

SOUTHERN ASIA PACIFIC DIVISION
Biblical Research Committee
A Report to the TOSC Meeting
January 21-25, 2014

I. Introduction

Since its establishment in May, 2012, the SSD Biblical Research Committee has met three times:

1. The first meeting was on November 12-13, 2012.
2. The second meeting was on May 9-10, 2013.
3. The third meeting was held on November 12-13, 2013.

II. First Meeting: SSD Headquarters, November 12 – 13, 2012

Eight papers were presented at this meeting. The summary of the papers is available in the full version of this report. After discussing those papers, the committee came up with the following actions:

Reaffirmation of the 1986 Document of the General Conference on the Method of Bible Study

VOTED *To reaffirm* the 1986 Document of the General Conference on the Method of Bible Study
2012 - 01 and to make it as a basis and standard in discussing the theology of ordination

Definition of Ordination

VOTED Definition of ordination should include the following components:
2012 – 02

- Manifested in the laying on of hands being the ultimate action (Acts 6, Titus 1)
- Appointment or setting apart to an office or function, a person recognized by the church based on the biblical qualifications (Matt 10; Mark 3; Acts 13) action of the church
- God choosing or electing (Jeremiah, 1Cor 1:1)
- Holy Spirit moved action (Act 6, 13)
- Prayer as preparation (Jesus, Matt 10)

Thus ordination may be defined as follows:

Ordination is an act of the church guided by the Holy Spirit and the Word, recognizing the call of God for a person for service in the church; a person fitting to the biblical qualifications for church functions; this is an act that preceded by a preparation including sincere prayer; into some particular offices/functions such as deacons, elders, and ministers, signified by a laying on of hands.

On the Theology of Ordination

VOTED Based on the presentations and discussions during the two day meetings, here are the
2012 – 03 consensuses on the theology of ordination:

1. In many aspects the Bible speaks about equality of men and women. God appointed them for doing special tasks for Him
2. God is the one who calls men and women for certain functions.
3. Ordination and church order in Adventist Church is established based on the NT models not on the practices of other churches in the history.
4. A return to the church order of the New Testament is vital to the role of the Adventists as the remnant and that establishing this order is an integral part of the third angel's message.

5. Since the disciples and bishops of the New Testament are ordained for the whole life of their ministry and mission, so do the ministers and church leader of present time. Once they are ordained, their ordination is for the whole life of ministry and this ministerial ordination is the world church ordination. Since the SDA Church is universal church, then the ordination of minister of church leaders is recognized as the world church ordination
6. In the New Testament, the laying on of hands has been used in different occasion, but the most important one is for the appointment of elders and deacons
7. At the baptism, we are all ordained to be serving in the church. If we are appointed to be deacon or elder, an ordination is required
8. Ellen G. White speaks about ordination of deacons/deaconesses, elders, ministers
9. Ellen G. White speaks about the wife of ministers to be paid if they work for the gospel
10. Justice to pay wives that works to assist their husband in the ministry
11. Gender equality, not biblical reason, has been the main reason for other denominations in adopting the practice of women ordination into gospel ministry
12. There is no appointment of women elders mentioned in the NT
13. There are biblical models that can help us in case where church practices need to be changed or to be maintained

II. Second Meeting: SSD Headquarters, May 9-10, 2013

The second meeting did not come up with a consensus in regard to the ordination of women, neither in favor nor against it. Eight papers were presented and discussed. Generally, there are four basic areas looked at and discussed in relation to the ordination of women:

1. Gender equality
2. Priesthood of All Believers
3. Prominent Women in the New Testament
4. Ellen White's Writings

III. Third Meeting: SSD Headquarters November 12 – 13, 2013

During this two-full-day meeting, 10 papers on women ordination were reviewed. These are the papers presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee meeting in July, 2013:

Papers IN FAVOR of women's ordination:

1. "Back to Creation" by Jiri Moskala
2. "Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors" by Richard Davidson
3. "Paul, Woman, and the Ephesian Church" by Carl Cosaert
4. "Shall the Church Ordain Women as Pastors" by Teresa Reeves
5. "Ellen White, Women in Ministry and the Ordination of Women" by Denis Fortin

Papers NOT IN FAVOR of women's ordination:

1. "Adam, Where Are You?" by Ingo Sorke
2. "Ellen White, Ordination, and Authority" by Jerry Moon
3. "Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians" by Edwin Reynolds
4. "Man and Woman in Genesis One to Three" by Paul Ratzara and Daniel Bediako
5. "Women of the Old Testament" by Laurel Damsteegt

After adequate time spent for discussion, the committee took votes by secret ballots in connection to five areas of arguments: 1) Gender relation; 2) Priesthood of all believers; 3) Women and ministry in

the Old Testament; 4) Women and ministry in the New Testament; and 5) The Life, Ministry, and Writings of Ellen G. White. The two GC BRI representatives were abstained from all votes. Every individual vote was made after prayers had been offered, individually and by groups. Each member of the committee gave his/her vote of YES or NO in response to the questions related to the points of arguments, and reasons for their votes.

1. Gender Relationship

VOTED 2013-003 To record the following vote result to the question: *Does the Biblical concept of Gender Relations support Women's Ordination?*
 YES 5
 NO 9
 ABSTAIN 0

2. Priesthood of All Believers

VOTED 2013-004 To record the following vote result to the question: *Does the Biblical concept of the Priesthood of All Believers support Women's Ordination?*
 YES 5
 NO 9
 ABSTAIN 0

3. Women and Ministry in the Old Testament

VOTED 2013-005 To record the following vote result to the question: *Does the Biblical record of Influential Women in the Old Testament support Women's Ordination?*
 YES 3
 NO 11
 ABSTAIN 0

4. Women and Ministry in the New Testament

VOTED 2013-006 To record the following vote result to the question: *Does the role of Women in the New Testament support Women's Ordination into the Gospel Ministry?*
 YES 5
 NO 10
 ABSTAIN 0

4. Questions related to Ellen G. White

VOTED 2013-007 To include the following two questions Ellen G. White regarding her position

5. Ellen White and Women Ordination (positive question)

VOTED 2013-008 To record the following vote result to the question: *Do the statements and the life and ministry of Ellen G. White support the ordination of women to the Gospel Ministry?*
 YES 5
 NO 7
 ABSTAIN 1

6. Ellen White and Women Ordination (negative question)

VOTED 2013-009 To record the following vote result to the question: *Is Ellen G. White opposed to the ordination of women to the Gospel Ministry?*
 YES 2
 NO 8
 ABSTAIN 2
 Question is too vague 1

7. Two General Questions

VOTED 2013-010 To ask these two general questions in relation to women ordination, based on the Scriptures and consideration of the local context of SSD

8. Women Ordination Based on the Scriptures

VOTED 2013-011 To record the following vote result to the question: *Are you in favor of the ordination of women to the Gospel Ministry based on the study of Scripture, (Gender relationship / OT / NT / Priesthood of All Believers / the life, ministry and writings of Ellen G. White)?*

YES 4
NO 9

9. Women Ordination Based on the Scriptures and Local Context

VOTED 2013-012 To record the following vote result to the question: *Based on the study of Scripture, considering the local context of the SSD are you in favor of the ordination of women to the Gospel Ministry?*

YES 3
NO 10

10. Recommendations

NOTED Whereas the SSD BRC came up with a majority vote not to ordain women for the Gospel Ministry, the SSD BRC makes the following recommendations:

VOTED 2013-013 **Recommendation to the SSD**

- 1. That the SSD will follow the voice of the Spirit and the world church upon its voted decision in July 2015 at the GC Session
- 2. To present the different viewpoints and issues of Women’s Ordination to the SSD Union levels

Recommendations to the World Church, through the GC TOSC

- 1. To appeal to our sister divisions to patiently follow the process outlined in Acts 15 and to wait for what “the Church & the Spirit says” during the July 2015 GC Session.
- 2. To recommend to TOSC to review its current consensus statement in line 25-27, “those whom the Lord has called and equipped for **local** and **global** Church ministry”

Questions for TOSC Committee

- 1. Whereas some women have been ordained to become the ministers of the gospel in some unions; whereas in the SDA Church ordination into gospel ministry should be globally recognized, a question arises: *What is the Biblical basis for ordination for “global” ministry?* This question is related to the fact that the SDA Church is a global church.
- 2. To explore the Early Adventist practice of ordaining “Medical Missionary/Physicians” to the Gospel Ministry.

Closing Prayer: Dr. Reuel Almocera

Richard A. Sabuin, Chairman

Doug Venn, Secretary