

## SUMMARY OF POINTS ON THE ISSUE OF ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

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**Note:** Most of the statements in this summary are taken verbatim from selected documents considered in the sessions of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC), herein listed as references. The main purpose of the Summary to present as briefly as possible to the leaders of the fields the different viewpoints in the debate so the issue can be presented to the church members with greater clarity and balance. As such, referencing of sources has been omitted for the sake of easier reading and brevity. Following are the sources of this summary:

Kyosin Ahn, “Hermeneutics and the Ordination of Women,” in *North American Division Theology of Ordination Study Committee Report* [submitted to the TOSC January 21, 2014], November 2013.

Richard M. Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Linthicum Heights, MD, July 23, 2013.

Dennis Fortin, “Ellen White, Women in Ministry and the Ordination of Women,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Linthicum Heights, MD, July 24, 2013.

C. Raymond Holmes, “Women in Ministry” What Should We Do Now?,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Columbia, MD, January 24, 2014.

Jiri Moskala, “Back to Creation: an Adventist Hermeneutic,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Linthicum Heights, MD, July 24, 2013.

Barry D. Oliver, “Moving Forward in Unity,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Columbia, MD, January 24, 2014.

Gerhard Pfandl and others, “Evaluation of Egalitarian Papers,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Columbia, MD, January 23, 2014.

Edwin Reynolds and Clinton Wahlen, “Minority Report,” in *North American Division Theology of Ordination Study Committee Report* [submitted to the TOSC January 21, 2013], November 2013.

Angel Manual Rodriguez, “Evaluation of the Arguments Used by Those Who Oppose the Ordination of Women to the Ministry,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Columbia, MD, January 24, 2014.

David Trim, , “The Ordination of Women in Seventh-day Adventist Policy and Practice,” paper presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Linthicum Heights, MD, July 22, 2013.

Kendra Haloviak Valentine, “Is Headship Theology Biblical?,” in *North American Division Theology of Ordination Study Committee Report* [submitted to the TOSC January 21, 2014], November 2013.

### I. Hermeneutics

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p><i>Overview:</i> The Bible does not address gender in reference to ordination to the gospel ministry. What are claimed by opponents to ordination of women as “clear” passages actually reflect the historical and cultural conditions when those passages were originally written.</p> <p>The <i>Methods of Bible Study Document</i> approved by the Church in 1986 allow Bible believing members a variety of approaches in interpreting scriptures, thus the differing opinions in this issue. When the Bible doesn’t seem to offer a clear, indisputable</p>	<p><i>Overview:</i> A plain, natural and literal reading of Scripture, which avoids employing any extra biblical sources, indicates that there is clear biblical mandate that women should not be ordained to the gospel ministry.</p> <p>The Bible is a unified harmonious revelation and is its own best interpreter and provides the key to interpret passages that address historical-cultural issues. The Bible provides evidence whether the counsels it gives are conditioned or of timeless value, whether the passage is merely descriptive or normative. Indications exists within</p>

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<p>directive on a subject, it is best to use a principle-based contextual approach, which considers similar or related examples in Scripture, especially in redemptive history. The method to use is the “historical-grammatical-theological method.” Interpretation of Scripture should follow a “trajectory” approach in cases where, because of the social and cultural conditions in Bible times, implementation of ethical principles were prevented. A trajectory beyond and outside of Scripture must be constructed for our current, more enlightened age, in order meet the purpose of redemption.</p>	<p>Scripture itself to guide interpretation as to whether and when an institution or practice is to be continued or discontinued. An interpreter should therefore seek to discover the author’s intended meaning, which is the only true meaning, and must avoid superimposing meaning on the text beyond the authorial intent.</p>
<p><i>Objection:</i> The hermeneutics used by egalitarians goes beyond the grammatical-historical method. Reliance on an authority beyond the pages of Scripture to determine present truth in cases where the inspired writings are supposedly less clear is problematic. Such an approach, even though it might broadly affirm the Bible’s inspiration, nevertheless undermines it by characterizing selected portions of Scripture as time- and culture- bound and, therefore tinged with the author’s or his community’s prejudicial views on such topics, rather than God’s thoughts which are valid for all places and all time.</p> <p>The influence of culture on the interpretation of biblical texts by the egalitarians is apparent. In order to accommodate the push for women as elders in the church, every biblical argument that in the past had been used against women’s ordination to pastoral leadership has been explained away or reinterpreted by seeking a deeper meaning in the text, by an appeal to other supposedly contradictory texts (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 speaks against 1 Corinthians 11:5), or by a reinterpretation of the meaning of biblical words. Some of the arguments are based on imaginative or creative reasoning and assumptions which are not supported by Scripture. At times, questionable information from non-biblical sources and hypothetical situations are brought into play in order to reinterpret or set aside the plain meaning of the text. What is simple and clear to the common reader of the Bible has been mystified and relativized. The risk of going beyond the plain reading of the biblical text is of reaching decisions that are not Biblical, such as tolerance of homosexual behavior.</p>	<p><i>Objection:</i> The traditional Adventist placement of meaning only within the biblical text is neither complete nor irrefutable. This is the reason why there are conflicting interpretations in the passages on the ordination of women. Those opposing the ordination of women deemphasize the full significance of the immediate context of the passages they use. With a plain, literal approach to the Bible, the ordination of women is not possible unless there is a clear biblical mandate. This is a “static” hermeneutic, which is interested in interpreting the text as an isolated entity and does not recognize the direction in which the Bible is moving. This is “literalistic” reading because the bible text is taken in a very narrow dogmatic way without applying its contextual and larger theological considerations. This “static” hermeneutic can even justify slavery or other unjust acts, because the Bible seems to endorse or tacitly recognize them.</p> <p>Interpretation is also an act of logical reasoning. The meaning of the text is also the result of the reader’s engagement with the text which considers contemporary issues. A proper discernment between temporal, cultural elements and transcultural, permanent elements is fundamental to this approach, for the Bible was written in a certain space and time. Thus the interpreter can also apply a progressive meaning as long as it is consistent with or does not contradict other biblical principles in redemptive history.</p>
<p><i>Response:</i> Unlike the issue of the ordination of women, the Bible makes several clear, direct references condemning homosexual behavior.</p>	<p><i>Response:</i> The Bible must be its own interpreter. To follow a method that allows each reader to determine what is universal and what is culturally specific is a departure from Adventist hermeneutics.</p>

**II. Gender Relations.** Both sides in the ordination of women issue agree that women, too, are created in God’s image; that they are created of equal worth to men; that they bring equally valuable gifts to the church; and that they also bring exclusively female contributions to the mission of the body of Christ. Those who favor the ordination of women to the gospel ministry are called egalitarians and those who oppose are called complementarians. The disagreement primarily centers around passages in Scripture that have been associated with the concept of “headship” and the interpretation of passages that speak about women in the Church.

