

Progress or Regress? *Adventist Women in*

Ministry | BY BERT HALOVIK AND KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE

The following is adapted from a presentation on women's ordination given at the Azure Hills SDA Church on March 22, 2014 for its series "The Advent Movement: Progress or Regress?"

It soon became clear that women had received ministerial licenses from the 1870s onward.

During the 1970s, Adventist women ministers holding ministerial licenses had their credentials taken away and were placed on a track that, by official policy, forever kept them from being fully ordained. One of the women who had her ministerial license revoked was Josephine Benton (*right*). She came to the General Conference Archives in the late 1970s with a list of SDA women who had received the ministerial license from 1904 to 1975. Her basic questions were, *what did a ministerial license mean in the past?*, and, *how far back in SDA history did women receive the ministerial license?* Her questions led to huge surprises, for no one had ever researched this topic in Adventist history. By looking at the nineteenth-century minutes of localized state conference meetings held annually, it soon became clear that women had received ministerial licenses from the 1870s onward. Josephine proceeded to publish her findings in her book entitled *Called by God*.¹

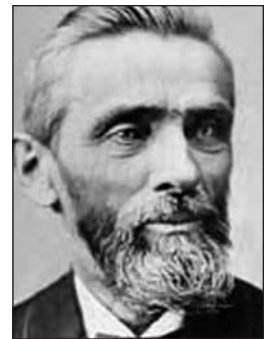


It is important to note that in 1975, no one in Seventh-day Adventism—including the leaders who had recently taken away the ministerial licenses of women pastors—knew about this heritage that was uncovered later that decade.

Up to that time, at least fifty women had received ministerial licenses within the Adventist church. The decisions of the 1970s had been made before adequate research had occurred, and before anyone realized that it undid over a century of progress toward women's ordination.

Early Adventist credentials

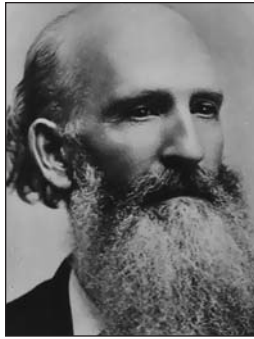
At the start of the Advent movement, the earliest Adventists were suspicious of organizations.² Jesus was coming soon, and they had been "called out" of organized Protestant religions in order to preach the soon return of Jesus. Because of the suspicion of human structures, every precaution was made to avoid drawing unnecessary lines of power. J. N. Loughborough (*right*) recalled his first years within the Advent Movement as a time when no records of church membership were kept, no church officers were appointed and there was "no ordination of any kind except that of one preacher."³



However, both the needs of the local congregations and the need to distinguish themselves from "false preachers" caused James White and others to justify their eventual concession to organizing as preferable to falling into ecclesiastical chaos.⁴ The earliest Adventist references to those "called by God" did not typically use the words "ordained" or "ordination," but rather used "setting apart" or "laying

on of hands,” probably due to a desire to follow the words of Scripture.

Beginning in 1853 (a decade before the church organized), cards of official approval from the Advent Movement were issued with signatures from James White (*above*) and Joseph Bates (*below*). In November of that year, the authority



to preach was associated with ordination in order to deal with “unworthy” teachers. By the next month, the importance of ordination in order to baptize was mentioned specifically. As churches

grew in membership, local needs caused the movement to ordain deacons and local elders to care for the local congregations. However, these lay leaders were typically not able to baptize.

In 1861, the Michigan Conference formalized the policy of granting a license to preach to qualified ministers which was renewed each year, assuming that after a “testing time” the minister would be granted ordination credentials, thus allowing the minister to perform baptisms and other ordinances. When the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized in 1863, the Michigan Conference policy was adopted for the entire denomination.

