

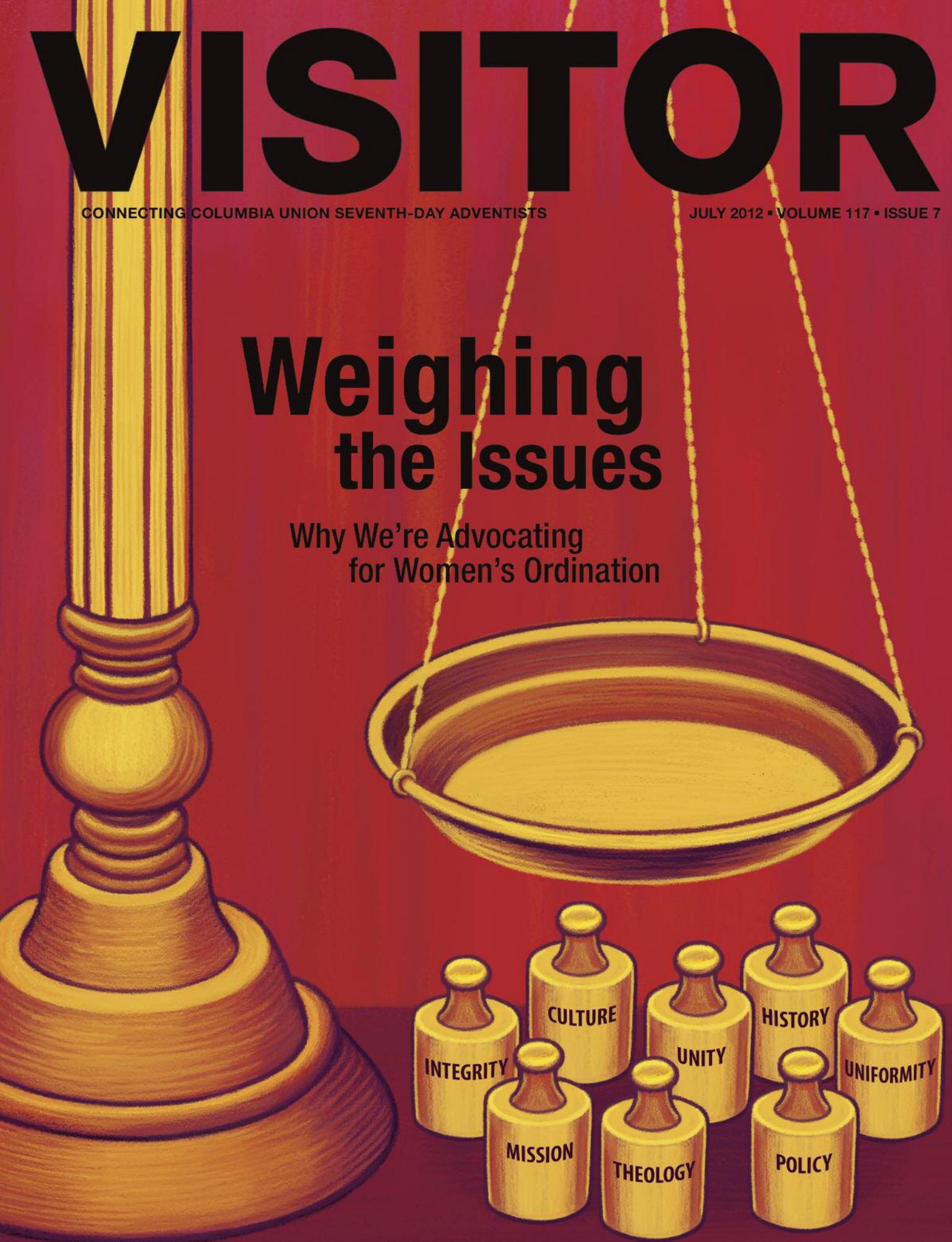
VISITOR

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JULY 2012 • VOLUME 117 • ISSUE 7

Weighing the Issues

Why We're Advocating
for Women's Ordination



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The *Visitor* provides news and information, resources for effective ministry, and insight on issues with a spiritual focus to help people celebrate God's transforming grace in preparation for His return.

