

# **Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the General Conference Seventh-day Adventist Church**

## Summery of the Biblical Research Committee Report and Recommendations



## Theology of Ordination and the Ordination of Women to the Gospel Ministry

December 23, 2013

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2 **The Study of the Theology of Ordination and Ordination of**  
3 **Women**  
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5 The Northern Asia-Pacific Division's Biblical Research Committee met June 3-5, 2013 at  
6 Hong Kong Adventist College to discuss the theology of ordination. There were eight  
7 papers presented by scholars from across the Division. While our topic was a theology  
8 of ordination, the focus of the papers was specifically on the subject of the ordination of  
9 women to the gospel ministry.  
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- 11 1. *"Laying on of Hands in the New Testament"* by Richard Sabuin of AIIAS  
12 2. *"Women's Ordination in a Perspective of the Old Testament"* by Lee Jong-Keun of SU  
13 3. *"Discussion on the Women's Ordination in the History of Korean Protestant Churches."*  
14 by Kuk Hun Lee of SU  
15 4. *"Pastoral Theological Implications on the Issue of Women's Ordination for the Ministry*  
16 *of the Local Church of the Seventh-day Adventist in Korea"* by B. H. Jang of SU  
17 5. *"Women's Ordination from New Testament Perspectives: Lexical Case Study with a*  
18 *Few Women"* by Hong Pal Ha of SGC  
19 6. *"Apostle Paul on Women's Ordination"* by William Lin of TAC  
20 7. *"Women's Ordination from Chinese Perspective"* by Samuel Chiu of HKAC  
21 8. *"Some Missiological Arguments on the Theology of Ordination"* by Sung-Ik Kim of SU  
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23 At that time we also carefully reviewed the draft version of the theology of ordination  
24 consensus statement. Our NSD BRC voted recommendations to be delivered to the GC  
25 Theology of Ordination Committee. In July 2013 a revised version of the consensus  
26 statement was voted by the GC TOSC committee.  
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28 We, the NSD Biblical Research Committee, are in agreement with this revised document.  
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30 Here is an excerpt that has helped to guide the ordination study for our Biblical  
31 Research Committee here in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.  
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33 "Seventh-day Adventists understand ordination, in a biblical sense, as the  
34 action of the Church in publicly recognizing those whom the Lord has called  
35 and equipped for local and global Church ministry . . . While ordination  
36 contributes to Church order, it neither conveys special qualities to the  
37 persons ordained nor introduces a kingly hierarchy within the faith  
38 community."  
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40 Our NSD Biblical Research Committee also met December 16-17, 2013. We reviewed  
41 and discussed the documents produced for the GC Theology of Ordination Committee  
42 that met in July of 2013. We spent a majority of our time discussing the papers on the

1 Biblical texts that pertain to the topic. This discussion and prayer has formed the basis  
 2 of our conclusions and recommendations that will follow.

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 4 Uniquely in the NSD we have a large percentage of women who are leading churches.  
 5 God has blessed women to grow several of the largest Adventist churches in the world.  
 6 Women in pastoral ministry are leading many of our large and effective churches within  
 7 our Division.

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 9 Here is the estimate of how many women are involved in pastoral ministry in the NSD.  
 10 Please see the number of women in pastoral ministry, the number of churches being  
 11 served by women, and the number of members being served by women pastors.

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Field	Women Pastors	Total Pastors	Churches with Women Pastors	Total Churches & Companies	Members served by Women Pastors	Total Members
Korean Union Conference	12	895	10	899	3,608	235,721
Japan Union Conference	6	81	8	149	1,917	15,242
Mongolian Mission	1	18	1	10	30	1,972
Taiwan Conference	13	78	15	85	440	6,132
Hong Kong Macau Conference	13	42	12	21	547	5,020
China (Unorganized Territory*)	3,176**	5,293	2,740**	4,566	248,592**	414,320
Totals	3,221	6,407	2,782	5,730	252,500	678,407

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Total NSD membership is now 671,158  
 Estimated membership led by women 252,500  
 38% of membership in NSD

\*Within the UT Territory the pastors include a few who have formal theological training from an Adventist school. Many have some training through seminars and certificate programs. A large majority of those who are serving churches in pastoral ministry have not yet had the privilege of formal theological training.

\*\* UT numbers based on estimate that 60% of those serving in pastoral ministry are women.

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## **Conclusions from the NSD BRC on the Subject of Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Ministry**

1. We agree with the General Conference Theology of Ordination Consensus Statement which shares that ordination is the church recognizing the call of God on the life of an individual for ministry as God will direct. We believe the church can recognize whom God has called, but it is God who determines whom He will call.

2. Based upon our studies in the NSD and our review of the GC TOSC documents we believe that while the Bible does not command women to be ordained to the pastoral ministry, it does not prohibit women’s ordination. The Bible supports women in ministry and leadership.

3. Based upon our studies in the NSD and our review of the GC TOSC documents we believe that while Ellen White does not command women to be ordained to the pastoral ministry, she does not prohibit women’s ordination. Ellen White supports women in ministry and leadership.

4. We recognize that the Seventh-day Adventist Church historically has had women in leadership and pastoral ministry from its earliest days. We also recognize that throughout the church’s history and especially in contemporary times the church has encouraged women to be a part of the mission of the church and to be a part of pastoral ministry.

5. We recognize the fruitful contribution of women to pastoral ministry within our Division noting that a significant number of those leading churches within our field are women.

6. Because of our emphasis on “Mission First” in the NSD we believe that this should be one of the determining considerations on who should be called and ordained (recognized by the church as having the call of God) within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

7. We recognize that our emphasis on “Mission First” will take into consideration the culture where we work and that ordaining women to ministry will bring great blessings to many places within the NSD Territories.

1 **Recommendations from the NSD BRC on the Subject of the**  
2 **Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Ministry**

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5 1. We recommend that the World Church place “Mission First” as a priority and that we  
6 focus on sharing the three angels’ messages with the world. This means that we  
7 recommend that both men and women should be encouraged and recognized by the  
8 church through ordination to the pastoral ministry.

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10 2. We recommend a “Mission First” approach to the pastoral ministry that allows each  
11 division to determine if ordination of women will be helpful within its local culture.

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13 3. We recommend that the Adventist Church educate its members about the historical  
14 importance and its impact gender inclusiveness has had on our church development  
15 and growth since its very beginnings.

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17 4. We recommend that the General Conference, divisions, unions, missions, and  
18 conferences develop materials and train our church members about the importance of  
19 gender inclusiveness to the achieving of our mission to our world.

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21 5. Since there is such a diversity of approaches to the study of the Scriptures that have  
22 been revealed in the study of the theology of ordination, we recommend that the world  
23 church develop and educate its scholars, educators, and pastors on a more united  
24 hermeneutical approach to Scriptures.

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26 6. Knowing that Unity and Gospel order are vital for the future mission of the Seventh-  
27 day Adventist Church, we recommend that the General Conference convene a  
28 committee similar to the General Conference Theology of Ordination Committee to  
29 develop and study ways to maintain unity in the church.

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31 7. We propose that at the General Conference Session in 2015 a recommendation be  
32 brought that globally the ordination of women to the pastoral ministry be approved.  
33 We further recommend that the implementation of ordination of women will be  
34 determined by each division taking into consideration its impact on mission and unity  
35 within its territories.