imperial Church. Even so, from time to time, usually in small monastic communities and in underground movements on the fringes of the Imperial Church, these ideas of servant leadership came with new freshness into life.²⁵

In the fifteenth century the Protestant Reformation began, but the main reformation bodies, Reformed and Lutheran, continued to espouse an ecclesiology in which establishment was presupposed. While Martin Luther rose up against the abuse in

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 111.

leadership, which resulted from the changes in leadership focus originally found in the New Testament Church, they did not give prominence to the servant-leader idea and the equality of gifts within the *ekklesia*.²⁶ It was the Radical Reformation stimulated by the Anabaptists that put forth the major challenge to the Imperial Church and disavowed any actions that would make them dependent upon the state or society for either material or moral support.²⁷ This movement stressed a separation of church and state. They felt the Church should not be aligned in any manner to the political powers or the society surrounding it.

Eventually, the Protestant Reformation came to emphasize “the priesthood of all believers” and began to advocate the education of lay persons as well as clergy.²⁸ This education took the form of basic skills in reading and writing, using the Bible as the primary reader. Advanced education for lay people was limited to those who attended the newly emerging universities and cathedral schools.

One of Luther’s contributions was the idea of the priesthood of all believers.²⁹ He appealed especially to 1 Peter 2:9. His entire understanding of the Church as the community of saints can be described by the priesthood as the law of the Church’s life.³⁰ When Christ bears human burdens and intercedes for people with His righteousness, He does the work of a priest (Hebrews 5:10). When members in a community of faith bear

²⁶ Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 294-323.

²⁷ Hall, *The Steward*, 38.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, 154.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

with one another's burdens and intercede on one another's behalf, a priestly activity occurs. The inner life of the local church is the priesthood of Christians for one another. The priesthood of Christians flows from the priesthood of Christ.³¹

It was the small non-conforming religious movements—Anabaptists, Quakers, Methodists—who made their way from Europe and to the North American continent. They brought with them two attitudes: a well-earned suspicion of Imperial Christianity and a readiness to assume and share responsibility for the maintenance of free religion, even to the point of personal sacrifice.³² They also brought with them the recognition of the need for an educated laity. The early settlers in North America were primarily from rejected and persecuted Protestant bodies such as the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Quakers, the Anabaptists, and the Methodists.³³

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination comes into existence against this backdrop of history and the development of the Church as an organization. The SDA denominational and organizational structure was impacted by these developments and created its framework in this context. Seventh-day Adventists sought to define their ecclesiology on a scriptural basis. Therefore, it has carved out certain principles from the Bible on which to build its organization.

³¹ Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 313-318.

³² Ibid. 38.

³³ Ibid.

Theological Pillars

There are four theological pillars that undergird the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. The first is *koinonia*, which means “fellowship.”³⁴ The second is *ekklesia*, meaning the “called-out ones.” Together these provide a theological basis for the existence and purpose of the Church. They offer foundations for understanding the purpose of the Church as being different from any other organization. The two other theological pillars that will be presented in this chapter are the unity in the Body of Christ and the importance of the gifts in the Church. Together these provide a theological basis for understanding how believers work together with harmony amidst diversity.

Koinonia (Fellowship)

This Greek word meaning “fellowship,” mentioned in the previous paragraph, is filled with meaning in the Christian context. The concept of *koinonia* connotes a special characteristic of the Church: family as fellowship. Christian fellowship is not merely socialization but deep bonds forged through the gospel (Philippians 1:5). It involves genuine connection with God the Father, His Son, the Holy Spirit, as well as with believers (1 John 1:3, 7). Members then give anyone who becomes a part of the family “the right hand of fellowship” (Galatians 2:9). The Church in heaven and on earth is considered a family (Ephesians 3:15). Two metaphors are used to describe how people join this family: adoption and the new birth (John 3:8). Through faith in Christ, those

³⁴ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 169.

who are newly baptized are no longer slaves but children of the heavenly Father and live on the basis of the new covenant (Galatians 3:26-4:7).³⁵

Members of God's family address Him as Father and relate to one another as brother and sister (James 2:15). Those who mentor others in the faith are often seen as spiritual parents. For example, Paul brought many into the church family and therefore saw himself as a spiritual father. "In Christ Jesus," he said. "I became your father through the gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15, NIV).³⁶ He referred to those he brought in as "my beloved children" (1 Corinthians 4:14).³⁷ Paul here utilizes the imagery of family to illustrate the close connection believers have through the faith of Christ. The imagery is powerful because the bonds of family demonstrate the deep affection and love he has for those under his care.

The metaphor of family reveals the Church as a caring entity "where people are loved, respected, and recognized as somebody, a place where people acknowledge that they need each other; where talents are developed; where people grow, and everybody is fulfilled."³⁸ It also implies accountability (Hebrews 6:4-6), a respect for spiritual parents (1 Timothy 5:1), and a watching out for spiritual brothers and sisters (1 Timothy 5:2). Finally, it means that each member will have toward other members of this family a love that engenders a deep loyalty that undergirds and strengthens (Philippians 2:3-4).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984).

³⁷ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 169.

³⁸ Charles E. Bradford, "What the Church Means to Me," *Adventist Review* 163, no. 47 (November 20, 1986): 15.

Membership in a church family enables individuals who vary greatly, in nature and disposition, to enjoy and support one another. For this reason, it is important for church family members to learn to live in unity while not losing their individuality.³⁹

Ekklesia (A Calling Out)

In the Scriptures the word “church” is a translation of the Greek *ekklesia*.⁴⁰ This expression was commonly used of any assembly summoned by the practice of calling people to meet. The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament which was popular in Jesus’ time. It used *ekklesia* to translate the Hebrew *qahal*, which stood for “gathering,” “assembly,” or “congregation” (Deuteronomy 9:10; 18:16; 1 Samuel 17:47).⁴¹

The general use of this word in the society at that time gives some understanding as to the intent when applied to the Church. It indicates a corporate coming together of people for a common and specific purpose. In the case of the Body of Christ, the purpose of gathering or coming together was for worship and fellowship in Christ.

Unity in the Body of Christ

The Church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Matthew 28:19-20). In Christ, believers are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality and differences between high and

³⁹ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 169.

⁴⁰ Wolfhart Pannenberg, . *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 557.

⁴¹ “*SDA Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., svv. “Nature of Church; *SDA Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., sv. “Church.”

low, rich and poor, male and female, are not meant to divide the family of God.⁴² All are equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded believers into one fellowship with Him and with one another (Galatians 3:29). All are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation (Galatians 3:28). Through the revelation of Jesus in the Scriptures, followers of Christ share the same faith and hope and reach out in one witness to all (Ephesians 4:4-6). This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.⁴³

The metaphor of the body stresses the unity of the Church and the functional relationship of each member to the whole (Ephesians 4:3). Jesus' sacrifice on the cross reconciles all believers "to God in one body" (Ephesians 2:16). Through the Holy Spirit they are "baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13), which is the Church. The body symbolizes an organization with various unique features that all function as a single unit in perfect harmony. (Ephesians 1:23). Since this represents the Church, it suggests that there is a need for different roles and responsibilities for the existence of the Church. It is necessary for the proper functioning of the organization. The Church is the organism through which He imparts His fullness. Believers are the members of His body (Ephesians 5:30). Consequently, He gives spiritual life through His power and grace to every true believer. Christ is "the head of the body" and the "head of the church" (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23), and so all other members of the body remain subordinate to Him. Even the leader is not the head but rather Christ is.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the main thing on Christ's mind was the unity of His Church, those who had come "out of the world" (John 17:6). He pleaded with His Father for a unity in the Church similar to that which the Godhead experienced. Jesus prayed this: "[May] they all [His followers] may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that you sent Me" (John 17:21). Such unity is the Church's most powerful witnessing tool, for it gives evidence of Christ's unselfish love for humanity. Said He, "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:23).⁴⁴ This oneness the Church displays is one of the most eloquent and powerful arguments on behalf of the life of faith to a skeptical, unbelieving world. The unity described in John 17 is so contrary to the world around us that its display testifies that there must be a power beyond human beings that allows people with varying backgrounds to dwell together in deep unity

The Holy Spirit is the moving force behind the Church's unity (1 Corinthians 12:13). Through Him all believers are led to the Church (John 16:13). By Him they are "all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). These baptized members are to have a oneness. Paul describes this as "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3).⁴⁵

Biblical unity does not mean uniformity. The biblical metaphor of the human body demonstrates that a church's unity exists in diversity. For example, the human body has many organs, all contributing to the optimal performance of the body. Each fulfills a

⁴⁴ Ibid., 202.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

vital, though different, task; none are useless.⁴⁶ Likewise, in the Body of Christ not all are given the same gift. For example, all are not given the same gift of finances. Some have the gift of music; and without it, a church would be deficient. Each gift is given to edify the Body of Christ. God gives many distinct gifts for the necessary functioning of the whole. Diversity is just as crucial in the biblical body as in the physical body (1 Corinthians 12:1-31).

The apostle listed the basic components of the unity of the Spirit: “There is one body and one Spirit,” he said. “Just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4-6). These basic components underscore the unifying aspect of the Body of Christ. “One hope” reminds the Church of the important calling for each body part. There is the same “Lord” for each body part. There is the same “faith” and “God” for all. It does not matter that the functions are different. What does matter are the things they have in common. The seven-fold repetition of the word “one” emphasizes the complete unity Paul envisioned.⁴⁷

Calling believers from every nationality and race, the Holy Spirit baptizes people into one body: the Body of Christ, the Church. As they grow into Christ, cultural differences become secondary to the greater culture of being in Christ and exemplifying

⁴⁶ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 204.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

the unity of His Spirit. Realizing that in God's sight they are all equal, members are called to hold one another in esteem.⁴⁸

So while there are different temperaments in the Church, all work under one Head. While there are many gifts, there is but one Spirit. Though the gifts differ, there is harmonious action. "It is the same God who works all in all" (1 Corinthians 12:6).⁴⁹

The goal is to attain unity through the power of an indwelling Christ. When Christ began His mediatory work at the side of His Father in heaven (Hebrew 4:14-16), He made certain that the goal of having His people united was not an illusion. For this reason, through the Holy Spirit He gave special gifts particularly intended to establish "the unity of the faith" among believers.⁵⁰

Additionally, unity in the Body of Christ is incarnational. This means that the unity of believers with God through the Word that became flesh is transferred to the believer once He is in the mind of the believer. When Christ dwells in the heart by faith, His attributes are embedded in the heart of those who follow Him. Since unity occurs within community and requires more than a single person, it is also relational. This means each member needs the others to display unity. When Psalm 133:1 says, "How good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," it places the emphasis on togetherness, because unity cannot exist without it. The unity of believers retains common roots in the Vine.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 206.

Finally, unity in the Body of Christ is rooted in the cross. The love of Calvary dawns within believers.⁵¹ This means that a church's unity takes place at the cross. It is only as believers realize that they cannot and do not love like Jesus that they are able to admit their need of His abiding presence and believe Him when He said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). At the cross, followers of Christ realize that He did not die just for them but for every person on earth (John 3:16). This means He loves all nationalities, races, colors, and classes (Matthew 28:19-20). He loves each equally, whatever their differences may be. In this way, ultimate unity is rooted in God. Where human beings' narrow vision tends to separate people, the cross breaks through human blindness and puts God's price tag on human beings. It shows that none are worthless and that all have eternal value. All are wanted children by God the Father. Therefore, if Christ loves them, so should we.⁵²

When Christ predicted that His crucifixion would draw all to Him (John 12:32), He meant that the magnetic drawing power of Himself—the greatest of sufferers—would bring unity to His body, the Church. The vast gulf between heaven and humanity was crossed by Christ. Invariably, this makes the small step across the street or town believers must take to reach a brother or sister quite insignificant. Calvary means "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2, NIV). Christ bore the entire burden of all humankind,

⁵¹ Ibid., 208.

⁵² Ibid.

which crushed out His life so that He could give those who follow Him abundant life and set them free to help one another.⁵³

The Importance of All Gifts

The Corinthian church did not lack any spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 1:4, 7). Unfortunately, they bickered like children over which gifts were the most important. Concerned about the divisions in their church, Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the true nature of these gifts and how they were meant to function. Spiritual gifts, he explained, are gifts of grace. From the same Spirit come “diversities of gifts,” which lead to “differences of ministries” and “diversities of activities.” However, Paul emphasized that it is “the same God who works all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).⁵⁴

In His love, God has given to each member of His Church at least one spiritual gift that enables that member to accomplish a vital function (1 Corinthians 12:7). Just as what each organ does is vital to the human body, the successful completion of the Church’s mission depends on the functioning of each of the spiritual gifts given to members. The body is no good without a heart and is much less efficient without eyes or a leg.⁵⁵ If its members withhold their gifts, a church can become deaf or blind or crippled in some other crucial way.

The Spirit distributes gifts to every believer for the edification, or building up, of the Church (Ephesians 4:12). The needs of the Lord’s work determine what the Spirit

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 239.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

distributes and to whom (1 Corinthians 12:11). As mentioned earlier, all do not receive the same gifts. Paul said, “The Spirit gives to one wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith, to another miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). The Spirit of God gives the gifts to individuals. It is interesting to note the Spirit does not give all the gifts to one person. It appears He purposefully distributes the gifts in a manner that requires the church members to need one another. “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11).⁵⁶ Since the gifts are given for the church, not the individual, recipients should not consider the gifts their private property. Since the Spirit distributes the gifts accordingly as He sees fit, no gift is to be despised or belittled. No member of the Church has a right to arrogance due to a particular appointment or function, nor should anyone feel inferior due to an assignment that may appear not as prestigious as another.⁵⁷ Recognizing there are some gifts more prominent than others, a follower of Christ will be content with whatever assignment God has given because it comes from the Father.

