

# The NAD Women Pastors' Document

A FULL-SCALE ATTACK ON A CLEAR DIRECTIVE IN SCRIPTURE

PART ONE OF THREE

This document was approved by the North American Division Year-end Meeting in October 1997. It was then sent to several committees for gradual activation; and they have been working on it since then. The preparers of the document and the committees are controlled by liberals and feminists. A majority of NAD officers, on all levels, are pro-feminist.

This document, which is just beginning to be implemented, has such radical requirements, that, when fully in place, is expected to provide our North American Division (Canada and the United States) with a larger proportion of women preachers, pastors, and church officers—than are to be found in any other denomination in Christendom.

The North American Division (NAD) has enacted a package containing a couple dozen, or more, of startling new regulations which constitute a stunning violation of Scripture. Only a small segment of this revolt against the clear statements and intent of God's Word has so far been implemented; more is to come. Viewing the complete document and its implications is breathtaking. You will read it for yourself in this report. Surely, when our leaders forsake the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, we are nearing the end of time.

First, we shall consider the historical background which led up to the writing of this document. Then we shall view this graphic insult to the Word of God.

## — SECTION ONE — HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1968, the Northern European Division sent a request to the General Conference, requesting permission for Finland to ordain some women as ministers.

Of course, this was an unbiblical request, but the matter was submitted to several committees to consider. Instead of standing solidly for the Bible pattern, the leaders stalled for time.

In the meantime, the Potomac Conference (the conference in which our world headquarters is located) ordained a woman elder. Then Germany an-

nounced that it also wanted to ordain a woman elder.

Church leaders were faced with a problem. The Bible clearly pointed in one direction, but it would not be politically wise to shut the door too fast on the requests. Surely, there seemed to be a way to keep peace in the family. Besides, were not a number of other Protestant churches moving closer to the feminist agenda? Should we be too quick to say no? Should we not, to some extent, keep pace with the current religious fads of our time? With all these thoughts in mind, delay was considered a better reply than an absolute no.

In 1973, a committee met at Camp Mohaven (the Ohio Conference youth camp) to discuss the whole matter of women in the church.

Papers were read, discussion groups held, and it was voted to recommend the ordination of women elders on a restricted, experimental basis.

But why should we do something on a "restricted, experimental basis,"—when it is contrary to Scripture?

"The very beginning of the great apostasy was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. Rome began by enjoining [requiring] what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined."—*Great Controversy*, 289-290.

The liberals claim that the Bible does not say we can not ordain women ministers, therefore we

can. By the same logic, the Bible does not say we can not smoke cigarettes or sniff cocaine; therefore this is permissible also?

Unmistakable principles are clearly given us in Scripture, and we are not to seek ways to circumvent them by, what logicians declare to be, a weak defense: “the argument by silence.”

The problem is that our leaders want to “bridge over the chasm” between our church and the others. “If worldly churches can have women preachers, why can’t we also?”

Over three centuries ago, church leaders in England wanted to come as close to Rome as they could. They decided to do this by adding things not specifically forbidden in the Bible. We are repeating their experience today. Certain leaders in our denomination are determined to “narrow the gulf,” and bring us as close to the other denominations as they can. Gradually they are doing it. Here are the three paragraphs preceding the above quotation.

“The English Reformers, while renouncing the doctrines of Romanism, had retained many of its forms. Thus though the authority and the creed of Rome were rejected, not a few of her customs and ceremonies were incorporated into the worship of the Church of England. It was claimed that these things were not matters of conscience; that though they were not commanded in Scripture, and hence were nonessential, yet not being forbidden, they were not intrinsically evil. Their observance tended to narrow the gulf which separated the reformed churches from Rome, and it was urged that they would promote the acceptance of the Protestant faith by Romanists.

“To the conservative and compromising, these arguments seemed conclusive. But there was another class that did not so judge. The fact that these customs ‘tended to bridge over the chasm between Rome and the Reformation’ (*Martyn, Vol. 5, p. 22*) was in their view a conclusive argument against retaining them. They looked upon them as badges of the slavery from which they had been delivered and to which they had no disposition to return. They reasoned that God has in His Word established the regulations governing His worship, and that men are not at liberty to add to these or to detract from them.

“The very beginning of the great apostasy was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. Rome began by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined.”—*Great Controversy, 289-290*.

In the above passage, did you notice that the disputed issue was the church service, and that the solution is to stay with the clear statements of Scripture,—and not go beyond them! Read it again; it is

all found in one sentence:

“They reasoned that God has in His Word established the regulations governing His worship, and that men are not at liberty to add to these or to detract from them.”—*Great Controversy, 289*.

There it is, all in one sentence. That should be clear enough. But the complaining Israelites of today hanker after that which Scripture does not permit,—and they are determined to appoint committees until they get it!

