

ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JULY 7, 1995

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What's Holland without a glimpse of its traditional costumes, worn here by Adventist students attending the session, Martin Altink, age 17, and Jessica Koning, age 17, both of northeastern Holland.

in Utrecht

THURSDAY, JULY 6

The morning business session of Constitution and Bylaws amendments is over now, and an undulating sea of humanity pours down the hallway toward me. It's not as easy as it seems, this business of moving in a crowd. The very best way, of course, is to get right behind a 9- or 10-year-old child. These small humans can negotiate the densest congregation, darting like small minnows.

I join a long row of people sitting on the low marble wall that surrounds the fountain in the entrance hall of Jaarbeurs. From this crossroads vantage point it is possible to watch the whole world pass in review in the space of a few minutes.

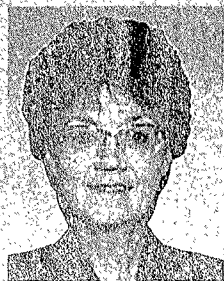
I listen to the hum of a dozen conversations reflecting closely held opinions and responses to issues raised in this fifty-sixth General Conference session. It's apparent that yesterday's vote on North America's request to allow the ordination of women is still being discussed with considerable warmth, pro and con.

I look at them all. Where have they

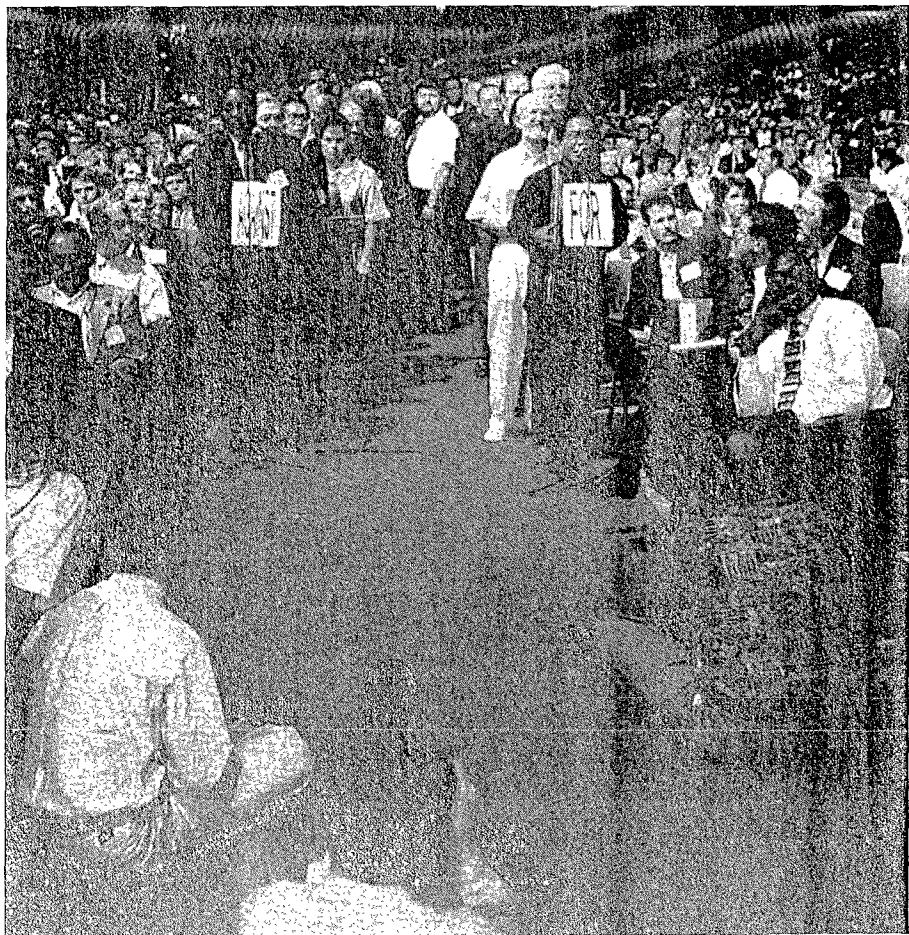
been in their lifetimes? What have they seen? What have they done? What is life like for them? They are so very different from each other, these saints of God. Every fingerprint, each hair and cell carrying identifying elements. Each possesses gifts, talents, interests, and ideas that are unique.

I decide that God must dislike uniformity as much as He loves unity. How is it, then, that we, God's children, are often autocratic, assuming that our viewpoint, lifestyle, religion, or love of broccoli should become everybody else's? Of how much do we deprive ourselves and our church by insisting on our viewpoints, missing the richness of another's perspective?

The truth is, most of us are rather "ordinary" people, I suppose, blooming and fading pretty close to where we sprouted. Most of the time that's in an out-of-the-way place where not many people pass to admire our colors. Life might seem rather pointless if it weren't for one thing: the God who planted us has



By Jeannette Johnson
Director for News & Information,
ADRA International



Approximately 60 individuals lined up behind the "for" and "against" microphones during the discussion on women's ordination, attracting many photographers.

provided complete growing instructions. We don't have to worry about how to get into the bouquet. God knows exactly which "arrangement" needs our unique splash of color.

In the women's meeting this morning, Rose Otis, director of the Office of Women's Ministries for the General Conference, declared, "God has planted us where we are and wants us to blossom there. Ministry is about using the gifts we have, doing what we can where we are. Nothing more is expected. Nothing less is expected."

A young couple approaches, pushing a stroller. The baby, a rosy little cherub of about 7 months, has a firm grip on his right foot. Suddenly he calmly inserts his foot into his mouth. Although many grownups I know have also perfected this

maneuver, at least in a figurative sense, I'm fascinated at the ease with which he accomplishes it. I decide that if this baby can get his foot out of his mouth as easily as he got it in, his might be a career worth following. As if reading my thoughts, he removes his foot and flashes me a charming, toothless grin.

United in Christ. We need each other. We need the wonderful miracle that occurs when all this diversity is unified in the body of Christ. Alone, none of us is the body of Christ. Together, corporately, we are His body. As we appreciate each other's gifts and use our gifts in loving, accepting relationships we maintain our balance and reach God's ideal.

I stand up, looking at the stroller disappearing down the hallway. Babies are such a delightful way to start humans. ☸

Session Schedule

THURSDAY, JULY 6

7:30 a.m.

Devotional—Ryan Culima

8:30 a.m.

Business session
Women's meeting

11:00 a.m.

Devotional—Johann (Hans) Heinz

2:00 p.m.

Breakout discussion groups

6:30 p.m.

Music program
International Festival of Mission
Euro-Asia Division
South American Division

The Old, the New, and the Crux

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON, Editor, *Adventist Review*

At three General Conference sessions in a row—New Orleans in 1985, Indianapolis in 1990, and now Utrecht yesterday—the church debated the role of women in ministry. How far have we come in resolving this issue?

First, in important respects nothing changed very much. The same arguments pro and con that circulated in 1985 surfaced again yesterday. I didn't hear one new point of substance that went beyond the New Orleans debate.

The session yesterday commanded high interest. The chief speakers—Elder McClure, Dr. Dederen, and Dr. Damsteegt—presented their cases strongly. We heard effective speeches from the delegates who rushed to the microphones when debate opened, even though they were limited to two minutes each. But I have the distinct impression that very few people changed their minds during the course of the afternoon: most delegates already had decided how they would vote.

And, of course, the result was identical with 1990—thumbs down. Support for women's ordination perhaps increased from about 25 percent in Indianapolis to 31 percent. However, we shouldn't place much importance on these numbers inasmuch as the recommendations before the delegates weren't identical.

Utrecht was different in other ways. The format was much better than previously: having two major presentations gave delegates a sense that their arguments had been made even though they did not get an opportunity to speak. And chair-

man Dr. Rock conducted the session with masterful tact, fairness, and grace.

