

STEWARD LEADERSHIP IN THE WRITING OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Sampson M. Nwaomah

Leadership is one area with copious literature by both Christian and non-Christian writers. This is perhaps because while for some leadership issues have eternal consequences for both leaders and followers, others limit its goals to transient benefits. No doubt, the perception of leadership largely influences leadership styles and orientation to leadership. Nonetheless, perceptions and styles of leadership for Christian leadership may benefit from an understanding that leadership is stewardship. Therefore, this paper surveys the Steward Leadership model and examines how this concept is evident in the writings of Ellen G. White. The paper concludes that although she does not seem to specifically use the term Steward Leadership, her expressions about the characteristics and implications of Christian leadership reflect this model and thus hold pertinent implications for contemporary leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa.

Introduction

Leadership is a broad and well-researched field by persons of diverse interest and persuasions. The jurisdiction of leadership, whether in the Christian community, industry, and social organizations, seems to influence the philosophy of leadership such as its foundation, focus, and model.¹ Thus copious publications on leadership have yielded a wide-range of definitions.² For instance, leadership is broadly defined as "the behavior of an individual who is involved in directing group activities"³ or "the process of helping a group to achieve goals which seem desirable to the group."⁴ However, it seems one of the most prevalent of all definitions is that

provided by Maxwell who opines thus: "Leadership is influence that's it. Nothing more; nothing less."⁵ From these definitions it could be concluded that leadership is not provided in a vacuum. It is "a role of influence"⁶ that occurs within a community. All these definitions seem to focus on what a leader does which involves attitude, skills and the changes that occur through leadership. But it seems also that the model of leadership, the attitude of a leader and the impact of leadership style could be influenced not only by the sphere of leadership, whether it is secular or spiritual but also by the leader's perception of leadership, his self-awareness and/or conviction of the foundation of his philosophy of leadership and his commitment to that

foundation. For instance, leadership in the spiritual circle could be influenced by the biblical philosophy and principles of leadership. Perhaps it is in this vein that Blackaby and Blackaby define spiritual leadership as "moving people on God's agenda."⁷ This definition assumes that the leader acknowledges the biblical foundation and goal of leadership and that it is not an ego trip for personal gratification. Therefore, Christian leadership reflective of biblical philosophy and motivations may influence appropriate leadership model.

However, writing from the perspective of Christian leadership in Africa and commenting on the challenges of such leadership while also acknowledging the existence of good leadership patterns, Louise Kretzschmar states:

It would appear that many leaders are uncertain, tentative and ineffective or else they go to the other extreme of acting in a domineering and coercive manner. These inadequate patterns of leadership lead to conflict within churches, splits between churches, ineffective ministry, and the mis-management of financial, human and other resources. One can even go so far as to speak of 'spiritual abuse' when referring to those churches in which leaders so manipulate, deceive and

frustrate the members of their congregations that their actions have a long term, negative effect - both on the individuals concerned and on the ministry of the church as a whole."⁸

Kretzschmar proceeds to contend:

these problems may be the result of the immoral or immature character of the leader (eg a pastor or denominational leader); the lack of leadership, management or administrative skills; or the abuse of power. Another common problem is that leaders sometimes lack the ability to translate visions and hopes into reality, either due to an unwillingness to follow through on commitments or to their inability to implement decisions.⁹

The well-intentioned observations of Kretzschmar seem to limit the cause of ecclesiastical leadership failure in Africa to the leader's character and deficient leadership skills. It seems however that the fundamental reason for these kinds of situations described by Kretzschmar could be some Christian leaders' ignorance of and/or disregard to the foundation of Christian leadership which invariably should influence their orientation to leadership. In the effort to articulate the various leadership models that could be identified in the Scriptures, within the circle and practices of Christian leadership,

various leadership models have been identified and advanced. For instance, Robert J. Clinton advocates four biblical leadership models: the harvest model, shepherd model, servant model, and stewardship model.¹⁰ Perhaps the widely known and publicized biblical leadership model is the servant leadership which was argued by Robert K. Greenleaf. This model is enunciated in his book, *Spiritual Leadership*. It however seems one of the leadership models that could inspire effective Christian leadership is the Steward Leadership. This biblical leadership model was first developed in contemporary times foundationally associated with Robert Clinton.¹¹ In this model, a leader is viewed as a steward who has been entrusted with the management of resources.

