

**LEADERSHIP  
IN THE  
LAST  
DAYS**

**TWELVE TOOLS FOR ADVENTIST LEADERS**

**DELBERT W. BAKER & DWAIN N. ESMOND**

**EDITORS**

## LEADERSHIP IN THE LAST DAYS

Twelve Tools for Adventist Leaders

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*Leadership in the Last Days: Twelve Tools for Adventist Leaders* was written by seasoned church administrators, leaders, and educators who came together during the COVID-19 pandemic with the mission to envision and develop innovative approaches to ministry and leadership. They aim to equip leaders to create and sustain vibrant churches and strong communities committed to the Great Commission.

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# DEDICATED TO OUR SPOUSES

Susan Baker

Dalyne Baptiste

Elfreda Blue

Kemba Esmond

Elaine Oliver

Linda Phipps

*We are deeply grateful and indebted to you for faithfully supporting our ministry with its demands and busyness.*

*We are a “ministerial team.”*

*You have been a steady source of strength, encouragement, and wisdom throughout the research, reflection, and writing that went into these pages.*

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*Your unwavering love, patience, and support made this book possible.*

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*May this book be a blessing.*

*With appreciation,*

*-The Authors.*



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The Seventh-day Adventist Church's commitment to developing strong, Christ-centered leaders who serve its mission globally during these Last Days of Earth's history drives this book's vision. We are privileged to be called to prepare others for Christ's soon return.

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*May the insights and principles shared in these pages inspire leaders to pursue integrity, faithfulness, and excellence as we prepare for the Advent of Jesus Christ.*

*-The Authors*

# PREFACE

Leading in the Last Days before Christ's return requires a distinctive approach—one rooted in biblical principles, informed by prophetic understanding, and responsive to the unique demands of our times. *Leadership in the Last Days* is more than a collection of essays on leadership; it is a comprehensive resource designed to meet the needs of those called to lead at this critical time, especially Seventh-day Adventist ministers, educators, and lay members committed to fulfilling the Great Commission.

This book results from the collaboration between six experienced leaders, each bringing a wealth of knowledge and practical insights to address the pressing leadership challenges of our time. While books on leadership abound, a resource that speaks to the unique circumstances faced by Adventist leaders during these Last Days is long overdue.

Several features of this book enhance the reader's experience. Chapters begin with a preview of its core concepts and end with a summary of the core ideas. Additionally, all chapters offer Practical Takeaways you can apply in your leadership context. A Resource Section with valuable leadership materials is included in the Appendices, offering deeper insights and additional support to help you implement the principles learned.

These features make *Leadership in the Last Days* a dynamic, interactive guide that equips you to lead effectively in our unprecedented times. We believe that the principles and skills shared here will challenge and prepare you to be a relevant, reliable, and resilient leader as we hasten the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

# INTRODUCTION

## A Call for Distinctive Leadership

In an era of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and moral decline, the Seventh-day Adventist leader's role has never been more critical. *Leadership in the Last Days* is a timely, essential resource designed to equip leaders with the skills to navigate these turbulent times with wisdom, courage, and faith. As we stand on the threshold of the final events in Earth's history, strong, principled leadership is urgently needed.

*Leadership in the Last Days* is designed to equip you with twelve essential leadership skills, each specifically tailored to address the unique challenges leaders face in the *eschaton* (the Greek term for "last, final, end"), the final days before Christ's Second Coming. Authored by experienced leaders who have navigated the complexities of ministry and leadership, this book offers a rich blend of biblical principles, insights from the writings of Ellen G. White, and modern leadership research. These skills complement the development of three unique types of leaders:

**Strong Natural Leader (SNL):** A leader who possesses innate leadership skills, inspires others, and drives change, even in the most challenging circumstances.

**Strong Spiritual Leader (SSL):** A leader who goes beyond natural abilities, nurturing and strengthening moral, ethical, and spiritual leadership. The SSL recognizes that true leadership is about what you do and who you are in Christ.

**Strong Adventist Leader (SAL):** A leader convicted about the distinctiveness of Bible truth and the nearness of Christ's Second Advent. The SAL understands how these truths should influence lifestyle and leadership and recognizes that specific leadership competencies are required to lead God's people effectively in these Last Days.