Delegates' speeches in general were kinder and gentler. There was less of a sharp edge, less of putting down the North American Division and women. At the end there was less sense of "victory" or "defeat." The wounds from the session, although painful, may heal faster than after Indianapolis.

Now the crux emerges in sharp relief. Cut through all the side arguments and you see what the debate is *really* about, why we have such a difficult time in reaching consensus. The crux is how Adventists interpret the Bible.

The Bible doesn't directly speak to the issue. If it did, we could have resolved women's ordination long ago, because both sides want to submit to the authority of the Word of God.

Out of this silence one side says—"Go forward under the leading of the Spirit." The other side says—"We dare not without direct counsel from the Lord!"

And there is more. Yesterday we saw two respected Adventist scholars approach the Scriptures in different ways. One based his case on specific verses and statements of Ellen White, arguing from a *literalistic* basis. The other also appealed to Scripture and Ellen White, but in terms of the *principles* behind the statements.

The differences are striking and important. They impact not only the women's issue but many others. We have not heard the last of this matter. Adventists will have to wrestle with this most basic concern: How shall we interpret Scripture?

ANALYSIS

Polish Parliament Votes to Recognize Adventist Church

BY RAY DABROWSKI

General Conference communication director

After five years of negotiations, Sejm, the Polish Parliament, has approved the text of a law that regulates the relations between the Polish republic and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

According to Zachariasz Lyko, Polish Union Conference public affairs and religious liberty director and the legal counsel who represented the church in the legislative negotiations, "this Act of Parliament is of historical proportions. Not only did our church receive a legal status in the country, but that status makes the church equal before the law, just like other denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church."

The Sejm acknowledges that the church in Poland is a part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, and recognizes the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as the highest authority in SDA doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters.

News of the parliamentary decision was announced by world church president Robert S. Folkenberg to the participants of the world congress of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church, meeting in Utrecht, Netherlands, just hours after the vote of approval in the Sejm on Friday, June 30.

"This is a historical event," said Folkenberg, "not only for the Polish Adventist Church, but also for Adventists in the whole world. Poland is the second country in the world after Italy to pass such a bill. We are convinced that the awaited final passing of the bill by the Polish Senate and signature of the president will affirm the good relationship between the Polish state and the Seventh-Adventist Church in Poland."

The law establishes the church's jurisdictions and describes its relationship with the state. It guarantees full religious freedom for Adventists, ensuring that their Sabbath rights in the workplace and school will be honored. A free Saturday is also guaranteed for military personnel.

The church has full autonomy in its operations, governed by its own statute. Freedom of its missionary work is guaranteed, together with the church's public activities. Regarding the day of worship,

the law recognizes Saturday as that day. Believers have a right to be free from work and studies between sunset on Friday and sunset on Saturday.

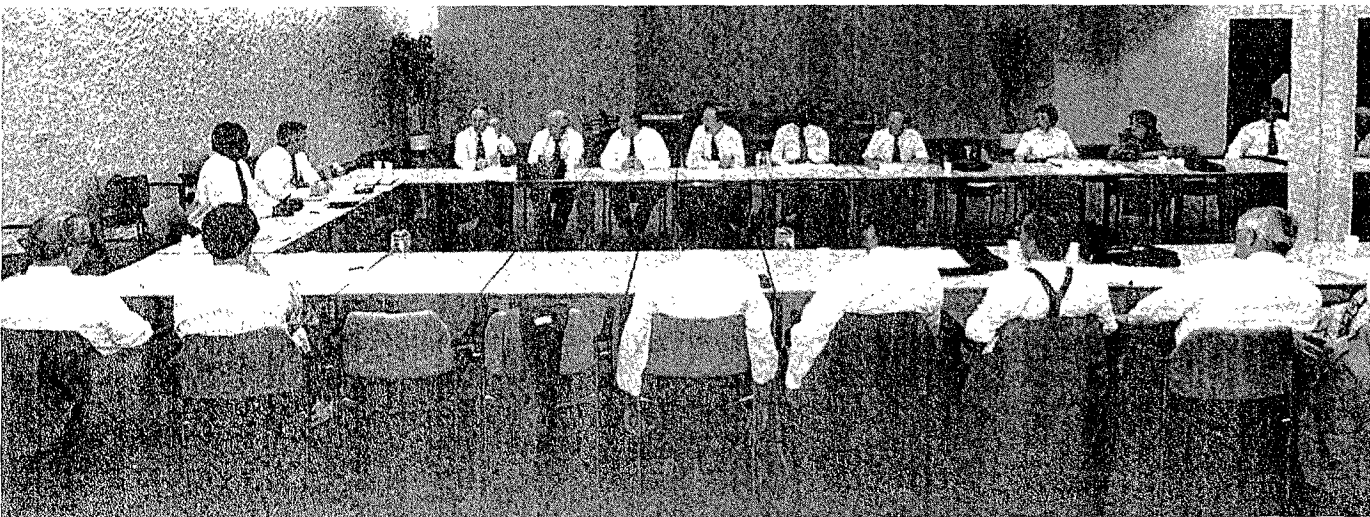
The law states that Adventists are awarded an opportunity to teach religion to Adventist students in public schools. The church is also guaranteed the full right to establish and operate institutions (including schools at all levels), publishing houses, foundations, and other entities.

The church further is guaranteed the right to military chaplaincy. The law received support of practically all members of the Sejm, and was part of a legal package that received parliamentary passage for three other churches—Baptists, Methodists, and Polish Catholics. The law is now being sent to the Polish Senate and will await the president's signature to make it legally binding.

"The passing of this law is a remarkable religious liberty victory for the Polish Seventh-day Adventist Church," said Dr. B. B. Beach, former public affairs and religious liberty director of the world church. "It marks the climax of many years of negotiations and increasing positive relations between the Polish state and the church!"

The law is similar to recently passed legislation in Italy and Spain, giving separate and legal recognition to the Adventist Church and the religious needs of its members.

GC SNAPSHOT



This normally low-profile committee became the center of attention early in the GC session because of comprehensive changes proposed for the Constitution and Bylaws. One day the committee heard 56 delegates speak after items were sent back from the floor for more consideration. The room is stiflingly hot with no air conditioning or fans.

God's Miraculous Power in the Euro-Asia Division



By **Ted N. C. Wilson**
President

The only appropriate expression we can use to explain the miraculous events and development of God's work in the vast Euro-Asia Division (ESD) during the past five years is "to God be the glory, great things He has done!"

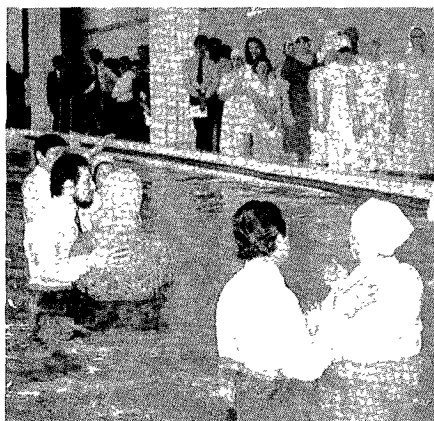
Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, large numbers of believers have learned of the truth for the first time and joined God's worldwide Advent family. Through the combined efforts of people from within and without our division, the message of the three angels has been brought to thousands. The full story of the unfolding of God's providence in this division would fill many books. However, in the short space provided, let us document God's wonderful leading.

Brief History and Overview

Through God's providence the Euro-Asia Division, spanning 11 time zones and stretching some 5,770 miles (9,285 kilometers) from east to west, was officially organized at the 1990 General Conference session. Since 1992 the division has served 12 independent republics that include semiautonomous areas and scores of ethnolinguistic cultural groups. Additionally, the large number of religious bodies within the 300 million population increases the difficulty of proclaiming Christ's grace and His soon coming.