Paul also used the human body to illustrate harmony in the diversity of gifts. The body has many parts that each contribute in a unique way. “In fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be (verse 18, NIV).”⁵⁸ The biblical narrative teaches that all are servants of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). Since

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Christ ultimately heads the Church, then in that sense all leaders are second-position leaders. Bonem and Patterson in *Leading from the Second Chair* points their readers to this universal reality: in Christ's Kingdom, all are in the second-leader position, submitting to Christ, the ultimate first leader.⁵⁹

Consequently, no part of the body can say to another, "I don't need you!" All depend on one another for a cohesive and functional whole. For this reason, Paul writes:

Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it. (1 Corinthians 12: 21-24, NIV)

This particular Scripture highlights God's value on everybody in the Church. He sees none as invaluable. In fact, Paul emphasizes that those parts that appear undesirable or lacking as compared to the others God gives "special treatment" in order that this particular part may be seen in a more positive light. This demonstrates how concerned God is about no part of His body appearing to be unnecessary, undesirable, or unused.

The failure of any organ would affect the entire body. If the body had no brain, the stomach would not function; and if it had no stomach, the brain would not receive the proper nutrients to function long term. In this same way, a church suffers if any member, no matter how insignificant, under-utilizes or does not employ a God-given gift.⁶⁰

Additionally, certain parts of the body that are structurally weaker need special protection (1 Corinthians 12:21-22). One may function without an exterior limb—for

⁵⁹ Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

example, a hand or leg—but not without an enclosed and shielded organ such as the liver, heart, or lungs. People normally expose the face and hands but go to great lengths to cover sensitive reproductive organs with clothes for purposes of modesty or decency. People treat these with greater care, because the health of the body and even relationships depend on them. In comparison the Church has to protect those portions that are essential to its existence. A church ceases to be a church when love and faith are no longer present. It ceases to be a church when spiritual leadership and teaching are gone. Therefore, it must expend extra efforts to protect these essential functions since these elements distinguish the Church as the Body of Christ.

Since God distributes His gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11), in order to create a healthy diversity that benefits the congregation, it is beneficial that not all members think alike nor are qualified to perform the same work. All, however, function under the direction of the same Spirit, building up the Church to the best of their God-given abilities.⁶¹ In this way, and to accomplish its mission, the Church needs the contributions of all the gifts. Together, believers are able to provide a total evangelistic thrust (Ephesians 4:12). The success of the Church does not depend on each member being the same and doing the same as every other member; rather, it depends on all the members performing their God-assigned tasks.⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid., 15.

⁶² Ibid.

Equality in the Body of Christ

“In Christ, and in His church, there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, free nor bond; for all are equal at the foot of the cross” (Galatians 3:28). Christianity subordinates the role of race and nationality to the principle of the brotherhood of all Christ followers (Acts 17:26). Here, however, Paul speaks of the standing of Jew and non-Jew before God (cf. Acts 10:34; Matthew 20:15). In Christ’s Kingdom all are covered with the same garment of Christ’s righteousness, which they receive by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22-23). However, to the Judaizing Christians of Paul’s day such an idea was rank heresy. They maintained that the only way into the Church was through Judaism—in other words, Gentiles must first be circumcised, or become a Jew through Old Testament Law, before being accepted into the Christian communion.⁶³ God sees past the social boundaries that mankind has set for itself. In the sight of God, all His children are equal and significant.

Much like slaves, in the ancient world women commonly were considered as little more than chattel and thus infinitely inferior to men.⁶⁴ Pagan philosophers sometimes argued as to whether a woman even had a soul. In some pagan societies, a father or husband had authority over the women of his household to the point of ordering their execution.⁶⁵ The elevation of woman to equality with man is a direct result of Christian

⁶³ Francis D. Nichol, Raymond F. Cottrell, and Don F. Neufell, eds., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 962.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

teaching and practice. The aforementioned text in Galatians points to the God who places men and women on equal footing in His sight.

It is important to understand that Paul uses Christ's sacrificial death and ownership of humankind to establish equality, value, and worth (cf. Romans 5:18-19). All are children of God. He argues in Christ there is a oneness and equality, irrespective of one's socioeconomic, civil, or religious background. He submits as children of God that this gives one not only a new standing with God but also a new standing within the community of God. This standing allows a person to see fellow followers of Christ in a different manner. It allows human desire and perspective to mold into service as Christ serves, for this is to be the ruling motive of leadership and ministry.

In Galatians 3:27, Paul advises believers to "put on Christ." The word translated as "put on" is commonly used with reference to clothing. To "put on Christ" means to adopt His principles, to imitate His example, to accept His guidance, and to become like Him. It implies putting off selfishness and the old nature.⁶⁶ Only in this manner of putting off the selfish nature can one have a spirit to put on the new nature of Christ. It is only as individuals receive and adapt this new nature or mindset of Christ that they are fit to be a leader or a servant of Christ.

Paul deals with three classes of people who are generally not viewed as equals. The first group this apostle addresses deals with ethnic differences. He specifies equality through this phrase: "There is neither Jew nor Greek." Actually, it is better translated as

⁶⁶ Nichol, Cottrell, and Neufell, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 962.

“neither Jew nor Gentile.”⁶⁷ The second classification speaks to socioeconomic standing. This was expressed in the phrase when Paul says, “There is neither bond nor free.” The third and final classification the apostle mentions is gender equality. This is expressed when he says there is “neither male nor female.” Paul presents powerful arguments on equality and unity that are established in the Body of Christ when members “put on” Christ. Christianity subordinates the role of race, gender, financial status, and nationality to this principle.⁶⁸ Building upon these key points, a fourth classification can be made with respect to leadership: in Christ there is neither first leader nor second leader, nor third leader nor lay leader. All are equal, eternally valuable, and function to their fullest potential in unity within the Body of Christ. As Paul asserts, “If ye be in Christ, then ye are Abraham’s seed” (Galatians 3:29). Since the Spirit gives the gifts to the body and not all receive the same gifts, but each is important, then there should be no difference. The inference here is that the functions of leadership are just like the parts of the body. Each plays a specific function and remains significant in the role it plays.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has provided some insights on the early church model of leadership and the intrusion of another model from a more political viewpoint. The understanding of God’s emphasis on fellowship of believers and unity in the Body of Christ has been presented. The equality of the gifts that God has given to His Church provides a context for how Christian brothers and sisters can freely relate with one another in the service of

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

God. The biblical and theological perspectives offer a rationale for God's view of equality of the gifts and diversity in the Body of Christ. The Bible teaches that functions are given to the Church by the Holy Spirit. It is significant to the Church to some degree that as each body part is to the body, every gift is given for the edification and the building up of the Body of Christ. The second perspective is that the body functions as an interconnected family; its members are interdependent. Each part relies one upon another.

In applying this biblical truth to the role of the executive secretary, every function of the body is important. In Christ there is no difference. The second-leader role is part of the Body of Christ. In fact, all the parts of the Body of Christ are in a secondary role in relation to Christ, as will be illustrated more clearly in Chapter 5.

Therefore, the role of the executive secretary in the organization is significant and is validated in this analogy of the church of God and the human body. If God has given every person their gifts and has designed the body to have various functions, then every function is interdependent on each other. This theology of the church dismisses any thought of a presidential system. This theology creates a community of believers all with differing roles and functions but each being necessary for the existence and vitality of the church. It emphasizes the systematic working of the body of Christ. Each role is distinct but works in harmony with all other members of the body.

CHAPTER 5

Biblical Examples and Principles for Leadership

This chapter seeks to identify biblical principles and examples of leadership positions in Scripture. It also will provide a principled, Bible-based foundation for a clear direction for various leadership roles and functions. Beyond establishing this biblical and theological foundation, this information can provide good motivation for Christian leaders to risk treading new roads in order to develop their own leadership gifts and guide others in doing the same. These principles are applicable to all leaders but since the focus of this project is the executive secretary it will apply the principles to that position. This chapter will conclude with a review of leadership in general from a biblical perspective.

Old Testament Leadership Roles

Moses was the primary leader during the exodus of God's people from Egypt. There were several other leaders at Moses' side: Aaron, his older brother; Miriam, his older sister; and Joshua, his aide. Each had a particular area of expertise and exercised key leadership functions at distinct yet important moments of God's people concurrently

with the leadership of Moses. This section will explore these functions and will identify those that carry them as second leaders.

Aaron as Second Leader to Moses

A primary example in the Old Testament of leaders carrying different functions can be found in the lives and relationships of both Moses and Aaron. The biblical record presents Moses and Aaron performing different but essential leadership roles. However, both men were called by God. Each one had been given his respective assignment by God. As will be shown below, they each had separate functions but both proved vital to the mission of God's people.

Aaron was sent by God to be Moses' mouthpiece. God would speak to Moses, and then Moses would speak to Aaron. In Exodus 4:14-16, God offered these words:

Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well, and thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people and he shall be even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Moses had earlier argued with God concerning his inability to speak in the language of the people. God's response to the first leader He had chosen was to give him a second leader. Although God calls Aaron to a very public role, it is clear that it is a second-leader position to Moses. God's order to Moses to "put words in his [Aaron's] mouth" makes this evident. Aaron is not being asked to initiate direction; rather, he is positioned to be an extension of Moses' body: "He shall be to thee instead of a mouth." Nevertheless, God promises to be with Aaron just as He will be with Moses. God issues this endowing

promise of authority: “I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth.” This is an incredible second-leader role Aaron had been asked to play by God.

This second-leader liaison was necessary and purposeful, because Aaron as the second leader had God-given gifts that Moses as the first leader did not possess. There are several lessons to learn. The first is this: God equipped Moses with certain abilities and Aaron with others. Even though God states in Exodus 4:12, “Now therefore go and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say,” it nevertheless reveals this was not an ability that Moses perceived as a strength he had or about which he was confident. For this reason, God gave him what he needed through the second leader.

The second lesson to learn from this biblical example is that God designed the relationship and ordained it to be so (Exodus 4:14). This divine origination validates the role as Aaron as ordained as Moses. God saw a need for a person in the first-leader role to have a second leader.

Another lesson to glean is the high importance placed by God on the role of the second leader to fulfill the mission of the exodus of God’s people. This role was not inconsequential to God (Exodus 4:15-16). In this example, both leadership roles were important and interdependent. Moses was to hear from God, and Aaron was to speak for God. Aaron is actually the mouthpiece of God. Each had a key responsibility to fulfill. This particular biblical example is foundational to understanding how God sees both leadership roles. God called both into leadership and gave to each one distinct areas of responsibility to carry forward His mission to fulfill His purposes. God’s design was for them to work together in community to accomplish the task using their respective strengths.

Miriam as Second Leader to Moses

Another example of a different leadership function in the Old Testament can be studied in the role of Miriam, Moses' older sister. While Moses occupied the first-leader role, his sister proved instrumental in helping to provide for Moses when he was a baby (Exodus 2:7). At that time, as big sister, she was acting as first leader; but now, she plays the second-leader role. Here her role has changed.

Also, during the celebration of the victory of crossing the red sea after watching the destruction of the Egyptian army, Miriam fulfills another significant function (Exodus 15:20-21). The Bible describes the festivities in full bloom when Miriam takes a timbrel, which was most likely a tambourine or a hand drum,¹ and raises the celebration to a much higher level. All the women followed her example in the celebration. This passage offers several insights into her leadership. First, it gives her the title as a prophetess. This means that she too received messages from God and communicated them to the people. She is the first woman in the Bible with that title. Ellen G. White a prophetess, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church understands the significance of Miriam's second-leader role and makes the following observation:

Aaron and Miriam had occupied a position of high honor and leadership in Israel. Both were endowed with the prophetic gift, and both had been divinely associated with Moses in the deliverance of the Hebrews. "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (Micah 6:4), are the words of the Lord by the prophet Micah. Miriam's force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people. Richly endowed with the gifts of poetry and music, Miriam had led the

¹ Francis D. Nichol, Raymond F. Cottrell, and Don F. Neufell, eds., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 572.

women of Israel in song and dance on the shore of the Red Sea. In the affections of the people and the honor of Heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron.²

The fact that all the women easily followed her lead in her dance and with timbrels leads one to believe she was a familiar person to the multitude in the leadership core of Israel. During the singing of the song she played a very prominent role during the worship experience. In these ways, she served as a valuable leader though in the second-leader position. As a “second chair,” she carried out a different function than Aaron did but her story provides another solid example of the dramatic leadership impact one serving in the second-leader position can have on God’s people. It is significant that she had such a role, given the view of women in the culture of her day. It provides striking evidence that in Christ there is no difference and that He pours His spirit out upon all (cf. Joel 2:28-32).

Joshua as Second Leader to Moses

The third person in the leadership core of God’s people in the Old Testament with Moses was Joshua. He was a young man who was called into leadership with Moses. He sometimes is referred to as the servant of Moses (Exodus 33:11; Numbers 11:28). This illustrates the great respect and humble attitude this second leader had for Moses. Joshua was a successful leader with his own assignments. He never sought to override Moses’ role and, in return, Moses demonstrated confidence in this young leader, even when a particular danger faced Israel (Numbers 13:38).

When the children of Israel had been in the wilderness far after the Red Sea experience, there was a serious threat that presented itself. The Amalekites, a fierce

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, ID; Pacific Press Publishing, 2005), 382.

warlike tribe inhabiting the region beyond the Red Sea, came out against the Israelites. They approached from behind the multitude and smote those faint and weary who had fallen into the rear. Knowing that the masses of the people were unprepared for battle, Moses directed Joshua to choose from the different tribes a body of soldiers and lead them against the enemy (Exodus 17:5-12).³ Joshua the second leader had warrior skills and talents that Moses did not possess. Therefore Moses called upon Joshua who was gifted in battle, to do what he could not do.

