

Another Church Joins the Rebellion— La Sierra University Church Ordains Women Ministers

Part One of Three

On Friday, July 7, only two days after women's ordination was voted down at Utrecht, the La Sierra University (LSU) Church board met. It voted to convene a church business meeting as soon as possible, and recommend that the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) Executive Committee be asked to approve, by November 1, the ordination of women to the ministry.

On Monday, July 10, Dan Smith, senior pastor of the LSU Church mailed out a two-page letter, calling for a special church business meeting to be held on the sacred hours of the next Sabbath afternoon (July 15) at 2 p.m.—so the entire membership of the church could fill the rest of the afternoon hashing out the politics of the matter.

At that Sabbath meeting, there was extensive discussion and argument about the matter. It was finally voted to request the conference office to approve women's ordination by November 1.

It was now clear that La Sierra was determined to railroad the entire conference leadership into joining in their rebellion.

On Sunday morning, August 6, the SECC Executive Committee met. Should they take responsibility for joining in the rebellion by a Yes vote? Or should they affirm their support of the July 5th rejection of women's ordination at Utrecht?

They did neither. If the committee members voted Yes, they would be in trouble with Silver Spring.

If they voted No, they would be in trouble with influential liberals throughout the conference.

So they washed their hands of the matter, by moving that the conference constituency make that decision at its next regular meeting.

Next, it was neatly decided that the SECC could not financially afford the cost of holding any special constituency meetings, but would have to wait until

the next regular one—which would not convene until 1996.

But, by this time, the liberals were becoming more angry. So, on November 11, a LSU Church constituency meeting was held. You guessed it: another full Sabbath afternoon meeting to wrangle over how best to facilitate the rebellion.

The Sabbath does not matter much at La Sierra. Those are the folk whose youth leader, about four years ago, openly bragged in the *Pacific Union Recorder* that they had become so religious there that they led their students out in work bands on Sabbath afternoons, to clean the streets of Riverside and paint old folks' homes.

Three hundred church members were present at that meeting. The question was whether La Sierra should bravely push forward and defy the General Conference and the entire world church—and ordain their women pastors. After some heavy discussion, 270 voted in favor of doing it. There was cheering when the vote was announced; it had the appearance of a Democratic Convention. —But nothing, compared with what would follow on December 2.

We have received several reports of what occurred at that December 2 gathering, along with a number of newspaper clips.

Here is a description of the La Sierra women's ordination service:

The liberals had gone overboard in their efforts to show their disregard for church rules.

Cards had been mailed in advance to thousands in the western states, and many were sent to the eastern states as well. Several different mailing lists were used, so some individuals received more than

one card.

Each card, printed on light violet paper, was intended to notify Adventism of the rebellion as widely as possible.

“Women’s Ordination: Let ten thousand flowers bloom! Demonstrate your support for the ordination of women to SDA Gospel ministry.”

Ostensibly mailed from the “La Sierra University School of Religion,” the cards requested donations to be used to train women for the Adventist ministry.

It is of interest that nowhere, on either side of the announcement card (*see reprint of both sides on the next page*), was any direct mention made that an ordination was to occur, but the inference was obvious. The wording had been carefully thought out.

Sabbath afternoon, December 2, was the day to celebrate the open rebellion. The pastor and a large preparation committee had a special treat waiting for the members when they arrived that afternoon. The amount of work which had gone into the preparations was fabulous. The church auditorium was decorated as if for a princess’ wedding!

Adventist members and church leaders from a wide area were in attendance. But, oddly enough, the SECC president (Lynn Mallery) and the Pacific Union Conference president (Thomas Mostert) were not in attendance.

The people hardly noticed the protesting picketers outside, carrying placards,—for their ears were already buffeted by sound waves from within.

This Sabbath gathering was something to rival

the best efforts of Dan Simpson’s Celebration Center.

The loud band playing inside could be heard some distance down the street. One of the persons who attended (and one of those who provided us with this account) said it sounded like thunder as she entered the foyer.

There were no specials (solos, etc.); the band alone (sometimes joined by the congregation) was enough to fill the air with piercing sound before and during the program.

The entire entrance and auditorium was elaborately decorated. One would have thought that the Queen of England was slated to be invested with royal dignities. We are told that these were very expensive decorations. “The cost must have been enormous; it was an extravaganza. Words can hardly describe it.”

