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2 **GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**
3 **EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION**

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5 **East-Central Africa Division (ECD) Biblical Research Committee (BRC)**

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7 **Report Summary Presented to the Delegates of:**

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9 **ECD Year-End Executive Committee (EXCOM) Meetings on**

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11 **November 5-7, 2013**
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14 Following formal introductions and protocol observances, the Chair and the
15 Secretary of the ECD BRC read the report to the delegates of what the Committee had been
16 studying, the findings of the study, and the preliminary conclusions with recommendations
17 on whether women may be ordained as pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

18 Delegates were affirmed for being tasked with the responsibility of making
19 decisions which facilitate the advancement of the redemptive mission of our God within
20 ECD which is growing by leaps and bounds, numerically, (at the average of about 600
21 baptisms daily), and structurally, (suddenly two Union Conferences from Kenya Union
22 Mission; two Unions—one Conference and another a Mission; two Union Missions ,
23 Burundi and North-East Congo from formally attached territories, not to mention new
24 Conferences which have already been organized). There is, indeed, a lot that is happening
25 in ECD which reveals that the mission-driven Church in ECD is overwhelmed by what the
26 Lord of harvest is doing. Much of the work of winning people to Christ and nurturing them,
27 delegates were reminded, is done by lay people, and not paid workers. It is, therefore,
28 understandable if most people in ECD are not fully aware of how the issue ordination of
29 women is a priority of the global Seventh-day Adventist Church this time. However, the

1 interest and concern about the issue of ordination of women is rising. ECD BRC members,
2 therefore, take seriously the study leading to global Church's decision whether women may
3 be ordained as pastors or not, knowing that what affects the Church any where on the globe
4 impacts the Church globally and every where. Procedures for presenting the report to the
5 delegates was as follows:

- 6 1. Committee examines reports (in the form of scholarly papers) from
7 scholars and professionals drawn from different disciplines or emphases
8 like studies from the Old Testament, New Testament,
9 Historical/Systematic Theology, Church Ministry and Mission and
10 Writings of Ellen G. White. All is done with a view to finding out whether
11 there is light from Scripture that may give the Church a clue as to
12 whether women ordination is biblical.
- 13 2. Committee also examine scholarly papers written by other professionals
14 outside ECD and decide whether the findings have implications on what
15 the Bible says so that the Church may be helped to make Scripturally
16 informed decision concerning the issue of women ordination.
- 17 3. The Committee highlighted sticking points which included: a. Biblical
18 Silence (in Old Testament and New Testament) about Ordination of
19 Women, Headship/Leadership Presented in Scripture As a Male Domain
20 e.g. 1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34,35; 1 Tim. 2:12; Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3 seeming to
21 contradict with Gal. 3:28 and the ample indications in the New Testament
22 that the work of advancing the redemptive mission is gender inclusive.
23 The silence of Scripture about whether woman may be set apart by

1 ordination is also significant, and lack of clear prophetic guidance by
2 Ellen White on the issue does not seem to help opponents or proponents
3 of women ordination.

4 4. The Committee has also examined the emerging strand of thinking which
5 is calling for a return to Edenic State before the Fall whereby the man
6 and the woman were “priests” in the “sanctuary” of Eden. All of this may
7 read plausible, but it is not convincing because some of us do not read
8 exegetical soundness in the arguments.

9 5. Delegates were also informed about where the process is right now.
10 They were told that after thorough examination of Scripture, the Writings
11 of Ellen White, and the scholarly papers that are for the ordination of
12 women and those that are against, there is still no light as to whether
13 woman may be ordained as pastors. The BRC at ECD feels that it is safer
14 to adhere to what the plain message of Scripture although some
15 members realize there is a need for further studies, especially of those
16 texts which read like women ordination is not permitted in the Bible.
17 The Committee is almost convinced that there are two possibilities: a.
18 Both sides of the debate on women ordination do not really understand
19 the New Testament passages which read like women ordination should
20 not be considered; b. The whole church has not given much thought as to
21 what women may do uniquely and be affirmed for to advance the
22 redemptive ministry and mission of God. So, before there is complete
23 clarity about the authentic Scriptural intent about the issue, the BRC

1 says: “**not yet**” to the ordination of women. It was also reported to the
2 delegates that BRC’s and TOSC are working systematically to build a
3 consensus. So far the consensus is growing and there is hope that we
4 shall get to some understanding that will glorify the Lord and bless His
5 people. BRC members and TOSC members are praying a lot. They
6 sometimes table the business agenda and pray. It is specially gratifying
7 to see the process clarifying what ordination is and what it means,
8 according to the Bible. Light is dawning!

- 9 6. The main point that ECD BRC recommends is that there be continuation
10 of diligent and prayerful study of selected topics which are connected
11 with ordination, and our Committee has identified some of those topics.
12 Our Committee is convinced that the Church needs to continue to “seek
13 understanding” so that the delegates to GC in St Antonio in 2015 may
14 produce good results by voting intelligently.

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