While Joshua and his company attacked the foe, Moses, Aaron, and Hur (another second leader) were stationed on a hill overlooking the battlefield. With arms outstretched towards heaven, and holding the rod of God in his right hand, Moses prayed for the success of the armies of Israel. As long as Moses' hands were up, Joshua and his warriors were successful; but the moment the hands of Moses fell to his side, the Israelite army would begin to falter. However, when Moses would become weary, Aaron and Hur assisted in lifting his hands.⁴ This underscores a marvelous example of teamwork among leaders. Each leader had a significant role to play in the success of the battle. Moses as the first leader clearly could not do it all by himself. Therefore, he recognized that he needed help and summoned Joshua to serve him. Moses did not possess the stamina to keep his hands raised without aid from the other second leaders. In this biblical example, one role is not less important than the others. They were dependent on one another for success in the overall mission. God could have designed leadership differently among His people, but He did not.

³ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 298-299.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 299.

New Testament Leadership Roles

There are several examples of leadership roles in the New Testament. Barnabas and Paul's roles' in the positions of first and second leader will be the first example examined for this project. In fact, these two New Testament leaders play interchangeable roles—not unlike the SDA dynamic of first leaders occupying second-leader roles and then moving again to function as first leader. Later, this section will discuss Jesus' views on leadership and His example of functioning in different leadership roles.

Barnabas and Paul

Barnabas was trusted in the early Church and had the respect and support of all the apostles. The Book of Acts establishes him as a leader who sought Paul to assist him in his ministry. Saul, otherwise known as Paul, started his leadership journey as the one who came to assist or to be the second leader to Barnabas. Paul had been converted from a persecutor of Christians and did not enjoy the full support of the Body of Christ, as his first leader did, although he desired to be endorsed by the leadership of the young Christian Church. Three years after his conversion, he went to see Peter in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18); but upon arriving in the city where he had once been well known as "Saul the persecutor," he could not commune with the Church. "He assayed to join himself to the disciples but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). Paul had a tremendous credibility problem with the leadership of the Church. They were not ready to accept him into the inner circle of leaders. At this critical point in his leadership development, Paul needed someone else to pave the way

for him. He lacked the reputation and influence among the apostles to be trusted. During this time, he accepted the invitation to help Barnabas.

Barnabas had been assigned to work in Antioch. His labors there were richly blessed, and many were added to the number of believers (Acts 11:24). As the work developed, Barnabas felt the need for suitable help in order to advance in the opening providence of God; and he went to Tarsus to seek Paul, who after his departure from Jerusalem some time before had been laboring in the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 11:25). Barnabas was successful in finding Paul and in persuading him to return with him as a companion in ministry.⁵ This again establishes Barnabas as the first leader bringing Paul under his mentorship.

In Acts 9:27 and Acts 11:25, Barnabas is portrayed as the leader in initiating the relationship with Paul. Barnabas is the active agent in bringing Paul to Antioch to labor with him. Barnabas' act portrays another example of the first leader's role with the second leader. Barnabas was well thought of in Antioch and throughout Jerusalem. It is said of Barnabas, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people were added to the Lord" (Acts 11:24). Barnabas took on the responsibility of mentoring his second leader, preparing the way for Paul and introducing him to the Christian community. Even though he was successful in his own ministry Barnabas invested in the development of another. He saw something of value in him, just as he explained in Jerusalem before the apostles (Acts 9:27-29).

⁵ Ibid., 156.

Upon following Barnabas to Antioch, Paul was in unfamiliar territory. The Christians in Antioch deferred to Barnabas. In the beginning of Paul's visit to Antioch, the Christians referred to them as Barnabas and Paul. In Acts 13, Barnabas' name is always mentioned first. It depicts him as the primary leader or teacher, and Paul is mentioned last behind Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen. Some scholars suggest the listing of names were according to age.⁶ If this were true then they always would have been referred to as "Barnabas and Paul." However, as soon it will be seen, the order in which the names are mentioned will be reversed as their first-leader/second-leader relationship alters. As Paul's fruitfulness as a leader in the Church grows, so does his role and his relationship with Barnabas.

A careful examination of Acts 12 through 15 reveals an interesting chain of events in the leadership relationship of these two leaders. In Acts 13:2, it clearly states: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them." This text reveals that these men were not summoned by men or a council but by the Holy Ghost Himself. The Holy Ghost did not just call them individually but collectively as a pair of leaders. God must see value in a team approach to ministry, because while on earth Jesus sent His disciples out by twos as well (Luke 19:29). The Holy Spirit validates the leadership and the ministry of both, regardless of who takes the lead in any given moment.

⁶ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, vol. 6 (McClean, VA: Mac Donald Publishing Company, 1706), 158.

Role Reversal of First Leader and Second Leader

A shift takes place in the leadership roles of Barnabas and Paul. In the beginning of their relationship, Barnabas clearly functioned as the primary leader. In Acts 12:25, 13:1, 13:2, and 13:7, the two always were referred to as Barnabas and Paul. However, in Acts 13:16, after Paul stood up and began to exhort and teach from God's Word, a shift took place. He had spoken so powerfully, that the Gentiles asked if he would come back the next Sabbath and preach to them the things he had preached to the Jews. Many of the Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:43). Paul's role and influence began to increase dramatically. Evidence of this fact can be seen when interest was aroused in Antioch by Paul's discourse that "almost the whole city wanted to hear the word of God" (Acts. 13:44). In Acts 13:45, "the Jews saw the multitudes and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul." This verse points to Paul as the primary speaker and reveals Paul's more visible and central role in his relationship with Barnabas.

Another example of Paul's more prominent role with Barnabas is found in Acts 13:9, when he rebukes a sorcerer. Then again in Acts 13:16, Paul stands up and says, "Ye men of Israel listen to me." Barnabas is present, but Paul leads out. Tracing the steps of Barnabas and Paul during their first year together in Antioch reveals a slow shift in the second-leader role from Paul to Barnabas (Acts 11:26). Paul begins to take on a more primary role of leadership in his ministry collaboration with Barnabas. This transition can be seen clearly as their followers begin to refer to them now as "Paul and Barnabas," instead of "Barnabas and Paul." This may appear to be a minor point, but the timing of

this reversal of their names coincides with Paul's emerging leadership role in Antioch. Acts 13 clearly starts off with "Barnabas and Paul."

Paul became increasingly more vocal. Acts 14:11 says that when the people saw what Paul had done they lifted up their voices saying, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They called Barnabas "Jupiter" and Paul "Mercurius," because he was the chief speaker and seemed to take primary leadership (Acts 14:12). This is another evidence of Paul's growing first leadership between the two leaders.

There are several perspectives on leadership one can glean from the relationship of Paul and Barnabas. First, they are both legitimate leaders called by the Holy Spirit. Second, they seem to fluctuate between the role of first and second leader. They start their relationship with Barnabas being the primary leader. Barnabas insists that the leaders accept Paul.

After the strong and powerful words from Paul in Acts 13:42, and then in Acts 13:43, the names are reversed. While this continues in Acts 13:46 and 13:50, in Acts 14:12-14 the text reads: "Barnabas and Paul" again. Continuing, in Acts 15:2, the team becomes "Paul and Barnabas" yet later in that same chapter the reference alternates back and forth several times and finally ends with "our beloved Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 15:12, 22, 25). Upon first glance, the Bible seems to establish Barnabas as first leader and Paul as the second leader. However, closer examination suggests they moved back and forth between these roles depending on the function to be performed. The biblical text, especially in Acts 15, seems to indicate even an intertwining of those roles between these two men. When one studies the activities taking place in Acts 15, and the continual

reversal of the manner in which the names are mentioned, it seems to be no coincidence. Some may argue that the reversal of names is incidental. Some scholars believe in Jewish literature the placement of names has some significance. Sometimes the names are placed in order by age from the oldest to the youngest. There is also some thought given of order by rank or authority.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Commentary* expounding on Acts 13:1 suggests that the names were given in order of rank. It expresses the thought that the first three names, Barnabas, Simeon, and Lucius were prophets, and the last two, Manaen and Saul were teachers.⁷ In the case of Barnabas and Paul, the arrangement of their names would not be due to age. If age were the criteria, then the arrangement of names would be constant. Therefore, one must conclude, either the arrangement of names had no significance or the significance was related to rank or authority exercised under various circumstances. It is possible that the latter could be true since the switching of names coincided with the person who was leading out most during the time his name was mentioned first. There is no conclusive evidence that the arrangement of names indicates which person is the first leader. However, there is sufficient evidence discussed here of both Paul and Barnabas at various times in their ministry moving between the first and second leadership roles.

Acts 15:35-36 provides yet another illustration of Paul's leadership among the two. He suggests to Barnabas, "Let us go and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." Barnabas agrees to the trip but suggests that John Mark accompany them. Paul is resistant to John Mark's

⁷ Nichol, Cottrell, and Neufell, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 279 and 281.

accompaniment, because on an earlier trip to Perga Mark became overwhelmed with fear and discouragement. Therefore John Mark wavered for a time in his purpose to give himself wholeheartedly to the Lord's work. Unused to hardships, he was disheartened by the perils and privations of the journey. As Paul and Barnabas advanced and still greater difficulties confronted them, Mark was intimidated, lost courage, and returned to Jerusalem.⁸ In this particular experience with Paul and Barnabas, there is a shift of the first-leader role as Paul begins to shape their activities. Paul seems to take on more prominence and Barnabas seems to submit or allow him take a more prominent role in leadership. Simultaneously, the author of the Book of Acts reverses the order of names and begins to refer to the two as Paul and Barnabas, thereby featuring Paul as the first leader. It seems to indicate primary leadership tended to shift based the needs of the situation.

Paul judged Mark severely and unfavorably for a period of time for this desertion. Barnabas on the other hand was inclined to excuse him due to his inexperience. He hoped he would not abandon the ministry for he saw qualities that would fit him to be a useful worker for Christ.⁹ There was great and sharp contention between these Paul and Barnabas. They decided to go their separate ways, Barnabas taking John Mark with him and Paul choosing Silas, a devout and faithful soldier of the Lord. This biblical example of the contention between two strong and revered men of God offers helpful insight into the first- and second-leader positions. It demonstrates that both first- and second-leader roles can be held by strong passionate leaders of God. Neither Paul nor Barnabas can be seen in

⁸ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 167.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

this illustration as weak or unassuming. During their missionary journeys together, in order to facilitate the mission of God, they both at one time or another had to submit their leadership to the other for the sake of the gospel. This is evidenced in the previous paragraphs on the discussions in Acts 13-15. This submitting and allowing another to lead provides a valuable biblical example for first and second leaders in the Church today.

Paul and Barnabas were both robust and strong leaders. Their leadership roles seem to fluctuate based on the function required. They both displayed the ability to be supportive and submissive to each other's leadership. The strength of both personalities was revealed during the contention over John Mark (Acts 15:37-39). This suggests the second-leader's role does not have to be weaker or a "yes" man; rather, there is room for mutual accountability in the relationship. It also suggests when one leader is not willing to submit then collaboration can not take place and ministry is impacted. A person can have a very stalwart personality but submit to a secondary role for the good of the Body of Christ. For this reason, Paul urges both leaders and laity in Ephesians 5:21 to engage in the following: "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Paul and Barnabas by their example demonstrate that fruitful leaders understand their call from God and flexibly know how to follow in the second leader's role and to lead with humility from the first leader's role. It appears God calls His leaders to do both, even while serving in either capacity. A final note can be gleaned from these two spiritual leaders: sometimes it might prove beneficial for two leaders to go their separate ways for a time, if they cannot work together in the moment. There is always the opportunity to re-

evaluate collaboration in the future, just as Paul did with respect to Barnabas's affirmation of John Mark.

Jesus and Leadership

The New Testament gives a model of Christian leadership in the Body of Christ. It was the constant refrain of Christ to say, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36; Matthew 8:20; 5:3). It was the persistent task of Christ to point His hearers to the world to come (Matthew 6:33). In this way, His teachings were a contradiction to the world around Him: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). The teachings of Christ call for a new way to live in the present culture one inhabits. These teachings invite a new way to interact with one another. This is also a clarion call to a different way of leadership among God's people.

Jesus introduces this new way of leadership in response to a request made by the mother of two of his disciples. Matthew observes the following interaction:

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons worshipping him and desiring a certain thing of him. She saith unto him, "Grant that these my two sons may sit; the one on the right hand and the other on the left in thy Kingdom." When the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. Jesus says, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentile exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But let it not be so among you." (Matthew 20:20-26)

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus rejects the world's standard of leadership. He repudiates the idea of dominion, power, and authority with one man over another. He plainly states this leadership style is not a part of his Kingdom.

While rejecting one style of leadership among His people, He establishes another style of leadership for His people. Christ says in Matthew 20:26, “Let it not be so among you.” The constitution of the spiritual Kingdom of God is quite different from the Jewish or Gentile style. Christ’s leaders are called to teach the subjects of His Kingdom to instruct, to take pains with them, and suffer with them. They are not to exercise dominion or authority over them.