Row after row had been reserved for church officials; so they could see clearly, for themselves, the extent of the rebellion. Up front was a large Christmas tree, with blinking lights.

As the audience sat, entranced with the fanfare, the decorations on the walls, the furnishings, and the building excitement, the gathering, which would last two hours, had begun.

Girls began coming down the aisles with lighted candles. Different ones came down the central aisle, carrying baskets of flowers. Then seven people came down that aisle, carrying banners which were afterward displayed on the stage. The printed program described these as “liturgical banners,” whatever that means. They had the appearance of the regular ban-

The eight-page ordination program began with the prelude, “Come, Holy Spirit, Come,” to introduce a gathering in rebellion against the Utrecht decision.

This was followed by a welcome by Dan Smith, senior pastor of the LSU Church.

Then came the processional of flower girls, ministers, ordinands [the two women being ordained], and banners down the central aisle.

After an opening hymn (“O Come, All Ye Faithful”), the head elder of the church prayed. Then it was time for the litany.

This was a lengthy reading, during which seven candles were lighted on the rostrum, in front of the gorgeously arrayed banners.

One stanza of the litany poked fun at aspects of our 1884 experience:

“In the beginning, the Spirit of God descended on New England. And the faithful issued an [gen-

der inclusive] inclusive call: “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.” And they encountered great disappointments, and mathematical formulas, and heavenly sanctuaries, and shut doors, and remnant definitions. And gifts enumerated by the prophet, Joel, were bestowed on women and men who vowed to take the good news to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. —And it was good.”

The scripture reading was Mary’s prayer, as given in Luke (the Magnificat).

Shortly after this was the presentation of the two women by four workers, one of which was the LSU president, Lawrence Geraty.

In response to the charge by Geraty, Wilson and Jones-Haldeman replied.

The benediction was given by Fritz Guy.

Looking through the program, we find that it was conducted by twelve women and eight men.

ners you would see in a Catholic procession.

Then all the ministers and the two women pastors entered.

The back page, of the eight-page ordination program, lists sixty-two Adventist “ministers” who “supported” the ordination of the women, even though it was in rebellion to the decision of the church at Utrecht. Do not underestimate the strength of the liberal element. The revolt against church authority is becoming quite widespread. (*Reprint on page 9.*)

Two women were to be ordained to the Adventist ministry that day: Halcyon Westphal Wilson and Madelynn Jones-Haldeman. Both spoke.

Dan Smith, senior pastor of the LSU Church, in his comments ridiculed those who opposed women’s ordination.

There was clapping, shouting, whistling—at the hearing of any phrase friendly to the rebellion. At times, standing ovations were made.

Girls carrying baskets of flowers went throughout the building and into the galleries, handing a flower to each person present. The audience was told in advance that they were to give money, at least a dollar, for each flower. The money, they were told, would be used to train a multitude of women pastors who would fill the rostrums of the church everywhere.

I have here a copy of the sign-up sheet they handed out. Different than the orchid-colored card mailed out earlier, this sheet said:

“SDA Women in Ministry Scholarship Endowment Fund . . . ‘Marshal all of the gifts in your church . . .’—A.C. McClure. With this ringing call to the North American Division, President McClure, on August 3, 1995, urged us all to ‘affirm the women in our division whom God has called to ministry’ . . . Help La Sierra University prepare Adventist women for ministry.” [emphasis theirs]

It is of remarkable interest that the insignia on the front of the above sheet showed a white dove alighting on a biting serpent (*see reprint on page 8 of this study*).

For the ordination ceremony, as at Sligo Church a month and a half earlier, hands were placed on the women and a ministerial ordination was prayed for them.

Oddly enough, no one asked God to forgive them for defying Scripture.

So many wanted to have a part in ordaining the two women, that a sizeable number of people held hands throughout the church, and those nearest the women placed their hands on their head.

After the ceremony, a very elaborate (and very merry) reception ceremony was held nearby, at the

Pathfinder Pavilion.

The rift in the church greatly deepened because of this action. We are told that, prior to the ceremony, death threats were received by some of those who led out in the ceremony. This reveals the depth of the feelings. It has been suggested that this may be why Mallery and Mostert did not attend.

