

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP
BEHAVIOR: AN EXPLORATION OF ETHICAL ISSUES

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This paper deals with two questions regarding leadership ethics in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They were chosen from among eleven responses to a request for input from several leadership professionals drawn from both the academic and professional leadership context. All are current members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. The first is the question: “How will we ever achieve a leader selection process that truly honors our profession of a representative form of ecclesiastical governance?” The second is distinct from but related to the first: “Can an organization founded and directed with religious, well-meaning purposes, slip into a way of organizational being that can be both efficient and yet, unethical?”

The normative process that establishes the values that inform the applied ethics of leadership for the Seventh-day Adventist Church is discussed as a means of better understanding the standards that in principle guide our organizational leadership behavior. The applied ethics of leadership in a well-defined representative system that is experiencing pressures due to growth, the erosion of the prescribed leadership model by business and political models, and the expense of maintaining a representative system are explored in response to the two questions stated above.

The Foundation of Seventh-day Adventist Normative Ethics

A map of the worldview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church would show theism (Singer, 1993, p.134; Sire, 2004, pp.23-44) as a base value shared with many world religions which hold that there is a God or gods to which mankind owes its allegiance if not worship. It distinguishes itself as monotheistic and as such narrows the category to sharing that “one God” distinction with others within the Christian faith community, Judaism, Islam, and some forms of Buddhist and Hindu religions. The Christian context requires further identity subdivision in that Seventh-day Adventists are Protestants and thereby distinguished from the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions as well as some primitive Christian groups. As measured within the Protestant community they are Evangelical and “The Bible is God’s inspired word, and is the full, the sufficient, and the only basic rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Ps. 119:9, 11, 105, 130; 1 Thess. 2:13; Isa. 8:20; Jer. 15:16; Heb. 4:12.)” (GCSDA, 2005, p.219). As such we along with most evangelicals confess that our ethical values are divinely imposed (Holmes, 1984, pp.74-78).

This brief categorizing of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview concurrently sets the general parameters for the values that establish the standards by which its leadership ethics are judged. The church further details those parameters in distinction from other evangelical Christians by some of the unique doctrinal aspects included in the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs which describe the primary biblical elements that inform the behavior and practices of the church community and organization (GCSDA, 2005, pp.7-17). Any further standards established as binding upon the members and institutions of the church are assumed to be an extension of the values established in these 28 fundamental beliefs.

Beyond the recognition of the Bible as the source of values and standards for the church there is the acceptance of the authority of the church conferred by Jesus in the New Testament narrative (Matt. 16:19; Matt 18:18; John 20:22, 23; 1 Cor. 5:4). This was interpreted and published in 1877 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (GCSDA, 2005, p.2) as being affected through the vote of the assembled delegates at the official session of the church that meets every fifth year:

“Resolved, that the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, unless they can be shown to conflict with the word of God and the rights of individual conscience.”—Review and Herald, vol. 50, No. 14, p. 106.

Since the voice of the General Conference in session is the official voice of the Seventh-day Adventist world faith community then actions of that body add to the values and behaviors that define the standards by which applied ethics of church leadership are judged. It is important that one clearly understand the parameter of standards for the specific organization before examining or arguing the applied ethics of any element within the organization.

In summary, the ethical standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are established in the Bible and doctrinally summarized in the statement of 28 fundamental beliefs published in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (2005). Actions taken by the General Conference in its quinquennial business session are binding upon the body of Seventh-day Adventist believers as the official voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Leadership Structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Stewardship Model

R. Scott Rodin (2010) applies the biblical descriptor of steward to spiritual leaders and presents leadership as a stewardship function. This contrasts with the leadership/management model that depicts the leader as owner. In the context of the church he views God as the owner and leaders within the church as stewards bearing responsibility over specific aspects of his kingdom/church. Rodin makes an interesting point of the observation that in the common business model used by both corporate and religious organizations the prospective leader is sought out, interviewed and referenced, and ultimately appointed to the desired position. Only after the appointment is there what we might call an anointing to that role. He sees the biblical process wherein the steward leader is “first anointed and then appointed” (p.13). This concept has implications for Question #1 which will be discussed below. Is the calling and gifting of God considered adequately prior to appointment? Does the candidate have a servant’s heart that will allow a stewardship function rather than behavior more consistent with one who feels that those being led are his/her property to manage?