Spiritual leaders are not to lord their authority over God’s heritage (1 Peter 5:3). Scripture forbids not only tyranny and abuse of power but the claim or use of any such secular authority as the princes of the Gentiles lawfully exercise (Mark 10:42-45). It is exceedingly challenging for vain men, even good men, to have such authority and not be puffed up with it. They will inevitably do more hurt than good with it. For this reason, Jesus saw it expedient to banish it from the Church altogether.¹⁰

In the place of power and honor in the Church, there should be service and an atmosphere of preferring one another. This is for all leaders no matter what the role. Leaders are called to model Christ and to lead from alongside. Christ says, “He that will be great among you, that will be chief, that would really be so, and would be found to be so at the end, let him be your minister, your servant”(Matthew 20:25). It is the duty of Christ’s disciples to serve one another for mutual edification. This includes both humility and usefulness. The disciples must be willing to stoop to the lowest office in love for the good of one another. The only greatness is the greatness of sincere humility. The only

¹⁰ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, vol. 5 (McClean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1706), 291.

distinction is found in devotion to the service of others.¹¹ The way to be great and “chief” in the Body of Christ is to be humble and serviceable. Such leaders are called to be like their master, Jesus.¹²

Christ’s Example as First Leader

Christ as the leader gives an example of servant-leadership. He says, “You call me Master and Lord and ye say well for so I am; if I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:13-15). In this passage, the example of Christ overflows with the paradigm shift in leadership Jesus sought to create in His Church. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus asserts the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Christ sets Himself before His disciples as a pattern of those two things before recommending humility and usefulness.

Christ said He was the Lord and Master (John 13:13). In the context of this project, He would be identified as the first leader. However, as the first leader He plays the role of a servant (cf. John 13:14-15). His admonishment to the disciples when the mother of James and John asked the question was this: “He that will be chief among you let him be the servant of all” (Mark 10:44). With the act of washing the disciples’ feet,

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association 2005), 650.

¹² Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, vol. 5, 291.

Christ demonstrated leadership in His Kingdom with a symbol the disciples never would forget. He exhibited humility and performed a useful act.¹³

Christ is the Master and, as such, functions as the first leader. Each of His disciples is a second leader to Him. Christ says to them in John 13:14-15 that the call is for His disciples to do as He did. Essentially, the call is for all His leaders to do as He did, to lead as He led. Christ uses the logic of how servants are not greater than their Lord (John 13:16). If translated into the emphasis of this project, the second leader is not greater than the first leader. In this analogy, all spiritual leaders have second-leader roles in light of the first and foremost leader, Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 5:4, Christ is called the “chief shepherd,” which means all others are something less than chief. All others are second leaders. Christ placed the disciples in second-leader positions when He called them to follow Him.

It was His purpose to teach them a new leadership paradigm. Bible readers are told by a disciple in Matthew 9:9, “He said follow me.” This was more than a physical pilgrimage in which these disciples were summoned to follow but also a spiritual one. When Christ said “follow me,” it meant in every sense and cultural aspect. The disciples were to adopt His method, His manner, and His servant style of leadership. The disciples came forth from the Savior’s training, having become like Him in mind and character. For this reason, men took knowledge of them that they had been with Christ.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., 290.

¹⁴ White, *Desire of Ages*, 250.

In John 21:15, Jesus calls Peter to feed His lambs. Jesus places Peter in the second-leader role to Him but in a first-leader role to the sheep. There must be a vital connection between the chief shepherd (the first leader) and the under-shepherd (the second leader). This connection makes the second leader a living representative of Christ, a light indeed to the world.¹⁵

The apostle Paul acknowledges Christ as the first leader as well (Philippians 1:21). Paul sees himself in the second-leader role and writes: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul positions himself as a first leader. In other words, he encourages the Corinthians to observe his example as a second leader. He encourages them to be the kind of second leader to him as he is to Christ. He qualifies their followership to be to the same extent as his followership of Christ. In other words, he advises them to follow this example of submitting to Christ. Paul casts himself in these writings in a first-leader role as he leads the people but in a second-leader role when it comes to Christ. Paul uses the Greek word *mimetai* which means “imitators.”¹⁶ The word “mimic” comes from this term. Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers to imitate him as he mimics and imitates Christ. He is saying succinctly, “I lead as I follow.” Christ is depicted as the great example. For this reason, he gives evidence that the first leadership role is about service in the Body of Christ.

Christ’s Example as Second Leader

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 315.

¹⁶ Nichol, Cottrell, and Neufell, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 753.

Christ not only gave an example of how to execute the role as the primary leader, but as a second leader He exemplified a pattern for His followers to emulate. Christ is not often thought of in terms of being a second leader, but He did function quite fruitfully in that capacity. Paul seeks to explain this in Philippians 2:5-8. He writes: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” The “mind” of which Paul speaks in this passage is a mind to be subjected to a lower status. This encompasses the submission concept. He explains further in the following verses. He exhorts the Philippian believers to have the mind of Christ in order to welcome the privilege of being subjected to a lower status for the advancement of the gospel of Christ for the purpose of growing maturity, leadership, and Christ-likeness.

Paul explains that Christ was equal with God. The apostle states, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philippians 2:6). The word for “form” in the passage (*morphe*) denotes all the essential characteristics and attributes of God. In this sense, *morphe* represents the manner in which God’s eternal qualities and characteristics have manifested themselves. Whatever forms that manifestation have taken, they were possessed by Christ, who thereby existed as one with God. This places Christ on an equal level with the Father and sets Him far above every other power. Paul stresses this in order to portray more vividly, the depths of Christ’s voluntary humiliation.¹⁷

¹⁷ Francis D., Raymond F. Cottrell, and Don F. Neufell, eds., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 154.

The phrase “to be equal” means He continues to exist on a level of equality with God. The phrase establishes Christ’s position in relation to God. He is placed side by side with the Father, on an equal footing, and in no way inferior.¹⁸

Paul continues in Philippians 2:7 by saying Jesus made Himself of no reputation. This literally means that He emptied Himself.¹⁹ This emptying was voluntary. In John 10:17-18 Christ declares, “I lay down my life, that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me but I lay it down of myself.” Christ voluntarily transitioned from being one equal to God. He submits Himself to a lower status and subjects Himself to a lower position than what He previously enjoyed. Both Christ and Paul transitioned to a lesser role.

John 17:4 provides concrete evidence of Christ’s secondary role. Jesus says, “I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished this work which you gave me to do. In the Garden of Gethsemane He says, “Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt.” Christ is completely subjected to the Father’s will (Matthew 26:39).

Never was there such an example of humility and unselfishness as there existed in the life of Christ, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. When Christ came into the world, one would think He should have appeared in a manner consistent with His person and character; but He made no show, no pompous train of state, brought no

¹⁸ Ibid., 155.

¹⁹ Ibid.

servants to attend Him, nor was He clad in robes of honor. He took the simple lowly form of a servant.²⁰ This is the example that Christ calls on his leaders to follow.

In Philippians 2:6, Paul talks about the exalted Christ being in the form of God. In Philippians 2:7, he talks about the humbled Christ being in the form of a servant. This extreme contrast is designed to illustrate the depth of Christ's meekness and submission. It magnified the extent in which He emptied Himself to take on His new role as man, submitting completely to His Father's will and way.

The same word (*morphe*) is used for "form" here as in "form of God" and in "form of a servant". It contrasts the two forms of Christ. In one He was taking off the form of God, and in the other he was putting on the form of a slave. This indicates the transition He was undergoing. In the context of this project, Jesus chose to submit Himself to the second-position role. The word for "servant (*doulos*) commonly is used for "slave" (cf. Romans 1:1).²¹ The apostle is saying that Christ emptied Himself and took on the essential attributes of a slave. A slave's outstanding characteristic is that of rendering unquestioning obedience, so as a man the Son undertook to render obedience to the Father (Hebrews 5:8). The universe is witness to the transition of Christ from equality with God to take on the form of a servant. He did not grasp His divine sovereignty; rather, He exercised leadership through service, which became the ruling passion of His life (Matthew 20:28). His whole existence was subordinated to the will of the Father, as

²⁰ Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, vol. 5, 291.

²¹ Nichol, Cottrell, and Neufell, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 155.

should be the life of every believer. The life of Christ thus became the simple outworking of the will of the great “mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16).

In light of Christ’s leadership and His call to follow Him, it is clearly seen how small is any sacrifice on the part of human beings in comparison with the sacrifice of Him whom Christians profess to follow. Leaders who are so far inferior to Christ should not find it difficult or impossible to yield their wills to the will of God. As they compare their lot to His, all can find it easier to transition from first leaders to second leaders. When believers share in the true spirit of Christ, when He dwells within them and they live the life of the Son of God, the objective of Paul’s admonition in Philippians 2:3-5 will have been fulfilled in them. Then, they will be like Christ.²²

In this voluntary transition to this role of a servant, Christ actually identifies with the subject of this project: the second leader. Paul says in Hebrews 4:15, “For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Christ has given an example of leadership from the first-leader role and from the second-leader role. The key in His transition to a lesser role was submitting Himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

It is consistent with Seventh-day Adventist history and culture to shape leadership positions from biblical examples. The denomination not only builds its doctrines on Scripture but uses the Word as the basis for various leadership roles. It has borrowed the elder and deacon roles from the New Testament (Philippians 1:1). The principle of its

²² Ibid.

committee system is derived from the New Testament Church (Acts 1:26; 9:27, 30). Perhaps the time has arrived to develop a model of leadership—particularly the way leaders interact one with the other—on the biblical example that Christ has given.

The denomination seeks to inculcate the principles of the priesthood of all believers in its organizational philosophy.²³ The principle of one body denotes that no part of the body is more significant than the other (1 Corinthians 12: 24-26). This concept is reflected in the remuneration policy of the denomination.²⁴ This historical approach to applying biblical principles and philosophy to organizational structures provides confidence in presenting new biblical principles to leadership philosophy within corporate denominational thinking.

²³ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 242.

²⁴ North American Division Secretariat Office, *Working Policy*, 695-698.

PART THREE
MINISTRY STRATEGY

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICAL STEPS TO TRANSITIONING SECRETARY: VISION AND GOALS

The preferred future outcome for this project is for the executive secretaries of the North American Division to see their roles as second leaders the way God designed and ordained them. A plan of action will be developed that will assist first leaders to transition successfully into their second-leader roles. Another objective for this project is to create a more positive perception of the role of the executive secretary in the minds of the secretaries and the communities they serve. There are several significant theological conclusions and implications relating to this SDA second-leader role. This chapter will explore those theological implications and will seek to apply biblical principles with practical consideration in transitioning from a first leader into a second-leader role.

Biblical and Theological Legitimacy of Second Leaders

The second-leader role in the leadership structure did not originate in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination but rather in the mind of God.¹ God called Moses, and then He called Aaron. In the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, it is critical to ground any position one may have in the Bible. If something does not have a biblical foundation for its purpose, generally speaking it will not last long or go far. There exist certain

¹ For more information, see Part Two of this discussion.

exceptions, but ultimately the denomination has its roots in Scripture. In the SDA organizational structure, any change or paradigm shift has an optimum chance of success when it comes with scriptural support. Based on the biblical foundations established in Part Two of this project, there are four key theological principles that set the direction for practical and strategic steps to transitioning first leaders into the role of executive secretaries.

The most important theological principle is that both first and second leaders receive their call from God; therefore, both are legitimate expressions of leadership. In carrying forward His mission, God entrusted both Moses and Aaron with gifts to enhance His people. God called both to use their gifts in mission. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* affirms this and states: “God gives spiritual gifts to benefit the whole body not simply the individuals who receive them. And just as the recipient does not receive the gift for himself, so the church does not receive the totality of gifts for itself. God endows the church community with gifts to prepare it to fulfill the mission to the world he has assigned it.”²

Moses’ ear was to hear the word directly from God, but Aaron’s mouth was to speak God’s word directly to the people of God (Exodus 4:15-16). Both individuals, functioning as first and second leaders, were needed for God’s task. In this way, the roles of first leader and second leader intersect at mission. It is for the good of the mission of God’s people that He has given gifts to all (cf. Ephesians 4:11-12). Second leaders must evaluate the gifts God has given to them and seek areas where those gifts will

² Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 242.

compliment the gifts of the first leader. Then they must accept that those areas of leadership may be less visible than the first leader. However, all must realize that God needs the gifts of each for the success of the Church. They are not the same nor do they carry the same function, but both are important.

When in Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit said, “Separate me out Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them,” both men were gifted, assigned work, and the source of that collaborative call was the Holy Spirit. There is no distinction by function or role. One is not more important, because he is the first leader; and the other is not less crucial for God’s task, because he is the second leader. This implies that God makes no distinction in first-leader or second-leader roles. For this reason, second leaders need to be mindful to remain open to God, who wants to develop their characters and gifts “to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Nothing can provide more assurance or comfort for leaders than knowing they occupy a position, serve in ministry, or provide a specific service that providence has ordained (cf. Philippians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:12).

Another important principle is that second leaders must embrace humility and empty themselves as Jesus emptied Himself. The leadership model of Christ, as illustrated through Philippians 2:5-8, provides an extraordinary example of humility and submission. This example must be emulated in the leadership of both first and second leaders. These two traits demonstrate a radical difference in the leadership model of Christ as compared to that of the world. It is only by exemplifying the traits of humility and submission can leaders demonstrate the life of Christian leadership. These characteristics are so prominent because they reveal the heart of God. His willingness to

empty Himself so completely crushes all human pride to powder. The transition of Christ from the form of God to the form of a servant is the essential example for first leaders transitioning to second-leader roles. This is the greatest transition the world has ever known. For a successful transition from first leader to second leader, humility and submission must reign in the life of the second leader.

This leads to the third principle: all leaders must submit their ideas and preferences not their principles for the good of the body. This includes the first leader. This idea of submission is key to the leadership style of Christ. This is what Barnabas and Paul did when they functioned and alternated as both first and second leaders. Transitioning from first leader to second leader has as much to do with one's perspective of the first-leader role as one's perspective of the second-leader role. Just as Paul and Barnabas seemed to transition seamlessly between the roles of first and second leader, so SDA second leaders must acquire the ability to move between these two positions of leadership. They must grasp the idea that some occasions will require them to act as the first leader; and when it does, they must take on that responsibility with ease. However, with the second chair most occasions will require leading from the second position. They must submit to the leadership of the first leader for the harmony and the unity of the organization. This does not diminish the leadership ability of the second leader; rather, putting on the unassuming nature of Christ only strengthens it. It strengthens leadership, because in this way second leaders demonstrate that the unity of the Body of Christ is more important than their role.