What sets this book apart is its focus on the practical application of these principles. The authors offer thorough explorations of leadership strategies and concrete implementation steps. Whether dealing with

crisis management, work-life balance, or integrating eschatological understanding as a leader, this book provides actionable advice to help you lead with effectiveness and purpose. Leaders who apply these strategies will find themselves better equipped to handle end-time complexities, more confident in their ability to guide others through these challenging times, and more effective in preparing the world for Christ's return.

*Leadership in the Last Days* is not just a guide; it is a call to action for leaders serious about fulfilling their divine, eschatological mandate. It is more than a resource; it is a mentor in print, designed to be studied and revisited often as you grow and evolve as a leader. Whether a seasoned leader or a beginner, the tools offered here will ensure that you lead with purpose, conviction, and clear vision.



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# PART 1

## FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS FOR END-TIME LEADERS

As leaders called to serve in the Last Days, our journey begins with a focus on developing the inner qualities that shape us into resilient, self-aware, Christlike, and Spirit-filled leaders. In this first section, we will explore the foundational *skills* that build the core of an empowered end-time leader. The following six chapters focus on cultivating personal and spiritual growth, aligning your leadership with God's purpose, and navigating the challenges of ministry with balance and determination.

Leadership in the Last Days requires more than just strategic insight; it demands a heart rooted in integrity, a life designed with intention, and the ability to lead others with compassion and confidence. The *skills* outlined here are not just concepts but practical steps that will shape you into a leader prepared to face the unique challenges of this era.



# CHAPTER ONE

# NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP SUCCESS WITH STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

## *LEADERSHIP SKILL: INTELLIGENCE*

DELBERT W. BAKER

*“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”*  
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE GOAL OF every progressive Christian leader is to educate themselves to lead intelligently, creatively, and spiritually in the “Last Days” before the Second Advent of Christ. Adventist leaders stand at the crossroads of history and prophecy, navigating the complexities of leadership while anticipating the return of Christ. The urgency of our times calls for leaders who combine biblical wisdom and leadership intelligence today, when the love of many has grown cold (Matthew 24:12). Integrating scriptural insights and the four intelligences into a cohesive framework for effective Adventist leadership is a powerful strategy to develop skillful, compassionate leadership, equipping end-time leaders to fulfill their divine calling.

## **BIBLICAL WISDOM AND LEADERSHIP INTELLIGENCE**

Foundational for effective Adventist leaders is the acquisition of wisdom and understanding, as we read in Proverbs 3:13–14: “Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold” (NIV).

As we examine how to combine wisdom and the four intelligences, take some time to reflect on the value of integrating spirituality into your

Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, and Experiential Intelligence. Mastering these areas will allow you to achieve personal and relational growth.

Let us begin with Physical Intelligence.

## PHYSICAL INTELLIGENCE

The connection between good health and effective leadership is undeniable. Leaders for the Last Days must value health and wellness because a healthy body supports a healthy mind, a healthy mind supports a healthy spirit, and a healthy spirit facilitates a healthy character.

Physical Intelligence involves understanding our body's signals and managing physical well-being through exercise, rest, and nutrition. For Adventist leaders, maintaining physical health is not merely about personal well-being but about stewarding the body as a gift from God and the temple of the Holy Spirit, essential for fulfilling your calling with vigor and vitality (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Adventist leaders enhance their well-being by pursuing Physical Intelligence, setting an example for others.

In addition to modeling wellness habits, leaders can incorporate physical wellness into their leadership practices, such as starting meetings with a brief walk, offering healthier food options, or promoting a workplace culture of wellness. Ellen White noted:

*“The body is a most important medium through which the mind and the soul are developed for the upbuilding of character. Hence it is that the adversary of souls directs his temptations to the enfeebling and degrading of the physical powers. Intellectual power, physical stamina, and the length of life depend upon immutable laws” (Prophets and Kings, p. 488–490).*

The following healthy habits will help integrate Physical Intelligence into Adventist leadership:

- **Adopt a balanced diet.** Daniel and his companions chose to eat vegetables and drink only water instead of the king's delicacies, recognizing the importance of a healthy diet (Daniel 1:8–16). Leaders should strive for a balanced diet that supports overall well-being and energy levels.



