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ABSTRACT

**ELLEN WHITE'S COUNSEL TO LEADERS: IDENTIFICATION
AND SYNTHESIS OF PRINCIPLES, EXPERIENTIAL
APPLICATION, AND COMPARISON WITH
CURRENT LEADERSHIP LITERATURE**

by

Cynthia Ann Tutsch

Adviser: Denis Fortin

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: ELLEN WHITE'S COUNSEL TO LEADERS: IDENTIFICATION AND SYNTHESIS OF PRINCIPLES, EXPERIENTIAL APPLICATION, AND COMPARISON WITH CURRENT LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

Name of researcher: Cynthia Ann Tutsch

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Denis Fortin, Ph.D.

Date completed: December 2006

Ellen G. White's counsel to leaders on both spiritual and practical themes, as well as her personal application of that counsel, has on-going relevance in the twenty-first century.

The author researched secondary literature, and Ellen G. White's published and unpublished works. She surveyed current leadership literature to compare and contrast with Ellen G. White's leadership principles and constructed a theological foundation for Ellen White's unique leadership world view.

Ellen White's leadership principles relating to knowing God, authority, visioning, and human relations may still inspire compassionate action and a deepening commitment to Jesus Christ in today's Christian leader.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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AND SYNTHESIS OF PRINCIPLES, EXPERIENTIAL
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CURRENT LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Cynthia Ann Tutsch

December 2006

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John Baldwin

Date approved

DEDICATION

To Joy Sorensen

capable, loyal, expeditious assistant
understanding and perceptive friend
faithful prayer partner

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¹This is a wonderful example of cross-generational mentoring, Laura being thirty years younger than I!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During her seventy years of public ministry, Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, penned more than 100,000 manuscript pages of counsel, instruction, exhortation, and comfort. Included in this vast manuscript collection are many letters and testimonies to church leaders. Seventh-day Adventists hold that these messages were inspired by God to the same degree, but with less authority, as the biblical prophets.¹ In a discussion of Doctor of Ministry projects in the cafeteria at a church retreat center in the spring of 2003, I outlined my proposed project on the involvement of Adventist youth in evangelism to the Doctor of Ministry program director, Dr. Skip Bell. He listened attentively, and suggested that while there was merit in my proposal, gathering together and analyzing the counsels of Ellen White on leadership might make a greater contribution to the Adventist world church, and be more useful for my current ministry position as an Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate.

As I discussed this new possibility with my young adult colleagues with whom I was taking classes at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, I discovered their intense interest in the subject of leadership, and in current

¹See chapter two for extended treatment of the concept of Ellen White's role and authority.

leadership literature. Several of those friends expressed a high level of interest in the subject of Ellen White's counsel on leadership.

With this affirmation and encouragement, I began the journey outlined in this project.

Statement of the Problem

Though a booklet-size compilation of Ellen White's counsels on Christian leadership exists, there remains a broadly recognized need for a larger, more comprehensive study on her theoretical and experiential leadership counsel. Although leadership literature has proliferated exponentially in the last decade, Seventh-day Adventists who wish to study Ellen White's leadership counsel must sift through thousands of pages of published material. In addition, leaders interested in current leadership theories have no resources which compare Ellen White's counsel on leadership with that of contemporary leadership literature.

An underlying problem is whether or not Ellen White's counsels on leadership are applicable in the twenty-first century. One objective of this project is to answer the question of whether Ellen White's leadership counsel is enduring, and thus practical in today's context, and whether current leadership theories and trends negate her (largely) nineteenth century counsel.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is a study of Ellen White's leadership counsel and practice on selected topics. First, I construct a theological foundation for Ellen White's unique leadership worldview. Next, I research and review relevant leadership literature, comparing and contrasting these authors with Ellen White's theory and practice.

Chapters four through seven focus on identification and synthesis of both her counsel and the application of her counsel in her life experience.

My research will contribute to determining whether or not Ellen White's counsels on leadership are applicable in the context of the twenty-first century, and will provide an accessible synthesis of Ellen White's leadership counsel on topics particularly relevant to contemporary challenges.

Justification for the Dissertation

Though a small compilation of Ellen White's writings on leadership has been published,¹ some vital topics for current issues are missing from that work, and there is no analysis of her counsel's relevance to contemporary leadership challenges.

Leadership principles in certain key selected areas have received limited published focus in current leadership literature. Additionally, little that is uniquely Adventist has been published on the subject of leadership.²

This project includes the application of Ellen White's principles in life experience, which is not found in standard Ellen White compilations.

Methodology

Key examples of Ellen White's counsel to leaders on selected topics were collected and reviewed for applicability to the twenty-first century. Sources include both published and unpublished works.

¹Ellen G. White, *Christian Leadership* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1985); Ellen G. White is the author of all subsequent citations through chapter 8, unless otherwise credited.

²Skip Bell's book, *A Time to Serve: Church Leadership for the 21st Century*, and Jere Patzer's book, *The Road Ahead: A Vision for Spiritual Leadership in the 21st Century*, are notable exceptions beyond compilations of Ellen White's counsels to pastors and teachers.

Recurring leadership principles¹ from the areas of focus were identified from her writings, which include books, articles, letters, and manuscripts. Biographies, diaries, letters, oral histories, and letters from friends and family were reviewed to discover the experiential and human interest element of her counsels on leadership. Biographical circumstances and historical events were selected to illustrate how Ellen White practiced her theoretical counsel.

In chapter two, a succinct theological foundation for Ellen White's ministry and unique leadership worldview has been built. The chapter concludes with a case study, which immerses from the theological foundation of her ministry and the imperative of her counsel to leaders regarding inclusiveness.

Chapter three is a comparison of Ellen White's counsel on leadership with principles and maxims found in current North American leadership literature. This analysis shows where Ellen White's leadership principles and contemporary leadership literature differ, where they parallel, and where Ellen White provides leadership counsel on topics infrequently discussed in recent leadership literature. The structure of the analysis follows the outline of topics in chapters four through seven.

Chapter four examines Ellen White's counsel to leaders on knowing and experiencing God. The chapter includes several key elements in the spiritual life of the leader--the role of the Holy Spirit, study of Scripture, the need of character development, and prioritizing prayer. In conclusion, there are vignettes that describe Ellen White's personal spiritual life, including illustrative phrases from her written and spoken prayers.

¹These principles, as they are used throughout chapters four through seven, should be defined as maxims, rather than general moral rules of conduct.

Ellen White's counsel to leaders on the concept of leadership and the use of authority is the major thrust of chapter five. I first show that Ellen White's *weltanschauung* pivots on Jesus as the primary model of servant leadership. Next, I review Ellen White's strong counsel to leaders on the abuse of authority, which provides a segue into her comparison between the Spirit-led leadership style of Moses versus Aaron's weak and vacillating leadership. The chapter concludes with examples of Ellen White's own use of authority under varying circumstances.

Human relations are the focus of chapter six. I provide a compendium of Ellen White's counsel to leaders on the race, gender, and age inclusive empowerment of people for evangelism and service, and the need for leaders to connect with others, especially through mentoring relationships. In view of the preponderance of Ellen White's counsel to leaders regarding care for the poor, I give quantity emphasis to those citations. The last section of the chapter shows Ellen White's experiential demonstration of her leadership principles on human relations.

Chapter seven is a synopsis of Ellen White's counsel on key leadership issues, beginning with leadership qualifications. Principles and citations continue on the topics of dealing with the erring, proactive visioning and planning, and alacrity, especially as it relates to the leader's quick response to God-given opportunities. This chapter concludes with illustrations of how Ellen White lived out her own counsel on these themes.

The final chapter provides the summary of my research and the conclusions I have made regarding the relevance of Ellen White's counsel to leaders in the twenty-first century. I abstract the important points regarding Ellen White's experiential practice of her leadership principles and close with a concise statement of my discoveries.

Expectations from the Dissertation

As an Associate Director of the White Estate, research of these topics has helped me in the presentations I make worldwide, both for the content of the lectures, sermons, and workshops, and also for the Question and Answer public forums.¹ Since the project has mandated extensive time immersed in Ellen White's writings, there have been benefits to my own spirituality.

The dissertation could contribute to a greater understanding and practice of God's ideal for Adventist Christian leadership which would hasten the Parousia.

Since very little has been written on Ellen White and leadership, the eventual publication of my dissertation in a popular format will be useful for Adventist administrators, pastors, and lay persons.

Delimitations

Ellen White's counsel to leaders covers a broad spectrum of practical and spiritual counsel. In an effort to have the project focused and concise, I have left out elements from three important categories: counsels to leaders regarding their personal life, such as exercise, care for the family, personal fiscal management, life balance; counsels regarding leadership issues, such as dangers of consolidation, finding courage for the present from the past, confidence and self-esteem, the role of leaders in the eschatological period known as "end time," trust in God through adversity; and counsels regarding

¹At the conclusion of many of the lectures I present on the subject of Ellen White, her writings, and principles of hermeneutics regarding her writings, I invite the audience to ask questions about the subject presentid.

management issues, such as delegation, teamwork, organization, interpersonal relationships, politicking, and business management.

There were many more examples of Ellen White's experiential application of the principles than could be contained in the scope of this project. Therefore, in chapters four through seven I have selected a few illustrative examples of her application in real life of her own principles. Additionally, I have restricted her counsels for each category to several that reflect the general trend of her writings on that subject.

The purpose of the project is to provide an accessible and organized selection of Ellen White's counsel on key topics, illustrate her application of leadership principles in her own life, compare her principles with current leadership theories, and determine the relevance of her principles in today's context. Therefore, the treatment in chapter two concerning the theological foundation of Ellen White's unique leadership counsel is only an overview. The purposes of this research project preclude a comprehensive examination of the nature of revelation and inspiration, and the authority of Ellen White to define truth and correct error.

I have chosen to compare Ellen White's principles on leadership primarily with leadership literature written by North American authors publishing after 1990. This delimitation is due to heightened interest in this genre among English speaking Christian leaders to whom I currently minister.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ELLEN G. WHITE'S MINISTRY AND COUNSELS ON LEADERSHIP

In this chapter I draw a concise and unexpanded overview of the theological and biblical basis for granting credibility and authority to Ellen White's counsels to leaders. First, I look at the history and evolution of God's communication with human beings. I note that Scripture speaks of the extrabiblical prophetic voice, and lists prophecy in four passages of the New Testament as a gift of the Spirit. I show that Ellen White passes biblical tests for a genuine prophet, and trace God's use of a prophet in times of calamity and crises. Next, I trace the theological foundations from which Ellen White's leadership counsel immerses. Finally, I make a theological application of Ellen White's principles to a present leadership challenge.

Humanity's desire is to know God; God's desire is to restore in humanity the image of God. This restoration enables the Godhead to achieve intimacy of companionship and communication with their created beings. This stage of companionship¹ includes humanity's loving obedience as a response to His love, grace, and expression of His sovereign will. The primary means through which God presently communicates that love, as well as His will for individuals, is through the Holy Spirit.

¹Janet O. Hagberg, *Real Power*, rev. ed. (Salem, WI: Sheffield, 1994), 177.

The Spirit works through various agencies: Scriptures, impressions on the heart that are tested by His Word,¹ the book of nature,² extrabiblical prophets,³ and the community of faith. Thus, the discovery and practice of Spirit-inspired principles of leadership in the writings of one of His appointed prophets is a means by which the believing leader can know and communicate with God Himself.

The Seventh-day Adventist church⁴ and Ellen White herself⁵ base her prophetic call on both the prophecy of Joel 2:28, 29 and on Rev 12:17, in conjunction with Rev 19:10. Eph 4:11-13 indicates that the gift of prophecy will continue to exist until the church reaches full maturity and unity, while both 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12 identify prophecy as a gift of the Spirit.

The Seventh-day Adventist church holds that the writings of Ellen White pass the biblical tests of confession in Christ,⁶ and harmony with Scripture.⁷ Ellen White's messages do not contradict God's past revelation through prophets and through His Son, Jesus. Thus, Seventh-day Adventists consider Ellen White, though fallible, to be a divinely appointed spokesperson for God, in the same way that Old and New Testament prophets were appointed as God's messengers.⁸ Since Jesus foretold the emergence of

¹John 16:14; Rom 2:14; Isa 8:20.

²1 Cor 11:14.

³Joel 2:28-29.

⁴*Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald for the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 252.

⁵*Loma Linda Messages* (Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn, 1987), 33.

⁶1 John 4:1-3.

⁷Isa 8:20.

⁸Exod 4:15, 16.

false prophets as one of the signs of the imminence of His return, the implication is clear that there must also be true, or genuine, prophets at that same time.

While Seventh-day Adventists officially hold that Ellen White's writings are authoritative,¹ her writings are considered to always be subordinate to the Scripture, which is the locus of authority. Ellen White is considered by Adventists to be one who communicates messages from God² for the upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation³ of the church.⁴ There are Adventists who maintain that Ellen White's gift is primarily for spiritual encouragement, but not for defining truth or correcting error. Yet, early Adventist leaders formally recognized God's revelations through Ellen White as having theological authority.⁵ Today, the Seventh-day Adventist position continues to be that one of the purposes for Ellen White's writings is guidance in understanding the teaching of Scripture and application of these teachings.⁶

Ellen White herself saw her role to include the correction of error,⁷ and "to open the Scriptures to others as God has opened them to me."⁸ She stated, "I have a work of

¹Biblical Research Institute, "Affirmations and Denials," [Internet]; available from <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/> (4 April 2006).

²"Prophecies" has a broader meaning than mere foretelling of future events. The bulk of Ellen White's "prophesying" is in the category of spiritual admonition, which appears to be the focus of 1 Cor 14:3.

³1 Cor 14:3.

⁴*Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 78.

⁵Herb Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998), 428; James White, "The Gifts—Their Object," *Review and Herald*, 28 February 1856, 172.

⁶Biblical Research Institute, (22 May 2006).

⁷*Selected Messages*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958, 1980), 3:31.

⁸*Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1855-1909), 8:236.

great responsibility to do—to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world.”¹

In times of crises or calamity or deliverance, God chose to declare His will to humanity through a prophet. Thus Noah announced earth’s impending destruction by the global deluge, Moses wrought deliverance of God’s people from the Egyptians, Jeremiah and Isaiah warned of national calamity, and John heralded the arrival of Messiah. Seventh-day Adventists believe the destruction of the planet followed by the eschaton is imminent. It is unlikely that at earth’s final crises God would leave His people without prophetic guidance.²

At age seventeen, Ellen White received her first vision, and shortly thereafter recognized her own calling by God to bear prophetic messages.³ Through seventy years of public ministry, she maintained that her calling was not of humanity, but that the voice of God spoke to her through His Holy Spirit.⁴

Ellen White’s roots were in Methodism. She was baptized by immersion at age twelve, and accepted into the membership of the Methodist church. Methodists of the nineteenth century were pietists with a strong emphasis on sanctification, and it was a Methodist minister who explained righteousness by faith in Christ alone to fourteen year old Ellen Harmon. Later, she described this event as pivotal in her Christian experience,⁵

¹Ibid.

²Amos 3:7.

³*Early Writings*, 13-21.

⁴“A Message to the Churches,” *Review and Herald*, 18 July 1907, 8.

⁵*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915, 1943), 36, 37.

changing her view of God from demanding and stern to that of a kind and tender parent.¹ This discovery of God as a loving Deity would become an encompassing theme in her copious writings.

Scriptures were the lens through which Ellen White viewed theology and from which her world view immersed. She considered the Bible to be its own expositor.² The centrality of the Scriptures were a recurring motif in both her writings and public speaking. As early as 1851 she could say, “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.” Thus, she saw the details and insights she provides as an agency to clarify the truths of the Word of God.

The idea of a battle between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels that extends from heavenly realms to the hearts and destinies of each human being is central to Ellen White’s values and philosophy. This great controversy concept permeates Scriptures. She believed her place in the drama of the great controversy was as a messenger who would prepare people to meet the Lord with joy. In her view, the Bible provides all the instruction necessary for the believer to understand and accept Christ’s proffered salvation.³ Her writings and testimonies were “a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light [the Bible].”⁴

¹Ibid., 39.

²*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913, 1943), 511.

³*Selected Messages*, 1:17-18.

⁴*Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1953), 125.

Scriptures were also foundational to two other eminent themes reiterated in Ellen White's writings—the second advent of Christ and the resulting need for the Advent movement to herald His coming. The Adventist mission, as Ellen White defined it, is evangelism and service.¹ She enjoined every church member, every Christian, to work for the salvation of those “for whom Christ died.”²

It would be the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross that buttressed her theology of salvation. “Christ and Him crucified” was to be the theme of every missionary effort.³ “Lift up Jesus,” she wrote, “lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer.”⁴ She believed that persons who bring the gospel to others are symbolized by the three angels of Rev 14.⁵ In her view, a sense of urgency should motivate Christians to evangelize for Christ, an urgency exacerbated by the world events occurring both in her day and in the events she believed would occur just before Jesus returns.

Ellen White did not claim authority as intrinsic in herself or even because she felt a superior status with God. Her authority, she believed, came because she was a link in the chain of communication through which God gave instruction to His people.⁶ If an individual believes, as Ellen White did, that her messages were inspired by the same

¹*The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 9.

²“Christ’s Commission,” *Review and Herald*, 10 June 1880, 369.

³*Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 272.

⁴*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915, 1948), 160.

⁵*Testimonies for the Church*, 5:455.

⁶*Testimonies for the Church*, 5:661; *Selected Messages*, 3:30.

Spirit who inspired biblical prophets, then those messages must contain principles which are enduring and applicable to present and future leadership challenges.¹

In the next section, I apply Ellen White's principles to one challenge facing Adventist leaders today. This challenge is vocal minority elements within Adventism, such as Colin Standish, who see women pastors and women leaders as contraindicated by Scripture and the recent elections of Rosa Banks, Daisy Orion, and Ella Simmons to General Conference leadership positions as a sign of apostasy.²

How does Ellen White's example and counsel help us sift through such conflicting claims in the increasingly divergent multi-cultural Seventh-day Adventist church? First, I note that Ellen White herself embodies an essential leadership concept—cultural position, wealth, power, education, gender, and physical appeal are no predictors or limitations to God's leadership calling.³ Next, I examine a case study that immerses from her theological foundation of ministry and her understanding of encompassing leadership. This case study is illustrative of Ellen White's progressive social voice and helps to clarify her egalitarian and inclusive empowerment of the body of Christ.

A Case Study

Ellen White's clarion call is that God would have His human creation work to restore the image of God to humanity.⁴ This *imago dei* motif is threaded throughout her counsels to educators, administrators, parents, pastors, and teachers, in short, to all who

¹2 Chr 36:16; 2 Pet 1:20, 21.

²Colin Standish, "Reflections on Eight General Conference Sessions, Part 8," group email (15 April 2006).

³Skip Bell, personal email (18 April 2006).

⁴1 Cor 11:7; *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903, 1952), 15-16.

lead or influence others. In Ellen White's view, this restoration begins with character development—the human mind becoming, through God's grace and under His instruction, sanctified into the likeness of the mind of God.¹ To extrapolate that motif into today's context, when the mind of humanity becomes one with the mind of God, leaders will seek restoration of the Edenic plan of male/female relationships. Additionally, leaders will seek restoration of God's plan for relationships between people groups and ethnicities, as well as the restoration of Earth to its original Garden state, to the best of limited human ability.

In a discussion of the original Eden state, Joseph Coleson states, "Genesis 1:27 states very clearly that women and men are created equally in the image of God. . . . Females are in God's image. Males are in God's image. Neither is more nor less in God's image than the other."² Concurring with Coleson, Phyllis Tribble says, "Sexual differentiation does not mean hierarchy."³ Hierarchy is sometimes used to deprive women of opportunities to find joy in participation in the area of church life for which she is best suited.

Ellen White also took the position of equality at Creation. "Women should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband's equal."⁴

Thus, it seems evident from the Genesis account that male and female were created by God as equals, with no hierarchical system inherent. Those who oppose

¹Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:16.

²Joseph Coleson, *Ezer Cenegdo: A Power Like Him, Facing Him as Equal* (n.p., Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy, 1996), 6.

³Phyllis Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 23.

⁴*The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 231.

women in leadership and ministry believe, however, that God put Eve in subjection to Adam as part of the consequence of her sin.

Two key words in this study are “sin” and “redemption.” Sin is the cause of female subjection. Hayter states, “Man and woman have disrupted their relationship with God. This sin leads to a disruption in their relationship with all creation, including one another.”¹

For Adventist Christians, the great hope, the good news, is the redemption theme, the restoration in humanity of the image of God. If God’s original creation included equality between the sexes, I could extrapolate from that pattern the premise that it is His will that equal opportunities be extended in our present culture. I should then press on toward that ideal as part of my reception of the gospel. “It is,” after all, “human sinfulness which initiates and maintains prejudice and inequality between the sexes.”² Ellen White also decries the arbitrary exercise of authority by leaders, declaring such domination as in opposition to God’s plan for His redeemed people.³

Since Jesus’ and Paul’s own teaching and practice were radically egalitarian, male dominance and female subjection in the structure of the Christian church are post-apostolic, not apostolic. Further, if man and woman were created fully equal, fully autonomous, yet interacting in complement physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually, the words of God in Gen 3:16 are more of an announcement, i.e., descriptive, not causative or prescriptive.

¹Mary Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 96-97.

²Ibid., 116.

³Letter to O. A. Olsen. Letter 55, 1895 written at Norfolk Villa, Prospect St., Granville, Australia, 19 September 1895. Archived at the Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD.

Biblically-based¹ feminism attempts a critique of the oppressive structures of society and the church. Ellen White's counsel to leaders is not in opposition to Christian feminism, if that feminism is about independence, education, competence, and work—family balance, in contrast to class, social maneuvering, hustling for jobs with sexuality, and whining about petty incidents (when many women within ecclesiastical structures are in real danger of abuse and oppression). Militant feminist activism has caused some to regard the goal of feminism to be the ascendancy of women, but biblically-predicated feminism is primarily striving toward human equality in which oppressed and oppressor, aged and youth, black and white, reconcile in a renewed unity worthy of His church, a concept which Ellen White repeatedly affirms.²

It is my view that if the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be true to its calling in Christ, if leaders of the church consider that the prophetic voice of Ellen White carries authority, those leaders must teach and practice the biblical equality of men and women predicated in the Creation story.

Additionally, leaders who find Ellen White's voice authoritative must motivate and equip the church to evangelize cross-generationally, make joyful intentional provision for diversity, and find more and increasingly effective ways to serve the poor and marginalized.

¹Isa 58:1-12.

²*Acts of the Apostles*, 600; *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898, 1940), 822.

CHAPTER 3

COMPARISON OF ELLEN G. WHITE'S PRINCIPLES ON LEADERSHIP WITH CURRENT LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to show the similarities and contrasts between Ellen White's counsels to leaders and several contemporary leadership theorists. I endeavor to promote understanding of the areas of agreement between those two sources of information as well as provide a structure which could encourage critical evaluation of current, and sometimes conflicting, leadership literature. I also describe areas where Ellen White's counsel appears to differ from contemporary leadership literature. Additionally, I seek to identify what may be considered as gaps in previous leadership research. Thus, in this chapter I will place Ellen White's leadership counsel in the context of contemporary leadership literature.¹ The analysis in this chapter follows the outline of topics listed in the table of contents under chapters four through seven.

For the purposes of this project, current leadership material may be most useful, not because it gives different information from what Ellen White writes (although that is

¹Some of the authors I reference write from an overtly Christian perspective; others do not reference Christianity as such, and though they may espouse principles which are compatible with Christianity, for the purpose of this research I consider them secular.

sometimes the case) but because current leadership material explains ideas and sometimes even principles, in a contemporary context.¹

Though contemporary leadership theorists are sometimes careful to clarify definitions of leadership, making a clear distinction between leadership which is primarily that of influence—visioning and inspiring change, and leadership which is primarily managerial, supervisory, or by virtue of office, Ellen White blurs those distinctions. In my view, she joins Greenleaf² in restructuring both management and leadership policy to a higher plane, giving service and altruism priority.

Though Ellen White never defines leadership in precise language, it is not difficult to extrapolate from her writings her conviction that leadership in terms of promoting the kingdom of God is given to every Christian. Thus in distilling her view, *every* disciple of Christ, regardless of position or status, has a sphere of influence, which should be used to help others know God and be prepared for eternity with Him. Ellen White agrees with Ford³ and Blackaby and Blackaby⁴ that persons whose spiritual gift is identified by others as administration or management are not exempt from promoting spirituality. Though much of Ellen White's counsel selected for this project was directed to leaders in administrative positions, I have found her counsel relevant for change agents regardless of position.

¹Laura Wibberding, personal email (30 November 2005).

²Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977).

³Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values and Empowering Change* (Downers Grove: IL, InterVarsity Press, 1991).

⁴Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001).

The following statement illustrates what Ellen White sees as essential elements of administrative leadership, elements which are not contradicted by Maxwell,¹ Dick and Miller² or Anderson:³ “The leaders in our schools should be men and women of quick intuitions, who have the Spirit of God to aid them in reading character, who have managing ability, who can understand different phases of character, and display tact and wisdom in dealing with varied minds. There are many who can fill the place of superintendent in name, but what is needed is men who can fill the place in every sense of the word. There are many who go through the form cleverly enough; but they fail to impart courage and hope, to inspire thought, to quicken energy, and to impart such life that the school shall become a living, growing power for good.”⁴

I did not find Ellen White’s approach to literature to be topically encompassing, but neither were her reading choices limited to denominational publications. Although practical leadership literature as we understand it today was virtually non-existent in her time, she consulted a wide variety of her contemporary’s works on theology, history, and biblical commentary.⁵ These works doubtless helped to shape her articulation of the leader’s need to know and experience God. There is no evidence, however, that Ellen White read or referenced classic works from Greek philosophy or early church fathers

¹John C. Maxwell, *The Twenty-One Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Business, 1998).

²Dan R. Dick and Barbara Miller, *Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1989).

³Ray S. Anderson, *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God’s People* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

⁴*Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 162.

⁵Warren Johns, Tim Poirier, Ron Graybill, comps. *A Bibliography of Ellen White’s Private and Office Libraries*, 3d rev. ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, April 1993).

such as Aristotle, Plato, Tertullian, or Origen. But perhaps it is not altogether unrealistic to conceive, based on the precedent of her own library, that if Ellen White were alive today, she might reference some of the work found in this project's bibliography!

Leadership Concepts from Chapter Four

The citations from Ellen White which I compare with contemporary leadership literature in this section are on the general topic of knowing God. I first note possible reasons for the mushrooming growth of spirituality-related leadership literature. Next, I compare and contrast Ellen White's views with other authors in the areas of the role of the Holy Spirit and Scripture in the life of the leader, character development, and prayer.

In the last twenty years, leadership theories have proliferated exponentially in books, journals, articles, and conferences. The reasons for this proliferation are many, and may include the human longing for meaning and direction, a condition exacerbated by the post modern's frequently cited sense of abandonment, pursuit of community, and increasing dissatisfaction with hierarchical symbols of success and status. Both Christians and non-Christians are often desirous of a deeper experience in spirituality. This search for direction and spirituality may drive the recent development of "life coach" as a vocation, the increase in para-church ministries that emphasize community, service, and experience, the increase in study centers and university courses devoted to world religions or the occult, including Wicca, and the unprecedented sales of cross-over

leadership literature, such as *The Purpose Driven Life*.¹ Skip Bell extends this search for meaning to be wherever human life exists.²

Spiritual formation, or knowing God, was the objective of Ellen White's life, as well as the focus of her leadership counsel. She believed that if an individual could see the depth of the love of God, demonstrated best at Calvary, that person would choose to be a loyal follower of Christ. This is the framework upon which all of her existential as well as esoteric leadership counsel is based. For her, no true leadership exists without a knowledge of God. She saw knowledge of God as being imparted chiefly through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Several Christian leadership authors, including Seamands,³ Foster,⁴ and Anderson⁵ reference the Holy Spirit peripherally, but none come close to the degree of emphasis Ellen White places on the role of the Spirit in the life of a Christian leader. In Furr, Bonem, and Herrington's⁶ discussion of congregational change, there is a glaring lack of treatment of the Holy Spirit's essential role in the process of transformation. While Blackaby and King⁷ and Blackaby and Blackaby⁸ do make many references to the

¹Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

²Skip Bell, *A Time to Serve: Church Leadership for the 21st Century* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2003), 183.

³David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 1981).

⁴Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3d ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1978).

⁵Anderson.

⁶James H. Furr, Mike Bonem, and Jim Herrington, *Leading Congregational Change Workbook* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2000).

⁷Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994).

⁸Blackaby and Blackaby.

work of the Spirit, Ellen White's identification of the Spirit as the "highest of Heaven's gifts"¹ may be unique in Christian leadership literature.

Because the world is degenerating (entropy) into chaos evidenced in political tensions, terrorism, global weather aberrations, and calamities of almost unprecedented scope, people are experiencing an awakening hunger for the transcendent and eternal. Though denying the Second Law of Thermodynamics (entropy as it applies to life), Margaret Wheatley² nevertheless attempts to fill this gap, this soul yearning, with something nebulous, mystical, and indefinable, but for Ellen White, increase of chaos provides an opportunity to present Jesus as the answer to all of life's perplexities and conflicting claims.³

Although Foster devotes an entire chapter of his classic *Celebration of Discipline* to spiritual study, Scripture is not the focal point of the chapter, but only one of many books he recommends. Guinness⁴ encourages every leader to answer the question, Who is God?, but he falls short of recommending Scripture study as an essential source of the answer. Even John Maxwell⁵ seems to use Scripture primarily as a source of leadership lessons, as opposed to reading Scripture for the purpose of knowing God and developing character (though the leadership lessons could conceivably be said to promote character

¹*Desire of Ages*, 671.

²Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco, CA: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1999).

³*Education*, 229.

⁴Os Guinness, *The Call* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998).

⁵John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible: Lessons in Leadership from the Word of God* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

development). Of the authors I surveyed, George Cladis¹ seems to make the most definitive call for leadership teams to read Scripture daily. Blackaby and King² are very strong on the point that experience alone cannot be our guide; every experience must be controlled and understood by Scripture. This high view of Scripture is a position that Ellen White also takes.³

Blackaby and King,⁴ Blackaby and Blackaby,⁵ Guinness,⁶ and Ford⁷ probably come the closest of leadership authors I examined to reflecting the importance Ellen White places on character development. Guinness comments, “All seeking short of the pursuit of God brings only restlessness.”⁸ This harmonizes with Ellen White’s statement that “never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God.”⁹

Several Christian leadership authors do more than a casual reference to prayer, including Blackaby and Blackaby,¹⁰ Blackaby and King,¹¹ Richard Foster,¹²

¹George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

²Blackaby and King.

³*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911, 1950), 598.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Blackaby and Blackaby.

⁶Guinness.

⁷Ford, *Transforming Leadership*.

⁸Guinness, 13.

⁹*God's Amazing Grace* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1973), 196.

¹⁰Blackaby and Blackaby.

¹¹Blackaby and King.

¹²Foster.

McNeal,¹ but strangely Ford, in his Christ-centered work, *Transforming Leadership*,² has no chapter focusing on the leader as pray-er. Though Cladis³ writes an entire book on leading the team-based church, he does not suggest a team-based approach to prayer.

In summary of the authors who write on one or more aspects of knowing God, of those I surveyed none seem to have the expansive breadth of counsel on this subject that Ellen White writes. Her emphasis on the necessity of the Spirit's empowerment of the leader seemed stronger than that of any current leadership author. Her writings seem to be among the strongest in promoting gender inclusive empowerment of the Spirit for gospel ministry leadership. Though John Kotter⁴ asserts that rigidity and conservatism in complacent organizations make learning difficult, Ellen White is unique in labeling leaders who discourage investigation and discussion of new Scriptural truth as conservative, a negative appellation describing the decline of spiritual life.⁵ Though most current leadership authors, Christian and secular, discuss integrity, Ellen White directly correlates the study of Scripture with character development and right thinking and even describes character development as more essential than church business.⁶ Hagberg⁷ acknowledges that the world is more receptive than ever to soul leadership, but her definitions of soul are more pluralist than Ellen White.

¹Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

²Ford, *Transforming Leadership*.

³Cladis.