At the 1990 session M. P. Kulakov was elected president, V. P. Krushenitsky secretary, and A. A. Pankov treasurer, in addition to some department directors. Others who assisted in the formative financial organization were M. E. Kemmerer and W. L. Pascoe. The first division office was located in a few rooms offered by the Zaokski Theological Seminary 60 miles (100 kilometers) south of Moscow.

In addition to the new administration located in Russia, a special operation, known as the Euro-Asia Affairs Office, was organized at General Conference headquarters to nurture the fledgling division, and help with evangelism, church construction, and other special projects. Persons in this office and those helping at various times included Neal C. Wilson, Harold Otis, Richard Wilcox, J. R. Spangler, G. J. Bertochini, and others. They worked together to implement Evangelism Advance, an unparalleled move to bring expatriate



A baptism being conducted in the Central Conference, West Russian Union

evangelists to the Euro-Asia Division to work with local pastors in lifting up Christ and proclaiming the three angels' messages. Since 1990 hundreds of evangelistic series have been held. Thousands of new believers now come to church radiant in their newfound Saviour and biblical understanding.

Because of Evangelism Advance and other soul-winning activities under God's guidance, membership in the division increased from 34,146 in 1990 to 98,963 by the end of 1994, as reported by V. Krushenitsky and assistant secretaries Gaspar F. Colon and

Michael Kaminsky. Churches increased from 546 to 872; Moscow churches increased from one congregation in 1990 to 14 in 1994.

Sister organizations provided personnel, materials, finances, and instruction. ESD is grateful for this outpouring of love from around the world.

A transition period came at the 1992 Annual Council when M. P. Kulakov resigned to become head of the Bible Translation Institute. In January 1993 the division office moved to leased quarters in Moscow. The division took the initiative to fill various departmental positions and bring about a full office team. In addition to continued concern for evangelism, a move has been made to develop a strong church organization throughout the division for effective nurture and systematic growth. By God's grace this has been accomplished through field visitation by ESD administrators. On-site assistance from General Conference departments and two special leadership councils have yielded positive results.

Two special division-wide stewardship seminars have been conducted in conjunction with the 1993 and 1994 ESD midyear committees. Full-time stewardship directors were appointed in most unions, conferences, and missions with salary assistance provided by the division for two years. God has greatly blessed this stewardship emphasis.

In 1992 the Development and Construction Service was organized to supervise finances and construction of new church buildings from available funding. Peter Koolik, a volunteer builder from Australia, directed this project. From 1992 to 1994 some 350 churches were constructed or renovated. Also helping at the division headquarters have been Cliff Morgan, Val Morgan, Simeon Chudin, and Alla Pavlyshe. However, in spite of these good results, hundreds of congregations remain without church structures.

Unusual progress has taken place in the treasury system of the division under the direction of J. R. Prestol, treasurer; his associate, Doris Jorgensen; and his assistant, D. O. Yunak. Special training seminars have been implemented for conference and union treasurers. Giving appropriate authority to the treasurers

has resulted in increased financial efficiency throughout the division.

Religious liberty remains a constant concern. Seventh-day Adventists are grateful to God and their government for whatever amount of religious freedom is accorded to them. Through the intervention of the Holy Spirit a strong degree of religious liberty exists in most countries. This has been maintained through active prayer initiatives, awareness activities, and the tireless efforts of leaders, members, and friends who highly value freedom of conscience.

Unions and Attached Fields

In 1990 ESD consisted of the Baltic Union Conference, Moldavian Union Conference, Russian Union Conference, Southern Union Conference, and Ukrainian Union Conference. As of January 1, 1994, the three Baltic countries transferred to the Trans-European Division, leaving the Belarus Conference as an attached field to the division. In late 1993 and early 1994 many local conference sessions took place in the Russian Union Conference, which saw a number of new conferences come into existence.

In mid-1994, at its own session, the Russian Union Conference was divided into two new unions, the East Russian Union Mission and the West Russian Union Conference. The Trans-Caucasus Field was formed in 1994.

Departmental, Agency, and Special Project Activities

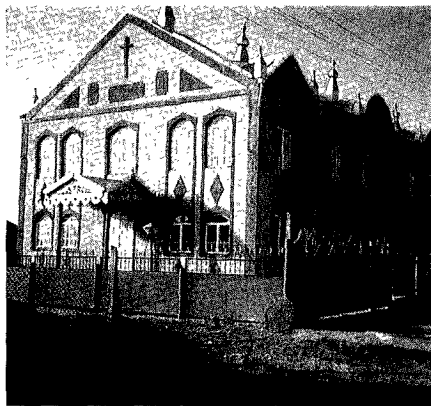
Much has taken place during this quinquennium in departmental structure and creating materials for nurturing and training the church for service.

ADRA/ESD. This service has been operating for five years now and is favorably recognized in public and government circles. Directed by P. M. Kulakov and deputy directors Evald Jorgensen and T. M. Porter, ADRA/ESD has realized many projects and plans new offices to help expand this humanitarian and spiritual work.

Communication Department. Directed by Bogdan Kachmar, this department is organizing a communication and reporting system throughout the division. They edit and manage the

ESD edition of the *Adventist Review*. Kachmar also covers the areas of Trust Services and ASI.

Education Department. In 1990 no church schools existed in the Euro-Asia Division. Now we have six schools with a combined enrollment of 513 students located in Chernovtsy, Kiev, Moscow, Ryazan, Tula, and Zaokski, reports Harry Mayden, director. Raya Abadir is



Church constructed in Kantamir, Southern Moldova Conference

his associate, and Irene Karpa is assistant director. They have established a teacher training program at Zaokski. A teachers' institute meets each summer to nurture Adventist educators (partially sponsored by Atlantic Union College). Translation of Bible textbooks, education seminars, and school visitation and evaluation are other projects.

Family Ministries. Under the direction of associates Gaspar and May-Ellen Colon, this organization prepares materials and holds seminars.

Global Mission. Coordinated by Helena Leonova, this office identifies and tracks progress in unentered areas. Scores of evangelistic meetings have taken place. A project called the Pioneer Missionary program uses local volunteers to go into unentered areas and open new churches.

Health and Temperance Department. Directed by Gaspar Colon, this department promotes health principles through seminars, written materials, and evangelistic meetings. Various organizations that have helped bring a healthy lifestyle to ESD include Adventist Youth to Youth, Pacific Health Foundation, International Congress for Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, and

Adventist International Medical Society. Two organizations have been officially organized to use the skills of Adventist physicians: the Russian Adventist Medical Association (RAMA) and the Adventist Medical Association of Ukraine (AMAU).

Church Ministries Department. Directed by G. G. Arutyunian and his associate, John McGhee, this department provides lay training and Sabbath school development. Seminars with a small group emphasis strengthen local churches and increase evangelism. The Lay Evangelism Missionary congresses (January 1995), held in six places with more than 2,000 delegates, have been a great blessing. Church Ministries emphasizes practical lay training. The department is also developing prison ministries and services for the physically or mentally impaired.

Ministerial Association. Led by Heikki Silvet, this organization concentrates on seminars for pastors. Bible conferences were organized in 1994 for all the unions. An intensive pastoral training program continues at Zaokski Theological Seminary. The Ministerial Association produces materials for pastors, including a journal entitled *Alpha and Omega*. Pastoral councils in four locations are planned for 1997.

Valery Ivanov, an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association, is the evangelism coordinator, helping plan hundreds of evangelistic campaigns using both foreign and local evangelists. Olga Murga, Shepherdess International coordinator, conducts seminars and produces a newsletter for pastors' wives.