By 1870—within seven years of the first issuing of ministerial licenses by the newly-established SDA denomination—women held licenses, although there is no evidence that after a “testing time” they were ordained. It is interesting to see the ways in which their ministry paralleled their male colleagues:

1. Their training as ministers was encouraged by Ellen G. White;
2. Their examination committees often included Mrs. White being present to listen

- and to ask them questions;
3. They followed the same path to the ministry as that followed by men;
4. They typically served as part of husband-wife ministry teams;
5. Sometimes they served on their own;
6. They participated in evangelistic efforts;
7. They preached;
8. They were licensed by local conferences;
9. They were paid by the local conference or by the General Conference with tithe funds;
10. When Adventist ministry shifted from an itinerant ministry to a more localized church ministry in the 1920s, they continued to contribute as licensed ministers.

The progressive nature of nineteenth-century ministry

Very few Adventists realize two things about nineteenth-century Adventism: that ministry was itinerant and that our first “pastor” (in the way we mean that role today) was a woman.

First, it is crucial for us to understand the nature of nineteenth-century Adventist ministry. Adventists in their initial understanding of ministry focused entirely upon the newly-discovered third angel’s message (the seventh-day Sabbath) and effectively evangelized mid-western America during the 1850s and 1860s. James White gave Adventism one of its earliest definitions of ministry. He said the duty of the minister was “to preach the word, to teach faithfully the plain declarations of the word of God,” and when that initial duty was performed, to move on to new fields. The Millerite experience, during which many believers had been disfellowshipped from Christian churches, reminded Adventists of church authoritarianism and was a factor in moving Adventists away from stationary pastorates. Jesus was coming soon, and the Gospel needed to be shared with as many as possible.

Within its initial evangelistic perspective, however, there were attempts to incorporate a caring pastoral ministry. It was typically the

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Adventist women, as members of husband-wife evangelistic teams, who performed such roles. A number of husband-wife teams functioned during the 1850s and 1860s, and the first was that of Merritt (*right*) and Angeline Cornell. Angeline Cornell served forty-four years in ministry with her husband, Merritt Cornell, and James White described their combined ministerial focus:



Iowa seems to be a very encouraging field of labor. . . The way is open for Brother Cornell to labor successfully in this part of the State. Sister Cornell has well acted her part. The mode of warfare is something as follows: Brother Cornell goes out alone into a new place. . . preaches a few days, when friends appear to invite him to their houses; and when the work is well under way, Sister Cornell joins her husband, and labors from house to house as they are invited. And when Brother Cornell's work is done, it is a good place for sister Cornell to remain and defend the truth in private conversations, and bear responsibilities of the work in the midst of young disciples. In this way both can bear a part in the good work.⁵

The woman member of the husband-wife team was vital at that time and would translate into a local pastor's role today. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the woman partner in the husband-wife team came the closest to our current understanding of pastoral ministry. The husband-wife team sought to meet the needs of the church for both evangelistic and pastoral ministries. James White considered the ministry of the woman important, saying, "My views and feelings are that the minister's wife stands in so close a relation to the work of God, a relation which so affects him for better or worse, that she should, in the ordination prayer, be set apart as his helper."⁶

Certainly Adventist church leaders in the 1860s and onward saw no reason to inhibit women from working in gospel ministry and even to be "set apart" to do so. Women were also

active as ministers in the way that Adventism defined ministry at the time—that is, in itinerant evangelistic preaching. The key to ministry in the nineteenth century was evangelism, which was the focus of the 1870s. The church recognized that vast areas of the United States were unrepresented and un-entered by Seventh-day Adventism, and evangelists were in desperate need. In light of this, the church wisely encouraged both men *and* women to receive training and enter the ministerial ranks. Not only were women working in ways that we currently define as "pastoral ministry," but they were ministers as the church defined ministry in the nineteenth century too. In 1871 the General Conference Session delegates voted that "means should be taken to encourage and properly instruct men and women for the work of teaching the word of God." The resolution called for a course "to instruct our devoted young men and young women, all over the land, in the principles of present truth, and the best methods of teaching them to the people."⁷

Thus, over 140 years ago, the Seventh-day Adventist Church encouraged its women to enter the ministry. Indeed, there was no definition of ministry within the nineteenth-century SDA Church that didn't include women. Women belonged to and spoke at ministerial associations, held the SDA ministerial license or the "license to preach," conducted evangelistic campaigns, visited churches doing pastoral labor, and were paid from tithe funds that Ellen White considered reserved for the official church ministry.