The steward model fits well the organizational leadership model formally developed and adopted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This model is referenced by one of the church founders (E. G. White, 1948) in the following quote:

Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference. (pp.236-237)

The clear intent is that the voice of the body should be heard by positional leaders through representative delegates that are linked to the body of members at the local church level. The question we must ask is whether or not we are honoring that model and if not what are the ethical implications?

Church Organization as it Relates to Flow of Authority

The Representative Model recognizes authority as residing in the body of members and flows up through elected leaders who lead and manage the church as stewards of that authority but remain accountable to the members (see Figure 1).

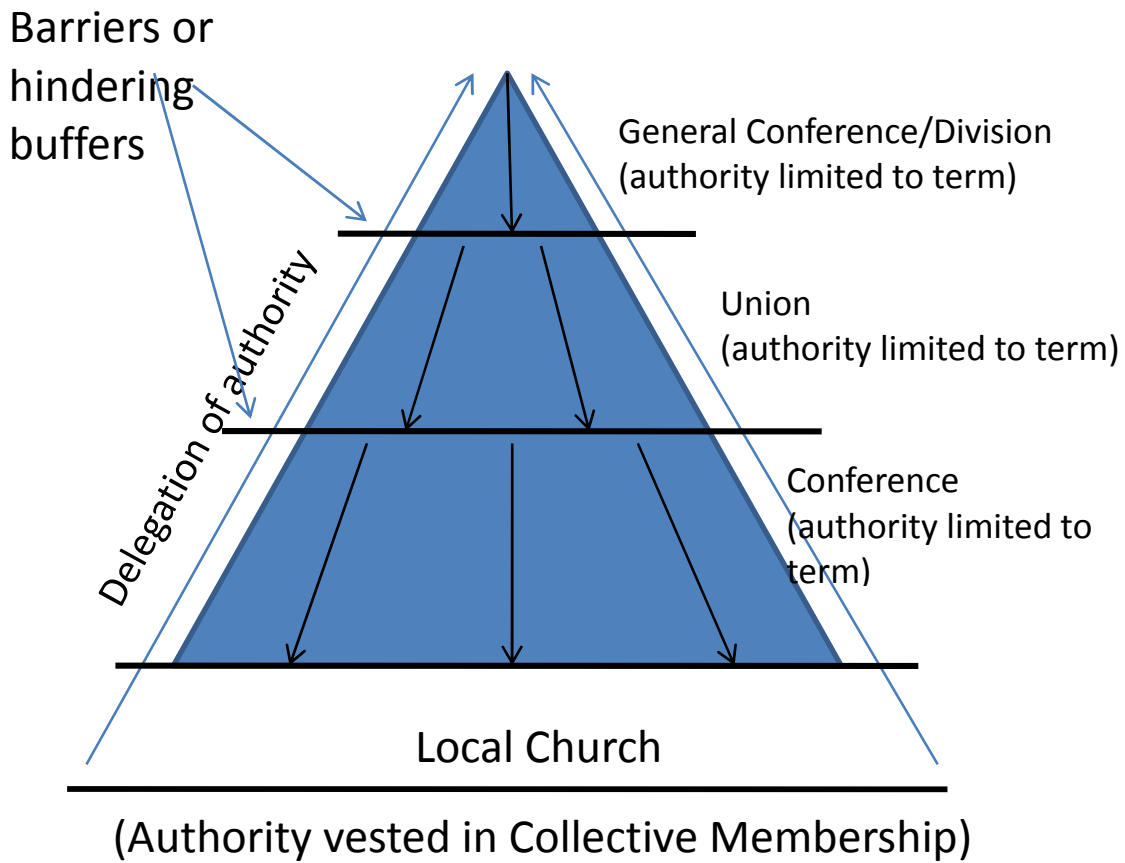


Figure 1: Representative Governance Structure in the SDA Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organized as a representative model with the somewhat unique element of buffers that limit the exercise of authority between the four levels of church organization—Local Church, Conference, Union Conference, and General Conference. Each level of this organization functions under a constitution that defines its territory, boundaries, and function. The higher organization is limited in its exercise of authority beyond the boundary that separates it from the next level above and below. These boundaries of downward directed authority have served to check the tendency of organizations to consolidate authority at the higher levels that can when unrestrained result in a ruling rather than serving model. Again, E.G. White (1985) supports this organizational model that limits directive authority by higher organization in comments made in regard to the value of union conferences:

It has been a necessity to organize union conferences, that the General Conference shall not exercise dictation over all the separate conferences. The power vested in the Conference is not to be centered in one man, or two men, or six men; there is to be a council of men over the separate divisions. (p. 27)

The Under Shepherd Model

The narrative of the Good Shepherd of John 10 makes very clear that Jesus is that shepherd and as such emphatically claims the ownership of the sheep (Jn 10:3,4,11,14,16). The faithful under shepherd then must serve as a steward of his master's sheep since the owner is established as Jesus. This role can be contrasted with that of the hireling (Jn 10:11, 12, and 13) whose connection is not as steward to the master but rather is one who serves on a transactional basis that lacks the commitment to lead with undivided and sacrificial love (Barrett, 1978, p.375; Pink, 1975, p.123).

Leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church do not own the positions they hold nor the authority by which they lead in those positions. The positions of leadership are *loaned* rather than *owned*. The consequent implications for leadership ethics are significant—all that the leader

relates to belongs to the Master. White (1985) alludes to this in the following cautionary counsel to leaders regarding employing commanding behavior toward those they are commissioned to serve as leaders:

No man has been made a master, to rule the mind and conscience of a fellow-being. Let us be very careful how we deal with God's blood-bought heritage. To no man has been appointed the work of being a ruler over his fellow men... Among the Lord's servants there is to be no commanding. No yokes are to be placed on the necks of God's blood-bought heritage. (pp. 27, 32)

This clearly supports the point that those led are the possession of the Master, not the steward, and are treated as precious to the Master and by extension to the steward. It is supported by the narrative of 1 Samuel 17:34 where David testifies to the commitment of accepting the risk of facing the lion and the bear, not as owner but as a son protecting his father's sheep. The father's sheep are cared for by the son as a stewardship function. The Christian leader likewise functions as a steward and demonstrates commitment and faithfulness as a "son" of the Father.

Any Christian leadership behavior that communicates the control of ownership violates the relationship between steward and Father. "Stewardship is relationship" (Rees, 1995, p.7). The under-shepherd, though claiming no "dominion over them not property in them (*feed my sheep and my lambs, saith Christ*); but in respect of dearness and affection they should be *their own*" (Henry, 1997, 2.2.a. Jn 10:12). This loving affection for those entrusted to the guidance and care of a leader is liberally supported in the language and behavior of New Testament leaders such as Paul, John, and Peter's generous use of the term "beloved" (1 Cor 10:14; 15:58; Phil 4:1; 1 Jn 2:7; 3:2; 3:21; 1 Pet 2:11; 4:12; 2 Pet 3:14,17). This application of the command of Jesus to love one another (Jn 15:12) and the "great commandment (Mt 22:37-40) establishes the expectation that the Christian leader will love those whom the Father loves (John 3:16).

This steward designation of the Christian leader is determined by the voice of the body. The leader lovingly serves both the Father and his brethren who have anointed him/her to serve the church via the spiritual gifts that recommend him/her to the defined responsibility to which the leaders is called and assigned.