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Volume 117 ■ Issue 7

5 Reasons I Changed My Views

Since we announced plans to hold a special constituency meeting July 29, I've discovered that many members, pastors and leaders support our request to authorize ordination of women clergy. They realize that although we continue to debate the issue theologically, it's largely cultural. In his new book titled *Where Are We Going?* Jan Paulsen, immediate past president of our world church, writes, "The church has never taken the view that biblical teachings exclude the possibility of women being ordained to ministry on an equal footing with men. But global leadership has felt that local readiness and perceptions—heavily influenced by culture—have thus far kept us from moving forward on this as a global community" (p. 12).



A QUESTION OF POLICY

In moving forward, our union would join others who are at variance with General Conference policy. And, for many members, this is really the crux of the matter. It's why, for the last six years, I discouraged the union committee from approving the many conference requests to ordain proven female candidates. So what changed?

- 1 I can no longer dismiss the evidence of the Spirit's moving in China and other parts of the world where women are advancing the mission of the church, nor the promise of Joel 2:28-29.
- 2 In the early days, our church saw the value of encouraging both genders to serve according to their calling, and history tells of female pastors, missionaries, evangelists, conference presidents and General Conference treasurers (see pp. 16-17). In New York at the turn of the 19th century, for example, women won 60 percent of our converts.
- 3 We already accommodate policy variances in some places for practical purposes, cultural sensitivities or to advance our mission, e.g., polygamy, labor unions, women's ordination. In our cultural context, this issue has moral and ethical implications.
- 4 Only recently has there been an attempt to have us walk lockstep in policy. Our pioneers would have been hampered by such uniformity.
- 5 Mission should drive policy, not vice versa. As policies become outdated or problematic for the advancement of the gospel, we revise or abolish them, and/or create new ones.

So if we already differ in policy practice, what keeps us united? Mission. Theology. Doctrine. Commitment. Our allegiance to Christ and the Great Commission to share His love, grace and soon return unites us in a bond that cannot be easily broken. And our shared desire for revival and reformation, coupled with the moving of the Holy Spirit, compel us to act. How can we do otherwise?

Dave Weigley (dweigley@columbiunion.net) is president of the Columbia Union Conference.



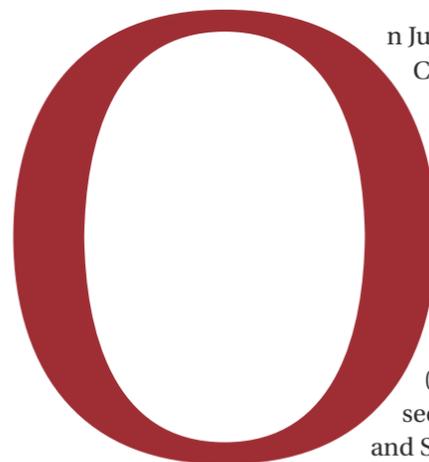
Columbia Union Officers Weigh the Issues

Union Executive Committee Calls Special Constituency

At its May 17 meeting, the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee received a report from an ad hoc committee assigned to study how to affirm women in ministry (see highlights printed in the June 2012 *Visitor*; or the full report at columbiaunion.org/2012specialconstituency). After discussing the report, the committee voted 34-6-1:

- 1** To recognize its responsibility to act morally and ethically by expressing unyielding commitment to ordain qualified persons to the gospel ministry without regard to gender, and
- 2** To call a special constituency meeting for the purpose of authorizing ordination to the gospel ministry without regard to gender, and
- 3** To set the meeting date for July 29, 2012, at 10 a.m.

WHY WE'RE ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S ORDINATION



On July 29 the Columbia Union Conference will convene a special constituency (see statement, left). The announcement drew comments and questions from members within the union territory. In an effort to understand the committee's position, the *Visitor* recently posed some of the most common questions to our officers (above) Rob Vandeman, executive secretary; Dave Weigley, president; and Seth Bardu, treasurer.