As the title of this paper indicates, the intention is to explore how the Steward Leadership model is reflected in the writing of Ellen G. White. Although White wrote extensively on leadership¹² and stewardship¹³ she does not seem to employ the term Steward Leadership or Steward Leader in her writings in describing Christian leadership. Therefore, this paper concisely reviews this leadership model and surveys how the basic principles of this model are evident in some of the writings of White. Towards this agenda, this paper is structured principally into two sections: (i) a survey of the model of Steward Leadership and (ii) Ellen G. White on Steward Leadership. These are followed by a brief conclusion.

The Concept of Steward Leadership

The most common understanding of stewardship in contemporary times refers to the management of financial resources and possessions in relation to God and humanity. It essentially focusses on the faithful management of time, talents, material possessions, or wealth in the service to God and/or humanity. In this vein, stewardship is the belief that God has entrusted humans with the world and its resources and humans are therefore responsible to take care of it. In other words, stewardship requires the appropriate human attitude in the divine-human financial/resources relationships where God is the owner and humans the stewards. This also should reflect in human-human financial/resources distribution. This concept of stewardship is largely influenced by the New Testament description of stewardship. The most common word translated steward, or manager in the New Testament, is *oikonomos*.¹⁴ This term could refer to one who manages a household or estate (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; 1 Cor. 4:2; Gal. 4:2) or a public treasurer (Rom 16:23). In Classical Greek period, it was common for business concerns to have stewards who functioned as the chief operating officers responsible for the daily management of the affairs of their masters. The roles of the steward cover accounting, sustainability, growth and optimization in the business concerns of their masters.¹⁵ Some of Jesus' parable illustrate this stewardship

concept.¹⁶ Consequently, a steward in that context was one who was entrusted with the management of another person's household, material resources and business affairs. In this regard, stewardship implies "being responsible and accountable for results"¹⁷ on the resources entrusted to him.

Nevertheless, the concept of stewardship is broadened to a person who is entrusted with oversight and management in connection with divine matters.¹⁸ Writing to Titus on Church leadership in the church at Crete, Paul admonishes: "For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, (Titus 1:7; cf. 1 Peter 4:10, emphasis supplied).¹⁹ And Paul strengthens the grand metaphor of the church as "the household of God" as he writes to Timothy in Ephesus on leadership and conduct in God's house. He counsels "but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). John Goodrich evaluating the moral qualifications of stewards in the Pastoral Epistles observes that it has been noted by many "the metaphor underscores the role of the overseer as the representative who leads in God's household on his behalf."²⁰ Thus, a leader in the household of God (the church and its affiliate institutions) is principally a steward who has been entrusted with responsibilities. Because

"steward leadership is a model that views the primary identity and role of the leader as one who is a steward managing the resources of another that are entrusted into his or her care"²¹ in the context of Church leadership, Steward Leadership could be seen as the identity and function of the leader managing the household of God and its resources in cognizance of its consequences. It is also the identity and role of a Christian who is even engaged in leadership in other spheres of society.