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. PARL is an important department for the Euro-Asia Division because of the constant threat to religious freedom. Valery Ivanov, director, helps keep the issue of religious liberty before the eyes of civic and public leaders. The Russian chapter of the International Religious Liberty Association has also made an impact, with M. P. Kulakov as its executive secretary.

Publishing Department. This department has developed a strong corps of literature evangelists. A. I. Paraschuk, director, states, "During 1995 we plan to draw 2 percent of all church members

into literature evangelism—about 1,500 to 1,700 people.” At present more than 500 are involved in literature work full- or part-time. Jan Knopper, a retired former division publishing director, helped pioneer the work.

Stewardship Department. This department has a vital role in helping the church lay a sturdy foundation for its programs and activities. Training programs and seminars have been held division-wide and on a local basis. Talking about the first division-wide stewardship council held in Moscow, May 1993, Babilo Zawadzki, director, states, “This was a significant event that awakened the church’s officers, interest concerning the importance of the Stewardship Department.” We thank God for the wonderful progress being made in stewardship education and commitment on the part of church members.

Office of Women’s Ministries. This organization promotes programs and seminars aimed at spiritual growth and evangelistic assistance. Ludmila Krushenitskaya, director, says, “The main direction of our activity is to establish a network of mutual support among sisters in order to have spiritual growth, and to serve each other, our family, church, and those in need in the surrounding community.” In addition to other activities, they also promote the Year of the Adventist Woman and help fund needy women students at the seminary.

Youth Department. Led by M. F. Kaminsky, the Youth Department is building a strong network of youth leaders. They prepare materials for youth directors and hold workshops. Assisting in the preparation of materials are Kevin and Thelma Silva, retired youth workers of the South Pacific Division. Union youth congresses have been held, and plans are under way for a division-wide youth congress during 1996. Youth evangelistic meetings have been held by ESD young people in many areas.

Institutions and Special Programs

Adventist Health Center. Located in Moscow and directed by David Bowers, M.D., AHC provides health care within a Christian setting. Dr. Bowers is assisted by Vernon Putz, R.P.T., and George Abraham, D.D.S. Serving as a

training institution for health professionals, the center specializes in dental care, rehabilitation, physical therapy services, and health education. It has the best known dental clinic in Moscow. Witnessing activities are prominent in the center’s overall program.

Bible Translation Institute. Directed by M. P. Kulakov, the institute’s goal is to accurately translate the Bible into modern Russian. Located on the campus of the Zaoski Theological Seminary, the institute plans to have the New Testament translated by 1996 and then finish the Old Testament. We hope this translation will have broad appeal among other Christians.

Source of Life Publishing House. Located in Zaoski, Russia, and managed by Roy Terretta, Source of Life is another miracle of God’s guidance. Donations by caring laypeople and others have built and equipped the publishing facility. As a result, many titles have been printed. By 1997 most Spirit of Prophecy books will have been translated and printed. The publishing work extends to a branch house in Kiev, Ukraine.

Voice of Hope Media Center. The Voice of Hope, situated in Tula, Russia, and directed by Daniel Reband, produces the most popular religious radio program in Russia. It also coordinates television broadcasts in Russian of *It Is Written*. The media center’s Bible correspondence school currently has about 60,000 students. The center also serves as headquarters for Adventist World Radio/Russia.

Zaoski Theological Seminary. The seminary, located in Zaoski, Russia, and led by Artur A. Stele, president, is a miracle of God’s power and direction. The school began classes in 1989, graduating its first full class in June 1993. Major study courses include religion, theology, and religious music. Education and business courses will be added in the near future. Michael M. Kulakov assisted in the formative stages of the seminary’s development. After much construction, the school now has adequate classroom facilities, library, administrative offices, church facilities, cafeteria, dormitories, storage facilities, faculty and staff housing, garages, etc. One of the better known aspects of the

seminary is its agricultural program. This program provides food for the school and the community, and serves as a center for agricultural education throughout Russia. The seminary offers an extension master’s program from Andrews University. It also provides a growing extension program for the B.A. degree with branches in different locations in the division as well as intensive pastoral training courses.

Public School Evangelism Project. This unique program is directed by Helen Yakovenko. The group contact local public schools and arrange for Adventist volunteers and paid teachers to provide religious and moral instruction in the schools after hours or other specified times. Often students reached through this program are invited to the homes of Seventh-day Adventists or to church programs. This project has been sponsored by Seventh-day Adventist laypeople in the United States, primarily in Arkansas.

International Teachers Service. This program is directed by Cliff Dewees and operates English language schools in Russia and Ukraine. They use Adventist volunteers to teach English, giving them opportunity to share the gospel with educated people who may not be attracted through other methods. Bible studies and weekend religious services allow time for personal evangelism.

New Russian Hymnal. A qualified and competent team of musicians, supervised by the Euro-Asia Division, is in the process of producing a new Russian hymnal.

A New Division Office. God has led us to purchase a new division office in the Eastern Prefecture of Moscow just near the outer edge of the city, not too far from Sheremetyevo International Airport. Renovation activities are proceeding under the supervision of Peter Koolik from the South Pacific Division and Simeon Chudin from Moldova. A crew of primarily Adventist construction workers from Ukraine and Moldova hope to finish the office by the latter part of this year.

The potential for God’s church in the Euro-Asia Division is limitless. As Christ and the cross are lifted up through biblical preaching, He will draw people to Him.



United in His Hope



JOHANN HEINZ

*Teacher for Systematic
Theology and Church
History at Marienhöhe
Seminary and at the
Theological Faculty of
Friedensau*

In 1968, a few months after the Soviet Army violently crushed the "Prague Spring" in the former Czechoslovakia, an open-air concert was held in Prague. One of the singers sang a popular German and Czechoslovakian song: "*Morgen, morgen lacht uns wieder das Glück*" ("Tomorrow, tomorrow things will get better again"). Immediately an outburst of enthusiasm gripped the crowd. Applauding wildly, they rose to their feet, climbed on their seats, and sang along. Like a spark setting a barrel of powder alight, the people were carried away by a maddening force. That spark was hope. They wanted to shout: "Today we are being ruled by darkness, by hopelessness; we, however, shall not give up our hope of freedom, and tomorrow everything can turn completely different."

They waited 20 years for the fulfillment of their hope. Without hope they could not have endured those years of dictatorship.

People Need Hope

Human beings cannot live without hope. "What oxygen is for the lungs," said theologian Emil Brunner, "hope is for human existence. If you remove oxygen, death through suffocation will take place; if you remove hope, a human being will suffocate from despair, from a paralysis of the mental and spiritual vigor, from a feeling of futility and the senselessness of life. A good supply of oxygen is what will decide the fate of mankind."

We need legitimate hope to combat two dangers threatening us today: a paralyzing fear of the future, viewing the world ending in an atomic, environmental, or economical catastrophe; and an unjustifiable over-optimism, believing that everything is all right and change unnecessary.

The Bible Speaks of Hope

Hope is a biblical concept. According to Paul (1 Cor. 13:13), the Christian comes into contact with eternity through faith, hope, and charity, for they are what remain.

Some 150 times in the Old Testament and 50

times in the New Testament the Bible speaks of hope. But this is a particular kind of hope, because it is dependent upon God, and it is certain.

Hope dependent upon humans is uncertain. People promise and do not keep their promises; situations change. God, however, fulfills His promises.

Divine hope expresses certainty; "Hope," as Paul tells us, "maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:5). Faith receives certainty from divine assurance and the fulfillment of the Word of God. God promised the world the Redeemer Jesus Christ and proved His trustworthiness through Him. Whatever God has begun He will finish through Christ. In the Bible we find:

1. "A lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3) based on God's Word and not on the ideas and promises of some human being.

2. "A better hope" (Heb. 7:19), not temporal and finite, but perfect in Christ, who came and died for us.

