Interview with Dan Jackson

Shortly after his reelection as president of the North American Division (NAD), Daniel Jackson sat down with NAD communication director, Daniel Weber, to share his thoughts on the mission of the church in the North American territory and his hopes and wishes for the members there. Jackson acknowledged that the church needs honest discussion on important issues. But he stated that “we still need to be able to say, ‘You are my brother. You are my sister. I love you. I care about you. And regardless of your position on this or that, we will link arms and walk together to God’s Kingdom!’” Read the full interview online.

The Ordination Decision: In Depth
For additional clarification on the implications of Wednesday’s vote on ordination, here are a few points. This vote does not determine whether or not women can serve as ministers. The world church has already decided that women may serve as credentialed ministers. This vote was not about whether female pastors should be ordained, but who should decide whether or not to ordain them. Dan Jackson, North American Division (NAD) president, said the 107 women pastors currently laboring in the NAD will continue serving their churches and communities. “We will continue with our intention of placing as many women into pastoral ministry as possible.” Read a full article on this topic online.

**NW Delegate Perspective**

After the North American Division meeting Wednesday evening, Gleaner correspondent Julie Sanders Keymer asked Paul Hoover, Upper Columbia Conference president, and his wife, Patti, about their thoughts on that day’s ordination vote and their commitment to the gospel mission of our church in the Northwest and around the world. Watch the video now.

[Watch the video now.]

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**Highlights of the Day**
After the intense discussion on Wednesday, Thursday’s schedule offered some relief. Here are three highlights of the day's activities.

- Full North American Division team now elected — Dan Jackson, president; G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary; G. Thomas Evans, treasurer.

- The Haystack TV missed breaking the Guinness World Record for a potluck by just 176 persons. They needed 1,276 to break the record held by a church in Arizona. Tomorrow’s GleanerWeekly will feature a video of the event.

- Delegates were given the afternoon to explore the acres of exhibits in the convention center or just rest weary minds and feet.

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**WWU Alumni Take to the Water**

Walla Walla University (WWU) alumni department held a special event on the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas during the GC Session. Alumni, faculty and staff enjoyed a riverboat ride around downtown San Antonio before stopping to enjoy ice cream. Watch this short video of their experience with interviews from alumni and staff.
"It's a simple blob of yogurt, my breakfast. People who know far more than I do (and they are legion) say it likely contains millions of microbes—bacteria if you will. Normally, that would not seem tasty. Yet these little guys are good for my digestive system, and that's more than just a gut feeling. Spread bacteria out in the wrong spot, and you're looking at trouble. It infects and inflames. It debilitates and destroys. Antibiotics used judiciously can kill it. But used indiscriminately they can create superbugs, impervious to any known prevention." Continue reading on the NPUC Gleaner Facebook page.
Looking Ahead

July

- July 2–11: General Conference Session, San Antonio, TX
- July 15: Restoration International's NW Family Retreat, Spangle, WA
- July 17: NAARA Annual Retreat, Lillooet, British Columbia, Canada
- July 21–25: UCC Sheridan Meadows Camp Meeting, Republic, WA

More Events Online
InPrint

July

Changes are coming to Adventist education in the Northwest — many of them good and all of them challenging. Through it all, educational leaders are committed to continuing the unique mission of Adventist schools. What does the future hold for our students? Read more in the July Gleaner at GleanerNow.com.
Interview with Reelected NAD President Daniel Jackson

Shortly after his reelection as president of the North American Division, Daniel Jackson sat down with NAD Communication director, Daniel Weber, to share his thoughts on the mission of the church in the North American territory and his hopes and wishes for the members there.

NAD Communication: You were just reelected for another five year term. Tell me your thoughts. How does this compare to five years ago when you were elected?

Dan Jackson: Well, last time it was such a shock for me that I thought it was just a brand new adventure that I headed out on it with a lot of exuberance and enthusiasm. And this time around there’s a fair amount of knowledge and a fair amount of concern for the future of the church but I am really pleased and really happy to be able to serve. I am just very deeply moved by the expression of the NAD delegates yesterday as they stood when we were...
announced. I told my wife, I've got to put my head down because I'm going to blubber. So there's just a completely different kind of sense this time around. Now I understand not only what's going on, but I also sense what lies ahead.