- **Balance work with Sabbath rest.** Rest is a biblical principle exemplified by God’s rest on the seventh day after creation (Genesis 2:2–3). Leaders should practice regular rest and observe the Sabbath, not only as a commandment but as a rejuvenation practice for mental, spiritual, and physical health.
- **Schedule daily physical activity.** The Bible may not explicitly deal with the effects of exercise on wellness, but it is now established science that regular, moderate exercise can significantly impact mental clarity, emotional resilience, and physical stamina. Physical exercise also helps manage stress and the tensions that accompany leadership.
- **Incorporate natural remedies.** Ellen White widened the scope of Physical Intelligence when she wrote:

*“Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature’s remedial agencies and how to apply them. It is essential both to understand the principles involved in the treatment of the sick and to have a practical training that will enable one rightly to use this knowledge”*  
(*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127).

Physical Intelligence leads us into the vital area of Spiritual Intelligence and its importance for Adventist leaders.

## SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

Spiritual Intelligence is the ability to use biblical principles, the Spirit of Prophecy, and spiritual insights to solve problems, achieve goals, and enrich your life and the lives of others. It involves understanding life’s deeper meaning and purpose, transcending pride and ego, and acting according to higher principles and values. Spiritual Intelligence is the distinguishing trait of a Bible-believing leader. A leader must have vision and strategy. However, a spiritually intelligent leader consistently strives to love people and give God glory. Their vocation may be at a place of employment, but their destination is heaven.

Our times demand spiritually intelligent leaders who are bold and creative with their spiritual interventions in the church, workplace,

home, or wherever they may be. Leaders can integrate scriptural study and prayer into team meetings, encouraging members to reflect on biblical principles and how they apply them to their work and personal lives, cultivating a deeper spiritual connection and purpose.

*“Intelligence is the light of life; spiritual intelligence is the light of eternal life.”*

*–Matshona Dhliwayo*

It takes tact and discernment to balance the demands of leadership with those of a life of faith without professional or spiritual burnout. However, in the right setting, a spiritually intelligent leader can schedule regular personal time off and team retreats to focus on spiritual growth and connection, ensuring that spiritual practices are integrated into the rhythm of leadership and organizational activities.

The following practices can enhance Spiritual Intelligence:

- **Set time aside daily for spiritual reflection.** The Bible is a source of divine wisdom and Spiritual Intelligence. Joshua 1:8 advises: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night.” The Psalms, for example, are particularly illuminating during moments of personal struggle. This reflection time can give you a fresh perspective on your current situation and a renewed sense of God’s presence in all aspects of life.
- **Be a source of spiritual influence.** Influence is a powerful aspect of leadership. Like Enoch, Joseph, Nehemiah, and Daniel, you can be a positive influence. Joseph influenced Potiphar positively (Genesis 39:2–3), whereas Achan exerted an evil influence on the Israelite community (Joshua 7).
- **Create an environment for spiritual mentorship.** Just as Elijah mentored Elisha, Barnabas mentored Paul, and Paul mentored Timothy, spiritual mentorship can enhance the Spiritual Intelligence of both mentor and mentee.

Next, we examine the popular area of Emotional Intelligence.

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence entails understanding and managing your emotions to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize, and defuse conflict. Emotional Intelligence is paramount for Adventist leaders to reflect the biblical commandment to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31) and to do unto others as you would have done to you (Matthew 7:12).

Daniel Goleman, known for his pioneering book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, identifies four domains of Emotional Intelligence:

**“Emotions are not problems to be solved. They are signals to be interpreted.”**

1. **Self-awareness** involves recognizing and understanding your emotions and how they affect your thoughts and behaviors.
2. **Self-management** is the ability to control impulses, manage emotions, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain a positive outlook.
3. **Social Awareness**, also known as empathy, involves understanding the emotions and perspectives of others and adapting to different social situations.
4. **Relationship management** focuses on building and maintaining healthy relationships, communicating effectively, inspiring and influencing others, and resolving conflicts constructively.

Emotional Intelligence is often demonstrated during personal or organizational conflict. Leaders with high Emotional Intelligence utilize effective interpersonal strategies based on empathy, active listening, and humility. They are well-versed in the H.A.L.T. rule: slow down when hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. During a heated meeting, an emotionally intelligent leader may pause to suggest a moment of prayer and reflection, allowing emotions to settle for a more thoughtful dialogue.

Spirit-led, emotionally intelligent leaders implement regular self-reflection and healthy interpersonal practices to better understand and regulate personal emotions, enabling a more empathetic response to others' feelings.