⁴John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

⁵*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 297.

⁶*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923, 1962), 279.

⁷Hagberg.

It would be Ellen White's counsels to leaders on prayer that I find particularly distinctive. Repeatedly she admonishes that God cannot bless, prosper, or sustain leaders who neglect to pray, for themselves, for their churches, and for those whom they influence. Other than Ellen White¹ and Skip Bell, I did not discover a reference in current leadership literature to more prayer in committee meetings. Only Foster,² who sees prayer central to all of the Spiritual Disciplines, joins Ellen White in suggesting corporate fasting and prayer for answers to difficult church challenges.

Leadership Concepts from Chapter Five

In this section, I compare Ellen White's concepts of leadership and the use of authority with that of several current leadership theorists. I specifically analyze and contrast the topics of servant leadership, abuse of authority, and principle-driven leadership versus popularity-driven leadership, using the model of Moses and Aaron.

Greenleaf coined the term "servant leadership" in his classic work.³ He references Jesus occasionally, but develops his servant-leadership concept largely from a humanistic worldview. Though the principles and maxims he expounds are not antithetical to Ellen White, the core, or basis, for servant leadership is dissimilar. For Ellen White, leaders serve, sacrifice, and engage in self-less behavior not because of innate goodness, but out of response to the grace of Christ and a desire to emulate His humility demonstrated in the Incarnation. Reflecting his Quaker roots, Greenleaf sees forces of good and evil propelled by the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of individual

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 8:238.

²Foster.

³Greenleaf.

beings. But for Ellen White, the great controversy between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels is the framework from which choices emerge.

Though I did not find references to servant leadership per se in Blackaby and King,¹ or in Blackaby and Blackaby,² the general tenor of both works correspond more nearly to what Ellen White writes about the need of humility and service in the character and practice of Christian leaders. With Guinness,³ Ellen White expands on the servant leadership theme to include economics. Both decried prosperity doctrines and “health and wealth gospel” as a corruption of calling. With Tony Campolo,⁴ Ellen White believed leaders should be self-denying and frugal for two reasons: to conserve monies to promote and expand the gospel, and to have resources with which to serve the poor.⁵

Anderson segues nicely from the concept of servant leadership into the issue of power. He maintains that the servant leader can be trusted with authority and power, as long as that power is used “to accomplish God’s vision and purpose for humanity.”⁶ Ellen White’s counsel on the abuse of power concurs with Anderson’s view that leadership must be in the power of the Spirit, not for self-interest or glory,⁷ which will preclude dysfunctional spiritual abuse. Greenleaf discusses negativity in centralization of power at length and largely concurs with Ellen White’s counsel to not allow one person unqualified control over an organization.

¹Blackaby and King.

²Blackaby and Blackaby.

³Guinness.

⁴Tony Campolo, *Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1995).

⁵*Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1940).

⁶Anderson, 199.

⁷*Ibid.*, 204.

Henri Nouwen¹ extrapolates the three temptations of Christ into contemporary pressures to be relevant, spectacular, and powerful. Ellen White also saw the effort to be holy, compassionate, equitable, and evangelistic as more important than relevance, show, and power.

Greenleaf calls Jethro's counsel to Moses on how to structure the leadership of the people "bad advice."² In contrast, Ellen White states, "When Moses was much burdened the Lord raised him up in Jethro an advisor and helper. The advice was taken, and . . . Moses was relieved and he had a better chance for his life, and men were learning to bear responsibilities to qualify them to do work in positions of trust so that Israel should not learn to look to one man and trust in one man."³ In his analysis of Jethro's advice, Greenleaf leaves out what it was that could have prevented Moses' appropriation of God's authority at the "striking-rock" incident. Had Moses been continually cognizant of God as Moses' ultimate superior, he would not have usurped God's authority in that instance. The problem was not the structure of leadership that Jethro proposed, as Greenleaf implies, the problem was that in striking the rock, Moses failed to recognize the greater authority of God. In Ellen White's analysis, Moses tragically destroyed the very symbolism of leadership and sacrifice God intended to portray through the rock and the ensuing streams of water.

¹Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (La Vergne, TN: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989).

²Greenleaf, 97.

³Letter to J. H. Kellogg, Circa 1886, Letter 64, 1886, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

Leadership Concepts from Chapter Six

Human relations are the focus of analysis in this section. I show where Ellen White shows agreement with selected leadership authors, where she differs, and where she might provide unique counsel on the topic of the empowerment of people for evangelism and service. The sequential topics considered are race inclusive empowerment, gender inclusive empowerment, age inclusive empowerment, and connecting with others through mentoring and care for the poor.

Hagberg sees empowering others and service to others as characteristics of Stage Five leadership. Stage Five empowerment can be released when the leader can affirmatively answer “Are you comfortable with yourself enough that other people’s opinions of you do not affect you?”¹ Ellen White seems to put Jesus into Hagberg’s Stage Five and Six categories when she states, “In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage.”²

Ellen White continually urged leaders to delegate authority, empower others, and give others opportunities to make good choices as well as to make mistakes, from which learning results. In this, her writings parallel Kouzes and Posner,³ who write that a leader

¹Hagberg, 154.

²*Desire of Ages*, 330.

³James Kouzes & Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, rev. ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1995).

should not tell talented people how to do their jobs. Bennis and Nanus speak similarly: “Leadership is not so much the exercise of power itself as the empowerment of others.”¹

A frequently cited principle in leadership literature is that the leader should discover his or her calling, the idea for which he or she can live or die.² The vision of early Adventist leadership was to save the world for Jesus Christ. Ellen White’s writings to leaders, as well as the demonstration of her life, encapsulated that vision. It was her dream that a cross-generational church, gender inclusive, age inclusive, race inclusive, would unite together and share Jesus in the context of the messages of the three angels. Guinness³ and Ellen White⁴ are in general agreement that the leader must find his or her first calling to God Himself, and thus be able to hear and respond to His call to win others for His kingdom.

Wheatley⁵ builds her worldview on the premise that life emerges, not from the creative fiat of God, but from chaos, though she acknowledges the inherent orderliness of the universe, even through continuous change. In contrast, Ellen White’s view is that God directs change and constant creation as His way of sustaining order and capacity.⁶ Wheatley finds leadership connections in quantum physics and the invisible world of energy fields and electromagnetics; Ellen White sees the Holy Spirit as the most powerful unifying influence in the universe. Because the basis of Wheatley’s argument is

¹Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* (NY: Harper & Row, 1986), 80.

²Guinness, 3.

³Guinness.

⁴*Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1892, 1956).

⁵Wheatley.

⁶*Great Controversy; Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923, 1957).

naturalism, she screens all facts, data, theories, and postulates through the filter of that worldview. In Ellen White's world there is equality; in Darwin's¹ world there is no equality. (Darwin believed men are more intelligent than women and Europeans more intelligent than Asians or Africans.)²

Interestingly, I found few leadership authors who discussed the empowerment of minority leaders. Perhaps this lack of inclusive emphasis is because there is an assumption of the equality of all groups. Another causative factor could be the dearth of minority authors of the most-read leadership literature. However, Pollard reminds leaders that though there may not be a current problem regarding race empowerment, relations and communications between groups are often made more difficult because of history.³ Even Ellen White writes little on minority empowerment for leadership, though what she does write is significantly inclusive.

Lest we misunderstand or evade Ellen White's call to inclusiveness in leadership, she states, "There are women who should labor in gospel ministry."⁴ Few of the current popular leadership authors I surveyed directly discussed the empowerment of women for spiritual or even secular leadership positions. Lesser known authors such as Coleson,⁵

¹Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).

²Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2d ed. (London: John Murray, 1874).

³Leslie N. Pollard, *Embracing Diversity* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000).

⁴*Manuscript 43a*, March 22, 1898, "The Laborer is Worthy of His Hire," 1898, EGWRC-GC.

⁵Coleson.

Rosa Banks,¹ and Nancy Vyhmeister,² do promote the empowerment of women for leadership, as does Phyllis Tribble,³ though the latter is not usually classed with current leadership authors. While Ellen White seems to focus on the empowerment of the entire church for ministry, she also makes statements that indicate her position that men and women are equal before God. In one of her most significant statements on inclusive empowerment, I find a strong directive to not forbid women leadership or ministry roles: “Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed. . . . *Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed* (emphasis mine); let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work. Place the burden upon men and women of the church, that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness.”⁴

Unlike Ellen White, the leadership theories of Susan Hunt and Peggy Hutcheson seem somewhat chauvinistic. However, they do point out that persons in leadership positions need to develop open minds about *everyone* in their congregations.⁵ This would ideally include youth, women, and all ethnicities.

¹Rosa Taylor Banks, ed. *A Woman's Place: Seventh-day Adventist Women in Church and Society* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992).

²Nancy Vyhmeister, ed., *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998).

³Tribble.

⁴“The Duty of the Minister and the People,” *Review and Herald*, 9 July 1895, 434. (Italics supplied.)

⁵Susan Hunt & Peggy Hutcheson, *Leadership for Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991).

Jeannette Scholer feels subordination implies inferiority and that once redeemed, women cannot be limited in status or function in the church or society. She sees the creation narrative as foundational to understanding our humanity. For her, salvation is both a work of grace for individuals and a work of grace in restoring the mutuality of creation in human relationships.¹

The empowerment of teens and students for leadership is a topic that is not often addressed by contemporary leadership material. Ellen White makes a strong contribution in her uncompromising empowerment of youth for evangelism and service. There are scores of her statements similar to this: “Young men and women should be educated to become workers in their own neighborhoods and in other places.”²

Ellen White’s discussion of positive contributions retired persons can make to the cause of God sounds similar to Hagberg’s sixth stage of personal power and to Greenleaf when he says, “Whatever reputation or status people may have aspired to, when they are old they have whatever they are going to get and (if they are sensible) they withdraw from the struggle. Then, in old age, they can do [accomplish] what striving people cannot do.”³

¹Jeannette F. Sholer, “Turning Reality Into Dreams,” in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, edited by Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 302.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:118.

³Greenleaf, 308.

Though Ellen White is supportive of the traditional mentoring relationship of experience mentoring lesser-experience, in another example of untypical leadership counsel, she urged leaders to take *time* to develop a relationship with young persons.¹

Kent and Nita Curry note that to have influence in a young person's life, adults have to "care every day and every time you see them. You find out what they like, dislike, who they like, where they go after church, and what subjects they like/dislike in school. It takes more time than it should, but then, most of them have been hurt deeper than they should."² I found no well-known current author of religious thought who lists "time with youth" as an important function of leadership.

In speaking of peer mentoring, Ellen White collaborates Gladwell's "stickiness factor"³ when she writes that youth can have twice the influence in the lives of their peers as do adults.⁴

¹"Very much has been lost to the cause of truth by a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the young, Ministers of the gospel should form a happy acquaintance with the youth of their congregations. Many are reluctant to do this, but their neglect is a sin in the sight of heaven. . . . The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, and the sympathy which flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will gain their confidence, and save them from many a snare of the enemy." *Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 207.

²Kent Curry and Nita Curry, "Seven Key Characteristics of Teenagers Today," 2003, from <http://www.ninetyandnine.com/Archives/20030217/ephemera.htm> (24 March 2006).

³Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company, 2000).

⁴*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basle: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), 288.

Though Ellen White repeatedly decries biographies that gloss over human frailty,¹ she agrees with Stanley and Clinton² who suggest that contemporary and historical biographies can be valuable mentoring models.

Several well known authors of leadership literature mention the poor, marginalized, and those who have the least in society, but few consider activism for social justice to be a qualifier for leadership. Ellen White again fills in the gap and writes prolifically on issues of service to the poor and needy. Of authors I surveyed, Ellen White is the most unequivocal author on this point, indicting leaders who feel they are doing too great a work for Christ to take time to notice the wants of the needy and distressed. Adventist author Dwight Nelson concurs with Ellen White's indictment, stating, "Christ's anger is visibly ignited when the guardians of God's truth spurn the economically disenfranchised, the socially alienated, and the nationally marginalized. The poor, the suffering, the handicapped, and the children—written off by the orthodox. It is the treatment of these by those in positions of leadership and authority that brings down the hot wrath of 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild.'"³

Campolo, renowned for challenging ecclesiastical power structures, stated, "Of all the lessons the Latin American peasants were able to teach the official and ordained priests who had come to preach to them, none was more important than this: 'God has sided with the poor and the oppressed against the rich and the powerful.'"⁴ Nouwen

¹*Conflict and Courage* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970), 7.

²Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationship You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992).

³Dwight Nelson, *Pursuing the Passion of Jesus* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 23.

⁴Campolo, *Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?*, 151.

demonstrated his own solidarity with the marginalized when he left his position as a Harvard professor to become a priest to the mentally disabled community of L'Arche.

Foster writes that “the biblical injunctions against the exploitation of the poor and the accumulation of wealth are clear and straightforward. The Bible challenges nearly every economic value of contemporary society. . . . Jesus speaks to the question of economics more than any other social issue.”¹

In a commentary on John Wesley’s leadership in the area of evangelical economics, Theodore Jennings comments, “God is not the god of property and security but of justice and compassion.”² Writing of the evangelical heritage of social concern, John Stott identifies John Wesley as the primary proponent of nineteenth century social activism tied with evangelical piety and evangelism. Stott then traces the twentieth century evangelical renunciation of social responsibility.³

Leadership Concepts from Chapter Seven

In this section I show differences and similarities between what Ellen White considered to be essential leadership qualifications and what a microcosm of current leadership authors shows to be important. I then compare and contrast Ellen White’s views with other authors in the key leadership issues of dealing with the erring, proactive visioning, and alacrity.

¹Foster, 82, 83.

²Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 184.

³John Stott, *Involvement: Being a Responsible Christian in a Non-Christian Society*, vol. 1 (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell Company, 1984, 1985).

For Ellen White, the most essential qualifier for leadership was a living, transparent relationship with Jesus Christ.¹ This idea is similar to Nouwen's vital premise, that "leadership must be rooted in the permanent, intimate relationship with the incarnate Word, Jesus . . . [there is] the source for [leaders'] words, advice, and guidance."²

Ellen White sees team approach to leadership as another essential leadership qualification.³ Foster also sees the guidance of the Holy Spirit coming to God's collective people, not to isolated individuals who insist on their own way apart from the body of Christ.⁴ Patrick Lencioni⁵ concurs when he says most persons on a leadership team just need to be heard (not necessarily get their way in a discussion) and know that their input was considered and responded to.

Ellen White counseled leaders to set boundaries, guard their health, and take time for recreation and family.⁶ Similarly, Richard Swenson⁷ advocates that leaders put margins, or reserves, in the emotional, physical, relational, financial, and time categories of their overloaded lives.

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1.

²Nouwen, 45.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*.

⁴Foster.

⁵Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

⁶*Selected Messages*, book 3.

⁷Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992).

Just as Jim Collins¹ includes debate, dialogue and discussion as important qualifications of Level 5 leaders, so Ellen White encouraged leaders to surround themselves with persons who challenge their thinking, rather than persons who will not differ with them.²

Ellen White, Guinness, and Ford all see leadership as a call from God rather than a position that persons choose for themselves. This calling may or may not be associated with an administrative or managerial post.

Ellen White devotes much of her prose to describing Jesus, in whose life Ford sees the epitome of all the positive qualifications described in leadership theory books. Ford believes that Jesus “was able to create, articulate and communicate a compelling vision; to change what people talk about and dream of; to make his followers transcend self-interest; to enable us to see ourselves and our world in a new way; to provide prophetic insight into the very heart of things; and to bring about the highest order of change.”³ Ellen White extrapolates practical leadership qualifications from the principles exemplified in the life of Christ. With Guinness, Ellen White saw Jesus as not confined to a mere religious leader, but “Lord of all of life.”⁴

Ford notes that Jesus shaped His successors for the future by allowing them to fail, and then reinstating them.⁵ Bell predicts that when members or colleagues become afraid to try something for fear of making a mistake, the church or school is doomed to

¹Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001).

²*Life Sketches*, 321.

³Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 15.

⁴Guinness, 167; *Colporteur Ministry*.

⁵Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 280.

mediocrity.¹ Blackaby and Blackaby see God using failure for a teaching moment; thus, no experience, good or bad, is ever wasted.² Ellen White writes repeatedly about the need to treat the erring with compassionate kindness, and respect.³ In this she is in agreement with Cladis, who writes, “If we ridicule or punish the person who makes a mistake in attempting to do ministry, we will quickly snuff out innovation.”⁴

For Blackaby and King, the core of proactive visioning and planning is to discover where God is working, and join Him there.⁵ I found harmony with that maxim in Ellen White’s counsel on visioning. She states, “While God and His angels are doing their work, those who profess to be followers of Christ seem to be coolly indifferent. They do not work in unison with Christ and holy angels.”⁶ Blackaby and King⁷ and Ellen White⁸ advocate that if the leader’s trust in God is deep, His will becomes our will. Bell expands Covey’s “abundance mentality” phrase to define the character of God who provides resources when vision, action, and progress are present.⁹

Like Ellen White, Blackaby and Blackaby see successful reflective thinking and planning as more dependent on God’s vision than on mimicking the successful strategies of others.¹⁰

¹Bell, 113.

²Blackaby and Blackaby, 43.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*.

⁴Cladis, 153.

⁵Blackaby and King, 48.

⁶*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:198.

⁷Blackaby and King, 176.

⁸*Desire of Ages*, 668.

⁹Bell, 169.

¹⁰*Christian Leadership*, 37; Blackaby and Blackaby, 59.

Charles Swindol writes that “vision is spawned by faith, sustained by hope, sparked by imagination and strengthened by enthusiasm.”¹ Ford suggests three questions as part of the visioning and planning process: 1. Is this God’s vision? 2. Is this God’s method? 3. Is this God’s timing?² Ellen White suggests similar planning and visioning processes.³

Blackaby and King advocate that the leader believe by faith that God will enable and equip him or her to do everything He asks, even if that commission falls outside of previous interests, perceived talents, and prior experience.⁴ Though Ellen White does say that “all God’s biddings are enablings,”⁵ she seems to agree more often with youth worker Jim Slevcove who wrote, “It helps to have people work in areas of their strengths.”⁶ Dick and Miller,⁷ as well as Greenleaf,⁸ also encourage individuals to discover the role that best draws on his or her strengths, as does Collins⁹ who advocates that the leader find where he or she has the potential to be best, what he or she is genetically coded to become.

Blackaby and King¹⁰ are firm in their premise that God always requires adjustments—to the leader’s circumstances, relationships, thinking, commitments,

¹Charles Swindol, *Quest for Character* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 98.

²Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 94.

³*This Day With God* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1979), 27.

⁴Blackaby and King, 72-77.

⁵*Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900, 1941), 333.

⁶Jim Slevcove, “Managing Your Ministry,” *Youthworker*, Jan/Feb 2004, 14.

⁷Dick and Miller.

⁸Greenleaf.

⁹Collins.

¹⁰Blackaby and King.

actions or beliefs. McNeal takes an unusual approach to long-term personal planning and advocates leaving career destiny in God's hands,¹ in opposition to most leadership literature which advocates that the leader envision himself or herself in ten years, or similar long-term projections. Although Ellen White says, "Success in any line demands a definite aim,"² she also says, "Consecrate yourself to God in the morning. . . . Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet.' . . . *Surrender all your plans to [God]* (emphasis mine), to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate."³

Regarding visioning, Ellen White wrote, "We are altogether too narrow in our plans. We need to be broader minded."⁴ Collins cautions that Big Hairy Audacious Goals (B-Hogs) should not be set with bravado, but should be carefully thought through. He raises the bar beyond good and encourages leaders to go for "great," in order to find meaning.⁵ For Ellen White, the meaning derived from excellence is found in Col 3:23, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."

Ellen White urged leaders to take responsibility and "to risk something on the success of this message."⁶ She decried a "slow, unbelieving pace."⁷ Kotter shares with

¹McNeal.

²*Education*, 262.

³*The Faith I Live By* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958, 1973), 126.

⁴*Manuscript Releases*, 21 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981, 1987, 1990, 1993), 6:329.

⁵Collins.

⁶Letter to William Peabody, Circa 1859, Letter 27, 1859, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁷*Ibid.*

Ellen White the importance of establishing a sense of urgency in order to effect change.¹ Both promote celerity and agree on the importance of capturing opportunities. Even Greenleaf states, “The burden of indecisiveness [is] much greater than the benefit of decisiveness.”² He notes that creativity involves risk, experiment, and perseverance in the face of failure, somewhat the opposite of prudence, and that institutions stifle the optimal contributions of the most gifted persons.

Greenleaf is in harmony with Ellen White’s comments on alacrity when he says, “One must oppose those things that one believes to be wrong, but one cannot lead from a predominantly negative posture. One can lead an institution or a total society only by strong, specific, sharply aimed affirmative actions.”³

In summary, Ellen White’s counsel is most similar to current leadership literature in the premise that governments, churches, and corporations exist to meet the needs of people. Her recurring theme of the great controversy between Christ and Satan is probably least like current leadership literature. The great controversy theme is the structural basis from which all of her spiritual and practical leadership counsel emerges. It is this framework of the battle between Christ and Satan, and the consequent need for humanity to choose one or the other as life’s leader, which is Ellen White’s most unique contribution to leadership theories.

¹Kotter.

²Greenleaf, 77.

³Ibid., 248.

CHAPTER 4

COUNSELS TO LEADERS ON KNOWING GOD

Leadership information abounds! Administrators and corporate leaders are inundated with direct and email invitations to leadership workshops, leadership conventions, leadership convocations, and leadership summits. Bookstores brim with books on leadership and leadership theories. Joseph Rost's research, graphed by year, indicates an exponential increase in leadership literature through the latter part of the twentieth century¹ and the trend may be even more marked in the first six years of the new millennium. Though many of these verbal and written information sources are secular, as in Gladwell's bestselling *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*, Christian authors such as John Maxwell and Rick Warren have successfully bridged the Christian and secular arenas. Their books on leadership have sold millions of copies.

What meets the needs of today's leader? Why are Christian and non-Christian leaders avidly reading *The Purpose Driven Life*? What drives the enormous interest in leadership theory today?

Though an in-depth examination of these questions is precluded by the scope of this project, it would appear that the postmodern leader is looking for meaning in his or her life. No one denies the attraction of temporal success, but the heart cry seems to be a

¹Joseph Rost, *Leadership for the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 46.

hunger for something deeper, something more mystical, something that goes beyond bigger, better, richer, more powerful. Thus, the proliferation of leadership book titles such as *The Soul of Ministry*, *Spiritual Leadership*, *Servant Leadership*, *The Path*, *Experiencing God*, *A Work of Heart*, *The Call*, etc.

Can a nineteenth century visionary speak to the postmodern leader's heart cry for meaning? In this chapter, I proceed directly to Ellen White's core values. To her, a true leader must be a recipient of the Holy Spirit and respond to the grace of God in his or her life. She believed that the human heart would never know happiness or real meaning until "it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God."¹ We will discover that Ellen White did not see the mantle of leadership as some mystical anointing of superiority or infallibility. In contrast, she stated, "The way to become great and noble is to be like Jesus, pure, holy, and undefiled."² In her view, the leader's greatest need is to know God and be led of His Spirit.

I will examine some of Ellen White's counsel on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the leader, the importance of time spent with God in Scripture study, the development of the leader's character, and the importance of prayer. From this counsel I have extrapolated principles—enduring moral rules of conduct for human behavior.

The chapter concludes with a glimpse of Ellen White's own experience with God. I briefly trace the story of her conversion and note some of her own spiritual struggles. Through her written and spoken prayers, I have come to understand a great deal about the

¹*God's Amazing Grace*, 196.

²Letter to J. H. Kellogg, Torre Pellice, Italy, 26 April 1886, Letter 7, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts Collection, EGWRC-GC.

breadth of her connection with God. Becoming like Jesus, being transformed into His image, was the purpose of her devotional time and the work of her life.

The Holy Spirit

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Spirit Empowers.*

Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train.¹

The Holy Spirit is the efficiency and power of all God's servants.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Spirit Creates Teamwork.*

The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christian shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to co-operate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give to the world the glad tidings of the grace of God.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Spirit Is the Voice of God.*

Are there not many, even religious leaders, who are hardening their hearts against the Holy Spirit, making it impossible for them to recognize the voice of God? Are they not rejecting the word of God, that they may keep their own traditions?⁴

¹*Desire of Ages*, 672.

²*Manuscript 117*, 1902, Los Angeles, California, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

³*Acts of the Apostles*, 164.

⁴*Desire of Ages*, 213.

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Humility Is a Prerequisite to the Spirit's Blessing.*

When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God's promise will never fail in one jot or tittle. But when the work of others is discounted, that the workers may show their own superiority, they prove that their own work does not bear the signature it should. God cannot bless them.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Spirit Qualifies the Called.*

Men are deceived in thinking they are serving God when they are serving themselves and making the interest of the cause and work of God a secondary matter. Their hearts are not consecrated. The Lord takes no pleasure in the services of this class. From time to time, as the cause has progressed, He has in His providence designated men to fill positions at Battle Creek. These men could have filled important positions if they had consecrated themselves to God and devoted their energies to His work. These men of God's selection needed the very discipline that a devotion to His work would give them. He would honor them by connecting them with Himself and giving them His Holy Spirit to qualify them for the responsibilities they were called to bear. They could not gain that breadth of experience and knowledge of the divine will unless they were in positions to bear burdens and responsibilities.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Spirit's Call Is Gender Inclusive.*

It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Spirit Reaches Beyond Education or Experience.*

Whatever his educational attainments, only he who realizes his accountability to God, and who is led by the Holy Spirit, can be an effectual teacher, or be successful in winning to God those who are brought under his influence. Shall those who do not heed the divine counsel be acknowledged as leaders in the Lord's institutions?—God

¹*Last Day Events* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1992), 190.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:468.

³*Ibid.*, 6:322.

forbid. How can we regard as safe guides those who manifest a spirit of unbelief, and who, in words and character, fail of revealing true godliness?¹

Scripture Study

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Encourage Discussion of New Scriptural Truth.*

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Scripture Transcends Philosophy.*

There are men among us in responsible positions who hold that the opinions of a few conceited philosophers, so called, are more to be trusted than the truth of the Bible, or the testimonies of the Holy Spirit. Such a faith as that of Paul, Peter, or John is considered old-fashioned and insufferable at the present day. It is pronounced absurd, mystical, and unworthy of an intelligent mind.

God has shown me that these men are Hazael's to prove a scourge to our people. They are wise above what is written. This unbelief of the very truths of God's word because human judgment cannot comprehend the mysteries of His work is found in every district, in all ranks of society. It is taught in most of our schools and comes into the lessons of the nurseries. Thousands who profess to be Christians give heed to lying spirits. Everywhere the spirit of darkness in the garb of religion will confront you.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Elitism Can Prejudice Against Truth.*

Those who allow prejudice to bar the mind against the reception of truth cannot receive the divine enlightenment. Yet, when a view of Scripture is presented many do not ask, Is it true—in harmony with God's word? but, By whom is it advocated? and unless it comes through the very channel that pleases them, they do not accept it. So thoroughly satisfied are they with their own ideas that they will not examine the

¹*This Day With God*, 248.

²*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 297.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 5:79.

Scripture evidence with a desire to learn, but refuse to be interested, merely because of their prejudices.

The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits—because it is truth.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *The Bible Is Its Own Expositor.*

The Bible must not be interpreted to suit the ideas of men, however long they may have held these ideas to be true. We are not to accept the opinion of commentators as the voice of God; they were erring mortals like ourselves. God has given reasoning powers to us as well as to them. We should make the Bible its own expositor.²

Character Development

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Integrity and Character Development Predicated on Time with God.*

Guard jealously your hours for prayer and self-examination. Set apart some portion of each day for a study of the Scriptures and communion with God. Thus you will obtain spiritual strength and grow in grace and favor with God. He alone can direct our thoughts aright. He alone can give us noble aspirations and fashion our characters after the divine similitude. If we draw near to Him in earnest prayer, He will fill our hearts with high and holy purposes and with deep, earnest longing for purity and cleanness of thought.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Both Blessings and Challenges Call for Dependence on God.*

If the children of God, especially those who stand in positions of responsibility, can be led to take to themselves the glory that is due to God, Satan exults. He has gained a victory. It was thus that he fell. Thus he is most successful in tempting others to ruin. It is to place us on our guard against his devices that God has given in His word so many lessons teaching the danger of self-exaltation. There is not an impulse of our nature, not a faculty of the mind or an inclination of the heart, but needs to be, moment by moment, under the control of the Spirit of God. There is not a blessing

¹*Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed. (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Publishing Co., 1901), 125, 126.

²*Ibid.*, 126.

³*In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1967), 85.

which God bestows upon man, nor a trial which He permits to befall him, but Satan both can and will seize upon it to tempt, to harass and destroy the soul, if we give him the least advantage. Therefore however great one's spiritual light, however much he may enjoy of the divine favor and blessing, he should ever walk humbly before the Lord, pleading in faith that God will direct every thought and control every impulse.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Care for the Poor Develops Character.*

There are many who urge with great enthusiasm that all men should have an equal share in the temporal blessings of God. But this was not the purpose of the Creator. A diversity of condition is one of the means by which God designs to prove and develop character. Yet He intends that those who have worldly possessions shall regard themselves merely as stewards of His goods, as entrusted with means to be employed for the benefit of the suffering and the needy.

Christ has said that we shall have the poor always with us, and He unites His interest with that of His suffering people. The heart of our Redeemer sympathizes with the poorest and lowliest of His earthly children. He tells us that they are His representatives on earth. He has placed them among us to awaken in our hearts the love that He feels toward the suffering and oppressed. Pity and benevolence shown to them are accepted by Christ as if shown to Himself. An act of cruelty or neglect toward them is regarded as though done to Him.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *High Administrative Position and Extreme Pressure Mandate Dependence on God.*

All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard the spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he was; yet this was not allowed to excuse his sin. God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. The strongest *temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul*, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer.³

[Leaders] are ever to remember that position will never change the character or render man infallible. The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility

¹*Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890, 1958), 421.

²*Ibid.*, 535, 536.

³*Ibid.*, 421.

he has to bear, the wider will be the influence he exerts and the greater his need to feel his dependence on the wisdom and strength of God and to cultivate the best and most holy character.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Obedience and Trust in God, Not Position, Makes Character.*

Those who today occupy positions of trust should seek to learn the lesson taught by Solomon's prayer. The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility that he has to bear, the wider will be the influence that he exerts and the greater his need of dependence on God. Ever should he remember that with the call to work comes the call to walk circumspectly before his fellow men. He is to stand before God in the attitude of a learner. Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *God's Leadership Transcends Humanity's.*

I write this that all may know that there is no controversy among Seventh-day Adventists over the question of leadership. The Lord God of heaven is our King. He is a leader whom we can safely follow, for He never makes a mistake. Let us honor God and His Son, through whom He communicates with the world.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Make Wisdom a Higher Priority Than Wealth, Power, or Fame.*

The God whom we serve is no respecter of persons. He who gave to Solomon the spirit of wise discernment is willing to impart the same blessing to His children today. "If any of you lack wisdom," His word declares, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. When a burden bearer desires wisdom more than he desires wealth, power, or fame, he will not be disappointed. Such a one will learn from the Great Teacher not only what to do, but how to do it in a way that will meet with the divine approval.⁴

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:282.

²*Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1917, 1943), 30.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 8:238.

⁴*Prophets and Kings*, 31.

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Character Development More Essential Than Church Business.*

Those engaged in the work of God cannot serve His cause acceptably unless they make the best use possible of the religious privileges they enjoy. We are as trees planted in the garden of the Lord; and He comes to us seeking the fruit He has a right to expect. His eye is upon each of us; He reads our hearts and understands our lives. This is a solemn search, for it has reference to duty and to destiny; and with what interest is it prosecuted. Let each of those to whom are committed sacred trusts inquire: "How do I meet the inspecting eye of God? Is my heart cleansed from its defilement? or have its temple courts become so desecrated, so occupied with buyers and sellers, that Christ finds no room?" The bustle of business, if continuous, will dry up spirituality and leave the soul Christless. Although they may profess the truth, yet if men pass along day by day with no living connection with God, they will be led to do strange things; decisions will be made not in accordance with the will of God. There is no safety for our leading brethren while they shall go forward according to their own impulses. They will not be yoked up with Christ, and so will not move in harmony with Him. They will be unable to see and realize the wants of the cause, and Satan will move upon them to take positions that will embarrass and hinder.