Q: Why is the union committee making this recommendation?

A: The matter of women's ordination has been studied and discussed within the Columbia Union for decades, even longer at the world level. Local conferences have frequently presented names of qualified women to our union committee requesting authorization to ordain them. In recent months, there has been significant movement in this matter at various levels of the world field. The convergence of all of these elements at this time seems to be the Holy Spirit's way of nudging us to decisive action. Given the latitude of our constitution and bylaws, we could have moved forward. However, we chose to follow a process, widen the conversation and enlist the support of our constituents.

What process did you follow?

Last year the North American Division (NAD) Committee sought to have commissioned ministers serve as presidents of conferences and missions (a policy known as E60). When it became clear that the world church leadership was not ready to step forward and include women in the church's leadership structure in this way, the North American Division asked each union to look for ways to affirm women in ministry within their territory. We then assigned an ad hoc study committee. In May they reported that while we affirm women in many tangible ways, the best way is to fully acknowledge the call of Christ on their lives, which our church traditionally does through ordination. After discussing the ad hoc report, the executive committee voted to receive it and act on it by calling a special constituency meeting. Delegates to this meeting are the ones who served at our last regular session held in April 2011.

What's motivating this committee?

One could suggest many relevant factors, but for our committee, mission and integrity are key. Mission drives church policy, not vice versa. The job of this committee is to see that we as leaders move the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church forward. The policies we vote are designed to advance that mission in our field. In Joel 2:28-29 and again in Acts 2:17-20, we learn that, in these last days, God is going to pour out His Spirit on

"sons and daughters" who will prophesy in His name. We pray that we won't let policy impede the work of the Holy Spirit nor sideline those He calls.

Integrity is one of the values our committee adopted for the 2011-2016 quinquennium, which means that we do what we say. We say that we don't discriminate for any reason when hiring. But, when qualified, proven ministers who accept God's call complete the same rigorous educational and practical requirements as men, and are carefully vetted and approved by their conference committees according to policy, and we deny them the right to be ordained only because they are female, we violate our integrity—morally and ethically.

And, while we want to move the mission forward morally and ethically, we don't want to do it at the expense of unity, which we also value. But is uniformity in policy and practice the answer? We do not violate the value of unity by the absence of uniformity, because unity speaks to oneness in Christ within our diversity while uniformity implies compliance for the sake of sameness.

“ IT IS THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD THAT PREPARES WORKERS, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, TO BECOME PASTORS TO THE FLOCK OF GOD. ”

GOSPEL WORKERS, PP. 96-97

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO

1 Share your thoughts at columbiaunion.org/2012specialconstituency.

2 Pray for God's guidance at the July 29 special constituency meeting.

3 If you are a delegate, prayerfully vote your convictions.

Excerpts From General Conference Positions on Policy Variance

"At the same time as the Church has worked to preserve unity, the effect of church growth has enlarged the understanding of diversity and its rightful place in a worldwide community. To expect that every entity of the world will look and function exactly like every other entity of its type may in itself become an impediment to mission. The development of structural designs in the history of the Church indicates that unity must be built on a stronger foundation than uniformity."

"There must be room to recognize the need for a legitimacy of local adaptation of policies and procedures that facilitate the mission while not diminishing the worldwide identity, harmony and unity of the Church."

SOURCE: Report 116-12G The General Conference and Its Divisions—A Description of Roles and Relationships in Light of Organizational Structure Development, Current Governance Documents, and Practices, p. 15, presented at GC Spring Council, April 2012. Read the full report at columbiaunion.org/2012specialconstituency.

Q: Is it biblical for women to engage in church leadership?

A: The study committee found strong biblical and Spirit of Prophecy support for women to engage in spiritual leadership, and church scholars have found no theological issue with it.

Some may not realize that ministers who are licensed or commissioned are required to be ordained as local elders before even being considered for further recognition (see *NAD Working Policy* L 26 05). This is evidence that we are already united in our global practice of ordaining both men and women to ministry at every level except one—pastoral.

