

George R. Knight,
Adventist Authority Wars, Ordination, and the Catholic Temptation (Westlake Village, CA: Oak and Acorn Publishing, 2017)

Adventist Authority Wars, Ordination, and the Roman Catholic Temptation | BY DOUGLAS MORGAN

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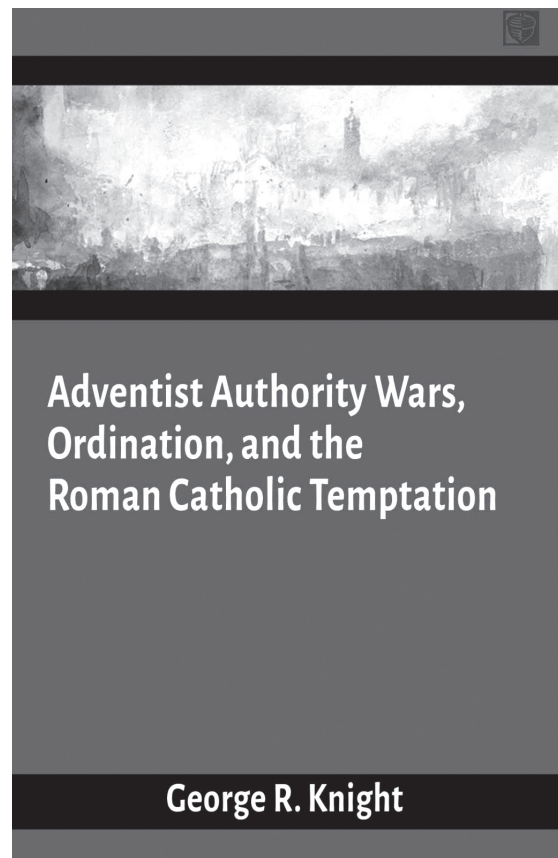
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October 2017, the month that will bring the five-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 Theses and the launch of the Protestant Reformation, will also bring the Adventist movement to a critical juncture in a struggle over its Protestant character. That is how George Knight sees it, anyway. In the run-up to the Annual Council of the General Conference, October 5–11, in an atmosphere rife with anticipation over the next phase of Adventism's protracted crisis over ecclesiastical authority, Knight, with an eye toward Luther and the Reformation's five-hundredth, has published this collection of essays centering on his 9.5 Theses to keep Adventism Protestant.

There is more: Knight's protest against the misconstrual and misuse of General Conference authority comes at a time when he is the author of the official companion book to the current Sabbath School lesson guides published by the General Conference for weekly study by the church worldwide. The topic for the fourth quarter lessons is the epistle to the Romans, the primary text for Luther's Reformation breakthrough to grasping that the righteousness of God is a free gift, not an impossible demand, received through faith alone.

Knight, seeming to write faster than some of us can read, has, over the past thirty years, established singular preeminence as an historian of Adventism. Never narrowly confined to the role of academic historian, he has also published numerous works of biblical exposition and analyses of contemporary issues in Adventism. *Adventist Authority Wars* (AAW) combines history



and homily in a bold diagnosis of Adventism's present crisis that includes a prophetic call to stand for a better future. It is a "tract for the times," similar in function to the weighty tracts in which the sixteenth-century Reformers marshaled scholarship in defense of their cause.

The book brings together three historically based essays on church governance and three essays of biblical commentary on the intersection of ordination and gender—the flashpoint for the broader and deeper conflict over authority. The heart of the book, containing its main polemical thrust, is Chapter 3, "Catholic or Adventist: The Ongoing Struggle Over Authority

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+ 9.5 Theses.”¹ In this chapter, presented at the Unity 2017 Conference convened by ten union conferences in London last July, Knight draws on the history of Adventist struggles over biblical and ecclesiastical authority to challenge positions taken in the document titled “A Study of Church Governance and Unity” (SCGU),² issued by the General Conference Secretariat in September 2016.

Since some of the essays conveniently assembled in this volume have previously been available separately and have been the focus of intense interest and discussion over the past several months, it does not seem useful to summarize them here. In fact, though I will briefly touch on matters of biblical interpretation, especially toward the end, this review will not at all do justice to Knight’s biblical essays. Instead, I will focus on selected aspects of his use of history to inform his polemic with SCGU revolving around two central issues—the nature of General Conference authority and, more briefly, its use.

The Nature of General Conference Authority

It is the directional flow of authority that is at stake in the current “war,” Knight tells us. He aligns with what he sees as “the traditional Adventist position,” which grounds authority in the membership or constituents as a whole, from whence it flows upward. The SCGU, on the other hand, he observes, sets forth the position that authority flows down from the General Conference “to the constituent administrative entities of the denomination.”³

The upward vs. downward flow is a useful metaphor or sound bite for introducing the conflict. On closer look, though, the matter is more complex than a simple up or down alternative. The SCGU in fact agrees that “authority derives from the lowest level of structure (the local church) and flows upward through constituency-based units to the highest level, the General Conference.”⁴ And, conversely, it would seem consistent with Knight’s position to say that the authority delegated upward to

the General Conference can rightfully flow back down in ways that call for recognition from the entire world church.

But what is the nature of that authority? Is the General Conference invested with plenary authority, including authority to define and, if necessary, to override that of every other governance structure within the world church? Or, is its authority more specifically demarcated to meet pragmatic needs—mission-driven, contingent, and limited?