The following leadership ideas can help Adventist leaders integrate Emotional Intelligence into their practices:

- **Active listening before quick speech.** James 1:19 advises: “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (NIV). Leaders should prioritize understanding the perspectives and feelings of others before disagreeing or imposing their views.
- **Practice emotional control.** Proverbs 16:32 highlights the strength of controlling your emotions: “Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city” (NIV). Influential leaders assess situations objectively, acknowledging their emotional responses while empathizing with the marginalized and suffering.
- **Cultivate self-awareness.** Reflect on your emotions and their impact on your decisions and interactions. David’s Psalms often illustrate self-reflection and an awareness of your emotional state before God.

Last, we examine the importance of Experiential Intelligence.

## EXPERIENTIAL INTELLIGENCE

Our experiences are events and interactions that contribute to our knowledge and development, forming the basis of our identity. These can range from subjective experiences, such as relationships and personal growth, to professional experiences, including education, work, and skills development.

**“Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.”**

Experiential Intelligence involves using your experiences to make better decisions in the present. It reflects a leader’s capacity to learn from successes and failures, applying the lessons learned to new challenges. The

goal of developing Experiential Intelligence is to be able to identify, manage, utilize, and transform our experiences. Paul admonishes: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and

acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2; see also 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Managing your experiences and using them effectively as a leader is an art. A church leader who shares lessons learned from a failed community outreach program can inspire a more effective strategy in the future.

Human beings tend to repeat past mistakes due to a lack of reflection or the inability to adapt based on previous outcomes. The thoughtful, experientially intelligent leader will seek to create a culture of open feedback and continuous learning within the leadership team, encouraging the sharing of experiences and lessons learned to inform better decision-making.

The following strategies are ways to incorporate Experiential Intelligence principles into your leadership style:

- **Integrate your life lessons with those of biblical characters.** The Bible is rich with narratives that provide insights into human behavior, decision-making, and the consequences of those decisions. Leaders can draw parallels from these stories by relating them to their experiences to gain wisdom and guidance.
- **Cultivate a humble, learning spirit.** Paul’s letters to various churches often reflect on his life and the lessons he learned. He uses these insights to advise, encourage, and correct the early Christian communities. Similarly, leaders can share personal stories of faith, failure, and redemption to teach and inspire others.
- **Create a culture of shared learning.** Creating environments where team members feel comfortable sharing their experiences can promote collective wisdom that enhances decision-making and problem-solving.

In an era clamoring for adept, compassionate leaders, integrating biblical wisdom into current intelligence theory provides a comprehensive framework for leadership development. Grounded in a deep commitment to biblical principles and a reliance on the Holy Spirit, Adventist leaders can face end-time complexities with grace, wisdom, and competence.

## SUMMARY

This chapter provided a practical overview of the four intelligences essential to every Christian leader in the Last Days before the Second Coming of Christ. Developing keen intelligence to discern the times in which we live is foundational to successful leadership (1 Chronicles 12:32).

## PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Health and wellness initiatives.** Prioritize health and wellness by modeling healthy habits for your team. Implement wellness programs, such as regular exercise sessions, healthy eating initiatives, and mental health practices. Promote a supportive and balanced work environment to improve productivity and morale.
- 2. Integrate spiritual practices into leadership.** Incorporate spiritual practices into your leadership routine, such as starting meetings with a devotional and prayer, organizing spiritual retreats, and encouraging team members to share and reflect on their faith experiences. Promote a sense of purpose and connection among team members, enhancing team cohesion and motivation.
- 3. Promote emotional and experiential learning.** Develop training programs focused on Emotional and Experiential Intelligence. Encourage self-awareness, empathy, and active listening through workshops and mentorship programs. Create spaces for sharing experiences and lessons learned, such as regular team debriefs and reflection sessions. Cultivate a culture of empathy, resilience, and continuous improvement within your team.



## 1. Supporting Bible Texts

Proverbs 2:6: *“For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”*

James 1:5: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”*

## 2. Ellen White Quotes

*“True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man” (Counsels for the Church, p. 202).*

*“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached” (Education, p. 18).*

## 3. Popular Wisdom Quotes

*“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”*  
—Martin Luther King Jr.

*“Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.”*  
—Stephen Hawking

## 4. Self-Assessment Questions

*Have I effectively integrated the four intelligences—Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, and Experiential—into my leadership approach?*

*In what ways have the four intelligences informed my decision-making and interactions with others?*

## 5. Discussion Questions

*How can leaders develop and balance these four intelligences in their leadership roles?*

*What impact do these intelligences have on a leader’s ability to navigate end-time challenges?*