In his book, *The Steward Leader*, R. Scott Rodin compares the Steward Leader model to four contemporary leadership theories; namely Great Man theory of leadership (charisma and vision), Transactional Leadership (skills), Transformational Leadership (change agent) and Servant Leadership (willingness to serve).²² He avers that the four leadership theories focus on "the skills, traits, aptitude, natural abilities or character of the individual leader that brings about 'success.'"²³ In his view, which the author aligns, the steward leader model is distinct because the focus is not first on the personality and skills of the leader but it is by God to be a steward. This is not to suggest that appropriate leadership skills and competencies are not relevant in leadership. Rather in the Steward Leadership model who the Christian leader is seems to be of weightier significance and may influence what he does or is able to do and how he does them. Accordingly, the steward leader does not derive identity

from being a leader but his identity is found in his being a faithful steward. Such a leader also acknowledges his human shortcomings and is highly dependent on God who is the true owner and finds happiness in fulfilling the mission of God.²⁴

Consequently, David Birkenstock reasons "the concept of steward leadership more closely suits the idea of Christian leadership. It incorporates the idea of servanthood and more fully recognizes the role of manager and of being fully accountable, responsible and reliable."²⁵ Similarly, Robert Clinton argues that this steward leader model is the most foundational of all four leadership models described in the bible and that it applies to all leaders, their abilities notwithstanding. In his words, "the Stewardship Model is the most general of the New Testament Philosophical models" because "it applies to followers as well as leaders."²⁶ However, while agreeing with Clinton on the inclusiveness of steward leadership, Ebener avers thus: "Generally speaking, the more that the leaders model the life of the steward, the more likely the members will be to practice stewardship as well. The first act of leadership is to transform oneself and to lead by example. Leaders are disciples too. To be a disciple means to practice stewardship."²⁷

The Steward-Leadership model is also based on the essential focus of several accountability passages in the Bible which require a leader to account for his/her ministry to God. Clinton

provides eight basic values to support this thesis; a summary of which is given below.

1. Ministry and leadership originate from God.
2. A leader is accountable to God for the leadership influence on followers.
3. Leaders will ultimately be judged by God for their leadership.
4. God will reward leaders for faithfulness to their ministry and the use of abilities, skills, gifts and opportunities.
5. Leaders are expected to develop their abilities, skills, and gifts for the service of God.
6. God gives leaders gifts to be used for his service.
7. Leaders' effective use of abilities, skills, and gifts for the service of God results in rewards.
8. Leaders are held to higher standards than followers. They should be above reproach.²⁸

Similarly, Kent Wilson identifies some very useful characteristics of a steward leader as shown in Table 1 below. These characteristics reflect some of the values that Clinton also identifies in his leadership model. The source of the leader's calling and authority, his identity and accountability are very significant in the steward leader model.

Table 1 Characteristics of a Steward Leader²⁹

Accountable	Humble	Self-sacrificing
Authority from God	Integrity	Sense of purpose
Caring	Loving	Stewardship awareness
Diligent	Obedient	Submission to authority
Faithful	Ownership recognition	Transparent
Giving	Passionate	Trustworthy

However, for the purpose of this paper, the eight values that Clinton identifies as guiding Steward Leadership and the characteristics of a steward leader by Wilson may be summed into four broad principles. These are: (i) the principle of ownership and authority, (ii) the principle of responsibility, (iii) the principle of accountability, and (iv) the principle of reward.³⁰ In other words, steward leadership operates in the awareness of delegated ownership and authority. This awareness compels a sense of responsibility and accountability since there are rewards for stewardship. Since this paper intends to survey the principles of Steward Leadership as may be gleaned from the writings of Ellen G. White, the next section focusses on that.

Ellen G. White and Steward Leadership

As earlier observed, Ellen G. White wrote extensively on leadership and stewardship but she does not seem to employ the term Steward Leadership or steward leader in her writings. Yet, a survey of her writings on leadership reveals though she did not use the term Steward Leadership, the four basic biblical principles of this leadership model as summed above and adopted for this paper are traceable in her works. Therefore, this section shall explore how these principles are expressed in some of her writings in relation to Christian leadership. To illustrate each of these principles, this section shall quote some statements from some of her works and provide some explanations as necessary.