**So, as a result of the Mohaven meeting, it was voted to allow a few women to be ordained as deaconesses and elders.**

It was obvious to the liberals and feminists that, if they kept pushing their demands, they would get even more. Although they now had an increasing number of women elders—and even women pastors,—demands began to be made that they should have the right to serve communion, baptize, and perform marriages.

Once again our leaders were confronted with the same quandary which Pilate, because of his hesitation, experienced. Instead of just saying, “No, you cannot crucify Christ, because He is innocent!” he kept giving in, little by little. And the local church members in Jerusalem knew that, with more prompting and demands, they would yet obtain everything they wanted.

Confused as to what to do, our leaders, instead of saying, “No, it is not Biblical to have women ministers over the churches,” replied, “No, it cannot be done because they are only ordained elders, and not ordained ministers.”

**More time passed; and then, as mentioned earlier, in 1984 the Potomac Conference authorized three of its women pastors to begin baptizing. That year, one young woman elder, serving as a pastor, baptized someone with the backing of the Potomac Conference office,** but without authorization of the *Church Manual* and in violation of the Inspired Writings.

In the face of this open rebellion against church authority and Scripture, what should the General Conference do? Instead of saying, “This is wrong and unscriptural and someone is going to be fired,” church leaders timidly said, “Please postpone this activity for a time and we will appoint yet another committee to study the matter.”

Once again the liberals and feminists were winning. Step by step, they intended to gain everything they wanted.

**In 1985, the Annual Council forbade any more baptisms by women elders; but, the next year, the Southeastern California Conference**

voted to let them baptize anyway.

**This shocked the General Conference; and they persuaded Southeastern to do nothing more for a time, promising to give the matter further study.**

Although they agreed to do that, the harsh, hateful terms of radical feminist politics began to be heard. There were cries of "gender exclusiveness," "discrimination," "affirmative action," and demands for "justice" and "equal rights."

**So a Commission on the Role of Women convened at General Conference headquarters that same year. But it did not arrive at a united decision.**

**Repeated warnings from local conferences, that they planned to go ahead with the ordination of woman pastors, led to a second session of the Commission on the Role of Women in 1988;** this time it was held at Cohutta Springs in northern Georgia (the Georgia-Cumberland Conference youth camp). Time and time again, General Conference leaders went to conference officers and begged them to please wait a little while longer.

Just as at its first session, the second session of this commission was deadlocked, day after day. Because it was attended by both conservatives (who believed the Bible as it read) and liberals (the progressives who wanted to ape the latest fads that other denominations were dabbling in),—neither side would yield an inch.

**The 1988 Cohutta gathering was finally presented with a compromise statement by a General Conference official who, after reading it, pleaded with them to approve it in order to keep peace in the church family.** This they did, although it satisfied neither side.

**According to this recommendation, women were not to be ordained to the gospel ministry; but each world division, at its own discretion, could authorize Seminary-trained women who were local elders to "perform essentially all the functions" of the ordained minister in their local churches.**

With this vote of approval, another in a series of victories for the feminists had been made.

**The year after that recommendation was approved, a large study group, called the Women's Commission, was appointed by the General Conference. It was assigned the preparation of a document to be submitted to the 1990 Indianapolis Session;—but, instead, it was handed one.** Leaders from the General Conference presented those in attendance with a written recom-

mendation which could either be voted up or down, but could not be altered.

The members were told that this recommendation, if approved, would be sent on to the Annual Council for further action.

**Like the previous recommendation, this one was a halfway compromise:** Give a little to the liberals and feminists, but not everything. The situation had become a political matter. It was not what the Bible said, but what was needed to best please all sides that counted.

Compromise is always a delicate balancing act. In this case, keep the liberals from rebelling while somehow keeping the conservatives from doing the same thing. The solution was found to be gradual gifts to the liberals over a period of 20 years while the conservatives became so tired of fighting that, in North America, they gave up or left the church.

**This recommendation had two primary points: (1) Women could not, at the present time, be ordained as ministers. (2) If they met certain qualifications (i.e., Seminary training and local elder ordination), they could perform essentially ALL the functions of an ordained minister, but only within their local churches.**

**This recommendation, which pleased no one, was passed by a majority of those present—and sent on to the 1989 Annual Council, where it was approved for placement on the agenda of the 1990 Indianapolis Session.**

**When the delegates met at Indianapolis, they were presented on Wednesday with the first half of that recommendation** (without, at that time, being told that there was a second half).

Prior to the vote, North American Division leaders appealed to the delegates to vote yes. In effect, they said, "Yesterday, we voted with you for what you wanted; today, please, vote with us for what we want. We want to keep peace in our family here in North America, and please remember that there are special 'cultural needs' on our continent which you may not have overseas."

The politics of appeasement. No Bible. No Spirit of Prophecy. No earnest prayers to God for guidance. —Yet, for those who disregard His Word, what other guidance could Heaven give?

