

MINORITY REPORT

The current study of ordination involves deeply held values, including faithfulness to God and His Word, fairness and equality, respect for one another, and our unity as members of the body of Christ. The conclusions we reach must not sacrifice any of these values. Paul implored the various factions in Corinth “that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” (1 Cor 1:10).¹ This becomes possible as we all allow God to guide us by His Word and by His Spirit, which are always in harmony because one is the product of the other. It is with this aim in mind that this report is offered, beginning with a brief history of ordination and the role of women in the Adventist church in order to show how we arrived at our present situation. This is followed by a discussion of two Biblical approaches that have led to divergent conclusions on ordination issues before considering evidence from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White on the subject and, finally, an appeal as to how we can move forward in unity.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ORDINATION AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

Seventh-day Adventists were slow to organize, not wanting to repeat the mistakes of the denominations that preceded them and wanting to ensure that no steps would be taken that were not clearly prescribed in Scripture. However, with the growing number of Sabbatarian Adventist ministers traveling

and preaching, the need to distinguish those the church considered truly called by God from “self-appointed preachers” who were causing confusion and disunity became increasingly evident.² Ellen White, based on visions she received in 1850 and 1852 which called for God’s last-day church to implement the “gospel order” of the New Testament, began urging that steps be taken toward church organization. The church needed to distinguish the “servants of God who teach the truth” from “self-sent men” who were “unqualified to teach present truth.”³ Soon afterward, articles began appearing in the Review dealing with the subject. James White, in December of 1853, wrote that “the divine order of the New Testament is sufficient to organize the church of Christ. If more were needed, it would have been given by inspiration.”⁴ Numerous articles were published over the next few years so that, well before the official organization of the church in 1863, the basic framework of church officers had been hammered out. But it would take another twenty years after the organization of the General Conference to publish a church manual, and then not as a book but as a series of eighteen articles in the Review.⁵ Nevertheless, apart from the reorganization in 1901 which dealt with the higher levels of church structure, the Bible-based system of ordination and church order established by the pioneers would remain essentially unchanged well into the twentieth century.

With the rise of the women’s rights movement and the ordination of women ministers by other

denominations in the 1870s and 1880s, questions began to be raised in Seventh-day Adventist circles about the role of women in the church. On the one hand, in view of Ellen White's prophetic ministry, there was a need to defend the propriety of women speaking in church and the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. On the other hand, in the absence of a clear Biblical mandate, there was an unwillingness to ordain women to church office. Thus, at the 1881 General Conference Session, the resolution that "females possessing the necessary qualifications . . . be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry" was not approved.⁶ The attitude against ordaining women to any office changed somewhat in the late 1890s, after Ellen White urged that "women . . . willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord" in visiting the sick, looking after the young and ministering to the needs of the poor "should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands."⁷ Later, perhaps as a result, some women were ordained in Australia as deaconesses,⁸ though these proved to be exceptions, and when the official Church Manual was published in 1932, it excluded women from being ordained as deaconesses because there was no clear Biblical basis for it.⁹ Nevertheless, throughout this period, women served the church as licensed preachers, Sabbath School writers and editors, treasurers, and in many other capacities.

The most significant changes in the way Adventists viewed ordination were made in 1975 and 1977. They came about as a result of increased pressure to ordain women as ministers as well as assertions by the United States' tax authority, the Internal Revenue Service, that licensed Adventist ministers were not really ministers since they were not allowed to perform weddings, meaning that the church would have to pay half of their Social Security obligation—a sizable sum which would

need to be taken from tithe funds. After studying the role of women in the church, the 1975 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee authorized "the ordaining of women to the office of local elder"¹⁰ (a decision that was reaffirmed by the 1984 Annual Council).¹¹ The 1977 Annual Council, in order to demonstrate to the IRS that licensed ministers were indeed ministers, authorized "licensed ministers . . . to do what they had never before been empowered to do, namely, to perform weddings and baptisms, provided only that they were ordained as local elders and that their conference committees approved."¹² The twin effect of these decisions was to make ministerial functions more a matter of policy than theology and to pave the way for women ministers to perform substantially the same work as ordained ministers without being ordained.¹³ Further study of the role of women was commissioned in the 1980s, culminating in a report by the Role of Women Commission to the 1990 General Conference session recommending that women not be ordained to the gospel ministry, which passed 1,173 to 377.¹⁴ At the next General Conference session in 1995, the North American Division requested that divisions "where circumstances do not render it inadvisable" be invested with authority to "authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender." The request was denied by a vote of 1,481 against to 673 in favor.¹⁵ Despite these decisions, in 2012 the Columbia Union and Pacific Union conferences took action unilaterally to ordain women to the ministry, actions that were firmly repudiated at the 2012 Annual Council which voted 264 to 25 that "the world Church does not recognize actions authorizing or implementing ministerial ordination without regard to gender."¹⁶

The existence of conflicting decisions at various levels of church administration suggest that these issues cannot adequately be resolved through

policy changes alone, that in fact there are deeper theological issues involved—issues that have not been fully addressed by the studies that have been undertaken up to this point. The present worldwide study of ordination, in response to a request made at the most recent General Conference session in 2010,¹⁷ offers hope of just this kind of solution. Addressing the matter at this deeper, theological level may enable the church to discover Bible-based answers for these gnawing questions that can then be translated into sound, lasting, and consistent policies. This latest study by the Adventist church is unique in its theological scope, the extent of global participation, and its ramifications. Much of what follows stems from and is intended as a positive contribution to this study process.

DIFFERING APPROACHES TO BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

The current divergence in views on the subject of women's ordination is due in part to different understandings of the nature of Scripture and how it should be interpreted. Some advocate an approach that takes into account the "trajectory" of Scripture. And there is, in a sense, a progression in Scripture from Eden lost to Eden restored, based on God's plan of salvation.¹⁸ But the suggestion is made in some Adventist circles that we should take the notion of a progression in Scripture even farther. They urge that God can lead His people to a better understanding only as the social and cultural conditions permit the implementation of a higher ethic than was possible in Bible times. Thus, according to this view, the progression within Scripture must be extrapolated so that the trajectory beyond and outside of Scripture can be seen. While appealing on the surface, the problem with this approach is its reliance on an authority beyond the pages of Scripture to determine present truth in cases where

the inspired writings are supposedly less clear. 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. According to such a view, the Bible is not a unified, harmonious revelation and Paul's interpretation of Genesis, for example, is not normative for us today.¹⁹ Most Adventists, on the other hand, consider that there can be no fundamental homogeneity in Scripture apart from supernatural intervention by revelation. They understand the Holy Spirit as the divine mind behind the human penmen. He is the One who has ensured that the entire canon of Scripture is theologically unified, that its teachings are valid for all time (Rom 15:4), and that they produce no conflicting opinions or opposing theological views (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Fortunately, with regard also to the question of ordination and the role of women in the church, God has given ample guidance in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to help us resolve even this seemingly intractable issue. But in order for Scripture to serve its intended purpose, all of what God says on this subject must be studied until we can perceive its underlying harmony. According to Ellen White: "To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error."²⁰ The "Methods of Bible Study" document (MBSD) approved by the Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Oct. 12, 1986, also gives important guidance: "Human reason is subject to the Bible, not equal to or above it." "The Bible is its own best interpreter and when studied as a

whole it depicts a consistent, harmonious truth. . . . Although it was given to those who lived in an ancient Near Eastern/Mediterranean context, the Bible transcends its cultural backgrounds to serve as God's Word for all cultural, racial, and situational contexts in all ages."²¹ Those who are uncomfortable with the plain reading of the Biblical text look for a meaning or trajectory that goes outside of what Scripture explicitly teaches, but such an approach risks reaching decisions that are not Biblical.