A case study: Elbert and Ellen Lane

As early as 1872, the *Review* reported on the ministry of Elbert (*right*) and Ellen Lane. Mrs. Lane actually took over her husband's evangelistic meetings in 1873 when he became ill with diphtheria.





Ellen Lane (left) was clearly effective in her ministry and became well-known for her health and temperance ministry. She was widely accepted in town halls in various cities and

addressed assemblies of people numbering in the hundreds, sometimes speaking to standing room only, with people unable to get in. Because of the evident success of her ministry, the Michigan Conference voted the ministerial license to Mrs. Lane in 1878.

By the early 1880s, SDAs began to assume a more “pastoral” focus, despite the fact that the church continued to lack stationary pastors. The Lanes adapted nicely as evidenced in their “Report” in the *Review* of Aug. 12, 1880:

Since our last report, we have labored mostly among the churches. Spent a few days at Wayland, and visited nearly every family in the church. . . We next labored six weeks with the church at Orleans, in a revival meeting. We made between fifty and sixty pastoral visits. . . Have also labored with the little company at Twin Lakes. They were quite discouraged, having had no ministerial labor for eighteen months.

Elbert Lane died on August 6th, 1881 (the same day as James White) while conducting meetings in Camden, Michigan. His wife was conducting a separate series of meetings in another place when she was informed of her husband’s death.

It is interesting that both Mrs. White and Mrs. Lane were widowed on the same day and that both continued on in their ministerial work long after the deaths of their husbands. Husband-wife ministries were, in a very real sense, allowed to fulfill these reflective Ellen White statements written from Australia:

While I was in America. . . I was instructed that there are matters that need to be considered. Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being as necessary to the work of ministry as their husbands.⁸

The method of paying men-laborers and not their wives, is a plan not after the Lord’s order. Injustice is thus done. A mistake is made. The Lord does not favor this plan. This arrangement, if carried out in our Conference, is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in [i.e., the work of ministry].⁹

Mrs. Lane resumed her ministry after the death of her husband and continued to be voted the ministerial license for the next seven years. She worked as a denominational minister in every way, yet because she was not ordained she was unable to officially organize churches or baptize those she brought to Christ. She was a member of the Michigan ministerial association, attended ministers’ Bible schools, led out in quarterly meetings, preached evangelistic sermons on all phases of denominational teaching, lectured to large SDA and non-SDA audiences on health and temperance matters, conducted revival meetings, made pastoral visits to languishing churches, maintained excellent contacts with many non-SDA churches, and was even called upon by fellow ministers to finish off their evangelistic meetings when they were called elsewhere. We thus see that, in the fullest sense of the meaning of ministry in the nineteenth century, Mrs. Ellen S. Lane was indeed a minister.

1881 General Conference Session actions

In 1881 the General Conference Session convened, placing women’s ordination on the agenda. Since women ministers had been holding ministerial licenses for over a decade with successful ministries but had not been ordained (and therefore were unable to conduct baptisms and other ordinances), the following resolutions from the 1881 session are not surprising:

1. RESOLVED, That all candidates for license and ordination should be examined with reference to their intellectual and spiritual fitness for the successful discharge of the

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2. RESOLVED, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry.¹⁰

The first resolution was adopted; the second was apparently not mentioned again other than being reported in the *Signs of the Times* by someone who considered it had been adopted. On July 9, 1895, there was a statement by Ellen White in the *Review and Herald*:

Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. . . Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work.

Women in early twentieth-century Adventist ministry: Lulu Wightman and Diamondola Keanides Ashod

Probably very few of the members of a number of churches in New York state realize that their church was initially established by a woman. But that is true of at least twelve churches thanks to Mrs. Lulu Wightman (right). According to her ministerial colleagues and conference officials, Lulu Wightman was the “most successful minister in New York State between 1896 and 1905.” She was known for raising up Adventist churches, and even offered a reward of one hundred dollars to anyone who



could present even one text of Scripture proving Sunday to be the Sabbath. A statistical analysis of the 1904 General Conference clearly shows Mrs. Wightman as the most effective minister in New York state if judged solely by the number of baptisms and professions of faith.