Church officials may fear fanatics, but they need have no fear of top level leaders. Nearly half a month before the ordination service, Monte Sahlin of the General Conference, told a reporter for a Riverside newspaper that our leading brethren intended to be as quiet as a tomb. (Riverside is the nearest city to the campus of La Sierra.)

That surely encouraged the rebels!

“When the La Sierra University Seventh-day Adventist Church ordains two women . . . as ministers Dec. 2, it will be met by silence. The kind of silence a national church spokesman said speaks volumes . . . ‘At this point we are not going to have any response,’ Sahlin said.”—*“Adventist Women’s Ordination a Quiet Victory,” Riverside Press-Enterprise, November 18, 1995.*

Fifteen days before the ordination, the Riverside paper proclaimed the coming event a “quiet victory.”

That article was not only circulated in southern California, but was wired to newspapers in other areas.

In the Chico, California *Enterprise-Record* (of November 25), for example, the article appeared alongside an article entitled, “*Vatican reaffirms ‘irrevocable’ ban on women in priesthood.*” It told of instances in which local churches wanted to ordain women, but, because the pope said No, they did not do so. The contrast between the two articles was unmistakable: The Catholics are for the Bible, and the Adventists are not. (More correctly, we would say: The Catholics obey the pope better than the Adventists obey God’s Word.) Chico is way up in northern California.

In another Riverside newspaper article, four days before the “quiet victory” article, Barbara Bestpitch, on behalf of the LSU Church also stood by the victory-in-advance concept:

“Bestpitch said her church’s decision to ordain women has not been challenged by national and world church leaders.

“‘There has been no serious fallout,’ she said.”—

Continued on the next tract

More WAYMARKS - from —
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Part Two of Three

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

Breaking with Tradition,” Riverside Press-Enterprise, November 14, 1995.

But there was a dissenting voice: Lynn Mallery, SECC president, described the forthcoming event in more somber tones.

“There will be tremendous repercussions,” said Lynn Mallery . . .

“Regardless of how we as individuals feel about this, the world church has told us we are not to do this. Many are supportive of ordaining women, including myself, but there is a concern about unity” . . . Mallery said he already has received letters and calls from members of area churches upset by La Sierra’s decision. Those members say La Sierra had no right to break with the church’s worldwide leadership.”—*Ibid.*

“Regardless of how we as individuals feel” was the comment made; nothing is said about what the Bible says.

On one side are the conservatives, who declare that Biblical statements run counter to the idea; on the other side are liberals who defend women’s ordination by saying it feels good to do it.

“La Sierra church member, Alice Powell, said the Adventist Church has been debating ordination of women for many years and much of the opposition continues to come from members in Asia and the Middle East, where the role of women is much different than in America.

“We felt it depended on the culture,” Powell said.

“So did the 3,200 members of the Sligo College Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland, which ordained three women in September.

“We feel it is the prerogative of each church,” said church spokeswoman Barbara Bestpitch.”—*Ibid.*

Notice that, in the above comment, it is only culturally inferior peoples from Asia and the Middle East who oppose women’s ordination.

“[Halcyon] Wilson [one of the two ordained on December 2] wrote of her hopes for ordination in a 1990 edition of *Ponderings*, published by the Adventist Women’s Institute.

“I don’t like being the one who will be breaking tradition,’ Wilson wrote in part, ‘I’m not in this for power or control or rebellion. I’m a minister because the door was opened for me and it felt right.’ ”—*Ibid.*

“It felt right”; that was enough of a reason for a modern Adventist in southern California.

“I don’t want to get involved in any controversy outside the church,’ Wilson said. ‘This really is a symbol of how our congregation feels about me. And it feels very good.’ ”—“*Adventist Women’s Ordination a Quiet Victory,*” Riverside Press-Enterprise, November 18, 1995.

“If it feels good, do it,” is the cry of our times. “If it feels good, it is right.” In our feelings we are to find both the action and its justification.

Normative standards no longer count. God’s Word is ignored, and its defenders ridiculed as counter-culture fanatics.