Regarding cultural issues, the Bible itself provides us the key as to how to handle them. For example, while some Evangelical Christians would classify the Sabbath as a temporary, cultural institution,²² Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:11 show that it originated as part of God's perfect plan for humanity and is therefore applicable in all cultures and for all time. Decisions regarding the perpetuity of institutions originating after the Fall is more difficult, especially in the case of those that seem to have been divinely established. Although circumcision began with God's command to Abraham, like the presence of the temple, it was no guarantee of God's favor without a right covenant relationship (Jer 4:4; cf. 21:10-12; 22:5). In fact, the time would come when God would treat the circumcised like the uncircumcised (Jer 9:25; cf. 1 Cor 7:18-19), apparently pointing to circumcision no longer serving as a sign of the covenant. This is confirmed by the New Testament, in which the reality symbolized by circumcision (Deut 30:6; 10:6)—a change of heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:7-11; Rom 2:28-29)—is replaced by baptism (John 3:3-8; Col 2:11-13). In fact, baptism itself derives from a Jewish cultural form of self-immersion in water for purification from ceremonial defilement (*baptizō*, Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38). Its meaning, however, is inseparable from the form, which transcends the meaning of circumcision in being egalitarian and symbolic of the believer's

being washed from sin, identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and acceptance of Him as Saviour (Rom 6). Furthermore, the command is given in a universal setting ("all nations," Matt 28:19). Therefore, in the case of baptism, the form itself is universal and unchanging.

Slavery, on the other hand, was never instituted by God; it is a cultural and legal institution. God redeemed Israel from slavery and provided legal protections so that no Israelite would ever be sold into perpetual servitude (Exod 21:2-6). No such provision for servants existed in the New Testament church. Through Christ's sacrifice the door of salvation is open to everyone—rich and poor, slave and free, male and female (Gal 3:28)—and through God's grace we are all free moral agents. The slavery existing under Roman law, though much milder than the racial-based slavery of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America,²³ had to be borne by Jews and Christians alike, "but from the beginning it was not so" (cf. Matt 19:3-8). Christians are instructed to treat slaves with compassion as fellow-servants of Christ (1 Cor 7:22-23) because, as believers, we are all "slaves," with Christ as our one Master (Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1). In the Lord, then, no one is to remain a slave, but is considered as a sister or a brother (Phlm 16).

As the above examples illustrate, indications exist within Scripture itself to guide us as to whether and when an institution is to be discontinued. The relevant historical-cultural contexts are vital to consider when studying the Bible. As the MBSD states, "In connection with the study of the Biblical text, explore the historical and cultural factors. Archaeology, anthropology, and history may contribute to understanding the meaning of the text."²⁴ However, it is one thing to study the historical-cultural backgrounds to enlighten our understanding of the setting in which the text was written; it

is another thing altogether to suggest that the text was culturally conditioned and that, therefore, a trajectory beyond the text must be constructed for our current, more enlightened, age.²⁵ If the latter were true, it would mean that the Bible does not set forth universal principles but only that which was perceived by the inspired writers to be valid for the local situation at the time or, even worse, reflects then-current prejudices and misunderstandings. In that case its relevance for other times and places would be muted, perhaps not even reflecting divine truth or principles. This is an important distinction to keep in mind when studying ordination in Scripture. What evidence does the Bible provide that the counsels it gives are culturally conditioned or of timeless value? How would one discern the difference?

These are crucial questions and, once again, the Scriptures themselves help us answer them. First, the merely descriptive must be distinguished from the normative, or else we would be practicing many of the sins of our forefathers, including idolatry, polygamy, slavery, and even murder. Jesus clearly indicates what constitutes normative behavior when He prayed, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10; Luke 11:2). Practices that reach back to Eden or extend to the new world constitute God’s will for all time. Without question there is a progression in Scripture whereby God is working to restore human beings into the image of God, but this should not be used to invalidate principles grounded in creation such as the equality of male and female, whose roles, however, are not completely identical. Interpreters should be extremely cautious in concluding that certain passages in Scripture pertain only to a given time or place. In fact, there would appear to be no secure basis to reach such conclusions without clear Scriptural indicators because, through divine foresight, the

Bible’s horizon extends beyond that of the human author to accomplish God’s purposes until the end of time (Isa 55:11). What follows, then, is an examination of evidence from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy relevant to the subject of ordination and the role of women, beginning with the early chapters of Genesis, followed by a consideration of influential women in Scripture, ordination in the New Testament, and spiritual gifts.

HUMAN IDENTITY, EQUALITY, AND DIFFERENTIATION IN GENESIS

According to Genesis 1, human beings were created in God’s image and, as such, are all equal. We are also complementary because from the beginning God differentiated us as male and female (Gen 1:27). Human beings were blessed by God and given dominion over the entire animal kingdom. They were also personally instructed by Him to be fruitful and multiply (v. 28). Biblically understood, equality, complementarity, co-regency, and mutuality are not contradictory. Genesis 2 elaborates on this initial overview of creation by focusing particularly on the creation of human beings and their relation to each other.

Both Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 give indications that man is given the primary leadership role. In Genesis 1:26-27, God calls the entire human family, both male and female, “Man” (*’ādām*). The term occurs three times in Genesis 5:1-2, bracketing the Genesis account of the earliest days of human history. In this latter passage, the generic use of *’ādām* is specifically distinguished from “Adam” as the name of the first man: “This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.”²⁶ In fact, one notable Old Testament scholar, who by his own admission

had accepted the typical feminist reading of these early chapters of Genesis²⁷ for more than a decade because he “wanted it to be true,”²⁸ shows that *’ādām* in Genesis 1-3 refers not to undifferentiated humanity but to “man” with the male gender principally in view: “Hebrew is no different from what English has been on this score until quite recently: the ordinary word for ‘human’ (man) has been a word for ‘male’ but not for ‘female’ even though females are human.”²⁹ Unfortunately, he uses the results of his own careful reading of Genesis 1-3 not only to reject some influential feminist-based studies of these chapters but also as a basis for rejecting Biblical authority entirely and in that way advancing feminist aims. Use of culture-based arguments to construct a trajectory beyond Scripture has the similar effect of denying Biblical authority, at least as it pertains to the specific issue of ordination without regard to gender. However, once Biblical authority is denied in order to resolve this particular issue, nothing would prevent the same method being applied to other issues such as homosexuality.³⁰

According to Genesis 2, God formed “the man” (*hā ’ādām*) first (2:7; cf. 1:27) and placed him in the Garden of Eden to labor and care for it (2:15). The man was given instructions regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (vv. 16-17). God brought the animals to him and entrusted him with the responsibility of naming them (vv. 19-20). 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 [*’iššâ*], because she was taken out of Man [*’iš*” (v. 23). The parallelism of these two naming accounts, using the same Hebrew verb (*qārā*’), reinforces the fact that the man is given the primary leadership role in this new world. Furthermore, since Genesis 1:5, 8, 10 employ this

verb without once using the word “name” (*šēm*), “it cannot be denied that ‘calling’ is a perfectly acceptable Hebrew way of describing naming.”³¹

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. Thus Adam is created as both the prototypical man (2:7, 15-23) and the representative husband (2:24-25).