When we turn from the Inspired Writings, we invite the whisperings of sinister, dark powers.

**The ordination of women ministers was defeated by a large majority: 1,173 to 377.**

The grueling 10-day Session was nearing its end. Everyone had come to the Session prepared to vote on this issue; and, since it had been voted down, **many delegates were not in the main au-**

**ditorium the next day—when the second recommendation was unexpectedly presented.** (Apparently, the liberals and feminists had received word to be there.) **This second provision stated that ordained local elders could perform all the functions of ordained ministers.**

**A yes vote to this second recommendation was made,** much to the anger of the absent delegates when they learned what had happened.

But if you think this satisfied the liberals, you are wrong. Determined to obtain all their objectives, they kept plotting how to achieve their ends.

**In 1993, responding once again to pressure, a majority of NAD leaders reached a consensus in favor of ordaining women pastors. But further waiting did not satisfy the Southeastern California Conference. They wanted to go ahead and ordain women pastors, without waiting for any official approval.**

**Once again, in desperation, the General Conference stalled for time; this time they promised to bring the matter to a vote again at the 1995 Utrecht Session.**

The question was not whether the objective was Scriptural, but how to frame the proposition, so it would meet with delegate approval at Utrecht.

**When the 1995 Session convened at this Dutch convention city, the North American Division asked for the right to ordain women ministers—in North America only.**

In preparation for this vote, four fluent speakers pleaded with the delegates, explaining why this ought to be done. As we reported shortly afterward, their words were remarkable for what they revealed: a willingness to replace Scripture with logic. Do we believe in taking it as it reads or can we talk it away with philosophy and speculation?

Only one speaker was given the opportunity to defend the Bible position on the matter: Dr. P. Gerard Damsteegt [WM 646]. His presentation was magnificent. We reprinted it. Thank God that He still has those who will defend our Bible-Spirit of Prophecy positions!

Four against one, and **then the vote was taken. It was 1,481 to 673 that the North American Division should not be authorized to go its own way.**

**Within less than a month after that decision, the Sligo Church, located only a few miles from world headquarters, ordained several women**

**pastors. Not long after, La Sierra University Church did the same. Several more have occurred since then.** All of them were, according to church rules, illegal. No command or precedent for any of them was to be found in the Bible.

**Under intense pressure, the NAD appointed a commission to seek ways to broaden the scope of women as pastors.**

Casting about for ways to sneak in the ordination of women ministers, after two Sessions had voted it down, the brethren recalled an innovation from the 1970s: the “*commissioning*” status. So they decided to try to substitute “*commissioning*” for ordination—and accomplish the same objective.

***In order to understand this, we need to review some earlier history.***

A process that began with a plan to reduce income taxes for certain younger Adventist ministers led to the concept that ordination is merely a matter of church policy—instead of to Scriptural mandates. This was finally twisted into the concept that commissioned female ministers are equivalent to ordained male ministers.

Here is what happened:

In earlier centuries, many churches in America would provide rent-free residences for their pastors. These homes were known as “*parsonages*.” Because the homes belonged to the church, the government considered them tax-free. So the ministers had rent-free and tax-free homes in which to live.

Later, churches began paying their pastors a “*parsonage allowance*,” permitting them to find their own housing at church expense. The government agreed to treat the parsonage allowance as not taxable.

**But in 1965 in the U.S., the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) noted that young Adventist ministers who had not yet been ordained were classified—not as ordained ministers—but “*licensed ministers*”; yet they still received this IRS benefit.** The IRS maintained that, since they had not been ordained, they could not be eligible for the parsonage allowance.

The problem here was that Adventist licensed ministers had previously been regarded by the IRS as ordained ministers, which the IRS classified as “*self-employed*” workers who had to pay their own social security. If all Adventist licensed ministers

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were, instead, to be treated as non-ministers, then they would be ordinary employees (not self-employed), and the church would have to pay half their social security. The total cost of this in the U.S. would be immense.

**The impasse over this continued for 12 years, as the church-hired lawyers tried to persuade the IRS to change its mind.**

But, when it became obvious that the IRS was not going to change its position—and, instead, was about to seize conference properties in lieu of taxes and penalties—our leaders met together with IRS officials, to see what they could do to convince them that licensed ministers really were ministers.

**The IRS said that if the denomination changed its rules, so that licensed ministers were authorized to perform weddings, the problem would be solved.**

**So, in 1976, it was voted that, in the North American Division, licensed ministers—although not yet ordained ministers—could henceforth perform weddings and baptisms. But they must be ordained as local elders, and their conference committee must give its approval. This action affected the entire worldwide church, yet was done to satisfy the IRS in the U.S. alone.**

**At the time that vote was taken, some General Conference treasurers—the very ones who had to deal with these difficult IRS financial problems—argued that it was wrong to reduce the value of ordination to a nothingness, merely to save money.**

Robert Osborn, an assistant General Conference treasurer, wrote to NAD leadership:

“There is a definite detected feeling that it is hardly becoming to alter our attitude toward our licensed ministers for tax considerations in a particular country.”

