A Response to the North American Division Request

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My Assigned Topic: "Why Am I Not in Favor of the North American Division's Request"

I Strongly Support the Involvement of Women in God's Work

• Women have unique gifts needed to finish the work

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- They can reach people men can never reach

Deeply Sympathize with the North American Division

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What is the dilemma the church is facing?

Women ordained as elders can perform all the duties of ordained ministers

- Women ordained as elders can perform all the duties of ordained ministers
- Yet, they cannot be ordained as ministers

How to Solve This Dilemma and Preserve Church Unity

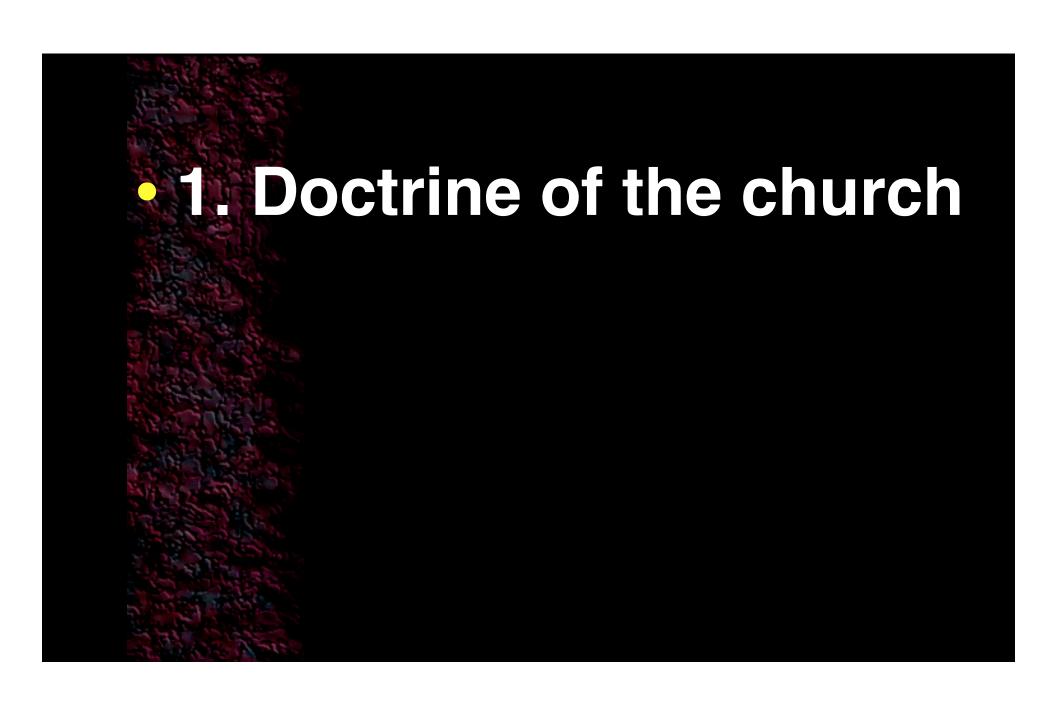
How to Solve This Dilemma and Preserve Church Unity

2 options cited by the NAD president (Adventist Rev., Feb '95)

• 1. To reverse the decision to begin ordaining women as elders

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- 2. To request for each division the freedom to decide to ordain women as ministers

The NAD Request Conflicts with Three of Our Bible Doctrines



1. Doctrine of the church 2. Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures

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- 2. Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures
- 3. Doctrine of unity in the body of Christ

What Are the Implications of the Request?

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It presents a major change in the structure of church leadership

It rejects the generally held SDA view that the Bible teaches clear differences in function between men and women within the church

• It assumes that the Bible allows women to occupy spiritual headship roles

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The Test for New Doctrine or Practice

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20, NKJV)

"The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine and practice.... It is the word of ... God that is to decide all controversies" (E. White, 1888, pp. 44, 45)

God's Word Must Be Our Focus

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We are a Bible church

• Does the Bible speak to the question of the right of women to occupy positions of full ecclesiastical authority?

• SDA pioneers supported reforms such as antislavery, temperance

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- However, Ellen White rejected the women's rights movement

 "Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of woman's rights ... might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message.

"The spirit which attends the one cannot be in harmony with the other.

The Scriptures are plain upon the relations and rights of men and women."

(E. White, Testimonies, I, p. 421)

I. The Request Conflicts with the Doctrine of the Church

What Does Scripture Teach on Relations of Men and Women?