The role of the woman in the creation narrative of Genesis 2 is different, though no less important. She was “built” (*bānāh*) from one of the man’s ribs, the verb vividly depicting the unique process of her creation from the building block of the man and probably also alluding to the building of the first family (cf. Prov 24:3; Ps 144:12). God could have made her too from the dust of the ground and at the same time as the man in order to exclude any suggestion of role differentiation, but the Creator’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.³² 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). The structure of the narrative makes clear that the animals could not provide this help by mentioning that the only thing “not good” about this otherwise perfect creation is that there was no one comparable

to the man, no “helper corresponding to him” (*‘ezer k^enegdô*, 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; 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.³³ For example, God warned the prince of Jerusalem that he would scatter all his “helpers” and troops (Ezek 12:14), a clear example where the noun refers to subordinates. The verb is used similarly: the two and a half tribes helped the larger segment of Israel to conquer Canaan (Josh 1:14; similarly 10:6), Abishai helped David against the Philistines (2 Sam 21:17), armed forces from Manasseh came to help David shortly before Saul’s demise (1 Chr 12:19-21 [MT 20-22]), troops provided help to King Uzziah against the enemy (2 Chr 26:13), and valiant men helped King Hezekiah cut off the water supply outside Jerusalem in advance of Sennacherib’s attack (2 Chr 32:3). The creation account’s use of this term shows man as leader and woman created “for him” (*lô*) as supportive helper.³⁴ 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 (1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:13). Genesis also shows that the woman was to gain self-understanding through the designation “woman” given her by the man, indicating at once both similarity and difference. “She found her own identity in relation to the man as his equal and helper by the man’s definition.”³⁵

Unfortunately, the happy, harmonious relationship in Eden of two equals, one as leader and the other as supportive helper, both trusting in God as their Father, soon comes under attack. Genesis 3, in recounting the sad history of the Fall, describes the overthrow of selfless male leadership: the man is absent; the serpent talks to the woman as if she

were the head and representative of the family; and the woman accepts the role accorded her by the serpent.³⁶ Her words, with their slight but telling variation on God’s actual command, reflect already the evil influence of the serpent on her in its selfish characterization of God. The man’s activity and initiative had been the focus in Genesis 2, but now, in chapter 3, the woman is shown taking the initiative. Based on her conversation with the serpent, she reasons to a decision, takes of the forbidden fruit, eats it, and gives some of it to Adam (v. 6). In sharp contrast with Genesis 2, in which the woman is called “his woman,” the man is now called “her man.” In other words, in place of the woman being defined by the man, he is now defined by her. But the narrative goes further. It also describes the man in terms of the woman as being “with her.” In short, there is a total reversal of the principle of leadership based on the creation order. The man ate the fruit second, following the initiative and example of the woman. Paul points to the respective roles of men and women established at creation and the consequences of its reversal as a Scriptural basis for preserving male teaching authority in the church (1 Tim 2:13-14).

The dramatic significance of this reversal is underscored by the way in which Genesis describes the results of the Fall. The man’s decision to eat the fruit is the decisive act, not the woman’s. First, only after Adam eats did the negative consequences become clear: the eyes of both were opened; they knew they were naked and so sewed fig leaves into loin cloths; then they heard God coming and hid themselves (Gen 3:7-8). Second, when God confronts this challenge to His command, he seeks out Adam, not Eve, as the one to be held principally responsible: “the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” The pronoun “you” is also a masculine singular form, referring only to

Adam. Third, in questioning the pair, it is clear that the man bears the primary responsibility. God first questions Adam at length, and only afterward questions the woman briefly (vv. 9-11). Finally, in pronouncing judgment upon Adam, God emphasizes the man's surrender of his leadership responsibility as the first misstep: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree" (v. 17). Paul, in recognition of this headship principle, assigns full responsibility for the Fall of the human race to Adam (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22).

The Fall injects sin into the world, bringing pain and suffering into all human experience. Existing relationships are changed. Adam no longer wants to identify with Eve, going out of his way to avoid calling her "my woman" (i.e., wife, cf. 2:24-25) by using a very lengthy circumlocution: "the woman whom You gave to be with me." In so doing, he also distances himself from his Creator and places the blame for sin on God just as Lucifer did in heaven. Eve's desire will now be "against" her husband (3:16b marg.).³⁷ The divine plan, however, is for man's headship to continue: "he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16c). Whether man's headship role would be predominantly positive or negative would depend on whether he would exercise this role with God's loving headship in view as well as on the woman's willingness to accept it. Unfortunately, as Ellen White observes, "man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden." But God's redemptive intent in placing Eve in subjection to Adam was that, by their cherishing "the principles enjoined in the law of God," it would prove to be a blessing to them.³⁸ Before sin, the relationship of the man and woman was perfect and harmonious with Adam exercising unselfish leadership and Eve providing help and encouragement. This remains the ideal: "Christian redemption does not redefine

creation; it restores creation, so that wives learn godly submission and husbands learn godly headship."³⁹ Ellen White comments on the significance of this history for women today:

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God's plan. In their efforts to reach positions for which He has not fitted them, many are leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them.⁴⁰

WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE AND HEADSHIP

Throughout Scripture women are active in many influential roles, but there is no clear instance of their exercising a spiritual headship role. That is, no woman was ever placed by God as a religious head over a man: women were never given a priestly role in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament are they ever seen functioning as apostles or elders. Some women in the Bible are described as prophetesses,⁴¹ but one cannot necessarily assume, by virtue of this work, that God intended for them to fulfill a spiritual headship responsibility. Miriam, for example, was explicitly condemned for attempting to arrogate to herself the privileges that God had given to Moses. She argued, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" (Num 12:2), implying that, since she also had the gift of prophecy, she was somehow equal to him

in spiritual authority. God made it clear by afflicting her with leprosy that her assumption was not only wrong but sinful. The punishment of Aaron, who joined with her in this challenge to Moses's authority, was evidenced by God's departure from the sanctuary (Num 12:9-10). Interestingly, however, by virtue of his headship authority as high priest, he could still intercede for Miriam, which, together with Moses' prayer to God, availed for her healing.

Deborah is a woman in Scripture who has been considered not only as a prophetess but also a judge. However, by means of several important indicators, the Biblical text reveals that Deborah was not a judge in the same sense as other judges. First, she is never called a "judge"⁴² nor is the normal formula ("X judged Israel Y years") used of her.⁴³ Second, the temporary character of Deborah's judging activity is emphasized in several ways (Judg 4:4), including use of the phrase "at that time" (*bā'et hahî*).⁴⁴ Third, in order to prepare the reader for a woman temporarily acting in this capacity, the way Deborah is introduced deliberately emphasizes in five different ways that she is female before mentioning her work of judging.⁴⁵ Finally, rather than sitting in the gate as judges and elders did (e.g., Ruth 4:9-11; 1 Sam 9:18) and kings somewhat later (1 Kgs 22:10; Jer 38:7), the description of Deborah is more in line with her role as a prophetic messenger (sitting under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, Judg 4:5): "In the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice."⁴⁶ Confirmation that Deborah's activity was more an extension of her prophetic role because the divinely-intended judge was unwilling to lead is indicated several times throughout the narrative: God calls Barak to act as Israel's deliverer through Deborah's prophetic message (vv. 6-7); at Barak's refusal to lead Israel into battle unless she would accompany him "and thus support his efforts by her influence and counsel,"⁴⁷ Deborah prophesies

that she will go and the victory will be gained, but that it "will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Jael, not Deborah, vv. 8-9); the "Song of Deborah," sung by Deborah and Barak, alludes to both of them as "leaders" who "took the lead in Israel" (5:1-2).