So, as it stands now, a woman can be ordained as long as it's not as a pastor, and a woman can be a pastor as long as she's not ordained as one. But, to be commissioned as a pastor, she must be ordained as an elder first.

People are also confused about headship because of Ephesians 5:22-25, where Paul talks about the home, the body of Christ and the church. He says that man is the head of the home and Christ is the head of the church. He is suggesting that just as women are subject to their husbands in marriage, we are all subject to Christ as His body of believers.

Some fear that authorization of female ordination could lead to acceptance of same-sex marriage in our denomination. Is that possible?

That's an unfounded leap because these topics are in no way related. The church's stance on marriage is doctrinal (see Fundamental Belief #23), and we, therefore, affirm it.

Others have suggested that this move is rebellious.

Our committee consists of loyal Seventh-day Adventists who respect and are wholly committed to advancing the mission and message of our church. And, if this were theological or even doctrinal, we would continue to deny the requests we receive for female ordination from our conferences. But, this is an ecclesiastical practice of the church that, though very special to ordained ministers, holds no biblical mandate and discriminates against our mothers, sisters and daughters.

The General Conference (GC) strongly discourages policy variances, but recognizes that "the distribution of authority and responsibility in the Church along with the recognition that 'authority rests in the membership' present significant challenges in finding a balance between centralized authority and the more localized authority in churches, conferences, or unions." They also realize that there are "several, perhaps many, instances where organizations have adapted General Conference and/or division working policy in a manner that reveals considerable diversity of application." Their report concludes that "the relationship among entities of the Church is more than a matter of law and policy," and that the "primary strength of the Church comes not from its structure but from its collective desire to live out a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

What are the implications for the church overall?

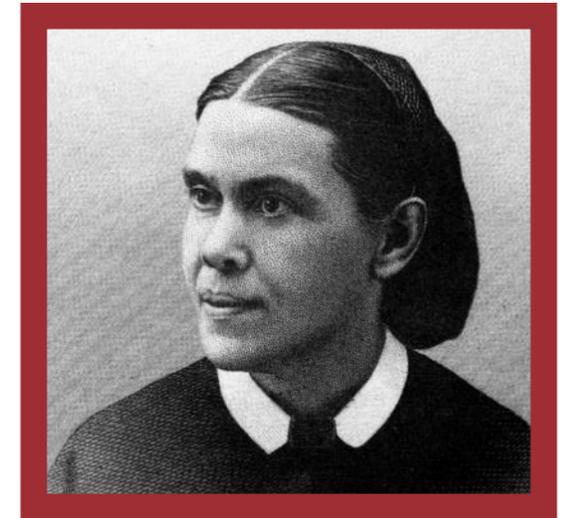
We see this discussion as a teaching moment for the church; a moment we pray will open hearts, minds and doors so that the Holy Spirit can work among God's people.

We are aware of the risk of unintended consequences. That is one of the reasons our committee is taking the recommendation to a special meeting of our constituency. Were the tables turned, we would expect the same process to be followed at the local conference level.

We are part of a worldwide family of believers. What one part of the body does affects the entire body. But this is a matter of practice not doctrinal belief. We are united with the world church in doctrine, mission and spirit. We are working for the return of Christ as much as any other entity around this globe. And, we sincerely want to move the mission of the church forward so more and more people might hear the gospel message and be prepared for His return.

Church leaders are launching a study on the theology of ordination. Why not wait for their report?

Adventists have been discussing and studying women's ordination for 130 years—almost as long as our existence (see timeline, pp. 18-20). Our inability as a world church to act on the outcome of these studies is largely because the primary concerns are cultural, not theological. So, regardless of what this



“ WHEN A GREAT AND DECISIVE WORK IS TO BE DONE, GOD CHOOSES MEN AND WOMEN TO DO THIS WORK, AND IT WILL FEEL THE LOSS IF THE TALENTS OF BOTH ARE NOT COMBINED. ”

ELLEN WHITE, EVANGELISM, P. 469

new study will yield, can we expect a different outcome? Though the GC authorized ordination of women elders and deaconesses, there are parts of the world where leaders have concluded that it is not in the best interest of the church in their field. We anticipate the same variance of practice in regard to ordination of women clergy. Our action will help advance the church's mission in our field. Mission compels us to do it; integrity compels us to do it now!