Major Ideas	Egalitarian View	Complementarian View
<p>A. Gender Relations in the Garden of Eden</p>	<p>According to Genesis 1 there existed full equality between man and woman in the Garden of Eden in “resemblance/constitution, in relationship, and in representation/function.” A careful reading of Gen 1-3 will indicate the problems with the complementarian basis for a hierarchal leadership role for the man.</p> <p>1) As to why Adam was formed first is not given in the Bible. Any interpretation is a speculation. One thing is contextually clear, the priority of Adam points to an unfinished being. The narrative is not seeking to show his superiority over Eve but rather his incompleteness.</p> <p>2) The answer of Eve to the serpent in her use of the plural pronoun, (3:3) show that both her and Adam were given instructions about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.</p> <p>This does not deny that (at least) Adam was the one-time “head of the human family” (Ellen White, 6T 236), “the father and representative of the whole human family” (Ellen White, PP 48). Adam’s representative headship of the entire human race is based upon the biblical principle of corporate solidarity, the individual(s) representing the many, and not of him being created first. The fluid use of the term (<i>ha</i>) <i>'adam</i> in Genesis 1–5 to refer both to an individual “human” and to “humanity” indicates that Adam the individual is to be viewed in corporate solidarity with the <i>'adam</i> which is humanity as a whole. This is the theological truth recognized by Paul in Romans 5:12–21.</p> <p>3) The context indicates that by assigning to Adam the task of naming the animals God wanted him to realize that he needed a companion, and not that he had dominion over them (2:20). Moreover, in naming the animals, the man is not exercising his authority over them, but classifying them.</p> <p>4) The naming of Eve in 2:23, based on verbs used in the passive form could be translated “This is the one called [by the Lord] woman.” The context supports this because the title woman is used before Adam uses it.</p> <p>6) The reason for the creation of Eve is not that Adam had some needs that she was to supply, but that God intended to created Adam as male and female. Eve was not a “helper” but a helper that corresponds to him to that is “like his counterpart.” There are indeed functional differentiations based on gender but this does not mean and does not require headship.</p> <p>We must interpret the creation of Eve from Adam and for Adam within its immediate context in the Genesis narrative. What was separated—“from Adam”—is now brought back “to Adam.” Eve was taken from his flesh and how they are reunited and become one flesh (2:24). Therefore the phrases</p>	<p>There is an “ontological” equality (i.e., in personal and spiritual value before God) between the genders in Genesis 1, but a functional leadership role for the male. This is supported by the following elements from Genesis 2:</p> <p>1) God formed “the man” first (2:7; cf. 1:27). This order of creation indicates God’s design of male priority in the male/female relationship. This is also Paul’s observation both in 1 Cor. 11:8 and 1 Tim. 2:13. God and placed him in the Garden of Eden to labor and care for it (2:15) even before the creation of Eve.</p> <p>2) The man was given instructions regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (vv. 16-17) before the creation of Eve. Implied in this is Adam’s responsibility to instruct his future wife and guard her from violating this prohibition (hence, the significance in 3:6 that the woman gave to the man “who was with her,” showing he failed to guard his wife as he should have).</p> <p>3) God brought the animals to him and entrusted him with the responsibility of naming them (vv. 19-20).</p> <p>4) When God brought the first female human to the man he was also entrusted with naming her (v. 22), but now—the first time we hear a human voice in Scripture—it is the man’s voice, speaking in poetry, and calling her “Woman, because she was taken out of Man ” (v. 23). The parallelism of these two naming accounts, using the same Hebrew verb (<i>qara.</i>), reinforces the fact that the man is given the primary leadership role in this new world.</p> <p>5) The conclusion follows that Adam is also made the primary leader of the home, since the man is told to take the initiative in leaving his father and mother (v. 24, note again the order: male then female). The reason given for the man to leave his parents is that he might “cling” or “hold onto” “his woman” (i.e., “his wife,” also in v. 25), suggesting that he is to take responsibility for their staying together and for her protection.</p> <p>6) God’s interactions with the man prior to the woman’s creation and the manner of her creation indicate a difference in function. Her being created from the man in no way suggests superiority or inferiority to him, nor a male-female caste system. To the contrary, the fact of her being created from the man’s side shows both woman’s equality to man and identity to him in terms of nature and yet also man’s precedence and his being given the primary responsibility for leadership of the human family. The woman filled a need for the man as “helper” (Gen 2:18). Woman was to the man a “helper corresponding to him” (<i>'ezer kenegdô</i>, vv. 18, 20). The Hebrew term here for “help” in both its noun and verb forms commonly refers to divine help (e.g., Gen 49:25;</p>