My brethren, are you cultivating devotion? Is love of religious things prominent? Are you living by faith and overcoming the world? Do you attend the public worship of God? and are your voices heard in the prayer and social meeting?¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Praise and High Profile Can Corrupt.*

I feel compelled to write most earnestly on this point because I feel the peril that is upon us. We have in past history the example of most painful characters showing the danger of men in high places being corrupted. Men of masterly minds, who possessed large talents of influence, yet did not put their trust wholly in God, but allowed themselves to be praised and petted and lauded by the world's great men, lost their balance, and thought that great men's sins were not vices. The heavenly guide left them, and their course was rapidly downward to corruption and perdition. They completely lost the just standard of honor, lost all distinction between right and wrong, between sin and righteousness. There are lights and shades in character, and one or the other certainly triumphs.²

Those whom God has placed in positions of responsibility should never seek to exalt themselves or to turn the attention of men to their work. They must give all the glory

¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:423.

² *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 91.

to God. They must not seek for power that they may lord it over God's heritage; for only those who are under the rule of Satan will do this.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Age, Power, and Position Do Not Guarantee Holiness of Character.*

Let no one run the risk of interposing himself between the people and the message of heaven. The message of God will come to the people; and if there were no voice among men to give it, the very stones would cry out. I call upon every minister to seek the Lord, to put away pride, to put away strife after supremacy, and humble the heart before God.²

Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great.³

Prayer

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *God Is Waiting for Leaders to Pray.*

There is a watcher standing by the side of all those who are filling positions of trust, ready to reprove and convict of wrongdoing, or to answer the prayers for help. He watches to see if the men privileged to bear responsibilities will look to God for wisdom and avail themselves of every opportunity to perfect a character after the divine similitude. If they deviate from straight-forward rectitude, God turns from them; if they do not earnestly strive to understand the will of God concerning them, He cannot bless or prosper or sustain them.⁴

In the valley of humiliation, where men depend on God to teach them and to guide their every step, there is comparative safety. But let everyone who has a living connection with God pray for . . . those who are standing on a lofty pinnacle and who, because of their exalted position, are supposed to have much wisdom. Unless such men feel their need of an Arm stronger than the arm of flesh to lean upon, unless they make God their dependence, their view of things will become distorted and they will fall.⁵

¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, 279.

² "Search the Scriptures," *Review and Herald*, 26 July 1892, 466.

³ *Prophets and Kings*, 30.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *The Upward Look* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 259.

Ellen White Leadership Principle: Power and Strength for Service Come through Prayer.

Daily beset by temptation, constantly opposed by the leaders of the people, Christ knew that He must strengthen His humanity by prayer. In order to be a blessing to men He must commune with God, pleading for energy, perseverance, and steadfastness. Thus He showed His disciples where His strength lay. Without this daily communion with God no human being can gain power for service. It is the privilege of every one to commit himself, with all his trials and temptations, his sorrows and disappointments, to the loving heavenly Father. No one who does this, who makes God his confidant, will fall a prey to the enemy.¹

Our strength lies in taking our burdens to the great Burden Bearer. God confers honor on those who come to Him and ask Him for help, in faith believing that they will receive.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Leaders Should Pray on Behalf of Those They Influence.*

Now is the time to lay hold of the arm of our strength. The prayer of David should be the prayer of pastors and laymen: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law" (Ps 119:126). Let the servants of God weep between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach" (Joel 2:17).³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *God Will Intervene on Behalf of His People in Response to Their Prayers.*

God has always wrought in behalf of His truth. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to His power and His overruling providence. He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the haters of His truth and His people can be turned aside, even as the waters of a river could be turned, if thus He ordered it. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep—the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people, if they will call upon Him in faith. He will restrain all the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who will heed it are prepared for His coming.⁴

¹ *Heavenly Places*, 85.

² *Testimonies to Ministers*, 485.

³ *Heavenly Places*, 351.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Pray for Wisdom, not Advancement.*

So long as he remains consecrated, the man whom God has endowed with discernment and ability will not manifest an eagerness for high position, neither will he seek to rule or control. Of necessity men must bear responsibilities; but instead of striving for the supremacy, he who is a true leader will pray for an understanding heart, to discern between good and evil.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *See in Every Difficulty a Call to Prayer.*

The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Pray for a Quick Mind, a Large Heart, and a Tender Spirit.*

The wisdom that Solomon desired above riches, honor, or long life, God gave him. His petition for a quick mind, a large heart, and a tender spirit was granted.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Pray for Your Employees and Tell Them You Are Praying on Their Behalf.*

As you have opportunity, speak to the workers; speak words that will be a strength and an inspiration. We are altogether too indifferent in regard to one another. Too often we forget that our fellow laborers are in need of strength and cheer. In times of special perplexity and burden, take care to assure them of your interest and sympathy. While you try to help them by your prayers, let them know that you do it. Send along the line God's message to His workers: "Be strong and of a good courage" (Joshua 1:6).⁴

¹*Prophets and Kings*, 31.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Testimonies for the Church*, 7:185.

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Pray in Committee Meetings.*

God would work mightily for His people today if they would place themselves wholly under His guidance. They need the constant abiding of the Holy Spirit. If there were more prayer in the councils of those bearing responsibilities, more humbling of the heart before God, we should see abundant evidence of divine leadership, and our work would make rapid progress.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Fast and Pray Until You Get Answers.*

I do not think any such questions² as that ought to be placed before me. I do not think it is my work to deal with any such things unless the case has been plainly opened before me. There should be brethren in the church who have wisdom who can speak decidedly regarding this case. I cannot understand such things. I do not believe that God wants me to take any such burden upon me. If they cannot settle such things among themselves by prayer and fasting, then let them continue [in] fasting and prayer till they can.

Such things will arise. It will come—that is, they will have these difficult questions, and they have got to learn how to treat them. They have got to have an experience. They must bring these things to the Lord, and believe the Lord will hear their prayer, and give them a sound experience in all these things, but they are not to bring them to me.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Praying Together Should Be a High Priority in Workers' Meetings.*

The Lord desires His workers to counsel together, not to move independently. Those who are set as ministers and guides to the people should pray much when they meet together. This will give wonderful help and courage, binding heart to heart and soul to soul, leading every man to unity and peace and strength in his endeavors.⁴

¹Ibid., 8:238.

²Ellen White had been asked if a minister who had had a moral lapse, but was now doing successful evangelism in the local church, should have his credentials restored and be given responsibilities as the conference evangelist. It is my view that her counsel to fast and pray for answers to difficult questions has a wider application than only this specific circumstance.

³*Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 234.

⁴*Testimonies to Ministers*, 485.

Ellen White's Experiential Demonstration of Her Leadership Principles on Knowing God

In this section, I will try to look into Ellen White's experience with God. How does she prioritize God and knowing God in her writings? What was the nature of her devotional life? What can her prayers tell us about her dependence on Jesus? What importance did she herself attach to a living connection with heavenly agencies?

During her lifetime, Ellen White penned over 100,000 manuscript pages. In this prodigious literary output, she chose to focus most frequently on God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. A recurring theme in her writings, particularly in the area of education, is the re-creation in the believer of the image of God.¹

She believed the Holy Spirit gives guidance and grace² and that Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit, as His representative.³ Recognizing the Spirit as the best of heaven's gifts,⁴ Ellen White wrote this prayer: "Take away, O Lord, what Thou dost choose to take, but withhold not from us Thy Holy Spirit."⁵ She also suggested this prayer, "Put Thy Spirit, Lord, Thy Holy Spirit, within my heart, that I may be sincere in keeping my baptismal vow."⁶

Ellen White considered the Spirit a divine agency who was willing to give specific guidance in life's perplexities. In 1874, while living in California, Ellen felt convicted she should return to Battle Creek to fundraise for specific evangelistic needs in

¹*Counsels to Parents*, 50.

²*Desire of Ages*, 672.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 8:64.

⁴*Our High Calling* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1961), 150.

⁵"Our Responsibility in the Present Crisis," *Review and Herald*, 23 June 1903, 7.

⁶*Manuscript Releases*, 2:33.

Oakland. However, her husband James was ill and felt he could not let Ellen go. A small group gathered to seek the Spirit's guidance concerning this dilemma. As they prayed together, Ellen White recalled, the Spirit of God filled the room like a tidal wave, and a brother Tay said he saw an angel pointing across the Rocky Mountains. Assured that the Spirit had indicated God's will, James conceded that he must let Ellen make the journey. She hurried home, gathered a small lunch, and immediately embarked alone by train to Michigan.¹

On another occasion, Ellen wrote with unusual candor in her diary, "Before the meeting I was depressed, and wished that the appointment had not been made."² She was sixty-five, local circumstances had discouraged her, and she even wondered if she should retire from public ministry. While preaching one Sabbath morning during this time of burn-out, she felt that the Spirit brought words of encouragement from the Scripture for her own heart, as well as for her hearers.³ She recognized God's special plans for her life and in spite of her physical and emotional sufferings, she found comfort and spiritual strength in claiming Scriptural promises of God.⁴

Early in Ellen White's ministry, individuals in Boston opposed the doctrine of a literal, personal return of Christ. Ellen White found strength to resist and combat this

¹"In the Regions Beyond," *General Conference Bulletin*, 5 April 1901, 84.

²*Manuscript 5*, 1893, 26 January–4 February 1893 Diary entry, (written in Parramatta, New South Wales, Australia), Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Manuscript 75*, 1893, [Concerning Early Labors in Australia, circa 1893], Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

erroneous view by surrounding herself with Scripture.¹ She continued the practice of studying and memorizing Scripture throughout her lifetime. A year before her death, an aid wrote to Ellen White's son, "Even when exceedingly brain-weary, your mother seems to find great comfort in the promises of the Word, and often catches up a quotation and completes it when we begin quoting some familiar scripture."²

Ellen White found deep character developing experiences while engaging in personal ministry to others. While on "vacation" at the Brown family home in Wellington, New Zealand in 1893, Ellen gave a personal gospel invitation to each young member of the family. As one by one the young adults confessed their love for Christ, and willingness to accept Him as their Savior, Ellen declared her own heart broken by the love of God. A wonderful time of praise and thanksgiving followed, which Ellen White described as a "precious season."³

Ellen White opened her heart to God as to a friend. She was eager to praise Jesus in her prayers and she was not afraid to confess her ardent love for Him.⁴ She often deliberately chose to focus on the positive in her prayers, once stating, "O God, I will pluck the roses and the lilies and the pinks!"⁵

¹*Life Sketches of James and Ellen White*, ed. 1880 (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1880), 230.

²*Life Sketches*, 436.

³*Manuscript 59*, 1893, August 8, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁴"The Substance of Things Hoped For," *Signs of the Times*, 18 March 1889, 162; "The Gift of God," *Signs*, 19 June 1893, 8.

⁵"Take the Cup of Salvation," *Review and Herald*, 19 May 1896, 306.

She recognized her Source of wisdom, and frequently penned or spoke prayers that asked for wisdom, guidance, and discernment:

“Enlighten me; teach me what is truth.”¹

“Lead me, guide me.”²

“Teach me Thy way, that I may not err. What is Thy pleasure concerning me? What shall I do to honor Thee, my God?”³

“I cannot make any decision until I know Thy will.”⁴

“Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do this day?”⁵

“Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand Thy Word. . . . Refresh me by Thy presence. Fill my heart with Thy Spirit that I may love my brethren as Christ loves me.”⁶

“What is right? What is wrong? How may I best fulfill the purpose of my creation?”⁷

Once before preaching in Switzerland, Ellen White spoke this public prayer:

“Lord, speak Thou to the hearts of the bearers; impress the truth upon the soul.”⁸

¹“Search the Scriptures,” *Review and Herald*, 3 April 1888, 209.

²*Manuscript 19*, 1894, George's Terrace, St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, Australia, [Regarding New Believers to be Encouraged, 17 March 1894], Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

³*Sermons and Talks*, 2 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990, 1994), 1:32.

⁴*Manuscript 121*, 1898, 2 October 1898, [Example of Faithfulness] Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁵“The Excellency of the Soul,” *Review and Herald*, 9 May 1899, 293.

⁶“The Promise of the Spirit,” *Review and Herald*, 10 June 1902, 8.

⁷*Testimonies for the Church*, 7:45.

⁸“April 5, 1887 Visit to Tramelan, Switzerland,” *Review and Herald*, 5 April 1887, 210.

Again, at the Ottawa, Kansas camp meeting she prayed, “Give me physical strength, mental clearness, and spiritual power, that through Thy grace I may be a blessing to the people.”¹

She also prayed for effectiveness in saving those without Christ:

“Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do, that the vigilance of Christ may be seen in my life, and that His example may be copied by me, and that I may speak sincere words that will help souls who are in darkness and sin?”²

“Lord, help me to save this soul.”³

“O Saviour, save the purchase of Thy blood!”⁴

In 1895, while serving in Australia, Ellen White was suffering with physical and mental exhaustion. Uncertain if she should preach at the upcoming Melbourne camp meeting, she decided to make a specific prayer request of God. If He would strengthen her to meet her imminent speaking appointment in nearby Ashfield, she would consider that to be a sign that God would strengthen her for further appointments at the camp meeting. She felt that God did give her special strength to speak at Ashfield, and with this evidence that God would further strengthen her for the camp meeting, she left with confidence for Melbourne, where she did indeed meet many speaking appointments over the three-week camp meeting (which expanded to a five-week evangelistic series!)⁵

¹“July 23, 1889 Camp-Meeting at Ottawa, Kansas,” *Review and Herald*, 23 July 1889, 465.

²“Our Duty to Communicate Truth,” *Review and Herald*, 25 February 1909, 7.

³“Repent, and Do the First Works,” *Review and Herald*, 26 May 1903, 8.

⁴*Testimonies for the Church*, 2:402.

⁵Letter to J. E. White, Armadale, Melbourne, Australia, 18 October 1895, Letter 114, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts Collection, EGWRC-GC.

Insomnia frequently plagued Ellen White. In the sleepless nights, she sought solace in prayer to God. On 22 January 1903, she confided to her diary, "I thank my heavenly Father for His merciful, tender watchcare. I plead with the Lord in the night season. He will hear our prayer of earnest desire for increased strength to do His will. I pray most earnestly in the sleepless hours of the night for clearness of the representations made me as God's messenger to bear the trust to others, and that if I have in any way departed from His will and His way that I may understand this and repent and be forgiven."¹

On the same day she wrote further in her diary of her specific physical infirmities and prayers for God to heal her, as well as give her discernment in ministry:

I will seek the Lord most earnestly to preserve to me my eyesight. My left eye has been afflicted for a number of years, but I know not what to do but to come to the Great Physician. Day and night I may present my request for special blessing of eyesight, hearing, and for removal of pain in my heart. I need keen spiritual perception to know when to speak and when to withhold words of censure for wrongs which are endangering the souls of church members. Ministers and people are to watch and to pray without ceasing.²

It would appear that in her night prayers, she was practicing what she said in a sermon at Copenhagen, Denmark, on 11 October 1886: "Lord, I have borne these burdens as long as I can, and now I lay them upon the Burden bearer."³

In another prayer that references physical distress, she wrote, "Jesus, my Tried Stone, to Thee will I come, moment by moment. In Thy presence I am lifted above pain.

¹*Manuscript 171*, 1903, January 3-31, 1903, Diary entry, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts Collection, EGWRC-GC.

²*Ibid.*

³"An Immortal Name," [Sermon at Copenhagen, Denmark, given on 11 October 1886] *Signs*, 2 March 1888, 130.

When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”¹

During the nights of sleeplessness, she often cried out to God to save His people in churches that she knew were struggling to find victory in Christ:

“O Lord, set Thy people in order, before it shall be everlastingly too late!”²

“O Lord, anoint the eyes of Thy people, that they may discern between sin and holiness, between pollution and righteousness, and come off victors at last.”³

Ellen White also frequently wrote or spoke prayers for forgiveness and cleansing of sin. In 1892, she wrote this prayer: “Forgive my sin. I put my hand to Thy hand for help, and I must have Thy forgiveness or perish. Let the Sun of righteousness shine into the chambers of my mind and heart, that I may teach transgressors Thy ways, and that sinners may be converted unto Thee.”⁴

Ellen White participated in an intense revival and confession meeting at Paris, Maine in September of 1849. The next morning she went to her mother’s home in Gorham, Maine, and found her suffering from an abscessed and swollen foot, a result of having stepped on a rusty nail. No remedy had relieved the injured foot or eased the pain. Ellen felt impressed to kneel at her mother’s feet and ask the Lord to touch her mother with His healing power. She describes the outcome: “With the Spirit of the Lord resting upon me, I bid her in the name of the Lord rise up and walk. His power was in the room, and shouts of praise went up to God. Mother arose and walked the room, declaring

¹“Recount God’s Dealings,” *Review and Herald*, 19 March 1895, 177.

²“The Work in Oakland and San Francisco,” *Review and Herald*, 13 December 1906, 9.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 5:603.

⁴“Need of Dependence on God,” *Review and Herald*, 11 October 1892, 626.

that the work was done, that the soreness was gone, and that she was entirely relieved from pain. That day she rode thirty-eight miles to Topsham to attend a conference there, and had no more trouble with her foot.”¹

Ellen White’s devotional time, time spent in knowing God, was precious to her.

On 1 March 1907, she wrote:

I am carrying a weight of great responsibility, and I scarcely venture to speak of the weight that oppresses my soul, for there is not one of those connected with me that can possibly understand the anguish of my heart. I feel that I am alone, *alone* as far as any soul’s being able to understand is concerned.

But why do I wish that they could? I have my Friend in Jesus, and He can help me and He alone. He has been to me a very present help in times of greatest necessity, and now I can only trust and hang my helpless soul on Jesus Christ.²

“I have a Friend in Jesus” is an apt summary of time Ellen White spent knowing God.

Experiential knowledge of God was central to Ellen White. It was impossible for her to conceive of leadership without the invigorating presence of the Spirit, a trust in God that defies the assaults of secularism, consumerism, love of power, and desire for prestige and recognition. She recognized that now we know darkly, imperfectly, but her hope was always the Parousia, “then, face to face.”

¹*Life Sketches of James and Ellen*, ed. 1880, 261.

²*Manuscript 154*, 1907, 1 January-30 March 1907, Diary entry, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts Collection, EGWRC-GC.

CHAPTER 5

COUNSELS TO LEADERS ON LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY

In this chapter, I examine Ellen White's counsel to leaders on their use or misuse of authority or power vested in them by virtue of their leadership role. Ellen White again appeals to leaders to see their position through a spiritual lens. Her leadership worldview emerges from the Scriptural frame of reference described in Philippians 2:5-8. As Christ chose to leave His position of exaltation and glory and come to earth in the form of a servant, Christian leaders can choose to leave the pursuit of hierarchical power, prestige, and privilege in order to humbly serve those for whom Christ died.

In his seminal work *Servant Leadership*,¹ Robert K. Greenleaf defines the servant-leader as one for whom the natural desire to serve emerges intuitively. He suggests that this sensitivity may be a survivor of naturalistic process.² In this, Greenleaf posits from a modern mindset, one which is more reflective of the Protestant ethic of rationalism and reason than his own mystical Quaker background. The premier figure in servant-leadership literature, Greenleaf does not hesitate to cite Jesus' teachings in his writings. But he falls short of identifying Jesus' substitutionary death as the ultimate

¹Greenleaf.

²Ibid., 36.

example of servant leadership; indeed, he does not reference the atonement, even as a positive moral influence.

In contrast, Ellen White does not fear to plunge into the realm of the incarnational mystery. She identifies the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as the basis for the Christian leader's acts of altruism. Blackaby comes close to Ellen White when he states, "Servant leadership flows from the love leaders have for their people"¹ and he even seems to recognize the Source of that love when he states, "In all of literature there is no clearer example of servant leadership than that of Christ on the night of his crucifixion."²

Unlike chaos theories of leadership which may describe a "strange attractor" as a nebulous sense of vision that somehow unites persons to the achievement of a common goal, Ellen White is definitive about the vision that unites the leader and his or her team. That end-product, that "prize" for which Christians press on, is sanctification in this life, and eternity with God in the next. It would be impossible for a leader who had internalized this vision to intentionally abuse power. But because our "hearts are deceitful" and we do not always recognize our own frailties, Ellen White repeatedly warns against the abuse of power.

In the section contrasting Moses' leadership style versus Aaron's model of leadership, I identify principles from Ellen White's writings that are based on what Steven Covey and current leadership literature might define as "moral authority."³ Covey is unwilling to define a basis for that moral authority, but Ellen White doesn't

¹Blackaby and King, 165.

²Blackaby and Blackaby, 164.

³Steven R. Covey, foreword to *Servant Leadership* by Robert Greenleaf (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977), 5.

hesitate! For her, the Scriptures are the voice of God, and the voice, or commandments, of God determine morality. God's moral authority compels the Christian leader to "stand for the right, though the heavens fall,"¹ but to do so with redemptive focus.

To conclude this chapter, I draw examples of servant leadership and exemplary use of moral authority from the life of Ellen White.

Servant Leadership

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Jesus Is the Primary Servant-Leader Model.*²

Your soul is not sanctified to the work. You do not take the burden of the work upon you. You choose an easier lot than that which is appointed to the minister of Christ. He counted not His life dear unto Himself. He pleased not Himself, but lived for others' good. He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. It is not enough to be able to present the arguments of our position before the people. The minister of Christ must possess an undying love for souls, a spirit of self-denial, of self-sacrifice. He should be willing to give his life, if need be, to the work of saving his fellow men, for whom Christ died.³

The covenant of agreement in church membership is that each member would walk in the footsteps of Christ, that all will take His yoke upon them, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. Doing this, "Ye shall," saith the dear Saviour, "find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29, 30).

Those who wear Christ's yoke will draw together. They will cultivate sympathy and forbearance, and in holy emulation will strive to show to others the tender sympathy and love of which they feel such great need themselves. He who is weak and inexperienced, although he is weak, may be strengthened by the more hopeful and by those of mature experience. Although the least of all, he is a stone that must shine in the building. He is a vital member of the organized body, united to Christ, the living head, and through Christ identified with all the excellencies of Christ's character so that the Saviour is not ashamed to call him brother.⁴

¹*Education*, 57.

²For the purposes of this project, I have arbitrarily determined, based on Ellen White's counsel to leaders, that Ellen White's definition of a servant-leader is one who follows Christ's example of self-sacrificing leadership for redemption purposes. This definition drives the selection of quotes for this section.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 2:151.

⁴*Selected Messages*, 3:16.

Brethren, keep your words of censure for your individual selves. Teach the flock of God to look to Christ, not to erring man. Every soul who becomes a teacher of the truth must bear in his own life the fruit of holiness. Looking to Christ and following Him, he will present to the souls under his charge an example of what a living, learning Christian will be. Let God teach you His way. Inquire of Him daily to know His will. He will give unerring counsel to all who seek Him with a sincere heart. Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, praising God in your daily conversation as well as in your prayers. Thus, holding forth the word of life, you will constrain other souls to become followers of Christ.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Combine God's Strength and Wisdom with Humble Diligence.*

Let every true, honesthearted worker be encouraged to work on, keeping in view the fact that every one will be rewarded as his works have been. Work with an eye single to the glory of God. Do not refuse to bear responsibilities because you have a sense of your weakness and inefficiency. God can give you strength and wisdom if you are consecrated to Him and keep humble. Let none through slothfulness refuse to work; and let none rush ahead, urging his service when it is not wanted.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Titles and Praise Irrelevant to Servant Leaders.*

The lesson is one needed by many. Talent is too much idolized, and station too much coveted. There are too many who will do nothing unless they are recognized as leaders; too many who must receive praise, or they have no interest to labor. What we need to learn is faithfulness in making the utmost use of the powers and opportunities we have, and contentment in the lot to which Heaven assigns us.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Recognize Truth Regardless of the Instrument.*

The rebuke of the Lord will rest upon those who would bar the way, that clearer light shall not come to the people. A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of more light, that they may unite with the messengers whom He sends to accomplish the work that He designs shall be done. The Lord has raised up messengers, and endued them with His Spirit, and has said, "Cry aloud, spare not,

¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:276.

² *Sabbath School Work*, 70.

³ *Education*, 117.

lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" [Isaiah 58:1]. Let no one run the risk of interposing between the people and the message of Heaven. This message will go to the people; and if there were no voice among men to give it, the very stones would cry out.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Seeking God in Humility Proscribes Competing for Position.*

I call upon every minister to seek the Lord, to put away pride and strife for supremacy, and to humble the heart before God. It is the coldness of heart, the unbelief of those who ought to have faith, that keeps the churches in feebleness.² So long as he remains consecrated, the man whom God has endowed with discernment and ability will not manifest an eagerness for high position, neither will he seek to rule or control. Of necessity men must bear responsibilities; but instead of striving for the supremacy, he who is a true leader will pray for an understanding heart, to discern between good and evil.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Are Not Deterred by Prejudice or Difficulty.*

Tact and ingenuity will be required. It is necessary to be constantly on the alert to meet prejudice and to overcome difficulties. Unless this attitude is taken, there will be, not peace, but a sword, in our institutions. The workers are constantly brought in contact with others who also carry heavy burdens; and all need divine enlightenment. They need to manifest the unselfish, loving spirit of Christ. They will be tried. Their faith and love, patience and constancy, will be proved; but God is their Helper.⁴

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Do Not Flaunt Their Humility.*

I saw that God wants you to turn your attention to yourselves. Try your motives. You are deceived in regard to yourselves. You have an appearance of humility, and this has influence with others, and leads them to think that you are far advanced in the Christian life; but when your peculiar notions are touched, self rises at once, and you

¹*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 304.

²*Ibid.*

³*Prophets and Kings*, 31.

⁴*Manuscript 162*, 1897, "How to Conduct Sanitariums," 1897, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

manifest a willful, stubborn spirit. This is a sure evidence that you do not possess true humility.¹

I saw that you² had mistaken notions about afflicting your bodies, depriving yourselves of nourishing food. These things lead some of the church to think that God is surely with you, or you would not deny self, and sacrifice thus. But I saw that none of these things will make you more holy. The heathen do all this, but receive no reward for it. A broken and contrite spirit before God is in His sight of great price. I saw that your views concerning these things are erroneous, and that you are looking at the church and watching them, noticing little things, when your attention should be turned to your own soul's interest. God has not laid the burden of His flock upon you. You think that the church is upon the background, because they cannot see things as you do, and because they do not follow the same rigid course which you think you are required to pursue. I saw that you are deceived in regard to your own duty and the duty of others. Some have gone to extremes in regard to diet. They have taken a rigid course, and lived so very plain God has been weakened.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders are Self-Sacrificing and Diligent.*

Your soul is not sanctified to the work. You do not take the burden of the work upon you. You choose an easier lot than that which is appointed to the minister of Christ. He counted not His life dear unto Himself. He pleased not Himself, but lived for others' good. He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. It is not enough to be able to present the arguments of our position before the people. The minister of Christ must possess an undying love for souls, a spirit of self-denial, of self-sacrifice. He should be willing to give his life, if need be, to the work of saving his fellow men, for whom Christ died.

You need a conversion to the work of God. You need wisdom and judgment to apply yourself to the work and direct your labor. Your labors are not required among the churches. You should go out in new places and prove your work. Go with a spirit to labor to convert souls to the truth. If you feel the worth of souls, the least indication for good will rejoice your heart, and you will persevere, although there may be labor and weariness in the effort. After you have once agitated the subject of truth, do not leave that place if there is the least indication for good. Do you expect a harvest without labor? Do you expect that Satan will readily allow his subjects to pass from his ranks to the ranks of Christ? He will make every effort to keep them bound in

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:204.

²This testimony is addressed to a couple who were highly critical of leadership at Battle Creek. Apparently these individuals acted pious and humble, but when their opinion was crossed, they stubbornly demanded their own way. Some of the members thought that because they were self-denying in appetite, they must be far advanced in the Christian life, but Ellen White saw their true condition.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:205.

fetters of darkness under his black banner. Can you expect to be victorious in winning souls to Christ without earnest effort, when you have such a foe to face and battle?¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Compassionately Nurture and Empower an Inclusive Church.*

Men and women are wanted at the heart of the work who will be nursing fathers and mothers in Israel, who will have hearts that can take in more than merely me and mine. They should have hearts that will glow with love for the dear youth, whether they are members of their own families or children of their neighbors. They are members of God's great family, for whom Christ had so great an interest that He made every sacrifice that it was possible for Him to make to save them. He left His glory, His majesty, His kingly throne and robes of royalty, and became poor, that through His poverty the children of men might be made rich. He finally poured out His soul unto death that He might save the race from hopeless misery. This is the example of disinterested benevolence that Christ has given us to pattern after.²

Why are believers formed into a church? Because by this means Christ would increase their usefulness in the world and strengthen their personal influence for good. In the church there is to be maintained a discipline which guards the rights of all and increases the sense of mutual dependence. God never designed that one man's mind and judgment should be a controlling power. He never designed that one man should rule and plan and devise without the careful and prayerful consideration of the whole body, in order that all may move in a sound, thorough, harmonious manner.³

In the special providence of God many youth and also those of mature age have been thrown into the arms of the Battle Creek church for them to bless with the great light God has given them, and that, through their disinterested efforts, they might have the precious privilege of bringing them to Christ and to the truth. Christ commissions His angels to minister unto those who are brought under the influence of the truth, to soften their hearts and make them susceptible of the influences of His truth. While God and His angels are doing their work, those who profess to be followers of Christ seem to be coolly indifferent. They do not work in unison with Christ and holy angels. Although they profess to be servants of God they are serving their own interest and loving their own pleasure, and souls are perishing around them. These souls can truly say: "No man careth for my soul." The church have neglected to improve the privileges and blessings within their reach, and through their neglect of duty have lost golden opportunities of winning souls to Christ.⁴

¹Ibid., 2:151.

²Ibid., 3:198.

³*Selected Messages*, 3:16.

⁴*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:198.

The feeble hands are not to be deterred from doing something for the Master. Those whose knees are weak are not to be caused to stumble. God desires us to encourage those whose hands are weak, to grasp more firmly the hand of Christ, and to work hopefully. Every hand should be outstretched to help the hand that is doing something for the Master. The time may come when the hands that have upheld the feeble hands of another may, in turn, be upheld by the hands to whom they ministered. God has so ordered matters that no man is absolutely independent of his fellowmen.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Plan and Counsel with Others.*

Men whom the Lord calls to important positions in His work are to cultivate a humble dependence upon Him. They are not to seek to embrace too much authority; for God has not called them to a work of ruling, but to plan and counsel with their fellow laborers. Every worker alike is to hold himself amenable to the requirements and instructions of God.²

In our several callings there is to be a mutual dependence on one another for assistance. A spirit of authority is not to be exercised, even by the president of a conference; for position does not change a man into a creature that cannot err. Every laborer entrusted with the management of a conference is to work as Christ worked, wearing His yoke and learning of Him His meekness and lowliness. A conference president's spirit and demeanor in word and in deed reveal whether he realizes his weakness and places his dependence on God, or whether he thinks that his position of influence has given him superior wisdom. If he loves and fears God, if he realizes the value of souls, if he appreciates every jot of the help that the Lord has qualified a brother worker to render, he will be able to bind heart to heart by the love that Christ revealed during His ministry. He will speak words of comfort to the sick and the sorrowing.

If he does not cultivate a masterly manner, but bears in mind always that One is his Master, even Christ, he can counsel the inexperienced, encouraging them to be God's helping hand.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Never Rule.*

It is time now for men to humble their hearts before God and to learn to work in His ways. Let those who have sought to rule their fellow workers study to know what manner of spirit they are of. They should seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, and in humility of soul.

¹*Testimonies to Ministers*, 496.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:270.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 496.