In Knight’s telling of the story, the force that was powerful enough to cause an “anti-organizational people” to “organize in spite of themselves” (Chapter 1, amplified in Chapter 3) came from “the pragmatic necessities of mission.” As seemingly innumerable varieties of post-Millerite Adventism competed for souls in the early 1850s, the need to identify authentic representatives of the Third Angel’s message led to the issuance of certification cards to preachers. The need to place church property on proper legal footing led to selection of an official name and the incorporation of a rapidly growing publishing ministry. The need to coordinate the work of ministers led to organization of state conferences.

The call for representatives of the state conferences to meet in order to form a General Conference was likewise prompted by a specific and rather basic missional need, set forth by J. H. Waggoner in 1862: coordination of the evangelistic labors of evangelists who traveled from state to state. So, when James White, in previewing the 1863 conference, urged that it would only be worth adding the new General Conference if it could function as “the great regulator,” it was with reference to meeting the specific need “of securing unity and efficiency in labor, and promoting the general interests of the cause of present truth.”⁵ One other major role for the General Conference was identified at the organizational gathering: to “take the special supervision of all missionary labor.”⁶

These functions were indeed broad and

made the General Conference, as James White had hoped, “higher in authority than State Conferences.” But they were also limited to that which the state conferences and local congregations by definition could not do. The General Conference was not created to manage, direct, or control the operation of the conferences and churches.

Here, as in his previous work, Knight places great stress on two hermeneutical moves by James White that were essential in enabling the “anti-organization people” to overcome their aversion to formalizing instruments of authority. First, White broke free of the Restorationist insistence upon explicit New Testament precedent or authorization for anything instituted in the church. Second, he drew attention to the fact that the meaning of “Babylon” was not limited to the early Adventists’ primary association of the term with the oppressive and persecuting ecclesiastical “established churches” that had harassed, expelled, and ostracized them during the 1843–1844 phase of the Millerite movement. That experience makes understandable their deep-seated resistance to any move in the direction of formal organization as the first step down the slippery slope to “Babylon.” But James pointed out that Babylon also stood for disorder and confusion, and that it was from this aspect that the disorganized early 1850s Adventists most needed to “come out.”

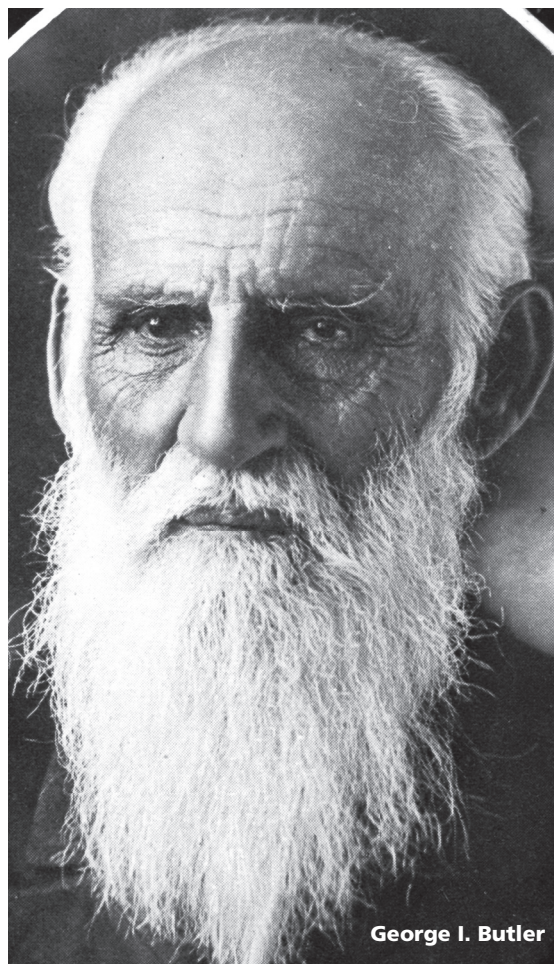
Nonetheless, the first meaning of “Babylon” was not dropped as obsolete. As Knight puts it, each organizational step was taken with “a cautious eye on higher ecclesiastical authorities removing their freedom in Christ.”⁷ We also learn from Knight’s narrative that both James and Ellen White were among those vigilant against church organization reverting to the oppression characteristic of Babylon.

It did not take long for the concept of the General Conference as “highest authority” in crucial but delimited functions to morph into more sweeping conceptions of plenary authority, most notably those of George I. Butler, who served as General Conference president

for several terms, off and on, during the 1870s and 1880s. Knight brings out striking passages from “the originator of Adventist church structure,” James White, that pushed back against Butler’s position that loyalty to a single, great Leader was needed for the Adventist movement to thrive.

In 1874, White wrote that “organization was designed to secure unity of action, and as a protection from imposture. It was never intended as a scourge to compel obedience, but, rather, for the protection of the people of God.” In 1880, after re-publishing the same statement, he added,

those who drew the plan of our church, Conferences, and General Conference organizations, labored to guard the precious flock of God against the influence of those who might, in a greater or less degree, assume the leadership. They were not ignorant of the evils and



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Ellen White speaking at the 1901 General Conference Session at Battle Creek Tabernacle (Source: Adventist Archives).

abuses which had existed in many of the churches of the past, where men had assumed the position which belongs to Jesus Christ, or had accepted it at the hands of their short sighted brethren.⁸

Butler does not seem to have altered his views in any fundamental way, however. A few years later, feeling threatened by the dangerous “new theology” of E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, Butler detailed the reach of General Conference authority extending to supervision of every institution, periodical, Conference, society, and mission field throughout the entire church.⁹

Knight adduces many of Ellen White’s repeated rebukes of “kingly power” by one man or a small group of men who exerted domineering influence from Battle Creek over all aspects of the church’s mission that by then was far-flung over distant continents. “Gospel order” was the great need of the 1850s but, by the 1880s, order had turned into an authoritarianism directed against gospel renewal. Ellen White’s advocacy for the former had never meant capitulation to

the latter. Alertness was necessary against the possibility that the ecclesiastical repression characteristic of Babylon, which she herself had experienced during the early Second Advent movement, could resurface in Adventism’s own governance structures.