In short, Deborah was obedient to the prophetic role that God had called her to do in an exceptional situation. Her work was temporarily expanded to encompass some of the functions that a judge would do, but, as Ellen G. White indicates, it was Barak who "had been designated by the Lord himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel."⁴⁸ This reading of Judges is confirmed by the New Testament, which mentions Barak, not Deborah, in recalling Israel's deliverance at that time (Heb 11:32). This single Biblical example of notable leadership by a woman during the time of the judges, when "there was no king in Israel" and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6, etc.), does not provide a sound basis for establishing a principle of female headship in contradiction to the rest of Scripture. Underscoring the fact that having female leaders of Israel was not God's plan, the two examples of women queens usurping power in the Old Testament are thoroughly negative. Queen Jezebel led the Northern Kingdom of Israel into apostasy and endeavored to exterminate God's true prophets, including Elijah (1 Kgs 18:4; 19:1-2). Athaliah, after coming to the throne of Judah, consolidated her power by killing all the male heirs save young Joash who was hidden away for six years by the wife of the high priest (2 Kgs 11:1-3; 2 Chr 22:10-12).

In the New Testament, female believers were called to significant supportive roles in the ministry of Jesus: learning lessons from Him just like the other disciples (Luke 10:39), providing financial means for the furtherance of His ministry (Luke 8:3), and supplying moral encouragement during the

Equality of service is not incompatible with different roles; all are servants of Christ and the glory belongs to God for the growth of the church and the abundant final harvest.

crucial closing week (John 12:1-8), not least by their determined presence at the cross (Mark 15:40-41; John 19:25). They were also His witnesses before and after His resurrection (Luke 8:1-2; 24:9-10). Jesus commanded Mary Magdalene to tell the news to the other disciples (John 20:15-18) and, together with the other women who went to the tomb, was among the first witnesses to His resurrection (Luke 24:2-10). Although these roles would undoubtedly have been offensive to Jewish cultural sensitivities, Jesus invited them to fulfill these important tasks. So out of step was Jesus' treatment of women with prevailing Jewish attitudes, that even the apostles did not believe the witness the women brought them of the risen Lord (Luke 24:11).⁴⁹

We also have ample evidence of women working in local churches: Priscilla and her husband Aquila in their spare time labored in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome, working with Paul, teaching accurately "the way of God," and opening their home for church gatherings (Acts 18:1, 18, 26; 1 Cor 16:9; Rom 16:3); Phoebe, a "servant" (*diakonos*)⁵⁰ of the church at Cenchreae near Corinth and patron of Paul and others, delivered Paul's epistle to Rome and may have encouraged generous support of his mission to Spain (Rom 16:1; cf. 15:25-32); Mary was notable in Rome for her hard work in the church (16:6); Junia with Andronicus were "well-known to the apostles" (v. 7);⁵¹ Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis "worked hard in the Lord" (v. 12). But there is no clear

evidence that any of these women ever exercised a headship role. Their labors appear to be supportive of the work being carried forward by the apostles and other men whom God had called to lead His church. Today God still seeks both men and women willing to fill supportive roles in the advancement of His work. Paul indicates the importance of each person's contribution to the process of reaping the crop for harvest (1 Cor 3:4-11). Every worker has an important role to play, but God gives the resultant increase so that no individual is more important than another. Equality of service is not incompatible with different roles; all are servants of Christ and the glory belongs to God for the growth of the church and the abundant final harvest.

ORDINATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Jesus established His church by ordaining twelve men from a much larger group of disciples.⁵² He named them "apostles," thus anticipating their future sending as His personal emissaries (Mark 3:13-14). This took place more than a year after their initial call (cf. Mark 1:16-20; John 1:35-51)⁵³ and represents a further stage both in their experience as disciples and in the development of the church. While all who join themselves to Christ are expected to be fruitful disciples (John 15:1-6), some were set apart or ordained to special leadership capacities. After His death and resurrection, Jesus bestowed the Holy Spirit on the apostles, making them His undershepherds, instructing them, and authorizing them to act on His behalf (John 20:21-23). In this light, Ellen White draws out the significance of the gift of the Holy Spirit in qualifying men for the gospel ministry:

Before the disciples could fulfill their official duties in connection with the church, Christ

*breathed His Spirit upon them. He was committing to them a most sacred trust, and He desired to impress them with the fact that without the Holy Spirit this work could not be accomplished. . . . Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.*⁵⁴

Ordination (to “set apart for an office or duty”)⁵⁵ is described in the New Testament by various Greek words, which reflect the preferred vocabulary of the individual authors. The only ritual associated with ordination in the New Testament is the laying on of hands, although prayer, fasting, and other practices are also sometimes mentioned. Use of the ritual, based on Old Testament precedent (Num 8:10; 27:18) serves to represent both the sanction of the church at large (through the one previously ordained by the church) and church members (who have expressed their confidence in God’s calling of the individual through their vote with the uplifted hand, 2 Cor 8:19).

Specifically mentioned as being recipients of the laying on of hands are deacons and elders (Acts 6:6; 14:23), which explains why these two offices also appear together in 1 Timothy 3. Paul, in writing to Titus on the island of Crete, makes no mention of deacons, instructing him to appoint elders for the churches in the various towns there (1:5). Timothy, on the other hand, was stationed in Ephesus. Being one of the leading cities of the empire, it must have had considerably larger churches than the island of Crete, because, like the church in Jerusalem, both elders and deacons were required. The role of Timothy and Titus, as elders overseeing a number of churches, is similar to that of the ordained minister today.

Turning in greater detail to 1 Timothy, the verses immediately preceding chapter 3 contain what some consider to be instructions as to how wives should relate to their husbands. However, normally such instructions are given as part of what is generally referred to as a household code like those found in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 and Colossians 3:18-4:1. The use in Ephesians 5 of pronouns which are translated “one’s own” (*idios*, v. 22; *heautou*, vv. 28-29) show clearly that the Greek words *anēr* and *gynē* should be translated in that context as “husband” and “wife,” not generically (“man” and “woman”). The article has a similar function in Colossians 3:18-4:1 to specify “wives” (v. 18), “husbands,” (v. 19), as well as “children” (v. 20), “fathers” (v. 21), “slaves” (v. 22), and “masters” (4:1). 1 Peter 2:18-3:7 addresses instructions to servants (2:18) followed by “similarly” (*houtōs*, 3:1, 7) to address wives and husbands, thus signaling the presence of a household code there also. In short, household codes always have indicators showing that reference is being made to husbands and wives.