Christ in His earthly life gave an example that all can safely follow. He appreciates His flock, and He wants no power set over them that will restrict their freedom in His service. He has never placed man as a ruler over His heritage. True Bible religion will lead to self-control, not to control of one another. As a people we need a larger measure of the Holy Spirit, that we may bear the solemn message that God has given us, without exaltation.¹

If he does not cultivate a masterly manner, but bears in mind always that One is his Master, even Christ, he can counsel the inexperienced, encouraging them to be God's helping hand.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Servant Leaders Trust in God, Not in Position.*

The question which each should ask himself in all humility is: "Am I qualified for this position? Have I learned to keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment?" The Saviour's earthly example has been given us that we should not walk in our own strength, but that each should consider himself, as Solomon expressed it, "a little child."³

By the cords of tender love and sympathy the Lord linked all men to Himself. Of us He says, Ye 'are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.' This relationship we should recognize. If we are bound up with Christ, we shall constantly manifest Christlike sympathy and forbearance toward those who are striving with all their God-given ability to bear their burdens, even as we endeavor to bear our appointed burdens.⁴

Abuse of Authority

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *God Is Not Honored by Arbitrary Displays of Authority.*

Sometimes a man who has been placed in responsibility as a leader gains the idea that he is in a position of supreme authority, and that all his brethren, before making advance moves, must first come to him for permission to do that which they feel should be done. Such a man is in a dangerous position. He has lost sight of the work of a true leader among God's people. Instead of acting as a wise counselor, he assumes the prerogatives of an exacting ruler. God is dishonored by every such display of authority and self-exaltation. No man standing in his own strength is ever

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:275.

²*Testimonies to Ministers*, 496.

³*Ibid.*, 283.

⁴*Ibid.*, 495.

to be mind and judgment for another man whom the Lord is using in His work. No one is to lay down man-made rules and regulations to govern arbitrarily his fellow laborers who have a living experience in the truth.¹

Those who accept a position of responsibility in the cause of God should always remember that with the call to this work God has also called them to walk circumspectly before Him and before their fellow men. Instead of considering it their duty to order and dictate and command, they should realize that they are to be learners themselves. When a responsible worker fails to learn this lesson, the sooner he is released from his responsibilities the better it will be for him and for the work of God. Position never will give holiness and excellence of character. He who honors God and keeps His commandments is himself honored.²

But this does not authorize any one man to undertake the work of ordering his brethren arbitrarily to do as he thinks advisable, irrespective of their own personal convictions of duty. Nor are God's chosen laborers to feel that at every step they must wait to ask some officer in authority whether they may do this or that. While cooperating heartily with their brethren in carrying out general plans that have been laid for the prosecution of the work, they are constantly to look to the God of Israel for personal guidance.³

God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men.⁴

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Domination and Control Indicate Abuse of Authority.*

God calls upon those who have exercised undue authority to take off from His workers every dominating hand. Let everyone to whom has been entrusted sacred responsibilities seek to understand his individual duty before God, and do that duty humbly and faithfully. Let no one regard himself as a master, with controlling power to exercise over his brethren. The principles of the word of God are to be taught and practiced.⁵

No man is a proper judge of another man's duty. Man is responsible to God; and as finite, erring men take into their hands the jurisdiction of their fellowmen, as if the

¹Ibid., 491.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:283.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 491.

⁴Ibid, 8:236.

⁵*Testimonies to Ministers*, 492.

Lord commissioned them to lift up and cast down, all heaven is filled with indignation. There are strange principles being established in regard to the control of the minds and works of men, by human judges, as though these finite men were gods.¹

In the experience of God's people there have been yokes that God never ordained, yokes that have greatly marred the experience and have offended the Lord God of Israel. Because a man carries responsibilities in the church, he is not given liberty to rule the mind and judgment of others with whom the Lord is working. The Lord wants every soul in His service to understand what is the kind of work required of him.²

Organizations, institutions, unless kept by the power of God, will work under Satan's dictation to bring men under the control of men; and fraud and guile will bear the semblance of zeal for truth, and for the advancement of the kingdom of God.³

The Lord has not placed any one of His human agencies under the dictation and control of those who are themselves but erring mortals. He has not placed upon men the power to say, You shall do this, and you shall not do that.⁴

Has not our past experience in these things been sufficient? Will we ever learn the lessons which God designs we shall learn? Will we ever realize that the consciences of men are not given into our command?⁵

Let no plans or methods be adopted in any of our institutions that will bind mind or talent under the control of human judgment; for this is not in God's order. God has given to men talents of influence which belong to Him alone, and no greater dishonor can be done to God than for one finite agent to bring other men's talents under his absolute control, even though the benefits of the same be used to the advantage of the cause. In such arrangements one man's mind is ruled by another man's mind, and the human agency is separated from God and exposed to temptation. Satan's methods tend to one end—to make men the slaves of men. And when this is done, confusion and distrust, jealousies and evil surmisings, are the result. Such a course destroys faith in God and in the principles which are to control, to purge from guile and every species of selfishness and hypocrisy.⁶

¹Ibid., 493, 494.

²*Upward Look*, 56.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 366.

⁴Ibid., 493.

⁵Ibid., 295.

⁶Ibid., 360, 361.

But these men who presume to judge others should take a little broader view and say, Suppose the statements of others do not agree with our ideas; shall we for this pronounce them heresy? Shall we, uninspired men, take the responsibility of placing our stakes, and saying, This shall not appear in print?¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Leaders Are Not to Exploit Others.*

The great and holy and merciful God will never be in league with dishonest practices; not a single touch of injustice will He vindicate. Men have taken unfair advantage of those whom they supposed to be under their jurisdiction. They were determined to bring the individuals to their terms; they would rule or ruin. There will be no material change until a decided movement is made to bring in a different order of things.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Diversity of Thought Essential on Committees.*

No confederacy should be formed with unbelievers, neither should you call together a certain chosen number who think as you do, and who will say Amen to all that you propose, while others are excluded, who you think will not be in harmony. I was shown that there was great danger of doing this.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Leaders Treat Others with Respect.*

It does not please God to have His servants censure, criticize, and condemn one another. He has given them a special work, that of standing in defense of the truth. They are His workmen; all should respect them, and they should respect one another.

In the army, officers are required to respect their fellow officers, and the privates soon learn the lesson. When the leaders of the people in Christian warfare are kind and forbearing, and manifest a special love and regard for their colaborers, they teach others to do the same.⁴

If he does not cultivate a masterly manner, but bears in mind always that One is his Master, even Christ, he can counsel the inexperienced, encouraging them to be God's helping hand.⁵

¹Ibid., 294, 295

²Ibid., 360.

³*Life Sketches*, 321.

⁴*Lift Him Up* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988), 225.

⁵*Christian Leadership*, 28.

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Disperse Control, Responsibility, and Authority.*

The mind of one man, or the minds of two or three men, are not to be depended on as certain to be safe for all to follow. Let all look to God, trust in Him, and believe fully in His power. Yoke up with Christ and not with men, for men have no power to keep you from falling.¹

When this power which God has placed in the church is accredited to one man, and he is invested with the authority to be judgment for other minds, then the true Bible order is changed. Satan's efforts upon such a man's mind will be most subtle and sometimes overpowering, because through this mind he thinks he can affect many others. Your position on leadership is correct, if you give to the highest organized authority in the church what you have given to one man. God never designed that His work should bear the stamp of one man's mind and one man's judgment.²

The Lord saw the danger that would result from one man's mind and judgment controlling decisions and working out plans, and in His Inspired Word we are commanded to be subject one to another and to esteem others better than ourselves. When plans are to be laid that will affect the cause of God, they should be brought before a council composed of chosen men of experience; for harmony of effort is essential in all these enterprises.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Organizing Voting Blocs Is an Abuse of Power.*

We were not to be under the control of men who could not control themselves and who were not willing to be amenable to God. We were not to be guided by men who wanted their word to be the controlling power. The development of the desire to control has been very marked, and God sent warning after warning, forbidding confederacies and consolidation. He warned us against binding ourselves to fulfill certain agreements that would be presented by men laboring to control the movements of their brethren.⁴

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Compassion Is Better Than Rigid Control.*

We must bear with one another, remembering our failings. With some have compassion, making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire. All cannot bear the same rigid discipline. All cannot be brought up to just another's

¹*Mind, Character, and Personality*, 2 vols. (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), 1:263.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:493.

³*Ibid.*, 5:418.

⁴*Ibid.*, 8:217.

ideas of duty. Allowance must be made for different temperaments and different minds. God knows how to deal with us. But my heart has been sick as I have seen brother deal with brother and the disposition to catch another in his words and to make a man an offender for a word. . . .¹

You seemed to be the controlling power. I saw that the impression made by your course on the minds of those who were settling their bills was unfavorable to the institution. I heard some of your brethren pleading with you, telling you that your course was unwise and unjust, but you were as firm as a rock in your adherence to your course. You claimed that in what you were doing, you were working for the good of the institution. But I saw persons go from ----- anything but satisfied.²

The Lord will not accept the work of any man that is not done in tenderness and love and kindness. He has not set us as rulers, to lord it over His heritage. Let others be moved by Christ, just as we desire to be moved by Him.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Pull the Weeds from Your Own Heart's Garden.*

It is time for all to take hold of the work, not stop to measure off just the share of wrong belonging to another, but each search his own heart, confess his own wrongs, and leave his brethren with the Lord. One has only to answer for his or her wrongs; and while so narrowly watching to pull the weeds from the garden of his brethren, the poisonous weeds are growing strong and rank in his own. Let each labor to keep his own soul and to possess a happy, cheerful, forbearing spirit at home, and all will be well.⁴

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *A Dictator Style of Leadership Detracts from the Glory Due God.*

When men educate others to rely on them and trust in them, when, by pen or voice, they dictate to others as to what they should do, they are teaching others to make flesh their arm, to give glory to human beings rather than to God.⁵

If they still persist in clinging to their own opinions, they will find that God will not sustain their action. Do they take the position that all they advance is infallible? that there is not a shadow of an error or mistake in their productions? Cannot other men

¹*Mind, Character, and Personality*, 2:632.

²*Selected Messages*, 3:44.

³*Upward Look*, 267.

⁴Letter to Friends at Hanover, Battle Creek, Michigan, 18 February 1863, Letter 12, 1863, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁵*Testimonies for the Church*, 8:145.

who give just as much evidence that they are led and taught of God catch at an expression in their work which they do not entertain as their views in every particular, and command them to cut it out?¹

Organizations, institutions, unless kept by the power of God, will work under Satan's dictation to bring men under the control of men; and fraud and guile will bear the semblance of zeal for truth, and for the advancement of the kingdom of God. . . .²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Anger and Impatience Not Fruits of the Spirit.*

Intimate connections between imperfect, defective characters may often, as a result, do great harm to both persons, for Satan has more influence upon their minds than the Spirit of Jesus. They do not consider each other under a true and impartial light, but under the most unfavorable light possible. By trying to correct evil in a hasty, cross spirit, two evils will be created instead of correcting one. Mutual support is essential. It is the fruit of the Spirit which grows upon the Christian tree.³

Moses Versus Aaron Model

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Support Leaders Who Must Carry Extra Responsibilities.*

I saw that there has been a watching to see if there was not a failure in the management of the work, and if it does not come out as expected, some take advantage of it and make as much of it as possible. God has been displeased with these things.

I was pointed back to Moses and saw where God placed him. He occupied a prominent position. Aaron and Miriam murmured against Moses and talked with each other upon the matter. They were jealous of Moses, thought he took too much upon himself. God's anger was kindled against them. I saw that God was displeased with those who do not take the burden themselves and then stand ready to murmur at the one upon whom He lays the heavy burden. I saw that if others would come up and bear the burden he [James] has borne for years, and venture all—life, health, strength, time, everything—to push this work ahead, trusting alone to the success of this message, then God would release him from heavy responsibilities and burdens. But as yet God has made him His agent to stir up to zealous action, and I saw that His blessing has rested upon every essential move that has been made to advance His

¹*Testimonies to Ministers*, 295.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 7:180.

³*Upward Look*, 59.

work, and steadily has the work progressed and one difficulty after another has been surmounted. It is because God's hand was in the work.

I saw that it is easier for those who look on to complain and find fault than to suggest and lead in a better course. It is very easy and cheap to suggest doubts and fears, but it is not so readily undertaken to tell what shall be done.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Crises Demand Firmness, Decision, and Unflinching Courage.*

In the absence of Moses, the judicial authority had been delegated to Aaron, and a vast crowd gathered about his tent, with the demand, "Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. . . ."

Such a crisis demanded a man of firmness, decision, and unflinching courage; one who held the honor of God above popular favor, personal safety, or life itself. But the present leader of Israel was not of this character. Aaron feebly remonstrated with the people, but his wavering and timidity at the critical moment only rendered them the more determined. The tumult increased.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Never Compromise for Popularity or Personal Security.*

Aaron feared for his own safety; and instead of nobly standing up for the honor of God, he yielded to the demands of the multitude. His first act was to direct that the golden earrings be collected from all the people and brought to him, hoping that pride would lead them to refuse such a sacrifice. But they willingly yielded up their ornaments; and from these he made a molten calf, in imitation of the gods of Egypt. The people proclaimed, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And Aaron basely permitted this insult to Jehovah. He did more. Seeing with what satisfaction the golden god was received, he built an altar before it, and made proclamation, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord." The announcement was heralded by trumpeters from company to company throughout the camp. "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play." Under the pretense of holding "a feast to the Lord," they gave themselves up to gluttony and licentious reveling.

¹Letter to Brother John Byington, Battle Creek, Michigan, circa 1859, Letter 28, 1859, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 316, 317.

How often, in our own day, is the love of pleasure disguised by a “form of godliness”? A religion that permits men, while observing the rites of worship, to devote themselves to selfish or sensual gratification, is as pleasing to the multitudes now as in the days of Israel. And there are still pliant Aarons, who, while holding positions of authority in the church, will yield to the desires of the unconsecrated, and thus encourage them in sin.¹

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Selfless Caring for Others Paramount.*

As Moses interceded for Israel, his timidity was lost in his deep interest and love for those for whom he had, in the hands of God, been the means of doing so much. The Lord listened to his pleadings, and granted his unselfish prayer. God had proved His servant; He had tested his faithfulness and his love for that erring, ungrateful people, and nobly had Moses endured the trial. His interest in Israel sprang from no selfish motive. The prosperity of God's chosen people was dearer to him than personal honor, dearer than the privilege of becoming the father of a mighty nation. God was pleased with his faithfulness, his simplicity of heart, and his integrity, and He committed to him, as a faithful shepherd, the great charge of leading Israel to the Promised Land.²

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Those Called to High Positions Hold Greater Responsibility to be Persons of Integrity.*

The fact that Aaron had been blessed and honored so far above the people was what made his sin so heinous. It was Aaron “the saint of the Lord” (Psalm 106:16), that had made the idol and announced the feast. It was he who had been appointed as spokesman for Moses, and concerning whom God Himself had testified, “I know that he can speak well” (Exodus 4:14), that had failed to check the idolaters in their heaven-daring purpose.³

He by whom God had wrought in bringing judgments both upon the Egyptians and upon their gods, had heard unmoved the proclamation before the molten image, “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” It was he who had been with Moses on the mount, and had there beheld the glory of the Lord, who had seen that in the manifestation of that glory there was nothing of which an image could be made—it was he who had changed that glory into the similitude of an ox. He to whom God had committed the government of the people in the absence of Moses, was found sanctioning their rebellion. “The Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him” (Deuteronomy 9:20). But in answer to the earnest

¹Ibid., 317.

²Ibid., 319.

³Ibid., 320.

intercession of Moses, his life was spared; and in penitence and humiliation for his great sin, he was restored to the favor of God.

If Aaron had had courage to stand for the right, irrespective of consequences, he could have prevented that apostasy. If he had unswervingly maintained his own allegiance to God, if he had cited the people to the perils of Sinai, and had reminded them of their solemn covenant with God to obey His law, the evil would have been checked. But his compliance with the desires of the people and the calm assurance with which he proceeded to carry out their plans, emboldened them to go to greater lengths in sin than had before entered their minds.¹

It is not a mean, penurious spirit that would lead the proper officers to reprove existing wrongs and require from all the workers justice, economy, and self-denial. It is no coming down from proper dignity to guard the interests of our institutions in these matters. Those who are faithful themselves, naturally look for faithfulness in others. Strict integrity should govern the dealings of the managers and should be enforced upon all who labor under their direction.²

Men of principle need not the restriction of locks and keys; they do not need to be watched and guarded. They will deal truly and honorably at all times, alone, with no eye upon them, as well as in public. They will not bring a stain upon their souls for any amount of gain or selfish advantage. They scorn a mean act. Although no one else might know it, they would know it themselves, and this would destroy their self-respect. Those who are not conscientious and faithful in little things would not be reformed were there laws and restrictions and penalties upon the point.³

Ellen White Leadership Principle: *Smooth, Gentle Speech and Dignified Demeanor Not Always Divine Attributes.*

When Moses, on returning to the camp, confronted the rebels, his severe rebukes and the indignation he displayed in breaking the sacred tables of the law were contrasted by the people with his brother's pleasant speech and dignified demeanor, and their sympathies were with Aaron. To justify himself, Aaron endeavored to make the people responsible for his weakness in yielding to their demand; but notwithstanding this, they were filled with admiration of his gentleness and patience. But God seeth not as man sees. Aaron's yielding spirit and his desire to please had blinded his eyes to the enormity of the crime he was sanctioning. His course in giving his influence to sin in Israel cost the life of thousands. In what contrast with this was the course of

¹Ibid., 323.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 4:573.

³Ibid., 4:573, 574.

Moses, who, while faithfully executing God's judgments, showed that the welfare of Israel was dearer to him than prosperity or honor or life.¹

Of all the sins that God will punish, none are more grievous in His sight than those that encourage others to do evil. God would have His servants prove their loyalty by faithfully rebuking transgression, however painful the act may be. Those who are honored with a divine commission are not to be weak, pliant time-servers. They are not to aim at self-exaltation, or to shun disagreeable duties, but to perform God's work with unswerving fidelity.²

Aaron was a man of amiable disposition, whom God selected to stand with Moses and speak for him; in short, to be mouthpiece for Moses. God might have chosen Aaron as leader; but He who is acquainted with hearts, who understands character, knew that Aaron was yielding and lacked moral courage to stand in defense of the right under all circumstances, irrespective of consequences. Aaron's desire to have the good will of the people sometimes led him to commit great wrongs. He too frequently yielded to their entreaties, and in so doing dishonored God.³

Ellen White's Experiential Demonstration of Her Leadership Principles and Theory

In her seventy years of public ministry, Ellen White often illustrated her own principles on leadership and authority. She herself exemplified servant leadership qualities by engaging in service, including menial tasks, in her family, in the church, and for the communities in which she lived. Even when ill and nearly exhausted, she preached and met speaking appointments near and far. Though not afraid to take a public stand on a definitive side of a controversial issue, I do not find evidence of her domineering insistence to "have her own way." She built no memorials to herself, nor

¹*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 323.

²*Ibid.*, 323, 324.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:293, 294.

was she ever known to have deflected credit from God to herself for her remarkable achievements.¹

In one instance, Ellen returned from a packed schedule in Michigan to her home in New York, hoping for some rest, but instead found a house full of company. The guests remained in her home during the ensuing conference of early Adventist believers. Adding to the workload, some of the household were ill. Ellen describes her participation in alleviating the needs: "The conference brought so much labor upon the family they had all they could do, and I was obliged to keep on my feet day after day to wait upon the sick until my feet at night would be blistered, and it was impossible for me to rest I was so exhausted."²

In 1879, Ellen White joined her husband, James, on what turned out to be a somewhat unsuccessful mule and horse pack trip from Texas to Kansas. In a letter to her daughter-in-law, Mary White, Ellen tells of her activities during the journey:

I am fearfully worn. . . . I have been sick the entire journey. Lost twelve pounds. No rest, not a bit of it for poor Marian, and we have worked like slaves. We cooked repeatedly half the night. . . . I have spoken every Sabbath to our camp, because no one else seemed to feel the burden, and every Sabbath evening or Sunday in towns and villages. I am worn and feel as though I were about one hundred years old. . . . I have not had even time to keep a diary or write a letter. Unpack, and pack, hurry, cook, set table, have been the order of the day.³

Several weeks later, at the Minnesota camp meeting, Ellen White, though frail and ill, spoke to the congregation twice a day for several days. In a letter to her son

¹A. G. Daniells, *Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Mountainville, CA: Pacific Press, 1936), 368.

²[Letter to Brother and Sister John Loughborough, circa September 7, 1853] *Manuscript Releases*, 7:259.

³Letter to Mary White, Emporia, Kansas, 20 May 1879, Letter 20, 1879, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

Edson, she wrote that she thought her work at the camp meeting was finished at the conclusion of the Sunday meeting, where she had preached for one and a half hours. However, the next morning, she was urged to preach on health reform. Following that sermon, she was about to sit down when Elder Butler asked her to continue speaking about education. She obliged, and spoke another hour. But when she sat down again, Elder Butler asked her to continue with an altar call! She wrote, "I arose again and spoke one hour more upon Noah's time and ours. My voice grew clearer and more free. We called the people forward and had a most wonderful meeting, the best of the series. I then engaged in earnest prayer for the backsliders and sinners. God gave me great power in prayer. I fastened my faith upon the promises of God and would not let go. Peace, consolation, and strength came to me, and I was very happy in the Lord."¹

In an act of service and love, Ellen White cut back on her cherished writing projects in order to keep her husband James company for a time during his protracted debilitation in the last several years of his life.²

Sometimes, particularly in his last years, she wrote words of counsel to her own husband to try to curb his authoritarian leadership, an often abrasive style exacerbated by James' series of strokes. Once she cautioned him, "One man's mind and one man's judgment must not mould the cause of God, for his peculiar, personal feelings may come

¹Letter to Edson White, Camp ground, Dunlap, Iowa, 1 July 1879, Letter 22, 1879, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²Letter to Ellen's Children, Oakland, California, 16 October 1877, Letter 25, 1877, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC; Letter to Willie and Mary White, Healdsburg, California, 22 January 1878, Letter 4d, 1878, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

in to be expressed in various ways and may injure greatly the cause of God.”¹ Writing further to her husband, she said, “It would be hard for you to cease being general; nevertheless, you must begin to accustom yourself to this position for your own good spiritually and for the good of the cause of God.”²

Yet, in another letter to her husband, Ellen White acknowledged her own struggle with temptation to harbor hard feelings toward her fellow workers, and her desire to emulate more the Servant leadership of Jesus:

I feel so grateful that the Lord is of tender pity, full of mercy. He deals not with us according to our sins, but is long suffering. He sees our weakness. He knows our defects, our lack of faith and courage, and yet He bears with us still. The same divine sympathy, the same patient love, He shows to us who are so unworthy of His favors. I am not what I ought to be, or what Jesus would have me. I see that I must have more of the spirit of the Master.

I must not let one thought or one feelings arise in my heart against my brethren, for they may be in the sight of God more righteous than I. My feelings must not be stirred. We have battles to fight with ourselves, but we should continually encourage our brethren. We should lay no stumbling blocks in their way and should cherish only the very kindest feelings toward them. Satan is willing and anxious to tear them down. Let us not unite our forces with his. They have their conflicts and trials. God forbid that we should add one trial to those they have to bear. . .

Now, dear husband, I would not harbor feelings that this one is injuring me and that one is hurting me. Have confidence in your brethren, and do not censure them in thought, by pen, or by word. Let the softening, subduing influence of the Spirit of God into the heart. We have no time or power to spend in justifying ourselves. We must hide self in Jesus.

Oh, I long for constant repose in God and not to have my mind in agitation in regard to minor matters. I constantly feel that my work upon the earth may not last long, and while it does last I want my thoughts and mind engaged in doing all I can to save perishing souls around me. I can not and will not allow my mind to think unkindly of and misjudge my fellow-laborers.

I will write out the testimonies of reproof for anyone and then my feelings shall not be exercised against them. I will look within. I will seek to make my ways in the strength of Jesus perfect before God. And when tempted to feel unkindly or to be

¹Letter to James White, Oakland, California, Circa 25 March 1880, Letter 49, 1880, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²Letter to James White, Circa July 1880, Letter 53, 1880, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

suspicious and to find fault, I will put this out of my heart quickly, for the soul temple is surely being desecrated and defiled by Satan. The love that Jesus possessed, it is the duty of us both to welcome and cherish, and to have that charity that thinketh no evil; then our influence will be fragrant as sweet perfume. . .

I have been shown that unless we make most diligent work in purifying our own souls from all unkindness and bitterness, these traits will reveal themselves at times before we are aware of it, to do great harm to the cause we love. . . . I was shown that it rests wholly with us whether we leave an influence behind us that is subduing, transforming and elevating—or to the contrary—whether we shall wound, injure, be dictatorial, overbearing, censuring, exalting and magnifying ourselves, and it be a relief to many who love and fear God when our voice shall be silent in the grave, our influence no longer felt.

I feel deeply, feel that we have erred in not manifesting greater love, forbearance, and pity for others. “The diseased have ye not strengthened” (Eze 34:4), is the reproof given to unfaithful shepherds. Our feelings must not be a ruling power. We must walk in all humility of mind. The Lord loves His servants who are unselfishly engaged in the saving of souls. He will as readily guide them in judgment and teach them His will as He will teach us. We must believe that Jesus stands at the helm. He will be Captain, and we may trust His own work in His all-powerful hands.

I know that God has conscientious, God-fearing men in the harvest field who will not spare themselves, who will, if required, sacrifice all for Jesus. Let us respect our brethren, give them credit for honesty of purpose and unselfish motives, as we wish they should do for us. We should treat all, rich and poor, high or lowly, exactly as we wish them to treat us. God is no respecter of persons. The pure, those who are good and do good, are very near to Jesus. The disciple whom Jesus loved most was John, because he was the closest imitator of His character and was imbued with the spirit of love.

It was the joy of Christ's soul to do good to men. Many times He sighed in spirit and was very sorrowful. Many times His tears flowed, expressing His anguish of soul when He beheld the unbelief, the ingratitude, and felt the hatred of those He came to bless and save. . . . Let us, dear husband, make melody to God in our hearts. Let us not be found accusers of our brethren, for this is the work Satan is engaged in. Let us talk of Jesus and His matchless love. I feel every day like deeply repenting before God for my hardness of heart, and because my life has not been more in accordance with the life of Christ. I weep over my own hardness of heart, my life which has not been a correct example to others. Let us bring ourselves into harmony with heaven and we will then be in harmony with our brethren and at peace among ourselves. Let us now, both of us, redeem the time. . .

In love,
Your Ellen¹

¹Letter to James White, Oakland, California, 18 March 1880, Letter 5, 1880, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

Ellen White was careful not to misuse the authority she claimed as God's messenger¹ by insisting on her own preferences when there was no clear word from God. For instance, though anxious and disturbed by the invitation of the Foreign Mission Board to go to Australia,² she nonetheless eventually accepted that call to overseas service. Rather than insist on her own way, she chose the practice of deferring to the requests of the General Conference when there was no special message from God to the contrary.³

Yet, she felt strong personal feelings of opposition against administrators who abused their authority by ordering, dictating, and lording over men's minds and talents, even going so far as to state she had no respect for their wisdom or even faith in their Christianity.⁴

Ellen White often exhibited firmness and decisiveness in times of church crises. I did not find evidence that she compromised the convictions she felt had been impressed on her mind by God in order to achieve popularity or personal favor, even if expressing her convictions meant potential alienation with life-long friends. Her style of leadership was more similar to Moses' unflinching courage than to Aaron's vacillating and facilitating character.

¹*Selected Messages*, 1:34.

²[Perplexity over proposed trip to Australia], *Manuscript Releases*, 18:155.

³Letter to Brother and Sister (J. H.) Kellogg, North Fitzroy, Australia, 5 July 1892, Letter 18a, 1892, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁴Letter to J. E. and Emma White, "Sunnyside," Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, 5 July 1896, Letter 152, 1896, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

These “Moses” attributes are illustrated in her correspondence with Uriah Smith in 1882 regarding Battle Creek College. In Ellen White’s view, Battle Creek College had largely lost the purpose for which it was established, and had evolved into an educational institution too similar to public institutions of learning. She was grieved that not only had the college’s social standards eroded, there also was not an adequate ministerial course, and certainly not a Bible-centered curriculum. Ellen White was particularly indignant that Professor G. H. Bell had been vilified by parents, students, and church leaders as being too strict, impatient, and exacting in his academic expectations of the students. Though Professor Bell had for a time been a highly respected educator, the tide of popularity had turned toward a more permissive teacher. Hearings had been set up in which the students were invited to rehearse their grievances against Professor Bell. In Ellen White’s view, Professor Bell was unfairly accused, his many excellent teaching qualifications and years of faithful service overlooked. She felt that the newcomer, Professor McLearn, had brought peace to the college because he and others of a similar mindset had simply allowed the students to have their own way.

In a missive of some fifty pages¹ to Uriah Smith (which Ellen White asked to have him read publicly to the Battle Creek church congregation), Ellen White told Smith, the *Review and Herald* editor, long time church administrator, and personal friend, that he was in need of conversion, humility, and repentance, and that his lack of support for Professor Bell was unjustifiable and un-Christian.

¹The original hand-written letter is not extant. The typewritten pages are roughly equivalent to fifty hand-written pages based on Ellen White’s typical handwriting.

She wrote, "I am not surprised that such a state of things should exist in Battle Creek, but I am pained to find you, my much-esteemed brother, involved in this matter, on the wrong side, with those whom I know God is not leading. Some of these persons are honest, but they are deceived. They have received their impressions from another source than the Spirit of God."¹

Ellen White saw the issue as larger than merely what was happening at Battle Creek College. As she continued her testimony, she included the church where many of her friends and even family members attended:

There has come into the church at Battle Creek a spirit that has no part in Christ. It is not a zeal for the truth, not a love for the will of God as revealed in His Word. It is a self-righteous spirit. It leads you to exalt self above Jesus and to regard your own opinions and ideas as more important than union with Christ and union with one another. You are sadly lacking in brotherly love. You are a backslidden church. To know the truth, to claim union with Christ, and yet not to bring forth fruit, not to live in the exercise of constant faith--this hardens the heart in disobedience and self-confidence. Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend on our union with Christ, and the degree of faith we exercise in him. Here is the source of our power in the world.²

Are you in Christ? Not if you do not acknowledge yourselves erring, helpless, condemned sinners. Not if you are exalting and glorifying self. If there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of a compassionate Saviour. Your birth, your reputation, your wealth, your talents, your virtues, your piety, your philanthropy, or anything else in you or connected with you, will not form a bond of union between your soul and Christ. Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail, unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe about Him; you must believe in Him. You must rely wholly upon His saving grace.³

Many of you at Battle Creek are living without prayer, without thoughts of Christ, and without exalting Him before those around you. You have no words to exalt Christ; you do no deeds that honor Him. Many of you are as truly strangers to Christ as though you had never heard His name. You have not the peace of Christ; for you

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 5:45.

²*Ibid.*, 5:48.

³*Ibid.*, 5:48, 49.

have no true ground for peace. You have no communion with God, because you are not united to Christ. Said our Saviour, "No man cometh to the Father but by me." You are not useful in the cause of Christ. "Except ye abide in me," says Jesus, "Ye can do nothing" --nothing in God's sight, nothing that Christ will accept at your hands.¹

You all need the converting power of God. You need to seek Him for yourselves. For your soul's sake, neglect this work no longer. All your trouble grows out of your separation from God. Your disunion and dissension are the fruit of an un-Christian character.²

The fact that most of the General Conference administrators held membership in the Battle Creek church did not prevent Ellen White from delivering a pointed testimony that she felt God had given her to combat the injustice done to Professor Bell, as well as call the church at Adventist headquarters to a state of repentance and conversion.

¹Ibid., 49.

²Ibid., 51.

CHAPTER 6

COUNSELS TO LEADERS ON HUMAN RELATIONS

Although much of Ellen White's existential counsel to leaders is on the need for spiritual commitment, she also has a great deal of practical counsel. Many pastors, administrators, and other leaders are hungering for guidance in the practical arena; indeed, that hunger may drive the popularity of contemporary Christian leadership books.¹

In this chapter, I identify principles from Ellen White's counsels to leaders on human relations, looking first at her writings that focus on race, gender, and age inclusive empowerment of people for evangelism and service. Though some leadership gurus that are familiar to many Christian leaders, (i.e., Greenleaf, Campolo, Blackaby) promote empowerment for service, fewer promote empowerment for evangelism. Although Ray S. Anderson promotes gender empowerment in his book, *The Soul of Ministry*, I found virtually no well-known leadership thought theorist who discusses race or age inclusive empowerment for evangelism and service.