In 1889, Ellen White reflected on the fact that Adventists had been “reformers” when “they had come out of the denominational churches” in the 1840s. However, in resisting the “reformation” call stemming from Minneapolis in 1888, denominational leaders “now act a part similar to that which the churches acted.” She had “hoped that there would not be the necessity for another coming out.” She indeed wanted everything possible be done to maintain unity “in the bonds of peace,” but she also pledged that “we will not with pen or voice cease to protest against bigotry.”¹⁰

In his second chapter, Knight highlights Ellen White’s prophetic advocacy for major organizational changes that General Conference leadership opposed prior to the breakthrough in 1901. Clearly, she did not regard the divine

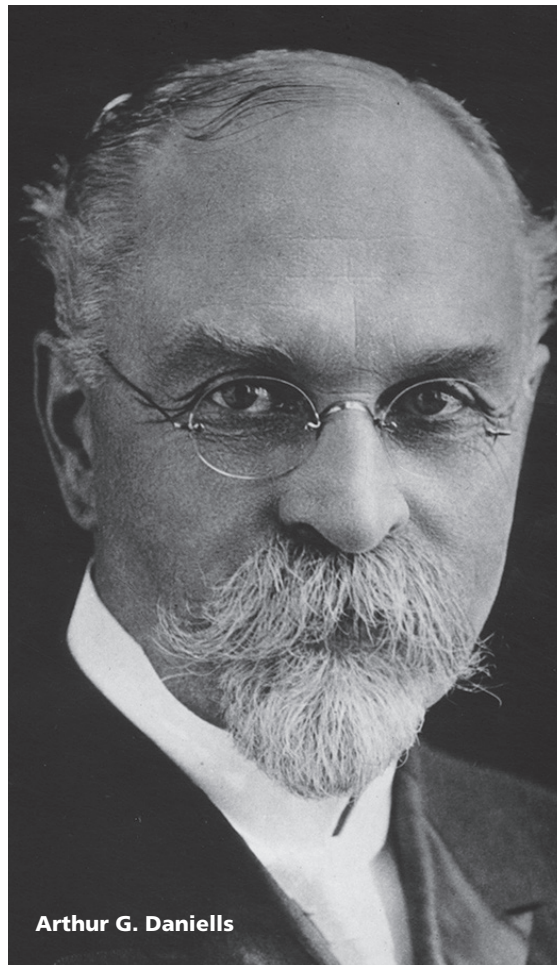
approval of the church organization formed in the 1860s as conferring sacred immutability on how its particular components were configured to best accomplish the unchanging goals of mission and unity in the original circumstances. Regarding the significance of union conferences and the departmental system for the various lines of church endeavor established in 1901–1903, Knight's gift for clarifying synthesis is in top form:

*Let it be remembered that both of the major innovations were developed in response to regional mission needs and both were developed in opposition to General Conference pronouncements and procedures. But they worked. The major lesson is that without the freedom to experiment Adventism would not have its present system of organization.*¹¹

Drawing on the work of Barry Oliver¹² and the late Gary Chudleigh,¹³ Knight drives home the radical shift of authority from the General Conference to the new union conferences envisioned and initiated in 1901. In the words of Arthur G. Daniells, elected to lead the denomination through the re-organization, the unions were invested with “full authority and power to deal with all matters within their boundaries.”¹⁴

But what should we make of the fact that the book under review, as well as Chudleigh's *Who Runs the Church?*,¹⁵ were published under the auspices of the Pacific Union Conference? Is all this “revisionist history” with evidence cherry-picked and twisted out of context to justify the Columbia and Pacific Unions in defying General Conference authority by enacting gender equality in the ordination of women?

It is a fair question, notwithstanding the fact that Oliver's comprehensive study *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, Present, and Future*¹⁶ has been in print since 1989. All historical writing is generated by some present interest or motivation. That factor must be taken into account, but such recognition neither substitutes for nor lessens the necessity of weighing evidence.