ORDINATION UNDERSTANDING

What is ordination, why do we ordain leaders and what does it take to achieve this special credential?

Ordination is the act by which the church sets apart an individual for a special function in the church by prayer and the laying on of hands. It follows biblical examples noted in the Old and New Testament, i.e., “And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before . . . all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight” (Num. 27:18-19). See also Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6; and Titus 1:5.

Though not biblically or doctrinally mandated, ordination is ecclesiastical, which means it’s an adopted spiritual practice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As of the 2010 General Conference Session, three categories of church leaders are ordained—ministers, elders, deacons/ deaconesses.

The Process

In North America, pastoral ordination candidates are expected to earn a Master of Divinity from the Seventh-day Theological Seminary at Andrews University (Mich.) or an accredited school, become an ordained local elder and pastor for several years.

Generally, after five or more years of experience, a conference-level committee reviews the candidate’s accomplishments, looking for evidence of God’s leading in their ministry. They carefully examine the candidate’s personal religious experience, knowledge of Scripture, acquaintance with and full acceptance of the fundamental teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and attitude toward denominational organization. The committee then votes to recommend his name to the conference executive committee, which then votes to recommend him to the union executive committee. Approved names are then voted by the union executive committee, which is the body that ultimately decides ordination of all pastors. The decision is then communicated to the division committee, and the individuals are recognized during a special ceremony in their local conference.

Upon receiving their ministerial credentials, they can serve in ministry positions around the world as assigned or invited and at every level of the church organization. The ordained minister performs many functions, among which are to preach, baptize, conduct the Lord’s Supper, perform

“ THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (SEE ROM. 12:4-8, ETC.) TEACHES THAT GOD GIVES GIFTS FOR SERVICE TO ALL WITHOUT RESPECT TO RACE OR GENDER. INCLUDED AMONG THOSE GIFTS ARE THOSE OF EVANGELIST, PROPHET, TEACHER AND PASTOR . ”

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ENCYCLOPEDIA

READ MORE Find links to documents noted in this issue and additional resources at columbiaunion.org/2012specialconstituency.

the marriage ceremony, organize churches, unite churches, and ordain local elders, deacons and deaconesses. They also can serve as presidents at all levels of the denomination.

Women’s Ordination

The Seventh-day Adventist Church ordains women as elders and deaconesses (voted in 1975, 1985 and 2010) and places them as pastors (voted in 1990), but withholds the ecclesiastical recognition of being an ordained pastor. This is despite the fact that the Adventist Church was co-founded by Ellen G. White, a woman who received visions from the Lord and used them to help establish and steer the development and mission of the church. Today’s worldwide ministry is a testament to what can happen when anyone and everyone accepts the call of God to do His bidding. Mrs. White was not the first person God enlisted to receive His prophetic instruction, but at age 17, she was the one who accepted His call.

“If you would give me all the gold your house could hold, I would not cease giving my testimony for God,” she once wrote. “I will not keep silent, for when God imparts His light to me, He means that I shall diffuse it to others, according to my ability” (*Signs of the Times*, June 24, 1889).

Since then women have contributed much to the growth and success of the remnant church, laboring alongside men to advance the cause of Christ and finish the work, organizing and preaching evangelism initiatives, and serving in key leadership positions. Though an 1881 resolution seemed to indicate approval of pastoral ordination for women (as reported in the *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1881), subsequent votes in 1990 and 1995 denied related requests. Today’s women clergy are “commissioned,” which allows them to perform many, but not all leadership functions within the denomination (see graphic).

