NPUC Seeks Progress on Ordination

At its regular meeting on Feb. 20, the North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) executive committee voted to confirm its intentions to address ministerial ordination without regard to gender. But in deference to the world church discussion already in process, the NPUC action specifies that a special constituency session on the topic will be convened within 120 days after the world church committee studying the theology of ordination completes its work in 2014. NPUC leadership will advocate for a policy and practice that allows equality for women in all church leadership positions while it invites continued prayer, study and comments on this important topic, and awaits word of a timely world church resolution. Read more information at GleanerOnline.org.

Retirement's No Picnic

Illustrating that retirement is no time to be lazy, Bryce Pascoe, former North Pacific Union Conference executive secretary, has expanded his retiree “to-do” list. He has accepted a part-time stipend role as ministerial director for the Dakota Conference, based in Bismarck, N.D. Pascoe will provide support from his home base in Happy Valley, Ore., with only occasional travel required. Former Alaska Conference pastor, Neil Biloff, is the Dakota Conference president.
Evangelistic Focus for Idaho Conference

The leadership of the Idaho Conference is making some changes to the focus of this year's camp meeting. At the request of their pastors, the camp meeting will have an enhanced evangelistic focus. To lead up to the June 11–15 camp meeting, area churches will hold Bible studies, Revelation seminars or evangelistic meetings and bring those with further interest to wrap-up meetings with Dwight Nelson at the camp meeting. The planners are expecting double the typical audience each evening and are making plans to accommodate the increased attendance.

Auburn City Church Member and Walla Walla Alumni Receives Invention Award

Bruce Blaser, an engineer at Boeing and Auburn City Church member, was part of a team of six engineers who received Boeing's 2012 Special Invention Award. His team patented a 90-degree interconnect technique between a radiating printed wiring board (PWB) and another circuit board that allows for a more uniform transition. After graduating from Walla Walla University in 1981, Blaser joined Boeing where he was encouraged to generate at least one patent idea each year. Read more about Blaser's work at WallaWalla.edu.

The One Project Wraps up in Chicago

The One Project recently wrapped up its latest gathering in Chicago, Ill. The event, which will be in Seattle, Wash., next year, focuses on the supremacy of Jesus in the Adventist church and featured encouraging worship, workshops and speakers. This year's program was recorded by The Hope Channel. An archive of the presentations will be available on the project's website. Visit GleanerOnline.org to view a short video produced for the North American Division's NewsPoints.

Family Worship Ideas App

Are you looking for family worship ideas? The Adventist Family Ministries has an iPhone app that offers ideas and resources. You can search by age range or topic and it
provides a lesson as well as Bible verses and resources to go along with the lessons. Additionally, the app allows you to set reminders for morning and evening worship times. Download the app from the Apple App Store.

Looking Ahead

February
23: The Evidence, Stone Tower Church, Portland, OR

March
15–17: Big Lake Snow Weekend

April
4–6: SONscreen 2013
5–6: Gays in the Family
12–14: Health Ministries Training Symposium

February
It's been almost 500 years since William Tyndale, the Protestant reformer, was charged with heresy, but does his approach to the Bible apply to us today? This month, Dr. John McVay takes a look back at Tyndale and his views on ordination. Download the issue today!
Feb. 21, 2013: NPUC Seeks Progress on Ordination
How did the North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) executive committee address the issue of ordination during its meeting on February 20, 2013?

The committee engaged in a spirited but thoughtful discussion and voted to approve the following action: “Moved that the NPUC executive committee schedule a special session of the NPUC constituency to address ministerial ordination to convene within 120 days after the General Conference (GC) theology of ordination study committee completes its work.”

But the GC theology of ordination study committee is not scheduled to complete its work until it gives a report to the October 2014 Annual Council—and a final action on that wouldn’t take place until the 2015 General Conference session. That puts any further NPUC action potentially two years in the future. Why wait so long?