Arthur G. Daniells

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Why does the newly prominent evidence concerning the 1901 outlook on the role of union conferences seem to clash so sharply with widespread assumptions about the central and pervasive authority of the General Conference a century later? Here Knight, drawing especially on Oliver, shows that the ideals of 1901 quickly became modified in the heat of the conflict with John Harvey Kellogg that escalated head-on confrontation the very next year. For A. G. Daniells, heightened General Conference authority became the unifying force needed to counteract the centrifugal influence of Kellogg in alliance with A. T. Jones. “That dynamic impelled Daniells to emphasize unity as he moved toward a more authoritative stance,” says Knight. In the century and more that followed, recognition of the General Conference as “God's highest authority” has been emphasized as the bulwark of unity.¹⁷

What, then, would warrant uplifting short-

IMAGE SOURCE: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A.G._Daniells.jpg

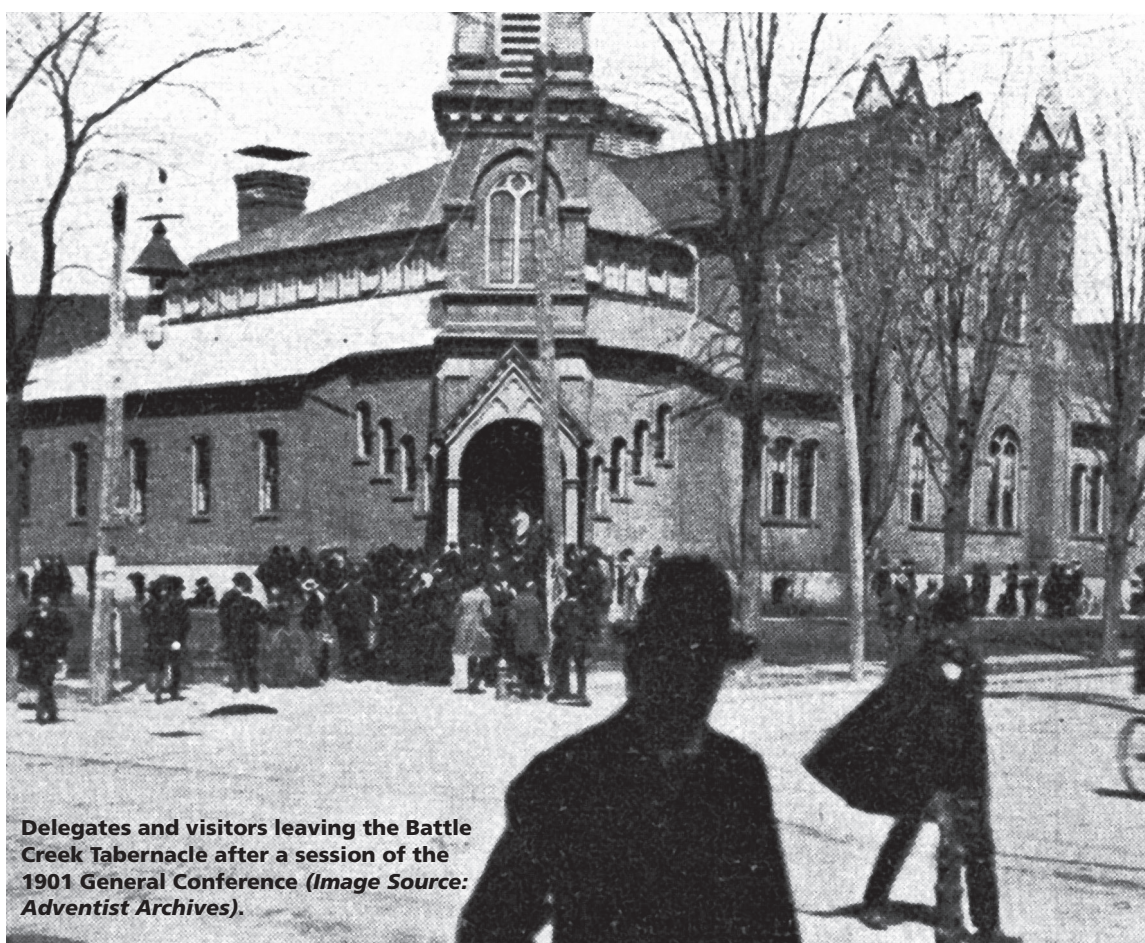
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lived changes in 1901, quickly if not entirely rolled back, as inspiration for the present? Does not the SCGU's explanation concerning the “plenary authority” of the General Conference over the world church have a more convincing basis in a continuity that has been sustained for more than a century?

Everyone acknowledges and celebrates that some of the changes of 1901 have stuck. The SCGU grants that union conferences (and local churches and conferences) do have “their own constitution and constituency” and thus “decision-making authority in defined areas.” However, the SCGU, quoting the General Conference *Working Policy*, explains that the status of unions “is not self-generated, automatic, or perpetual” but instead comes by way of conferral from the General Conference. Whatever decision-making authority it has may thus also “be reviewed, revised, amended, or withdrawn by the level of organization that granted it” (B

05 03). So, the bottom line is that the unions, and conferences, missions, and local churches as well, have a responsibility “to comply with world Church ‘practices and policies’” that “supersedes all other considerations.”¹⁸

Along with decades of historical precedent, the SCGU's logic is clear and grounding and the GC *Working Policy* solid. On the other hand, Knight brings much to our attention that prompts questions. I find it difficult to reconcile the SCGU/GC *Working Policy* doctrine of General Conference plenary authority with Ellen White's observation, in a testimony to church leaders in April 1903, that it had been “a necessity to organize Union conferences, that the General Conference shall not exercise dictation over all the separate Conferences.” It seems her comment is part of a lament that the reforms of 1901 were not being sustained, for she also refers to “kingly authority” once again being manifested.¹⁹



Delegates and visitors leaving the Battle Creek Tabernacle after a session of the 1901 General Conference (Image Source: Adventist Archives).

IMAGE SOURCE: [HTTP://IMAGES.ADVENTISTARCHIVES.ORG/VIEW/ARA/ARA1944-P20-01.JPG](http://images.adventistarchives.org/view/ARA/ARA1944-P20-01.JPG).HTML



SDA General Conference
Administration building in Takoma
Park at the turn of the century
(Image Source: Adventist Archives).