The Principle of Ownership and Authority

The first principle of Steward Leadership as discussed in this paper centers on ownership of the domain of leadership and the authority of the steward leader. In our context, the domain of leadership is the church which includes all its affiliate institutions. As is evident in the Scriptures, the church is the household of God and it belongs to God. He is the owner and ultimate leader of the church. It is in this divine household that a steward leader is called to lead. Equally, the mission of the church and its resources belong to God. The divine ownership of the church is expressed in various ways in the writings of Ellen G. White. On the occasion of the appointing of the seven deacons to provide some leadership oversight function for the material well-being of the members of the Early Church, she describes the church as God's heritage. She writes:

Those to whom was given the responsibility of the general oversight of the church were not to lord it over God's heritage, but, as wise shepherds, were to "feed the flock of God, ... being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2, 3); and the deacons were to be "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." These men were to take their position unitedly on the side of right and to maintain it with firmness and decision. Thus, they would have a uniting

*influence upon the entire flock.*³¹ (emphasis supplied).

In another instance she illuminates:

*God's care for His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon His children but such as is essential for their present and eternal good. He will purify His church, even as Christ purified the temple during His ministry on earth. All that He brings upon His people in test and trial comes that they may gain deeper piety and greater strength to carry forward the triumphs of the cross.*³²

Further, she cautions:

*The high-handed power that has been developed, as though positions had made men gods, makes me afraid, and ought to cause fear. It is a curse whenever, and by whomsoever it is exercised. The lording it over God's heritage will create such disgust of man's jurisdiction that a state of insubordination will result.*³³ (emphasis supplied).

In the view of Ellen G. White, the ownership of the church is undisputed. It is God's heritage and belongs to him only. The Church as God's object in the world is not created by the steward leader neither does it exist for the leader. Therefore, the

sovereign authority over the church is God, its rightful owner.

Further, a steward leadership's authority over the church is not self-derived because leadership calling, gifts, talents and abilities belong to God. They are entrusted on persons who have been called by the Master who has the ownership of the estate, in this case the church.³⁴ Two statements may illustrate the dependence of the steward leader on God concerning gifts and abilities for ministry. First Ellen White observes,

*The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.*³⁵ (Emphasis supplied).

Writing in the context of youths who are preparing for leadership by seeking to obtain an education, she encourages them to contemplate thus: "Shall I open my heart to the Holy Spirit, that every faculty and energy may be aroused, which God has given me in trust? I am Christ's property, and am employed in His service. I am a steward of His grace."³⁶ These statements align with the counsel of Apostle Peter to believers concerning

the use of their gifts. Peter admonishes, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracle of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet. 4:10, 11). Therefore, the steward Leader is also a disciple of the Master; on his behalf he functions. A steward leader's recognition of and loyalty to God's sovereignty over the church and the steward leader's calling, gifts, talents and abilities may influence his leadership and results in submission to the mission of God for the church and the use of his spiritual endowments for ministry. Such a leader may not be obsessed with hierarchy but service and an attitude of humility since as a steward leader he is only a representative with delegated authority and abilities from the owner. Correspondingly, how a leader leads in his circles of influence such as his family, community, and ecclesiastical circle is a measure to determine whether he recognizes and is loyal to the ownership of God and his delegated authority.

The Principle of Responsibility

The second principle of steward leadership in the context of this paper is accountability. In this principle of steward leadership, a leader recognizes

the real owner of the church and that his status as a steward requires certain obligations. This responsibility is founded on the fact that the authority the leader wields is delegated to him; he is on a mission God entrusted to him and not on personal agenda. Although acting on delegated authority, the leader is nonetheless responsible for the influence and consequences of his leadership and the use of his gifts, talents and abilities God has given to him. Hence, a steward leader does not have the liberty to be lackadaisical in the handling of the business of God. Ellen recognizes that leaders are appointed guardians of the church of God with solemn responsibility. In her words,

The words of the prophet declare the solemn responsibility of those who are appointed as guardians of the church of God, stewards of the mysteries of God. They are to stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy. Souls are in danger of falling under temptation, and they will perish unless God's ministers are faithful to their trust. If for any reason their spiritual senses become so benumbed that they are unable to discern danger, and through their failure to give warning the people perish, God will require at their hands the blood of those who are lost.³⁷ (emphasis mine).