First Timothy 2, while it resembles a household code, has no such indicators;⁵⁶ nor is there mention of masters, servants or children. So here *anēr* and *gynē* should be translated generically, “man” and “woman” rather than “husband” and “wife.” Further support for this translation is seen in the fact that 1 Timothy 2 deals with worship life rather than home life, as well as from 1 Timothy 3:15 which calls the church “the house of God.” Understandably, then, this passage has been labeled a church code.⁵⁷

Such an application of the rules of the house to the church should not be all that surprising since we have many references in the New Testament to churches meeting in homes, including in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) where Timothy was located at the time that Paul wrote his first epistle to him (1 Tim 1:3). First Timothy 2 begins with instructions that

prayer should be offered for all people (vv. 1-7),⁵⁸ and that the men “in every place,” i.e., wherever there is a church gathering for worship (cf. 3:15), “should pray, lifting holy hands, without anger or quarreling” (v. 8). Next follows instructions for “women who profess godliness,” i.e. believers—women in the church.⁵⁹ They should dress modestly and prudently (vv. 9-10), so that fashion does not lead to rivalry or divisions in the church. What immediately follows should also be understood as part of this church code: women should not take an authoritative teaching role (vv. 11-12) apart from or independent of the male-based church leadership prescribed in 1 Timothy 3. Again, as in the earlier part of the chapter, Paul gives his rationale for this assertion, this time based on the history and theological significance of the Creation and the Fall: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (vv. 13-14).

Mentioning the order of creation, man first and then woman, concisely invokes from Genesis 2 the male leadership principle that God established in Eden. The word Paul chooses for deceive (*exapataō*; cf. Gen 3:13, LXX) means “to cause someone to accept false ideas about someth[ing].”⁶⁰ As we saw above, the serpent deceived Eve by approaching her as if she were the head, reversing the headship principle, and by suggesting that she and Adam could rise to a higher level of power through eating the forbidden fruit. Adam was not deceived—he saw the headship principle had been reversed and “mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. . . . Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation.”⁶¹ Yet, Paul also exalts as crucial one of the roles that only women can play in counteracting the Fall and obtaining salvation—as mothers in

fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. This verse points first and foremost to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the promised seed (Gal 3:16), the source of eternal salvation (Heb 5:9); but it is also a part of God’s plan that women who have the opportunity exercise this God-given privilege and role of bearing and raising godly children (1 Tim 2:15; 1 Cor 11:11-12). Paul is not suggesting that women who are unable or choose not to have children cannot be saved since he makes clear that the condition for obtaining salvation is not childbearing per se, but maintaining one’s connection with Christ by continuing “in faith and love and holiness, with self-control” (v. 15).⁶²

Paul’s explanation in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 of the relations between believing men and women in the church, predicated on the creation order of Genesis 1-3 (which Paul had already established in 1 Cor 11), lays the basis for his stipulations regarding the qualifications for overseers and deacons that immediately follow in 1 Timothy 3. Confirmation that these chapters form a church code appears in 1 Timothy 3:14-15: “. . . that you may know how it is necessary for people to conduct themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (cf. v. 5, Mounce). As those who carry responsibility for the spiritual and material well-being of the church, overseers and deacons must be carefully selected based on the specified qualifications, which are almost the same for both offices. In addition, however, the overseer must also be “able to teach” (*didaktikon*, cf. 2 Tim 2:24), a qualification not required of deacons. Another church code, Titus 1:5-3:2, gives nearly identical qualifications for the overseer/elder, including competence in teaching (1:5-9).⁶³

The importance of such competency is apparent in view of the frequent New Testament references to false teachers, and not only in the Pastoral Epistles. Requiring this competency of the overseer or elder

coupled with disallowing women an authoritative teaching role (1 Tim 2:12) helps to explain why the person filling the office of overseer/elder “must be . . . the husband of one wife” (3:2, *dei . . . einai, mias gynaikos andra*), a stipulation Paul underscores also to Titus (1:6). Deacons have a similar requirement (1 Tim 2:12).⁶⁴ Some translate this phrase as “one-wife husband,” arguing that the word order in Greek places the emphasis on “one-wife” (as opposed to two or more) when actually the syntax makes all parts of the phrase emphatic. It stresses competence in managing a stable, respectable Christian home, which demonstrates in turn that, as an ordained officer of the church, the man should be capable of caring for and managing well God’s church. The requirement that he be “the husband of one wife” cannot refer to polygamy, which was not practiced in cities of the Roman empire such as Ephesus;⁶⁵ rather, it stipulates that men be appointed who exemplify a loving, unselfish headship and the values of a lifelong marriage. The parallel between 3:12 for deacons and 3:2, 4-5 for the elder shows that there is a connection between having one wife and the ability to manage the household well (including any children).

The New Testament’s emphasis on the importance and integrity of the family social structure is not simply out of convenience to harmonize with the surrounding culture or out of expedience to facilitate mission. In fact, not unlike today, there were many cultural forces in Greco-Roman society that tended to undermine family stability including immoral lifestyles, homosexuality, and materialism. In the church too, Paul expresses concern that false teachers were subverting “whole families” (Titus 1:12). The key role that Christianity accorded to the family, placing it at the heart of religious faith and worship, helps explain its explosive growth and rapid expansion throughout the ancient world. It

also makes clear that the church’s continued growth, vitality, and stability depend largely on godly spiritual leadership in the homes that compose it.

Paul underscores that the structure of the human family was established at creation: “the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man” (1 Cor 11:3 NIV). “For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man” (vv. 8-9; cf. 1 Tim 2:13). Christ is not just the head of Adam, but the head of every man. And “the husband is the head of the wife” (Eph 5:23). This human family structure was integrated at creation into heaven’s existing order in which cherubim and seraphim are nearest the throne (Ps 99:1; Isa 6:2; Ezek 10:3; 11:22), Christ as Archangel is head over these as well as the rest of the angelic host (1 Thess 4:16; Rev 12:7; cf. Josh 5:13-15), and “the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor 11:3).

First Corinthians 11 is similar to 1 Timothy and Titus, but as a corrective church code. We see the same clues: a generic use of man and woman in connection with an argument from the creation order (11:3, 7-9) and instructions for how men and women are to behave in the church (11:4-6, 13-15). Apparently there were some believers in Corinth who were not following the accepted practices for affirming the headship principle in the church. So Paul first articulates the overarching principle that “the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man,” which is modeled by Christ Himself, who is submissive to His Head, God the Father (v. 3). Paul makes application of this headship principle, based on the governing role of the head to the body (vv. 4-6, as also in Eph 5:22-33), and he defends it vigorously (vv. 7-16). “Head” (*kephalē*) in this context, as elsewhere in the New Testament,⁶⁶ does not refer to “source,” which is not at issue here, but to “authority” (v. 10).⁶⁷ The notion of head as

authority is frequent also in the OT, where the term (Heb. *rō'š*) is used for rulers, chiefs, captains, and other authorities.⁶⁸ Even in prophecy, heads symbolize authority, whether kings, rulers, powers, or kingdoms (Dan 2:38; 7:6; Rev 17:9-10).

