Title: Developing lay leadership for church ministry: a model of leadership training program for local Seventh-day Adventist churches in Korea

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Abstract:

One of the most urgent needs of the local Seventh-day Adventist Church in Korea is to develop its members to become effective lay leaders for ministry. This is so because the success and failure of the church largely depends on the lay leadership within the church. To fulfill this need, lay leadership development is required. Through this development process, the laity must be brought back into their proper place of ministry and church leadership. The concept of developing lay leadership is strongly supported by the Bible. It emphasizes the involvement of all the church members in ministry since God’s ministry is for all the believers in Christ.

To become effective lay leaders, the church leaders must find ways to enhance their ability and skills in leadership. Thus, to find proper ways to develop the laity in leadership is urgently needed. This is the main purpose of this study.

Quantitative and qualitative self-constructed instruments were formulated to purposely gather desired data from selected respondents—church pastors and lay leaders—in East Central Korean Conference. The survey indicates that there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift in church ministry where local churches must enhance laity’s participation in
ministry. To enhance laity’s ministry, developing laity’s leadership is needed. Thus, church leaders need to develop a church-based lay leadership training program.

The study concludes that when the church develops and enhances its laity’s leadership skills, the entire church will experience growth and development. These skills will be used by the laity in all church activities and thus improve its ministry. The study recommends that the church should exert every effort to develop a self-styled academic structure termed as the “Leadership Training School” (LTS). The LTS is a church-based leadership institution specialized in developing and enhancing the laity’s competence to lead the church and its activities. The program of LTS consists of three semesters and emphasizes special leadership factors that include (1) character, (2) spirituality, and (3) leadership traits and skills. Each subject was placed in a special curriculum consisting of long-term course and intensive courses which can be accomplished in a year.