There were times especially in Acts 14, where Paul and Barnabas' roles were interchanging regularly. The most remarkable observation is the lack of tension and conflict between the two men. Even when contention arose between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15:37-39), this biblical situation provides several insights for first and second leaders. First, it demonstrates these were two strong passionate leaders; yet, they were able to submit to one another's leadership for years. The second insight provided is that sincere, spiritual men of God can have a difference of opinion on a given issue and still preserve overall unity. This difference sometimes can create contention, but Godly resolution and reconciliation can occur (cf. Colossians 4:10-11) without either person sacrificing their essential core identity as a leader.

The final theological principle that undergirds this ministry vision and strategy is that second leaders must seek to develop their own leadership strengths while balancing loyalty to their first leader. Biblically, the second-leader role offers opportunity for followers of God to exercise their leadership traits. For example, Joshua was young, loyal, and possessed a living faith in God.³ As a second leader, he learned to depend on God and trust what God could do through him. This development of his faith did not diminish his allegiance to Moses nor the role God called Moses to hold. In fact, in each of the cases cited in Part Two of this project—Aaron, Joshua, Barnabas, Paul or Jesus—none of them were viewed as weak or compromised leaders. They were strong and resolute yet supportive. They were able to balance strength with solid support of their first leaders. In each of the second-leader examples, there is evidence that they served in some capacity as

³ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 481.

a first leader. In the same way, God calls second leaders to continue to develop their leadership strengths but at the same time continue to be loyal to the first leader by honoring God's call to the first leader. The second leader must recognize that first leaders occupy the role to which God has called them. Through this acknowledgement the second leader must offer support, even though God has gifted the second leader to lead. Just as this duality often existed in the Bible, so it exists in the reality of God's people today.

The preferred future for the executive secretaries in the North American Division is to emulate the example of biblical second leaders identified in this project. The goal is to facilitate an environment that nurtures and grows strong second leaders and to assist first leaders transitioning into their second-leader roles. In doing so, the great need for a fully functioning second leader in the church organizations will be seen by both the second leaders themselves and those to whom they minister. Ultimately, doing so will better equip the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America to fulfill its mission to facilitate the proclamation of the gospel to every man and woman throughout its territory.

Theological Principles for Executive Secretary

In the SDA denomination, change can best be effected in the function of the executive secretary by providing a biblical and theological rationale for the growth or shift. This section will seek to apply the biblical principles mentioned above specifically to the leadership role of executive secretaries within the SDA organizational structure as they seek to grow as followers of Christ and in their leadership function. The example of Christ in the second-leader role is paramount in the following discussion on transitioning

from a first-leader role to a second-leader role. The discussion will focus on the principles of humility, submission, and unity. These are the principles that were primary in Christ's transition from the form of God to the form of a servant.

Humility

Executive secretaries need to follow Christ's example of humility, in order to change from a first-leader role to a second-leader role. This means emptying themselves of whatever their previous role may have been. This "shedding" also grants them an opportunity to re-evaluate leadership in general from Jesus' example. In the primary role, in many instances, the first leader makes the final decision or helps to lead a group to make a final decision. Executive secretaries transitioning from the first-leader roles must realize their function requires submitting to the final decisions of another.

Humility shifts self from the center and allows one to see where and how God is leading. Embracing humility means understanding the providence of God. Humility urges leaders to see the role God has assigned to them. This revelation paves the way for God to unveil God's His plan. One cannot truly accept His plan until the submissive mind and heart are in place. Executive secretaries have to come to understand why they have been placed in their position by God. This perspective allows second leaders to see their first leaders as also serving in their capacity as assigned by God. Realizing this perspective makes it easier to humble oneself in order to submit to the first leader.

It is incumbent for leaders, especially executive secretaries, to grasp the leadership paradigm Jesus advocates. At the heart of the leadership example of Christ was being a servant to mankind. He literally came to minister and not to be ministered

unto. True spiritual leadership is more about people's influence than the position that they hold, says Sanders.⁴ This influence does not come with the office; it comes with the man or woman serving. If secretaries can grasp this view of spiritual leadership, it not only will change their personal perspective of the second-leader role but it will change how the first leader's role is viewed. In this way, the principles of humility properly understood and embraced will make the transition easier.

Submission

The principle of submission pairs itself with humility and needs to be followed by all leaders, whether first or second chair. It is important in the SDA organizational structure because submission reveals that Christ is leading in His Church. For this reason, Paul writes about the importance of “submitting yourselves one to another, in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21). This passage is inclusive of all believers and followers of Christ. However, for the purposes of this project, the passage is applied to the executive secretary.

In order for executive secretaries to fulfill their assignment, they must submit to another's leadership. Submission does not require one to sacrifice one's principles or core identity, but it does require one to sacrifice one's immediate plans and preferences. It is only in this kind of submission can peace and harmony be maintained in the conferences and unions. This submission allows the organization to focus its resources and efforts on tasks and not on the struggle over power. It ensures a better working relationship between first leader and the second leader. Also, it allows the kind of unity that is required of the

⁴ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 19.

Body of Christ that Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:25. Emulating Christ's example in submission ensures unity and a harmonious working together among leaders that is seamless. This kind of unity among leadership signals to the world and the members of the Church that Christ resides with the leadership (John 10:35). The SDA Church cannot carry forward its mission without second- and third-position leaders submitting to the leadership of another.

It is important to remember that Godly submission is not taken by the receiver. Instead, it is freely given by the donor. Any submission not freely given is not submission at all. The ultimate purpose of this is for the unified Body of Christ to accomplish the mission that Christ has entrusted to His Church.

Unity

The maintenance of unity is vital for the executive secretary within the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in order to foster an environment for the accomplishing of God's mission. The executive secretary must recognize unity in the Body of Christ as the coming together of every person for the common task of spreading the gospel of Christ.⁵ This unity must be displayed by the top leaders of the organization. Unity only will be achieved by exercising the characteristics of humility and submission.

When unity is achieved in the leadership core, it will portray to others an administrative team working in harmony and utilizing their gifts to the fullest. In a world torn apart by dissent and conflict, the love and unity around God's people of different personalities, temperaments, and dispositions witnesses to the Church's message more

⁵ Fowler, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 203.

powerfully than anything else. This unity provides incontrovertible evidence of their connection with heaven and helps to validate their credentials as true disciples of Christ (cf. John 13:35). In this way, unity will be revealed in the manner executive secretaries submit themselves to the leadership of the president. While the president also has a role to play, for the benefit of maintaining the focus of this project this discussion will continue to concentrate on the function of the second leader.

The executive secretary's role is significantly more crucial than any others when it comes to maintaining unity in the organization. Those who serve as second leader have the opportunity to cause discord and chaos unlike any other. Since they are in the second position of authority then their negative spirit, attitude or action has greater influence and therefore greater potential to cause deep dissension and disharmony within the organization. When a lack of unity is present, it can be seen readily in the operation of the organization. There often surfaces tension and distrust, and energy is spent trying to protect and secure positions and areas of responsibility rather than serving the cause of God's mission. When executive secretaries embrace unity as a key aspect in their role as second leaders, this will assist in their transition. They will come to understand the grave responsibility their position carries in keeping the organization functioning as a unified body. The executive secretary will grasp that not even the president can be successful, if the organization is not functioning together in unity. In this way, unity is paramount and the secretary plays a major role to facilitate this Christ-like quality in the organization.

Enhanced Vision for Executive Secretary Role

The current perceptions of the role of the executive secretary vary and usually are shaped by the historical view of a given conference or territory. Some perceptions have been fostered by a particular function of the position. As discussed earlier, some see the role as policy guru, a “yes” man, or a “company” man. Others believe the executive secretary to be simply a supporter of the president. Still others have a much more positive view of this position and see the second chair as a true leadership function. It is the objective of this project to change in some cases and standardize in others the perception of the position of the executive secretary in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the greater health and effectiveness of the leader and the organization.

In order to have a different view of the position, the executive secretaries themselves first must be willing to open up their mental model of leadership to be pruned and enhanced. This enhanced mental model rests on executive secretaries never forgetting that God has called them to spiritual leadership. This does not change when they are assigned to the second-leader position. How they lead is what changes. To help foster the transition in mindset, Senge would ask, “What does the spiritual leader look like when you are in ‘second command’?”⁶ Keeping this question in mind and remembering that God does not call leaders to abandon their leadership, executive secretaries must change how they personally see the position. Although they are not the first leader, they are still called to lead. They must not lose the compassionate heart of the Shepherd and become relegated to just quoting what the policy says; rather, they must

⁶ Peter Senge, “The Leader’s New Work: Building Learning Organizations,” *Sloan Management Review* (Fall 1990): 8.

interpret policy and make sense of it in today's changing times to and for constituents. That is leadership.

Executive secretaries can create a broader yet deeper perspective of their role by interpreting situations in a different manner than what has been the traditional practice. The attitudes and values of executive secretaries must reflect that they are a spiritual leader who happens to be functioning in the second position. The position does not define their essential identities. Executive secretaries must intentionally seek not to be defined by the functions of the role they carry. Looking at situations through Bolman and Deal's four frames can prove helpful in keeping the secretary from being relegated to evaluating from a single perspective. Cormode's emphasis on the fourth frame, making spiritual sense of situations, can be extremely valuable. It can create an opportunity for the secretary to form a new perception by looking at things from distinct perspectives which can enlighten and cause growth. Executive secretaries have the chance to relate to things like policy from that "making spiritual sense" perspective. The executive secretary's shift to assess situations differently will aid in altering the perceptions of the position for the constituents they serve.

In addition to interpreting policy through Bolman and Deal's four frames, an enhanced vision of the executive secretary includes being a strong leader who is loyal, being supportive of the first leader but not being a "yes" man, and mastering the skill of leading behind closed doors. This enhanced perception involves the executive secretary understanding how to win the trust of the first leader, how to balance the needs of the employee with the conference, and how to provide leadership by making spiritual

meaning of policies and other actions of the church organization for constituents. This is a description of the enhanced perception of the executive secretary. It does not suggest that there are currently no executive secretaries that have this awareness. Rather, the intent of this project is to make this particular perception standard for executive secretaries throughout the North American Division.

Strong Leader But Loyal

One of the more challenging aspects of the executive secretary is to understand that being a strong yet loyal leader means being supportive but not being a “yes” man. First leaders need executive secretaries to be strong enough to give their honest, sincere opinions on issues even when they are in opposition to the views of the president. The president also needs to feel secure about having the complete backing of the executive secretary. Loyalty does not mean telling presidents what they want to hear. It means being trusted with confidentiality and supporting the first leader even when there is disagreement, as long as principle is not being violated.

Table 3 below offers several helpful insights on how an executive secretary can become a stronger supporting leader. It reveals how managers currently think in general and how they can change their thinking to be a different kind of leader. The column on the left describes how managers often process issues and situations, and the column on the right presents a distinct approach to issues that are more encompassing. The chart is designed to help those who manage organizations to think more broadly than just their specific roles.

The chart challenges managers to lead not just with policies and structural solutions but with the heart and mind adapting to the circumstances around them. It is in this broader sense that executive secretaries can be of the greatest benefit to the president and the conference they serve. Table 3 exhorts managers to be willing to take more risks and is Bolman and Deal’s way of pushing second-level leaders out of their comfort zone.⁷

TABLE 3 Expanding Managerial Thinking⁸

How Managers Usually Think	How Managers Can Think
They often have a limited view of organizations (for example, attributing almost all problems to individuals’ flaws and errors).	They need a holistic framework that encourages inquiry into a range of significant issues: people, power structure, and symbols.
Regardless of a problem’s source, managers often choose rational and structural solutions: facts, logic, restructuring.	They need a palette that offers an array of options: bargaining as well as training, celebration as well as reorganization.
Managers often value certainty, rationality, and control while fearing ambiguity, paradox, and “going with the flow.”	They need to develop creativity, risk-taking, and playfulness in responses to life’s dilemmas and paradoxes, focusing as much on finding the right question as the right answer, on finding meaning and faith amid clutter and confusion.
Leaders often rely on the “one right answer” and the “one best way”; they are stunned at the turmoil and resistance they generate.	Leaders need passionate, unwavering commitment to principle, combined with flexibility in understanding and responding to events.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Bolman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 17.

It supplies executive secretaries with several challenges that can assist them from falling into the trap of just maintaining the organization to becoming a well-rounded leader of the organization. Since the executive secretary by function is assigned to the policies and infrastructure of the organization, it can be easy to become myopic in perspective. The chart invites a more holistic approach to the position. It is another tool to assist the executive secretary in gaining a new vision for the position.

As stated earlier, enhancing the perception of the position of the executive secretary starts with executive secretaries. They must be a strong leader but loyal and change the way they see situations. An enhanced vision begins with how that position is viewed. The manner in which they process information will have an effect on how they are perceived by others. In order for the executive secretary to change or enhance the perception of the position, they must be willing to engage with it differently.

Five Strategic Goals

To help executive secretaries embrace this enhanced vision of their second-leader role, the strategy contained in this project facilitates their shift from present perceptions to seeing themselves first and foremost as the spiritual leader God has called them to be. This involves embracing the specific and clear mission to provide leadership in the sphere to which God has assigned. Consequently, the strategy contained within this project has five goals: to help secretaries gain a heightened sense of spiritual awareness in their present call, to encourage new secretaries to employ useful and available tools when addressing typical secretariat issues, to assist secretaries in embracing the leadership style of Christ, to equip secretaries with how to utilize Bolman and Deal's four-frame approach

for evaluating situations, and to promote their negotiation of difficult situations towards a win/win approach.