Sources: Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, *Review and Herald Publishing Association*, 1996; NAD Working Policy, 2011-2012, L-35

WEIGHING THE ISSUES ORDINATION VS. COMMISSIONING

Ordained Clergy	Commissioned Clergy
Preach	Preach
Baptize	Baptize
Perform Marriages	Perform Marriages
Lead Communion	Lead Communion
Organize or Unite Churches	X
Ordain local elders, deacons and deaconesses	X
Serve as president of local conferences, unions, division and the General Conference	X



ILLUSTRATION BY NATA METLUKH

11 PIONEERING WOMEN MINISTERS

From day one, women have been serving as ministers and evangelists in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

■ In 1844 at age 17, **Ellen G. Harmon (White)** received her first vision and commenced a 70-year public ministry. As co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and author of more than 100 titles, she remains the most translated woman author worldwide and the most translated author in American history (photo, p. 2).

■ Pennsylvania native **Sarah A. Hallock Lindsey** served as an evangelist in her home state and in western New York with her husband, John. In the early 1870s, she became the first Adventist woman to be licensed as a minister (not pictured).

■ In the 1880s, **Ellen S. Edmonds Lane** and her husband, Elbert, were co-evangelists in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia and Tennessee. [1]

■ **Lorena Florence Plummer** was elected executive secretary of the Iowa Conference in 1897. For a time in 1900, she was acting conference president. From 1913 to 1936, she led the General Conference Sabbath School Department. [2]

■ **Minnie Day Sype** was a licensed Adventist minister from 1902 to 1956. As an evangelist, she planted churches in Oklahoma and Iowa, at times performing marriages and baptisms. [3]

■ **Maybelle Vandermark** was the first woman to graduate from Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University [WAU] in Takoma Park, Md.) with a ministerial degree. From 1933 to 1935, she served as the sole pastor for a district of churches in Virginia. She later taught Bible at Washington Missionary College from 1940 to 1952. [4]



■ **Madelynn Jones** graduated with a degree in theology from Columbia Union College (now WAU) in 1948. The following year, she graduated from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (then in Takoma Park, Md.) with a master's in theology and biblical theology, a first for women. [5]

■ In 1972 **Josephine Benton** became the first woman ordained as a local church elder. The ceremony, officiated by Potomac Conference president W.G. Quigley and Columbia Union Conference president Cree Sandefur, took place at the Brotherhood church in Washington, D.C. From 1979 to 1982, she pastored the Rockville (Md.) church. [6]

■ In 1989 the Ohio Conference Executive Committee endorsed its Worthington pastor, **Leslie Bumgardner**, as a candidate for ordination. A week later, the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee endorsed her as their first candidate for full ordination no earlier than August 1990 on the basis that it is "morally right and theologically correct." [7]

■ When **Hyveth Williams** was invited to shepherd the Boston Temple in 1989, she became the first female senior pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. During her seven-year tenure, attendance grew from 27 to 350. [8]

Sources: multiple websites, documents, biographies and Josephine Benton's book, *Called by God*. To review the book, visit columbiaunion.org/2012specialconstituency.

BY THE NUMBERS

20 Number of women clergy and chaplains in the Columbia Union

122 Number of women pastors in North America

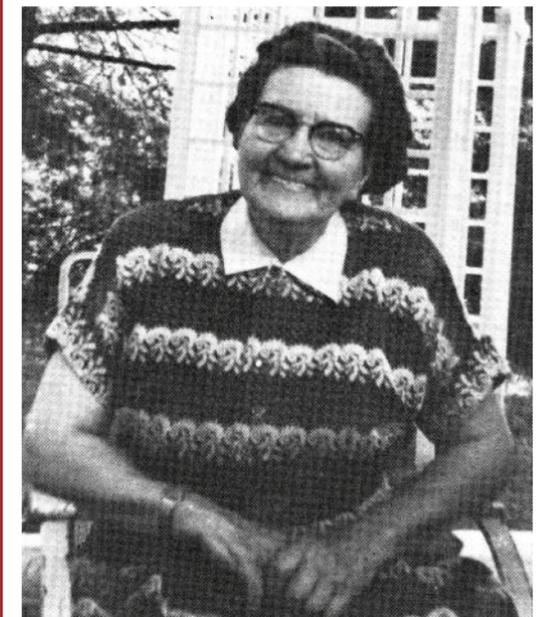
130 Number of women enrolled in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University (Mich.)