**NAD Comm**: When you were elected five years ago, as you said, everything was new. But now, looking at the past five years, how do those experiences focus the mission of the division for the next five years?

**Dan Jackson**: Well, I just see the last five years as having been very positive, very enjoyable years. We moved in directions that we hadn't gone before and I believe that God has blessed the NAD. I think we have built a solid foundation in the last five years. When I look ahead I see a wide variety of potentials and all of them are good, and I praise God for what lies ahead. We have a positive future ahead of us.

**NAD Communication**: The church, some say, faces slightly contentious times based on some of the discussions taking place here (in San Antonio). In spite of that, what is your hope for the church?

**Dan Jackson**: Well, my hope for the church, I really believe that we tie into God's vision for the church. Ellen White makes the comment, "The church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard." (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 15) and I believe that God wants to do things through the church that it has never experienced, and I see that as particularly true in the North American Division. We are the mother division, but we have not perhaps grown. We have not been as aggressive as some of the other divisions. We cannot be South America. We cannot be Eastern Africa. We are the cosmopolitan, complex diverse group of the North American Division. But I believe that moving into the future there are some things that we can do to ignite an advancement of God's cause that we has not been experienced in this division before.

**NAD Communication**: What gives you hope?

**Dan Jackson**: The people. The people in the division give me hope. I have had the privilege of traveling back and forth through this division to a variety of different meetings and to different places, and I see the desire of our people to be engaged in the work of the gospel. In particular, that is very true of our young people. I think our young people are waiting to be fueled to become a dynamo, and I see this in a number of areas. I think we have not fully explored those areas, or exploited them yet, but I think that the people are the potential of this division. And I get excited when I think of some of the things that could happen. And this is not a "paid political announcement." I have seen enough of North America and enough of the people of North America to know that there is something waiting to happen and that God is going to do something very positive in our territory.

**NAD Communication**: What would you say to the discussions going back and forth, over issues that are not theological but are more ecclesiastical? What is your response to that?

**Dan Jackson**: Well first of all, I am very, very much a believer that it does not matter who a person is or whether they like us or love us, or whatever their position may be, we are brethren. We are bound together, I believe, – this is my theological and practical belief – we are bound together with bonds that Jesus created with His own blood. So regardless of what a person's position is or how they feel about us, they are still our brethren. The North American Division, especially in the question of ordination of women to the gospel ministry, has been accused by many people of many things, and yet it has been our position from the beginning that we represent two solitudes – not just one. That we are responsible to be the leadership for all the people of the North American Division. So what I would say to the individuals is, that by God's grace, the engine known as North America is going to move down the tracks. That by God's grace, we are going to rise above theological differences, practical differences, suspicions, or whatever, and we are going to forge a movement here by God's grace. I think God is leading us to this and my statement to the people would be, Come with us! Get on board with us. Move ahead with us. Because if not, you will be left behind.
NAD Communication: Anything else you would like to share with us?

Dan Jackson: Yes. I think Jesus is coming soon and I am praying that that will happen. I believe very sincerely that Jesus wants to return. I believe that. I believe that he will return when we begin to grow into the church that He wants. I want to quote Ellen White on the first page of Acts of the Apostles where she says, “It has been God’s plan from the beginning that through his church, even to principalities and powers in the heavenly places, shall be manifested the final and the full display of the love of God.” We’ve got to come to the place where, by God’s grace, we are extending His love to one another, so that we move beyond distinctions, we move beyond differences. We move beyond the racial problems that can plague us. And we begin to sense that the real standard we begin to implement in the church is the standard of love. The standard that we can look at each other and no matter whether we agree or disagree – and by the way I believe that the church needs disagreement, honest, honorable disagreement – but in the middle of that disagreement, there always needs to be the assurance, “You are my brother. You are my sister. I love you. I care about you. And regardless of your position on this or that, we will link arms and walk together to God’s Kingdom!”
Delegates of the 2015 General Conference Session voted "No" today to the carefully worded proposal that would have allowed the 13 divisions of our world church to each decide for themselves whether or not to provide for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry within their own territories. The vote, conducted by secret paper ballots, was 977 in favor of divisions deciding and 1,381 opposing it.

This vote does not determine whether or not women can serve as ministers. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has already decided that women may serve as credentialed ministers. As several delegates pointed out during floor speeches (including special guest former GC president Jan Paulsen), this vote was not about whether female pastors should be ordained, but who should decide whether or not to ordain them.

