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PETR ČINČALA, EDITOR

“TILL SICKNESS COMES:” THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLISTICALLY HEALTHY CHRISTIAN LEADERS

There is an old adage, attributed to Thomas Fuller (1608–1661), that says, “Health is not valued till sickness comes.” If nothing else, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed this to be true; we don’t always appreciate our health when we feel good, but we miss it terribly when we experience sickness.

It is important to remember that the word “health” can apply to different areas of well-being: physical, emotional, mental, interpersonal, vocational, and so on. Sickness in any one of these areas can cause our whole being to spiral into “un-wellness.” Ultimately, our goal should be to attain holistic health.

Those in ministry and positions of Christian leadership experience a specific calling; however, this feeling of being called can often lead to an unbalanced existence. For the sake of the call, many abandon self-care and thus suffer the consequences of poor health. It is for this exact reason that the editors of the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* have put together a two-issue series on leadership health and wellness. It is our goal to promote leadership wellness in every area of health.

Jim Marshall kicks us off with a thought-provoking Biblical Reflection on interpersonal health. Examining five biblical roles (evangelist, pastor, teacher, prophet, and apostle), Marshall makes a case for the benefits of team leadership. Using creative analogies, he explains the role of each member of the team and how each one complements the other. This article closes with suggestions for developing five-fold team leadership in today’s modern church.

Petr Činčala, PhD, associate professor of World Mission, is director of the Institute of Church Ministry, director of NCD America, director of Doctor of Missiology at Andrews University, and executive editor of the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*.

Our Leadership Interview is brought to us by Dr. Calvin Rock, who just celebrated his 92nd birthday. In this interview, Rock shares some of the lessons he has learned that have enabled him to live a long, healthy life. He also shares some of his own personal methods of maintaining physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Rock closes his interview with advice for aging, veteran leaders. This is an interview you won't want to miss!

The first of two Feature Articles is an adapted chapter from *Mending Ministers on Their Wellness Journey*. Craig Carr and I examine pastoral spiritual health. Research has shown that while a majority of pastors feel called to their ministry, many experience barriers to spiritual health, such as isolation, pressure from church administration, church member expectations, and lack of time to engage in spiritual activities. There's good news, though! With careful intentionality, pastors can make positive changes. This article reminds us that the only "true source of pastoral leadership comes from friendship with God. It is out of this friendship that healthy engagement with others can flow consistently" (Činčala, Carr, & Page, 2022, p. 1).

The second Feature Article is also an adapted chapter from *Mending Ministers on Their Wellness Journey*. Authors Angeline Brauer, Stanley James, and James Kyle look at data from both the Duke Clergy Health Initiative and Adventist Health Studies-2, offering practical implications for how these findings can and should impact the everyday lives of pastors and other leaders.

Shawn Claybrooks, author of our first Leadership Lived article, gives practical advice for developing interpersonal health, delving into the value of listening as a strategic leader. It commences by identifying costly mistakes made by organizations as a result of poor listening. Several examples are shared of CEOs from major corporations who increased overall performance by practicing effective listening in their leadership strategies, and illustrations are shared involving two biblical leaders whose practices reinforce the importance of listening before attempting to build. The role of the strategic leader is examined, and the effective impact listening can have on the leader—and their team—is addressed. The article concludes with practical steps that leaders across the globe can immediately apply.

Our second Leadership Lived article, a collaboration between myself and my colleague Boubakar Sanou, shares our personal story of interpersonal conflict, misunderstanding, and reconciliation. We then examine Peck's four stages of true community: pseudocommunity, chaos, emptiness, and community. Finally, we discuss eight lessons found in Acts 15:36–41 that

have direct implications for approaching conflict in mission and ministry settings.

In our Dialogue article, Throstur Thordarson examines the costs and consequences of pastoral lack of wellness and placement turnover. After highlighting some of the stresses present in the pastorate, Thordarson examines the cost of turnover to organizations as a whole and, more specifically, to the congregations and community of those in ministry. He closes with research-based suggestions to lower pastoral turnover. This is a Dialogue that should be read and implemented by those in ministry and church leadership alike.

This issue wraps up with a book essay from Duane Covrig and Judith Bernard-Fisher on *Mending Ministers on Their Wellness Journey*, as well as several other book reviews and dissertation notices. We hope that these will provide you with additional thought-provoking reading and professional development.

For more information on Seventh-day Adventist Pastoral health, you can access the following full-text reports at <https://nadministerial.com/health> :

- The Adventist Pastor: A World Survey (2013)
- Seminary Training, Role Demands, Family Stressors and Strategies for Alleviation of Stressors in Pastors' Families (2014)
- Views of Future Pastoral Ministry Careers Among SDA Adolescents (2019)
- Pastoral Health: What We Know and What We Need to Know (2019)
- Pastoral Longevity in Ministry: Survey Report (2020)
- A Quantitative Comparative Study of Employee Engagement Among Full-time Seventh-day Adventist Pastors in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and its Relationship to Level of Participation in Annual Pastoral Continuing Education (2020)
- Former Seventh-day Adventist Pastors: Qualitative Study Report (2021)
- What Can and Must Be Done to Save the Health of Adventist Pastors: Health Qualitative Study Report (2021)

References

Into Action. (n.d.). *Which conflict do you have? New clergy's stories from the field*. <http://into-action.net>