The first goal entails executive secretaries gaining a heightened sense of being exactly where God wants them to be in their current roles and positions. This involves understanding that the second-leader role is just as valid and important a call from God as the first-leader position the secretary once occupied. Chapter 5 of this discussion details several biblical examples on how God calls second leaders into position to fulfill His mission. This material will be presented, reviewed, and discussed with executive secretaries in order to achieve this strategic goal. Given the SDA reliance on biblical foundations for justified action, executive secretaries will be more prone to see and accept that God has a particular reason for positioning them in their current call. They will learn that it is vital for building up His kingdom and to assist in the furtherance of the gospel in some specific way. Embracing this goal will enable executive secretaries to lead with confidence and to know that God has placed them in a position to lead unto His glory.

The second strategic goal is to encourage new executive secretaries to use some tool or instrument to review typical secretariat issues. Given the difference in context between unions or conferences and local churches, observing the need for distinct tools will help to open up the mindset of the new executive secretary and to create opportunities for viewing issues from perspectives that are more diverse than the traditional organizational view points. This can be of immense value. Since executive secretaries have spent much of their lives working inside the organization, consequently it can be an increasing challenge to engender fresh perspectives on various issues. One of

the strategies that will be utilized for executive secretaries' paradigm shift is the employment of Bolman and Deal's four frames. Though it will take some effort to become accustomed to applying the four frames to the various situations the executive secretaries confront, it will be well worth the effort. Executive secretaries will be encouraged to explore other tools individually in order to take greater ownership for their personal leadership growth while occupying the second-leader role.

The third strategic goal for secretaries is embracing the leadership style of Christ and to emulate Him as a second leader. This example of Christ in the second-leader position required Jesus to empty Himself of everything He was prior to submitting to the second-leader role (cf. Philippians 2:6). The self-sacrificing act of Christ penetrates to the essential issue for the second leader. In order to follow Christ's example as a second leader, the executive secretary must be emptied of self and all preconceived notions of leadership that are not in harmony with the principles of Christ. The selfish desires of supremacy by the human heart must be allowed to melt away.

If executive secretaries assume the second-leader position with this mind of Christ, it will afford them the ability to add tremendous value to the organization. They be able to complement instead of compete with the first leader (cf. Philippians 2:5). This example of Christ encourages second leaders even to view their former first-leader position differently—not as something to be grasped or to be seen as better. While working toward and through this goal, submitting to another's leadership will not cut across one's ego because self will have been emptied out. Executive secretaries will come to actually see their leadership from a servant's viewpoint. If executive secretaries can grasp and embrace

this model of Christ, it can change the leadership paradigm throughout the NAD. In as much as first leaders generally are chosen from second-position leaders, many of the currently serving secretaries one day will serve as presidents. With this more informed view of Christ's leadership exercised as a president, these former executive secretaries will be in a position to inspire this change throughout the division. Following the example of Christ in leadership makes serving in the second-leader position a tremendous privilege, because one has the high honor of walking in His footsteps.

A fourth strategic goal is to help executive secretaries utilize Bolman and Deal's four-frame approach to evaluating situations. Working towards this goal involves assisting secretaries in acquiring the ability to utilize the frames in assessing situations they confront in the everyday functions of their office. These frames can be defined as windows that offer varying perspectives on a given situation.⁹ The use of these frames affords the secretary the opportunity to observe a single occurrence or decision from distinct vantage points. These frames can aid in broadening and enhancing the secretary's viewpoint, lifting it from a restricted portal of policy or other details and functions inherent in the secretariat. The broader perspective can inform decisions, policies, and the approach to various situations with the intent of encouraging a union and/or conference to move forward with greater unity and understanding. This will impact a secretary's leadership and will enhance the overall organizational perception of this second-leader role.

⁹ See Chapters 2 and 3 of this project for details regarding Bolman and Deal's four frames.

The final strategic goal in assisting first leaders transitioning into the second-leader roles is to help them refine their art of negotiating difficult situations towards a win/win approach. One of the constant challenges for the executive secretary is dealing with conflict. This can be especially true in their relationship with the president. The second leader often confronts differences with the president in various areas. In these instances, the secretary needs a means and process of managing and navigating these differences. The five steps for negotiating conflict in William Ury's book, *Getting Past No*, offer a solid approach for swimming through these difficulties.¹⁰

Ury's approach helps the leader to move to a win/win mentality. These principles also may be applied when the executive secretary seeks to balance the needs of the employees and constituents against policies, rules, and the best interests of the organization. These steps provide practical tools in assisting executive secretaries in negotiating conflict, especially since their primary leadership tool is not positional authority but influential authority. The five steps are colloquial but descriptive: "Don't react, go to the balcony," "Don't argue, step to their side," "Don't reject, reframe," "Don't push, build them a golden bridge," and "Don't escalate, use power to educate." These concepts will be added as helpful sections in the *Handbook for Local Conference Secretaries of the North American Division* as a tool for conflict management.¹¹ For the purposes of this project, here is a brief description of the five steps mentioned in Ury's approach.

¹⁰ William Ury, *Getting Past No* (New York: Bantam Dell/Division of Random House, 1993).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

When applied to the position of the secretary in negotiating with the president, Ury's first step is this: "Do not react but go to the balcony." This step advocates not operating from the mindset of frontal defense when feeling attacked. If executive secretaries choose to react in this way, they will lose their objectivity. Ury argues for leaders to "go to the balcony." The balcony is a metaphor for a mental attitude. This means to rise above the circumstances and to see them from a more objective point of view. This vantage point allows one to think constructively for both the president and the executive secretary, almost like a third party, and to seek a mutually satisfactory way to resolve the problem.¹²

"Do not argue but step to their side" is the second step. Ury defines this as disarming first leaders by doing the opposite of what they may expect.¹³ "Stepping to their side" involves doing three things: listening, acknowledging, and agreeing.¹⁴ Executive secretaries need to look for places where they can agree with the president. Amid differing opinion, finding fine points of common ground is important. This will make bridging disagreements easier.

The third step is this: "Don't reject but reframe." "Reframe" means redirecting the president's attention away from a position on a given issue towards the task of identifying interests and inventing creative options for a solution.¹⁵ Instead of directly opposing a

¹² Ibid., 37.

¹³ Ibid., 54.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 76.

position, it is helpful to look for ways to focus attention on available options providing solution.

The fourth step is this: “Don’t push but build them a golden bridge.” Once again, Ury cautions against direct confrontation. Instead, he advocates “building a golden bridge” to which the president can retreat. This means actively involving him in the solution so that it is not only the secretary’s idea but a collaborative solution by both the secretary and the president.¹⁶ This can be utilized best when it is obvious the president is wrong, and both parties know it. This approach allows a first leader to save face and makes the process of negotiating much easier.

“Don’t escalate but use power to educate” is Ury’s final step. Escalating a situation may help an executive secretary “win” a battle, but the cost for such a victory may be losing the war. In this context, “losing the war” means destroying the relationship with the president. Ury advocates the use of power, influence, or position to bring to light for the first leader all the benefits of a win/win solution. A win/win solution involves the ability to see the situation from all sides and then creating a resolution that encompasses a dignified response or way out for all. The key to this step is outlining the benefits of agreement.¹⁷

Collectively, Ury’s steps serve as practical tools in negotiating beneficial solutions when facing conflict with the president and others. Ury’s five points create an invaluable, even breakthrough strategy for the executive secretary. It aligns perfectly with the teachings of Christ. Matthew 5:44, 45 says, “Love your enemies, bless them that

¹⁶ Ibid., 110.

¹⁷ Ibid., 132.

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be children of your Father, which is in heaven.” If Christ commands this with enemies, then how much more when executive secretaries are in relationships with people of a Christian organization they should seek to preserve and protect relationships through a win/win approach.

Four Key Components of the Strategy

Implementing the strategy and achieving its goals will be accomplished through a four-fold approach. This will involve training seminars in person and online, additions to the *Handbook of Local Conference Executive Secretaries*, the availability of executive secretary coaching or mentoring, and ongoing support. In this section, the focus will turn to the mechanisms and vehicles that will be used to assist executive secretaries in their transition from a first-leader role and empowering them in a second-leader role. The first step in the transformational experience of the executive secretary involves the training segments, which will be reinforced through the readings and then integrated into practice through ongoing mentoring or executive coaching.

Training Seminars

Above all, the biblical rationale for the executive secretary is paramount. For this reason, the training component for the strategy centers on the biblical rationale and legitimacy for the second-leader position. Consequently, it will be the first area addressed. The trainers will present the examples of Moses-Aaron, Moses-Joshua, and Barnabas-Paul relationships. The training will be very interactive with group studies on

the second-leader role of Christ in Philippians 2:5-8. It will involve the executive secretaries participating in role playing and applying the emptying of Christ to the current role and perception of the executive secretary. They also will be asked to describe the role in the light of Scripture and the example of Christ.

There will be an in-depth analysis of the Body of Christ and spiritual gifts with handouts as presented in the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*. In the training component, each secretary will be asked to write personal notes on what this emptying will look like for them individually in their perspective roles. These discussions will be followed by presentations and discussions in small groups on how the first leader and the second leader can intersect at mission. Case studies and role playing along with biblical support that encompass submission, humility, being supportive but not a “yes” man, and achieving unity will be incorporated.

As an additional part of the training component, the executive secretaries will be asked to create role-playing scenarios from some of the routine functioning that second leaders often face. They then must apply Philippians 2 and other biblical principles to those scenarios and share what they discover. The training will highlight the key that spiritual leadership is about influence. Each one will be asked to share at least one of the qualities that they seek to empty in their transition from being the first leader to now functioning as an executive secretary. The training will involve other practical aspects such as the responsibilities of the role, negotiating conflict from a win/win approach, and using Bolman and Deal’s four frames.

A segment of the training will include several practical situations on Bolman and Deal's four frames and Ury's five steps for a win/win solution. The secretaries then will be asked to practice viewing an array of situations through each of the frames. During this portion of the training, practical techniques for making spiritual sense of policies and rules and contextualizing them will be highlighted as the symbolic frame is presented. Afterwards the secretaries will be asked to divide into groups and role play around several scenarios that highlight contention between the president and the secretary. They will apply the principles from Ury's five steps to resolve the conflict with a win/win approach. This will be instrumental in dealing with various issues of conflict as it relates to preserving unity in the secretary's relationship with the president.

The objective of the training is to assist executive secretaries in discovering or rediscovering a deeper understanding of the leadership model of Christ that will motivate and inspire them to emulate Him more from the second-leader role. Participants in the training seminar will learn that this ultimately forms the foundation for an enhanced, empowered executive secretary. The training segment is not designed to be the end of this approach but merely a catalyst to launch executive secretaries into further development and to provide resources that will aid in their continued study of a biblical understanding of leadership.

Executive Coaching and Mentoring

The core component of this project's strategy builds on the first by involving each executive secretary in some level of mentoring or coaching for the purpose of integrating the training into their secretariat practices. The selection of the coach or mentor is the second

practical step in the transformational experience of the secretary. It provides for gentle inward and mild outward accountability to the principles required in making the transition from the first-leader position. Many of the executive secretaries are well established in their careers and may perceive it to be a little elementary to have a mentor. Therefore, for some, an executive coach may be more appropriate. It can generate an exciting opportunity for the executive secretary to have someone as a neutral party to be a sounding board on issues to whom they can turn when faced with new, uncomfortable dilemmas.

Coaches also will serve as a listening ear. They must be able to understand the plight of a second leader but already have grasped the leadership example of Christ. The coach's role is to reinforce some of the leadership principles discussed in the training segment, such as submitting to another's leadership, humility, unity, and most of all the second-leader example of Christ. This mentor, partner, or coach will be effective to the degree they have the confidence of the executive secretary. Therefore, it is imperative for secretaries to be actively involved in selecting their coach. These executive mentors also will help guide the secretary through situations where it may be difficult to remain objective. The coach assists in molding the leadership of the secretary to help bring to fruition this enhanced vision and empowerment in leading God's organization from the second-leader position.

The coaches should all have served in some capacity as a second leader. Their experience in the second-leader position does not necessarily need to have been as an executive secretary, although this is most desirable. Essentially, coaches need to have some working knowledge of the SDA organizational culture in order to fully understand the

dilemma of an executive secretary. It would serve the secretary best to have someone from another region, so there are no employment implications. These coaches need to be available for at least thirty minutes per week to provide feedback to the executive secretary.

Orientation Materials

The third strategic component entails providing materials for the orientation of those who are new to the position of executive secretary, as it relates to this enhanced vision of the position. This will help assist in the next step in this transformational experience. The presentation of materials will occur as a substantive segment during the training sessions. The materials are composed of Bible readings and examples of second-leader roles, quotes from White as the prophetess of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and SDA teachings on the Body of Christ and the gifts God gives to the Church.

Since the participants in the training seminars are new executive secretaries, they are probably in the greatest need of assistance for making the transition into the executive secretary position. However, being new to the position, they may be more open to looking at the role of executive secretary from a different perspective. In other words, they are ripe candidates for creating an enhanced vision of the position. Heretofore, the objective was to train and orientate them to functions of the position. However, this strategy involves the extra step of providing assistance and equipping them for full-orbed leadership from the second-role position.

In the executive secretarial training that occurred in January 2011, I added a component on leadership from the second position. The materials on humility, submissiveness, unity, and the second-leader role of Christ along with the biblical

examples were beneficial;¹⁸ consequently, all will become permanent portions of the *Handbook for Local Conference Executive Secretaries*. Inclusion of these materials helps to establish a setting for new secretaries to ask questions they otherwise might not ask. It has provided the North American Division Secretariat Office an opportunity to begin to shape a new paradigm for the role and therefore the perceptions of the position.