Into this vacuum steps Ellen White. In her comments about race empowerment in *The Southern Work*, I see synchronism with Leslie Pollard, who believes that the Christocentric life differs from ethnocentric and ethnorelativistic life chiefly because it

¹Laura Wibberding, personal email, (23 July 2004).

assumes the fallen condition of every group, clan, tribe, and race. The new community, organized around Christ, results in a radically new way of viewing and serving others.¹ Identity, according to Ellen White, is found in Christ,² who empowers all to evangelism and service.³ In this view, though race and ethnicity may have previously been sources of separation and alienation, for the believer, every aspect of his or her being, including racial and ethnic identity, can be used as a vehicle for God's service.⁴

Ellen White continues her clarion call to inclusiveness and empowerment in this statement:

God can and will use those who have not had a thorough education in the schools of men. A doubt of His power to do this is manifest unbelief; it is limiting the omnipotent power of the One with whom nothing is impossible. Oh, for less of this uncalled-for, distrustful caution! It leaves so many forces of the church unused; it closes up the way so that the Holy Spirit cannot use men; it keeps in idleness those who are willing and anxious to labor in Christ's lines; it discourages from entering the work many who would become efficient laborers together with God if they were given a fair chance.⁵

In the next section of this chapter, I look at a related theme—Ellen White's counsel to leaders concerning mentoring. It has been said that Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric spent 30 percent of his time doing leadership development. Ellen White also saw the need for emerging leaders to interact with veteran leaders. She would doubtless concur fully with Eddie Gibbs when he writes, "Where there is an absence of

¹Pollard, 16, 17.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 6:51.

³Matt 28:19, 20; *Acts of the Apostles*, 110.

⁴Pollard, 21.

⁵*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:259.

training, usually there is a lack of effective evangelistic outreach.”¹ When George Cladis states, “Our continuing education and training must be intentional and must include all people in ministry,”² I hear Ellen White saying, “With such an army of workers as our youth, *rightly trained* (emphasis mine), might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!”³

Just as the Bible contains hundreds of mandates to care for the poor, so does Ellen White repeatedly and decisively call Christians to care for those who have the least in society. In contrast to her counsel to leaders concerning the poor which I examine last in this chapter, where are social activists in leadership literature today, those who combine evangelical piety with progressive social concern with the intensity of Isaac Watts, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, William Law, Hannah More, John Newton, or William Wilberforce? With exceptions such as Tony Campolo⁴ and Adventist writer Dwight Nelson,⁵ I found a paucity of leadership literature on the theme of empowerment for the myriad needs to provide social justice for the marginalized.

Chapter four concludes with illustrations from Ellen White’s own life that demonstrate her counsels to leaders on human relationships, with emphasis on her care for the poor.

¹Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 203.

²Cladis, 151.

³*Education*, 271.

⁴Tony Campolo, *Speaking My Mind* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004).

⁵Nelson.

Empowerment of People for Evangelism and Service

Race Inclusive Empowerment

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Character, Not Race, Determines God's Family.*

When the sinner is converted he receives the Holy Spirit, that makes him a child of God, and fits him for the society of the redeemed and the angelic host. He is made a joint heir with Christ. Whoever of the human family give themselves to Christ, whoever hear the truth and obey it, become children of one family. The ignorant and the wise, the rich and the poor, the heathen and the slave, white or black—Jesus paid the purchase money for their souls. If they believe on Him, His cleansing blood is applied to them. The black man's name is written in the book of life beside the white man's. All are one in Christ. Birth, station, nationality, or color cannot elevate or degrade men. The character makes the man. If a red man, a Chinaman, or an African gives his heart to God, in obedience and faith, Jesus loves him none the less for his color. He calls him his well-beloved brother.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *The Love of Christ Dispels Hereditary and Cultivated Prejudices.*

Men may have both hereditary and cultivated prejudices, but when the love of Jesus fills the heart, and they become one with Christ, they will have the same spirit that He had. If a colored brother sits by their side, they will not be offended or despise him. They are journeying to the same heaven, and will be seated at the same table to eat bread in the kingdom of God. If Jesus is abiding in our hearts we cannot despise the colored man who has the same Saviour abiding in his heart.²

If you find that your former views are not sustained by the Bible, it is for your eternal interest to learn this as soon possible; for when God speaks in His Word, our preconceived opinions must be yielded up and our ideas brought into harmony with a "Thus saith the Lord."³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *God's People Are One Melded Humanity.*

You have no license from God to exclude the colored people from your places of worship. Treat them as Christ's property, which they are, just as much as yourselves.

¹*The Southern Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1901, 1966), 12, 13.

²*Ibid.*, 14.

³"The Bible the Colored People's Hope," *Review and Herald*, 24 December 1895, 817.

They should hold membership in the church with the white brethren. Every effort should be made to wipe out the terrible wrong which has been done them.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Provide Leadership Opportunities to Those Previously Marginalized.*

Many among this race have noble traits of character and keen perception of mind. If they had an opportunity to develop, they would stand upon an equality with the whites.²

As a people we should no longer say by our attitude, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We should arouse ourselves to do justly, to love mercy. We should make manifest by our actions that we have the faith for which the saints are to contend. We should go forth to seek the oppressed, to lift up the fallen, and to bring help to those who need our assistance. We should remember that many among the colored people who have been entrusted with God-given ability, who had intellectual capabilities far superior to those of the masters who claimed them as their property, were forced to endure every indignity, and their souls groaned under the most cruel and unjust oppression. . . . Many of these have filled positions of trust, and have demonstrated the fact that the colored race is capable of cultivation and improvement.³

Gender Inclusive Empowerment

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Encourage Leadership Opportunities for Women.*

Women can learn what needs to be done to reach other women. There are women who are especially adapted for the work of giving Bible readings, and they are very successful in presenting the Word of God in its simplicity to others. They become a great blessing in reaching mothers and their daughters. This is a sacred work, and those engaged in it should receive encouragement.⁴

Many have felt, "Well, it doesn't matter if we are not so particular to become thoroughly educated," and a lower standard of knowledge has been accepted. And now when suitable men are wanted to fill various positions of trust, they are rare; when women are wanted with well-balanced minds, with not a cheap style of

¹*Manuscript 6*, 4 November 1889, "Our Duty to the Colored People," 1891, [Read by Ellen G. White in Battle Creek, MI, to thirty leaders of the church on 21 March 1891, and later published in a 16 page leaflet.], EGWRC-GC.

²"An Example in History," *Review and Herald*, 17 December 1895, 802.

³"Am I My Brother's Keeper?" 1896, *Review and Herald*, 21 January 1896, 33.

⁴Letter to A. G. Daniells, St. Helena, California, 1 September 1910, Letter 108, 1910, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

education, but with an education fitting them for any position of trust, they are not easily found.¹

There are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God.²

The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty, and labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time.³

I feel to regret the fact that there is such a dearth of breadth of mind and of far-seeing ability. Workers should be educated and trained for the fields of labor. We need missionaries everywhere. We need men and women who will give themselves without reserve to the work of God, bringing many sons and daughters to God.⁴

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Provide Preaching Opportunities for Women.*

Women can be the instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus. . . . If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission [preaching] their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.⁵

Teach this, my sister. You have many ways opened before you. Address the crowd whenever you can by any association that can be made the means of introducing the heaven to the meal.⁶

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Allow the Holy Spirit to Anoint Whom He Will.*

There should be selected for the work wise, consecrated men who can do a good work in reaching souls. Women also should be chosen who can present the truth in a clear, intelligent, straightforward manner. We need among us laborers who see the need of a

¹*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 117, 118.

²*Manuscript 43a*, 22 March 1898.

³"Words to Lay Members," *Review and Herald*, 26 August 1902, 7.

⁴*Testimonies to Ministers*, 301.

⁵"Address and Appeal, Setting Forth the Importance of Missionary Work (Concluded)," *Review and Herald*, 2 January 1879, 1.

⁶"The Excellency of the Soul," 293.

deep work of grace to be done in hearts; and such should be encouraged to engage in earnest missionary effort. There has long been the need for more of this class of workers. We must pray most earnestly, "Lord, help us to help one another." Self must be buried with Christ, and we must be baptized with the Holy Spirit of God.¹

It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.²

The Lord desires His ministering servants to occupy a place worthy of the highest consideration. In the mind of God, the ministry of men and women existed before the world was created.³

Age Inclusive Empowerment

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Encourage Youth to Assume Major Responsibility.*

Never, never feel the slightest disturbance because the Lord is raising up youth to lift and carry the heavier burdens and proclaim the message of truth.⁴

When the youth give their hearts to God, your care for them should not cease. Lay some special responsibility upon them. Make them feel that they are expected to do something. The Lord chooses them because they are strong.⁵

In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies.⁶

Those who are older must educate the youth, by precept and example, to discharge the claims that society and their Maker have upon them. Upon these youth must be laid grave responsibilities.⁷

But the church may inquire whether young men can be entrusted with the grave responsibilities involved in the establishing and superintending of a foreign mission. I

¹*Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970), 472.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 6:322.

³[Battle Creek, Michigan, 15 March 1891 Diary Entry], *Manuscript Releases*, 18:380.

⁴*The Retirement Years*, [Letter to Elder Haskell, Sidney, Australia, 11 December 1891, Letter 14, 1891], (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990), 73.

⁵*Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., 279.

⁶*Counsels to Parents*, 535.

⁷*Ibid.*, 536.

answer, God designed that they should be so trained in our colleges and by association in labor with men of experience that they would be prepared for departments of usefulness in this cause. We must manifest confidence in our young men. They should be pioneers in every enterprise involving toil and sacrifice, while the overtaxed servants of Christ should be cherished as counselors, to encourage and bless those who strike the heaviest blows for God. Providence thrust these experienced fathers into trying, responsible positions at an early age, when neither physical nor intellectual powers were fully developed. The magnitude of the trust committed to them aroused their energies, and their active labor in the work aided both physical and mental development.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Provide Opportunities for Youth to Develop Their Potential.*

The minds of many of the youth are rich in talents which are put to no available use, because they have lacked opportunity to develop them. . . . Aids to self-development must be given to the youth; they must be drawn out, stimulated, encouraged, and urged to action.²

With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!³

When the youth is converted, do not leave him in idleness; give him something to do in the vineyard of the Master. According to his ability, let him be employed; for the Lord has given to every man his work.⁴

Let the overseers of the church devise plans whereby young men and women may be trained to put to use their entrusted talents.⁵

Ministers and church members should second the efforts of parents to lead the children into safe paths. The Lord is calling for the youth, for He would make them His helpers to do good service under His banner.⁶

¹Ibid., 516, 517.

²*Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894), 30.

³*Education*, 271.

⁴*Sabbath School Work*, 50.

⁵*The Adventist Home*, 487.

⁶Ibid., 358.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Coach Youth to Help Their Peers in Spiritual Growth.*

We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor.¹

We little realize the objectionable traits of character given to the youth as a birthright, and how often temptation comes to them as a result of this birthright. We should educate the youth to help the youth; and as they seek to do this work they will gain an experience that will qualify them to become consecrated workers in a larger sphere.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Make Educational Institutions for Youth and Children Training Places for Evangelism.*

In the closing scenes of this earth's history many of these children and youth will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power. They have been taught the fear of the Lord, and their hearts have been softened by a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God and will do a work in proclaiming the truth to the world that at that time cannot well be done by the older members of the church.

Our church schools are ordained by God to prepare the children for this great work.³

Timothy was a mere youth when he was chosen by God to be a teacher; but his principles had been so established by his early education that he was fitted to take his place as Paul's helper. And though young, he bore his responsibilities with Christian meekness.⁴

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Coach Children and Youth to Be Evangelists.*

When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord's work, and led to see that He expects them to do

¹*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1922, 1940), 205.

²*Testimonies*, 6:115.

³*Adventist Home*, 489.

⁴*Acts of the Apostles*, 204.

something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ.¹

You should not carry the burden of leading the church in meetings. Younger hands should do this, and you should not bear the responsibility. You should not feel that you are required to hold meetings yourself, having the charge in different places, for your mind and your physical strength are not equal to the task.²

Youthful talent, well organized and well trained, is needed in our churches. The youth will do something with their overflowing energies. Unless these energies are directed into right channels, they will be used by the youth in a way that will hurt their own spirituality, and prove an injury to those with whom they associate.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Older Workers Should Be Valued Consultants.*

Those who have served their Master when the work went hard, who endured poverty and remained faithful when there were few to stand for truth, are to be honored and respected. The Lord desires the younger laborers to gain wisdom, strength, and maturity by association with these faithful men. Let the younger men realize that in having such workers among them they are highly favored. Let them give them an honored place in their councils.⁴

Among God's people are some who have had long experience in His work, men who have not departed from the faith. Notwithstanding the great trials through which they have passed, they have remained faithful. These men should be regarded as tried and chosen counselors. They should be respected, and their judgment should be honored by those who are younger or who have had less experience, even though these younger men may be in official positions.⁵

¹*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 210.

²*Retirement Years*, 126.

³*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 211.

⁴*Ibid.*, 33.

⁵*Testimonies to Ministers*, 497.

Connecting With Others

Mentoring

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Mentor with the Heart.*

Let the heart of the instructor be linked with the hearts of those under his charge. Let him remember that they have many temptations to meet. We little realize the objectionable traits of character given to the youth as a birthright, and how often temptation comes to them as a result of this birthright.¹

The youth need more than a casual notice, more than an occasional word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor. He only whose heart is filled with love and sympathy will be able to reach those youth who are apparently careless and indifferent. Not all can be helped in the same way. God deals with each according to his temperament and character, and we must co-operate with Him. Often those whom we pass by with indifference, because we judge them from outward appearance, have in them the best material for workers, and will repay all the efforts bestowed on them. There must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Discipling Type of Mentoring Requires Prayer and Careful Planning for Field Participation.*

Young men and women should be educated to become workers in their own neighborhoods and in other places. Let all set their hearts and minds to become intelligent in regard to the work for this time, qualifying themselves to do that for which they are best adapted.

Many young men who have had the right kind of education at home are to be trained for service and encouraged to lift the standard of truth in new places by well-planned and faithful work. By associating with our ministers and experienced workers in city work, they will gain the best kind of training. Acting under divine guidance and sustained by the prayers of their more experienced fellow workers, they may do a good and blessed work. As they unite their labors with those of the older workers, using their youthful energies to the very best account, they will have the companionship of heavenly angels; and as workers together with God, it is their privilege to sing and pray and believe, and work with courage and freedom. The

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., 208.

confidence and trust that the presence of heavenly agencies will bring to them and to their fellow workers will lead to prayer and praise and the simplicity of true faith.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Train Mentee(s) to Assume Major Responsibilities.*

When Moses was much burdened the Lord raised him up in Jethro an advisor and helper. The advice was taken and the burdens that had come upon him were divided with others and a two-fold object was gained; Moses was relieved and he had a better chance for his life, and men were learning to bear responsibilities to qualify them to do work in positions of trust so that Israel should not learn to look to one man and trust in one man and think that no one could do any thing for them unless it came before that one man. Now it is hard I know to let go some responsibilities and give others an opportunity to get hold with all the advantages and counsel of your knowledge to help them. Unless this is done they will ere long have to carry an unwieldy load without the instruction and counsel which now it is their privilege to have.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Good Mentors Are Patient and Identify Potential.*

To those upon whom God has bestowed many talents, I am instructed to say: Help the inexperienced; discourage them not. Take them into your confidence; give them fatherly counsel, teaching them as you would teach students in a school. Watch not for their mistakes, but recognize their undeveloped talents, and train them to make a right use of these powers. Instruct them with all patience, encouraging them to go forward and to do an important work. Instead of keeping them engaged in doing things of minor importance, give them an opportunity to obtain an experience by which they may develop into trustworthy workers. Much will thus be gained to the cause of God.³

If you think that men have not all the experience that you have, then forbear to expect of them all that the Lord expects of you. If they need instruction, try to instruct them as you have been instructed. But remember that you can never, never read human hearts. Be afraid to discount character. Let your hearts be sensitive to human need. Men may be brought into places where they need not only the help of words, but the firm grasp of an outstretched hand. Give them the help that in time of pressure God moved upon others to give to you.⁴

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:118, 119.

²Letter to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Circa 1886, Letter 64.

³*Christian Leadership*, 55.

⁴*Manuscript 149*, 1902, Fresno, California, Diary Entry, October, 1902, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

Those who are placed in responsible positions should feel it their duty to recognize talent. They should learn how to use men, and how to advise them. If mistakes are made, they should not withdraw themselves, thinking it easier to do the work themselves than to educate others. Those who are learning should be patiently instructed, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. Every effort should be made, by precept and example, to teach them right methods.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Good Mentors Provide Opportunities That Require Application of All Concepts Associated with the Work.*

Those placed in positions of responsibility should patiently seek to make others familiar with all parts of the work. This will reveal that they do not desire to be first, but that they are glad to have others become acquainted with details, and to become as efficient as they are. Those who faithfully fulfill their duty in this respect, will, in time, have standing by their side a large number of intelligent workers whom they have trained. Should they shape matters in accordance with narrow, selfish conceptions, they would stand almost alone.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Godly Mentors Rejoice When Talented Mentees Surpass the Mentor's Achievements.*

If in their ministry those whom we teach develop an energy and an intelligence even superior to that which we possess, we should be led to rejoice over the privilege of having a part in the work of training them. But there is danger that some in positions of responsibility as teachers and leaders, will act as if talent and ability have been given to them only, and that they must do all the work in order to make sure that it is done aright. They are liable to find fault with everything not originated by themselves. A great amount of talent is lost to the cause of God because many laborers, desiring to be first, are willing to lead, but never to follow. Although they closely scrutinize and criticize all that any one else does, they are in danger of regarding that which goes forth from their hands as perfect.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Good Mentoring Retains Youth to Ministry.*

There are numbers that ought to become missionaries who never enter the field, because those who are united with them in church capacity or in our colleges, do not feel the burden to labor with them, to open before them the claims that God has upon all the powers, and do not pray with them and for them; and the eventful period which

¹*Christian Leadership*, 57.

²"The Training of Workers," *Review and Herald*, 1 December 1904, 7.

³*Ibid.*

decides the plans and course of life passes, convictions with them are stifled; other influences and inducements attract them, and the temptations to seek worldly positions that will, they think, bring them money, take them into the worldly current. These young men might have been saved to the ministry through well-organized plans. If the churches in the different places do their duty, God will work with their efforts by His Spirit, and will supply faithful men to the ministry.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Peer Spiritual Mentoring Includes Accountability.*

And just in proportion to the strength of the friendship will be the amount of influence which friends will exert over one another for good or for evil. All will have associates and will influence and be influenced in their turn.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Cross-Generational Mentoring Beneficial to Both Mentor and Mentee.*

How touching to see youth and old age relying one upon the other, the youth looking up to the aged for counsel and wisdom, the aged looking to the youth for help and sympathy. This is as it should be. God would have the young possess such qualifications of character that they shall find delight in the friendship of the old, that they may be united in the endearing bonds of affection to those who are approaching the borders of the grave.³

Care for the Poor

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders, Including Administrators, Are Called to Serve the Needy.*

I was pointed back and saw that amid all the hatred and devices of Satan, God had spared the life of my husband, although Satan pressed him sore to take it away a few years since. The Lord wrenched him from the enemy's power, and raised him up to still act for him—to walk out on his faith, to be a succorer to the needy, and to strengthen and uphold his servants whom he has called into the field.⁴

¹*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 113.

²*Adventist Home*, 455.

³*Conflict and Courage*, 144.

⁴Letter 27, Peabody 1859. Unpublished.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Jesus is the Ultimate Model of Sacrificial Care for the Marginalized.*

Men and women are wanted at the heart of the work who will be nursing fathers and mothers in Israel, who will have hearts that can take in more than merely me and mine. They should have hearts that will glow with love for the dear youth, whether they are members of their own families or children of their neighbors. They are members of God's great family, for whom Christ had so great an interest that He made every sacrifice that it was possible for Him to make to save them. He left His glory, His majesty, His kingly throne and robes of royalty, and became poor, that through His poverty the children of men might be made rich. He finally poured out His soul unto death that He might save the race from hopeless misery. This is the example of disinterested benevolence that Christ has given us to pattern after.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *A Commendable Leader Continually Cares for the Poor.*

Cornelius was a Roman centurion. He was a man of wealth and noble birth, and his position was one of trust and honor. A heathen by birth, training, and education, through contact with the Jews he had gained a knowledge of God, and he worshiped Him with a true heart, showing the sincerity of his faith by compassion to the poor. He was known far and near for his beneficence, and his righteous life made him of good repute among both Jews and Gentiles.

His influence was a blessing to all with whom he came in contact. The inspired record describes him as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Destruction Came to Sodom Because of Neglect of Needy.*

The prophet Ezekiel thus enumerates the causes that led to Sodom's sin and destruction: "Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." All who would escape the doom of Sodom must shun the course that brought God's judgments upon that wicked city.³

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:198.

²*Acts of the Apostles*, 132.

³*Adventist Home*, 138.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Prioritizing Giving Is a Distinguishing Mark of Leaders' Discipleship.*

God's requirements come first. We are not doing His will if we consecrate to Him what is left of our income after all our imaginary wants have been supplied. Before any part of our earnings is consumed, we should take out and present to Him that portion which He claims. In the old dispensation an offering of gratitude was kept continually burning upon the altar, thus showing man's endless obligation to God. If we have prosperity in our secular business, it is because God blesses us. A part of this income is to be devoted to the poor, and a large portion to be applied to the cause of God. When that which God claims is rendered to Him, the remainder will be sanctified and blessed to our own use. But when a man robs God by withholding that which He requires, His curse rests upon the whole.¹

The squandering of money in luxuries deprives the poor of the means necessary to supply them with food and clothing. That which is spent for the gratification of pride in dress, in buildings, in furniture, and in decorations would relieve the distress of many wretched, suffering families. God's stewards are to minister to the needy.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Giving to the Needy and Extending Hospitality Increase Strength.*

The giving that is the fruit of self-denial is a wonderful help to the giver. It imparts an education that enables us more fully to comprehend the work of Him who went about doing good, relieving the suffering, and supplying the needs of the destitute.³

Some plead their poor health—they would love to do if they had strength. Such have so long shut themselves up to themselves and thought so much of their own poor feelings and talked so much of their sufferings, trials, and afflictions that it is their present truth. They can think of no one but self, however much others may be in need of sympathy and assistance. You who are suffering with poor health, there is a remedy for you. If thou clothe the naked and bring the poor that are cast out to thy house and deal thy bread to the hungry, “then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily.” Doing good is an excellent remedy for disease. Those who engage in the work are invited to call upon God, and He has pledged Himself to answer them. Their soul shall be satisfied in drought, and they shall be like a watered garden, whose waters fail not.⁴

¹Ibid., 369.

²Ibid., 370.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 446.

Angels are waiting to see if we embrace opportunities within our reach of doing good—waiting to see if we will bless others, that they in their turn may bless us. The Lord Himself has made us to differ—some poor, some rich, some afflicted—that all may have an opportunity to develop character. The poor are purposely permitted to be thus of God, that we may be tested and proved and develop what is in our hearts.

When the spirit of hospitality dies, the heart becomes palsied with selfishness.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Extend Hospitality to the Needy, Those Outside Leaders' Socio-Economic Position.*

Our social entertainments should not be governed by the dictates of worldly custom, but by the Spirit of Christ and the teaching of His word. The Israelites, in all their festivities, included the poor, the stranger, and the Levite, who was both the assistant of the priest in the sanctuary and a religious teacher and missionary. These were regarded as the guests of the people, to share their hospitality on all occasions of social and religious rejoicing, and to be tenderly cared for in sickness or in need. It is such as these whom we should make welcome to our homes. How much such a welcome might do to cheer and encourage the missionary nurse or the teacher, the care-burdened, hard-working mother, or the feeble and aged, so often without a home and struggling with poverty and many discouragements.

“When thou makest a dinner or a supper,” Christ says, “call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

These are guests whom it will lay on you no great burden to receive. You will not need to provide for them elaborate or expensive entertainment. You will need to make no effort at display. The warmth of a genial welcome, a place at your fireside, a seat at your home table, the privilege of sharing the blessing of the hour of prayer, would to many of these be like a glimpse of heaven.

Our sympathies are to overflow the boundaries of self and the enclosure of family walls. There are precious opportunities for those who will make their homes a blessing to others. Social influence is a wonderful power. We can use it, if we will, as a means of helping those about us.²

Our Thanksgiving is approaching. Will it be, as it has been in many instances, a thanksgiving to ourselves? Or will it be a thanksgiving to God? Our Thanksgivings

¹Ibid., 447.

²Ibid., 447, 448.

may be made seasons of great profit to our own souls as well as to others if we improve this opportunity to remember the poor among us. . . .

. . . Now a season is coming when we shall have our principles tested. Let us begin to think what we can do for God's needy ones. We can make them through ourselves the recipients of God's blessings. Think what widow, what orphan, what poor family you can relieve, not in a way to make a great parade about the matter, but be as a channel through which the Lord's substance shall flow as a blessing to His poor. . . .¹

Let not any more Thanksgiving days be observed to please and gratify the appetite and glorify self. We have reason for coming into the courts of the Lord with offerings of gratitude that He has preserved our lives another year. . . . If a feast is to be made, let it be for those who are in need.²

When you have a holiday, make it a pleasant and happy day for your children, and make it also a pleasant day for the poor and the afflicted. Do not let the day pass without bringing thanksgiving and thank offerings to Jesus.³

By precept and example parents are to teach their children to labor for the unconverted. The children should be so educated that they will sympathize with the aged and afflicted and will seek to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and distressed. They should be taught to be diligent in missionary work; and from their earliest years self-denial and sacrifice for the good of others and the advancement of Christ's cause should be inculcated, that they may be laborers together with God.⁴

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *True Greatness Comes Not from Position or Achievement, But from Caring for the Poor.*

Whether in the home, the neighborhood, or the school, the presence of the poor, the afflicted, the ignorant, or the unfortunate should be regarded, not as a misfortune, but as affording precious opportunity for service.⁵

There are those who would think it lowering to their dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. Others neglect the poor from a different motive. They are working, as they believe, in the cause of Christ, seeking to build up some worthy enterprise. They feel that they are doing a great work, and they cannot stop to notice

¹*Adventist Home*, 474.

²*Ibid.*, 475.

³*Ibid.*, 476.

⁴*Ibid.*, 487.

⁵*Ibid.*, 490.

the wants of the needy and distressed. In advancing their supposedly great work they may even oppress the poor. They may place them in hard and trying circumstances, deprive them of their rights, or neglect their needs. Yet they feel that all this is justifiable because they are, as they think, advancing the cause of Christ.¹

By no selfish practices can the cause of Christ be served. His cause is the cause of the oppressed and the poor. In the hearts of His professed followers there is need of the tender sympathy of Christ—a deeper love for those whom He has so valued as to give His own life for their salvation. These souls are precious, infinitely more precious than any other offering we can bring to God. To bend every energy toward some apparently great work, while we neglect the needy or turn the stranger from his right, is not a service that will meet His approval.²

We should anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. We should enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor. “Freely ye have received,” Christ says, “freely give” (Matt 10:8). All around us are poor, tried souls that need sympathizing words and helpful deeds. There are widows who need sympathy and assistance. There are orphans whom Christ has bidden His followers receive as a trust from God. Too often these are passed by with neglect. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; yet they are God’s property. They have been bought with a price, and they are as precious in His sight as we are. They are members of God’s great household, and Christians as His stewards are responsible for them. “Their souls,” He says, “will I require at thine hand.”³

As you open your door to Christ’s needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen angels. You invite the companionship of heavenly beings. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace. They come with praises upon their lips, and an answering strain is heard in heaven. Every deed of mercy makes music there. The Father from His throne numbers the unselfish workers among His most precious treasures.

Those on the left hand of Christ, those who had neglected Him in the person of the poor and the suffering, were unconscious of their guilt. Satan had blinded them; they had not perceived what they owed to their brethren. They had been self-absorbed, and cared not for others’ needs.

To the rich, God has given wealth that they may relieve and comfort His suffering children; but too often they are indifferent to the wants of others. They feel themselves superior to their poor brethren. They do not put themselves in the poor man’s place. They do not understand the temptations and struggles of the poor, and mercy dies out of their hearts. In costly dwellings and splendid churches, the rich shut

¹*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 382.

²*Ibid.*, 383.

³*Ibid.*, 386.

themselves away from the poor; the means that God has given to bless the needy is spent in pampering pride and selfishness. The poor are robbed daily of the education they should have concerning the tender mercies of God; for He has made ample provision that they should be comforted with the necessities of life. They are compelled to feel the poverty that narrows life, and are often tempted to become envious, jealous, and full of evil surmisings. Those who themselves have not endured the pressure of want too often treat the poor in a contemptuous way, and make them feel that they are looked upon as paupers.¹

When you doled out the pittance of bread to the starving poor, when you gave those flimsy garments to shield them from the biting frost, did you remember that you were giving to the Lord of glory? All the days of your life I was near you in the person of these afflicted ones, but you did not seek Me. You would not enter into fellowship with Me. I know you not.²

Real charity helps men to help themselves. If one comes to our door and asks for food, we should not turn him away hungry; his poverty may be the result of misfortune. But true beneficence means more than mere gifts. It means a genuine interest in the welfare of others. We should seek to understand the needs of the poor and distressed, and to give them the help that will benefit them most. To give thought and time and personal effort costs far more than merely to give money. But it is the truest charity.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Give Poor Dignity and Courage, Not Condescension.*

We can do nothing without courage and perseverance. Speak words of hope and courage to the poor and the disheartened. If need be, give tangible proof of your interest by helping them when they come into strait places. Those who have had many advantages should remember that they themselves still err in many things, and that it is painful to them when their errors are pointed out and there is held up before them a comely pattern of what they should be. Remember that kindness will accomplish more than censure. As you try to teach others, let them see that you wish them to reach the highest standard, and that you are ready to give them help. If in some things they fail, be not quick to condemn them.⁴

¹*Desire of Ages*, 639.

²*Ibid.*, 640.

³*The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905, 1942), 195.

⁴*Ibid.*, 196.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Caring for the Poor Is True Worship.*

To become a toiler, to continue patiently in well-doing which calls for self-denying labor, is a glorious work, which Heaven smiles upon. Faithful work is more acceptable to God than the most zealous and thought-to-be holiest worship. It is working together with Christ that is true worship. Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Serve Jesus in the Person of the Poor.*

Pure religion and undefiled before the Father is this: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Good deeds are the fruit that Christ requires us to bear: kind words, deeds of benevolence, of tender regard for the poor, the needy, the afflicted. When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures. "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Every merciful act to the needy, the suffering, is regarded as though done to Jesus. When you succor the poor, sympathize with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriend the orphan, you bring yourselves into a closer relationship to Jesus.

'Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was anhungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee anhungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal' (Matthew 25:41-46).

Jesus here identifies Himself with His suffering people. It was I who was hungry and thirsty. It was I who was a stranger. It was I who was naked. It was I who was sick. It was I who was in prison. When you were enjoying the food from your bountifully spread tables, I was famishing in the hovel or street not far from you. When you closed your doors against Me, while your well-furnished rooms were unoccupied, I had not where to lay My head. Your wardrobes were filled with an abundant supply

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 2:24.

of changeable suits of apparel, upon which means had been needlessly squandered, which you might have given to the needy. I was destitute of comfortable apparel. When you were enjoying health, I was sick. Misfortune cast Me into prison and bound Me with fetters, bowing down My spirit, depriving Me of freedom and hope, while you roamed free. What a oneness Jesus here expresses as existing between Himself and His suffering disciples! He makes their case His own. He identifies Himself as being in person the very sufferer. Mark, selfish Christian: every neglect of the needy poor, the orphan, the fatherless, is a neglect of Jesus in their person.¹

Ellen White's Experiential Demonstration of Her Leadership Principles on Human Relations

Ellen White felt a great burden for the Three Angels' messages to reach a world she believed was perishing for a want of salvific truth. She also believed Christians should follow the example of Christ in working for the poor and marginalized. Workers were scarce during her lifetime, and, as I learned from her own experience, often overburdened trying to minister to the needs of the new church and to spread the message. In this milieu, she was adamant that no hand be restricted that could be helping. Everyone must find involvement. No one should believe that they were excluded from God's service, and no one must forbid another from doing their part. It was in this evangelistic, practical view that Ellen White spoke about the role of Christian women, men, and children in service. In her writings and in her example she urged all to be active in giving the gospel to the world, laboring for persons living without Christ, as well as for those who have the least in society.