After explaining how the headship principle articulated in verse 3 should impact one's decorum in worship, Paul gives several supporting arguments for the principle. His primary Biblical rationale comes from the order and purpose of creation in Genesis 1-2: (1) woman is the glory of man inasmuch as she came from man (1 Cor 11:7-8); and (2) woman was created for the man (v. 9). He also appeals to the decorum angels manifest in worship (v. 10).⁶⁹ Paul balances this male leadership principle, however, with a "nevertheless" (*plēn*) clause in vv. 11-12 in order to remind his readers that it is not unconditional, that interdependence also functions among believers. Thus, as in the New Testament household codes,⁷⁰ unselfish love is presumed in the church code too. Paul wraps up his instructions with subsidiary arguments which are universal, not local or cultural—from reason (v. 13) and nature (vv. 14-15). Finally, he makes clear that all of the churches follow a consistent practice, from which no deviation will be considered (v. 16). While the nature of the head covering is not completely clear, Paul's main point applies with equal force today: the way men and women conduct themselves in church should indicate that the principle of male church leadership is operative and accepted by all who take part in worship. Since every reason Paul gives for upholding this principle transcends local culture and practice, it follows that what he enjoins for the church at Corinth is not unique or applicable only to them. The principle of submission to the designated head is not limited by location or circumstance because it is practiced in all the churches and even in heaven. Paul shows how headship functions throughout

divine-human, human, and divine relations,⁷¹ thereby emphasizing the same kind of nourishing headship relation by men in the church that Christ has with the church as a whole (cf. Eph 5:23), which resembles the role relation God the Father bears to Christ (1 Cor 11:3).

A few chapters later, in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul lays down another corrective church code. This set of rules deals with disruptive speech by both men and women in the church. Verses 33b-35, which forbid women from speaking in church, must be understood in this setting. Rather than contradicting what Paul has just said in 1 Corinthians 11:5 about women praying and prophesying in church, the rule should be read in light of this more comprehensive instruction that precedes it.

RELATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO ORDINATION

There are several lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, which together reflect a wide diversity of talents put to spiritual use. These gifts include prophecy, evangelism, teaching, helps, hospitality, ministry to the poor, and many others. Such gifts are available to both men and women without regard to race, class, or nationality. Still, while everyone is given some gift (1 Cor 12:7), there may be gifts that are not available to everyone since each of them is distributed in accordance with the Spirit's choosing, bestowal, and direction, not ours (v. 11). The same may be said of church offices. Various church capacities, including that of prophet, are open to women (Luke 2:36; Acts 21:9; cf. 2:17-18; 1 Cor 11:5). However, women are never seen functioning as pastors, even though some, like Priscilla with her husband Aquila, were certainly involved in the work of instructing and making disciples, because the commission to share the gospel is something that all Christians should be actively engaged in (Luke

24:8-10; Rev 22:17). Nor are women ever seen functioning as elders/overseers, no doubt because this office combines headship and shepherding functions. Paul speaks tenderly to the “elders” (*presbyteroi*) of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:17), whom the Holy Spirit appointed as “overseers” (*episkopoi*) to “shepherd” (*poimainō*) the church of God (v. 28). Peter also seems to use overseer and shepherd (or “pastor”) synonymously when he speaks of Jesus as “the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Pet 2:25),⁷² as well as in his exhortation to the leaders of the churches of Asia Minor to “shepherd the flock of God, . . . exercising oversight [*episkopountes*]” (5:2). The elder is given oversight over God’s “flock” to protect it from danger and deception (Acts 20:29). It is an office that was given only to men who, like Adam and other spiritual leaders of the home and the church, will be called “to give an account” (Heb 13:17).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the course of this brief but wide-ranging study, we have seen that 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. However, the increasing conflict over the ordination of women, seen in recent years at various levels of our church, suggests that deeper theological issues are involved which can only be fully resolved by returning to a more Biblically based understanding and practice of ordination. An alternative approach suggests that we must continue down the path of pragmatic solutions because the Bible provides us no more than a vague, principle-based “trajectory.” It implies that the Old Testament’s consistent affirmation of male priests, the precedent of Jesus

in ordaining twelve men as apostles, the selection of seven male deacons, and the teachings of Paul regarding the qualifications of church officers, are all products of the time, circumscribed by the limits of the culture. In fact, ordaining women represents a significant departure from the Biblical model. Is our degenerate Western culture of modernism and post-modernism, with its intentional dismantling of the family and family values, Christian distinctiveness, and, ultimately, “truth,” better equipped to address the needs of the church today than are the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy? 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, as our recent experience in connection with this issue has shown. Genuine unity is 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 that can never bring lasting relief from the abuses brought about by sin. Jesus has shown us the way, not through external social reforms but through inner transformation and the power of a positive example.

Beginning with the creation narrative of Genesis 1 and 2, the Bible consistently describes human beings as both equal and complementary, assigning the primary leadership role to the man with a supportive role given to the woman. The entrance of sin attempted to reverse these roles, but God indicated that male leadership would continue (Gen 3:16). Paul describes, based on Genesis, how this leadership, both in the home (Eph 5) and in the church (1 Cor 11), is to be subject to and modeled after Christ’s own unselfish headship. Throughout Scripture, women fulfill important supportive roles

and women were specifically included by Jesus in His ministry. They also assisted the apostles in their work of establishing churches, but none are ever seen functioning as an elder or deacon because such persons “must be” (*dei . . . einai*) the husband of one wife, exhibiting godly character qualities and demonstrating wise spiritual leadership in the home (1 Tim 3:2-5, 12; Titus 1:6). This same Scriptural requirement applies also to pastors, whose headship role transcends that of a local church elder. The theological basis for this requirement is grounded in the early chapters of Genesis. Paul sets out guidelines for men and women in the church based on the creation order, which in turn is based on the relation between the Father and the Son (1 Tim 2-3; 1 Cor 11, 14; Titus 1-3). Within this Biblical paradigm of godly male headship, all supportive avenues for

service within the church are open to both women and men based on their Spirit-bestowed gifts and calling, including teaching, helps, hospitality, ministry to the poor, and many others. Naturally, how men and women relate to each other in a church setting will vary somewhat from culture to culture. At the same time, it will be evident that the principle of male church leadership is supported by the congregation as a whole, particularly by those who take leading roles in worship.

To follow the Bible model on the issue of women’s ordination will require courage like that of our pioneers. Nevertheless, it is the only basis on which we can expect to maintain global unity, receive God’s continued blessing, and, most importantly, anticipate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to finish His work. ■



Edwin E. Reynolds, Ph.D.

Edwin Reynolds is a professor of New Testament and biblical languages and is the School of Religion graduate program coordinator at Southern Adventist University. He holds a doctoral degree in New Testament from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Reynolds was the editor of the *Guide for Research Writing: AIIAS Theological Seminary*, 2d ed. (Silang, Cavite, Philippines: AIIAS Publications, 2002) and *Asia Adventist Seminary Studies*, and is a former editor of and regular contributor to the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*.



Clinton Wahlen, Ph.D.

Clinton Wahlen is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute. He holds a Ph.D. degree in New Testament from Cambridge University, U.K., and has authored *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* (Mohr Siebeck, 2004) and *James* (Adult Bible Study Guide, forthcoming). He has also published academic articles in journals such as *New Testament Studies* and *Biblical Interpretation*, and written for biblical dictionaries published by InterVarsity Press.