Ongoing Support

The fourth component of the strategy is the ongoing provision of materials that will assist all secretaries in continuing to enhance and empower them in their position of executive secretary. As the final step in the transformational experience of the secretary, this stage will continue to build on the training segment. There will be ongoing training conducted for all executive secretaries. Heretofore, the training has been used only to bring policy updates and various issues such as legal, constitutional, and other practical functions of the role of the executive secretary. These training sessions now will include all of the materials addressed in this project. The materials will become a part of the *Handbook on Local Conference Secretaries* and thus a part of the primary curriculum and resources for all executive secretaries.

In addition, there will be training and updates online. However, intermittently there also will be limited materials presented by union executive secretaries during annual meetings. The online features will focus on the broader biblical principles of biblical leadership already presented in the training. This feature will be very useful in

¹⁸ For further details, see the evaluation portion of Chapter 7.

that it will help the executive secretaries to keep focused on the items presented in the training sessions.

The role of the union executive secretaries is very significant for this strategy in particular, in as much as they will be the infield representatives that will aid in the implementation of the strategy. Union secretaries will feed the online curriculum with featured scenarios from their various territories concerning any of the materials covered during the in-person training sessions. These materials will center on maintaining unity from the second-leader position, submission, humility, the application of Bolman and Deal's four frames to actual situations, and the use of principles presented in Ury's five steps for negotiating conflicts.

This component is very significant because it will keep fresh the strategy that was presented during the training sessions. In addition, it will make the principles relevant by providing actual events transpiring in the lives of the executive secretaries currently serving. Providing these online materials will offer a reference and an opportunity to ask questions of others anonymously in applying some of the principles of second-position leadership. The ongoing provision of materials and support forums for continued dialogue to keep this emphasis before the executive secretaries is pivotal to improving the enhanced vision and empowering executive secretaries to live it fully within their respective ministry contexts.

These key components of the strategy make it possible for the executive secretary to have a fulfilling and vibrant leadership role in the SDA Church in North America. They not only enhance the position but emancipate it by providing empowerment to lead

and a mechanism to do so within the SDA framework of the Body of Christ. It assures executive secretaries of being in the place God has called them to be and equips them with skills and a mindset to serve effectively in God's Church. Overall, this strategy will provide assistance to executive secretaries in leading from the second position. They will learn that they can lead with dignity through humility and submission while preserving unity. They can rest in the knowledge that they are following in the footsteps of Christ.

Participants

The initial target audience will be the new local, conference, and union executive secretaries. The criteria used for selection are those who have served in their current position of executive secretary for less than a year. In January 2011, there were nine participants in total. Seven were from the local conferences, and two were from the union conferences. Among the group, only one had served in any level as an executive secretary. Geographically, they were sprinkled all over the North American continent, including Canada.

The individuals providing the leadership training in the first phase were me, the associate secretary, vice-president for leadership, office of general counsel, and a representative from Adventist Risk Management. These individuals all have been second and first leaders and have made the transition from first leadership to second-leader roles. They provided some insight from their experience but primarily focused on the technical aspects of the role and function of the executive secretary.

However, during this initial training, I piloted a piece of this strategy through a seminar called “Spiritual Leadership from the Second-Leader Position,”¹⁹ which encapsulated biblical examples and the principle of being servant leaders presented by Christ in Luke 22: 25-27. This initial phase did not include the second-leader example of Christ, Bolman and Deal’s four frames, or Ury’s five steps of negotiating conflict. This was included in phase 2 as this group met again for additional training in April 2011.

¹⁹G. Alexander Bryant, “Spiritual Leadership from the Second-Leader Position” (training seminar held at Seventh-day Adventist Headquarters, Silver Spring, MD, January 2011).

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

The new ministry initiative contained in this project seeks to assist SDA first leaders transitioning to the second-leader position of executive secretary. In this model a new paradigm based on biblical principles is a central focus of the orientation and training. The overall objective is to create a new perception of this role and empower executive secretaries with a biblical understanding to embrace Christ's leadership principles in the second-leader role. In addition to presenting the exact steps and time sequences that are utilized in assisting first leaders transitioning to the role of executive secretary, this chapter will identify the specific opportunities for training since this group of second leaders comes from all over the country. It also will clarify objectives for each training session and establish accountability procedures and assessments to ensure that the objectives have been accomplished.

Timeline

The timeline for this initiative contains several phases and occurs over a two-year period. The first phase is called "the preparation phase." During this stage, new

perspectives were explored, biblical principles were examined, current perceptions of the executive secretary were evaluated, and a new model started to emerge. As a result of this new model, additional resources are being developed. This phase started in January 2011 and implemented a new seminar in the orientation process called “Spiritual Leadership from the Second-Leader Position.” This first resource was created and presented in January 2011 to nine new executive secretaries. The training took place at the Seventh-day Adventist Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. I conducted a two-day orientation and training in order to provide an introduction to their new posts and to emphasize the leadership role of their position. More than 25 percent of the time was spent on defining spiritual leadership and biblical principles of the second-leader role. Though I did not conduct a survey or an assessment, the verbal and written responses to the spiritual leadership emphasis were very positive.

In April 2011, during the second phase, the materials for “Spiritual Leadership from the Second-Leader Position” were further refined by senior and experienced union executive secretaries in a meeting held in San Antonio, Texas.¹

As part of this second phase, in October 2011 these materials will be presented again to union executive secretaries with the design of providing orientation to equip them to train local executive secretaries in their territories. The example of Christ as second leader, as illustrated in Philippians 2:5-8, will be added to the training segment. In addition, Bolman and Deal’s four frames and Ury’s five steps for negotiating toward a win/win solution will be featured in this session. Since there are nine unions that cover

¹ G Alexander Bryant, “Spiritual Leadership from the Second-Leader Position Meeting,” (Union Executive Secretaries Council, held at Embassy Suites Hotel in San Antonio, TX, April 2011).

the North American Division, and each has approximately six local conferences in its region, the training will focus on how to equip the local conference executive secretaries that reside in their territory. The goal is to have a manual that will allow more uniformity. This will facilitate some consistency in how the executive secretary role is being designed and shaped. The goal is not total uniformity, because it must allow for the variations that exist in many of the conferences.

An evaluation and assessment tool on the functioning of the executive secretary will be designed and distributed in late fall of 2011. This will be an online assessment and conducted nationally. The purpose of this assessment is to establish a baseline of current attitudes and perceptions concerning the role and functions of the executive secretary. After the results of the assessment, union and division leaders will determine key areas of need. There will be a national training session conducted in the spring of 2012 that will focus on these key areas. This will be a recurring cycle due to the new executive secretaries who constantly are being hired and other secretaries who process change at a slower pace. Materials focusing on the biblical principles and legitimacy of the second leader as discussed in this project will be presented with the same intention of shifting the paradigm of the executive secretary. Each executive secretary will be encouraged to have a mentor or coach within sixty days after the training session.

The third phase will take place in April 2012 with all the executive secretaries of the North American Division. During this time, having refined the presentation of the previous phases, all the seminars will be presented. This will include the biblical role of the second leader and its legitimacy; the second-leader role of Christ; and the principles

of humility, submissiveness, and unity as they relate to the second-leader role. Bolman and Deal's four-frame perspective will be presented along with practical case studies and role playing to apply its principles. The seminar on Ury's five steps on negotiating for a win/win solution also will have practical applications, group discussions, and role playing to assist the executive secretaries in incorporating these steps regarding common issues they face.

The fourth phase will be the selection of a mentor or coach. The union secretary and the local conference secretary shall work together to find a mentor or coach that believes in the biblical principles of leadership that were discussed and implemented during the training sessions. This mentor or coach also should have experienced second-position leadership and been through the transition from first leader to the second leader. The mentor should be selected within three months of the April 2012 training session. There will be a twelve-month continuous cycle of interaction of the mentor or coach with the executive secretary. The role of the coach or mentor is to provide a listening ear and to hold executive secretaries accountable for demonstrating biblical and Christ-centered leadership from their position as presented during the training session.

The fifth phase will be the online presentation of materials consistent with those presented during the training session. These materials will be new and fresh scenarios in which the executive secretary can apply principles learned from the in-person training session. These scenarios will be true and gathered based on the experiences of the local conference secretaries from across the North American Division. The union executive secretary will be responsible for motivating and gathering these scenarios and sending

them to the North American Division Secretariat Office for online redistribution. In addition, there will be an opportunity for real scenarios to be presented anonymously and counsel to be sought from fellow executive secretaries based on the principles presented during the training sessions. This will be ongoing, with no ending date supplied. The intention is for this to become a continuing educational service, to provide lifelong learning for the executive secretary.

Identifying and Training Implementation Personnel

A key factor in the entire strategy is the identification and training of personnel that will implement and carry through the concepts presented in this project. Without the right people in this area, all the work of this project will be in vain. Therefore, it is critical to employ a good selection process to identify the proper people to assist in bringing this to fruition. It is equally important, after having identified them, to have a thorough training regiment to ensure they are equipped to do the required task.

The first criterion for all training personnel is to have experience currently as a second leader or to have served as a second leader within the last ten years. Without this criterion, trainers will have no credibility to speak to the group in the area of transitioning from the first-leader to the second-leader role. Second, they need to have the ability to incorporate and apply biblical principles to the second-leader role. The implementation personnel need to have some working knowledge of the role and function of the executive secretary as well. The training personnel are the ones who actually present the seminars. These will be selected from a wide variety of leaders. The implementation personnel are the ones who are responsible for carrying out the strategy that will assist

executive secretaries in their transition to second leaders and the enhancement of the position. These implementation personnel will be composed primarily from the North American Division Secretariat Office and the union executive secretaries.

There is a wide pool of human resources available for this strategy. One of the more likely places to find personnel with such a specified and unique background is among those who have previously served in the position of executive secretary. Another likely source of potential candidates falls among vice-presidents serving at the union and division levels. As I have surveyed the North American Division with this criterion in mind, several names have surfaced. They can provide a great service in assisting these first leaders in their transition process and helping to create a broader paradigm when it comes to the role of the executive secretary.

Thus far, I have engaged four presenters for training. The technical presenters—in other words, those dealing with policies and routine secretary functions—will be the same. However, the seminars discussed in this project will be presented by me and various other presenters at the different training sessions. There will be presentations, but each one will be followed by some interactive participation. This interaction can take the form of role playing, group discussions, or case studies. In some cases, the participants will be asked to create a scenario based on the particular principle presented. The emphasis will be on involvement of the participants in order to make the principles practical as applied to their daily functions and situations. Listed below is one technical presenter, Carolyn Forrest, along with three presenters who will deal with the broader leadership aspect of the executive secretary. Those presenters are Dave Gemmell, Alvin

Kibble, and José Rojas. In the following paragraphs, a brief summary of each presenter is shared.

Forrest currently serves as associate secretary and director of Human Relations for the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. She has had vast experience as a first and second leader, having previously served as the director of Human Resources in the Florida conference. Having successfully served there, she was asked to serve at the North American Division as the associate secretary, thereby leaving her first-leader role to come to a second-leader role. After three years of service at the division, she then was asked to serve as interim secretary, stepping into the first-leader role once again. She served in this capacity for five months. A new secretary was appointed, and she stepped back into the second-leader role once again. This imminently qualifies her to understand the nuances of transitioning from first leader to second leader.

Kibble currently serves as the vice-president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist. As a part of his experience and portfolio, he has occupied first-leader and second-leader roles. Kibble's ministry experience as a first leader are in the roles of senior pastor and conference president, while as second leader he has been an executive secretary and vice-president. This ministry breadth gives him a rich experience that can be of great value to new leaders in transition.

Gemmell currently serves as the associate ministerial director for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist. He saw tremendous success as a first leader while pastoring. For the last ten years, in two different roles, he has made the adjustment to the second-leader position. He has been selected to speak to other leaders

from his experience of making this transition. There are practical principles he has learned that will prove helpful to others in their pursuit of finding balance and significance in their new role.

Rojas presently serves as director of Volunteer Ministries for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist. The Office of Volunteer Ministries brings together church, institutional, and supportive organizations for shared goals in volunteer ministries. These include student missions, taskforce missions, literacy programs, community projects, Bible work, evangelism, and a host of other outreach activities. Throughout his career, he has moved in and out of roles with great success and frequency. His background and experience will bring helpful insights to those who are making this transition at this point in their ministries. He has been selected as one of the presenters due to his background in serving in both the second- and first-leader roles.

Leadership Development

Much leadership development will happen through the personal coaching process. The selection for coaches will come primarily from union executive secretaries, division staff, union presidents, and others. The criteria utilized will be those who have demonstrated visionary leadership, servant leadership, and a grasp of being a strong leader yet a loyal supporter of their current leadership. They also need to be individuals who have served in the second-leader position yet who previously had served as a first leader.

There will be a tremendous need for executive coaching with the executive secretary group. It is the initiative of this division for each executive secretary on every

level in North America to have some level of professional partnership. This can be in the form of mentoring, nurturing, or coaching. It will be the responsibility of the union executive secretary in consultation with the local executive conference secretaries to determine which of these functions will be most useful.

Some executive secretaries may benefit by a mentoring relationship, while others may prefer coaching or nurturing. A mentor is defined as a senior-junior relationship, where the junior looks up to the senior as a role model. In the mentor relationship, while encouragement and collegiality is a part of the relationship, accountability rises higher here than in the other two relationships.

A coach is defined as one who comes alongside. This is more of a collegial relationship. In the coaching relationship, the emphasis is more on operating from the same level and running alongside as an equal. In this relationship, there is accountability, there is nurture, but the emphasis is more on striving together.