Further, she stresses:

Those to whom was given the responsibility of the general oversight of the church were not to lord it over God's heritage, but, as wise shepherds, were to "feed the flock of God, ... being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5: 2, 3); and the deacons were to be "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." These men were to take their position unitedly on the side of right and to maintain it with firmness and decision. Thus they would have a uniting influence upon the entire flock.³⁸ (emphasis mine).

On the responsibility of pastoral leadership, she writes:

Addressing the church elders regarding their responsibilities as undershepherds of Christ's flock, the apostle wrote: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."³⁹

She further opines:

Those who occupy the position of undershepherds are to exercise a watchful diligence

over the Lord's flock. This is not to be a dictatorial vigilance, but one that tends to encourage and strengthen and uplift. Ministry means more than sermonizing; it means earnest, personal labor... Pastors are needed — faithful shepherds—who will not flatter God's people, nor treat them harshly, but who will feed them with the bread of life—men who in their lives feel daily the converting power of the Holy Spirit and who cherish a strong, unselfish love toward those for whom they labor.⁴⁰

From the passages quoted, Ellen White identifies the responsibilities of the steward leader as including that of being a watchman who is to warn on the approach of the enemy. The leader is also responsible for the spiritual care and character development of the community of his leadership by providing what is needed for this care and development. It means that a steward leader has the responsibility to empower the people under his leadership authority and influence to discover, develop, and use the abilities God has given them to his glory and blessings of humanity. Also, because the leader has influence on those he leads, he is to provide worthy examples to the people. However, leader is cautioned to be diligent, not to be dictatorial but show love and faithfulness. A steward leader would

manage God's household and his gifts, talents and abilities well in accordance with God's desires and purposes and not for personal fulfillment. The steward leader does not need to compel or enforce obedience. He exercises authority and influence on others with the realization that he is accountable to God. Thus, his motivation is not self but service. He does not exalt himself but submits to the will of God and is conscious of the eternal consequences of his decisions.

The Principle of Accountability

The Steward Leader is aware that his calling and responsibility require accountability. Paul, in writing to the Christian community in Corinth who were engrossed in the assessment and comparison of leadership influence of the stewards who had worked in their midst appropriately, expresses this. He states: "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Cor 4:2, NIV). As earlier mentioned some parables of Jesus also illustrate the imperative of faithfulness, integrity and accountability in stewardship. If accountability is required of resources like time, money, abilities, information and wisdom for secular organizations, much more is required of those that God has delegated authority and influence over his business — the church and its institutions. Thus, a steward leader shall give account to the rightful owner on the management of the things he has entrusted to him (Rom. 14:10-12)

because "Christians need always to bear in mind that their authority or power is delegated, not absolute. They exercise it on God's behalf and are accountable to exercise it in accordance with the character and will of God."⁴¹

A survey of the writings of Ellen White reveals that she emphasizes this principle of steward leadership in at least in three areas.

First, counseling church leadership, she cautions, "Let everyone who sits in council and committee meetings write in his heart the words, I am working for time and for eternity; and *I am accountable to God for the motives that prompt me to action.*"⁴² (emphasis mine). Similarly, while writing to one "Brother R" she warns:

But the accountability of a minister of Christ, who is to warn the world of a coming judgment, is as much more important than that of the common workman as eternal things are of more consequence than temporal. If the minister of the gospel yields to his inclination rather than to be guided by duty, if he indulges self at the expense of spiritual strength, and as the result moves indiscreetly, souls will rise up in the judgment to condemn him for his unfaithfulness.... the result of an unwise cause pursued by the minister will never be fully understood until the minister sees as God seeth.⁴³

Concerning the accountability of educational leaders and their influence over students, White counsels on the need to provide proper guidance even on matters of recreation. She observes thus:

Had the teachers to a man done their duty, had they realized their accountability, had they stood in moral independence before God, had they used the ability which God had given them according to the sanctification of the spirit through the love of the truth, they would have had spiritual strength and divine enlightenment to press on and on and upward on the ladder of progress reaching heavenward. The fact is evident that they did not appreciate or walk in the light or follow the Light of the world.⁴⁴

In the view of Ellen White, accountability is not limited to spiritual responsibilities. She extends divine accountability to the physicians. She writes:

The physician who understands the responsibility and accountability of his position will feel the necessity of Christ's presence with him in his work for those for whom such a sacrifice has been made. He will subordinate everything to the higher interests which concern the life that may be

saved unto life eternal. He will do all in his power to save both the body and the soul. He will try to do the very work that Christ would do were He in his place. The physician who loves Christ and the souls for whom Christ died will seek earnestly to bring into the sickroom a leaf from the tree of life. He will try to break the bread of life to the sufferer.⁴⁵

White also attests that "Increased responsibilities bring increased accountability. He who would be a faithful servant must give entire and willing service to the greatest teacher the world ever knew. His ideas and principles must be kept pure by the power of God"⁴⁶ and "those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God, will receive his blessing."⁴⁷ Further, those who realize their accountability are more enabled to function better in the responsibilities that God entrusts to them. She elucidates:

God requires every steward of the grace of Christ to be faithful, to elevate and purify every power of his nature, that he may be a man, and a child of God. Christ died for him; and with a high sense of his accountability, understanding when God speaks, he will become a polished instrument in the hands of God to bless his fellow-men.

To perform his work well, to make the most of his priceless opportunities, will be to him a sacred duty.⁴⁸

It seems also that in the view of Ellen G. White, educational attainment does not exempt a leader from accountability; he is not limited by educational attainment. Consequently, she addresses this thus:

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 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?⁴⁹

A steward leader's accountability is also influenced by character development. Thus, Ellen White correspondingly places significance on the integrity of a leader. She writes: "But the position does not make the man. It is the integrity of character, the spirit of Christ, that makes him thankful, unselfish, without partiality and without hypocrisy—it is this that is of value with God."⁵⁰ In

another instance while commenting on the life of Solomon and the responsibility that accompanies higher positions, she warns "position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great."⁵¹

The Principle of Reward

The parables of Jesus about the kingdom portray that faithful stewards receive commensurate rewards. Hence, steward leaders in God's household shall receive a reward for their stewardship. The commendation "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matt. 25:21) is expected at the end of time. Paul encourages some of his audience in his Epistle to the Colossians, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23, 24).

White enunciates on the reward that awaits stewards in the household of God whom she calls undershepherds of Christ's flock.

Addressing the church elders regarding their responsibilities as undershepherds of Christ's flock, the apostle wrote: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre,

but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. *And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*"⁵² (Emphasis supplied).

Commenting on the rewards of the master to the faithful servants in the parable of the talents, Ellen White elucidates thus:

It is the faithfulness, the loyalty to God, the loving service, that wins the divine approval. Every impulse of the Holy Spirit leading men to goodness and to God, is noted in the books of heaven, and in the day of God the workers through whom He has wrought will be commended.⁵³

White does not only speak of positive rewards for leaders. She does counsel on the type of rewards that may be granted unfaithful leadership. She counsels:

Because of the wrong actions of those in positions of trust, do not let envious feelings fill your heart. They are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. You only need to pity and pray for them. The Lord knows every dishonest transaction, and will award

them according as their work shall be. The Lord rewards every unselfish action. Pray with heart and soul and voice, "O God, impress more deeply upon my mind and heart the principles of thy holy law, which is the transcript of thy character. Let me by faith grasp the exceeding great and precious promises, that I may not in my duty and work fail or be discouraged, but perfect holiness in thy fear."⁵⁴

However, the faithfulness that is required of a steward leader either in the church or in secular leadership is not one arising from fear or in anticipation of reward but a response to the confidence demonstrated by the Master to call and grant authority over his household and his resources.