Jessie Weiss Curtis

Something unusual was taking place in the country near the town of Drums, Pa., during the summer of 1927. A large tent had been pitched in a field, and what was going on in the tent was attracting a lot of attention. A newspaper reporter counted 110 automobiles parked in the fields around the tent one evening, and ascertained that people were flocking in from a radius of 20 miles. In an article titled, "Kingston Girl Holding Services Near Drums," the reporter explained the attraction that was drawing the owners of these many automobiles: "Stirred with the desire to give the gospel to the people, Miss Weiss secured a tent, and with the aid of two men pitched it on the C. A. Straw farm and people are flocking to the hundreds to hear her."

Night after night the crowds arrived in time to participate in the old-time congregational song service, and stayed until the sermon was finished. "With the skill of a clergyman of long years experience," the article stated, "Miss Weiss declares that she will teach no doctrine but what she can substantiate from the Word of God. Her repertoire of subjects reaches out over a wide range."

At the conclusion of her first evangelistic series, [she] presented 80 converts ready for baptism. The Drums, Pa., Seventh-day Adventist Church was born.—*Josephine Benton in Called by God writing about the evangelist and licensed minister (1945-1972) who helped establish several churches in Pennsylvania (available at adventsource.org)*



TIMELINE

THE ROAD TO ORDINATION

Adventists have discussed and studied women's ordination for 130 years

1880s: A number of women served as pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Between 1872 and 1945, at least 16 women carried ministerial licenses.

1895: In a July 9 *Review and Herald* article, Ellen White wrote that some women should be set apart for service in the church by "prayer and laying on of hands."



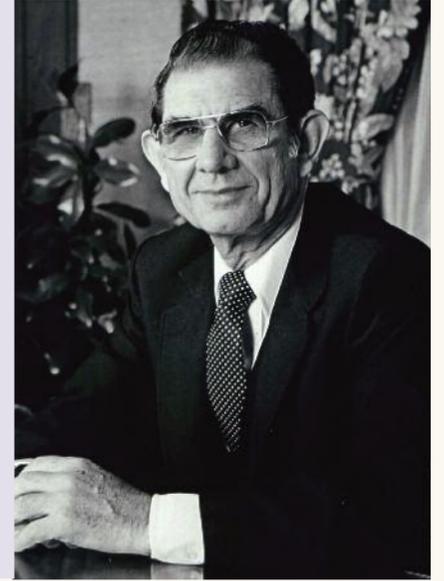
1970: On June 5, GC officers discussed the role of women and agreed to appoint "an adequate committee to consider this large topic . . . and to submit a report for consideration at the 1970 Autumn Council" (Minutes, GC Officers Meeting, June 5, 1970).

1973: In October the Annual Council voted to accept the Mohaven Committee's report, that "continued study be given to the theological soundness of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination" and "that in areas receptive to such action, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral evangelistic work."

1974: A year later at Annual Council, attendees voted to continue studying the theological issues, saying, "The time is not ripe nor opportune" to ordain women to the gospel ministry.

1977: General Conference president Robert H. Pierson alerted Spring Meeting attendees that the role of women was under continuing study and a report would be given at the 1977 Annual Council. However, after a poll of the world field yielded negative response, it was deleted from the agenda.

1980: As the fifth priority in his keynote address at GC Session, new GC president Neal C. Wilson stated, "The church must find ways to organize and utilize the vast potential represented by our talented, consecrated women. I am not only urging that women be represented in the administrative structure of the church, but also that we harness the energies and talents of all the women so as to better accomplish the task of finishing the work assigned by our Lord."



1850

1900

1950

1970

1975

1980

1881: At the General Conference (GC) Session on December 5, a motion was made to ordain women to gospel ministry. "Resolved, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry." It was reported in the *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1881, but the item was referred to the GC Committee.

1950: On May 3, GC officers discussed ordination. "A.V. Olson explained . . . A statement from the pen of Sister White, as found in the *Review and Herald* of July 9, 1895, has been understood by some to provide for the ordination of certain sisters in church service. After some discussion, it was 'Agreed, To recommend to the General Conference Committee following the session that a small committee be appointed to study and report on this question'" (Minutes, GC Officers Meeting, May 3, 1950).