One of Lulu's fellow ministers evaluated her after her first year in ministry, saying:

I say as I have said all the time in reference to Sr. Lulu Wightman, that a good lady worker will accomplish as much good as the best men we have got, and I am more and more convinced that it is so. Look at Sr. Lulu W.'s work. She has accomplished more the last two years than any minister in this state. . . I am also in favor of giving license to Sr. Lulu Wightman to preach, and believe that there is no reason why she should not receive it, and if Bro. W. is a man of ability and works with his wife and promises to make a successful laborer, I am in favor of giving him license also.¹²

In the October 1897 annual meeting of the New York Conference, Lulu Wightman received her ministerial license and, from time to time, her husband received some pay from the conference in recognition of his help to her. Mrs. Wightman was licensed for six years before her husband received his license. He was ordained two years after receiving his license. She never was.

Apparently the result of licensing John Wightman caused a discussion concerning the question of salary for the now-formed wife-husband team. When the conference president suggested that Mrs. Wightman “voluntarily lower her salary” from nine dollars to seven dollars per week to conform to the usual licentiate salary of seven dollars, her husband felt grieved and wrote:

Mrs. Wightman's personal work was considered by three or four former [auditing] committees as being that of an ordained minister unquestionably; and yet they felt . . . that a woman could not properly be ordained—just now at least—and so they fixed her compensation as near the “ordained” rate as possible. As her capability was recognized and general fitness known to all, and work continued, the \$9 is still as fitting under the circumstances as before.¹³

The Wightman's ministry continued and embraced a variety of roles. Mrs. Wightman attained state and national acclaim in religious liberty lectures before a number of state legislatures. Her husband proudly wrote of her in 1909:

*Yesterday a resolution was adopted in the House of Representatives inviting Mrs. Wightman to address the representatives in the House of Representatives chamber on "The Rise of Religious Liberty in the United States." I believe this action upon the part of the Missouri legislature is unprecedented in the history of our people.*¹⁴

Additionally, there is no doubt that one of our most courageous ministers was Diamondola



Keanides Ashod (*left*), secretary-treasurer of the Levant Union Mission who served during World War I. Her mission location, which encompassed the former Ottoman Empire territories of Armenia, Bulgaria,

Central Turkey, Cilicia, and Greece, was a very dangerous area for Seventh-day Adventists during this period.

Diamondola had amazing facility with languages. Born of a Greek family living in Turkey, she learned English through the Adventist paper, *Our Little Friend*, in her teens so that when American missionary C. M. AcMoody came to her area of the Levant, he urged her to accompany him to the various mission territories in the region and translate for him in Greek, Turkish, and Armenian. She also worked with missionary R. S. Greaves, who, through her work with him, baptized the first Adventist convert in Greece. Her work with a small group of believers in Albania also resulted in baptisms. Amazingly, Diamondola accomplished all of this while still in her teens. Upon the completion of her second missionary journey, Diamondola began receiving a denominational salary, and after finishing her schooling she was asked to work at the mission headquarters office in

Constantinople. In her office work, she gained fluency not only in Turkish, Greek, Armenian, and English, but also in French and German. She was soon promoted to secretary-treasurer of the Levant Union Mission, where some came to call her "the voice and pen of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" in that mission.¹⁵

While Adventist membership in and around Constantinople continued to grow during the war, the mission headquarters learned of horrible atrocities befalling Armenian Adventists and others who were forcibly marched toward the Syrian Desert with the intent that they perish along the way. Well over half of the 400 members of the pre-war Adventist community were martyred in those forced marches.

After being arrested and released from imprisonment on several occasions, Diamondola, along with the union president E. E. Frauchiger (*below*), left for the interior with documents and supplies that they hoped might bring the release of some of these persecuted believers. While their dangerous mission was unsuccessful in gaining the release of any, the supplies that were donated by the Constantinople mission did bring relief to some of those



suffering. Upon their return, Diamondola informed the headquarters community of the results of the trip she and President Frauchiger undertook: "We found many of the members. The Armenian members

were nearly all with the exiles. They were grateful for your clothing and money, which helped alleviate some of their suffering. But we could not save them from the death march. Nevertheless, praise God, they were faithful."¹⁶

Diamondola and Aram Ashod were married in September 1921, and continued their ministry together for the next forty-one years, working together in Iran, Greece, Lebanon, and Cyprus. Diamondola died in 1990 at the age of ninety-six.