3. "That blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) in the return of Him who has already come. Christian hope gains its power, not only from looking back to our Redeemer's cross and resurrection, but forward to His return. "He is coming," the password of hope for the church and proof of the early Christians' authentic faith, gives the Christian a joyful look into the future!

Utopia of the Kingdom of God

The world also looks to the future. Up to just a few decades ago it was doing so with optimism, hoping for utopia. The modern concept of utopia is that of being in an unfinished state with continually increasing improvement. Carried away by progress in technology, medicine, and biology, many people still speak of worldwide prosperity, paradise, and a future in space.

Futurology, a branch of science that researches the future, draws a dismal picture: overpopulation, world famine, environmental pollution, the exhaustion of resources, and the possibility of an atomic catastrophe.

*Devotional
message
presented
Thursday
morning,
July 6, 1995*

Christian statements, long considered to be old-fashioned, are receiving new meaning. Some scientists complain about the loss of a connection with the Divine; others see a world captive in the deadly sins of civilization.

The shock of the future has awakened us from our utopian dream of always better, always faster, always farther! The world's hope in the future has dimmed, for it has been based on humans. We cannot expect any qualitative changes in humans, or the world.

In contrast to the utopia of an improved world, the gospel gives us the promise of the kingdom of God. When Jesus entered into His ministry, He announced the coming of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14, 15), or the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4:17). His message then became the message about the kingdom (Matt. 13:19). This message of the kingdom extends through His whole ministry, even to the end of His life on earth (Matt. 26:29). This

kingdom is neither a geographical or political unit nor an inner condition of the soul. The kingdom is God actively causing a basic change among people.

The kingdom is a gift from the Supernatural, which we can receive but not produce. It means overcoming our alienation from God, from nature, and from each other. It is the end of guilt, sickness, suffering, and death. The kingdom of God is joy over the victory of justice, over peace among peoples and in nature, over freedom from hate and freedom to love, over eternal fellowship between creation and its Creator.

The Kingdom of God Is at Hand

Our experience shows us that we cannot achieve this kingdom ourselves, but the life of Jesus shows us that it is no illusion. In His words and ministry He is the embodiment of the kingdom (Luke 17:20, 21). In the powerful deeds of the Humble One, in the sermons of the Nonviolent One, in the love of the Unselfish One, the universal change had already been anticipated (Matt. 12:28). The wonders that Jesus performed with individuals during His ministry on earth

(healing the sick, freeing the possessed, awakening the dead) are the same wonders God will perform for the whole world at the end (or goal—Gr. *telos*). The whole world will be healthy again, freed from evil and the threat of death. That is why it can be said that the kingdom is already here and not yet here.

Jesus lived as an example for us. As His disciples, what we do in opposing

continual preparedness and do deeds of hope. They await the future kingdom consciously and joyfully, serving until He returns. They do not cling to the "world in its present form which is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31, NIV).

The Kingdom of God Is Coming

God's reign is not complete with the mere presence of His kingdom. It still awaits its full realization. This will first take place when the Humble One appears the second time to lead His disciples into the visible rule of God in the redeemed world (Matt. 25:31-34).

Therefore, the gospel message of reconciliation has to be preached to all nations. Only then will everything reach its goal (Matt. 24:14). The time of the end started with Christ's first coming (1 Cor. 10:11; 1 John 2:18), but the end of time was not yet. The church still had to go through "latter times" (1 Tim. 4:1) and "last days" (2 Tim. 3:1). Until then

the church must diligently carry forward God's reign as it waits for the Lord's return (Luke 19:13). His return fulfills God's promises and the hope of the faithful.

The promise is much more than a return. The New Testament does not speak of a return (the statement in John 14:3, "I will come again," comes the closest to this concept), but of a *parousia*, Christ's coming and appearing in great glory (Matt. 24:27, 28); of an *apoklypsis* (Luke 17:30), His glory being revealed (1 Peter 4:13); of an *epiphaneia* (Titus 2:13), the appearance of a *Christus Triumphator* as the victor over Satan, the antiChrist, and the world (2 Thess. 2:8-12).

Genuine apostolic Christianity includes not just a belief in Him who has already come (to Bethlehem and Golgotha), but also a hope in the coming of Him who has already come. This hope acts as proof of genuine Christianity, of genuine discipleship, and of a church true to the principles of the Bible.

Therefore, lift up your hearts! Christ is coming. The future belongs to Him; our lives belong to Him! May we be united and remain united in this hope!



Thousands of eager visitors and delegates use portable headphones to receive translation of business sessions and worship events in their own language.

violence, social injustice, brutality, cruelty, hunger, and disease is no world improvement. The present-day kingdom is not here to renew a perishing world, but to point to a new world. Christians know they can do no more than set the pattern for God's future kingdom. Their well-founded hope relieves them of the utopian burden of perfecting the present world. They can calmly and peacefully enter the battle against suffering and evil because they know that their work, as futile and insignificant as it may seem, is not just piecemeal. They do not close their eyes to the world's misery, acting as if it does not exist. Christians are realists; they see the world as it is. They are optimists as well, knowing that everything will be different tomorrow. They are also activists, knowing that what they cannot complete, God will bring to fruition. Jesus' disciples today witness for a God who is changing things now. Their prayer for the coming of the kingdom (Matt. 6:10) witnesses for a God who will complete everything.

Those who are overwhelmed by the love of Jesus have their place in the midst of today's world. They live in

A Blazing Continent

"In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a little fire that sets the forest aflame—like a burning match among the sheaves; they will burn up all the neighboring nations right and left, while Jerusalem stands unmoved" (Zech. 12:6, TLB).

The South American Division was organized in 1916, formed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, plus the Falkland Islands. It measures 5.9 million square miles, and has more than 250 million inhabitants. Basically two languages—Spanish and Portuguese—are used, simplifying the work enormously.

Adventist ideals had been preached in South America well before 1844—as early as 1764, preceding any other movement. Manuel Lacunza, a Jesuit priest from Chile, became, perhaps, the first to herald the second return of Christ in modern times. His *Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty* influenced the minds and hearts of influential people of faith in many parts of Spanish America, from Tierra del Fuego (southern Argentina and Chile) to Mexico. Lacunza's book eventually reached Europe, where it awakened interest and consciences, powerfully affecting the life and teachings of Edward Irving in England and Joseph Wolff in Germany, both pioneers of Adventism in those European countries. Finally, the book's influence reached North America, where the William Miller movement was emerging.

Another satisfying aspect, for us, is the influence of the life and work of the Argentinean Francisco Ramos Mexía, who contributed significantly in the dis-

seminating of biblical truths. He became a successful preacher, more than 20 years before William Miller began his preaching.

It was on September 9, 1894, in Crespo, in northern Argentina (Austral Union), that the first Seventh-day



One of the 36 pioneers represented in Crespo, Argentina

Adventist church in South America was organized, with 36 members. Today, to God's honor and glory, we are a division of seven unions, two attached fields, and, as of December 1994, 1,310,538 baptized members. During the quinquennium, 548,104 persons were baptized—an average of 300 per day.

In spite of the economic oscillation in various countries, by the favor of God's blessings and the faithfulness of the members, tithes reached US \$209,041,765, which represents a 101 percent increase over the last period. Mission offerings reached US \$16,223,373.

Global Mission

Our concept of Global Mission is that of an evangelistic strategy aimed to finish



By Joao Wolff
President

the mission Jesus entrusted to the church. It led us to stop, analyze which places were less evangelized, and then take steps to establish the work there.

Large portions of the financial and human resources at all levels, from the division to the local church, were directed to these priorities. The program was readily accepted by both workers and members, and the results have been marvelous. On average we have entered one new place every day.