- 1 Unless otherwise specified, all Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version.
- 2 “Ordination,” Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, 254; see also J. N. Loughborough, *The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1920), 98-101.
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 97.
- 4 James White, “Gospel Order,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* [RH], Dec. 6, 1853, 173.
- 5 “The S.D.A. Church Manual,” published in eighteen installments. See RH, June 5 to October 9, 1883.
- 6 See 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), 8-12.
- 7 Ellen G. White, “The Duty of the Minister and the People,” RH, July 9, 1895, 434.
- 8 See Arthur N. Patrick, “The Ordination of Deaconesses,” RH, Jan. 16, 1986, 18-19.
- 9 *Church Manual*, 1932 ed., 34, mentions that Rom 16:1-2 and “other references indicate that women served the early churches as deaconesses. There is no record, however, that these women were ordained, hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by our denomination.”
- 10 Minutes of the Three Hundred Fifteenth Meeting of the General Conference Committee (75-153), par. 5.
- 11 Minutes of the 1984 Annual Council (272-84G-N), 56.
- 12 C. Mervyn Maxwell, “A Very Surprising (and Interesting) History,” in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (ed. Mercedes H. Dyer; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventists Affirm, 2000), 226 (indicating, erroneously it seems, that the decision was made in 1976). The policy voted at the 1977 Annual Council appears in “Licensed Minister Role and Status—New Policy,” *Adventist Review*, Dec. 1, 1977, 17.
- 13 According to Josephine Benton, *Called by God: Stories of Seventh-day Adventist Women Ministers* (Smithsburg, Md.: Blackberry Hill Publishers, 1990), 210 n. 2, since the 1970s women have generally been credentialed as commissioned rather than licensed ministers because the latter are on a path toward ordination. Mary Walsh, a licensed minister for sixty years, had her status changed to licensed commissioned minister after 1981 (*ibid.*, 135).
- 14 Minutes of the Fifty-Fifth General Conference Session, *General Conference Bulletin* 7 (1990): 15.
- 15 Minutes of the Fifty-Sixth General Conference Session, *General Conference Bulletin* 8 (1995): 30.
- 16 Mark A. Kellner, “After Debate, Annual Council Votes Statement on Church Polity,” online: <http://news.adventist.org/archive/articles/2012/10/16/after-debate-annual-council-votes-statement-on-church-polity>; cited June 10, 2013.
- 17 Minutes of the Fifty-Ninth General Conference Session, *General Conference Bulletin* 11 (2010): 34. This session also for the first time approved the ordination of deaconesses (*ibid.*, 3).
- 18 Cf. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, 19: “The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread.”
- 19 Paul’s statements citing Genesis 2 and 3 as a Scriptural basis for his arguments are minimized—even though they speak directly to church matters (1 Tim 2; 1 Cor 11)—because supposedly they apply only to Ephesus or Corinth, while a single Pauline verse is elevated to supra-canonical status (Gal 3:28). Genesis 2-3 is also reinterpreted and pitted against Paul’s interpretation of the same, which goes against the principles of *sola Scriptura* and *tota Scriptura* as well as Christ’s injunction that “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). See the discussion (pp. 16-18 below) on 1 Timothy 2:13-15 and 1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-9.
- 20 Ellen G. White (quoting approvingly of William Miller’s hermeneutic), “Notes of Travel,” RH, Nov. 25, 1884, par. 24.
- 21 “Methods of Bible Study Committee (GCC-A)—Report,” *Adventist Review*, January 22, 1987, 18; online: http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH19870122-V164-04__B.pdf#view=fit; accessed 31 May 2013. Notably, the NAD Theology of Ordination Study Committee was unable to agree on acceptance of the Preamble of the MBSD, though the body of the document was accepted.
- 22 E.g., William Webb, *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001), 126-27 (favoring women’s ordination, considering the Sabbath cultural); Wayne Grudem, “Review Article: Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic?” *JETS* 47/2 (June 2004): 299-346 here 327 n. 20 (opposing women’s ordination, denying the Sabbath a normative status in Eden).
- 23 Bondservants had strict protections under Roman law: they could earn their freedom, hold private property, and often occupied very responsible positions as lawyers, shopkeepers, and even financial managers working with huge sums of money as the parable of the talents shows (Matt 25:14-30).
- 24 “Methods of Bible Study,” 19.
- 25 For a recent critique of Webb, who advocates such a trajectory hermeneutic, see Benjamin Reaoch, *Women, Slaves and the Gender Debate: A Complementarian Response to the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 2012).
- 26 The RSV, NKJV, NASB (1995), and NIV (2011) all use “man” or “mankind” to indicate this clear distinction made by the Hebrew text, while the NRSV prefers “humankind.” The term “generations” (Heb. *tôlédôt*) regularly introduces genealogies of the patriarchs (6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27, etc.).
- 27 The seminal work of feminist interpretation, now followed by many evangelical and even some Adventist scholars, is that of Phyllis Trible, “Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation,” *JAAR* 41 (1973): 30-48; see also *idem*, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).
- 28 David J. A. Clines, *What Does Eve Do To Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament* (JSOTSup 94; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 8.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 28-38.
- 30 In fact, such a trajectory has already been constructed to allow various Christian denominations to perform same sex marriages and to ordain clergy without regard to sexual orientation. See Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2006), 15-16, 156, 237-50 for a discussion and evaluation from a conservative perspective.
- 31 Clines, 25, citing George W. Ramsey, “Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 24-35.
- 32 Cf. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 46: “Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.”
- 33 See Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004), 117-18. Clines, 16-18 argues convincingly that Eve’s role is to help Adam fulfill the command of Gen 1:28, but Clines’ limiting of this help to procreation (20-21) is too narrow.
- 34 It can also refer to the feeble help of Egypt (Isa 30:5, 7; 31:3) and of human help in general (Isa 41:6; 63:5; Jer 47:4; Eze 12:14; 30:8; Dan 11:45).
- 35 Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton,