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Regression: The IRS and the blocking of women ministers

By the early 1960s, the Adventist Church still granted a “ministerial license” to ministers in training—ministers who had usually finished their formal education but were now getting ministerial experience. It was considered a “testing time.” If no problems presented themselves after several years, a minister would be ordained and then receive “ministerial credentials,” authorizing the minister to baptize and perform other ordinances such as marriage, burial services and communion. In the early 1960s, seven women held such ministerial licenses. They, along with their male colleagues, were assumed to be on the track towards ordination even if the “testing time” of women ministers never seemed to come to an end.

Conferences treated the salaries paid to these “licensed ministers” the same as the salaries paid to ordained ministers, which resulted in lower income taxes paid by the interns and lower social security contributions paid by the conferences. However, in 1965, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) notified the denomination that licensed ministers must be “fully qualified to exercise all the ecclesiastical duties” of the ordained ministers in order to receive parsonage and other tax benefits. Suddenly, if the licensed but unordained ministers-in-training did not receive government tax benefits, the denomination would have to make up the difference. This was a very costly possibility.

In 1966 when Robert Pierson became General Conference president and Neal Wilson (*right*) became General Conference vice-president for North America, they inherited the IRS problem. Would the church be able to define those with ministerial licenses in a way that met IRS standards? Or would the General Conference have to spend millions of dollars to make up the difference



for their employees? The amounts also involved large sums of tax needing to be paid to the IRS in arrears. Future employment of ministers would have been much more costly. The problem took over a decade to resolve.¹⁷

The 1975 Spring Meeting consequently made two changes to church policy: 1. those with ministerial licenses and on their way to ordination who had been ordained as a local church elder were allowed to perform communion services, baptisms, and funerals. Since at the same Spring Meeting women were approved for ordination as local elders and deaconesses, this first action would have opened the door for women with ministerial licenses to perform almost all the functions of ordained ministers. Hence, the second action: 2. where women “with suitable qualifications and experience are able to fill ministerial roles, they be assigned as assistant pastors, their credentials being missionary license or missionary credential.” Just like that, after over a century of progress, women ministers could no longer have ministerial licenses. They were no longer on the track toward ordination.

Neal Wilson wrote to the IRS in December 1975 stating that “the role of the licensed minister has been re-defined by the SDA Church.” The licensed minister was *not* a separate category of minister. He could have added that *women* ministers had also been re-defined by the church. Yet even after all that, Elder Wilson’s description still did not satisfy the IRS. From their perspective, to be considered a minister deserving of tax benefits, the minister needed to be able to perform marriages. Wilson’s appeal was rejected, and some conferences received final notices from the government warning of the seizure of church property in order to pay outstanding IRS amounts.

In 1976 the president’s executive advisory agreed “to ask the Presidential staff to study the suggestions for changing the authority of the licensed minister.” Elder Wilson’s proposal to Annual Council read, “A licensed minister is authorized by the Conference Executive Com-

mittee to perform all the functions of the ordained minister in the church or churches where he is assigned." The union presidents and officers from around the world did not agree, and the 1976 Annual Council did not approve Wilson's proposal. They voted "no" to this change in policy. So the North American Division (NAD) went it alone—they voted "yes." The definition of minister would be different in the NAD than anywhere else within the church. In an article in the *Review* (Dec 30, 1976), Elder Wilson explained "with the view of preserving the unity and strength of the church," the Annual Council had "voted to amend the policy governing licensed ministers to provide for appropriate latitude and flexibility within each division of the General Conference." Apparently the world church would have to live with a diversity of policies when it came to defining the minister, at least where so much money was involved.

By 1977 the IRS had agreed that the changes were sufficient to warrant tax benefits for those with ministerial licenses not yet ordained. The 1977 NAD Annual Council then added the new term "associates in pastoral care" for women pastors and for those whose ministerial licenses had been withdrawn. Those receiving the new "associate" title were "persons who are employed on pastoral staffs but who were not in line for ordination." Thus, the tax benefits issue had been resolved for male pastors at the expense of the women pastors.