The plenary authority doctrine also seems incongruent with the resolution passed by the 1877 General Conference, with the support of Ellen and James White, as a corrective to G. I. Butler's misguided theory of leadership authority. It affirmed that "the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, unless they can be shown to conflict with the word of God and the rights of individual conscience."²⁰

According to this resolution, actions duly taken by a General Conference in its capacity as "highest authority under God" are limited to a realm of "proper jurisdiction." It appears that "highest" may not mean "absolute" or "all-encompassing." At any rate, the 1877 resolution seems to check the exercise of even the "highest authority" in a way that is incommensurate with

the doctrine of plenary authority.

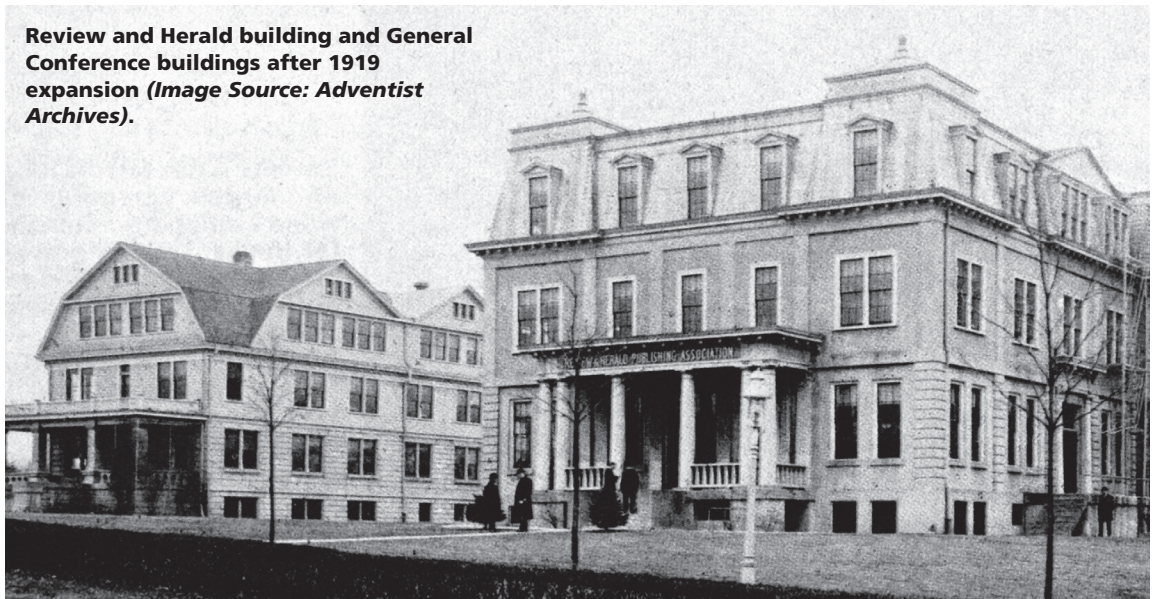
In sum, we might suggest that Knight's account reveals two governance orientations, both deeply embedded in Adventist history. The *centralizing orientation*, accompanied by an emphasis on the General Conference imbued with divine authority as the supreme bulwark of church unity, was given voice early on by George I. Butler. I have to wonder, though, if it is entirely fair to Butler that the high profile resulting from his effectiveness as forceful leader has made him the historical whipping boy for excesses in this direction. He must have been drawing on wider currents in the church and was perhaps not entirely without basis for thinking that his approach was in line with that of James and Ellen White.

The *decentralizing orientation* (for lack of a better term), accompanied by an emphasis on flexibility and openness to innovation in the interests of mission, finds resonance in the distrust of formal authority characteristic of the "anti-or-

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Review and Herald building and General Conference buildings after 1919 expansion (Image Source: Adventist Archives).



ganizational people” who launched the Adventist movement. It accepts the consensus about gospel order that resulted in denominational organization but seeks the essential minimum when it comes to centralized power and the maximum possible scope of freedom for those “on the ground” to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and is more reliant on that informal influence as the source of unity than on policy enforcement.

The 1901 reorganization was a breakthrough for the decentralizing orientation and, though scaled back, instituted lasting change. The centralizing orientation toward uplifting the General Conference as the apex of unifying authority prevailed as a mentality throughout the twentieth century. However, Knight, in an illuminating synthesis of recent history, traces a new thrust of the centralizing orientation begun in the 1980s to formalize and extend the scope of General Conference authority.

The Commission on World Church Organization, established in 1991, for example, sought to undermine the plenary authority of local churches over whom to include or exclude from membership. Though that particular push in the centralizing direction did not prevail, the Commission did, in 1995, succeed in codifying in the *GC Working Policy*, initiatives that began in the 1980s to bring union and conference gov-

ernance into greater conformity. The changes included “further tightening of control measures embedded in model constitutions” and, portentously, a new section (B 95) with a title that needs little elaboration: “Discontinuation of Conferences, Missions, Unions, and Unions of Churches by Dissolution and/or Expulsion.”

Though these initiatives engendered considerable debate and concern, the long-prevailing influence of the centralizing orientation may have limited the spread of alarm. Also, a more vivid controversy overshadowed these critically important but abstract matters of organizational policy at the 1990 and 1995 General Conferences. It appears that the pervasive centralizing mentality made it seem natural to ask the General Conference for permission to do something that, as Gary Patterson has persuasively argued,²¹ was not formally prohibited and for which no special GC permission was needed in the first place—namely, to ordain female pastors.