1973: Requests from two overseas divisions for further study, the rediscovery of Ellen White's 1895 quotes on ordaining women, and the employment of several women as pastors at Adventist churches led the church to establish two study committees. In July the GC Committee established an ad hoc committee to study the role of women in the church and ordination. In September the Council on the Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church met. Known as the "Mohaven Committee" because they convened at Ohio Conference's Camp Mohaven in Danville, the group consisted of 13 men and 14 women who published 29 "Mohaven Papers" and recommended that women be ordained as local church elders and that those with theological training be employed as associates in pastoral care. The group also proposed that a pilot program be developed to lead to ordination by 1975.

1975: At March's Spring Meeting, leaders recommended that the church stop granting women ministerial licenses (after 100 years) and instead grant missionary licenses. They also encouraged women to become Bible workers and assistant pastors and voted to permit ordination of deaconesses (reaffirmed in 1985 and 2010) and women elders (reaffirmed in 1984) with discretion.

1979: Annual Council voted 10 ministerial internships for women pastors and Bible instructors in North America.

In September 1973, the Council on the Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church met at Ohio Conference's Camp Mohaven in Danville.



1984: Early in the year, three Potomac Conference women pastors, ordained as elders, held baptisms with the approval of the Columbia Union Conference. This swiftly brought ordination to the forefront again, and GC officers urged conference and union leaders to table further plans until they could convene a **worldwide Biblical Research Institute study commission** with representation from each division. Although a 1979 action allowed non-ordained men to baptize, the 1984 Annual Council defeated the Potomac and Columbia Union request to allow women to baptize candidates in their own local churches with conference authorization. They did, however, reaffirm a 1975 decision to approve women elders to be ordained. *In action 272-84GN (also noted in the GC Working Policy as BA 60 10) they voted "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."**

1985: After weighing a proposal to ordain women pastors to the gospel ministry, GC delegates in New Orleans voted instead to **study it further**, reform ordination practices for men and provide “affirmative action” by placing qualified women in leadership roles that do not require ordination.

1989: GC Annual Council delegates voted 187-97 in favor of accepting a two-pronged recommendation from the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church—rejecting women’s ordination, but permitting qualified women to baptize and perform marriages.

1995: Delegates to the GC Session in Utrecht, Netherlands, voted 1,481 to 673 to deny an NAD request to allow divisions to individually decide whether women should be ordained to the gospel ministry.

**These actions are examples of times when the world church authorized each division to decide whether or not to ordain women elders, and whether or not to allow women to baptize or perform marriages in their field.*

1985

1990

2000

1988: At a May meeting, NAD leaders called for an end to discriminatory policies affecting Adventist women in ministry. During the meeting in Loma Linda, Calif., they voted unanimously their objection to the current discrepancies in how the church treats men and women who have the same training and qualifications. Soon after, the Potomac Conference voted to cease discriminating against women in ministry and permit them, along with unordained males, to baptize and perform marriages in the local church.

1990: At GC Session in Indianapolis, delegates voted 1,173 to 377 to accept the 1989 commission and Annual Council’s recommendations that women not be ordained at this time. At Annual Council that October, they voted to authorize women to serve as pastors and authorized them to perform baptisms and marriages in some divisions.*



2010: At the GC Session in Atlanta, delegates reaffirmed their 1985 decision to allow ordination of deaconesses. World leaders also agreed to **study a theology of ordination** scheduled to be completed by the 2014 Annual Council.

Sources: “Ordaining Women to the Gospel Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” compiled by North American Division Communication; “An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women” by Kit Watts (updated April 1995); and “Women in Recent Adventist History” by Bert Halowiak, *Adventist Review*, May 1995, pp. 21-23

“ Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed ... Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work. Place the burden upon men and women of the church, that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness. ”

*“The Duty of the Minister and the People,” *Review and Herald*, July 9, 1895, p. 25*