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	<p>“from Adam/for Adam” emphasize the equality of the two within gender differentiation and not the subjection of the one to the other.</p> <p>While biological gender differences are acknowledged in Genesis 1–2, other differences between the genders are not described. The emphasis of the stories is on a shared equality of nature and status and responsibility. Since the biblical text in Genesis 1–2 differentiates between the sexes (male and female) but does not specify certain behaviors that belong exclusively to the male, and others that are exclusively the domain of the female, it seems inappropriate to go beyond the biblical evidence to insist that certain gender-specific “roles” such as “male headship” and “female submission” are part of the creation order.</p> <p>What some call “role differentiation” is actually a permanent, hereditary social division based solely upon gender.</p>	<p>Deut 33:26; Ps 115:9-11) but also of help given by human beings; in itself, therefore, it says nothing about the relative status of the one giving help, which must be decided by context. The creation account’s use of this term shows man as leader and woman created “for him” (<i>lô</i>) as supportive helper.</p> <p>Paul affirms this perspective when he cites Genesis 1 and 2 in supporting different roles in the church for men and women within the framework of equality of personhood: “Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head,” (1 Cor 11:9-10) and “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve” (1 Tim 2:12-13).</p> <p>Were it not for the fact that Paul understood Gen. 2 as the complementarian does, objections might have some force. But it is Paul who observes the importance of Adam's creation first, and Paul who notes Eve was created for Adam's sake. Therefore, the complementarian stands with Scripture's interpretation of itself on this issue.</p>
Religious roles of Adam and Eve in the Garden.	<p>Adam and Eve served as priests in the pre-fall Eden sanctuary. The words "to tend" and "to keep" (Gen 2:15) are used elsewhere to describe the duties of the priests. In Gen 3:21, God clothed Adam and Eve with "tunics (<i>kutonet</i>) of skin, the same word used for priestly tunics (Lev 8:13).</p> <p>From the very beginning then, even before the Fall, woman, as well as man, is welcomed into the priestly function in the Eden sanctuary, to be a leader in worship and to serve in other priestly functions alongside her male counterpart.</p>	<p>To project the earthly sanctuary and its work back into Eden and make Adam and Eve priests goes far beyond the biblical evidence. Though "tend" and "keep" are words used to describe the work of priests, Gen 2:15 was before the fall when there was no need of priestly mediation. Besides these words in Gen 2 refer to the work of Adam in caring for the garden and the animals, not sanctuary service. The use of <i>kutonet</i> in the OT refers to garments but not exclusively those worn by priests. Adam and Eve were therefore not priests in the Garden because priestly ministry arose after the Fall.</p>
Gender relations after the Fall	<p>God’s provision for harmony and unity after the Fall does include the wife’s submission to the servant-leadership of her husband. The evidence in Genesis 3:16 already points to the implication that the male servant-leadership principle is limited to the relationship between husband and wife. This is a temporary, remedial/redemptive provision representing God’s less-than-the-original- ideal for husbands and wives. This implicitly involves a divine redemptive call and enabling power to return as much as possible to the pre-Fall egalitarianism in the marriage relationship, without denying the validity of the servant-leadership principle as it may be needed in a sinful world to preserve unity and harmony in the home. Genesis 1–3 should not be seen as barring women from accepting whatever roles of servant leadership in the believing community (church) or society at large to which they may be called and gifted by the Spirit.</p>	<p>The headship of Adam was already established in the Garden of Eden. Further evidence is that God made Adam responsible, for sin (Gen 3:9, 11). God addressed Adam by the word “you,” which in Hebrew is always a masculine singular pronoun. In the NT Paul holds Adam-- not Eve-- responsible for the entrance of sin into the world (Rom 5:12, 14; 1 Cor 15:22). It is always Adam-- not Eve-- who is made responsible for the Fall because Adam’s God-given role was to be the spiritual head of the human family. He was to be the protector and provider for Eve, but he failed. He failed to exercise his spiritual headship function at the time of Eve’s temptation.</p> <p>Man’s headship, which God ordained before the Fall, is made crystal clear after the Fall: “Your desire [Heb. <i>teshuqah</i>] shall be for your husband, and he shall rule [Heb. <i>mashal</i>] over you” (Gen 3:16 ESV). In Gen 4:7 the same words are God says to Cain, “And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the</p>

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		<p>door. Its desire [<i>teshuqah</i>] is for you, but you must rule [<i>mashal</i>] over it" (Gen 4:7 ESV). Sin will seek to rule over Cain, but Cain is encouraged to rule over it. The woman's "desire" (<i>teshuqah</i>) and man's "rule" (<i>mashal</i>) in 3:16 occur in a similar context. But now it is the woman who desires to have mastery over the man, a path which she had taken by having the man eat of the fruit, with devastating results. Adam was rebuked for having listened to the voice of his wife (3:17). Eve is now told that although she may seek mastery over her husband, he is to rule over her. Yet, this ruling is not to be a dictatorial rule of force, but a rule of love and care for the woman. Paul seems to have understood Genesis 3:16 in this way (1 Tim 2:13, 14).</p>
<p>1 Cor 11:2-16. The important texts in the debate are "3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. . . . 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man</p>	<p>First Corinthians 11 is concerned with how believers represent God in the church worship gatherings. Paul's main purpose in 1 Cor 11:2-16 was to bring the spiritually arrogant and liberty-grasping Corinthians to think about how the choices they were making regarding head coverings in their public gatherings affected their relationships both with God and others.</p> <p>1 Cor 11:3, the verse so often quoted with reference to the ordination debate, is not a distinct theological treatise, but functions as part of Paul's argument about head coverings. This verse does not teach about authority of men over women as can be shown by looking at the word translated as "head" (Gr.: <i>kephale</i>). This term is widely used in Greek literature outside of the NT to mean "source" (as with the "head" of a river). Therefore, what this means, then, is that woman owes her existence to the fact that man was created first and, in his incomplete state, God made from him the woman. The woman, then, is "sourced" in man. As such, this word does not suggest, as many think, that man has some rightful authority over woman. This meaning fits best in the context of the passage, where Paul comes back repeatedly to the question whether man came from woman, or woman from man.</p> <p>In verses 7-9, Paul goes on to work with several aspects of Gen 1-2 as he seeks to dissuade the offending Corinthians from shameful head covering. In verse 7 while Adam is said to be the image of God, both Paul and his audience are aware that Eve is also in that image. To speak of the woman then as also being a glory, places her in a special place of honor which should not be changed into a source of shame. In verses 8-9 the idea that woman comes from man is being used to demonstrate that man is the head of the woman and therefore it is appropriate to avoid shaming him (even though one may be free in Christ). The idea of headship as source, or being first, makes perfect sense with these verses, while head as ruling power has no place in the analogy of verse 8 or elsewhere in this passage.</p>	<p>This passage in 1 Corinthians has often been seen by egalitarians as a purely local issue of head covering for women without much theological importance. Whatever the details of the case, and there may be much we don't know, Paul begins his counsel by stating the biblical principle, "that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (v. 3). Thus Paul makes it clear at the beginning that whatever he has to say flows from the principle of male headship.</p> <p>The claim that "although headship is often understood as ruling power, this meaning is not normal in the Greek language" is not borne out by the facts. Walter Bauer's Greek Lexicon under the figurative use of <i>kephale</i> (head) says that head "in the case of living beings" denotes "superior rank," and cites examples of texts both within and outside of Scripture. No reference is given for <i>kephale</i> as source; in fact, in the latest edition of the Lexicon "source" is explicitly rejected as a possible meaning for head. Clearly the intent of the metaphorical use of "head" is to describe someone who holds superior rank as leader, master, ruler, authority figure, or other person of first status among others.</p> <p>We need to understand "head" in 1 Corinthians 11 as it is used in the parallel expressions found in other Pauline passages such as Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church." The husband is certainly not the source of the wife, and it would be awkward to understand in the same context that Christ is the source of the church, since He is depicted not as Founder of the church but as its Savior, and the relationship is clearly defined in the next verse as one of submission to the head: "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Eph 5:24). Also, in Colossians 1:18, which declares Christ to be "the head of the body, the church;" the text explicitly</p>