Dan Smith, LSU Church pastor was also interviewed by student reporters of Southern College’s *Southern Accent*. After the Sligo ordination, and a full month before the one at La Sierra, he implied that women’s ordination is more important than obeying a ruling of the church:

“We believe this is a moral issue,’ he says. ‘And when you have the competing morals of equality and unity, equality is marginally more important.’ ”—“*Sligo Ordains Three Women, Other Churches to Follow,*” *Southern Accent*, November 2, 1995.

According to the liberal view, morals are pivotally related to equality of status and unity with leadership positions. Obedience to God’s Word has nothing to do with the matter.

Ruddy Torres, senior pastor of Sligo Church, added this comment:

“This issue won’t go away. It will be like civil rights. People of conscience will continue to raise the issue. In time, I think justice will prevail.’ ”—*Ibid.*

Gordon Bietz, Georgia-Cumberland Conference president, quoted in the same article, stated his position:

“Bietz says he’d like to hire a female pastor for

the conference, but there's a lot of resistance to it in many churches.

"There's more resistance in rural areas [of Georgia and eastern Tennessee] than in areas like Collegedale and Atlanta,' he says. 'I think it's primarily a sociological issue. People make it theological.'—*Ibid.*

Liberals tell us that worldly fads should be fol-

lowed. They are cultural, sociological, and unrelated to anything the Bible might say about the matter. "Do as you like, do what you feel like doing,—and call it your culture."

Then, when Southern College's senior pastor, Ed Wright, was asked for his position, he said women's ordination was the moral thing to do. But, he added

INTENDED AS AN ACT OF REBELLION

The day after the women's ordination service, it received a 40 column-inch feature article in the Riverside Press-Enterprise.

The implications of the act, as a mark of rebellion against church authority, were clearly spelled out. Here are some excerpts from this article:

"In a departure from their church's international doctrine, two women were ordained Saturday as ministers by La Sierra University Seventh-day Adventist Church in a ceremony the senior pastor described as long overdue recognition of their calling to serve God.

"Halcyon Westphal Wilson and Madelynn Jones-Haldeman were ordained in an emotional, two-hour service before about 1,500 people at La Sierra, which is believed to be the second Adventist church in the nation to ordain women . . .

"Wilson who has been an associate pastor at La Sierra for 15 years, praised her church for having the courage to act upon its convictions, even if it meant going against the wishes of the world church.

"I am respected at last as a disciple, a minister,' Wilson said. 'I belong to a church which ordains women' . . .

"La Sierra University president Lawrence Geraty likened the church's decision to ordain Wilson and Jones-Haldeman as the Adventist equivalent of black civil rights activist Rosa Parks' refusal in 1955 to relinquish her seat to a white person on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, an event that helped spark the civil rights movement.

"You have ministered in the back of the Adventist bus,' Geraty said, 'looking forward to this day when the church would recognize your calling as equal.'

"Not everyone agreed. Two Loma Linda men picketed the ordination service, quietly answering questions from passersby and carrying signs proclaiming that the Bible specifically prohibits women from leadership roles in the church.

Jerry Garner said he was particularly dis-

turbed that La Sierra would go against the decision of the world church.

"There seems to be an attitude of celebration, and I don't feel disagreeing with the official church should be something that is celebrated' . . .

"In so doing, La Sierra has found its way to the heart of a debate over the role of women in the Adventist church.

"Adventist women are already allowed the power and status of pastors. They can perform marriages and baptisms, offer communion and deliver sermons. They can earn the same pay as an ordained minister.

"While many Adventist leaders in the United States and Canada believe it is time to allow women to formalize their commitment to the church as ordained ministers, world leaders in July rejected for the second time in five years a plan that would have allowed the ordination of women in North American churches . . .

"There are more than 60 ministers here today to affirm two women who should have been affirmed many, many years ago,' Smith said.

"Lloyd Wilson, dean of men at La Sierra University and an ordained Adventist minister since 1967, called the ordination of women long overdue.

"It took a lot of soul searching,' Wilson said. 'But, as a black man, I know how I would have felt had I been denied the opportunity to be ordained. How could I deny them?'—*Adventists Ordain Two Women,* Riverside Press-Enterprise, Sunday, December 3, 1995.

In the above article, Wilson said the ordination was necessary, because she felt not respected without it. Geraty likened it to an act of civil disobedience against church authority.

Geraty also implied that unordained Sabbath School teachers, faithful church members, mothers, youth, and all the rest are "not equal," but are looked-down-upon inferiors "at the back of the bus."