- Ill.: Crossway, 2006), 103, emphasis his.
- 36 Cf. Ellen G. White, *Confrontation*, 13-14, amplifying Gen 3:5, includes the deeper issue of power among the temptations: the serpent claimed the prohibition “was given to keep them [Adam and Eve] in such a state of subordination that they should not obtain knowledge, which was power.”
- 37 The translation of the preposition *ʾel* as “against” is based on the close parallel with Genesis 4:7-8 (esp. v. 7b); there, as here, it is used to indicate action “of a hostile character” (BDB 413.4).
- 38 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 58-59.
- 39 Ortlund, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship,” 109.
- 40 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 59.
- 41 Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah, and the wife of Isaiah in the Old Testament, and Anna, and the four daughters of Philip in the New Testament.
- 42 Although the qal participle *šōpēʾī* is used substantively to mean “judge” (Judg 2:16, 17, 18ter, 19; 11:27), this is never applied to Deborah, who calls herself “a mother in Israel” (5:7).
- 43 See Judg 10:2 (Tola), 3 (Jair); 12:7 (Jephthah); 12:9 (Ibzan), 11 (Elon), 14 (Abdon); 15:20 and 16:31 (Samson).
- 44 Besides this temporal phrase in Judg 4:4, use of a participle (“judging”) rather than the normal verb form (“judged”)—the only such case in the entire book of Judges (besides the verses listed in the previous footnote, see also Judg 3:10; 11:27; 12:8, 11, 13, all of which employ either a qal perfect or a qal imperfect with waw-consecutive)—suggests “a comparatively transitory act” (GKC §116f; cf. Joüon §121f).
- 45 Judg 4:4 is literally translated: “Now Deborah [feminine proper noun], a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she [feminine pronoun]. . . .” Since Deborah is a feminine name and “prophetess” (*nʿbīʾā*) is grammatically feminine in Hebrew there is no need to add that she was a woman unless that point is being stressed. Furthermore, this construction is unique in the Old Testament; nowhere else is “woman” (*ʾiššā*) linked to *nʿbīʾā*.
- 46 Ellen G. White, “Defeat of Sisera,” *The Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881, par. 4.
- 47 *Ibid.*, par. 6.
- 48 *Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.
- 49 Cf. *ZIBBCNT* 1:182.
- 50 In the New Testament, *diakonos* is the preferred designation for all church workers irrespective of capacity, because all serve Christ, who made Himself a Servant (Luke 22:27; cf. Phil 2:7, which uses *doulos*). Elsewhere *diakonos* carries the technical sense of “deacon,” a church officer working under the authority of an elder/overseer (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-16), in apparent contrast to women who seem to have fulfilled some church duties, though without an official title (1 Tim 3:11).
- 51 Literary, epigraphic, and historical evidence is divided (BDF 125.2; MM 306) as to whether the name *Iouianis* is feminine (Junia) or masculine (Junias), though the latter possibility is strengthened by the presence of three other shortened names in this list ending in -as (Patrobas, Hermas, Olympas, vv. 14-15), all clearly masculine (William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [4th ed.; ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900], 422-23); see also Al Wolters, “IOYNIAN (Romans 16:7) and the Hebrew Name *Yēhunnī*,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127/2 (2008): 397-40. The translation “among the apostles” is possible too, but in that case may refer to “missionaries” (2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25) rather than to authoritative church leaders. Andronicus and Junia, then, could be a husband and wife missionary team with Junia directing “her energies especially to other women” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* [BECNT 6; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998], 797).
- 52 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 296: “When Jesus had ended His instruction to the disciples, He gathered the little band close about Him, and kneeling in the midst of them, and laying His hands upon their heads, He offered a prayer dedicating them to His sacred work. Thus the Lord’s disciples were ordained to the gospel ministry” (cf. *idem*, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 4).
- 53 See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (ed. Francis D. Nichol; 7 vols.; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1956), 5:230-31; cf. 196-97.
- 54 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 805.
- 55 D. Miall Edwards, “Ordain, Ordination,” *ISBE* (1915 ed.), 4:2199, col. 2. The word “ordination,” derived from *ordinatio*, has its analogs in the other Latin-based languages. However, the concept is translated in various ways, in some languages closely reflecting the Biblical idea of the “laying on of hands” (e.g., Russian and Korean), while in others (e.g., Indonesian and Tagalog) translating it with a word that means “poured oil.”
- 56 Gordon P. Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis?,” *JETS* 35/3 (1992): 357, is forced to admit that at most it is only “a partial ‘household code.’” However, as we shall see, it really pertains to church life rather than home life.
- 57 Philip H. Towner, “Household Codes,” *DLNT*, 514. Similarly, David L. Balch, “Household Codes,” *ABD*, 3:318, who calls it a “congregational code.”
- 58 Paul gives several reasons for this: God wants all to be saved, Jesus is mediator and died for all, and Paul was ordained a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles, which embraces the world.
- 59 Paul is well aware that some became believers while their spouses did not (cf. 1 Cor 7:12-16) and so, if he were writing about how to behave at home, he could not assume that the women “profess godliness.” He can only assume this because he is giving instructions for behavior in a worship setting. Besides, if this is a home setting verses 9-10 do not make sense: why would Paul be concerned about how women dressed at home?
- 60 BDAG 345.
- 61 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 56.
- 62 Some women (the unmarried or otherwise incapable of giving childbirth) might need to accept that it is not God’s plan yet for them to have children; to such this verse obviously does not apply.
- 63 Here, and in Acts 20:17, 28, overseer (*episkopos*) is used interchangeably with elder (*presbyteros*). Judging from the negative qualities listed in Titus 1:10-14, there may have been problems with some of the overseers of the churches on Crete.
- 64 The possibility of construing *anēr* as “person” is excluded because it is linked in both these verses with *gynē* which refers to the man’s wife. Further confirmation is found in v. 11 where “the women” are referred to separately and without such a specification, perhaps because they were the wives of the deacons. In any case, these women had a supportive role, doing work similar to that of the deacons though without the title (see n. 50 above).
- 65 Cf. Walter Scheidel, “Monogamy and Polygyny,” in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (ed. Beryl Rawson; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 108: “Greco-Roman monogamy may well be the single most important phenomenon of ancient history that has remained widely unrecognized.”
- 66 The word is used elsewhere of Christ as “head over all things” in relation to the church (Eph 1:22), which is His body (v. 23; similarly Col 1:18), and as the “head over all rule and authority” (Col 2:10 NIV). Both passages refer to His supremacy—over the church, as the Chief Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Pet 2:25; 5:4), and over all other authorities and powers that have been made subject to Him (1 Pet 3:22). Parallel to Christ’s headship over the church is the husband’s headship in relation to his wife (Eph 5:22-24).

- 67 This has been clearly established by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “*Kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3,” *Int* 47 (1993): 52-59; Wayne Grudem, “The Meaning of κεφαλή (“Head”): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” *JETS* 44/1 (2001): 25-65, who on 61-64 cites many others reaching this conclusion.
- 68 See, e.g., Exod 6:14, 25; 18:25; Num 1:16; 7:2; 10:4; Deut 1:15; 5:23; 33:5, 21; Josh 14:1; 19:51; Judg 10:18; 11:8, 11; 1 Sam 15:17, etc. None of these heads were sources in any sense of the word, as indicated by the Septuagint’s translation choices (*archēgoi*, *archai*, *chiliarchoi*, *archontes*, *hēgeisthai*, *hēgoumenoi*, *kephalē*).
- 69 Perhaps referring at once to the reverence the angels exhibit in God’s presence (covering their faces, Isa 6:2), the high degree of order they exemplify (cherubim, seraphim, etc., vividly described in Rev 4-5), and their presumed presence during church worship.
- 70 Wives are enjoined to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (Eph 5:22-24). Children are instructed to obey their parents in the Lord (6:1-3). Servants are enjoined to submit to their masters as serving the Lord (6:5-8). In addition, those in positions of authority are enjoined to reciprocate: husbands to love their wives (5:25-28), fathers to deal gently with their children so as not to exasperate them (6:4), and masters to deal gently with their servants, knowing that both serve the same Master, who will not show favoritism of the one over the other in the judgment (6:9). This reciprocation of love and kindness by the authority figure helps make the incumbent submission easy to practice and is akin to the mutual love and submission that all believers are to manifest toward one another (5:21).
- 71 The word order in each of the three relations places the heads in parallel and prioritizes Christ by placing this relation first, perhaps because He is the connecting link between the other two relational pairs.
- 72 Jesus likened Himself to the “good Shepherd” promised in the Old Testament (John 10:1-16; Mark 14:27; cf., e.g., Jer 23:4; Eze 34:23; 37:24; Zech 13:7).