

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Elder J. Alfred Johnson, II, Director of Adult Ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, for writing the foreword to this book, and for the way in which he and Paula have modeled humility to Audrey and me over the years.

Thanks to Kenley D. Hall, D.Min., who served as my doctoral dissertation adviser, for the guidance and encouragement he gave me. Thanks also to the other members of the Andrews University Doctor of Ministry Dissertation Defense Committee—Trevor O'Reggio, Ph.D., Skip Bell, D.Min., and Martin Hannah, Ph.D.—for challenging me to be a voice for deacons and deaconesses by placing my research in public view so that dialogue for change may occur. The writing of this book is a step toward meeting that challenge.

I am grateful for the mentoring of the deceased (2004) Elder Eric C. Ward, former pastor of the Oakwood College (now University) Seventh-day Adventist Church, Huntsville, Alabama. When I was a student at Oakwood, I was privileged to assist him. It was there that I grew to respect and appreciate the sacred work of deacons and deaconesses.

Thanks to Elder Steven Norman, Communication Secretary of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, for recommending me to conduct a training seminar for the deacons and deaconesses of our conference in January 1999. It was that event that challenged me to study the work of these officers.

Thanks to all of the pastors, deacons, and deaconesses who have purchased my first book, *Problem Solvers and Soul Winners: A Handbook for Deacons and Deaconesses*, 1999, and have invited me to conduct training seminars at your churches.

Thanks to my friends and colleagues Elders Wayne Martin (Jean) and Llewellyn Williams (Cynthia) for their support and encouragement through the years. They are two of the original members of the Forty-Seven Club.

Finally, special thanks to my wife, Audrey—my main source of encouragement and support; a wonderful Christian, mother, and friend. To my son, Dr. Vincent E. White, Jr., DC, and daughter, Angella V. White. I am very proud of both of them. Angella served

as proofreader of this book, and Shalanda Edwards-White, my daughter-in-law, served as graphic designer.