Developments at Camp Mohaven

In 1968 Ellen White's 1895 statement about "laying on of hands" in order to set women apart was rediscovered. Subsequently, in 1973 the "Council on the Role of Women in the Church" (made up of fourteen women and thirteen men) met at Camp Mohaven in Ohio. They were called to respond to the Northern European request for a study of women's ordination and to consider the rediscovered 1895 statement. The council included twenty-seven study papers that reflected diversity, yet there

was remarkable consensus on the following:

1. Women should be ordained as deaconesses and elders;
2. An experimental program should be initiated for installing women ministers in appropriate receptive locations;
3. If the responses from local congregations was positive after two years, an action should be taken to the 1975 General Conference Session to approve the ordination of women as pastors in receptive locations;
4. No scriptural evidence precluded women from ordination as ministers.

Elder Pierson (*below*), president of the General



Conference, thought that the study commission's recommendation went too far and decided that this issue needed to go before the world church. Such a proposal in the early 1970s assured its failure, as

Pierson well knew. In 1974, the Annual Council decided that "the time is not ripe." In the 1975 Spring Meeting, it was decided that women could be ordained as local church elders and deaconesses. That was the same meeting that changed policy so that women ministers could no longer receive ministerial licenses. They could only receive missionary credentials, which meant that they were no longer on the track toward ordination. Women receiving the same ministerial training as male colleagues could now be ordained as local church elders, but were not able to baptize, celebrate communion or perform marriage ceremonies because they no longer held ministerial licenses but were "associates in pastoral care" holding "missionary licenses."

A personal reflection: Kendra

In the early 1980s, Elder Neal Wilson, then president of the General Conference, occasionally allowed a woman who was trained as a minister

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and who had been ordained as a local church elder to baptize in remote areas (e.g., Marsha Frost, pastor in Virginia). But in 1984, when the Potomac Conference president Ron Wisbey gave the green light for a woman pastor (Jan Daffern) at Sligo to perform baptisms so close to the General Conference and with ordained male pastors present who could have been called upon, things became tense.

It was some time in the mid-80s that I was asked to give a week of worships at the General Conference. I was serving the local day academy as the pastor of the student association. I was either a junior or senior at the academy (sixteen or seventeen years old). I remember sharing stories from the Gospels that week. And I also recall Elder Wilson talking with me one of those mornings. He encouraged me not to give up. Changes were taking place, he said, and it would not be long now—certainly by the time I finished college—was the understanding he conveyed.

I finished college and accepted an invitation to join the pastoral staff at the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Kettering (Ohio Conference) in May 1989. At the 1989 Annual Council, Elder Wilson pushed through an action that stated that unordained and ordained pastors would be allowed to perform the same functions. The new action was made policy at the General Conference session in Indianapolis in 1990. This meant that for the first time I could baptize someone I had prepared for baptism. I did so that year at the Kettering Church.

At the next General Conference Session in Utrecht (1995), the North American Division asked the world church to allow each division to decide the matter. It was denied. I was now serving at the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland (Potomac Conference). In a Sabbath School session that was reporting on events at Utrecht, church members began to be convinced that, for our local congregation, it was time. Many conversations and prayer sessions followed, including a business session that voted overwhelmingly

in favor of going forward with a local ordination service. This congregation had embraced women pastors since 1973. It was indeed time.

On September 23, 1995, the Sligo SDA Church ordained three women to gospel ministry in a local church worship service on Sabbath afternoon. Norma Osborn (*right*), Penny Shell and I (*Kendra, below*) were ordained. This did not receive official affirmation from the Potomac Conference nor from the Columbia Union. Later that year, the three of us flew to southern California to participate in the ordination services of Made-



lyn Haldeman and Hallie Wilson at La Sierra University Church, and Sheryl Prinz-McMillan at Loma Linda Victoria Church. Not long afterwards, the Southeastern California Conference, whose Gender Justice

Commission had been working for years, began issuing the same credentials for all pastors, regardless of gender. The credential card equated ordination with commissioning and certified that the bearer had been “ordained-commissioned.” This policy was further changed in March 2012, when the conference voted to delete the word “commissioned” and issue “ordination” credentials to all its pastors without regard to gender.