Perhaps we should all demand some kind of ordination to soothe our hurt feelings.

that we must not push forward too fast, for there are too many immature Adventists:

“ ‘If we allow the world field, which is much younger theologically than North America, to dictate what is right and wrong it could be damaging,’ he says. ‘They are unable to negotiate anything unless there is a direct reference. But there are a lot of things that don’t have direct references, like tobacco and TV. The concept of principle isn’t really clear to them.’ ”—*Ibid.*

According to the most influential churchmen in the lives of your sons and daughters attending Southern College, people who based their beliefs on simple Bible statements are immature.

Then Southern College’s woman associate pastor (“church chaplain,” they call her) was asked for her position, and she made this remark:

“ ‘We owe the promise of ordination to girls coming through the ministry,’ [Lorabel] Hersch says. ‘The real importance of ordination is acceptance. Women are tired of second class acceptance.’ ”—*Ibid.*

She added:

“ ‘I believe you can twist Scripture in any way you want,’ she says. ‘I see the Lord using my gifts just as I am. I don’t have to base that on any set of doctrines.’ ”—*Ibid.*

“Free from doctrines and standards, oh, happy condition” is the cry of the liberals. “Down with the immature, social misfits, who preach ‘Bible, Bible.’ We want to walk with the world on that broad way. Somewhere in the Bible it talks about where it leads, but we don’t read that old book anymore. It’s out-of-date.”

1995, the “year of the woman” was drawing to a close, but many wandered what would follow.

OPEN CONTEMPT FOR ORDINATION PAPERS

The level of rebelliousness is rapidly increasing. The latest news is that a growing number of Adventist men, holding ministerial ordination papers,—are repudiating them!

Because their feelings have been hurt over the Utrecht decision not to ordain women,—they are handing their ministerial credentials back to church leaders, and saying, “Until women can have them, we don’t want them either!”

Many of these are very influential pastors, college Bible teachers, college church pastors, college presidents, etc. Here are some of the men who, since July 5, have tossed their ministerial credentials in the face of their employing officers:

NAD UNION LEADERS CONCUR

In an official statement, the nine union conference presidents within the North American Division, expressed their harmony and support of the rebellion.

If you doubt that, read their statement for yourself on page 7 of the December 1995 issue of the *Adventist Review*. We plan to reprint it in its entirety in the next mailing.

Please do not underestimate the extent to which those nine church leaders are committing themselves to the rebellion against the world delegates at Utrecht! It is well-known and generally accepted among our leaders that future Session delegates will never rescind their rejection of women’s ordination. It is recognized that overseas delegates, now in the majority, are too culturally and mentally backward, for they refuse to yield their preference for Scripture rather than current fads.

This means that, for North American Division leaders (including Al McClure, himself), to unite on the side which forthcoming Sessions will reject—is to join in the rebellion! McClure’s “Commission,” now accepted by many church leaders, is intended to devise ways to as much as ordain

women—in spite of what delegates worldwide decreed!

Here are several excerpts:

1 - “We believe that God calls both men and women to the gospel ministry.”

2 - “We were disappointed by the General Conference vote in Utrecht to deny ordination to women.”

3 - “While loyal to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we still firmly believe in the biblical rightness of women’s ordination.”

4 - “We are pleased that Elder McClure already has taken steps to establish a Presidential Commission on Women in Ministry to find ways to validate our commitment to women in ministry.”

5 - “In support of the work of the Presidential Commission and our desire for full equality of men and women in ministry, we ask that the following steps be taken and pledge our vigorous support:”—*“NAD Union Presidents Support Women in Ministry,” Adventist Review, December 1995.*

Then follows a lengthy list of recommendations, including increasing the number of women pastors and administrators as rapidly as possible.

These men are declaring, “Down with the Word of God; we have the liberals on our side!”

SECC AND PUC COMMITTEES FAVOR IT

More are climbing on the rebellion bandwagon. But they will not be disfellowshipped for doing so; they are too influential.

On September 21, 1995, The executive committee of the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) rejected the recommendation of their Gender Inclusiveness Commission (GIC) to immediately begin ordaining women pastors.

But the executive committee did approve an action permitting the next regular SECC constituency meeting (October 27, 1996) to do so if it wished—which it probably will do!