Conclusion

Christian leadership in ecclesiastical circle whether in the church or its institutions, is a calling from God who owns the church. In his wisdom he has entrusted some with the stewardship in various aspects of his household and some Christians are even called as steward leaders outside the ecclesiastical circle. It is imperative to note that a steward leader is only a trustee and should lead with the awareness of delegated authority. This trust comes with his gifting and empowering those who respond to this

calling and are submissive to his authority to fulfill his mission. Such leaders recognize the awesome responsibility that are placed on them. They are also accountable for their leadership and look forward to the commendations from God. Ellen G. White's counsels on leadership provide relevant insights and guidance on how faithful Christian leadership, which could be called Steward Leadership and the Christian leaders as steward leaders, may understand and practice leadership in the household of God and even in their secular vocations.

References

¹See Sampson M. Nwaomah, "Towards the Search for Sustainable Political Leadership in Nigeria" in *Babcock Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 1.2 (June, 2003), 1-7.

²See Henry & Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, Tennessee: 2011), 32, quoting Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus claim that as at 1997, about 850 definitions had been identified for leadership. See also David Birkenstock, "Leadership: The Key Dimension in Adventist Tertiary Educational Administration", paper read at International Faith and Learning Seminar held at Helderberg College, Somerset West, RSA, November/December 1993, http://circle.adventist.org/files/CD2010/docs/12cc_037-048.pdf, accessed January 24, 2018 and Bernard M. Lall and Geeta R. Lall, *Dynamic Leadership* (Mountain View California: Pacific Press, 1979), 20-21 for

examples of definitions. Authors like John Maxwell, Henry and Richard Blackaby, Robert K. Greenleaf, George Barna, Paul Block and R. Scott Rodin among others have extensively written on leadership with emphasis on Christian leadership.

³John K. Hemphill cited in Lall and Lall, 20, 21.

⁴Ordway Tead cited in Lall and Lall, 21.

⁵John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 1.

⁶Duane M. Covrig, Janet Ledesma, and Gary Gifford, "Spiritual or Religious Leadership: What Do You Practice? What Should You Practice?" in *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 2013), 105.

⁷Blackaby and Blackaby, 36.

⁸Louise Kretzschmar, "Authentic Christian Leadership and Spiritual Formation in Africa" in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 113 (July 2), 47.

⁹*ibid*, 47.

¹⁰For readings on these models, see Robert J. Clinton, *Leadership Emergence Theory: A self-study Manual for Analyzing the Development of a Christian Leader* (Altadena, CA: Barnabas Resources, 1989). For the Steward model, see also R. Scott Rodin, *The Steward Leader: Transforming People, Organizations and Communities* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010) and Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (Ramsay: Paulist Press, 2001), and Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*.

¹¹See Kent R. Wilson, "Steward Leadership: Characteristics of The Steward Leader in Christian Nonprofit Organizations," A Dissertation Presented for the Degree of PhD At The University Of Aberdeen (2010), <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5e83/15f4a8558f3809f86fc565ba865e34f5d57d.pdf>. accessed January 21, 2018.

¹²The book *Christian Leadership, a* compilation of the Board of Trustees of Ellen G. White Estate is a commendable effort to bring together some of her statements on various aspects of leadership. Another compilation of White's statements on leadership is the work of Cindy Tutsch, *Ellen White on Leadership: Guidance for those who Influence Others* (Nampo, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2008). Both publications provide helpful insights on Ellen White's statement on leadership. However, the statements were not compiled from the perspective of Steward Leadership.

¹³See Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1968) for her insightful counsel on Stewardship.

¹⁴Another Greek word translated steward in the New Testament is *epitropos* (Matthew 20:8, Luke 8:3 and Gal 4:2). But the most regular word is *oikonomos* occurring in the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistle of Peter.