Towards resolution

Recent happenings on this issue have worked in various ways towards progress. At the Annual Council in 2009, a seemingly innocent question about the ordination of deaconesses prompted discussion about the Adventist theology of ordination, and in 2010 the manual was changed to reflect the 1975 decision to ordain deaconesses. In October 2011, the NAD made a request to

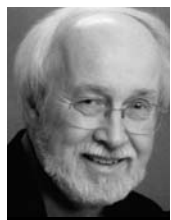
Annual Council asking that commissioned (women) ministers be allowed to serve as conference presidents. This was denied.

Then in 2012 at a regular committee meeting, the Mid-America Union Executive Committee voted to approve the ordination of women ministers. Shortly afterwards, the North German Union session, the Columbia Union (July 29, 2012), and the Pacific Union (August 19, 2012) voted actions to approve the ordination of qualified ministers without regard to gender. In the Columbia and Pacific Unions, ordination services have now taken place. And in some conferences in the Pacific Union, qualified women ministers who were previously commissioned have received ordained ministerial credentials.

The international Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) met for the first time January 15–17, 2013, then in July 2013, and most recently in January 2014. The NAD task force also met regularly for two years. Along with five other divisions, it reported a pro position to the ordination of women to TOSC. Six divisions said “no” to women’s ordination but also suggested a willingness to either allow for diversity or to support a “yes” vote by the world church. Only one division was a clear “no” on this issue.

The current plan is that TOSC, when it meets for the last time in June of this year, will conclude its work through a consensus statement. This statement will be given to the Annual Council for consideration as a possible agenda item for the General Conference Session in 2015. ■

Bert Haloviak, retired Director of the General Conference



Archives, worked at the world church headquarters from 1975-2010. During that time he was responsible for the annual yearbook, church statistical data, and the recording and preserving of church records. He found his greatest joy in helping interested researchers discover the many rich resources available in the Archives. Currently he and his wife Mary enjoy retirement near their children and grandchildren.

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References

1. Benton, Josephine, *Called by God: Stories of Seventh-day Adventist Women Ministers* (Smithsburg, MD: Blackberry Hill Publishers, 1990).
2. Two earlier articles in which similar themes are discussed: Haloviak Valentine, Kendra, “Ordination: Disentangling the Gordian Knot,” available on the Pacific Union Conference website; and “A Review of Ordination in the Early Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1844–1881,” in the North American Division’s “Theology of Ordination Study Committee Report” (November 2013), 128–139.
3. *Review and Herald*, May 28, 1901.
4. See a two-part series titled “Gospel Order” by James White in *Review and Herald*, Dec 13 and Dec 20, 1853.
5. White, James, *Review and Herald* (March 8, 1860).
6. White, James, “Report from Bro White,” *Review and Herald* (August 13, 1867).
7. Actions of the 1871 General Conference Session.
8. White, Ellen, “The Laborer Is Worthy of His Hire,” Ms 43a, 1897–1898, emphasis supplied.
9. *Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.
10. *Review and Herald* (December 20, 1881), 392.
11. *Signs of the Times* (January 5, 1882).
12. S. M. Cobb to A. E. Place, Aug 6, 1897, emphasis supplied.
13. John Wightman to S. H. Lane, Sept 2, 1904, emphasis in the original.
14. Wightman, John S., “Sunday Legislation Defeated,” *Missouri Workers’ Record* (April 28, 1909).
15. Thompson Olson, Mildred, *Diamondola* (Washington, D.C.: *Review and Herald*, 1966).
16. *Ibid.*, 151.
17. For more on this dilemma, see Haloviak, Bert, unpublished manuscript, “Money and Theology: IRS and the Redefining of SDA Ministry” (1996).

**In the 1975
Spring
Meeting, it was
decided that
women... could
only receive
missionary
credentials,
which meant
that they were
no longer on
the track
toward
ordination.**