So it is likely that full ordination of women, and the issuance, to them, of ordained ministerial credentials will begin in SECC next fall.

Until then, the committee approved a resolution to otherwise give women pastors every possible equality of service.

A straw vote revealed that 21 of the 23 members of the SECC executive committee favored women's ordination. The only question was how soon the conference should bolt in full defiance of Utrecht and begin doing it.

A similar climate permeates the executive committee of the Pacific Union Conference (PUC).

On August 30, it voted a resolution that it "is still committed to the ordination of women to the gospel ministry and to working toward the day when it will happen."

One phrase of that resolution, however, was voted down. It is the following italicized portion: "In the interest of giving this process the best possibility of succeeding, it is urged that all entities stay united *and resist unilateral action* while working together for justice, in unity and in harmony with biblical principles and the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs." By that vote, the PUC executive committee approved independent ordinations by local churches.

For their part, the women pastors in SECC were not taking a backseat. Very anxious that they be ordained as soon as possible, whatever the cost might be to Biblical principles or church unity, they signed and mailed out this demand: "The word 'ordained' needs to be included in whatever service occurs and credentials issued."

Darold Bigger, John Brunt, Ernest Bursey, Douglas Clark, Lawrence Geraty, Glen Greenwalt, Bruce Johanson, Ronald Jolliffe, John Jones, David Larson, Pedrito Maynard-Reid, Charles Scriven, Alden Thompson, Louis Venden, Larry Veverka, James Walters, and Gerald Winslow.

Geraty, president of La Sierra University, announced he would not belong to a club that excluded people on the basis of gender. Is he by this implying that he no longer wants to be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? At last word, he was still collecting paychecks from the denomination.

As soon as the negative vote was settled at Utrecht, Geraty mailed his ordination credentials to Thomas Mostert, president of the Pacific Union Conference.

We are told that, along with some others who also did that, Geraty's request will be brought up before the November 29 meeting of the PUC executive committee.

Continued on the next tract

More WAYMARKS - from —
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Here is that strange symbol which is on the LSU "SDA Women in Ministry Scholarship Endowment Fund" announcement.

Perhaps you can figure it out.

It is either the dove, symbolizing the Holy Spirit,

being crucified above a snake (which is totally unscriptural).

Or it is the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descending on the serpent, to endow him with power.

Over and above it all, is a sunburst.

— Full size

Reduced 64% —

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Part Three of Three

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

On the left, is the ministerial ordination certificate issued to one of the three women who underwent the act of ordination to the ministry, which occurred at a September 23, 1995 Sligo service.

But it is clear from Al McClure's statement (*see next page*), that these various ministerial ordination ceremonies were improper and out of order.

In order to give the appearance of massive support for women's ordination, the president of the university, Lawrence Geraty, and his associates were able to garner the names of 62 Adventist workers who permitted them to list their names as "supporters" of this LSU ordination.

—And it is impressive.

Here is this list, reprinted from the last page of the eight-page printed program, handed out at the LSU ordination service.

THE AUGUST 3, 1995 STATEMENT

Having heard that open acts of rebellion were soon to occur, as local, liberal congregations began ordaining women ministers, on August 3, Al McClure, North American Division president, wrote "An Open Letter to Church Leaders," which was published in that month's *Review*.

In this letter to "all NAD pastors and administrators," he wrote this:

[1] "Throughout our history, we have agreed that ordination to the gospel ministry is part of a process by which the world church acknowledges those who have sensed the calling of God. This process was decided on by the church as a whole. A pastor who has achieved a certain level of training, experience, and effectiveness is examined by local conference administration.

[2] "That name is then brought to the conference executive committee for recommendation to the union conference executive committee, where authorization for ordination occurs. Only when these steps are taken does the ordination proceed, and only then is the pastor given the appropriate credentials. As this process is followed, then it can be said that the individual has been ordained to the gospel ministry.

[3] "On the other hand, a commissioning or dedicatory service, even with the laying on of hands, is biblical and affirming of the call to ministry (*see Acts 13:2-4 and Review and Herald, July 9, 1895*), yet does not violate the spirit or the letter of the vote of the General Conference Session . . .