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<p>created for the woman, but woman for the man. 10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head”</p>	<p>Verse 10, which is highly disputed, makes full sense when we recognize the main point of the passage and set aside the insistence that headship is primary about ruling authority. “Because of this” refers to the problems caused by improper head coverings, and recognize that Paul continues to plead with women to take the initiative or authority to make good decisions about what to put on her head. Thus the passage all works together in a perfect sequence calling on men and women to cease shaming themselves and the one who came before them and instead act to replace shame with honor, ending in verses 13-16 by calling on the offenders to think logically about the issue and avoid what is naturally and communally recognized as unacceptable.</p> <p>Since this passage is not about the headship of elders, it is irrelevant for the discussion of headship in the church. It does not even deal with the question of ordination.</p>	<p>states, so that “in all things He may have the preeminence.” The issue is one of rank, not of source.</p> <p>Therefore, for lexical, exegetical and contextual reasons, it appears clearly best to understand male "headship" as denoting male authority in the home and the church. The leadership which Scripture points to as headship, and which was modeled by Christ, is a loving, nurturing, self-sacrificing leadership to which women voluntarily submit, as called for in Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 5:2, 3.</p>
<p>Ministry of women in the Old and New Testaments</p>	<p>Although Israel was largely patriarchal (in accord with most other sin-afflicted cultures of the time and through history), God saw fit to have in Israel some expressions of female leadership. Examples are: Miriam (Exod. 15), Huldah (2 Kings 22) and Deborah (Judges 4-5) who were prophetesses; and Deborah who was also a judge in Israel. Other examples of women who had prominent roles in the spiritual formation and development of Israel, but not in official religious offices, are Esther, Ruth and Naomi.</p> <p>Deborah is of note because the only judge who combines all forms of leadership possible—religious, military, juridical, and poetical—is a woman. Such an example of female community leadership are not numerous in the OT, since women’s counsel, inspiration and leadership were focused upon the raising of her children in biblical times. Nonetheless, the leadership roles of women like Deborah in the covenant community, clearly accepted by society and given the blessing of God, reveal that such are not opposed to biblical patriarchy nor the divine will.</p> <p>Jesus began the process of the restoration of women to their place of full equality, a process seen continuing in the early church (e.g., Gal. 3:28, 1 Cor. 12). There are numerous examples of significant roles women played in Jesus' ministry, roles which, although unacceptable to the culture of the day, nevertheless display Jesus' full endorsement of women and their desire to minister. Several women who provided financially to Jesus' ministry and who even traveled with Him (Luke 8:1-3 ). Jesus encouraged women, as fully as men, to come and learn ( Luke 10:38-42). Matthew 15:21-28 and Luke 7:36-50 gives examples of women whom Jesus held out as great examples of faith and love.</p>	<p>Israel's political and religious structures exhibit an almost exclusively male leadership, and this by God's calling and command. E.g., Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, 12 sons of Jacob as 12 tribes of Israel, male priests, stress on first-born sons, male kings (Athaliah, a wicked usurper of the throne, excepted).</p> <p>Most of the examples of female leadership appear in roles other than those of highest human religious authority. That is, there are some prophetesses and female teachers in Old and New Testaments, but were there any women priests, women heads of tribes of Israel, women kings of Israel (Athaliah wrongly usurped the throne), women apostles (Junia of Rom. 16:7 is highly disputed), women elders in the early church? The point is that at the level of highest human religious authority, the Bible gives a clear and uniform picture of male leadership.</p> <p>The most notable apparent exception to the above is Deborah (Judg. 4-5), who was both prophetess and judge of Israel. Given the spiritual state of Israel at the time, most see Judges not as illustrating well God's ideal for His people. Quite probably, then, Deborah's judgeship demonstrates, not how God endorses female leadership, but rather just how far from God's design and purposes Israel had strayed. In any case, it is difficult to accept the case of Deborah as normative, in light of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.</p> <p>Clearly Jesus was not at all averse to challenging customs and traditions of men which ran contrary to the values of the kingdom of God. He lacked no courage to challenge humanly fabricated restrictions upon the wise and good purposes of God (e.g., Matt. 15:3-9; 23:1-36). And his taking of women with</p>