Ministerial Association and Evangelism

There are 1,269 pastoral districts for 11,545 churches and congregations—an average of nearly 10 congregations per district. Our great challenge is for more pastors, but the present situation provides an opportunity to develop the leadership potential of the laity.

Evangelism is a constant among us. We have pastors baptizing up to 2,000 candidates per district per year—through laity family groups, permanent baptismal classes, public Sunday night evangelism, and regular 90-night evangelistic series. The REVIVE programs, led by division ministerial secretary Alejandro Bullón, are a new method of sowing and reaping. These comprise 3 to 15 nights of campaigning. The pastors, together with the churches, prepare the program months in advance. Thousands become interested,

receive preparation, and are invited to the meetings—usually in some gigantic open auditorium. In one campaign in Lima more than 40,000 attended each night. The press, radio, and television are attracted, and cover the meetings, resulting in decisions and baptisms by the thousands, both during and after the campaign.

Church Ministries

► Sabbath school. We are growing in accomplishing the Sabbath school's objectives: Bible study and fellowship among members, outreach, and offerings for missions worldwide. Small study groups ("Action Units" of 6 to 8 persons) are having surprising results in the churches that have organized them.

There are 14,725 Sabbath schools with

1,410,826 members. More than 55,000 branch Sabbath schools were reported. Visitors' Day is celebrated the second Sabbath of every month. Thousands join the church by this means.

► *Outreach.* The aim is to take the message to every door, make every member a soul winner, and make every church a mission school and a salvation agency. Through these objectives 75,818,741 tracts have been distributed, 15,448,217 Bible studies given, and 29,465,571 missionary contacts made.

The "Holy Week" season (the period before and after Easter) is a time for evangelism in the division's territory every year. Our lay members have led out in more than 150,000 preaching centers during this period over the past five years.

The "Pioneer Project" goal is to have one Sabbath school class going out to a new place to establish a new congregation. The unit leaves never to return. This is one of the most efficient methods of forming a new congregation. New congregations by the hundreds are formed each year.

► *Adventist Youth and Pathfinders.* Our youth and adolescents constitute a true army. More than 60 percent of the church in South America is made up of people under 30 years of age.

— During spring baptism (in September each year) as many as 100,174 youth and adolescents have been baptized.

— During the Youth Evangelism Year, 1993, more than 7,700 evangelistic series were held, resulting in 22,600 baptisms.

— The second division Pathfinder Camporee, held in January 1994 in Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil, brought together 8,100 of the division's 80,455 Pathfinders. "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!" (*Messages to Young People*, p. 196).

► *Stewardship.* Stewardship is more than a ministry, more than a depart-

ment. It is a lifestyle. In its various aspects stewardship has been presented to the church in South America through seminars, congresses, and specific campaigns. Tithes growth, mission offerings, planned giving, and contri-

ties at the present, with another now being established in Brazil.

On March 3, 1993, with Argentinean president Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem attending, the opening class was conducted at the School of Medicine at the River Plate Adventist University. Thus, the division now hosts the third church-owned School of Medicine in the world. We have postgraduate programs in Peru, Argentina, and Brazil.

Spiritual and missionary activities through our schools resulted in the distribution of more than 3.5 million pieces of literature during the quinquennium and the baptism of 19,750 students and their families.

Latin-America Adventist Theology Seminary (SALT), the umbrella organization of our five Schools of Theology, had an

enrollment, at graduation level, of 1,250 students a year—some 20 percent of the total number of Adventist theology students worldwide.

SALT, in collaboration with the Ministerial Association, conducts a Continuing Education program. This program benefits not only the workers of all areas but also, and especially, lay leaders.

Publishing and Spirit of Prophecy

"And in a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory" (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 140).

The 6,500 literature evangelists, of which 35.8 percent are students from our schools, distributed more than 5 million books and 20.8 million magazines to 90 million homes during the quinquennium. And 299,747 Bible studies were given. Sales reached US\$110 million.

One of the blessings offered by the publishing houses is that we have almost all the Spirit of Prophecy books that exist in English, published in the two languages used in our division.

Communication and Civic Duties

The Communication Department has played its role in informing the public of the church's activities. More than 5,000



One of the 5,000 huge billboards placed in great urban centers: "God is Father"

butions for projects and special programs in all the fields give evidence to the understanding and faithfulness of our people. The great objective now is to have each field, mission, institution, church/group, etc., develop their stewardship program to the place of financial independence.

► *Home and Family.* Family ministry has developed its activities with the objective of strengthening Christian homes through special weeks, seminars, training of department directors and lay leaders, marriage enrichment meetings, premarriage courses, etc. The aim is to confront the challenges that the Christian home and the Adventist family face.

Education

The first Adventist school in our territory was opened in 1898 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. From a modest beginning, it grew enormously. Today, by God's grace, the strongest potential for growth and the strengthening of the church is through education.

Statistics are reflected in the attached report of 1994:

Items	Elementary	Academy	College	Total
Schools	850	135	9	994
Students	142,895	21,765	5,526	170,186
Teachers	6,109	1,935	460	8,504

The division operates four universi-

huge billboards placed strategically in the great urban centers have announced the church's programs. The commercial value of these announcements exceeds US\$2 million, but the church has paid only 3 percent of the amount, the rest having been donated by various marketing agencies.

During this quinquennium, with the help of the Adventist Media Center in Thousand Oaks, California, the *It Is Written* television program began with high ratings and great public acceptance and participation. The higher and influential classes are being reached. Another important aspect is that the major segments of the program are administered and financed by lay members from the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) group in Brazil.

The Voice of Prophecy program in both Spanish and Portuguese is going strong. More than 592,756 people have enrolled in the various Bible courses offered by these radio and television programs, with 101,521 finishing one or more courses.

Health and Temperance

The medical missionary work, the right arm of the third angel's message, began in South America at the end of the past century. The physicians, nurses, workers, and employees from our hospitals, clinics, centers of healthful living, and launches have written brilliant and heroic pages in Adventism's history. In many areas we are identified by our medical missionary work.

We have 25 health institutions—large and small—with 1,004 beds and 3,862 employees. More than 200,000 patients were cared for.

The participation of the Chaplaincy Department in Global Mission has been a high point during this period. The hospitals give significant importance in their budgets to evangelism, and the chaplains' group is engaged in a very fruitful ministry in our hospitals and elsewhere.

The temperance program, linked with the medical work and having the participation of the church, has greatly contributed to better understanding of health principles and has taught thousands how to conquer addiction.

For 18 years the "Day Without Smoking and Drinking" has been celebrated. Begun in Chile by Adventist youth, this program today covers the division. To the delight of the authorities and the press, hundreds of youth and students from our schools take to the streets marching through the cities inviting people to stop smoking or drinking.



During the past five years our publishing house has had an open house. Sales reached more than US\$2.5 million. Here *Nosso Amiguinho* (*Our Little Friend*) is being promoted.

Health Food Factories

Three church-owned industries (Granix in Argentina, Frutigran in Uruguay, and Superbom in Brazil) produce a variety of high-quality food products, distributed by the best supermarkets in the area. Sales have surpassed 70,000 metric tons, achieving a high financial result of US\$157 million.

ADRA

Through the years the influence of ADRA has been incalculable, almost impossible to measure or evaluate. More than 600 professionals put their efforts into projects directed by ADRA. These programs have given a better identity to the church by uniting our concerns with those of the community, both in great urban areas and in the remotest regions. The community recognizes the inestimable presence of ADRA's programs directed to the more vulnerable segments of society—that is, mothers and children. We operate orphanages for "street children" in Brazil, educational programs (for more than 40,000 needy children) in Bolivia

and Peru. And the services of 21 launches on the rivers in the Amazon region, which constitutes an undisputable statement for the Adventist Church's Christian commitment in South America.