¹⁵Kent R. Wilson, "Stages in the Development of Stewardship: Historical Precedents and Contemporary Expressions" hestewardsjourney.com/.../Stages-in-the-Development-of-Stewardship-SLI-Article.do. accessed January 29, 2018.

¹⁶These parables were not primarily told in the context of stewardship but to

illustrate the kingdom motif, they however provide some insights on stewardship. See the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13), and the parable of the Ten Minas (Luke 19:11-27)

¹⁷Roger T. Playwin, "Applying the Concept of Servant Leadership and Stewardship to Organizational Management," <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/AboutUs/VincentianIdentity/vfs/Documents/Servant%20Leadership,%20Stewardship%20Case%20Study.pdf>, accessed, January 24, 2018.

¹⁸The present Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the first quarter of 2018 briefly discusses the two concepts of stewardship, especially the lessons for January 27-February 2.

¹⁹All Bible passages are from the New King James Version, unless otherwise stated.

²⁰John Goodrich, "Overseers as Stewards and the Qualifications for Leadership in the Pastoral Epistles." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*, 104.1(2013), 83. Retrieved 25 Jan. 2018, from doi:10.1515/znw-2013-000.

²¹Kent R. Wilson, "Steward Leadership: Characteristics of The Steward Leader in Christian Nonprofit Organizations," A Dissertation Presented for the Degree of PhD At The University Of Aberdeen (2010), <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5e83/15f4a8558f3809f86fc565ba865e34f5d57d.pdf>. accessed January 21, 2018.

²²Rodin, 70-89.

²³*Ibid*, 76.

²⁴*Ibid*, 77, 82.

²⁵David Birkenstock, "Leadership: The Key Dimension in Adventist Tertiary Educational Administration."

²⁶Clinton, 57-58.

²⁷Dan R. Ebener, "Servant Leadership and a Culture of Stewardship" in *The Priest* (February 2011), 18.

²⁸Clinton, 58.

²⁹Table is adapted from Howard C. Rich III, "Steward Leadership Among Christian Leaders of For-Profit Organizations," A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Tennessee Temple University, 2012, page 32. The table is originally from Kent R. Wilson, *Steward Leadership: Characteristics of The Steward Leader in Christian Nonprofit Organizations*, A Dissertation Presented for the Degree of PhD At the University of Aberdeen (2010),

³⁰See also the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the first quarter of 2018 which briefly discusses the two concepts of stewardship, especially the lessons for January 28, and February 1, which also hints on the characteristics of a steward.

³¹Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Nampo Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005), 91.

³²*Ibid*, 524-5.

³³Ellen G. White, Letter 55. Sept. 19, 1895.

³⁴The passages on spiritual gifts clearly demonstrate that leadership is

entrusted. See Romans 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-11; Eph 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

³⁵Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lesson* 328.2

³⁶Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2010), 301.

³⁷White, *Acts of the Apostles* 361.

³⁸*ibid*, 91.

³⁹*ibid*, 525-6.

⁴⁰*ibid*, 526.

⁴¹Kretzschma, 50

⁴²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* vol. 7 (Nampo Idaho: Pacific Press, 1948), 258, 259.

⁴³White, *Testimonies for the Church* 3:243.

⁴⁴Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages Book 1* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1958), 131.1

⁴⁵Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* vol. 6 (Nampo Idaho: Pacific Press, 1948), 229-30

⁴⁶Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Nampo Idaho: Pacific Press, 1948), 282.

⁴⁷Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, September 16, 188.

⁴⁸Ellen G. White, *Pamphlet* 028, Feb 13, 1890, 12.

⁴⁹Ellen G. White, *This Day with God* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1979), 248.

⁵⁰White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 356.

⁵¹Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Nampo Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005), 30.

⁵²White, *Acts of the Apostles* 525.

⁵³White, *Christ Object Lesson* 361.3

⁵⁴Ellen G. White, Letter 178, 1899, (November 6), 9.

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