But, ignoring the warning, church leadership decreed something very ominous:

“The difference between the functions of a licensed and ordained ministry is not a moral or

theological issue, but a matter of church policy”; and “the process by which the church trains its ministers obviously is not a matter of theology nor doctrine, but one of methodology, policy.”

**In order to save some money, church leaders have been willing to sacrifice ministerial ordination.** By a newly made official addition to their policy books, the ordination of Adventist ministers no longer amounts to much. Indeed, the calling is no longer one that is determined by the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. No longer does the work of a minister have to be in agreement with Scripture. Instead, it is said to be exclusively within the jurisdiction of committee action and administrative policy.

**But there is more to this. In 1978, the IRS said that it would accept someone as equivalent to an ordained minister,—if he had been “licensed, ordained, or commissioned.” This gave our church leaders a new word to work with.**

So the church began calling its church treasurers and other non-ministerial staff workers “commissioned ministers.” The IRS would accept this for parsonage allowance; and, because those men were not ordained ministers, critics in the church could not say the church ordained men who were not ministers so they could be paid from the tithe. Now commissioned workers could be paid from it also.

Bible workers (who were women) were also for the first time “commissioned.” Then came the idea to “commission” church-school teachers as “commissioned ministers.”

**In 1975, the practice of granting ministerial licenses to women was discontinued; but, at the prompting of the liberals, it was agreed that, henceforth, if great caution were exercised, selected women might be ordained as local elders.**

**Two years later, women were permitted to serve as “associates in pastoral care.” It was hoped that this wording would placate those who did not want “assistant pastors.”**

***So that is the sorry history of how we came to have “commissioning” in our church.*** This matter of “commissioning” is now being used, by the feminists and liberals, to better fulfill their objectives.

**The whole issue reached an astounding climax in Silver Spring, Maryland, during the October 7-10, 1997, North American Division Year-end Meeting. But first we must go back to a Year-end Meeting two years earlier.**

— SECTION TWO —

THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

WHICH PREPARED THE DOCUMENT

**At the 1995 NAD Year-end Meeting which convened in Battle Creek, Michigan, on October 12-13, it was voted to appoint a new commission to study the women’s ordination problem. This meeting was held only three months after the Utrecht Session had seemingly settled the matter on July 5.** (You may recall that, at that Session, one NAD leader told the delegates that the NAD would accept the delegates’ decision in the matter, and not press the matter any further.)

In order to please the angry liberals and feminists, announcement was soon after made that the NAD had appointed a special committee to study the matter and “recommend ways to expand the role of women in ministry, recognize and deploy the gifts God has given to women, and affirm women in pastoral and other spiritual ministries.”

**It was stated that the work of this commission was to advance every aspect of pastoral ministry among women, other than ordination itself. As we shall learn below, the commission’s recommendations would make the ordination of women irrelevant and unnecessary.**

***Be sure you understand this: The “ordination of women ministers” is no longer an issue or even being sought after. Instead, we will have the “commissioning of women to the ministry.”***

**But, very important, although a different name is used, every other aspect remains the same! In all its ramifications, “commissioning” is identical to “ordination” in all its aspects and empowerment.**

(Clarification: A “commission” is a committee appointed to a special purpose. “Commissioning” is something very different. As interpreted by the liberals, it is identical to ordination.)

**The membership of the commission was officially approved on February 28, 1996, by the NAD Committee on Administration (NADCOA).**

**To our knowledge, not one conservative was placed on that committee. This is why, as you read the shocking document, you can understand why it can be so blatantly radical.**

**The commission met in June and July of that year, and again in May 1997. It was at that May meeting that the final form of the document was approved.**

The document which it has produced makes no attempt to discuss ordination as such. It says nothing about Biblical teachings respecting men and women, nor does it seek at any point the support of either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. It is entirely a political maneuver, nothing else.

Without saying so, this document assumes that the 1990 and 1995 General Conference Session votes were positive instead of negative. So we have here a full-blown rebellion against the highest earthly authority in the church. It is also a blatant rebellion against the God of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

The new recommendation does not use Scriptural terminology, but modern political and cultural concepts.

The 1990 General Conference Session overwhelmingly disapproved women’s ordination to the ministry (1,173 to 377); and the 1995 Session decisively (1,481 to 673) refused to let the North American Division have a special dispensation to ordain women to the ministry, when the rest of the world field did not.