It comes down to one main reason: A desire to give our world church the opportunity to complete a process already in progress—as long as it is done in a timely manner by the projected dates. The unity of our church is important to NPUC leadership. We have carefully reflected on the call for unity issued by the General Conference on whether or not the practice of ordination is applied appropriately to women. We wish to signal our intent to avoid taking any action at this moment that could be broadly interpreted as one of disrespect toward the polity of our world church.

Will NPUC leadership do whatever the world church decides?

Well, a lot can happen in two years, but this is our hope: That the world church will resolve this clearly by issuing a strong recommendation at the 2014 Annual Council that will ultimately be approved at the next General Conference session scheduled for the summer of 2015. If the matter is clearly determined then, there may be no need for us to move ahead with plans for a special NPUC constituency session. If past history is repeated, and the issue is delayed or “punted” to succeeding GC committees or future world church sessions, the NPUC has resolved to then move ahead on its own, as per the February 20 action.
So what is the current position of NPUC leadership on the issue of women’s ordination?

The members of the NPUC executive committee have a consensual conviction that choosing candidates for leadership roles and the way those leaders are affirmed should both be conducted without reference to gender. This conclusion is based on deep reflection upon Scripture and on the story of our church. We understand this conviction is not shared by every member within our union or in the world church as a whole. We believe this is an area where honest-hearted people who take a high view of Scripture may disagree. And we believe the best course ahead for our church is to honor this range of convictions rather than suppress it. If the world church does not find its way clear at the 2014 Annual Council or 2015 General Conference session to affirm areas within our movement who are open and ready to accept women into the full range of leadership, the NPUC is prepared to respectfully move ahead to bring the issue to a vote in the Northwest.

Are all members of the NPUC executive committee in agreement with this stance?

The 40 members of our committee represent the diversity among our membership, including administrators, pastors, teachers and lay people from all sectors of the Northwest. So, of course there are different opinions—often strong opinions—among our group. If everyone thought exactly alike, discussion of this topic would be quite brief. But in spite of the complexity, decisions voted on this issue within our committee have passed with an overwhelming majority in favor.

So you're essentially saying, if the world church doesn’t agree with our view, we’ll do what we want anyway?

We have expressed our desire to move in harmony with our world church. But we believe our church mission and Bible-based doctrines must drive our policies, not the other way around. And we believe it is past time to bring every person called to minister to the front lines. In Joel 2 and Acts 2, we see God promising to pour out His Spirit on “sons and daughters” who will prophesy in His name. We don’t want our policies to become a human barrier to what God is doing.

How does this NPUC position reflect its views on church unity?

We believe there is a big difference between unity and uniformity. It seems inconsistent with
our scriptural mandate to grant women pastoral roles and responsibilities and yet deny them the full authority freely granted to male pastors. According to current working policy, male ministers who are ordained and female ministers who are commissioned must also have been previously ordained as local elders. There is unity on ordaining both men and women to ministry at every level except one—pastoral ministry. This promotes a mixed message on our view of women in leadership and contradicts our core value of equality supported in Scripture. Our own North American Division has clearly stated its intention to equip and engage more women in positions of administrative and pastoral leadership on this continent. We plan to work in unity with that mandate, and hope that the world church will see wisdom in allowing some variance in practice if necessary to preserve our overall unity in mission.

How does that measure up with the view of the General Conference?

After the recent actions of two North American union conferences to approve ordinations without regard to gender, the General Conference issued a sternly worded statement intended to discourage any further similar actions apart from world church approval. But an excerpt here from a report presented at the General Conference Spring Council in April, 2012, brings some important perspective to consider: “At the same time as the Church has worked to preserve unity, the effect of church growth has enlarged the understanding of diversity and its rightful place in a worldwide community. To expect that every entity of the world will look and function exactly like every other entity of its type may in itself become an impediment to mission. The development of structural designs in the history of the Church indicates that unity must be built on a stronger foundation than uniformity. There must be room to recognize the need for a legitimacy of local adaptation of policies and procedures that facilitate the mission while not diminishing the worldwide identity, harmony and unity of the Church.”