Knight brings another critical feature associated with the centralizing orientation under scrutiny in responding to the use of Matthew 18:18 in the September 2016 documents issued by the General Conference Secretariat. In this passage, Jesus instructs his disciples about a correspondence between their decisions about “binding” (restricting) and “loosing” (permit-

IMAGE SOURCE: [HTTP://IMAGES.ADVENTISTARCHIVES.ORG/View/ARA/1975-P16-01.JPG](http://images.adventistarchives.org/View/ARA/1975-P16-01.JPG).HTML

ting) and that which is done in heaven.

The *Summary of the Study of Church Governance and Unity* declares: "Seventh-day Adventists believe the authority granted to the Church by Jesus enables Church leaders to make decisions that bind all members. Further, we collectively subordinate ourselves to decisions taken at GC Sessions and Annual Councils."²² This use of Matthew 18 invests the functioning of a particular, fallible configuration of ecclesiastical governance with divine authority and by unavoidable implication castigates dissenters as rebels against Jesus (in other words, on the side of Satan, not to put too fine a point on it).

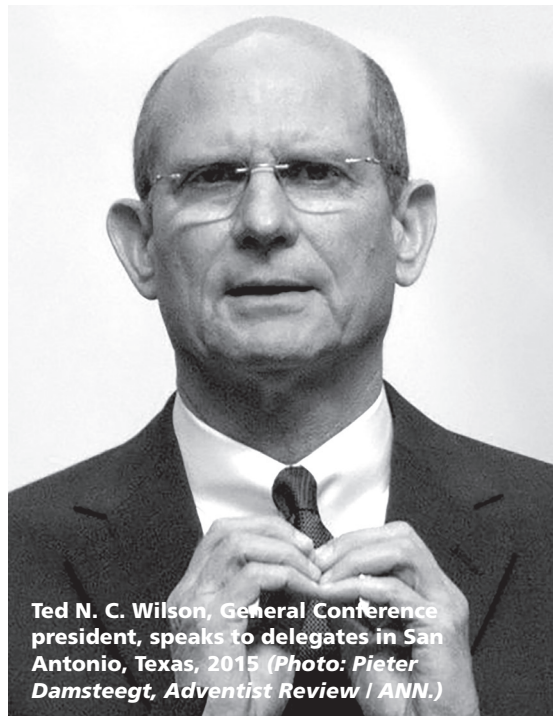
Ellen White also cited the passage on several occasions to admonish individuals to accept the counsel and authority of the church as God's appointed agency. Regarding such passages as placing divine favor on one side of a disagreement between conscientious church leaders over where to draw the boundaries of authority between denominational entities seems a shaky proposition.

Knight, with the backing of the New American Standard Bible²³ and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, prefers to highlight Ellen White's explanation that the passage does not provide blanket divine confirmation for church decisions. Instead, "whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God's word will be ratified in heaven."²⁴

This illustrates a contrasting pattern in the decentralizing orientation's use of inspired texts. It tends to scrutinize the present practices and policies of the church in the light of Scripture, and to uplift the abundance of striking examples in which Ellen White did the same.

The Use of General Conference Authority

Perhaps the most provocative section of Knight's book, though, is not about the scope and character of church authority, but rather openness and integrity in its use. The defeat of Divisional choice in women's ordination at the San Antonio General Conference in 2015, its failure to reverse the behavior of the "noncom-



Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference president, speaks to delegates in San Antonio, Texas, 2015 (Photo: Pieter Damsteegt, *Adventist Review* / ANN.)

pliant" unions, and the specter of punitive action raised in the Fall of 2016 have taken center stage in Adventism's decades-long struggle over gender equality in ministry. This is understandable, but it seems to me that in the process attention has been unduly diverted from the story of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC), one that is most crucial within the overall drama.

Regular readers of the *Spectrum* website will surely have some awareness of TOSC, and I may be overstating its relative neglect. But if the issues surrounding its role are less sharp and vivid in your mind than those specific to the San Antonio vote, I urge you to make a point of reading Knight's treatment of it,²⁵ and view the presentation on this topic by Drs. Kendra Haloviak Valentine and Gilbert Valentine.²⁶

In the briefest terms possible, this massively funded project was, at its launch in 2011, touted as the process that would, through a scrupulously thorough, open, and fair process lead to a final resolution of the question of women's ordination by 2015. The work of study commissions in each division of the world church was followed by an overall, worldwide TOSC to produce the final report.

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SDA World Church
Headquarters, present day.

IMAGE SOURCE: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GENERAL_CONFERENCE.JPG

Knight quotes, with full agreement, the SCGU's description of the work of TOSC: "Voices from around the world and from all sides were heard; the arguments and supporting documents of all perspectives were made freely available online to church members for their own study and prayerful consideration. The process was unmatched in both breadth and depth."²⁷

But then, to Knight's astonishment and mine, the SCGU moves immediately to this conclusion: "When, after such a process, a GC Session takes a decision, one obviously intended to apply to the world (since variation of practice was part of the motion put to the Session), it cannot be disregarded." But this conclusion apparently does not apply to the nearly two-thirds majority vote (62-32) of the world TOSC to allow divisions the option of ordaining on a gender-neutral basis. So, it turns out that the SCGU has extolled the virtues of the TOSC process to buttress the legitimacy of a 2015 GC vote that, in denying divisions choice, went precisely op-

posite to the TOSC recommendations.