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	<p>The Samaritan woman became the first evangelist of the Gospel from among nondisciples of Jesus (John 4:39-42). God chose, over Peter or any other of the disciples, women to be the first to witness to Jesus' resurrection (Matt. 28:1-10 and Mark 16:1-8).</p> <p>In the NT church, Acts 2 (esp. vv. 17-18) describes women and men alike as recipients of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 11:5 mentions women in the church "prophesying," clearly a speaking gift used to instruct and edify those in the church (cf. Acts 21:9). Priscilla (named first) and Aquila took Apollos aside "and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Priscilla, then, was exercising a teaching gift and instructing a man, who was himself also a teacher. (cf. Rom. 16:3-5). Paul commends two other women (besides Prisca in 16:3): Phoebe, who is a servant, perhaps a deacon, in the church; and Junia, who (if in fact a woman) is named as "outstanding among the apostles" (Rom. 16:1, 7).</p>	<p>him during his itinerant ministry testifies to this. But what Jesus never did, though He clearly could have and was not constrained by social convention not so to do, is to choose any women to be among the twelve. His choice of 12 men continues the pattern we observe in the OT, of distinguishing a certain level of spiritual leadership as gender-restrictive.</p> <p>Egalitarians cite Junia as a female apostle. There is uncertainty whether Junia was actually the name of a woman or a man.</p> <p>Assuming that Junia is indeed female, the question is what is the meaning of the phrase "of note among the apostles"? The expression could mean that Junia and Andronicus were held in high regard by the apostles (exclusive meaning) as indicated in the English Standard Version: "They are well known to the apostles," or that Junia and Andronicus were themselves highly regarded apostles (inclusive meaning) as translated in the New Century Version: "Greetings to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives, who were in prison with me. They are very important apostles." If they were important and highly regarded apostles and were converted before the apostle Paul, as the text states, why are they never mentioned in the book of Acts?</p> <p>Junia(s) was not an apostle. The linguistic evidence is inconclusive whether Junia(s) was male or female. The evidence from the book of Acts, the rest of the New Testament, and the writings of Ellen White support the interpretation that Paul was referring to the reputation of Andronicus and Junia(s) among the apostles.</p>
<p>Gender relations in view of the Gospel</p>	<p>It is God's purpose through redemption to abolish false and sinful distinctions that separate men and woman into classes or into a hierarchy. This must be understood as a return to what He intended in creation, an intent that was distorted by the fall and sin but now made real again in Christ.</p> <p>In Galatians 3:26-29, Paul speaks of the effects of being "in Christ." This is not merely a statement on equal access to salvation among various groups (see Gal 2:11-15; Eph 2:14-15) but Paul also speaks about equality in general. He especially focuses on three relationships in which the Jews of his time perverted God's original plan of Gen 1 by making one group subordinate to another: 1) Jew-Gentiles Relationship; 2) Master-Slave Relationship; and 3) Male-Female Relationship. In regard to the male-female relationship, by using a specific Greek pair vocabulary <i>arsen-thelys</i> [man-woman] instead of <i>aner-gyne</i> [husband-wife]), Paul establishes a link with Gen 1:27 (LXX employs <i>arsen-thelys</i> language), and thus shows how the Gospel calls us back to the divine ideal, which has no place for the general subordination of females to males.</p>	<p>If Galatians 3:28 abolished male headship and the subordination of women in the church, why did Paul, ten years later, write in 1 Timothy 2:12 "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man"?</p> <p>The context of Galatians 3 indicates that Paul was addressing the issues of justification, baptism into Christ, and the reception of the Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life, not offices or leadership positions in the church. There is absolutely nothing in the entire book of Galatians to suggest that Paul was discussing church offices. Galatians is a theological discussion about how people are saved and how saved people should live after they are saved. If we wish to know what Paul had to say about qualifications for church leadership offices we must go to the places where he addresses these specific issues in the Pastoral Epistles of First Timothy and Titus.</p>

Major Ideas	Egalitarian View	Complementarian View
1 Tim 2:12-14	<p>The traditional understanding based on 1 Tim 2:12-14 that women are to be in a subordinate relationship in the church, with only qualified men teaching or preaching is an error because it treats Paul's specific instruction to one particular church situation as though it is normative instruction to all churches at all times. There is evidence that the church at Ephesus (where Timothy pastored) was plagued with false teaching, and that this false teaching was coming primarily from women in the church who usurped authority and taught wrong doctrine about the creation and sin of Adam and Eve. If this is the case, then we must see this passage not as precluding any and all female teaching in the Church, but as a direct prohibition to these certain women in the church at Ephesus who were false teachers. 1 Timothy 2:12-14 applies only to a specific situation in Ephesus and does not refer to the relationship that should universally exist between men and women.</p>	<p>Contrary to the claim that Paul addresses only a specific issue in Ephesus in these verses, what Paul says in 1 Timothy 2 and 3 is clearly meant for the universal church, not just for the church in Ephesus. In chapter two he discusses the universality of Christian worship (2:1–15). In chapter three, Paul discusses the prerequisites for Christian leaders in all churches, not just in Ephesus (3:1–13). Thus to claim that 2:12-14 refers only to the local church is to ignore the context which is clearly universal. The immediate context of verses 12-14 begins in verse 8 with the words “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,” indicating that Paul is speaking to the universal church and not just to the local church in Ephesus. In verse 9, Paul begins his admonition to women with the words “in like manner also,” i.e., speaking to women everywhere; he addresses the issue of adornment and good works. The whole of chapter two is addressed to the universal church.</p>
<p>Gender qualifications for those in the ministry, specifically the meaning of “husband of one wife” (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7)</p>	<p>The context of 1Tim 2:1-3:16 is Paul providing Timothy with practical instructions for actually addressing the problems of false teaching within the church, which affected both men and women. Paul first addresses men and urges that they “should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling” (v 8). Paul next turns his attention to the disruptive demeanor of women within the church. In addition to dressing in an immodest manner, women were also involved in some sort of teaching ministry that Paul felt had to be stopped. To explain the basis of his prohibition, Paul alludes to the creation and the fall in verses 13 and 14. Paul appeals to the equality of men and women established in the creation account in order to counter the domineering behavior of women in Ephesus. These women are to learn true teachings in silence and submission (v 12).</p> <p>Because the problem of false teaching involved both men and women, the qualifications of the elders who are to teach the truth are accordingly gender neutral. The indefinite pronoun “anyone” (3:1) in Greek does not define gender. The emphasis of the phrase “husband of one wife” (3:2) is on the word “one,” as indicated by the order of the words, is on faithfulness and moral purity. The literal translation then is “a one-woman husband.” A deacon was expected also to be “the husband of one wife” (3:12). Deacons were not only male but also female; Paul names Phoebe as a deacon (Rom 16:1). Being this the case, the phrase “a one-woman husband” does not exclude women from being deacons or elders.</p>	<p>In 1 Timothy the qualifications for the office of elder (3:1-7) are found immediately following Paul’s admonition that women should not be allowed to have authority over men (2:11-15). The logical connection between the two issues should not be ignored. Having explained why women should not serve as authoritative teachers or elders of the congregation, Paul then proceeds immediately to spell out what kind of men are suitable for the office of elder.</p> <p>It is truly astonishing that, given the context, the phrase “husband of one wife” can be seen as gender neutral. In both passages (Timothy and Titus), specific reference is made to “man” (<i>aner</i>) as distinct from “woman” (<i>gyne</i>.)” The text does not offer the flexibility of reading this phrase generically. The fifty-nine occurrences of <i>aner</i> (“man, husband”) in the writings of Paul consistently refer to male subjects. There is no linguistic or exegetical reason to make this text gender neutral. The pressure of culture should never be allowed to change the meaning of a biblical text.</p>