**—Now the NAD is going to do exactly what two world Sessions forbade. In the face of these overwhelming decisions, the document intends to grant authority to women to serve as senior pastors, even as conference presidents and union-conference presidents, subject to their being “commissioned”—but without their needing to be ordained.**

That is how the NAD intends to sidestep two world Session decisions. It was twice voted that the women could not be ordained to the ministry, so the NAD will commission them to the ministry—with full authority equal to those ordained to the ministry. Henceforth, the men will be ordained and the women commissioned! Their assignment, empowerment, and functions will be identical. How is that for using words to set aside the plain teachings of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy?

For clarification, it would be well to mention that the most important gathering of the world church is the fifth-year *General Conference Session*. The second and third most important is the October *Annual* (formerly Autumn) *Council* and April *Spring Council*. In each of the world divisions, the

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most important meeting is the *Year-end Meeting*, which convenes immediately after the Annual Council (generally in October). All of these meetings primarily consist of the presentation of reports and the discussion and voting on—for the most part—previously prepared actions. Little discussion is generally given to actions presented to Year-end Meetings.

The other name for this is “rubber stamping.” Unfortunately, it frequently occurs at executive councils on all levels of the church. A few men make the decisions, then assign a writer or two to put it on paper. Then it is presented to a committee to approve with little discussion.

**One of the actions which was presented to the NAD October Year-end Meeting in 1997 was this special document, entitled “*President’s Commission on Women in Ministry—Report*.” (This is what, throughout this present study, we refer to as “the document.”)** The preparation of the document and its enactment, by the NAD Year-end Meeting, was carried through amid a remarkable degree of secrecy.

Some NAD leaders naively planned that this document would merely be read at the Year-end Meeting, and then laid aside. In other words, they had hoped it would be a “received,” but not a “voted on” document.

But when the document was actually read to the assembly of Division, union, conference, and institutional leaders from throughout North America, and “received,”—urgent voices spoke up and demanded that it be voted on as an official “recommendation.”

**Although a substantial number of conference presidents and other church officers voted against this document, a majority of those present voted to recommend it,—and in this manner:**

**First, various portions of it were to be sent to different committees to be studied and worked on.**

**Second, those recommendations which would later be approved by those committees were to be implemented, to the degree that funds permitted.**

**In other words (with the exception of Section IV, of the document, which requires Council approval) if the committees approved of the document, it was to become part of official NAD policy and carried into action throughout the Division.**

It can be expected that the liberals were as careful in preplanning who would be on those committees as they were in initially writing the document.

We are told that some portions of that docu-

ment are already in place as official policy and are being acted on.

Very likely, most or all of the rest will eventually become church policy in North America. Unfortunately, Adventist church members today are not very troubled by Bible and Spirit of Prophecy violations.

## — SECTION THREE —

### COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENT

*We are reprinting the entire document on pages 10-12.*

Listed below are a number of its key provisions, given in the order in which they appear in the document. They are startling, in the extreme.

All of the following, of course, is to be done at church expense; and, since it concerns “ministers,” it is to be paid from the tithe. Not one item, listed below, has ever been done for Seventh-day Adventists following any other career path, including ministers who are men.

**1 - A woman must be placed as ministerial secretary or associate ministerial secretary on the Division level.** This must be done with a sense of urgency.

In other words, we must rush this through before the laity wake up, rise up in protest, and stop us. When this policy is fully implemented (on the union and conference level, as well as the Division), **all Adventist ministers in the United States and Canada will be under women and answerable to them;** since the ministerial department is in charge of the ministers and how they carry on their work, it will be her responsibility to guide their activities.

At the October 1998 Annual Council, which was held in Brazil, a woman was elected to serve as an associate ministerial secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association.

**2 - On the Division level, the following 12 things are to be done** (To our knowledge, men in the Adventist ministry have never received even one of the following paid-benefit opportunities, which will be given to woman ministers.):

(1) **A professional association of woman ministers is to be formed, so they can attend an annual retreat;** expenses are to be covered by the sending conference or by the Division.

(2) **An internet connection between woman ministers and women and girls** who are interested either in entering the field or taking college work to that end.

(3) **A women-in-ministry newsletter;** copies of

which are to be sent to conference offices, to encourage them to hire more women pastors, and to local churches.

(4) **An NAD data base is to be maintained—of churches which may want women ministers, so these can be filled.** This information is also to be supplied to local churches, to spur them to hire women pastors.

(5) **A “speaker’s bureau” is to be established,** to place women as speakers in all Adventist gatherings. If necessary, the Division will pay all expenses.

(6) **A mediation system is to be set up;** so that, when women ministers have trouble with their employing organization (the president may not like women in the ministry), a paid mediation board will help them.

(7) **Special training classes are to be set up for women ministers,** so they can learn how to deal with problems in the ministry.

(8) **A special, completely equipped placement service for women is to be established, so they can more easily be hired.** “Regular contacts” must be made with conference presidents, to keep pushing them to hire women as pastors. This service will have a second data base of local churches which might hire a woman minister. “Career counseling” must also be offered by this placement service.