Little was said about the TOSC recommendations preparatory to the vote in San Antonio either. Knight concludes, "As impossible as it seems after having spent so much money and time on the project, the results of TOSC were never clearly presented to the General Conference session at the time of the vote. And for good reason. Apparently, TOSC's consensus did not support the desired conclusions of certain individuals at the top of the denominational power structure."²⁸

It is difficult to conceive how such a procedure would credit any organization, much less one that claims to be God's "highest authority." Unfortunately, it is not an isolated case. Knight details a pattern of what he calls "manipulation of data" associated with efforts to defend or heighten General Conference authority in the 1880s and then beginning again in the 1980s.

One more issue involving the use of authority needs mentioning due to its current relevance.

The aforementioned addition of section B 95 to the *GC Working Policy* in 1995, itself arguably an overreach in centralizing authority, set forth procedures for disciplining, and if necessary, dissolving administrative units such as conferences, missions, and union conferences that persist in noncompliance with world church policy. However, this apparently sweeping policy had one shortcoming as the basis for action against the allegedly noncompliant unions in 2016: it specifies that such action be initiated by the division.

Since the North American Division, it seems, could not be counted on to take the desired action, the currently pending process adopted at the 2016 Annual Council for dealing with noncompliant unions had to be initiated by the General Conference administration rather than by following the policy outlined in B 95. Based on the analysis of attorney and retired Associate General Counsel of the GC, Mitchell Tyner,²⁹ Knight concludes that “*the General Conference presidential office had to step outside of pol-*

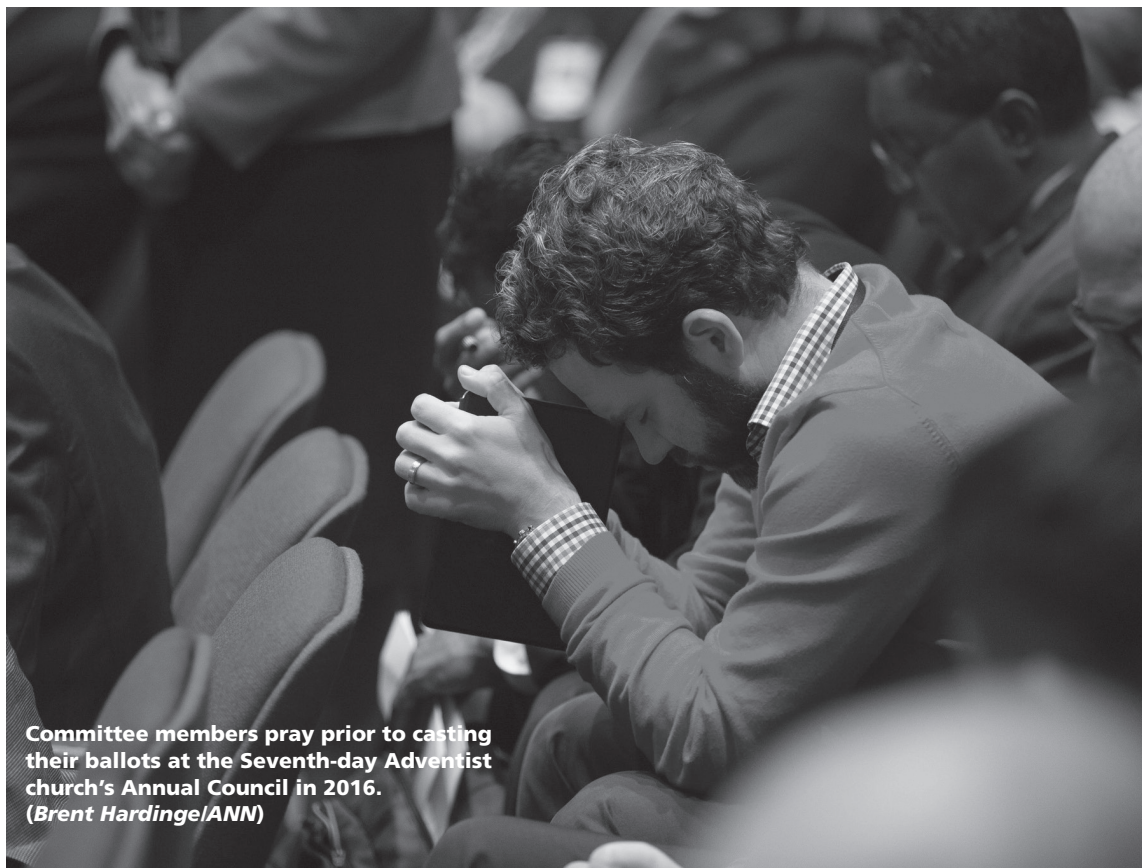
icy to make its case for punishing those it deemed to be outside of policy.”³⁰

A Place to Stand

Both Knight’s contention that authority, not female ordination, is the core issue, and my own inclinations, have led me to concentrate my commentary there, to the neglect of his chapters on biblical interpretation. But the authority relation of the unions and General Conference is not finally the central issue either. That debate is of vital importance, for if the charge of noncompliance against the female-ordaining unions cannot be sustained, then the impasse is dissolved, and the denomination’s existential crisis goes away.