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It teaches true equality of nature and worth before God

• 1. In <u>nature</u> men and women are created in "the image of God" (Gen 1:27)

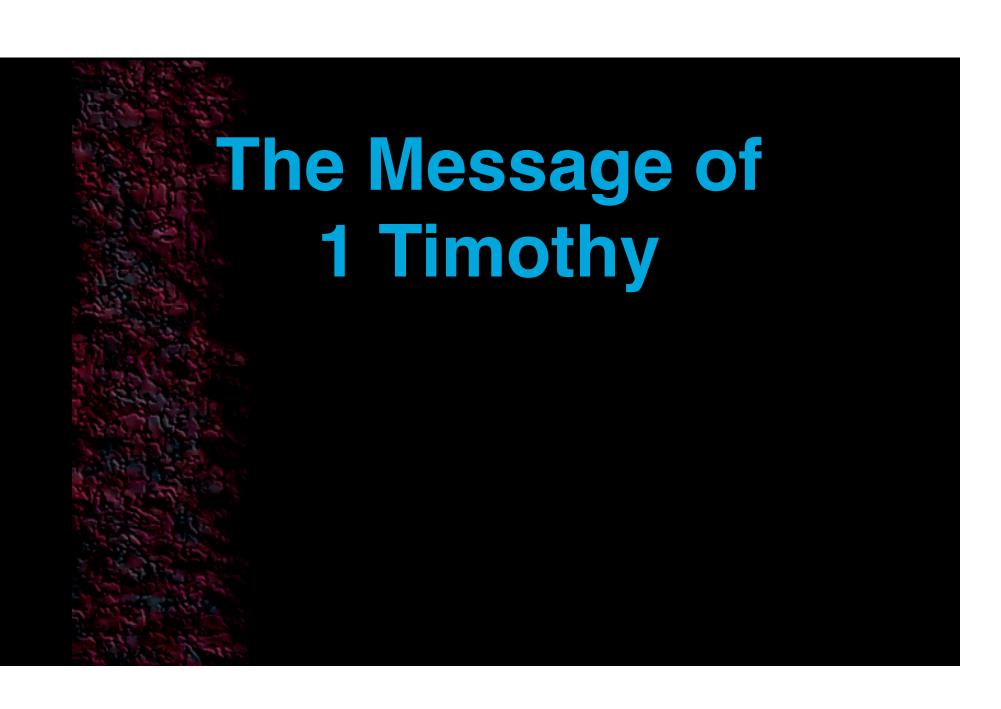
• 2. In worth Jesus reveals that before God we are all exceedingly precious. God "shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34) because we are all "one in Christ Jesus."

Therefore "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Gal 3: 28, NKJV)

Are men and women the same in every sense?

The Bible teaches that they have the same value and standing before God but that they are different in their functional roles

• 1 Timothy and Titus clearly present this teaching which speaks directly to our situtation



The Message of 1 Timothy

A timeless message for the church

"To teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables...which cause disputes rather than godly edification" (1 Tim 1: 3, 4, NKJV)

"that...you may know how one ought to behave in the...church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:14, 15, RSV)

Principles of Authority in the Church

 In certain places women interpreted the freedom of the Gospel as freedom to exercise the spiritual headship role in the church

"I do not permit a woman ... to have authority over a man" (1 Tim 2:12, NKJV)

God's Plan for Spiritual Headship

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1. Christ's creation order before the Fall

Paul based his first theological reason on Christ's creation order

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"Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1Tim 2:13, NKJV)



His 2nd reason is based on the order of sin

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• "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (1 Tim 2:14)