Major Ideas	Egalitarian View	Complementarian View
<p>Gender relations in relation to the “priesthood of all believers”</p>	<p>The Bible teach that because our High Priest died on our behalf, by His death we have been made priests in Him. The same Priest "who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood," also "made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father..." (Rev. 1:5-6). We are a “royal priesthood” 1 Peter 2:9.</p> <p>Properly understood, the priesthood of all believers teaches us that all believers are priests, no matter what their vocation -- their calling -- in life might be. The priesthood of all believers permits women to be ordained as elders/ministers.</p>	<p>The term “priesthood of all believers” is not a biblical term; it refers primarily to the fact that believers have direct access to God without an earthly mediator, thus every believer has direct access to God. This is biblically correct, but to argue that the text in 1 Peter also permits women to be ordained as pastors goes far beyond the textual evidence.</p> <p>1 Peter 2:9 is a quote from Exodus where God says to Israel, “ you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (19:5-6). Did God intend that everybody in Israel—adults and children, male and female become priests? No! All Israel was a kingdom of priests, but only the Levites and Aaron and his sons served at the sanctuary.</p> <p>In the NT, Peter calls Christians “a royal priesthood, a holy nation,” but again it does not mean that all adults and children, male and female are serving as priests or ordained ministers. Just as in the OT the “kingdom of priests” was led by the Aaronic priesthood, so in the NT all Christians are a “royal priesthood” but only the apostles and elders served as spiritual priests and leaders of the churches, and all of them were males.</p> <p>The concept of the priesthood of all believers in the Old and New Testaments refers to the fact that all members of the community are participants in the mission of Israel and the church. Nevertheless, it upholds the leadership of elders and deacons and it does not open the door for women to be ordained as elders/ministers.</p>
<p>Relationship of Spiritual Gifts to offices in the church.</p>	<p>1 Cor. 12:7-11 clearly states that God distributes His gifts to His people as He so wills, but one's gender is not a factor in His giving any particular gift to a person. Women and men alike are recipients of all of God's gifts (e.g., see 1 Cor. 11:5 for a statement of women having the gift of prophecy). Since God's spiritual gifting is gender-neutral, and since God expects His gifts to be used in the church, it follows that men and women alike are equal in their exercise of gifts in the church. In determining qualification for ordination, the focus centers on spiritual gifts rather than gender (Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11). The church thereby implements a means for testing qualities germane to each spiritual gift while acknowledging that God is no respecter of persons.</p>	<p>There is a difference between the offices in the church (apostle, bishop/elder, deacon) and the gifts of the Spirit, one of which is shepherd/pastor. This has been nicely summarized by the New Testament scholar Harold W. Hoehner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Church offices mentioned in the NT appear to include only four: Apostles (Acts 1:21-25), elders/bishops (1 Tim 3:1-7), deacons (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim 3:8-13), and deaconesses (Rom 16:1). Gifts, however, are many (1 Cor 12:8-11, 28-30; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11). According to 1 Peter 4:10, every believer has received at least one gift.</li> <li>2) Those who hold offices are either appointed (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) or elected based on qualifications (Acts 1:26; 6:3; 1 Tim 3:1-13), whereas gifts are sovereignly bestowed directly by God (Eph 4:7; Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:11, 18, 28). Hence, there are no qualifications listed in any of the gifts passages.</li> <li>3) Scripture indicates that every believer has at least one gift (Eph 4:7; 1 Cor 12:7, 11; Rom 12:4; 1 Pet 4:10), but not every believer holds an office.</li> <li>4) While marital status is mentioned for the offices of elder and deacon (1 Tim 3:2, 4-5, 12; Titus 1:6), no such stipulation is mentioned for those endowed with gifts.</li> <li>5) An elder “cannot be a recent convert” (1 Tim 3:6), but gifts are</li> </ol>