[4] "We are initiating dialogue about ways to *affirm the women in our division whom God has called to ministry* . . . Meanwhile, I am asking that you be a

bridge builder, that you *marshal all of the gifts in your church and focus them on mission*, and that you join me in praying that God will help us through this very delicate time. As painful as this issue is to many, we must not allow it to splinter our unity or divert our mission."—*Alfred C. McClure, "An Open Letter to Church Leaders," Review, September 1995, p. 7.*

Numbers have been added to the above paragraphs, in order to aid us in reviewing their meaning.

In paragraphs 1-2, McClure explained the proper procedure for a ministerial ordination to be valid. Only then could it be acceptable to the denomination.

In paragraph 3, he says that a ministerial "dedicatory" service, will be acceptable, but not a ministerial "ordination" service.

Therefore, the local churches, in carrying out these later ministerial ordinations, are in rebellion. *By these actions, they have, in veriest fact, made themselves independent ministries, which are not subject to control by any level of denominational headquarters.*

Note paragraph 4: McClure concluded his appeal to local churches not to ordain women ministers, yet two phrases in that paragraph (*the italicized portions*) were twisted out of context by LSU, and printed as indicating his approval for their ordination service! On the endowment fund application, distributed widely during and after the women's ordination, the following paragraph was given prominence:

" 'Marshal all of the gifts in your church . . .'—A.C. McClure. With this ringing call to the North American Division, President McClure, on August 3, 1995, urged us all to 'affirm the women in our division whom God has called to ministry.' "—*SDA Women in Ministry Scholarship Endowment Fund, page 2.*

THE REBELLION EXPANDS

On Sabbath, September 23, two women were ordained at Sligo Church. On Sabbath afternoon, December 2, two women were ordained at the La Sierra University Church.

But did you know that another women was ordained to the ministry that same morning?

Not to be outdone, the folk at Loma Linda arranged for a woman's ordination ceremony to be done on Sabbath morning, December 2, at the Victoria Church, located in nearby San Bernardino.

Because leaders of the Loma Linda University and the Medical Center are continually requesting additional large loans from the General Conference, it was thought best to not stage the ordination in their area at the immense University Church, but, instead, to hold it at a smaller, nearby Adventist church.

For similar reasons, it was thought best to bring the three recently-ordained women from Sligo to do the ordaining!

Sheryll Prinz-McMillan is the woman pastor of the Victoria Seventh-day Adventist Church. The eight-page program of the LSU ordination said the Victoria Church is located in Loma Linda. But a brief newspaper mention said it was in adjacent San Bernardino.

Her husband is the associate pastor, working under Smuts van Rooyan at the Riverside Church.

An intriguing part is that the three women, who were ordained at Sligo (Kendra Haloviak, Norma Osborn, and Penny Shell), were flown to California, and they alone ordained Prinz-McMillan!

Also present was Charles Scriven, president of Columbia Union College, who flew out with them for the occasion.

Ironically, at the 1980 Dallas Session, Branch Davidians from Waco picketed outside the auditorium, demanding that the delegates approve the ordination of women ministers. In response, church leaders said that such a thing was impossible and would never be done.

And now, 15 years later, it is being done.

Lois Roden, woman prophet of the Branch Davidians at the time, had arranged to have herself ordained to the ministry—so to justify that action, she said the mainline church should also. The background of all this is of interest:

Victor Houtiff, founder of the Shepherd's Rod, said that Christ would return before his death. Following Houtiff's death on February 5, 1955, his wife Florence took command. Under her leadership, it was decided the world would end on April 22, 1959.

When that date passed, she confessed her error and

later disbanded the Rod. In 1960, Benjamin Roden gained control of the largest Rod splinter, and announced the end of time would occur in 1960. Maintaining control when the prediction failed, he proclaimed himself the antitypical David of Israel.

Acquiring the Waco property, left by Florence, Benjamin died in 1978. His widow, Lois, proclaimed herself a prophet and said the Holy Spirit was a woman. In 1980, she and 25 of her followers picketed at the Dallas Session.

Gradually, her son George gained control. Some of his actions indicated he was partially demented. Then in 1983 a young man, 23-year-old Vernon Howell, joined the group.

Later, as you know, he had a gun battle with George, and changed his own name to David Koresh. The rest is history.

(See our book, The Davidians of Waco, for the entire story.)