Accountability of the Leader

The respective constituency sessions were designed as the context where, in addition to the business of the church being conducted, accountability of leaders chosen to serve that body was to be responsibly handled by representatives of the body. The effectiveness of these meetings can be negatively impacted by unruly behavior emanating from unreasonable passion or anger among delegates. But it can also be negatively impacted by the high degree of control exercised in the agenda and process of the meeting that minimizes the opportunity for expression by delegates and maximizes the predictability of the desired outcome by leaders. Rarely is there healthy recognition of the fact that the session is intended as a means of reaffirming the stewardship of the leaders to the legitimate authority of the body in whom the God we serve placed spiritual authority. The acknowledged prophetic voice of the church (E. G. H. White, 1915) affirms this accountability to the body in her reference to the authority exercised by the apostles:

There were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, . . . and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:1, 2). Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus they were authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism, and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority. (p.441)

These apostles did not set out to minister on their own but rather were sent by the body of Christ as representing the body. This model of leaders bearing authority conferred in trust by the body of believers thus finds its origin in the earliest practice of ministry and governance in the Christian tradition (Brown, 1975, p.151). Attempts by leaders to control legitimate accountability events either during or between sessions by means of procedure or control tactics violates the relationship between the leader and the body that she or he serves as steward.

Question #1: Does the Current Leader Selection Process Honor the Representative System?

The Problem of Delegate Ignorance

The recent General Conference Session held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA in late June and early July 2010 provides a convenient context in which to observe this process in action. The anecdotal comments of delegates indicated significant frustration over the fact that many of them were totally ignorant of the professional experience, competency and character of the names of individuals presented for nomination. The exception to that were those from their own geographic field of service. This ignorance was further compounded by the fact that the perception among many delegates was that it was unethical to speak to anyone outside of the delegate arena to gather information about these names. This may or may not have been a misunderstanding of expressed confidentiality rules but nonetheless impacted the ability of delegates to responsibly cast an intelligent vote for or against a candidate nominated for election.

Geographic Political Focus

An additional challenge that may have been exacerbated by this lack of information was perception by some that each world division essentially lobbied and pressed for their candidate to be chosen. Was this a result of national/regional loyalties or simply a default attitude prompted

by lack of any significant information about the candidates nominated from other world divisions of the church? Does ignorance of nominated candidates' qualifications lead to other complications that downgrade the effectiveness of the leader selection process? Can a delegate exercise legitimate representative authority without adequate information that would allow an intelligent decision regarding a candidate's qualification to serve? Does the governing body have an ethical responsibility to provide the necessary information that would allow for an informed decision?

Bass (1990) reports on the 1963 study of M. E. Shaw that reveals the general positive impact of leaders having access to adequate information related to the task at hand as follows:

Group members with an informational advantage were found to enter the discussion earlier, to initiate more task oriented communications, to find their suggestions accepted more frequently, and to be rated by others as contributing more to the group's task than were members who had no previous information about the problem. (p.679)

This if taken alone would suggest that since the availability of adequate information regarding the task at hand helps the one expected to accomplish the task then lack of information would hinder and thus restrict the success and affirmation of the one charged with responsibility. It thus qualifies as an ethical issue in the context of leadership.

Growth of Presidential Influence

One delegate expressed extreme frustration at the impact of the following common practice that he viewed as having a severe negative impact on the representative process. It is customary for a newly elected president to be invited to be part of the deliberations of the nominating committee in their work of selecting leaders to fill roles in the administrative and leadership posts of the General Conference. When the newly elected president presented names of potential (some felt that it came across as "preferred") candidates to serve on the leadership

team it inadvertently provided a solution to the frustration of ignorance regarding proffered candidates about whom most delegates knew little. The consequence seen as negative was that the elected delegates transferred their authority to choose leaders as a voice for the people of the church body and allowed one man's recommendation to override their collective voice.