(9) **A continual promotional campaign must be carried on by the Division, to urge conferences to hire more and more women as ministers.** All policies that “encourage the hiring of women pastors” are to be implemented.

(10) **Church administrators who have hired women ministers are to be defended and retained** in their positions, in those instances when the laity have aroused themselves to replace those administrators.

(11) **Establishment of a second NAD travel fund; this one will send women preachers to various gatherings for “continuing education events,”** when the employing organization cannot or will not do so. All travel and housing expenses are to be covered.

(12) **“Multimedia educational materials” are to be prepared, at NAD expense, to advertise the importance of women ministers to the laity** in every possible way and at every possible gathering. The importance of hiring still more women as ministers is to be stressed.

3 - **A complete “commissioning service” is to held for each woman entering the ministry.** (To satisfy IRS demands, a sheet of paper was quietly sent by mail to licensed ministers. This new policy transforms it into a full-fledged ordination ceremony, complete with laying-on-of-hands.)

4 - **Four changes are to be made in the Church Manual, showing that, henceforth, women can do the following:**

(1) **Women can conduct male ordination services or female commissioning services.**

(2) **Women can ordain men or women as deacons.**

(3) **Women can organize local churches.**

(4) **Women can lead out in a meeting, to unite one local church with another.**

5 - **Four changes are to be made in the North American Division Working Policy.** (None of these changes have been made yet, since they require approval by an Annual Council or a General Conference Session.)

(1) **Gender-inclusive language must be used everywhere in the NAD Working Policy !!!** That means that the words “man,” “men,” “he,” and “him” must, at considerable expense, be eradicated from that large policy book.

(2) **The union conference president can be a woman.**

(3) **The local conference president can be a woman.**

(4) **The term, “Associates in Pastoral Care” is to be changed to “Commissioned Minister.”**

6 - **A special edition of the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook must be printed yearly** (at sizeable expense!), so that women can be listed in it. (This is because licensed and commissioned ministers are not listed in the regular *Yearbook*.)

7 - Several times in this document, special things must be done to get conference presidents to hire more women ministers. In addition, in a special section, **three additional points are added “in order to encourage conferences to hire more women in pastoral positions”:**

(1) Whereas men ministerial interns receive a three-year NAD-paid internship, **the NAD must now give women a four-year-paid internship.** This financial incentive will go only to those conferences who do not presently have any women ministers.

(2) **The NAD must energetically try to pres-**

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sure local conferences to set goals as to how many more women preachers they are going to hire over each subsequent three-year period.

(3) **The NAD must push Adventist colleges and universities to direct women, with any interest, to take the ministerial course.**

8 - **A third data base must be set up by NAD; this one will be for women interested in being hired onto conference- and union-level staffs.**

9 - It is again mentioned that **the NAD must keep urging the conferences to have women as speakers**; here the emphasis is on having them to preach at the Sabbath morning worship services at camp meetings. It is to be done through the woman "speaker's bureau," mentioned earlier.

10 - **The NAD edition of the Review and other church papers should regularly feature articles on various women "in pastoral ministry."** (A full article on one woman preacher, with a large picture of her, was in a recent *Review*.) These articles must not, in any way, be negative.

11 - **Articles, news clips, and pictures about women preachers doing things with men preachers must be in our church papers.**

12 - **Church members should be shown a continual variety of video presentations of women ministers.**

13 - **An ongoing series of cassettes, both of women ministers speaking and sermons about how important they are, must be provided to the church.**

14 - **ACN "First Wednesday" segments must praise the work of women ministers.**

15 - **A large "resource center" must be built and manned** (pardon the non-gender neutral word) to provide the following:

(1) **Headquarters for a women ministers' Professional Association** which organizes retreats, etc., for them.

(2) **An e-mail and internet linkage** of all the

women preachers, students, and interested girls.

(3) **Women's ministry Publishing and Newsletter Center.**

(4) **Job Vacancy and Referral Center.**

(5) **Employment Data Base Center.**

(6) **Women Speaker's Bureau which will "solicit and market" women as speakers** to our people at all gatherings.

(7) **Legal and Mediation Department**, to mediate job disputes of women with their fellow workers and conference presidents.

(8) **Conflict Resolution Training Center** for women preachers.

(9) **A Placement Service** with a large-enough staff to [1] provide a second active **employment job placement data base**, [2] maintain **ongoing promotional, referral, and placement contacts with hiring officials** on all levels, and [3] **provide "career counseling** for women in ministry."

(10) **Women-in-ministry Literature Distribution Center**, to send advertising and promotional literature to all offices and officials which hire ministers.

(11) **Church Officer Promotional Center** which will routinely place news clips and feature articles in church papers, praising those leaders who are hiring the most women pastors. This office will also provide liaison assistance, in arranging for the NAD to send officers to help keep conference presidents in office, if their constituency becomes irate over such a flood of women preachers being sent into their churches.