A nurturer can be defined as a spiritual partner or one who primarily provides spiritual counsel or encouragement. In the nurture relationship, there is accountability and some collegiality, but the strength of the relationship grows from a spiritual emphasis. All three relationships can achieve the goal of assisting executive secretaries to their desired outcome. The differences lie more in where particular executive secretaries are in their professional growth, personality, and temperament. Each secretary is unique and will need to determine which of these relationships will provide the most motivation for enhancement and their implementation of these principles.

The North American Division will assume the responsibility of training every new executive secretary who is elected into office. There are several resources that will be provided, while others will be recommended. Some will include but are not limited to NAD's *The Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat*, Bonem and Patterson's *Leading from the Second Chair*, McNeal's *The Work of Heart*, Bolman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations*, Ury's *Getting Past No*, Cormode's *Making Spiritual Sense*, and Collin's *Good to Great*. Video presentations are will form part of resources and materials: *Celebrating What's Right With the World*,² and a video presentation by Louis Giglio called *How Great is Our God*.³ Each will be utilized to demonstrate a unique perspective of a biblical model of leadership. They will help to provide a biblical foundation for the transition of executive secretaries to the leadership level to which God has called them.

In the video, *Celebrating What's Right with the World*, there is a primary focus on finding the positive benefits in almost any situation in the world. The intent with this video is to underscore a valuable lesson inherent in the role and position of the executive secretary. Instead of looking at the negative consequences of being the second leader, this training session will spend a significant amount of time listing the benefits that the position offers.

In the second video, *How Great is Our God*, the purpose is to show the enormity of God as opposed to minuteness of human beings. It demonstrates in a graphic manner

² Dewitt Jones, *Celebrating What's Right With the World*, DVD (Gahanna, OH: Training ABC, 2003).

³ Louis Giglio, *How Great is Our God*, DVD (Roswell, GA: Six Step Records, August 11, 2009).

what Christ gave up to become the second leader versus what executive secretaries give up to become second leaders. It offers a fresh new meaning to what is meant in Philippians 2 about the emptying of Christ. It gives a graphic illustration how little is asked by comparison for executive secretaries to empty themselves.

Training Locations and Mediums

The training locations and mediums will provide a physical site for the presentation of the biblical rationale and principles associated with the executive secretary position. This site also will provide adequate space for several break-out group discussions of approximately eighty-five attendees. The sessions will include role playing and will cover Bolman and Deal's four frames, Ury's five steps to negotiating win/win solutions, and the biblical principles of Christ's example of leadership.

The primary training location will be the North American Division office in Maryland, although there may be times when some training may be conducted in one or more of the nine union offices. They are located in Toronto, Canada; Lancaster, Massachusetts; Columbia, Maryland; Atlanta, Georgia; Berrien Springs, Michigan; Lincoln, Nebraska; Dallas, Texas; Los Angeles, California; and Portland, Oregon. Other venues for training will include webinars and possibly video conferencing. These webinars and video conferencing will not take place at the physical site. They will be utilized as additional training tools in between the face-to-face gatherings of executive secretaries.

During these training events, the North American Division will assume responsibility for all material cost including some of the book resources. The attendees

will assume responsibility for travel and all other expenses related to attending the training sessions. All the executive secretaries have travel budgets where their organization pays their travel expenses. Since this is a high priority for the North American Division, it will bear all the expenses for presenters, materials, information, and technological services. As executive secretary of the North American Division, my role is to plan and execute all training sessions and provide the infrastructure for accountability and assessment. In addition, I will play an integral role in the continued development of biblical rationale and foundation for the role of the executive secretary.

Support Staff and the Development of Materials

The assistance of support staff in the development of materials is vital to the operations of the North American Division Secretariat. One of the key functions this staff provides is the laborious task of updating the handbook. Another is the development of training materials. This staff is not on the payroll of the North American Division. This task is necessary due to the ever-changing nature of society and the growing diversity of the SDA Church in North America.

The current union executive secretaries along with the division executive secretary will be responsible for the development of training materials. The following people will be responsible for modifying and updating the technical aspects of the *Handbook for the office of the Local Conference Secretariat*: Carlyle Simmons, the Atlantic Union executive secretary located in Lancaster, Massachusetts; Rodney Grove, the Lake Union executive secretary, located in Berrien Springs, Michigan; and Ronald Smith, the Southern Union executive secretary, located just outside of Atlanta, Georgia.

As the technical presenter, Forrest will join me in the responsibility of developing the new section of the *Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat* that articulates the biblical role of the executive secretary position. The first draft for each of these assignments will be due on January 22, 2012. The revised draft will be due at the executive secretary's meeting on August 5, 2012. The final draft will be due at the November 2012 executive secretary's meeting preceding the Year End meeting. The final editing of the *Handbook for the office of the Local Conference Secretariat* will be done by February 2013. Reproduction of the *Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat* should be ready by March 2013.

There will be several power point presentations that will be developed. Ernie Hernandez of the Office of Volunteer Ministries will take the new section and the modified section of the *Handbook for the Office of the Local Conference Secretariat* and create power point slides for each of the major portions. The first draft of the power point slides will be due by November 2012. Melissa Gottlieb will be responsible for nurturing both the handbook and the power point slide projects. Her objective is to monitor and keep everyone on task.

Assessment Plan for Executive Secretaries after Training

An assessment tool based on the unique needs and roles of the executive secretary will be developed by Paul Brantley. He is the director for Strategic Planning and Assessment and has twenty years of experience developing assessment instruments for hospitals and educational organizations. There actually will be two tracks of assessments performed, one for the executive secretaries and another for the constituents they serve.

There already has been one general survey assessment on perceptions of executive secretaries and their roles. There has been no evidence of an assessment ever done on the role and function of the executive secretaries across this division.

The intent of the first assessment is to define the current perceptions of the role by constituents who are served by these second-position leaders. This assessment will create a baseline for the thinking and mindset of the constituents relating to these second-position leaders. The recent survey assessment taken by the existing secretaries will serve as a baseline for perceptions of these leaders. After the training sessions, the Bible-oriented group discussions, the mentorship program, and the online presentations, the same assessment instrument will be utilized. The assessment tool will be distributed six months after the training to evaluate its long-term benefits on the function of the executive secretary. It will be sent to the constituents, reviewed, and then compared to the first assessment instrument. This will be done to determine if the efforts expended on the executive secretaries have made any difference in the perceptions of their constituents.

The second track of assessment will be done on the executive secretaries themselves. Another instrument will be sent to the executive secretaries after the training sessions, Bible-oriented discussions, the mentoring/coaching initiative, and the online program have concluded. This second assessment will be compared to the first one provided to the executive secretaries prior to the training. It will seek to determine what impact has occurred due to the efforts that have been outlined in this project. The objective is to ascertain if an enhanced vision and empowered role of the executive secretary in North America has been achieved.

The first instrument for the constituents will be completed prior to the April 2012 training session. Brantley will ensure that the surveys are handled anonymously and confidentially. He also will be responsible for the tabulation of the results and reporting them to the Secretariat Office of the North American Division. He will conduct a formal presentation at the first meeting of union executive secretaries after the results have been tabulated in order to determine if the above objective has been met

I was not prepared for the positive comments on the spiritual leadership aspect of the role of executive secretary. In fact, in some ways I felt leaders at this level would be inclined to think it was automatically understood. There appeared to be on the part of most a genuine yearning to learn more about how to emulate the leadership style of Christ. There was a sincere seeking on how to balance support of the president and simultaneously exercise independence of thought. These newly elected secretaries earnestly craved models for leadership as the second leader. As a result, I discovered my material needed to be more comprehensive on leadership issues facing the executive secretaries. The presentation needed to be more practical. In addition to the workshops, another component needed to be developed. The missing component was mentoring. While necessary, the mentoring concept can be a very difficult one to embrace, especially for experienced leaders. For this reason, feedback will be solicited regarding this component as well.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The January 2011 training session provided some keen and revealing insights. Some of them, at no surprise to me, validated a few private suspicions I had held concerning the role of the executive secretary. One of those suspicions was that some really struggle with defining leadership from the second position. However, another revealing fact caught me by surprise: how desperately these second-position leaders longed for some biblical foundation and principles on which to base the second-leader role. Though the seminar I presented on spiritual leadership from the second role was less complete than it is now, it touched a chord in the hearts and minds of the listeners. Therefore, it gave me great motivation to move forward with this project, despite the many obstacles that have presented themselves.

The anonymous online surveys conducted on the executive secretaries were sobering. This was especially true as it related to how a large percentage did not feel that the position was perceived by the constituents as a true leader. However, it was heartening to read some of the responses that indicated great commitment and self-sacrifice on the part of these men and women of God. As stated earlier in the project, some are leading fine from the second-leader position, while others face unresolved challenges. However, this discussion on the second leader has led me as a leader to see a great need for a reevaluation on how the SDA denomination looks at leadership in general. It begs one to ask this question: “Am I exemplifying the leadership of Christ in my role? Are we as leaders together exemplifying the leadership of Christ?” When I behold the Philippians 2:6-8 account of Christ emptying Himself, it sheds new light on

how to serve as a second leader. I see this question as not only a question for second leaders but a question for first leaders at all levels of the Church. However, my attention and focus currently reside in the sphere and influence of responsibility where the Lord has placed me: here with the executive secretaries in the North American Division.

Another unexpected consequence at looking how to serve from the second-leader position came from a clarified and more biblically based understanding of the Body of Christ. Paul's analogy of the believers of God's Church being symbolized by the human body is fascinating. In this analogy, all of the body parts are subservient (or second leaders), each fulfilling a vital function, but none called to lord it over another. Each has a role to play, even the "comely" parts of the body as Paul calls them. This suggests that no body part is without use and benefit to the whole. In fact, each body part helps to make the anatomy complete. This has so many ramifications for the second-leader role, and specifically the executive secretary. The theological understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ, with the gifts provided to it, and the unity that prevails even in diversity, gives a high standard to which the Church has been called to rise.

A closer look at the theology of the Church and the biblical foundations on which Christ-centered leadership stands has led me down paths I had not planned to travel. Indeed it has led me down roads I did not know to travel. There can be no true leaders in the first- or second-position roles without there being true servants after the example of Christ. I am absolutely convinced that following Christ-centered leadership is the key to the SDA Church in North America reaching levels of spirituality and growth unparalleled in recent history.

Some of the plans and corresponding next steps already have been discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. One of the implications not explored is the possible impact on the denomination. If the executive secretaries can genuinely grasp and apply the leadership principles of Christ to their routine operational functioning, it could begin transforming the entire organization.

I hold this belief because the development of this project has had a profound impact on my ministry—more than ministry, it has had a profound impact on my life. My view of leadership has been forever altered. The biblical study on the second-leader role especially as viewed through the humility of Christ has made me hang my head in shame. As a second leader myself, sometimes I contemplate the role I left as a first leader and compare what has been lost by submitting my leadership to another. In my selfishness I thought I had lost something. However, when I consider the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice, in emptying Himself to be a second leader, subjected to the Father’s will, it convicts me. It has truly brought to my mind new understanding of this Scripture: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). It demonstrates how easily the self can rise, almost without a conscious thought.

Jesus’ sacrifice allows me to serve in any capacity with gladness and joy, because I now see servant leadership in a much different light. Since Christ emptied Himself fully and completely, then He calls all His servants to walk as He has walked. It is my prayer and sincere hope that I will be the leader God wants me to be. I have been deeply moved by what I have discovered on the biblical role of leaders and the second-position role in particular.

Due to the potential impact not only on the leadership of executive secretaries but on the organizations they serve, I will move ahead with great deliberation in order to be extremely clear. The primary role the North American Division can play is to provide the resources and seek to create a climate for change and transition. This assistance can be effective only to the extent the executive secretaries avail themselves of it. However, given the response from the orientation and a recent survey taken by the executive secretaries, they will use whatever tool is available to be effective in their second-leader roles.

The North American Division can be positively affected with a significant shift in the roles and perception of the executive secretary throughout its territory. First, since the position is a part of every organizational church unit, the impact can be systemic. Second, the position is the highest ranking position and is very visible. Therefore, whatever changes take place will be noticed. Third, since many first leaders and presidents are selected from this second-leader group of executive secretaries, the ripple effect could be enormous. The ripple effect is the impact of these new first leaders on other first leaders and on the second leaders that follow them. Then there is the impact that these groups of leaders will have on other leaders at the local church level. It can continue, much like throwing a stone in a small pond.

If the executive secretaries genuinely model the leadership style of Christ and focus on emptying themselves of reputation and ambition and concentrate completely on being a servant leader, the denomination in North America could be amazingly revolutionized. Christ started with twelve and changed the world with His radical

leadership. In a similar way, the key to transitioning from the first-leader role to the second-leader role is emulating the self-emptying example of Christ—thereby reversing the leadership pyramid the world demonstrates.

The implications for the larger Christian community can be plentiful. This challenge of second position is not limited to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The book, *Leading from the Second Chair*, makes it evident that many other faith communities have this same struggle in their leadership structure.¹ However, one of the things missing from this source was the lack of a biblical or scriptural footing on which to base second leadership roles and actions. My hope is that this project begins to fill that gap. Second leaders need to sincerely grasp the reality of the God-ordained nature of their positions, wherever they may serve. God needs not only the technical functioning of second leaders, but He desires for them to fulfill their calling of being the leaders He has ordained them to be so that they may understand and focus on the importance of equipping those leaders who serve under their authority and help them to fulfill their potential for the broader Body of Christ. By doing so, they will release the saints to engage in God's mission in their respective communities in ever greater ways.

¹ Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 8 and 61.

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