¹Ibid., 25, 26.

Her arguments regarding the work women were to do were practical, not theological. She wasted no time arguing theology with so great a need unmet.¹ She saw the ideal body of Christ as service oriented and united. Writing on this inclusive theme, she states,

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

By a beautiful illustration, Paul shows the harmony that the Spirit of God will bring into the church. . . . The Gentiles may, by faith, become true children of Abraham and partakers of the promises made to him. By repentance, and faith in the glorious hope of the gospel, all will be brought into harmonious action, as they continue to obey the requirements of God.²

How did Ellen White model these principles in her own life? What was she like as a neighbor? How did she treat her own children? Her diaries and letters portray a devoted, though not always impartial, wife, mother, and grandmother. When she was called away from her children to do public ministry, she wrote them often. Her letters tell of her love for each child, interesting things she observed on her journeys, and her desire that they develop characters like Jesus. She encouraged her children to serve others cheerfully.

When at home, Ellen White organized sewing bees and knitted stockings to help the less fortunate. She planted vegetable and flower gardens and showed the poor how to cultivate the soil. She shared her garden and orchard produce with others. Often she traveled long distances with her horse and buggy to deliver homemade bread or

¹Cindy Tutsch and Laura Wibberding, *Ellen White and the Roles of Women*, 20 September 2004, (PowerPoint workshop prepared for the Department of Women's Ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).

²*Manuscript* 62, 1903, "That They All May Be One," 28 November 1902, Diary entry, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts Collection, EGWRC-GC.

homegrown vegetables to her neighbors. She practiced careful economy so that even when her resources were meager, she could share with those in need.

She was hospitable and entertained so many guests at her home that she at least once referred to her home as “the hotel!”¹ She and her husband James took orphans and needy students into their home for weeks, months, sometimes even years. They often paid tuition for needy students.² She worked with the community on projects to benefit the poor and was active in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. At one such interdenominational temperance convocation, Ellen White addressed 20,000 persons, without a microphone!

At a time of racial tension in the southern part of the United States, Ellen White wrote repeated counsel to persist in work to promote literacy and gospel knowledge to the race that had only recently been enslaved in unjust and often cruel conditions. Though opposed by the prejudice of many in the prevailing culture of the time, she herself drew no discriminatory lines of color, caste, or privilege.

In Ms. 49, written in 1907, Ellen White recalled her admonitions concerning what we today would probably term “inner city ministry”:

There is a great work to be done, and we have only a little while in which to do it. There are cities in the South—Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis—in which but little has been done; and there are others that have not been entered. In these places the standard of truth must be uplifted. With might and with power we are to carry the truth to the people. . . .

¹*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 4 vols., [Letter to O. A. Olsen] (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 3:1264.

²Letter to Sister E. Weber, “Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, 28 September 1898, Letter 76a, 1898, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts Collection, EGWRC-GC. [This is one example of Ellen White’s philanthropy to underprivileged students.]

At another time I gave the instruction:

New Orleans is to be worked. At a proper time of the year a public effort is to be made there. Camp-meetings are to be held in many places, and evangelistic work is to be done after the camp-meeting is over. Thus the sheaves are to be gathered in.

We stand rebuked before God because the large cities right within our sight are unworked and unwarned. A terrible charge of neglect is brought against those who have been long in the work, and yet have not entered the large cities. We have done none too much for foreign fields, but we have done comparatively nothing for the great cities right beside our own doors.

Now that the work in New Orleans is to be more fully entered upon, I am bidden to say, Let men and women who have a knowledge of the truth, and understand the way of the Lord, enter this city to work with wisdom and in the fear of the Lord. The laborers who are chosen for the work in New Orleans should be those who have the good of the cause at heart, men who will keep the glory of God always in view, and who will make the strength of the God of Israel their frontguard and their rearward. The Lord will certainly hear and answer the prayers of His workers if they will seek Him for counsel and instruction.

In a sermon preached by Ellen White to the African-American congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, she affirmed the work of Brother Staines, a black educational innovator at the Hill Crest Farm. She reminded the hearers to not be discouraged if they encountered prejudice on this earth, but to remember that Christ Himself was despised by the Jews of His day. Each person, she said, had a work to do in preparing a people for the day of the Lord.

Enlarging on that inclusive theme, she said,

The Lord has a special part for the colored people to act in the work to be done in these last days, and He wants the white people to help them as far as possible. . .

I recall how especially one of your race was recognized by God in the time of the apostles, the record of which we find in the book of Acts. The Ethiopian mentioned there was a man of influence and was doing a great work when he heard the message of the gospel. The Lord saw the interest of this man in the Scriptures, and He sent His angel with a message to one of the disciples, telling him to go to a certain place, and there he would meet someone whom he was to help. . . . The man's heart was alive with interest as Philip explained the Scriptures to him; and when the disciple had finished, he was ready to accept the light that had been sent. . .

[God] bids us labor to build up one another in the most holy faith. . . . God has His eye upon every soul. He calls for the white people, and He calls for the colored people to engage in His service. He calls us to be laborers together with Himself. . . . I want to say to you, The Lord is no respecter of persons. He makes no difference because of the color of your skin. He understands all your circumstances. We have one Saviour for all mankind. He presents His merits before the Father for all peoples.¹

She had also written previously concerning racial prejudice and the need to eliminate color lines:

While attending the General Conference in Battle Creek, I was one morning aroused at a very early hour. During the night representations had been made to me and instruction given to me. I was in a meeting where the Southern field was being considered. Plans for the work in this field were being outlined. I was instructed that none of these plans was correct. The matter of the color line was being considered, and one of authority said decidedly, "Your plans are not correct. They do not bear the signature of God. You need not talk about the color line. The Lord has not made any such line, and He has no special lines for His people to define. Such definitions will do harm wherever they are made. . . . When the Spirit of God comes in and souls are worked by the Spirit, matters will be adjusted as the case demands."

The colored people are to be allowed to enjoy the benefit of the conferences that are held. . . . A resolution saying that the colored should not be allowed to assemble with the white people should never be passed.

Difficulties will confront us, whatever course may be pursued. How long will prejudice be permitted to live in human hearts? Little has been done to fulfill the commission given by Christ to His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."²

Whether in evangelism, outreach, or even in a work bee, Ellen White supported the involvement of a gender-inclusive, race-inclusive, age-inclusive church. She wrote

¹*Manuscript 17*, 1909, Nashville, Tennessee, "A Holy Calling" 25 April 1909, (Sermon), Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Manuscript 75*, 1903, "Practical Christianity," 1 August 1903, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

that “Our workers in every line are to be appreciated and respected and valued.”¹ She viewed the world as in the midst of a war—the war which she called “the great controversy between Christ and Satan.”² She wanted humanity to be presented with God’s offer of eternal life, though she believed each person is surrounded by an enemy who doesn’t want them to understand or accept it. In that context, it is easier to understand the urgency behind her statements on gender inclusiveness—why Ellen White was more concerned over the great need of workers than over justifying the roles of women.³

In 1897, Ellen White was dismayed at the delay in the opening of the new school at Cooranbong, Australia. After consulting with a few of her colleagues, Ellen called the head contractor to her home. There she asked how many persons were needed to finish the building. When told the number and job descriptions, Ellen White said, “We will have every position filled.” She and her friends rallied men, women, and children to volunteer.

Describing the work bee, Ellen White wrote, “The sisters had put the first coat of paint on the window frames. Brother Hare said that the women’s diligent work had done more to inspire diligence in the men at work than any talk or ordering. The women’s

¹Letter to Brothers Faulkhead and Salisbury, “Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, 3 October 1898, Letter 78, 1898, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²This is also the title of the book Ellen White considered to be her most important.

³Tutsch and Wibberding.

silence and industry had exerted an influence that nothing else could do.”¹ The school opened on time!

Writing to Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Waggoner, urging them both to come to Australia, Ellen White wrote, “When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do this work, and it will feel the loss if the talents of both are not combined.”² She was opposed to persons serving as mere “ornaments” in the church and encouraged G. A. Irwin to “appoint wise men and women to minister in Word and deed in the new churches.”³

Ellen White was a strong advocate of age-inclusive service. Not only did she want to see the youth involved in evangelism and service, she felt that persons of traditional retirement age could also continue to contribute to the church.

In 1910, she indicates her approval of S. N. Haskell’s continued service as president of the California Conference, even though he was seventy-six. Interestingly, she seems to recognize the value of effective husband and wife pastoral-administrative teams when she comments, “Elder Haskell and his *wife*, by the sustaining grace of God, may continue to do an important work in the position *they* have occupied”⁴ (italics supplied).

¹Letter to J. E., Emma, and W. C. White, “Sunnyside,” Letter 152, 1897.

²Letter to Brother and Sister (E. J.) Waggoner, “Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, 26 August 1898, Letter 77, 1898, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

³Letter to G. A. Irwin, “Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, 11 October 1899, Letter 157, 1899, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁴Letter to Brethren, St. Helena, California, 13 January 1910, Letter 8, 1910, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

She herself recognized her need of the grace of God, that she could be involved in His service even in older years:

The twenty-sixth of this month I shall be seventy-eight years old—too old to be in the din of the battle, and yet I am not excused. I feel the need of the grace of God every moment. I dare not put confidence in myself. I wish the constant direction of One who understands the very things I need and [who] will supply them. . . .

I need in this age of my life the security and serenity of mind that is obtained through the Christian hope, which hope all may have who put their trust in God and rest there as a child in the care of a parent.¹

While in Australia, Ellen White wrote an affirming appreciation letter to a little girl who had given a dime to help the Adventist work:

My little Sister Elsie Wilson:

I thank you for your precious offering. It is a small sum, but it is more precious in the sight of God than a large sum given grudgingly. . . . The Lord looks with pleasure upon the little children who deny themselves, that they may make an offering to Him.

Sister White appreciates your words: "This is all I have; but I want to help Sister White," and the Lord is pleased. God is made glad when the little ones become laborers together with Jesus who loved the little children and took them in His arms and blessed them. He will bless your gift to Him.

In love,
E. G. White²

Ellen White loved youth, and was often invited to speak at Adventist schools and colleges. In a devotional talk given to students the year before she died, she said, "I have always had an especial interest in the youth. I see before me today those whom I know God can use if they will put their dependence in him. Children, if you will be in

¹*Manuscript 178*, 1905, 2 November-20 December 1905, Diary entry, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²Letter to Elsie Wilson, "Sunnyside," Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, 6 October 1899, Letter 155, 1899, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

earnest in serving God, you will be a help to all with whom you associate. There is nothing to be ashamed of in being a Christian. It is an honor to follow the Saviour.”¹

Ellen White didn't just write about the importance of mentoring. She modeled a variety of good mentoring relationships that often began when the worker was young and continued throughout life.² The long mentoring relationship that Ellen White had with John Harvey Kellogg, first in his student years and later through his professional and spiritual successes and failures has been well documented in other works.³

Ellen White wrote a profound "mentoring" letter to her twenty-year-old son Willie which contains enduring counsel:

Character must be made. It is the work of a lifetime. It is a work requiring meditation and thought. Judgment must be well exercised, industry and perseverance established. . . . You may be encouraged by others in your work, but they can never do your work of overcoming temptation. You cannot be honest and truthful, industrious and virtuous for them, neither can they become thus for you. In one sense you must stand alone, fighting your own battles. Yet not alone, for you have Jesus and the angels of God to help you. But few reach what they might in excellence of character, because they do not make their aim high. Prosperity and happiness will never grow of their own accord. They are the acquisition of labor, the fruit of long cultivation.—Letter 22, June 30, 1875, to W. C. White, her 20-year-old son.⁴

During her seventy years of ministry and writing, Ellen White employed many literary and household assistants. Some of these persons lived in her home. She developed a mentoring relationship with a number of these individuals.

¹“Following on to Know the Lord,” [Remarks by Ellen G. White, Sanitarium, Church School Picnic, 15 June 1913], *The Youth's Instructor*, 9 June 1914, 3.

²A. G. Daniels is an example of a life long mentee of Ellen White.

³Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1970).

⁴*This Day With God*, 190.

In a letter to her assistants Marian Davis, Fannie Bolton, and May Walling, Ellen White gave lifestyle counsel, specific to each. She urged regular hours for sleep, early rising, consistent exercise, and systematic organization of the work. But she also encouraged Marian and Fannie to set aside private time daily for intellectual pursuits. She wanted them to be well dressed, and provided suitable fabric, patterns, and dress makers for this purpose.¹

But it would be Marian Davis with whom Ellen White developed the deepest mentoring. Describing this mutually beneficial relationship, she wrote:

[M]y soul is drawn to the dying girl who has served me for the last twenty-five years. We have stood side by side in the work, and in perfect harmony in that work. And when she would be gathering up the precious jots and tittles that had come in papers and books and present it to me, "Now," she would say, "there is something wanted. I cannot supply it." I would look it over, and in one moment I could trace the line right out.

We worked together, just worked together in perfect harmony all the time. She is dying. And it is devotion to the work. She takes the intensity of it as though it were a reality, and we both have entered into it with an intensity to have every paragraph that shall stand in its right place and show its right work.²

Mourning the loss of her friend and mentee, Ellen White wrote:

Marian had been with me about twenty-five years. She was my chief worker in arranging the matter for my books. She ever appreciated the writings as sacred matter placed in her hands and would often relate to me what comfort and blessing she received in performing this work, that it was her health and her life to do this work. She ever handled the matters placed in her hands as sacred. I shall miss her so much. In the matter of losing Marian, I could but think that soon my pen would be laid aside and our work, ever connected, would rest. . . . I shall miss her so much. Who will fill her place?

¹Letter to Brother and Sister Lockwood, Marian, Fannie, and May Walling, Reno, California, 24 May 1888, Letter 76, 1888, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Manuscript 95*, 1904, "A Tribute to Marian Davis," Circa 26 September 1904, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

We left Thursday morning. We started on our way for Fresno in the early morning. I was glad to be alone with my thoughts. For days I would think what a precious helper I had lost. . .¹

Throughout her life, Ellen White helped the poor in the neighborhoods where she lived, and cared for those who had the least in society, or were impacted by personal misfortune or illness. In the wonderfully crafted memory album given her as a going-away present by the Australians when she left their country for California, one person wrote, "Mrs. E. G. White's presence in our village will be sadly missed. The widow and the orphan found in her a helper. She sheltered, clothed and fed those in need and where gloom was cast her presence brought sunshine. . ."²

Page seven of the same hand-created book of Australian memories contains this message:

Cooranbong
Aug. 10, 1900
Dear Sister White,

Our first acquaintance with you was marked by an incident which we will never forget. For several weeks we were living on a few small potatoes and a little milk. When one evening the Coachman drove up and left us a bag of flour we asked him where it came from and he said the Lord had sent it-and really so it seemed to us. The next week you paid us your first visit bringing with you some more of the necessities of this life. You can never know how parched the ground was on which those blessings fell. They said more to us than many sermons. And so right on through all our acquaintance we have received many blessings both temporal and spiritual. . .

Irene & C. James

¹*Manuscript 146*, 1904, "Elmshaven," St. Helena, California, 9 October 1904, Diary entry, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²Thomas Russell, hand-written note in Australian memory scrapbook on page 10, Circa August 1900, EGWE-RC.

On page twelve of the scrapbook, a H. C. Coulston simply quoted Ps 41:1, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver in time of trouble."

There are many documented instances of Ellen White's intervention for the poor. She enjoyed going to auctions, and buying furniture and goods to distribute to families in need.¹ On 31 July 1895, she wrote in her diary "I went into Sydney to see if I could find anything for the poor families, cheap. Money is so scarce we hardly know what to do and which way to turn to supply the demands in a variety of lines. The calamity of failure of banks has been, and still will be, keenly felt. We watch our chances where goods are offered for half price and purchase most excellent material to give to those who cannot buy that which they need. We are oft distressed at the sight of our eyes. I never have seen anything like it."

Describing the poverty she encountered and her response to it, she wrote,

While the horse was being harnessed Sister McCann walked into the house. She had walked four miles to see us. I talked with her and she wept, saying she would do our washing, do anything to earn a little money. Her two youngest children had not attended school for two months because they had no shoes. Her oldest son is a man grown, but, although he does a man's work, receives only seven shillings per week, the second lad six shillings per week. This is all they have, except as the father can get a little job occasionally. I put in her hand seven shillings—which was all I had in my purse, besides a sixpence—and gave it to her. I then gave her a new dress pattern for herself and one of the children for which I had paid six shillings. I have purchased many yards of goods to clothe the naked. I put them up rice, four quarts of milk, and various provisions, and then we were all seated in the carriage that conveyed her to her home. She seemed very grateful.

We are trying to help in every way possible. There were needy, from the failure of the banks has brought great distress, but I am circulating around and helping all I see

¹Letter to O. A. Olsen, Per Ardua, Granville, New South Wales, Australia, 24 June 1894, Letter 54a, 1894, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

in distress. Our means are very limited, but I hire [borrow] money to supply the necessities.¹

Another example of Ellen White's practical piety is described in Letter 12, 1860:

Dear Husband:

George and self have written Brother C. as comforting a letter as we could under the circumstances. We shall make up a box and send to the family the things sent in for the poor. It will do them much good this winter. I shall write to Convis to help and to Bro. Byington's family and we can make out a box, I think, worthy of sending. We have stockings and socks which will be of good service to them and unless they have them, will not be used this winter. I shall send a bed quilt that has been handed in for the poor.

Ellen

A few days later, Ellen wrote to her friend Lucinda Hall,

Sister Kellogg came for me yesterday and took baby and me home with her and we spent the day; had a good visit. Last night I rested, yet my back is weak and I am so lame I cannot get around much. I went upstairs once on my knees to get these things together for the poor. Czechowski is quite poor and we shall send a box to them in about four weeks. Mr. Warren's little girl is dead; died with croup very suddenly. They had no little chemise to lay her out in; got one of Mary Loughborough. The family, we find, are destitute of almost everything. They must have help or suffer this winter. Dr. King is near his end; can live but a few weeks.²

In these and scores of other instances for which the scope of this project precludes documentation, I find evidence of Ellen White's genuine, practical care for others, particularly for those victims of misfortune, disease, catastrophe, and poverty.

¹*Manuscript 61*, 1895, Cooranbong, Australia, 16-31 July 1895, Diary entry. Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Manuscript Releases*, 8:16.

CHAPTER 7

COUNSELS ON KEY LEADERSHIP ISSUES

Ellen White wrote or spoke often concerning key issues that still confront leaders and administrators in the twenty-first century. In this chapter, I look at several “hot topics,” including characteristics of a strong Christian leader, discipline in the workplace, how to respond to persons who have made mistakes, proactive visioning, and alacrity—prompt response to God-given opportunities.

Some of these themes, usually without the Christian lens, are treated extensively in contemporary leadership literature. But discussion of essential topics, such as leadership qualifications, from a secular viewpoint leaves a void, a vacuum, for the Christian leader. Henry Blackaby states, “We are concerned that many Christian leaders are reading secular books and are accepting their teachings uncritically. Much secular leadership theory is based on presuppositions that may appear sound yet promote ideas contrary to Scripture.”¹

However, even Christian leadership theories are sometimes conflicting. For instance, Blackaby states that “Jesus did not develop a plan nor did he cast a vision. He sought His Father’s will.”² In contrast, popular author Laurie Beth Jones says, “Your

¹Blackaby and King, x.

²Ibid., 24.

vision statement is the force that will sustain you. . . . All significant changes and inventions began with a vision first.”¹ Ellen White offers a third view. She encourages vision casting, but combined with a willingness to “surrender all your plans to [Jesus], to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate.”² This “flexible visioning” is also reflected in Kotter’s work.³

In this chapter, I examine Ellen White’s counsel to leaders on key issues that face them in today’s context. We will discover what qualifications for leadership and management that Ellen White considered to be most essential.⁴ I again identify biblically based leadership principles which transcend time and place, follow those principles with Ellen White passages from which the principles were drawn, and conclude with several illustrations from Ellen White’s personal experience. In these anecdotes from Ellen White’s own experience, I see a microcosm of a long life devoted to emulating the “Ultimate Leader,”⁵ Jesus Christ.

¹Laurie Beth Jones, *The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and for Life* (New York: Hyerion, 1996), 71.

²*Faith I Live By*, 125.

³Kotter, 72.

⁴Though Ellen White often uses leadership and management interchangeably and thus seems to blur their separate definitions, she is definitive in recognizing spiritual gifts. It might be fair to describe her implied definition of leadership as anyone who influences others for the kingdom of God, whether mobilizing and equipping church members for service and evangelism, or serving constituents as the vice-president for finance. Though many of the quotes I have selected from her writings are directed to leaders in elected or appointed positions, nearly all of these principles apply to any Christian whose personal calling is to be an agent of change, inspiring excellence and momentum.

⁵Leighton Ford, 27.

Leadership Qualifications

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Conversion to Christ Prerequisite to Effective Leadership.*

Many of those carrying heavy responsibilities need to be converted. Christ says to them as He said to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:7, 3). Many are controlled by an unchristian spirit. They have not yet learned in the school of Christ His meekness and lowliness, and unless they change, they will yield to Satan's temptations. Year after year they carry sacred responsibilities, yet prove themselves incapable of distinguishing between the sacred and the common. How long shall such men continue to wield a controlling influence? How long shall their word be permitted to exalt or to cast down, to condemn or to lift up? How long shall they hold such power that no one dare make a change in their methods?¹

He only whose heart is transformed by the grace of Christ can be a proper leader.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Moral Integrity Founded on God's Law is an Important Leadership Qualification.*

King David, toward the close of his reign, delivered a solemn charge to those bearing the burden of the work of God in his day. Summoning to Jerusalem "all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men," the aged king solemnly charged them, "in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God," to "keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God" (1 Chr 28:1, 8).³

Those who act as managers and overseers in our sanitariums are not to make the world's policy their criterion; for the sign of God, as defined in Exodus 31:12-17, is to be revealed in all its comprehensive meaning. The proper observance of the Sabbath day by all connected with our sanitariums will exert an untold influence for good. Every medical institution established by Seventh-day Adventists is to bear God's sign before the world prominently, without disguising the facts in any way. We are to voice the message of the third angel flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 8:150.

²*Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932, 1963), 164.

³*Acts of the Apostles*, 94.

gospel to proclaim to the world. We are to bear aloft the banner on which is inscribed, "The Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."¹

God cannot endorse any institution unless it teaches the living principles of His law and brings its own actions into strict conformity to these precepts. Upon those institutions that are not maintained according to His law He pronounces the sentence, "Unaccepted; weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and found wanting."²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Energy, Perseverance, and Initiative Are Important Leadership Qualifications.*

I was shown that God will reward those who bear responsibility, and with energy push His work forward and stand in the forefront of the battle. God will have those who will venture something in His work.³

A man who does not love manual labor and is naturally easy and indolent will never make a successful preacher. He will ever lack self-denial, perseverance, and energy. He will never make a thorough workman in spiritual things. There will ever be seen the love of ease and the dislike to exertion in matters of the church, and there will be disposition to tax the mental faculties.⁴

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Impartiality, Dignity, and Sound Judgment, Are Important Leadership Qualifications.*

Later, when choosing seventy elders to share with him the responsibilities of leadership, Moses was careful to select, as his helpers, men possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience. In his charge to these elders at the time of their ordination, he outlined some of the qualifications that fit a man to be a wise ruler in the church. "Hear the causes between your brethren," said Moses, "and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's" (Deuteronomy 1:16, 17).⁵

¹*Medical Ministry*, 164.

²*Ibid.*

³Letter to Brother John Byington, Circa 1859, Letter 28.

⁴*Manuscript 3*, 1861, Testimony for Mill Grove [N.Y.] Church, Circa 1861. Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁵*Acts of the Apostles*, 94.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Organization and Visioning Are Important Leadership Qualifications.*

There are men of the world who have God-given powers of organization, which are needed in the carrying forward of the work for these last days. All are not preachers; but men are needed who can take the management of the institutions where industrial work is carried on, men who in our conferences can act as leaders and educators. God needs men who can look ahead, and see what needs to be done, men who can act as faithful financiers, men who will stand as solid as a rock to principle in the present crisis and in the future perils that may arise.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Divine Credentials and Respect Toward Others Are Important Leadership Qualifications.*

Confidence cannot be placed in the judgment of those who indulge in ridicule and misrepresentation. No weight can be attached to their advice or resolutions. You must bear the divine credentials before you make decided movements to shape the working of God's cause.²

Those who are engaged in the great and solemn work of warning the world should not only have an individual experience in the things of God, but they should cultivate love for one another, and should labor to be of one mind, of one judgment, to see eye-to-eye. The absence of this love greatly pleases our wily foe. He is the author of envy, jealousy, hatred, and dissension; and he rejoices to see these vile weeds choke out love, that tender plant of heavenly growth.

It does not please God to have His servants censure, criticize, and condemn one another. He has given them a special work, that of standing in defense of the truth. They are His workmen; all should respect them, and they should respect one another.

In the army, officers are required to respect their fellow officers, and the privates soon learn the lesson. When the leaders of the people in Christian warfare are kind and forbearing, and manifest a special love and regard for their colaborers, they teach others to do the same.³

¹"The Call to the Feast," *Review and Herald*, 8 May 1900, 289.

²*Life Sketches*, 325.

³*Lift Him*, 225.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Intelligence, Even Temper, Tolerance, and Perfect Self-Control Are Important Leadership Qualifications.*

The man at the head of any work in God's cause is to be a man of intelligence, a man capable of managing large interests successfully, a man of even temper, Christlike forbearance, and perfect self-control.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Care of Personal Health and Setting Boundaries Are Important Leadership Qualifications.*

I saw that now we should take special care of the health God has given us, for our work was not yet done. . . . I saw that we should be careful of our strength and not take upon ourselves burdens that others can and should bear.

I saw that we should encourage a cheerful, hopeful, peaceful frame of mind, for our health depends upon our doing this. I saw that it was duty for everyone to have a care for his health, but especially should we turn our attention to our health, and take time to devote to our health that we may in a degree recover from the effects of overdoing and overtaxing the mind. The work God requires of us will not shut us away from caring for our health. The more perfect our health, the more perfect will be our labor.²

I saw that when we tax our strength, overlabor and weary ourselves much, then we take colds and at such times are in danger of diseases taking a dangerous form. We must not leave the care of ourselves for God to see to and to take care of that which He has left for us to watch and care for. It is not safe nor pleasing to God to violate the laws of health and then ask Him to take care of our health and keep us from disease when we are living directly contrary to our prayers.

I saw that it was a sacred duty to attend to our health, and arouse others to their duty, and yet not take the burden of their case upon us. Yet we have a duty to speak, to come out against intemperance of every kind,—intemperance in working, in eating, in drinking and in drugging—and then point them to God's great medicine, water, pure soft water, for diseases, for health, for cleanliness, and for a luxury.³

Let those who are teachers and leaders in our cause take their stand firmly on Bible ground in regard to health reform, and give a straight testimony to those who believe we are living in the last days of this earth's history. A line of distinction must be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve themselves.

¹*Medical Ministry*, 164.

²*Selected Messages*, 3:279.

³*Ibid.*, 280.

I have been shown that the principles that were given us in the early days of the message are as important and should be regarded just as conscientiously today as they were then. There are some who have never followed the light given on the question of diet. It is now time to take the light from under the bushel and let it shine forth in clear, bright rays.

The principles of healthful living mean a great deal to us individually and as a people.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Passion for Saving Souls an Essential Leadership Qualification.*

Dear Brother G: I have been shown that you were greatly deficient in your duties as a minister. You lack essential qualifications. You do not possess a missionary spirit. You have not a disposition to sacrifice your ease and pleasure to save souls. There are men, women, and youth to be brought to Christ who would embrace the truth could they have the light presented to them. In your own vicinity there are those who have an ear to hear.²

I saw you seeking to instruct some; but at the very time when you needed perseverance, courage, and energy, you became fainthearted, distrustful, discouraged, and dropped the work. You desired your own ease, and allowed an interest which might have increased, to go down. There might have been an ingathering of souls; but the golden opportunity passed for that time, because of your lack of energy. I saw that unless you decide to gird on the whole armor, and are willing to endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross of Christ, and feel that you can spend and be spent to bring souls to Christ, you should give up your profession as a minister and choose some other calling.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Practice Independent Thinking.*

The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits—because it is truth.

The Bible must not be interpreted to suit the ideas of men, however long they may have held these ideas to be true. We are not to accept the opinion of commentators as

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:158.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 2:150.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 151.

the voice of God; they were erring mortals like ourselves. God has given reasoning powers to us as well as to them. We should make the Bible its own expositor.¹

There are men who today might be men of breadth of thought, might be wise men, men to be depended upon, who are not such, because they have been educated to follow another man's plan. They have allowed others to tell them precisely what to do, and they have become dwarfed in intellect. Their minds are narrow, and they cannot comprehend the needs of the work. They are simply machines to be moved by another man's thought.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Delegate and Empower.*

Now do not think that these men who do follow out your ideas are the only ones that can be trusted. You have sometimes thought that because they do your will to the letter, they were the only ones in whom you could place dependence. If anyone exercised his own judgment, and differed with you, you have disconnected from him as one that could not be trusted. Take your hands off the work, and do not hold it fast in your grasp. You are not the only man whom God will use. Give the Lord room to use the talents He has entrusted to men, in order that the cause may grow. Give the Lord a chance to use men's minds. We are losing much by our narrow ideas and plans. Do not stand in the way of the advancement of the work, but let the Lord work by whom He will. Educate, encourage young men to think and act, to devise and plan, in order that we may have a multitude of counselors.³

[L]eaders among God's people are to guard against the danger of condemning the methods of individual workers who are led by the Lord to do a special work that but few are fitted to do. Let brethren in responsibility be slow to criticize movements that are not in perfect harmony with their methods of labor. Let them never suppose that every plan should reflect their own personality. Let them not fear to trust another's methods; for by withholding their confidence from a brother laborer who, with humility and consecrated zeal, is doing a special work in God's appointed way, they are retarding the advancement of the Lord's cause.

God can and will use those who have not had a thorough education in the schools of men. A doubt of His power to do this is manifest unbelief; it is limiting the omnipotent power of the One with whom nothing is impossible. Oh, for less of this uncalled-for, distrustful caution! It leaves so many forces of the church unused; it closes up the way so that the Holy Spirit cannot use men; it keeps in idleness those who are willing and anxious to labor in Christ's lines; it discourages from entering the

¹Ibid., 106.

²Ibid., 303.

³Ibid.

work many who would become efficient laborers together with God if they were given a fair chance.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Surround Themselves with Persons Who Challenge Their Thinking.*

How my heart aches to see presidents of conferences taking the burden of selecting those whom they think they can mold to work with them in the field. They take those who will not differ with them, but will act like mere machines. No president has any right to do this.²

Our most responsible men have made some unwise plans, and have carried them out because they thought their plans were perfect. They have needed the mingling of other elements of mind and character. They should have associated with other men who could view matters from an entirely different point of view. Thus they would have helped them in their plans.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Learn and Grow from Mistakes, and Allow Similar Growth in Others.*

You, Brother A, have had strength to bear some responsibilities. God has accepted your energetic labors and blessed your efforts. You have made some mistakes, but because of some failures you should in nowise misjudge your capabilities nor distrust the strength that you may find in God. You have not been willing and ready to assume responsibilities. You are naturally inclined to shun them and to choose an easier position, to write and exercise the mind where no special, vital interests are involved. You make a mistake in relying upon my husband to tell you what to do. This is not the work God has given my husband. You should search out what is to be done and lift the disagreeable burdens yourself. God will bless you in so doing. You must bear burdens in connection with the work of God according to your best judgment. But you must be guarded, lest your judgment shall be influenced by the opinions of others. If it is apparent that you have made mistakes, it is your privilege to turn these failures into victories by avoiding the same in the future. By being told what to do you will never gain the experience necessary for any important position.