Another delegate from Africa saw this act as a service to the process of election since the new president knew those he was recommending and thus solved the ignorance gap for the delegates. He also saw it as a positive solution to the stress of what he perceived as political tension between world division delegates who were pressing for selection of their candidates.

What, though, was sacrificed in the process? Is the delegated voice of the body neutralized by the act by the nominating committee delegates accepting the names of candidates presented by the president-elect? If the representative voice of the delegate is the official link to the body of members wherein God's conferred authority is based then any act whether intentional or unintentional is an ethical violation of the expressed will of the Seventh-day Adventist faith community.

If we begin by viewing such behavior at the elemental level of church organization, the local church, it would be considered ludicrous for an incoming pastor to present a list of candidates to the nominating committee for appointment to specific offices. The pastor does not have such delegated authority and it is not likely that the delegates to the nominating committee would so easily forfeit their authority to directly select nominees to present to the body for election. A newly elected conference president will often be invited to sit in counsel with the nominating committee to provide input into the selection process but would not generally present a list of candidates since the knowledge base of the committee is generally relationally closer to the established leaders at that level than at the Union or Division/General Conference levels.

In one recent North American Division union conference session the president who was himself standing for re-election processed the changes that would take place among departmental and ministry leaders and even spoke to the affected leaders about the recommended changes before the constituency was ever convened. Thus most of the work of anticipated change and selection of leaders was done by the very leaders who were presenting themselves to the people for accountability and possible reelection. One of the conference presidents involved in that same constituency when questioned about the propriety of such administrative behavior responded by appealing to the unreasonable amount of time that it would take for the nominating committee to process its work if the recommendations for change and the subsequent selection of new leaders was not processed before the session. This attitude of organizational efficiency as a necessary expedient to for the continuation of the representative process will be addressed in the discussion of Question #2 later in this document.

These practices are administrative behaviors that have evolved as the presidential model has increased in power and influence over the last sixty to seventy years. Beach and Beach (1985) suggest that the presidential role in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is gradually assuming the characteristics of the more common secular political model of presidential leadership where appointment of subordinate leaders is commonplace. This actually follows a pattern in the executive function of the president of the United States just prior to and during World War II where such actions taken alone by the president “grew first arithmetically, then geometrically” (Burns, 1978, p.387).

Bert and Walter Beach (1985, p.69), both highly placed leaders in the General Conference, wrote in 1985 warning that our move toward a presidential model of administration

would take us away from the distributed leadership model built into our administrative policy.

They added the following to this counsel of concern:

She (the church) too can become entrapped in a mild form of clericalism that leaves a large majority of the total *laos* unchallenged. Church leadership, including pastors and elders, must spread the responsibilities and involve thousands.... This total involvement applies to worship, shepherding, outreach, and to decision-making.... A study of church history reveals that organizational principles and structured lines of authority have played a large role in many religious apostasies. (pp.79, 80)

Lest one assume that these struggles of balancing participation and organizational efficiency are unique to the Seventh-day Adventist Church we should be aware of the Anheier and Themudo (Herman, 2005) report that INGO's (international non-governmental organizations) such the International Red Cross find this same issue to be a perplexing problem in the current global community context. "The high cost of bringing all constituencies together in one place precludes easy solutions" (pp.120-121).

Acceptance of these creeping changes that have compromised the representative model of governance and consequently infringe upon the exercise of authority by the members of the church at large through their delegates results in little expression of concern for the ethical considerations it raises when analyzed from an organizational and ecclesiological perspective.