Major Ideas	Egalitarian View	Complementarian View
		<p>given regardless of age or maturity. 6) The office of elder must be held by a man (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6), whereas gifts are given to either gender (Acts 21:9-10; 1 Cor 11:5).</p> <p>The present problem among Seventh-day Adventists is that we have made the gift of pastor an office on the same level as the headship role of the elder/minister. In this we have followed what other churches have done, but it is not in accordance with the biblical pattern.</p>
<p>Concept of ministry</p>	<p>Ministry in the New Testament Church was non-hierarchical (Mark 10:42-44;) and is a rejection or reversal of the hierarchal model. Gospel ministry should be viewed as service—ministering to the body, as opposed to commanding authority ( Luke 22:25–27). The precise reason why Christ, God incarnate, came to this Earth and founded a community like no other was to counteract the counterfeit notion of God’s authority. He accomplished it by His life of divine slavery (<i>doubleia</i>) that ultimately led Him to the cross. Unfortunately, human beings, weakened by millennia of sin’s existence on this Earth, returned to the old patterns of thinking soon after the death of its pioneers. Notwithstanding our devotion to Scripture, we, Seventh-day Adventists, inherited these patterns of thinking that are so tenaciously (and tragically) ingrained in the Christian faith. Christian ministry as it evolved, thus, became hierarchical, sacramental, elitist, and oriented towards male headship. To a greater or lesser degree, most Christian communities, including Seventh-day Adventists, continue to perpetuate some of these characteristics in their communities.</p> <p>Gospel order in the church does not require hierarchical headship, spiritual or otherwise.</p>	<p>The argument that the words of Jesus in Mark 10:43 rejected the hierarchical structure of ministry is misleading. Jesus condemned the selfish, self-seeking, or self-exalting use of authority, but He did not condemn an authority structure per se. the New Testament church was clearly structured along hierarchical lines with levels of authority (apostles, elders, deacons). Not everyone could be an apostle, elder, or deacon. Apostleship was a spiritual gift distributed by the Holy Spirit according to His will (1 Cor 12:3-11; 28-31). Elders and deacons were to be vetted carefully according to rather stringent lists of qualifications (1 Tim 2:10-3:13). Those holding an office had authority over others (1 Cor 16:15-16; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Cor 9:1, 12).</p> <p>Thus, Jesus did not forbid the exercise of godly authority, but the selfish usurping of authority not granted by God. The New Testament church was clearly structured along hierarchical lines. Not everyone was given the same authority, but each was to respect and submit to those of greater authority, and each was accountable for serving responsibly, in humility and love, those who were of lesser authority. Nevertheless, levels of authority point to a hierarchy. And yes, there are roles and offices in the NT reserved for men—men who also meet the stringent qualifications for these offices. In that sense, NT authority is based on the principle of male spiritual-headship.</p>

### III. Ellen White Teachings

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p>Though Ellen White did not take a formal stand concerning the ordination of women, she supported the ordination of women to the gospel ministry. There are several statements in the Spirit of Prophecy that brings together ordination and the ministry of women.</p> <p>In <i>Review and Herald</i> (Jan. 15, 1901), Ellen White clearly states, “It is the accompa-</p>	<p>Like the early Adventists, Ellen White approved of licensing women ministers as preachers and evangelists, and in addition, she advocated for the important work of women serving in the local churches and of their being ordained, even of being paid from tithes. But EGW and the early Adventists did not advocate the ordination of women to the gospel ministry.</p>

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p>niment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, <u>both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.</u>"</p> <p>Earlier she had already written that "<u>Women</u> who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be <u>set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands</u>. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church" (<i>Review and Herald</i>, July 9, 1895).</p> <p>In 1898, Ellen White spoke quite forcibly about the need to remunerate fairly the spouses of pastors who do team ministry. Even if some men may not have felt comfortable with women doing ministry in partnership with their husbands and be remunerated for it, she argued, "this question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it." She went on to say that God is calling women to engage in ministry and in some instances they will "do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God." Emphatically she stated, "There are women who should labor in the gospel ministry" (MR, 5:327).</p>	<p>The <i>RH</i> July 9, 1895 statement clearly show that EGW's counsel refer to women who are to serve only in "some of their time," and they are to counsel . . . with the minister." Some women were ordained as deaconess in Australia in the 1890s, although EGW did not mention the office in her counsel, perhaps as a result. These proved to be exceptions because women were excluded from being ordained as deacons in the 1932 <i>Church Manual</i> because the Church cannot find a clear biblical basis for it.</p> <p>Her 1901 statement that "both men and women,[are] to become pastors to the flock of God" has to be read carefully because for EGW, to pastor the flock is also the work of local lay leaders and not only of the gospel ministers. "Responsibilities must be laid upon the <u>members of the church</u>. The missionary spirit should be awakened as never before, and workers should be appointed as needed, who will <u>act as pastors to the flock</u>, putting forth <u>personal effort</u> to bring the church up to that condition where spiritual life and activity will be seen in all her borders" (5T 723). Members, lay leaders, both men and women, may pastor the flock but this is different from ordination to the gospel ministry. This is consistent with the NT teaching that local elders are the pastors of the local congregation.</p>

#### IV. Ordination of Women to the Gospel Ministry and the Unity of the Church

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p>The 28 Fundamental Beliefs comprise the basis for unity within the Adventist Church. Other issues not unequivocally outlined in Scripture are subject to varying interpretations. Because a scripturally-based, reasonable case may be made in favor or opposed to the ordination to women to pastoral ministry, a world-wide mandate is neither practical nor necessary.</p> <p>In recent years, the General Conference has established policies recognizing women in leadership roles: the ordination of deaconesses (2010) and elders (1984) and the commissioning of pastors (1989). Although these policies are not practiced in all regions of the world, the Church has remained a single, worldwide organization. Our recent history show that differences in opinion and practice on this issue do not constitute disunity in Christ nor in the Church.</p> <p>We must allow for a flexibility of practice that has characterized both the NT church and also the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There was flexibility in the ruling of the Jerusalem Council. Jewish Christians may continue circumcision, Gentile Christians need not do so. Even now the Church Manual allows a whole range of</p>	<p>The existence of conflicting decisions at various levels of church administration on the issue of ordination of women to the gospel ministry suggest that this cannot adequately be resolved through policy changes alone.</p> <p>There are deeper theological issues involved. At the root of the issue is the way the biblical text is interpreted and whether we can import cultural presuppositions and assumptions into the text or jump into conclusions that are not warranted by Scripture.</p> <p>The Seventh-day Adventist understanding of ordination and church order was established very early through extensive Bible study and remained essentially unchanged until the 1970s and 1980s when church policy started becoming more dominant in defining ministerial functions. The deep theological issues involved can only be fully resolved by returning to a more Biblically based understanding and practice of ordination. From our earliest beginnings as Seventh-day Adventists, we have found a solid, Bible-based approach to be our source of unity, and this challenge will be no exception. Ultimately, when policy-based rather than Scripture-based solutions to theological problems are employed, church order and unity may be undermined. Genuine unity is</p>