The same is applicable to all who are standing in the different positions of trust in the various offices at Battle Creek. They are not to be coaxed and petted and helped at every turn, for this will not make men competent for important positions. It is obstacles that make men strong. It is not helps, but difficulties, conflicts, rebuffs, that

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:259.

²*Ibid.*, 304.

³*Ibid.*

make men of moral sinew. Too much ease and avoiding responsibility have made weaklings and dwarfs of those who ought to be responsible men of moral power and strong spiritual muscle.¹

Leave others to plan; and if they fail in some things, do not take it as an evidence that they are unfitted to be thinkers. Our most responsible men had to learn by a long discipline how to use their judgment. In many things they have shown that their work ought to have been better. The fact that men make mistakes is no reason why we should think them unfit to be caretakers. Those who think that their ways are perfect, even now make many grave blunders, but others are none the wiser for it. They present their success, but their mistakes do not appear. Then be kind and considerate to every man who conscientiously enters the field as a worker for the Master.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Are Teachable.*

It is those who accept the warnings and cautions given them who will walk in safe paths. Let not men yield to the burning desire to become great leaders, or to the desire independently to devise and lay plans for themselves and for the work of God. It is easy for the enemy to work through some who, having themselves need of counsel at every step, undertake the guardianship of souls without having learned the lowliness of Christ. These need counsel from the One who says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden."

Our ministers and leaders need to realize the necessity of counseling with their brethren who have been long in the work, and who have gained deep experience in the ways of the Lord. The disposition of some to shut themselves up to themselves, and to feel competent to plan and execute according to their own judgment and preferences, brings them into strait places. Such an independent way of working is not right, and should not be followed. The ministers and teachers in our conferences are to work unitedly with their brethren of experience, asking them for their counsel, and paying heed to their advice.³

Dealing with the Erring

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Angels Help Those Who Discipline with Christ-Like Sympathy.*

Angels are watching with intense interest to see how man is dealing with his fellow men. When they see one manifest Christlike sympathy for the erring, they press to his

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:495.

²*Testimonies to Ministers*, 304.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 501.

side and bring to his remembrance words to speak that will be as the bread of life to the soul. So “God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:19. Your testimony in its genuineness and reality He will make powerful in the power of the life to come. The word of the Lord will be in your mouth as truth and righteousness.¹

Ellen White’s Leadership Principle: *Always Present Hope through Jesus to Those Who Have Erred.*

Give the erring one no occasion for discouragement. Suffer not a Pharisaical hardness to come in and hurt your brother. Let no bitter sneer rise in mind or heart. Let no tinge of scorn be manifest in the voice. If you speak a word of your own, if you take an attitude of indifference, or show suspicion or distrust, it may prove the ruin of a soul. He needs a brother with the Elder Brother’s heart of sympathy to touch his heart of humanity. Let him feel the strong clasp of a sympathizing hand, and hear the whisper, Let us pray. God will give a rich experience to you both. Prayer unites us with one another and with God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.²

To no man has been appointed the work of being a ruler over his fellowmen. Every man is to bear his own burden. He may speak words of encouragement, faith, and hope to his fellow workers; he may help them to bear their special burdens by suggesting to them improved methods of labor; but in no case is he to discourage and enfeeble them, lest the enemy shall obtain an advantage over their minds—an advantage that in time would react upon himself.³

Ellen White’s Leadership Principle: *Those Who Correct in Anger or Impatience Should be Terminated.*

A Christian is a Christlike man, and for the very reason that he carries heavy responsibilities, he feels it degrading to himself to be in the slightest degree oppressive. If those who are in command have not self-control, they place themselves below the servant. God expects the steward whom he honors to represent the Master. If he cannot represent the patience, the kindness, the long-suffering love, the honesty and self-denial of Christ; if he forgets that he is a servant, and lifts himself up, it would be well for the people to discharge him.⁴

¹*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 148.

²*Ibid.*, 250.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 495.

⁴*Manuscript 115*, 15 August 1899, [Words of Exhortation to the Workers], 1899. Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Reproof and Protest Sometimes Urgently Needed.*

When there are men in the church who love riches more than righteousness, and who stand ready to take advantage of their fellow-men by unjust dealings, shall we make no protest? And when men standing in the position of leaders and teachers work under the power of spiritualistic ideas and sophistries, shall we keep silent, for fear of injuring their influence, while souls are being beguiled? Satan will use every advantage that he can obtain to cause souls to become clouded and perplexed in regard to the work of the church, in regard to the word of God, and in regard to the words of warning which He has given through the testimonies of His Spirit, to guard His little flock from the subtleties of the enemy.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Do Not Break a Bruised Reed.*²

The parable of the good shepherd represents the responsibility of every minister and of every Christian who has accepted a position as teacher of the children and youth. The one that has strayed from the fold is not followed with harsh words and a whip but with winning invitations to return. The ninety and nine that had not strayed do not call for the sympathy and tender, pitying love of the shepherd. But the shepherd follows the sheep and lambs that have caused him the greatest anxiety and have engrossed his sympathies most deeply. He leaves the rest of the sheep, and his whole energies are taxed to find the one that is lost.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Be Genuinely Interested in the Feelings of the Erring.*

Show a tender, pitiful spirit toward the erring. Come close to hearts.⁴

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Never Use Sarcasm When Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance.*

When in your discourses, you denounce with bitter sarcasm that which you wish to condemn, you sometimes offend your hearers, and their ears are turned from hearing you further. Carefully avoid any severity of speech that might give offense to those

¹Manuscript 72, 25 July 1904, "The Great Controversy," Washington, DC, 1904, EGWRC-GC.

²Isa 42:3

³*Counsels to Parents*, 198.

⁴Letter to Elder E. E. Franke, Letter 190, 1902, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

you desire to save from error; for it will be difficult to overcome the feelings of antagonism thus aroused. . . .¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Treat the Erring with Full Recognition That Christ Died for Them.*

Let us bear in mind that we are dealing with souls that Christ has purchased with infinite cost to Himself. O tell the erring, God loves you, God died for you. Weep over them, pray with them. Shed tears over them, but do not get angry with them. They are Christ's purchased possession. Let every one seek a character that will express love in all his actions. . . . Give love to them that need it most. The most unfortunate, those who have the most disagreeable temperaments need our love, our tenderness, our compassion. Those who try our patience need most love. We pass through the world only once; any good thing we can do, we should do most earnestly, untiringly, with the same spirit as is stated of Christ in His work. He will not fail nor be discouraged. The rough, stubborn, sullen dispositions are the ones who need help the most. How can they be helped? Only by that love practiced in dealing with them which Christ revealed to fallen man. Treat them, you may, as they deserve. What if Christ had treated us thus? He, the undeserving, was treated as we deserve. Still we are treated by Christ with grace and love as we did not deserve, but as He deserved. Treat some characters, as you think they richly deserve, and you will cut off from them the last thread of hope, spoil your influence and ruin the soul. Will it pay? No, I say no, a hundred times no. Bind these souls who need all the help it is possible for you to give them close to a loving, sympathizing, pitying heart, overflowing with Christlike love, and you will save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. Had we not better try the love process?²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Treat Others Who Are In Error As You Wish to be Treated When You Are In Error.*

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." I saw that if God should be as exacting as we are, and should deal with us as we deal with one another, we might all be thrown into a state of hopeless despair.³

Let us all remember that we are not dealing with ideal men, but with real men of God's appointment, men precisely like ourselves, men who fall into the same errors that we do, men of like ambitions and infirmities. No man has been made a master, to

¹*Evangelism*, 304.

²*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 280.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:614.

rule the mind and conscience of a fellow being. Let us be very careful how we deal with God's blood-bought heritage.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Work Patiently, Tenderly, and Tenaciously with the Erring.*

In laboring with the erring, some of our brethren had been too rigid, too cutting in remarks. And when some were disposed to reject their counsel and separate from them, they would say: "Well, if they want to go off, let them go." While such a lack of the compassion, and long-suffering, and tenderness of Jesus was manifested by His professed followers, these poor, erring, inexperienced souls, buffeted by Satan, were certain to make shipwreck of faith. However great may be the wrongs and sins of the erring, our brethren must learn to manifest not only the tenderness of the Great Shepherd, but also His undying care and love for the poor, straying sheep. Our ministers toil and lecture week after week, and rejoice that a few souls embrace the truth; and yet brethren of a prompt, decided turn of mind may, in five minutes, destroy their work by indulging the feelings which prompt words like these: "Well, if they want to leave us, let them go."²

It is not the work of a gospel minister to lord it over God's heritage, but in lowliness of mind, with gentleness and long forbearance, to exhort, reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Leaders Must Sometimes Confront the Erring.*

Fearing that Timothy's mild, yielding disposition might lead him to shun an essential part of his work, Paul exhorted him to be faithful in reproving sin, and even to rebuke with sharpness those who were guilty of gross evils. Yet he was to do this "with all long-suffering and doctrine." He was to reveal the patience and love of Christ, explaining and enforcing his reproofs by the truths of the Word.

To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult achievement. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin, and the more decided our disapproval of it. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrong-doer; but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but

¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, 495.

² *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:18.

³ *Ibid.*, 3:229.

there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust.¹

This expression [cutting and slashing] is often used to represent the manners and words of persons who reprove those who are wrong or are supposed to be wrong. It is properly applied to those who have no duty to reprove their brethren, yet are ready to engage in this work in a rash and unsparing manner. It is improperly applied to those who have a special duty to do in reproofing wrongs in the church. Such have the burden of the work and feel compelled, from a love of precious souls, to deal faithfully.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Christ-like Love Mandates Correction of Sin and Error, while Maintaining Care and Compassion.*

The True Witness declares that when you suppose you are really in a good condition of prosperity you are in need of everything. It is not enough for ministers to present theoretical subjects; they should also present those subjects which are practical. They need to study the practical lessons that Christ gave His disciples and make a close application of the same to their own souls and to the people. Because Christ bears this rebuking testimony, shall we suppose that He is destitute of love to His people? Oh, no! He who died to redeem man from death, loves with a divine love, and those whom He loves He rebukes. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." But many will not receive the message that Heaven in mercy sends them. They cannot endure to be told of their neglect of duty and of their wrongs, their selfishness, their pride and love of the world.³

I have warned you against a spirit of censure, and I would again caution you in regard to that fault. Christ sometimes reproveth with severity, and in some cases it may be necessary for us to do so; but we should consider that while Christ knew the exact condition of the ones He rebuked, and just the amount of reproof they could bear, and what was necessary to correct their course of wrong, He also knew just how to pity the erring, comfort the unfortunate, and encourage the weak. He knew just how to keep souls from despondency and to inspire them with hope, because He was acquainted with the exact motives and peculiar trials of every mind. He could not make a mistake.

But *we* may misjudge motives; *we* may be deceived by appearances; *we* may think *we* are doing right to reprove wrong, and go too far, censure too severely, and wound where *we* wished to heal; or *we* may exercise sympathy unwisely, and counteract, in our ignorance, reproof that is merited and timely. *Our* judgment may be wrong, but

¹*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 30.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:612.

³*Ibid.*, 3:257.

Jesus was too wise to err. He reproved with pity and loved with a divine love those whom He rebuked.¹

There is great need that the pitying tenderness of Christ should be manifested at all times and in all places—not that blind sympathy which would gloss over sin and allow God's cause to be reproached by ill-doing, but that love which is a controlling principle of the life, which flows out naturally to others in good works, remembering that Christ has said: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Practice the Counsel of Matthew 18.*

From Christ's manner of dealing with the erring we may learn profitable lessons which are equally applicable to this work of confession. He bids us go to the one who has fallen into temptation, and labor with him alone. If it is not possible to help him, because of the darkness of his mind and his separation from God, we are to try again with two or three others. If the wrong is not righted, then, and only then, we are to tell it to the church. It is far better if wrongs can be righted and injuries healed without bringing the matter before the whole church. The church is not to be made the receptacle for the outpouring of every complaint or confession.³

Proactive Visioning and Planning

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Prayer and Sometimes Fasting Essential to Spirit-led Plans.*

Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel. “Wherefore, brethren,” they said, “look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons.⁴

¹Ibid., 4:66.

²Ibid., 4:224.

³Ibid. 5:646.

⁴*Acts of the Apostles*, 89.

But if the officers of a conference bear successfully the burdens laid upon them, they must pray, they must believe, they must trust God to use them as His agents in keeping the churches of the conference in good working order. This is their part of the vineyard to cultivate. There must be far more personal responsibility, far more thinking and planning, far more mental power brought into the labor put forth for the Master. This would enlarge the capacity of the mind, and give keener perceptions as to what to do and how. Brethren, you will have to wrestle with difficulties, carry burdens, give advice, plan and execute, constantly looking to God for help. Pray and labor, labor and pray; as pupils in the school of Christ, learn of Jesus.

The Lord has given us the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." It is in the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another, and to pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart. Unitedly make known your troubles to God. Talk less; much precious time is lost in talk that brings no light. Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Planning and Visioning Should Involve Others.*

In our plans for the carrying forward of the work, our mind must blend with other minds.

Let us cherish a spirit of confidence in the wisdom of our brethren. We must be willing to take advice and caution from our fellow laborers. Connected with the service of God, we must individually realize that we are parts of a great whole. We must seek wisdom from God, learning what it means to have a waiting, watching spirit, and to go to our Saviour when tired and depressed.

It is a mistake to withdraw from those who do not agree with our ideas. This will not inspire our brethren with confidence in our judgment. It is our duty to counsel with our brethren, and to heed their advice. We are to seek their counsel, and when they give it, we are not to cast it away, as if they were our enemies. Unless we humble our hearts before God, we shall not know His will.

Let us be determined to be in unity with our brethren. This duty God has placed upon us. We shall make their hearts glad by following their counsel, and make ourselves strong through the influence that this will give us. Moreover, if we feel that we do not need the counsel of our brethren, we close the door of our usefulness as counselors to them.

¹*Testimonies to Ministers*, 498, 499.

To every church I would bear the message that man is not to exalt his own judgment. Meekness and lowliness of heart will lead men to desire counsel at every step. And the Lord will say, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." It is our privilege to learn of Jesus. But when men, full of self-confidence, think that it is their place to give counsel instead of desiring to be counseled by their experienced brethren, they will listen to voices that will lead them in strange paths.

The angels of God are in our world, and satanic agencies are here also. I am permitted to see the inclination of certain ones to follow their own strong traits of character. If they refuse to yoke up with others who have had a long experience in the work, they will become blinded by self-confidence, not discerning between the false and the true. It is not safe that such ones should stand in the position of leaders, to follow their own judgment and plans.¹

The Lord's heritage is made up of vessels large and small, but each one has his individual work. The mind of one man, or the minds of two or three men, are not to be depended on as certain to be safe for all to follow. Let all look to God, trust in Him, and believe fully in His power. Yoke up with Christ and not with men, for men have no power to keep you from falling.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Make Plans to Remediate Systemic Injustice.*

Behold, O Lord, this poor, oppressed people that have been despised and maltreated by the White nation. Breathe into their souls the breath of spiritual life. . . . Give Thy Holy Spirit to those who shall go forth as messengers to this people. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us in our councils, and enable us to make plans and devise means for the spread of the truth among them.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Effective Planning Requires Expansive Visioning.*

I feel to regret the fact that there is such a dearth of breadth of mind and of far-seeing ability.⁴

¹Ibid., 500, 501.

²1888 *Materials*, 4:1620.

³"Am I My Brother's Keeper?" [A quoted prayer of Ellen G. White].

⁴*Testimonies to Ministers*, 301.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Sometimes the Planning and Visioning Should be Delegated to Others with Less Experience.*

The disciples of Jesus had reached a crisis in their experience. Under the wise leadership of the apostles, who labored unitedly in the power of the Holy Spirit, the work committed to the gospel messengers was developing rapidly. The church was continually enlarging, and this growth in membership brought increasingly heavy burdens upon those in charge. No one man, or even one set of men, could continue to bear these burdens alone, without imperiling the future prosperity of the church. There was necessity for a further distribution of the responsibilities which had been borne so faithfully by a few during the earlier days of the church. The apostles must now take an important step in the perfecting of gospel order in the church by laying upon others some of the burdens thus far borne by themselves.¹

Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth. In the days of the theocracy, when Moses was endeavoring to carry alone burdens so heavy that he would soon have worn away under them, he was counseled by Jethro to plan for a wise distribution of responsibilities. "Be thou for the people to Godward," Jethro advised, "that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." Jethro further advised that men be appointed to act as "rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." These were to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." They were to "judge the people at all seasons," thus relieving Moses of the wearing responsibility of giving consideration to many minor matters that could be dealt with wisely by consecrated helpers.

The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church, should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle. "Every great matter they shall bring unto thee," Jethro proposed to Moses, "but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace."²

I think I have laid out this matter many times before you, but I see no change in your actions. We want every responsible man to drop responsibilities upon others. Set others at work that will require them to plan, and to use judgment. Do not educate them to rely upon your judgment. Young men must be trained up to be thinkers. My

¹ *Acts of the Apostles*, 88.

² *Ibid.*, 92.

brethren, do not for a moment think that your way is perfection, and that those who are connected with you must be your shadows, must echo your words, repeat your ideas, and execute your plans.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *The Holy Spirit Gives Specific Direction through Appointed Agencies in the Organized Church.*

The circumstances connected with the separation of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit to a definite line of service show clearly that the Lord works through appointed agencies in His organized church. Years before, when the divine purpose concerning Paul was first revealed to him by the Saviour Himself, Paul was immediately afterward brought into contact with members of the newly organized church at Damascus. Furthermore, the church at that place was not long left in darkness as to the personal experience of the converted Pharisee. And now, when the divine commission given at that time was to be more fully carried out, the Holy Spirit, again bearing witness concerning Paul as a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, laid upon the church the work of ordaining him and his fellow laborer. As the leaders of the church in Antioch "ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.'"

God has made His church on the earth a channel of light, and through it He communicates His purposes and His will. He does not give to one of His servants an experience independent of and contrary to the experience of the church itself. Neither does He give one man a knowledge of His will for the entire church while the church—Christ's body—is left in darkness. In His providence He places His servants in close connection with His church in order that they may have less confidence in themselves and greater confidence in others whom He is leading out to advance His work.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Effective Planning Skills Grow with Exercise.*

God is the ruler of His people, and He will teach those who give their minds to Him how to use their brains. As they employ their executive ability, they will grow in efficiency.³

[T]he people go to church, listen to the sermon, pay their tithes, make their offerings, and do very little else. And why?—Because the ministers do not open their plans to the people, soliciting the benefit of their advice and counsel in planning and their help in executing the plans that they have had a part in forming. . . . There are to be no

¹*Testimonies to Ministers*, 302.

²*Acts of the Apostles*, 163.

³*Mind, Character, and Personality*, 1:263.

secret societies in our churches. "All ye are brethren." The minister's work is the lay member's work as well. Heart should be bound to heart. Let all press forward, shoulder to shoulder. Is not every true follower of Christ open to receive his teachings? And should not all have an opportunity to learn of Christ's methods by practical experience?¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *End Time Requires More Wise Planning Than Ever Before.*

As we near the final crisis, instead of feeling that there is less need of order and harmony of action, we should be more systematic than heretofore. All our work should be conducted according to well-defined plans.²

I am receiving light from the Lord that there should be wise generalship at this time more than at any former period of our history.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Each Geographical Location Has Its Own Challenges Which Should Not be Micromanaged from a Distance.*

Be sure that God has not laid upon those who remain away from these foreign fields of labor the burden of criticizing the ones on the ground where the work is being done. Those who are not on the ground know nothing about the necessities of the situation, and if they cannot say anything to help those who are on the ground, let them not hinder, but show their wisdom by the eloquence of silence, and attend to the work that is close at hand. I protest against the zeal that they manifest that is not according to knowledge, when they ventilate their ideas about foreign fields of labor.⁴ Men in responsible positions should credit others with some sense, with some ability of judgment and foresight, and look upon them as capable of doing the work committed to their hands. Our leading brethren have made a great mistake in marking out all the directions that the workers should follow, and this has resulted in deficiency, in a lack of a caretaking spirit in the worker, because they have relied upon others to do all their planning, and have themselves taken no responsibility. Should the men who have taken this responsibility upon themselves step out of our ranks, or die, what a state of things would be found in our institutions!

Leading men should place responsibilities upon others, and allow them to plan and devise and execute, so that they may obtain an experience. Give them a word of

¹"The Duty of the Minister and the People," *Review and Herald*, 9 July 1895, 434.

²*Selected Messages*, 3:26.

³Letter to E. J. Waggoner, George's Terrace, Melbourne, Australia, 27 December 1892, Letter 27a, 1892, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁴*Testimonies to Ministers*, 201.

counsel when necessary, but do not take away the work because you think the brethren are making mistakes. May God pity the cause when one man's mind and one man's plan is followed without question. God would not be honored should such a state of things exist. All our workers must have room to exercise their own judgment and discretion. God has given men talents which He means that they should use. He has given them minds, and He means that they should become thinkers, and do their own thinking and planning, rather than depend upon others to think for them.¹

The arrangement that all moneys must go through Battle Creek and under the control of the few men in that place is a wrong way of managing. There are altogether too many weighty responsibilities given to a few men, and some do not make God their counselor. What do these men know of the necessities of the work in foreign countries? How can they know how to decide the questions which come to them asking for information?²

In each country a man should be appointed to work in the general interests of the cause. He need not be a preacher, and he must not be a policy man. He should be unselfish, a man who loves, who honors, and fears his God. His whole time should be devoted to the work. He should plan unselfishly, and in the fear of God. Let him be general agent for that country, and let him be connected with a council composed of the very best men, that they may counsel together, and attend to the work within their borders. There should be businessmen appointed to do the same in the different states in America.³

Alacrity

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Prompt and Decisive Action Brings Success.*

Industry in a God-appointed duty is an important part of true religion. Men should seize circumstances as God's instruments with which to work His will. Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect result in failure and dishonor to God. If the leaders in the cause of truth show no zeal, if they are indifferent and purposeless, the church will be careless, indolent, and pleasure-loving; but if they are filled with a holy purpose to serve God and Him alone, the people will be united, hopeful, eager.⁴

¹Ibid., 302.

²Ibid., 321.

³Ibid.

⁴*Prophets and Kings*, 676.

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Venture Out and Risk!*

The [administrative] position occupied by my husband is not an enviable one. It requires the closest attention, care, and mental labor. It requires the exercise of sound judgment and wisdom. It requires self-denial, a whole heart, and a firm will to push matters through. In that important position God will have a man to venture, to risk something; to move out firmly for the right, whatever may be the consequences; to battle against obstacles, and waver not, even though life be at stake.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Seize the Day, or Resign!*

I saw you seeking to instruct some; but at the very time when you needed perseverance, courage, and energy, you became fainthearted, distrustful, discouraged, and dropped the work. You desired your own ease, and allowed an interest which might have increased, to go down. There might have been an ingathering of souls; but the golden opportunity passed for that time, because of your lack of energy. I saw that unless you decide to gird on the whole armor, and are willing to endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross of Christ, and feel that you can spend and be spent to bring souls to Christ, you should give up your profession as a minister and choose some other calling.

Your soul is not sanctified to the work. You do not take the burden of the work upon you. You choose an easier lot than that which is appointed to the minister of Christ. He counted not His life dear unto Himself. He pleased not Himself, but lived for others' good. He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. It is not enough to be able to present the arguments of our position before the people. The minister of Christ must possess an undying love for souls, a spirit of self-denial, of self-sacrifice. He should be willing to give his life, if need be, to the work of saving his fellow men, for whom Christ died.²

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *"Slow" and "Sluggish" are Negative Qualities.*

Brother A, you are too slow. You should cultivate opposite qualities. The cause of God demands men who can see quickly and act instantaneously at the right time and with power. If you wait to measure every difficulty and balance every perplexity you meet you will do but little. You will have obstacles and difficulties to encounter at every turn, and you must with firm purpose decide to conquer them, or they will conquer you.³

¹*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:320.

²*Ibid.*, 2:150, 151.

³*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:497.

My brother, you need to cultivate promptness. Away with your hesitating manner. You are slow and neglect to seize the work and accomplish it. You must get out of this narrow manner of labor, for it is of the wrong order. When unbelief takes hold of your soul, your labor is of such a hesitating, halting, balancing kind that you accomplish nothing yourself and hinder others from doing. You have just enough interest to see difficulties and start doubts, but have not the interest or courage to overcome the difficulties or dispel the doubts. At such times you need to surrender to God. You need force of character and less stubbornness and set willfulness. This slowness, this sluggishness of action, is one of the greatest defects in your character and stands in the way of your usefulness.¹

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Long Delays Tire the Angels.*

Sometimes various ways and purposes, different modes of operation in connection with the work of God, are about evenly balanced in the mind; but it is at this very point that the nicest discrimination is necessary. And if anything is accomplished to the purpose it must be done at the golden moment. The slightest inclination of the weight in the balance should be seen and should determine the matter at once. Long delays tire the angels. It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position, to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily.

I have been shown that the most signal victories and the most fearful defeats have been on the turn of minutes. God requires promptness of action. Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage. My brother, you need to reform. The timing of things may tell much in favor of truth. Victories are frequently lost through delays. There will be crises in this cause. Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect will result in great failures and positive dishonor to God. Rapid movements at the critical moment often disarm the enemy, and he is disappointed and vanquished, for he had expected time to lay plans and work by artifice.

God wants men connected with His work in Battle Creek whose judgment is at hand, whose minds, when it is necessary, will act like the lightnings. The greatest promptness is positively necessary in the hour of peril and danger. Every plan may be well laid to accomplish certain results, and yet a delay of a very short time may leave things to assume an entirely different shape, and the great objects which might have been gained are lost through lack of quick foresight and prompt dispatch. Much may be done in training the mind to overcome indolence. There are times when caution and great deliberation are necessary; rashness would be folly. But even here, much has been lost by too great hesitancy. Caution, up to a certain point, is required; but

¹Ibid., 498.

hesitancy and policy on particular occasions have been more disastrous than would have been a failure through rashness.¹

If the leading men in our conferences do not now accept the message sent them by God, and fall into line for action, the churches will suffer great loss. When the watchman, seeing the sword coming, gives the trumpet a certain sound, the people along the line will echo the warning, and all will have opportunity to make ready for the conflict. But too often the leader has stood hesitating, seeming to say: "Let us not be in too great haste. There may be a mistake. We must be careful not to raise a false alarm." The very hesitancy and uncertainty on his part is crying: "'Peace and safety.' Do not get excited. Be not alarmed. There is a great deal more made of this religious amendment question than is demanded. This agitation will all die down." Thus he virtually denies the message sent from God, and the warning which was designed to stir the churches fails to do its work. The trumpet of the watchman gives no certain sound, and the people do not prepare for the battle. Let the watchman beware lest, through his hesitancy and delay, souls shall be left to perish, and their blood shall be required at his hand.²

It often happens that circumstances arise which demand prompt action. And sometimes precious opportunities have been lost because of delay. The one who should have acted promptly felt that he must first consult with someone who was far away and who was unacquainted with the true conditions. Much time has thus been lost in asking advice and counsel from men who were not in a position to give wise counsel. Let all God's workers be guided by the word of truth which points out their duty, following implicitly the directions Christ has given.³

Ellen White's Leadership Principle: *Rash, Hasty, Impulsive Moves Dishonor God.*

When men in positions of responsibility are in such a hurry to establish some new institution that is untimely, the showing made is not only against the interests of the Lord's cause, but against the interests of the men who in human wisdom have tried to advance too rapidly. God is not glorified by those who attempt to go faster than He leads. Perplexity, embarrassment, and distress are the result. The Lord does not desire His representatives to repeat these mistakes; for the past record of such movements does not glorify Him.⁴

Let there be nothing done in a disorderly manner, that there shall be a great loss or sacrifice made upon property because of ardent, impulsive speeches which stir up an

¹Ibid., 497, 498.

²Ibid., 5:715.

³*Testimonies to Ministers*, 497.

⁴*Manuscript 144*, 1902, [The Results of Following Human Wisdom], 9 November 1902—typed, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

enthusiasm which is not after the order of God, that a victory that was essential to be gained, shall, for lack of level-headed moderation and proper contemplation and sound principles and purposes, be turned into a defeat. Let there be wise generalship in this matter, and all move under the guidance of a wise, unseen Counselor, which is God. Elements that are human will struggle for the mastery, and there may be a work done that does not bear the signature of God. Now I plead with every soul to look not too strongly and confidently to human counselors, but look most earnestly to God, the one wise in counsel. Submit all your ways and your will to God's ways and to God's will. . . .

Should some move hastily and fly out of Battle Creek, and be brought into discouragement, they will reflect, not upon themselves for moving unadvisedly, but upon others who, they will charge, brought a pressure to bear upon them. All their discomfiture and defeat are charged back upon those who should not be reflected upon. . . .¹

We desire that in all that is done, the Lord's name shall be glorified, and His cause advanced. Never was there a time when wise generalship was so much needed as at the present time. Human prejudice is not of God. To be guided by impulse is very dangerous. Human impulse is a poor commodity and cannot take the place of sanctified reason.²

Ellen White's Experiential Demonstration of Her Leadership Principles on Key Leadership Issues

Ellen White saw conversion to Christ as key to leadership success, indeed, as a requisite to eternal life. Thus, she saw the born-again experience as the most important qualifier for leadership. She herself took an early interest in spirituality. Converted at age eleven, she was baptized the next year and accepted into membership into the Methodist church.³ Yet she longed for a fuller experience with God, and at age thirteen attended William Miller's lectures in Portland, Maine. Speaking of that time in her life, Ellen White wrote, "When the invitation was given for church members and sinners to

¹*Country Living* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 27.

²*This Day With God*, 269.

³*Early Writings*, 11.

come forward for prayers, I embraced the first opportunity, for I knew that I must have a great work done for me to fit me for heaven. My soul was thirsting for full and free salvation, but knew not how to obtain it.”¹

Eventually, young Ellen’s mother encouraged her to consult with a trusted Methodist minister, Elder Stockman, who helped her understand the depth of God’s love for her and the beauty of salvation in Christ alone.² Thus emerged a love for Jesus that would grow stronger as her life progressed. In 1872, Ellen White confided to her diary, “My whole being longs after the Lord. I am not content to be satisfied with occasional flashes of light. I must have more.”³

Throughout her long life of ministry, Ellen White saw herself as indebted to the grace of Christ for fulfillment of her mission. In 1903 she wrote in her diary: “I can never doubt my mission for I am a participant in the privileges and am nourished and vivified, knowing that I am called unto the grace of Christ. Every time I set forth the truth to the people, and call their attention to eternal life which Christ has made possible for us to obtain, I am as much benefited as they, with most gracious discoveries of the grace and love and the power of God in behalf of His people, in justification and reconciliation with God.”⁴

In few areas does Ellen White model her own leadership principles better than in her treatment of the erring. Over the years, Ellen White spent many hours befriending

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., 12.

³*Manuscript 20*, 15 July 1892, Diary entry written in Preston, Victoria, Australia, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

⁴*Manuscript 174*, 16 July 1903, Diary entry while in Healdsburg, California, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

and counseling John Harvey Kellogg. She sent him scores of letters, cautioning him against building too expansive an edifice at Battle Creek, and warning him against his immersing pantheistic worldview and resistance to teamwork.

Dr. Kellogg vacillated in his acceptance of Ellen White's counsel. By 1903 it seemed apparent that Dr. Kellogg was making choices in defiance of the church, and Ellen White was expected by many to take a stronger, more definitive stand against him at the General Conference session. Instead, her biographer¹ believes she had Dr. Kellogg in mind when she told this compelling story at the conclusion of her talk on Sunday, April 5:

Do not cut any man's hands. I once read of a drowning man who was making desperate efforts to get into a boat close beside him. But the boat was full, and as he grasped the side, those in the boat cut off one of his hands. Then he grasped the boat with the other hand, and that hand was cut off. Then he grasped it with his teeth, and those inside had mercy on him, and lifted him in. But how much better it would have been if they had taken him in before they had cut off his hands!