Conclusion of Question #1

The constituency session should foster openness to input and expression of delegates by planning time and means for the body to be heard. So doing recognizes that the voice of the Holy Spirit legitimately speaks through the members to professional leaders at such gatherings. Failure to do so adds to the frustration and distancing of members from the governance process and a loss of commitment to the organization which they feel no longer recognizes their legitimate authority. Such a commitment to openness can seem messy and risky to leaders who are

dedicated to managing risk and avoiding conflict over ideas different than they determine to be best for the church but unless the church body rediscovers its voice of authority through its members it will never exercise its authority as owners of the ecclesiastical process. The declines in per capita tithe and in some Divisions the percent of members who regularly attend church will almost certainly continue to decline. It is also likely that the hoped for empowerment of the laity in the area of ministry will continue to be a hope rather than a reality of mass involvement as long as their legitimate involvement in the governance process is marginalized and the distance between them and professional leaders continues to increase. The individual member's service cannot be divorced from his/her exercise of legitimate generative authority in the governance process.

Richard Lennan (Lennan, 2004) quotes Michael Raschko, in discussing the nature of the Roman Catholic Church and authority to change it sees tension between those who emphasize God's activity and human choices in history. Those who emphasize human choice in history and minimize the role of God's activity in the process make the assumption that "all traditions, since they are historically contingent, can change whenever the members of the church choose to change them" (p.135). This is an interesting assumption in the Catholic tradition since it assumes that the members have the authority to make those changes (human choices) in a system that has traditionally placed its authority in the episcopate and in a sense, in the person of the bishop of Rome. The governance system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was designed to avoid the tension that Raschko refers to by clearly establishing the body as the repository of its authority rather than in select positional leaders. God's activity is legitimately recognized as visible in the people.

The selection process of leaders at all levels must honor the voice of the body and positional leaders who steward the resources and processes of the church bear ethical responsibility to nurture the representative process to assure its effectiveness even as the church grows numerically and diversely. It will require intentional and determined effort the results can lead to "...better quality of decisions and greater acceptance of decisions by people who will implement them or be affected by them" (Yukl, 1998, p.144).

Question #2: Can the Organization that Serves the
Church be both Efficient and Unethical?

This is a challenging and at first glance a confusing question. First we should establish that efficiency is neither ethical nor unethical. If a failure occurs in the context of a move toward achieving efficiency and the action violates a standard held by the community affected in such a way that it violates the commitment of that individual or group to the community then it could be considered unethical. Feinberg et al (1993) state the following:

on the basis of deontological an act is considered right because it keeps a promise, it is just, or God commands it. The key for deontological theories is that an act is right because it is one's duty to do it, and it is one's duty for some reason other than the consequences stemming from the act. (p.28)

When we accept membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church our vows to support the church and abide by the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist community of faith make us subject to the ethical norms on the deontological basis.

The Church and the Organization

The second issue that must be made clear is the relationship of the church organization to the church. If the church organization serves the church then it requires us to assume that the

organization is not “the church” but is a structure created by the church to serve the necessary administrative and common purpose needs of the church.

A news item in the January 1, 2010 issue of *Adventist World* journal (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists., 2010, p.3) bore the title, *South African Court Ruling Favors Adventist Church*. The litigation involved a couple dozen plaintiffs from six different congregations who sued the South African Union and by extension the General Conference over an action with which they disagreed. The high court ruled against the plaintiffs and in favor of the South Africa Union. The title of the article inadvertently left some significant issues unclear by claiming the “church” was favored in the decision but failed to explain the relationship of the plaintiffs to the claim of being also “church.” Did the members who sought a different outcome cease to be church when they took their differences into court? Does the organized church speak for the whole church when it is not in session? Maybe a better title might have been *South African Court Ruling Favors South African Union*. The issue remains, however, that we have much ambiguity over the identity of the church after 150 years as an organized body.

Though these are semantic considerations they also reveal a deeper ambiguity in the minds of many regarding the identity of the church. If the authority assigned by God in Matthew 18 rests with the membership and the membership in a representative system constitutes the church then the legitimate claim to the title may be violated when we speak of the organization as the church rather than as a body formed to serve the church. On this basis we will now look at the issue of the substance of question #2.

Efficiency and the Representative Model

I risk stating the obvious in saying that a representative model of church organization is not an efficient model when compared to the episcopal or papal model of church governance.