(12) **Financial Assistance Center**, to provide travel expenses and registration fees for women to travel around the countryside speaking at church gatherings.

In the following document, an underlined word or phrase means that it is to be added to an existing policy book; ~~a strike-through~~ indicates something which must be removed.

*Here is the actual document:*

**THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION  
WOMEN PASTORS' DOCUMENT**

**PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION  
ON WOMEN IN MINISTRY—REPORT**

**I. Appointment of an Associate Ministerial Secretary**

RECOMMENDED, That the NAD move with a sense of urgency to include a woman with ministerial background as ministerial secretary or an associate ministerial secretary.

**II. Needs to be Addressed by the Ministerial Association**

RECOMMENDED, That the following needs be addressed by NAD administration for the implementation and/or any appropriate structure.

A. A professional association for women serving in pastoral ministry that would organize an annual retreat for the purpose of mutual support, affirmation and networking. Financial assistance which should be provided where local conferences are unwilling or unable to pay for travel, etc.

B. Development of an electronic linkage to connect more experienced women pastors with women who are ministerial students or intern pastors and desire a professional mentor.

C. Development of a newsletter for women in ministry that would publish affirmative success stories, list job vacancies of interest, announce relevant seminars and workshops, and provide other helpful information. This newsletter should also be sent to conference presidents and ministerial directors.

D. Development of a database of churches in the NAD which are likely to want women as pastors. (The newsletter and other information should be provided to these churches on a regular basis.)

E. Development of a speaker's bureau for women in ministry which would solicit and market women speakers for camp meetings, seminars, weeks of prayer, retreats, etc. The NAD might provide travel subsidies for organizations seeking a woman speaker which could be managed by the resource center.

F. Appointment of an "ombudsman"—a person with insight into the system and denominational policies who can provide feedback and guidance when women in ministry encounter conflict with employing organizations, as well as provide mediation if necessary.

G. Development of training for women in ministry, about conflict resolution skills and how to sur-

vive in a male-dominated milieu.

H. Development of a placement service that would provide a database where women in ministry could list resumés and employing organizations could access this information. An adequate placement service should also include regular contacts with conference administrators and an identified list of local churches most likely to accept women as pastors; active promotion of qualified women seeking to match these candidates with openings; and career counseling for women in ministry.

I. Development of regular distribution of information to conferences regarding the NAD's support of women in pastoral ministry and policies that encourage the hiring of women pastors.

J. Opportunities for the public affirmation to church administrators who have taken risks to support and employ women in ministry. (If members so resist having women pastors that the conference president finds reelection at the next constituency meeting to be doubtful—that is, if he has "taken risks" to employ women—then the NAD should send a persuasive speaker to the constituency meeting to make sure he gets reelected anyway.)

K. Development of a fund from which to provide financial assistance for travel expenses and registration fees for women in ministry to attend continuing education events when the employing organization cannot or will not provide these benefits.

L. Preparation and dissemination of educational materials in multimedia designed to raise awareness about women in pastoral ministry and the role of women in the church.

**III. The Commissioning Service**

RECOMMENDED, That the NAD and its union and local conferences be encouraged to promptly conduct commissioning services for those women who are eligible.

**IV. Ministerial Function of  
Commissioned Ministers**

*[Special note: Section IV is the only part of this entire document which cannot be implemented solely on the authority of the liberal committees, authorized by the NAD Year-end Meeting to do so. Section IV would require Council approval, which it might or might not obtain. It has not yet been submitted to a Spring or Annual Council.]*

RECOMMENDED, That the following changes be made in *The Church Manual*:

A. Modify the language on page 46, in the section entitled "The Church Elder," as follows:

The ordination service is only performed by an ordained/commissioned minister with credentials from the local conference.

B. Modify the language on page 52, in the section entitled "The Deacon," as follows:

A newly elected deacon cannot fill his office until he has been set apart by an ordained/commissioned minister who holds current credentials from the conference.

C. Modify the language on page 175, in the section entitled "Organization of a Church," as follows:

Churches are organized by an ordained/commissioned minister on the recommendation of a conference or field committee.

D. Modify the language on pages 176-177, in the section entitled "Uniting Churches," as follows:

In a duly called meeting presided over by the conference president or the pastor or other ordained/commissioned minister, each church should vote on the question of union.

#### **V. Working Policy Revisions**

RECOMMENDED, That the following revisions be made in the NAD Working Policy.

A. That gender-inclusive language be used throughout.

B. That the language of CA 10 05 Union Conference Constituency and Bylaws be modified on page 100 as follows:

President: The president, who shall be an ordained/commissioned minister of experience . .

C. That the language of CA 20 05 Local Conference Constitution and Bylaws be modified on page 110 as follows:

President: The president, who shall be an ordained/commissioned minister of experience . .