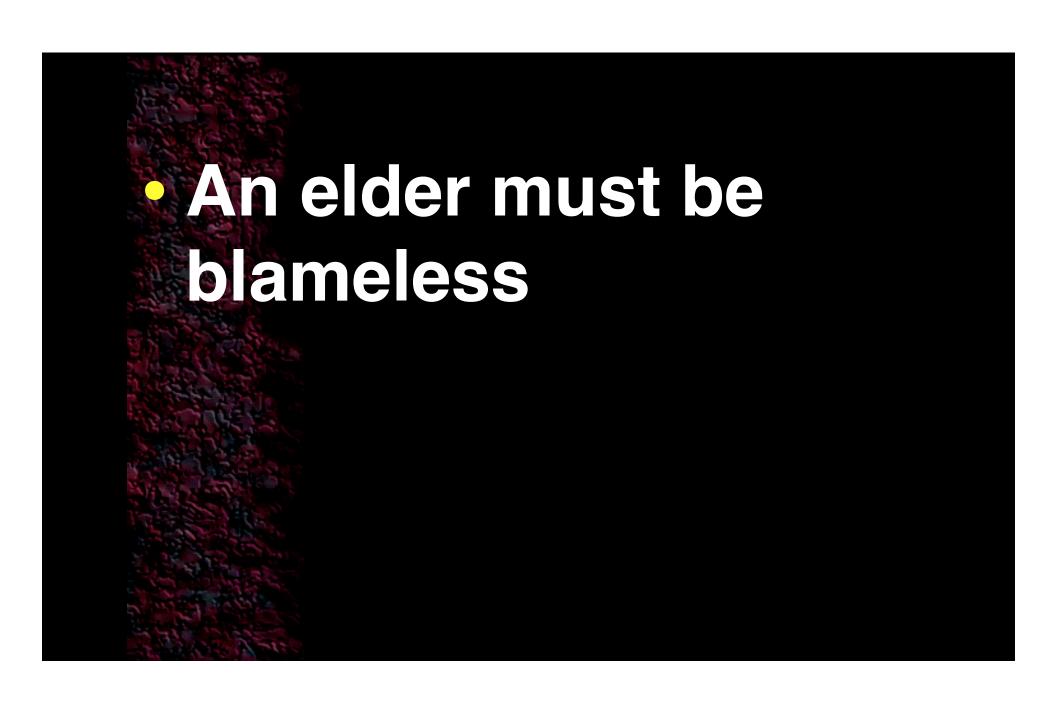
3. Christ's order after the cross

• "The head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3, RSV)

The Qualifications for an Elder or Overseer (1 Tim 3:1-7)?

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Requirements for spiritual headship



- An elder must be blameless
- He must be the "husband of one wife" (I Tim 3:2, NKJV)

Here the word "husband" in Greek is "aner" which is always a man, not a woman

Here the word "husband" in Greek is "aner" which is always a man, not a woman To appoint a woman as elder is not Biblical

He must be "one who rules his house well, having his children in submission with all reverence" (1 Tim 3: 4)

"For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim 3: 5, NKJV)

This is not as a cultural custom, but as a divinely ordained principle—
"as to the Lord"
(Eph 5:22, NKJV)

The Line of Authority in the Doctrine on the Church

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• "The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word"

(Fundamental Belief 11)

 Jesus as head of the church delegates His authority to leaders of the church in harmony with the Bible In harmony with His order of creation Jesus has assigned the position of elder, or overseer, to men, not to women

II. The Request Violates the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will" and "the test of experience"
(Fundamental Belief 1)



Was Paul Culturally Biased?

The question really is, Can we fully trust the Bible writers?

God is the author of the Bible. Therefore the Bible is "the infallible authority ... as a rule of faith and practice" (Great Controversy, p. 249)

It is not affected "by human prejudice or human pride" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 596)

How should we interpret the Bible?

"The Word of God is infallible; accept it as it reads"

(Ellen White in *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1896, p. 81)

Danger of Modifying God's Instructions

• "The very beginning of the great apostasy was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. "Rome began by <u>enjoining</u> what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined" (Great Controversy, pp.289-290)

"True faith consists in doing just what God has enjoined, not manufacturing things He has not enjoined" (That I May Know Him, p. 226)

SDAs Need Submission to the Word of God, Not Reinterpretation

The Remnant church is a movement at the end of time that still is to reveal the characteristics of the NT church, even in the authority structure of church leadership

III. The Request Destroys the Doctrine of Unity in the Body of Christ

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Results of Approving the Request

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It allows the use of two conflicting methods of Biblical interpretation for SDAs

• One method follows the New Testament, the Protestant Reformers and the Advent pioneers, including Ellen White This approach favors the plain meaning of the Bible and its regulations for church leadership

The other method follows the approach adopted by the fallen churches of Babylon **since 1844**

This new approach to the Bible is influenced by the trends of today's culture. Male spiritual headship is not politically correct.



The effect of conflicting methods of Bible interpretation

 It establishes two conflicting theologies of church leadership

• Ordination will not have worldwide validity any longer

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- Some fields will not recognize the leadership from other fields