There is an element of efficiency in that delegates represent groups of people as a means of filtering the voice of many through one delegate. However, as the number of members and congregations have grown over the years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church the struggle to keep the system affordable and not cumbersome has required constant and challenging adjustment to the system. The time between sessions has evolved from one every year in the early days of the church to the current five year schedule we have come to expect at this time (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010). The ratio of delegates who select leaders and conduct the business of the church on a quinquennial basis to the members they represent continues to necessarily widen the membership base grows.

The ever present pressure of expediency has to be weighed against the stewardship of maintaining fair representation. The committee system has served well to provide broad counsel in the process of decision-making but often endures the frustration and even irritation of some who would wish for a more executive approach to decision-making that would avoid the time and energy required for committee meetings. In cases where a dominant leader is involved, committees can become degraded by group-think or even silence where the wishes of the leader are voted as a means of demonstrating compliance or support of the leader. However, in a committee that honors the candid expression of each member and that is led with integrity and respect for the voice and vote of its members, the committee remains a solid contributing force for the representative model.

Industrial Model Thinking

It must also be understood that the western world is, even in the post-industrial period (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p.18), a victim of industrial model thinking. Rost (1993, pp.91-95) makes a point of the fact that up until the 1980's the common assumption about leadership was

that it simply represented good management. The failure of western culture to differentiate between the two results in an overemphasis on efficiency in the leadership context where control is absent and coercion is inappropriate. Nevertheless, shortening the time frame for accomplishment is considered a positive in almost all western organizations. Efficiency efforts permeate our corporations and organizations in general as a means of increasing productivity and profits. This drive to achieve efficiency often influences our value associated with processes that require time and methods that do not always honor the short term demands of efficiency. The biblical model of leadership stresses effectiveness on a higher plane of value than efficiency. Most efficiency counsel is indirect and even such common efficiency elements such as stewardship of time (1 Pet 1:17) and application of effort (Eccl 9:10) deal primarily with the quality of effort and time.

An interesting example of effectiveness over efficiency emphasis is found in the Luke 10 narrative of the commissioning of the 70 disciples. The seventy were divided into teams of two in a context of task assignment—the preparation of cities, towns, and villages for the future visitation and ministry of Jesus. Efficiency would have dictated training seventy and sending them to seventy separate locations. Instead he reduced the number to thirty-five teams of two and thus reduced the number of communities prepared for his presence by 50%. The effectiveness gains are primarily to be found in the creation of an active social learning context and the synergy tapped by creating teams. This same issue can be applied to his use of the twelve. This two by two ministry model has not gained favorable support or broad application in most ecclesiastical contexts apart from the model adopted by Mormon youth missionaries (Glad, 2002).

Since the body of Christ—the church—is not itself a managed organization then it should not be a surprise that management emphases such as efficiency are not stressed in the Scriptures. Where efficiency becomes an issue is in the organized work that supports the church and its mission since it is a managed organization and has legitimate management authority over employees, resources, etc. Since the church organization and the steward leaders who serve it are charged with the responsibility to manage the governance processes, the urge to maximize efficiency can compromise elements that are not inherently efficient in nature such as representative governance and the qualitative process of discipling members.

Expedience in Governance

In parts of the world away from the *chronos* dominated culture of the western context it is fairly common for constituency gatherings to last 2 or more days before voting leaders into positions and session business decisions are completed. The industrial mindset in the western context will rarely tolerate such a process due to an unwillingness to invest the time required. Consequently, the temptation to sacrifice the representative process for the sake of efficiency is almost irresistible. The illustration of the Union constituency and nominating committee process mentioned in the discussion under question #1 is a case in point. The representative process was basically reduced to an affirmation of the recommendations processed by the executive leaders who were themselves standing for reelection.