ADRA's funding agencies in Sweden, Germany, Canada, Spain, and Italy have provided generous resources for the implementation of educational and health services in our division.

ASI

The Organization of Adventist Businessmen and Professionals of Brazil (ASI) was revived through the common desire for finding a mass communication method for disseminating the gospel. ASI in Brazil involves more than 500 businessmen in its activities, meeting yearly to plan and evaluate the mission of the church. Large sums of money have been invested to finance the airing of the *It Is Written* TV program. Thousands have contacted the SDA Church as a result of this program. More than 1,000 Bible courses were requested.

Women's Ministry

Women's Ministry has come to stay! All the unions and fields are developing this program that has captured the interest of the women of the church.

The International Year of the Adventist Woman promises to be one of the best avenues for church growth in our territory. The vitality and dedication are uncommon. We must never forget that the Adventist movement in its beginning had the active and decisive participation of women, many of them very young.

In conclusion, I say in gratitude: "Thus far has the Lord helped us." Our words are only of praise and recognition to God for all He has done for us and with us. The battles and challenges ahead are nothing compared with the joy and happiness of seeing the church of Jesus Christ victorious.

Through the dedication and leadership of more than 16,000 workers in many lines and the participation and faithfulness of the total Adventist family, we are watching a "blazing continent" for God.

Session Actions

*Fifty-sixth General Conference session,
July 4, 1995, 8:30 a.m.*

REALIGNMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE

Voted. To realign the departmental structure so that the Church worldwide is served by the following departments/associations:

- Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Department
- Communication Department
- Department of Education
- Family Ministries Department
- Health and Temperance Department
- Ministerial Association
- Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Department (incorporating Community Services)
- Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department
- Publishing Department
- Stewardship Department
- Trust Services Department
- Women's Ministries Department
- Youth Department

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Voted. To reduce the membership of the General Conference Executive Committee to approximately 260, and to constitute the membership so as to be more representative of the world field, as follows:

- General Conference Officers
- Division Executive Officers
- General Conference Departmental Directors
- General Conference Field Secretaries
- Representatives of General Conference Institutions, and others such as ADRA, AWR, and ARM
- Director of Archives and Statistics
- Past presidents of the General Conference
- + Three laypersons from each division*
- + Presidents of Union Conferences and Union Missions
- + One church pastor from each division without regard to membership, and one additional church pastor or other frontline denominational employee for every 500,000 members or major fraction thereof beyond the first 500,000 members*
- + Thirty members-at-large**

* Chosen by the division executive committees from lists of candidates recommended by the union executive committees.

** Selected by the General Conference Executive Committee.

+ Travel and accommodation expenses and per diem for these members met by the General Conference.

ARCHIVES AND STATISTICS—REPORT

Voted. To accept the report from Archives and Statistics, as presented by F Donald Yost.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE—ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

Voted. To appoint to the Session Nominating Committee the following additional representatives of the Euro-Asia Division: Vasilij Gorbul,

Ivan Gumenyuk, Michael Murga, Ilya Velgosha, Ivan Ostrovsky, Daniil Reband.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT—VIDEO REPORT

Voted. To record the reception of a video report from the Communication Department.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, OUR POSITION—CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT (Divorce and Remarriage—Church Manual Amendment)

Voted. To refer the recommended amendment to the *Church Manual*, Divorce and Remarriage, Our Position, page 172, to the standing *Church Manual* Committee for further study.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, OUR POSITION—CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

Voted. To amend the *Church Manual* pages 172 to 173, paragraph 6, Divorce and Remarriage, Our Position, to read as follows:

6. It is recognized that sometimes marriage relations deteriorate to the point where it is better for a husband and wife to separate. "To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife" (1 Cor. 7:10, 11, RSV). In many such cases the custody of the children, the adjustment of property rights, or even personal protection may make necessary a change in marriage status. In such cases it may be permissible to secure what is known in some countries as a legal separation. However, in some civil jurisdictions such a separation can be secured only by divorce.

A separation or divorce, in which "unfaithfulness to the marriage vow" (see sections 1 and 2 above) is not involved, does not give either one the scriptural right to remarry, unless in the meantime the other party has remarried; committed adultery or fornication; or died. Should a member who has been thus divorced remarry without these biblical grounds, he or she shall be disfellowshipped; and the one whom he or she marries, if a member, shall also be disfellowshipped from the church.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE STUDY COMMISSION—REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT

Voted. To request the General Conference Executive Committee to establish a study commission, with representation from all of the world field, to reconsider the matter of divorce and remarriage, and make appropriate recommendations for changes in the *Church Manual*.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #6

Voted. To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

- Asia-Pacific Division
President, P D Chun
- Euro-Africa Division
Secretary, Carlos Puyol
Treasurer, Erich Amelung
- Inter-American Division
Secretary, Agustin Galicia
Treasurer, Ramon H Mauray
- South American Division

- Secretary*, Roberto Gullon
- Treasurer*, Alipio Bernardo da Rosa
- South Pacific Division
Secretary, Laurie J Evans
Treasurer, Warwick H Stokes
- Trans-European Division
Secretary, Reinder Bruinsma
Treasurer, Graham M Barham
- Directors of General Conference Departments and Services
Auditing, Eric A Korff
Communication, Rajmund Dabrowski
Education, Humberto M Rasi
Health and Temperance, Albert S Whiting
Ministerial Association, James A Cress
Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, John Graz
Publishing, Ronald E Appenzeller
Trust Services, G Tom Carter
Women's Ministries, Rose M Otis
Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, James Zackrisson

Adjourned.

- Robert J Kloosterhuis, *Chair*
- Harold W Baptiste, *Secretary*
- Athal H Tolhurst, *Actions Editor*
- Larry R Colburn, *Proceedings Editor*
- Carol E Rasmussen, *Recording Secretary*

Session Actions

*Fifty-sixth General Conference session,
July 4, 1995, 2:00 p.m.*

HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS—NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPLEMENT—CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

Voted. To add a new section, Health Care Institutions, to page 185 of the North American Division Supplement of the *Church Manual* following the section, Transferring Property Before Death, to read as follows:

Health Care Institutions

The gospel ministry is advanced through health care institutions which are influenced by Christ and His Spirit. Seventh-day Adventists see in the gospel commission, and the example of the Lord and His apostles, the responsibility of followers of Christ to serve the spiritual, mental, and physical needs of humankind through motivated Christian lives and service. Thus from the earliest years of the Adventist movement, health care institutions have been established to help facilitate the total ministry of carrying the gospel to all the world.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPLEMENT, AMERICAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY—CHURCH MANUAL DELETION

Voted. To delete a section from the *Church Manual* pages 185-187, North American Division Supplement, American Temperance Society, which reads as follows:

American Temperance Society
From its earliest days the Seventh-day Adventist

Church has been in the forefront of the temperance movement. Specific counsels through the Spirit of Prophecy have guided and directed the church on this vital and important matter.

"God wants us to stand where we can warn the people. He desires us to take up the temperance question. By wrong habits of eating and drinking, men are destroying what power they have for thought and intelligence."—*Temperance*, p. 235.

"The subject of temperance, in all its bearings, has an important place in the working out of our salvation."—*Evangelism*, p. 265.

"In the family circle and in the church we should place Christian temperance on an elevated platform. It should be a living, working element, reforming habits, dispositions, and character."—*Temperance*, p. 165.

"The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example—by voice and pen and vote—in favor of prohibition and total abstinence. We need not expect that God will work a miracle to bring about this reform, and thus remove the necessity for our exertion. We ourselves must grapple with this giant foe, our motto, No compromise and no cessation of our efforts till the victory is gained."—Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Oct. 15, 1914, p. 4.