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p>church officers or programs. God has given the Church authority to establish ecclesiastical practices and offices that are consistent with biblical principles and fulfill the mission of the Church.</p>	<p>the product of the converting power of the Word of God. It must be our guiding light—not a social reengineering of gender roles and functions.</p>

**V. What the Church Should Do**

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p>The action of the General Conference Executive Committee in the 1984 Annual Council, which voted the following statement concerning the ordination of women as local church elders, may be a guide how the Church may move forward on this issue.</p> <p>“To advise each division that it is free to make provision as it may deem necessary for the election and ordination of women as local church elders.”</p> <p>This action has served the global Church well. There have been no deep schisms. Indeed, it has promoted the preservation of unity of the Church and enabled mission to flourish by encouraging appropriate flexibility in practice. Time has shown that it was a wise decision in the face of the diversity of the Church on the issue of the role of men and women in the local church. It has not fractured the unity of the church and neither has it damaged the message and mission of the church.</p> <p>An enabling action which gives a similar flexibility to global Church practice with reference to the ordination of gospel ministers can be voted. Such an action could be worded something like this:</p> <p>That each division be given the prerogative to determine and make provision as it may deem appropriate within its territory for the ordination of men and women to the gospel ministry.</p> <p>How would this work in practice? Subsequent to an enabling action, the primary operational documents of the Church [The Church Manual and General Conference Working Policy] would need to be adjusted and appropriate wording found in order to express the principle of flexibility and permit freedom for the relevant various organizational entities of the Church to exercise their conscientious conviction on this matter.</p> <p>As an example of how this wording might be adjusted, it could be stated that while all ordination as such is for the world Church, (deacons, elders and pastors), the scope of authority to perform the functions of an ordained person is determined by the appropriate authority-granting entity. For example, a person who is ordained as a deacon or an elder is authorised to function in those capacities only when elected to do so by a local church, for a specified period of time. If such an ordained person were to move to another local Church anywhere in the world, they would only be granted the</p>	<p>It is clear that God called women to ministry. Male leadership in the church does not mean women have to renounce their calls to be gospel workers. The Spirit of Prophecy counsels support the idea of women being ordained but not for the spiritual headship ministry as elders. It only requires that they be willing to carry a credential other than that of an ordained minister, in order to honor Scripture.</p> <p>This was the practice since the early years of our Church. Women were licensed to preach and teach, but not to preside in any of the church ordinances, nor to preside at meetings in which members are received or dismissed from church membership. If women today could make Paul’s words their motto: “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Cor 1:17), accepting such a credential, and letting others do the baptizing, then Seventh-day Adventist women could “preach the gospel” as a lifelong career—without violating Scripture or dividing the church. The church could give them full support as career preachers, evangelists, evangelistic trainers, and pastoral visitors, while still upholding the Creation distinction between male and female.</p> <p>One option suggested by some complementarians is for the Church to set apart by “laying on of hands” women to a work that is complementary to but not identical with the ministry to which men are set apart. EGWhite wrote that ordination is a ceremony to recognize authority to a “specific work” or a definite line of service” (AA 162). A specialized track should be established in our schools for training women for the specific ministry for which they are qualified and gifted by the Holy Spirit. As long as women in ministry are trained for the same office and role for which men are trained, they can be expected to claim the same outcome. Men, called and trained for the office of overseer/elder, would have to submit to some specialized training for that ministry which could prepare them to work with women in an appropriate professional relationship.</p> <p>We have some repenting to do. We have introduced into the Church, without prior intensive Bible study, and resolution to the issue, practices which contradicts biblical teachings. We have made ministerial functions more a matter of policy than theology. There may be a need to rescind all previous actions permitting the ordination of women</p>

For Ordination	Against Ordination
<p>authority to function as an elder or deacon in that local church, if elected through due process to do so. They would not need to be ordained again. On the other hand, if they were not authorised to function in those capacities by a local church, they would not function, even though ordained. The same would apply to pastors. Although the ordination of a pastor is recognition for ministry in the global Church, authorisation to exercise the functions of an ordained pastor would be granted by the body authorised to issue the ministerial credentials to individuals, whether male or female, within the territory in which they reside or are employed.</p> <p>In fact there is a sense in which this principle is already at work. Ordination does not automatically enable a male pastor to minister in any part of the world. A process of careful selection still needs to occur to prevent the wrong person going to a place or responsibility for which he is totally unsuited. It is always appropriate to ensure that the right person ordained or otherwise is appointed to fill any vacancy. Credential-granting entities should always exercise their prerogative to meet the needs of their constituents in the best way for them and the Church.</p> <p>On the basis of the changes made to documentation, each Division would then have the prerogative to determine how the issue would be handled within its own territory. Some Divisions would continue to do as they do at present and ordain only men. Some will determine that they are going to ordain both men and women. It could be that some Divisions will determine that each union or employing entity within the Division may make the decision and make provision as each may deem appropriate within its territory for the ordination of men and women. It would be important that assurance be given in each circumstance that there would be mutual respect and recognition of the actions of each other and that within a Division, an employing entity's decision on the matter will not be overridden by the senior entity. There will be differences in practice just as there are right now with respect to ordination of local Church elders.</p>	<p>as local elders. The 1990 General Conference action allowing women to perform most of the functions of an ordained minister in their local churches without being ordained should be carefully reconsidered.</p>