The relief experienced by the 2010 General Conference Session nominating committee members when a bank of candidates was presented for nomination may or may not have been intended as an efficiency tactic but the result could be affirmed as more efficient than struggling through the political stress and frustration over lack of adequate information regarding candidates presented for nomination. If, though, the unintended consequence was the effective

stifling of the voice of the delegates through their elected nominating committee representatives and by extension the voice of the body—the church—then again an ethic has been breached.

Managing the Pastor

Efficiency can also create an ethical dilemma when our mental model of ministry professionals moves from professional to that of employee. The pastors and teachers who serve at the local leadership level as representatives of the conference in their context are regularly referred to as employees collectively. As such they can be directed into uniform behaviors through imposed organizational goals, extrinsic rewards urging or rewarding achievement, and many of the same motivational and management tactics used in the secular corporate context. They become a managed workforce that is expected to march to the organizational directives of those who plan their work and determine what quantitative level will be deemed satisfactory.

At what point does this directive and controlling behavior infringe on what the Holy Spirit has called them to do within the context of their personal spiritual giftedness? Is the loss of freedom to assess, plan, and execute apart from the directed expectations of those who manage them an ethics infringement on the relational level (Feinberg, et al., 1993, p.26)? Is it possible that the manager mentality of those called to serve as stewards of the front line ministry professionals requires more service and less control? The expectation created by one of the church's founding leaders (E. G. White, 1985) follows:

To no man has been appointed the work of being a ruler over his fellow men. 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.... (p.27)

This norm is strengthened in a similar statement:

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 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. (E. G. White, 1985, p.43)

Management is an honorable function in the society in which we live. It is a necessary element of business, institutions, and multitudes of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. And it has an important role to play in the context of the church. We must, however, know and understand the limitations inherent within it. The church was built upon a relational model that involves necessary free association of members. Pastors have spiritual authority to lead but have no control authority. As such they are not managers of members since we can only manage that which we control. They cannot themselves contribute their best spiritual leadership when managed in a manner that stifles creativity and opportunity for innovation or forces them into uniform programs that may or may not fit the context of their ministry assignment. There is a spiritual work that thrives in an environment that is free of control and coercion that engenders fear and anticipates a high degree of uniformity in regard to production of new members, etc.

Summary

Applied ethics in the setting of the Seventh-day Adventist church requires an examination of the commitment to effective ministry leadership done within the boundaries of the norms established by the Word of God and the collective decisions of the Seventh-day Adventist community as expressed through the Church Manual and Working policy guidelines. These norms serve as a guide to ethical leadership that balances the mission against those commissioned to carrying it out. The tasks of the mission will never override the concern for the welfare of those who apply their gifts to the process of ministry accomplishment—both

professionals and laity. Intentional effort must be maintained by leaders at all levels to avoid the temptation to use others to accomplish an end in any way that violates the steward relationship that the leader has with those he/she leads. The litmus test for servant leader was coined by Robert Greenleaf (Greenleaf, 1991, p.27), “Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” The exercise of leadership authority in the accomplishing of ministry tasks will always have a generative effect on those being led.

The norms established relative to our governance process have at their root an understanding of the relationship shared with one another. Leaders and those led all come from the same pool and when leaders are decommissioned they return to that same pool. Leaders also serve as stewards of the processes that serve our community. As such they bear the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of the representative system by assuring that the voice of the body remains as clearly heard today as it was when the church was small and young. Ignoring the impact of growth and the tendency for positional leadership to gradually gather more and more authority to itself will almost certainly lead to ongoing ethical violations of the norms of a representative system. Technology and innovative leadership can and must be applied to both the governance process whereby leaders are selected and to the manner and extent to which leaders apply management principles to pursue the mission of the organization. We dare not for the sake of expediency or efficiency progress further toward an episcopal model of governance. Nor should we allow organizational management and leadership behaviors that were designed for and by secular corporate models to be imposed upon the ecclesiastical organization for which they are not fit. The Church doesn't need a new model, it needs to renew its commitment to model we have been given.

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