The NPUC motion states a potential constituency session would be scheduled within 120 days following the 2014 Annual Council. Wouldn’t this have to technically wait until after the 2015 GC session?

Our NPUC executive committee meeting scheduled for November 2014 will likely revisit this once the Annual Council recommendations are public. We want to give our General Conference the benefit of the doubt on resolving this issue in a timely manner, and yes, the definitive voice of our world church is the General Conference in session.

What if the GC theology of ordination study committee finds that our current practice of ordination is not biblical and that we should follow a different process in designating
pastors and church leaders? Is the whole idea of women’s ordination then a moot point?

We and our world church will cross that bridge if it comes. There are certainly different schools of thought on that topic. One thing is certain: We believe that both men and women are called to be shepherds and leaders of God’s flock and should be provided equal respect and support by our church. We will advocate for that and move into full compliance in our practice as soon as possible.

If the NPUC does move ahead to approve the ordination of women within its territory, what will happen to groups or churches that may not feel comfortable with that practice?

We believe that each local conference will continue to be sensitive to the unique characteristics of their individual churches. A policy may permit without mandating.

Between now and 2014–15, how should NPUC members engage in a constructive discussion?

The NPUC, through the GLEANER and other online options, will educate members on the rationale that supports the recent executive committee actions. The NPUC ad hoc committee on women in leadership has been asked to develop additional counsel on a communicative process and timeline to follow as we look toward further actions from the world church. All members are encouraged to read documents and add their own comments or send comments as letters to the editor.
Alumni: Blaser and Boeing Team Receive Invention Award

February 25, 2013

Patent is Granted for Specialized Antenna

By: Rosa Jimenez

Bruce Blaser was part of a team of six Boeing engineers who received an invention award.

Bruce Blaser has been honored with Boeing’s 2012 Special Invention Award.

The aerospace company gives these awards “each year to individuals and teams who are inspired to create the kind of intellectual property that proves most valuable to Boeing and to the future of aerospace.”

Blaser was part of a team of six Boeing engineers who patented a 90–degree interconnect technique between a radiating printed wiring board (PWB) and another circuit board by attaching a flexible circuit to the PWB called “rigid flex.” This allows for a more uniform transition that is better for manufacturing and operates at millimeter wave frequencies.

“When you get into antennas that operate at really high frequencies, the geometry gets small, and it becomes difficult to keep a constant impedance over the line transition areas so you don’t get energy reflected back,” he says. “Two hair widths—0.004 inches—is a big deal, and it can be enough to make it perform poorly.

“The patent was a small part of the phased array antenna projects we work on,” explains Blaser. “These antennas are used mainly for satellite communication from moving vehicles, and we are continually striving to make them more mass producible. We would like to make them inexpensive enough to purchase at a local store and put on your camper.”

Blaser graduated from the Edward F. Cross School of Engineering in 1981, and began working for Boeing soon after. There, he and his electromagnetics colleagues are encouraged to generate at least one patent idea per year, and he enjoys the team–oriented brainstorming environment that results in stimulating ideas.

“When you get a group of engineers in a room with a white board talking technology, our idea of ‘fun,’ you build on other people’s ideas and sometimes come out with something useful, like in this case. In my job, you’re left with a fair amount of freedom to investigate
ideas and push them to fruition,” he says.

Blaser was raised in Denver, Colo., where he attended Mile High Academy. He loves the outdoors and spent his childhood skiing, hiking, and camping in the Rocky Mountains. More recently, he has climbed Mount Rainier eight times, and enjoys riding his two horses in his spare time. He and his wife, Linda ’81, are parents to Tiffany Billington att., Chelsey ’12, and Janessa.