Yet Knight, in the stirring conclusion of his 9.5 Theses, does not appeal for a stand with Luther and the Confessing Church on the true interpretation of *GC Working Policy* B 05. Conversely, if the 2015 vote had been more like 80–20 in the negative, or if there had not been a favorable TOSC supermajority, it seems un-

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Committee members pray prior to casting their ballots at the Seventh-day Adventist church’s Annual Council in 2016. (Brent Hardinge/ANN)

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likely that the Columbia and Pacific Unions would have reversed course on equality. Nor would they likely do so if the 2020 General Conference entirely eliminates any basis for ambiguity by passing an explicit prohibition against ordaining women.

On the other hand, if the unions were to win the debate over whether there is no gender limitation in their authority to approve recommendations for ordination, it is not a foregone conclusion that all would always include women. Would not unions still be in a position to use their authority to exclude women whose names are sent for approval from a conference?

The core issue does finally lead us back to the Protestant Reformation and the question which holds priority: ecclesiastical authority or biblical authority? Knight's most telling argument in this regard is that Adventist ecclesiastical authority has created an extra-biblical category called ordination, reserved to males only, and insisted on conformity based on bare assertion of General Conference authority—itself defended with Scripture passages but devoid of any clear, substantive basis in Scripture on the disputed issue itself.

So, is Adventism really on the road to Rome if it fails to heed George Knight's 9.5 Theses? A case for an over-sensationalized title and framing of the issue might be made, but he is serious about getting our attention. And might it be the case that wise, confident leadership would feel no need to overreact, give some scope for the element of rhetorical and marketing strategy, and discern the love at the heart of the message?

I want to suggest that if the Adventist movement is to be instrumental in bringing the reformation of the church begun five hundred years ago to its culmination, it makes sense that we should neither be bound by the limitations of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, nor lose the bearings of its definitive insights, such as, 1) salvation by grace through faith alone, 2) the supreme authority of Scripture, and 3) priesthood of all believers (and the

only New Testament "royal priesthood" I know about has no gender exclusions).

Along with Knight's 9.5 Theses, I think the 1877 General Conference resolution cited above could be useful toward that twin goal. The resolution both affirms an appropriate scope for the General Conference as the "highest authority" of a united world movement and honors the Protestant principle of individual conscience guided by the supreme authority of scripture. It does not provide a formula for easy resolution of tension and conflict over how these sources of authority interact "on the ground." It does, I would hope, continue to provide a viable touchstone for unity. ■



Douglas Morgan holds a PhD from the University of Chicago, and teaches at Washington Adventist University.

Footnotes:

1. <https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2017/10/02/catholic-or-adventist-ongoing-struggle-over-authority-95-theses>.
2. <https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2016/09/29/annual-council-considers-authority-document-demonizes-many-church-entities>.
3. *Adventist Authority Wars, Ordination, and the Roman Catholic Temptation* (Westlake Village, CA: Oak and Acorn Publishing, 2017), 4.
4. "A Study of Church Governance and Unity," General Conference, 15.
5. James White, *Review and Herald* (April 28, 1863).
6. James White, *Review and Herald* (May 26, 1863).
7. AAW, 42.
8. *Ibid.*, 106.
9. *Ibid.*, 43.
10. Manuscript 30, June 21, 1889.
11. AAW, 47–48.
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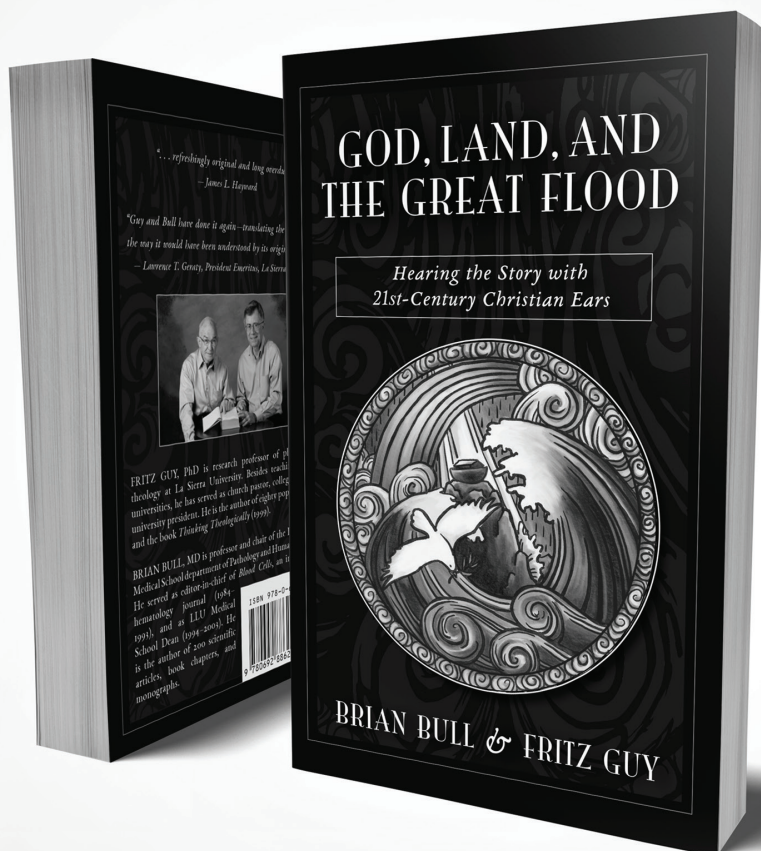
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