Dan Jackson, president of the North America Division, said that regardless of whether or not they are ordained, the 107 women pastors currently laboring in the NAD will continue serving their churches and communities. "We will continue with our intention of placing as many women into pastoral ministry as possible. We affirm the important role they play in reaching all of God's children."

Ordination of elders unchanged
Neither does today’s vote change the current GC policy on the ordination of women as local church elders, as stated
in the 2009 Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook, p. 94: "Elders and deacons should be persons of experience, chosen wisely. By action of the Annual Council of 1975, reaffirmed at the 1984 Annual Council, both men and women are eligible to serve as elders and receive ordination to this position of service in the church."

Nor does this vote limit the mission of the global church's Women's Ministries departments in carrying forward their work. Nancy Buxton, Mid-America Union Conference Women's Ministries leader, points out that Women's Ministries is not about ordination. "We have never promoted the ordination of women," she said. "Women's Ministries is about ministry — it's about helping women be all God created them to be as leaders, teachers, friends and yes, pastors. Our ministry involves a caring, loving relationship with each other within the church and community."

**Proper procedures**

Today's proceedings, chaired by GC vice president Michael Ryan, were orderly, well explained and bathed in prayer. Multiple times during the day delegates paused for sessions of earnest prayer.

In his morning remarks GC president Ted N.C. Wilson sincerely requested that the discussion be civil and allowed to continue without anyone calling question or proposing amendments.

Before discussion began three documents were read aloud: Theology and Practice of Ministerial Ordination, Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination, and the three positions from the Theology of Ordination Study Committee report, all based on Scripture. The words were also displayed on the screen and included in delegates' packets.

**History of the debate**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been wrestling with this topic off and on for nearly 100 years. Adventist historians report that between 1870-1900 over 20 women received ministerial credentials from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen White among them. These women served as evangelists and in pastoral roles. They were paid from tithe funds — with Mrs. Whites' approval — but there is no record of them being ordained.

According to a report given during preliminaries this morning, there have been numerous committees through the years tasked with exploring this topic and bringing a recommendation. In most cases, there was "failure to reach consensus" and the matter was referred for "more study." (www.columbiaunionvisitor.com/timeline-the-road-to-ordination)

In June 2014 the 106-member Theology of Ordination Study Committee, which had analyzed 65 papers and presentations for 18 months) voted by a two-thirds majority to recommend that each division be allowed to determine its own trajectory on this matter. For an in-depth analysis of where the authority for ordination lies see Who Runs the Church? Understanding the Unity, Structure and Authority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

However, in October 2014 the GC and division officers declared unanimously that the issue should be determined through a process of church discussion and voting. Members of the Annual Council voted to place before the 2015 GC Session the question that was voted today: "After your prayerful study on ordination from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the reports of the study commissions, and; after your careful consideration of what is best for the church and the fulfillment of its mission, is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? Yes or No."

**Strong opinions and prayers for peace**

Because our theologians have not been able to reach consensus, many Adventists have concluded that this is a point of church procedure, not a theological issue. In an article in the July/August 2015 Elder's Digest, Ekkehardt Mueller says, "The ordination debate has nothing to do with the Bible’s most fundamental teachings. It does not belong to the core of Adventist beliefs."
However, as evidenced during today’s debate, many other Adventists believe this is a matter of Scriptural integrity and firmly hold that the church would have strayed from God’s plans if the vote had been “Yes.” With 59% of the delegates voting “No” to 41% voting “Yes,” it is clear that opinions are strong on both sides of this question.

One female pastor who has served in various NAD churches for 19 years says she is saddened by the unkind words and lack of Christian courtesy that has surrounded this debate. “I know that is not Jesus speaking,” she said. “I have never spent one minute fighting for ordination and I never will. But it breaks my heart that the church I love and passionately serve chooses not to acknowledge my calling or the fruits of the ministry God has given me.”

She added that she is “praying earnestly for the grace to accept the vote and begging God to give me peace, patience and the right attitude to continue being the light and sharing the light that He gives me.”

Related from Barna Group: *Five Factors Changing Women’s Relationships with Churches*

—Brenda Dickerson, Mid-America Union Conference communication director
—Photo: Rohann Wellington