My brethren, do not cut a man to pieces before you do anything to help him. God wants us to have hearts of pity.²

In the end, Ellen White did confront the issues with Dr. Kellogg. But this final confrontation did not occur before she had made every conceivable effort to restore him to harmony with the church and with his fellow workers.

In another instance, Ellen White again modeled a kind, compassionate, patient attitude in dealing with the erring. Complaints about Elder A. T. Jones' direct, sometimes abrasive style of leadership had been circulating. At a 6 A.M. ministers' meeting, held on the Seventh-day Adventist camp ground in Fresno, California, Ellen

¹ Arthur White, *The Ellen G. White Biography*, 6 vols. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1981-1986), 5:254.

² "The Work Before Us," *The General Conference Bulletin*, 7 April 1903, 105.

White spoke candidly about how God views the erring and how He wishes us to treat them. Interestingly, A. T. Jones was in her audience!

“Brethren, I have something to say to you. I will come right to the point.”¹ Ellen White went on to describe A. T. Jones’ and Elder Corliss’ strengths and weaknesses in some detail. Then she continued with this counsel:

When I returned to America, I found among the workers in this Conference a spirit of measuring their fellow workers. I have no sympathy whatever with such a spirit. Do not condemn your brethren because their minds do not run in the same channel as your own. You may not agree with them, it is true; but perhaps they would not agree with you any more than you would with them. You might just as well be told to cease your ministry on account of your defects as they. Such measurement is of a very cheap order. God does not measure in this way.

Soon after our arrival in America, we attended a local camp-meeting at Napa. Several of the Conference laborers were present; but where was Brother Corliss, a man who has an understanding of the Scriptures, a man who should be respected? God has respect for Brother Corliss. He does not desire any of us to take the position that because our brother may sometimes fail, he is unworthy of our respect and confidence. Although Brother Corliss has faults and makes mistakes, yet he is no more defective than those who thought he was hardly worthy to attend the Napa camp-meeting as a public speaker. They needed to repent just as much as he did. It could well have been said to them, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.”

It is not surprising that a man who has passed through the experiences that Elder Jones passed through in Battle Creek should sometimes err. He has had to arm himself and keep on the armor constantly, fighting the various evils that were continually creeping in. He has kept himself braced for so long that he must now make an effort to unlearn many things. He must be reconverted. In his manner of presenting the principles of truth he must reform. God has great love for Brother Jones, as well as for every other poor mortal who in some respects fails of reaching the standard placed before him. . . .

I thank God with heart and soul and voice that He has spared Brother Corliss to us. I thank God, Brother Corliss, that you are still in the world. Although at times I have felt that your course was not just right, my brother, yet you have never heard me speak in a manner that you could question, have you? (J. O. Corliss: No.) I do not think you have, because I have felt just as tender toward you as if you were my own son. And I want this tenderness ever to remain in my heart. I know that Brother

¹*Manuscript 120*, 1902, Fresno, California, 6 October 1902. Report of a Ministers’ Meeting, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

Corliss may sometimes be hasty and may make mistakes; but in Christ he can find One who is able to keep him from falling.

Brethren, let us all refrain from criticism. He who criticizes his brethren takes his position on the enemy's ground. Satan is an accuser of the brethren. Day and night he is accusing those who profess to follow Christ. Too often we think we could do better than those who are doing their best to carry on the work in right lines.

When you think your brother is pursuing a wrong course, go to him in kindness, telling him his fault "between thee and him alone." Ask him if he is sure that he is right in doing as he does. Invite him to compare notes with you. Often when you treat him in this way, light and blessing come to both of you. Not infrequently the supposed fault is found to be a virtue.

Let us learn to follow the Bible rule for dealing with the erring. Let us do our part to answer Christ's prayer for unity among His people. During the coming year let us obey the new commandment that Christ gave to His disciples in every age, "Love one another, as I have loved you." For our soul's sake let us serve Him with more zeal and earnestness than we have ever served Him before.

Brethren, shall we not cease criticizing one another? Shall we not blend? Shall we not be determined so to unite that we shall be one strong whole? Shall we not bind heart to heart? Shall we not seek to subdue our hasty spirit, and learn to be as meek and lowly as the little children of whom Christ said to His disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as this little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"?

We have the privilege of being loyal members of the Lord's family, children of the heavenly King. Shall we not act like brethren and sisters, treating one another kindly, tenderly, affectionately? "By this," Christ declares, "shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Let us remember these words.¹

Though Ellen White often wrote letters of counsel and correction to leaders, she could also be strongly encouraging and affirming to workers who had mismanaged their ministry. This encouragement was repeatedly seen in her efforts to support the work for the southern blacks. Complaints against the workers in the South had escalated by the turn of the twentieth century. While acknowledging that mistakes had been made in the management of the Nashville publishing house and in the work for the blacks of the south, Ellen White refused to join the general criticism and instead urged support of the beleaguered ministry and workers. She counseled:

¹Ibid.

My brethren, if you had a realization of what has been done in the South, you would praise God, and work earnestly to bring to greater completion that which has been begun. Instead of picking flaws, you would commend the good that has been accomplished. What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The church on earth is to become the court of holy love. Those who by the Lord's appointment occupy in it positions of trust are to bring into it the pity and self-sacrifice of the great Head of the church.

The Lord desires His people to take up the work that lies nearest them, remembering that every work of goodness is identified with the goodness, mercy, and love of God. Christian fellowship is one means by which character is formed. Thus selfishness is purged from the life, and men and women are drawn to Christ, the great Center. Thus is answered His prayer that His followers may be one, as He is one with the Father.

My brethren, fasten your grasp upon the unworked Southern field, and labor for it zealously and untiringly. Let not all the means be absorbed in places that have already been worked, leaving the work in other places to present unfinished plans and unfulfilled purposes. As you travel from place to place, and hear our people saying that they wish to help the Southern field, beware how you dissuade them from doing this. Thus you rob a needy field of the place that God designs it to have.¹

Not surprisingly, Ellen White followed the plan of Christ Himself outlined in Matthew 18 as a paradigm for dealing with the erring:

Christ has told us plainly how we are to deal with those whom we think have injured us. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

Let us cease to feed on the faults of one another. It is worse than cannibalism. God cannot bless His people until they believe His Word and follow His methods. A reform is needed in our churches, that God's cause may be saved from the strife of tongues.²

Another of Ellen White's leadership strengths was casting a vision for the establishment of schools, hospitals, sanitariums, and publishing houses in the United

¹*Manuscript 167*, October 1902, Diary entry regarding the work in Nashville, written in Fresno, California. Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Ibid.*

States, Europe, and Australia. In 1902 she wrote a wonderfully prescient letter to Adventists, urging the purchase of properties to establish medical or educational entities in Fernando and near San Diego and Los Angeles.¹ After urging her fellow Adventists to invest quickly in these properties, she wrote, "From many places in Southern California the light is to shine forth to the multitudes."²

The familiar story of Ellen White's initiative and alacrity in the establishment and subsequent accreditation of what would be Loma Linda Medical Center and School of Medicine has been well documented in *Story of Our Health Message*, by D. E. Robinson. Displeased by the Southern California Conference president's lack of alacrity and his resistance to the purchase of the Loma Linda property, Ellen White wrote to Elder Burden: "Do not be discouraged if in any wise there is some cutting across of your plans, and if you are somewhat hindered. But I hope that we shall never again have to meet the hindrance that we have met in the past because of the way in which things have been conducted on some lines in Southern California. I have seen the hold-back principles followed, and I have seen the displeasure of the Lord because of this. If the same spirit is manifested, I shall not consent to keep silent as I have done."³

In the report of the council meeting held in the Sanitarium Chapel at St. Helena, California on 22 June 1902, I find Ellen White again showing an early proactive vision for the Sydney Sanitarium in Australia. Chiding the Battle Creek Sanitarium

¹*Manuscript 119*, 8 October 1902, "An Appeal for the Work in Southern California," written in Fresno, California, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Ibid.*

³*The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters* (Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1985), 251.

administrators for not sharing their profit with the fledgling Australian entity, Ellen White urged that God's money not be localized.¹

Even after Ellen White described a vision in which God had showed her the positive potential of the establishment of an entity in a particular place, the "brethren" sometimes still dragged their feet. To get them off dead center she would alternately send telegrams and urgent letters, make personal visits to the property, or at times even provide earnest money from her own pocket.

On 12 June 1906, in a personal interview at St. Helena, California, George Irwin asked Ellen White if \$55,000 would be an extravagant investment in the proposed Washington Sanitarium. Not only did Ellen White vigorously support the investment, she also said "The Washington Sanitarium ought to have been in running order before this time!"²

When convinced that a project was God-approved, Ellen White was never one to let grass grow under her feet. Today, we might label her a "mover and a shaker." She herself once stated that "long delays tire the angels."³ At the same time she cautioned against rash, ill-considered decisions.

Whether discussing or modeling leadership qualifications, response to the erring, proactive visioning, planning, or alacrity, Ellen White continually urged leaders in word and example to remember that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This would remain her lode star.

¹*Manuscript 93*, 22 June 1902, Report of Council Meeting, Part 2, written in St. Helena, California, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

²*Manuscript 83*, 12 June 1906, An Interview regarding the Washington Sanitarium, recorded in St. Helena, California, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.

³*Gospel Workers*, 1915 ed., 134.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize Ellen White's counsel to leaders, briefly describe her experiential application of the counsel, extract from her writings a theory of leadership, and derive a conclusion as to whether or not her writings are still relevant to leaders in the twenty-first century.

Summary of Ellen White's Counsel to Leaders

In Ellen White's perspective, the most important qualification for a leader is the calling and empowerment of the Spirit. This anointing comes in response to the leader's willingness to ask in humility for the Spirit's renewal and guidance, and to respond to His promptings with selfless obedience and service. The Spirit-led leader will then build an inclusive team, and will not be eager for power, status or recognition. Ellen White encourages the Spirit-led leader to build a relationship with his or her followers that is based on shared purpose, values, and vision, and to encourage dialogue and dissent as authentic steps to sustainable change. She sees Jesus as the great model for Spirit-led leadership.

Leaders, in her view, must prioritize time for careful, continual, and deep study of the Scriptures, both to seek a deeper relationship and commitment to God, and to find truth and wisdom. She promoted an expanding understanding of Scripture, accompanied

with dynamic discussion of new truth.¹ When real spiritual life declines, leaders become conservative and avoid discussion of fresh Scriptural insights.

Leaders of integrity must schedule time daily for communion with God. For Ellen White, the purpose of redemption is to restore in humanity the image of God. This divine miracle of heaven's infilling can only occur in the leader whose dependence on God is total. She believed that a leader's spiritual character develops and strengthens as he or she actively works to aid the poor and the marginalized. In her view, the higher the administrative position, the greater need of dependence on God. No leader can rationalize sin due to pressure or any other circumstance. She wrote that too much "busyness" dries up the character and leaves the soul Christless. She saw a living connection with God, not position, as essential to sound decision making and development of character.

Leaders in responsible positions who do not pray continually for divine wisdom will develop a distorted worldview, and will forfeit God's blessing, which will result in personal failure. Power and strength for service come through prayer, as is demonstrated in Christ's example. Leaders should pray on behalf of those they influence, and inform them of those prayers. In times of crises or emergency, God waits for leaders to pray in order that He can intervene. Leaders should also pray to discern good from evil. Ellen White also counseled leaders to do more than perfunctory praying in committee meetings, councils, and workers' meetings, seeking unity, divine leadership, and Spirit-wisdom. For particularly complex issues, she recommends fasting and prayer.

¹"In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, 127).

Though Ellen White did not coin the term “servant leader,” she does write at length on the concept of servant leadership. She saw Jesus as the primary servant-leader model. Servant leaders combine God’s strength and wisdom with humble diligence. Though she encouraged leaders to be productive, making the most of present opportunities, she strongly decried pushing for status or a higher position. According to Ellen White, a servant-leader loves people, and works sacrificially and compassionately to save them for the kingdom of God. She believed that though titles and praise are irrelevant to the true servant leader, he or she would not flaunt humility, but rather work together with an inclusive church team.

Ellen White gave considerable counsel to leaders who abused authority. In her view, no one should see himself or herself as infallible, of supreme authority, or use any dictatorial or arbitrary methods of command. She vehemently opposed centralization of power and control, while at the same time warning against congregationalism. She was particularly strong in her indictment against any kind of dishonest practice, exploitation, or injustice. Committee members should be intentionally chosen to represent diversity of thought, not because they necessarily concur with the leader’s views. Leaders who do not treat each person with respect and dignity are abusing their authority.

Ellen White uses the case study of Moses’ leadership contrasted with Aaron’s leadership to illustrate the positive and beneficial use of authority versus a weak, vacillating and popularity-seeking type of authority. Though she completely rejects a domineering, autocratic leadership style, she maintains that in times of crises a leader must demonstrate firmness, decision, and unflinching courage. The difference may be

found in the leader's motivation; a domineering leader may be eager for power and control, whereas a decisive leader may be most eager to promote the honor of God.

Ellen White was a strong proponent of the inclusive empowerment of people for evangelism and service. She saw a gender-inclusive, race-inclusive, and age-inclusive movement, organized to propagate the gospel in the context of Revelation's three angels. For her, the people of God are one melded humanity, where prejudice should not exist. The Holy Spirit should be allowed to anoint whom He will, and no hand should be stayed that could be engaged in ministry.

For Ellen White, one of the strongest attributes of strong, godly leadership is the cultivated ability to connect with others. She speaks often of the need for patient mentors who will take youth and others with less experience under their wing, carefully encourage and motivate them, and provide opportunities to grow through success and failure. She even called it a duty for leaders to recognize and develop potential in others. A true leader even rejoices when the mentee surpasses the leader's own achievements!

Another unarguable qualification for true leadership, according to Ellen White, is care for the poor and service to the needy. Harking back often to Jesus' model of leadership, she calls for leaders to engage in sacrificial benevolence to the marginalized. She even spoke of hospitality to those outside the leader's socio-economic position as being the means for the giver to increase physical strength and vitality.

Ellen White sees conversion to Christ as an essential leadership (and even management) qualifier. Both leaders and managers need moral integrity that is grounded in God's law. She is unique in her call for leaders whose primary activity is mental to also engage in physical labor. (Gardening and yard work might be a contemporary

application of this principle.) Managers should have financial acumen and organization; leaders must be persons of vision and action. Other qualifications she enumerates for leaders include consistent respect for others, tolerance, independent thinking, delegation skills, and self-control. She believed that all leaders should have a passion for saving souls for Christ.

Leaders must deal with the erring with Christ-like sympathy, offering hope and redemption even in failures. Though Ellen White acknowledged that reproof and protest are sometimes needed, discipline and correction must never be given harshly but always in the Spirit of Christ's long-suffering love. She advocated tenacious, patient, even tender interaction with those who make mistakes, use bad judgment, or have other personal failures. Leaders who possess Christ-like love promote justice, correct sin, and combat error while maintaining care and compassion.

In Ellen White's view, proactive visioning and planning must be Spirit-led. Decisions should not be made until the leader's team engages in prayer and sometimes fasting to ensure they are at one with God's will. Ellen White was a strong proponent of expansive visioning, far-seeing thought, and well-considered risk taking. In this context of visioning, she again urges leaders to sometimes delegate planning and future development to those with less experience in order to provide them with important opportunities to enlarge their leadership potential. Additionally, she recognized that each geographical location has its own challenges, and micromanaged visioning should not be done from a distance.

Summary of Ellen White's Experiential Practice of Her Leadership Principles

Though Ellen White was a proponent of productivity, and exemplified this in her vast literary output, community outreach, and intense speaking and travel schedule, she also advocated margins, both in the example of her personal life and in her counsel to others.¹ She was particularly focused and consistent in scheduling personal time with God in prayer and Scripture study. Family worship (prayer, hymn singing, and Bible study) was a daily event in the White home, whether there were guests or not. Both her written prayers and diary entries show struggles in her spiritual journey, and occasions when she turned in contrition to her Savior as she rued her failure to reflect His image in her own life. In spoken and written communication, she frequently referenced her willingness to know and practice God's will for her life. She petitioned God continually for fresh unction from His Spirit that she could be God's agent to "save souls." The consuming passion of her life was to meet Jesus and spend eternity with Him. Throughout her prodigious literary achievements, she often heralds this expectation.

Ellen White often performed disagreeable tasks, both in correcting error, and in undertaking mundane and even unpleasant work which contributed toward others' happiness and well-being. Her summary of this altruism was, "The Lord has sustained me."² Though some of her counsel may seem harsh, especially when isolated from contextual annotation, I do not find evidence of her domineering insistence on power or

¹"[Leaders and ministers]are not to have so many burdens laid upon them that they cannot give proper attention to the church in their own home. . . . When you hurry from one thing to another, when you have so much to do that you cannot take time to commune with God, how can you expect power in your work?" (*Manuscript 101*, 21 July 1902, "Ministers and Teachers to Take Time to Talk With God," 1902, Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts, EGWRC-GC.)

²Manuscript Releases, 5:59.

control. Repeatedly, she reminds the recipient who received reprimanding counsel of God's love for him or her, and His desire to send the message for redemptive purpose. She did not shy from decisiveness in times of church crises, emulating more nearly Moses' courage and firmness than Aaron's compromising, facilitating leadership style.

Ellen White demonstrated the empowerment of an inclusive church, mobilized for service and evangelism. Through speaking, writing, and personal invitation, she challenged each church member to live out their potential. She urged leaders to provide opportunities for minorities, women, and youth to be involved in the life and action of the Adventist movement. Traveling in the war-torn southern part of the United States, she helped support the work for blacks in the region with her own finances and words of encouragement to the innovators of that outreach. She was actively involved in community outreach, and often participated in ecumenical movements to combat social ills, such as alcoholism. She also kept a personal collection of money, clothes, and furniture to give to those in unfortunate financial circumstances, as well as frequently sharing her garden and orchard produce with neighbors who had less. Many Adventist leaders of the nineteenth century cite evidence of Ellen White's on-going mentoring relationship with them, often beginning in their youth.

It is in Ellen White's treatment of the erring that I find her most significant existential display of compassionate, redemptive leadership. Her on-going correspondence with Dr. J. H. Kellogg, her public treatment of A. T. Jones, are prominent examples of scores of persons experiencing personal failures whom she counseled and encouraged. Though her interaction with son Edson seems sometimes to be a notable exception to her usual compassion and tact, even in this relationship she often showed

strong support for her free-wheeling oldest son, even in the midst of upper-level-management detractors. Examples of her almost incredible vision (in hindsight) and alacrity in the establishment of schools, sanitariums, and publishing houses around the world have been specifically documented in previous chapters.

Her own words, pronouns changed to feminine, might best describe the enduring impact of Ellen White's personal life: "After [a person] has nothing more to do with anything under the sun, the example she has set, the golden words she has spoken, live through time and through all eternity. This influence which was after the divine pattern never dies. Her life has been connected with God."¹

Ellen White's Theory of Leadership

Though Ellen White never articulated her theory of leadership, her writings indicate that the most essential element for any leader is to accept and develop a personal accountability to God, subsequently working with excellence "as unto the Lord." In her view, God's leadership always transcends humanity's. Thus, privatization of ethical choices can not flourish when Christ is Lord of every sphere of the leader's life.

Ellen White devotes much of her prose to describing Jesus, who she would doubtless see as the epitome of all the positive qualifications described in contemporary leadership theory books. A theme of her writings is the renewal of the leader's heart into the image of the heart of God. The incarnate "Jesus as Leader" that Ellen White describes as worthy of emulation was able to create, articulate, and communicate a

¹*The Upward Look*, 55. (This quote is excerpted from an encouraging letter by Ellen White to Daniel Bourdeau when he was engaged in ministry in Europe.)

compelling vision, change the theme of ordinary persons' conversation, re-order His follower's priorities and ambitions, motivate the majority of His original group to transcend self-interest,¹ transform His followers' entire worldview, and inspire such loyalty that many in His organization have chosen to be martyred rather than abandon His cause. Not surprisingly, then, even her practical leadership counsel as well as her more theoretical leadership principles are extrapolated qualifications from the principles exemplified in the life of Christ.

Another source from which I extracted Ellen White's theory of leadership was through her descriptions of leaders in various biblical narratives. Perhaps the most precise example would be Exod 18, where Jethro tells Moses that he represents God to the people. In commenting on this in *Acts of the Apostles*,² Ellen White affirms this view of leadership—leaders are persons who represent God, His character, His purpose, to those whom they are called to influence. She also quotes from I Chr 28, David's charge to the newly anointed King Solomon, that he should "know God." Thus Ellen White saw leaders as persons called by God to know Him, and to pass on the knowledge and purposes of God to the people.

Yet almost paradoxically, Ellen White did not promote a leader's *playing God* in the isolated, dictatorial, authoritative style that some persons hoist on Deity. An unexpected result of my research was the discovery of her myriad counsels that leaders should lead by cultivating a relationship with their followers that is based on shared

¹Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 15.

²*Acts of the Apostles*, 92-96.

vision, shared values, shared purpose, and characterized by authentic conflict, managed transitions, and sustainable change.

Since practical leadership literature in the genre that we know it today was virtually non-existent in the time of Ellen White, her practical counsel cannot be shown to be influenced by her contemporaries. Though some of Ellen White's counsel on knowing God parallels other nineteenth century moralists, evangelists, and theologians who wrote on prayer, Scripture study, and character development, her spiritual counsel to leaders nonetheless bears the hallmark of her unique and overarching worldview of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, as I have shown in the preceding chapters. She always looked beyond the present existence to heavenly realities, and her leadership counsel reflects that projection. In comparative analysis with current leadership literature, I found that sometimes she mirrors today's leadership theories, occasionally her counsel is oppositional, and in some instances, her leadership principles are totally unique, and may even be said to "fill in some gaps" left by current theorists.

In a sense, I categorize her theory of leadership as progressive, because she promoted a fresh approach to old truths, because she empowered an inclusive church, and because she condemned as conservative those who refused to examine new understandings of Scripture. Additionally, Ellen White's counsel repeatedly defies the metaphors of her own industrial era, where "machine" best described organization, with all of machinery's inherent orderly and rational uniformity, complete with rigid rules enforced by a rigid system of hierarchy. Against this cultural milieu, Ellen White promoted creativity, authentic conflict, humanizing interaction with workers, and distributed leadership. She also extolled biblical values (in today's leadership literature

often called "human values") such as spirit, love, empowerment, trust, grace, humility, and forgiveness. Though born into a world of radical individualism, Ellen White nonetheless emphasizes a community-based movement. She urged leaders to move courageously through complexities of transition and chaos,¹ certain of their hope that earthlings will move beyond the fractal-like predictability of time, space, and matter² when Christ intervenes in earth history.

The metaphor for today's organization is a living system that may be chaotic, complex, creative, unpredictable, and filled with conflicting values. No single individual could bring about sustainable change and progress to a living system in time of great transformation. I found that to be exactly what Ellen (albeit in nineteenth century language) is saying! Not only is each leader to consider himself or herself part of a team effort, they must also recognize that their success will be in direct proportion to their willingness to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In "*The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the 21st Century*" Michael Mandelbaum argues that the *raison d'être* for American's fight to globalize democracy is that "all powerful states have some tendency to want to export what they value most about themselves."³ In a parallel sense, Ellen White sees leadership as primarily an opportunity for persons whom the Spirit has called to leadership to use that gift to promote Christ and the kingdom of heaven, both the kingdom of God that is "within you" as well as the hope of the kingdom of glory. Because her leadership

¹*Education*, 214.

²2 Pet 3:4.

³Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2005), 170.

counsel is always in the context of her theological structure of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the influence she urges leaders to exert is in favor of Christ's offer of eternal life, and in opposition to the inducements of Satan, with his enticements to the conventional trappings of leadership such as power, authority, wealth and position.

Perhaps a summary statement of Ellen White's theory of leadership, both actual leadership and potential leadership, can be found in her own statement:

Regard every moment of time as golden. Do not waste it in indolence; do not spend it in folly; but grasp the higher treasures. Cultivate the thoughts and expand the soul by girding about the mind, not allowing it to be filled with unimportant matters. Secure every advantage within your reach for strengthening the intellect. Do not be satisfied with a low standard. Do not rest content until by faithful endeavor, watchfulness, and earnest prayer, you have secured the wisdom that is from above. Thus you may rise in character, and gain an influence over other minds, enabling you to lead them in the path of uprightness and holiness. This is your privilege.¹

Lastly, Ellen White's theory of leadership must be seen as expansive, going beyond the conventional definitions of a leader. Though she did acknowledge spiritual gifts,² and recognized the importance of responsible positions on boards, committees, and in conferences, her definition of leadership included the right and moral imperative of *every church member* to act their part in influencing the world for eternal realities, under the guidance and in the power of Christ.³ I derived from my research that Ellen White sees a leader as a person who actually accepts and exercises the opportunities given by God to every Christian to use their influence for promoting Christ and the kingdom of heaven with excellence. A leader, through Ellen White's lens, is only an instrumentality to achieve the goal of mobilizing the body of Christ to action, of providing momentum,

¹*Our High Calling*, 21.

²*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:118, 119.

³*Ibid.*, 8:47.

and that leader is no more or less important than the follower. In this expanded definition of leadership, Christ, not formal institutions of learning, qualifies the leader for His purposes.¹

Conclusion

Ellen White makes a significant contribution to the discovery and understanding of leadership principles. It does not appear that her leadership principles will ever become outdated, even in the face of accelerating world change, because they have universal application.² Christ used agrarian society as the backdrop of many of his parables; yet, the principles from the stories endure even in societies far removed from the culture to which he originally spoke and despite unprecedented rates of societal evolution.

In my evaluation, increasingly powerful economic, political, religious, and social forces, such as more countries linked to the capitalist system, and more information networks connecting people globally, will soon be associated with changes most people in the world never envision: the loss of personal freedoms to worship according to one's conscience, and the ability of the dissenting minority to acquire goods and services.³ In

¹*Education*, 269, 270.

²In its 30 May 2005 electronic newsletter, *Update*, The Barna Group announced Ellen White as one of the authors, along with leadership theorist Jim Collins, who had the greatest impact on pastors surveyed under the age of 40. <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=189>.

³It is beyond the scope of this project to discuss this concept in detail. I mention it in the conclusion only because of the potential of legislative action changing the culture and practice of the United States in unprecedented ways. This is my subjective interpretation of biblical apocalyptic prophecy, but that interpretation may ultimately be significant to the question of Ellen White's contemporary relevance.

this projected milieu, Ellen White's counsel on knowing God, and anchoring that knowledge in Scripture, may have far more relevance than can be imagined today.

The popularity of contemporary leadership literature may indicate a longing in the human heart for direction, a search for meaning in "busyness," even searching for meaning in "busyness" for God. Yet, leadership theories are contradictory. In fact, Bennis commented that "of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for top nomination"¹ Later, Bennis and Nanus wrote "books on leadership are often as majestically useless as they are pretentious."² In today's conflicting milieu of leadership theories, Ellen White's leadership principles consistently remind leaders to center his or her life in the call of God, to be faithful to Scripture, and to enable an inclusive church to preach the gospel. Her principles seem to cut through the nebulous maze of leadership theory kerfuffle, and put the mind and will of God at the center of the leadership picture.

Yet it is not the purpose of this project to decry the usefulness of contemporary secular and spiritual leadership literature. Thus acceptance of the relevance and on-going application of her principles to twenty-first century leadership challenges does not arbitrarily preclude sifting for valuable principles in today's burgeoning contemporary leadership literature. Ellen White's leadership principles may, however, be helpful in the challenge today's leaders face in discerning the difference between the latest leadership fads and time-less truths established by God.³

¹W. G. Bennis, "Leadership Theory and Administrative Behavior: The Problem with Authority," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 4 (1959): 259.

²Bennis and Nanus, 20.

³Blackaby and Blackaby, 14.

Additionally, Ellen White's leadership counsel could be a type of mentorship—akin to reading biographies of history's influential change begetters—to a wide spectrum of Adventist leadership on issues for which many persons of influence crave guidance. Though occasionally her counsel seems more apt for managers than for leaders, (e.g., qualifications such as business acumen) since her counsel centers strongly on the example of Christ, it is seldom that the principles found in this project would not apply both to leaders in the sense of sharing vision, values, and purpose with their followers, and also to managers in the sense of supervisors or financiers or other persons of specific expertise or skill.¹

All leaders, even great leaders, find themselves in complex circumstances where their leadership is challenged or their options seem perilously restricted. In an era of unprecedented information dissemination, communication speed, terrorism, AIDS, globalization, and family disintegration, our world may seem quite different than Ellen White's world. Yet, it is perhaps *because* of the accelerating changes in our world that her counsel to cultivate a calm trust in God in the face of life's stress-ors² seems surprisingly fresh and apropos. Ellen White's distinctive and enduring message to leaders is to keep Jesus and the mystery of the cross constant, especially in the mercurial movement of societal change.

¹Ellen White often wrote to persons holding elected or appointed positions of administrative responsibility in organizational structures. Many of the principles found in this project are derived from that counsel. But the same principles nearly always apply to leaders in the definition of the vanguard of a movement, influential catalysts of change, or even keepers of the status quo, whether or not that leader holds a formal position.

²*The Upward Look*, 55.

In few areas does Ellen White give more counsel to leaders than on the subject of the need for a leader to care for the poor, needy, and marginalized. Yet little focus or discussion of this emphasis can be found in Seventh-day Adventist treatises on Ellen White. If contemporary leaders had no other counsel than this, Ellen White's enduring legacy and relevance to them would be assured. In the midst of unparalleled western prosperity, neglect of the needy corresponds to spiritual poverty. The perpetual search for meaning in the *arbeitsplatz* might find resolution in the minds of those who applied Ellen White's counsel about serving the poor to their personal prioritizing. In this counsel, Ellen White contributes significant answers to Tolstoy's important questions, "What shall we do and how shall we live?"

Ellen White is also consistent in her clarion call for leaders to make decisions and mobilize and empower others to evangelize in light of the imminence of the eschaton. In this emphasis, she is truly unique. I found no other currently prominent leadership scholar or even author of popular leadership literature who mentions the second coming of Christ as the framework, purpose, or motivation for leadership visioning, empowerment, and process. Personal proclamation and verbal witness has been in escalating decline in Adventist church ministries, especially youth ministries, causing not only a potential loss of mission but a distortion, even reversal, of the church's original mission.¹ The commission of Christ in Matt 28:19-20 does not exclude youth, women, or minorities. Thus the section in chapter six on Ellen White's empowerment of people for

¹Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Lombard, IL: Henrickson Publishers, 1944), 122.

evangelism and service may be useful for illuminating and awakening some in current Adventist leadership to the inclusive mission of the Adventist movement.

Today the church is much larger and better organized to do its work than was the case in Ellen White's era. But the mission for evangelism, the need for acts of mercy and compassion for the marginalized, have only become larger as the church grows. In my analysis, the intervening years have brought Planet Earth still closer to the coming of Jesus. Crises in our world bring greater urgency and relevance to the proclamation of Jesus' soon coming. There is no less a need for workers to reach a world that is dying for lack of understanding of Christ's redemptive role. Therefore, Ellen White's counsel that all who are able should be involved in reaching the world with the gospel may have more significance today than ever before.¹

In conclusion, Ellen White's counsel to leaders on both spiritual and practical themes has on-going relevance in the twenty-first century. For those whose biblical understanding grants Ellen White status as a God-inspired visionary, her counsel doubtless has greater impact than for those who do not believe her authority is greater than any other devotional writer. Even leaders in the latter category, however, may find that elements of her spiritual leadership counsel sharpen their inner focus and that her practical counsel offers sound injunctions for the often frenetic and conflicted workplace, community, church, and society. It is my assessment that reading Ellen White's leadership principles may well have a significant impact on today's Christian leader, inspiring compassionate action, and deepening commitment to Jesus Christ.

¹Tutsch and Wibberding.

Perhaps Wheatley herself aptly summarizes Ellen G. White's leadership counsel when she states in the preface to her book, "I realize that the work is not to introduce a few new ideas, but to change a world view."¹ Ellen G. White's counsel to leaders may not just change how we think church or how we do ministry, but also revolutionize our priorities and change the entire direction of our lives.

¹Wheatley, xi.

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