D. That NAD Working Policy L 21 Commissioned be revised as follows:

~~L 21 Associates in Pastoral Care~~ Commissioned Minister—Role and Status.

~~L 21 05 Ministerial Employee—An associate in pastoral care~~ A person is recognized as a ministerial employee when all of the following prerequisites have been satisfied . .

#### **VI. Changes in the SDA Yearbook**

VOTED, To recommend that the NAD publish a NAD version of the NAD section of the *SDA Yearbook* with the licensed ministers and licensed commissioned ministers included in the listings.

#### **VII. Encourage Conferences to Hire Women as Pastors**

RECOMMENDED, In order to encourage conferences to hire more women in pastoral positions:

A. That the NAD extend a four-year internship budget (instead of the usual three-year internship budget) to each local conference which presently has no woman employed as a pastor and hires a woman in the pastoral internship.

B. That the NAD request local conferences to set realistic goals to increase the number of women in pastoral ministry in their field during the next three years.

C. That Adventist colleges and universities in North America be encouraged to recruit young women who sense a call to pastoral ministry to pursue ministerial studies.

#### **VII. [sic. should be VIII]**

##### **Data Base of Women**

##### **Candidates for Openings**

RECOMMENDED, That the NAD departmental staff develop and disseminate a data base of women who might be candidates for vacancies on union and local conference staffs.

#### **IX. Visibility of Women in**

##### **Pastoral Ministry Roles**

RECOMMENDED, That conferences be encouraged to invite women to speak during the Sabbath morning worship services and other general sessions at camp meetings.

#### **X. Articles in Church Journals**

RECOMMENDED, That the NAD edition of the *Adventist Review* and other general church papers be asked to publish profiles of women serving in pastoral ministry several times a year and that multiple exposures be given to models of gift-based ministry taking place in congregations throughout the NAD, including:

A. Concrete portrayal and affirmation of women in ministry

B. Indirect portrayals of women with men in creative approaches to pastoral ministry

C. Use of both print and video media

D. A cassette ministry of sermons and lectures supporting women in ministry

E. ACN "First Wednesday" segments highlighting women in ministry

### **XI. Resource Center for Women in Ministry**

RECOMMENDED, That the NAD Church Resource Consortium create a resource center for women in pastoral ministry. It should provide the following services:

*[To save space, the remainder of this section is omitted. It is virtually identical to Section II, except that item L is not repeated.]*

### **XII. Goals for Gender Inclusion in Church Organization**

RECOMMENDED, A. That there is urgent need to study and clarify the church's understanding and application of biblical hermeneutics. This should take the form of:

- i. Multiple articles in denominational periodicals.
- ii. A hermeneutic's conference sponsored by

the NAD and/or the GC.

B. That more of the advocacy for women in ministry be channeled through the union papers and other media of mass distribution, including:

- i. That Church Resource Consortium monitor and audit all NAD-produced and endorsed materials for compliance with a gender-inclusive model of ministry.

- ii. That the NAD produce and endorse only gender-inclusive resource materials.

- iii. That the division president issue a clear call to the church for gender inclusiveness at all levels of the church—board, committees, pastoral assignments, etc.

- iv. That materials be prepared for conference administrators and search committees that specifically address the need to consider qualified women as candidates.

—*The concludes the special NAD document.*

#### **WHO TO WRITE —**

It is not enough to write the North American Division office. They are under intense pressure, but some there want to obey God.

You also need to contact the union and conference offices in North America. The pressure is heavy there also. You probably know your local conference office address and phone number. (If you do not know it, a quick call to your union conference office will provide that information.)

#### **North American Division of SDA**

12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD  
20904-6600 / 301-680-6400 / fax -6464

#### **Atlantic Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box 1189, South Lancaster, MA 01561-1189  
/ 978-368-8333 / fax -7948

#### **Canadian Union Conference of SDA**

1148 King Street, East, Oshawa, Ontario,  
Canada L1H1H8 / 905-433-0011 / fax -0982

#### **Columbia Union Conference**

5427 Twin Knolls Road, Columbia, MD 21045  
/ 410-997-3414 / -7420

#### **Lake Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box C, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0904 /  
616-473-8200 / fax -8209

#### **Mid-America Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box 6128, Lincoln, NE 68506 / 402-484-  
3000 / fax -483-4453

#### **North Pacific Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box 16670, Portland, OR 97292-0670 /  
503-255-7300 / fax 253-2455

#### **Pacific Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box 5005, Westlake Village, CA 91359  
805-497-9457 / fax -495-2644

#### **Southern Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box 849, Decatur, GA 30031 / 404-299-  
1832 / fax -9726

#### **Southwestern Union Conference of SDA**

P.O. Box 4000, Burleson, TX 76097 / 817-295-  
0476 / fax -447-2443

**“If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, IT IS DOING NOTHING in case of an emergency. INDIFFERENCE AND NEUTRALITY in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.”**

—3 Testimonies, 281