Organization—The American Temperance Society has been organized for the express purpose of informing the public, through continuous education, of facts concerning the benefits of temperance and better living and the evil effects of alcoholic beverages and narcotics, also to develop an intelligent public opinion which shall by voice, pen, and vote demand of lawmakers a complete eradication of the liquor traffic.

The organization of the society calls for the appointment of temperance directors in the General Conference, divisions, union conferences, local conferences/missions, and temperance leaders in the local churches. All conference leaders, workers, and church officers are expected to become familiar with the policies and plans of the organization and to foster its principles and activities.

Duties of the Church Temperance Leader—The church temperance leader shall work in close cooperation with the pastor or district leader in carrying out the following plans:

To enlist every member of the church and every Adventist youth who may not as yet be baptized as an active member of the American Temperance Society.

To invite the church school teacher to enlist all the children of school age; the AY Society leader to enlist the youth; the Dorcas leader to enlist all the women of the church; and the leader of the men's organization to enlist all the men of the church.

To see that membership cards are issued to all members of the society.

To keep an accurate record of all members on the membership record cards prepared especially for this purpose.

To launch pledge-signing campaigns and

membership drives.

To promote the circulation of *Listen* and *Winner* magazines and such other literature as will advance the cause of temperance.

To follow the instructions outlined in the statement of policy regarding the handling of membership dues, temperance offerings, and *Listen* magazine sales and subscriptions.

To encourage every member of voting age to be registered and qualified to vote on the temperance issue.

To carry on an intensive educational campaign in behalf of the temperance cause in the church school, the church, and the community.

To urge all members to take an active part in all local option campaigns that will restrict, control, and eradicate the traffic in liquor and narcotics.

To sponsor temperance forums, rallies, or mass meetings in the community each year.

To organize temperance teams that will carry the temperance message to churches, young people's societies, service clubs, schools, and other organizations.

To pass specific resolutions at each major mass meeting on such questions as liquor advertising, narcotics traffic, crime, drunken drivers, juvenile delinquency, law violation, grain preservation, et cetera, and see that such actions are released to the press.

To cooperate with other temperance forces in strong educational campaigns conducted with a view to eliminate the liquor business and narcotics traffic in his/her town, city, district, county, or state.

To cooperate with the church pastor in the promotion and conducting of Five-Day Plans to Stop Smoking, Four-Dimensional Key programs for better living without alcohol, and the organization of the Home Help Visitation Plan.

The Church Treasurer and Temperance Funds—Membership dues, temperance offerings, and such offerings as may be taken up especially for temperance should be handled in harmony with the general policies regarding membership dues and temperance offerings.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPLEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—CHURCH MANUAL DELETION

Voted, To delete a section from the *Church Manual* pages 187 and 188, North American Division Supplement, Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, which reads as follows:

Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty

The Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty is organized for the main purpose of maintaining liberty among men, with particular emphasis upon liberty of conscience. Within the North American Division special attention is given to the preservation of the liberties guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States and under the laws of Canada and of other political entities within the division.

As the surest way of securing full religious

liberty, it is concerned with fostering the separation of church and state commended by our Lord when He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). "The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world."—*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, p. 297.

The state should never invade the distinct realm of the church to affect in any way the complete freedom of conscience or the right to profess, practice, and promulgate religious beliefs; and the church should never invade the distinctive realm of the state.

The Religious Liberty Department seeks to guard against intrusions upon religious liberty, especially in view of the persecutions prophesied in Revelation 13. "It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 452.

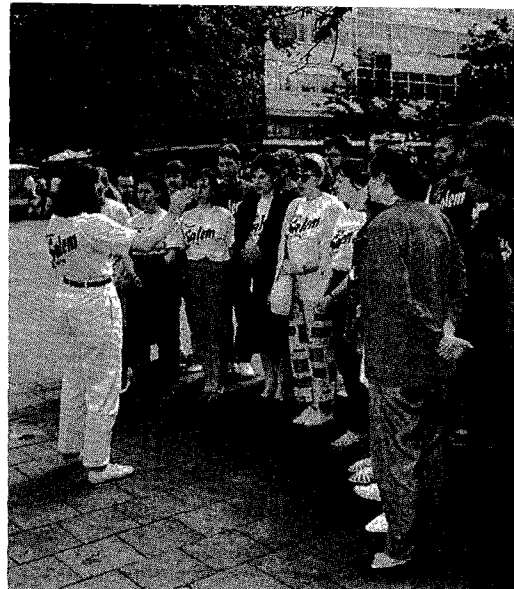
Religious Liberty Associations—The Religious Liberty Department carries on many of its functions through the Religious Liberty Association of America and the International Religious Liberty Association, incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, and with branches throughout the denomination. The president or a vice president of the General Conference is president of the International Religious Liberty Association, and the corresponding organization is carried down through the union and local conferences and missions.

Religious Liberty Association in the Local Church—Each church is organized as a Religious Liberty Association, and every church member is a member of the association. The pastor or the local elder is the chairperson of the association in each local church.

The religious liberty leader shall be elected at the annual church election and shall work in close cooperation with the pastor or district leader in all phases of his work.

He should be of positive spiritual influence, able to meet the general public, interested in public affairs, apt at correspondence, and concerned with the preservation of the liberty of the people of God to do the Master's service. He will keep in touch with the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director of the conference/mission or union where appropriate and carry out the suggestions that come to him through proper channels; advise concerning matters affecting religious liberty in his area; promote the circulation of religious liberty magazines approved by the division committee for promotion by the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, such as *Liberty: A Magazine of Religious Freedom, Conscience and Liberty*, and other appropriate religious liberty literature; and organize and stimulate religious liberty meetings, programs, and enterprises as circumstances require.

(Actions, continued in the next issue.)



Adventist Youth Street-Witness

BY MIKE AND KRIS STEVENSON

More than 320 Adventist youth from 61 countries have descended on Utrecht to participate in Impact Utrecht '95, a street-level public evangelism project running concurrently with the General Conference session.

From July 2 to 7 the youth are busy performing with various street-witnessing groups in places scattered throughout the shopping center adjacent to the GC session and other prime spots in Utrecht. Passersby who are attracted to the street programs are invited to attend one of three meetings being held in Utrecht; one in the Muziekschool, one in the Utrecht Adventist church, and the third in a local theatre.

Impact participants, chosen by their respective divisions, journeyed to

Utrecht a week early for an intensive training session prior to starting their evangelism. They divided up into workshops where they specialized in singing, drama, preaching, puppets, or mime. During the General Conference session, each group performs several times in different spots around the city during the day and are rotated between the evening meetings. Other Impact youth are volunteers in the Global Mission Village.

The groups on the street are not only witnessing, but working to attract the attention of the crowd to invite them to evening youth meetings. In some cases this strategy has worked only too well, drawing such a large crowd that nearby store owners have complained. The evening meetings feature performances by musical groups, drama teams, and puppet troops as well as a main speaker. In the Muziekschool, Victor Lee from the Far Eastern Division is the speaker; Jose Rojas, North American Division youth director, is the speaker in the Trianon Theatre; and a Dutch Adventist youth is speaking in the Utrecht Adventist church.

Although Impact is reporting great success from their evangelism efforts, the main purpose has been to train youth in street-witnessing skills and to ener-

While church leaders and delegates do business in the Jaarbeurs Convention Center, youth have been meeting the public to share their faith—through music, puppets, martial arts, and flyers.

gize them to start their own evangelism projects at home. "We want them to take back the excitement to their own countries," says Ole Kendel, Trans-European Division youth director, who is directly responsible for the organization of Impact Utrecht '95.

Kwasi Senanu Gameti, from Togo, says he has "learned a new preaching style, and I feel like I have made a major achievement." The core group of 200 youth were jointly sponsored by the General Conference, Global Mission, and their local divisions. An additional 100 plus youth made their own way to Holland to participate in this event.

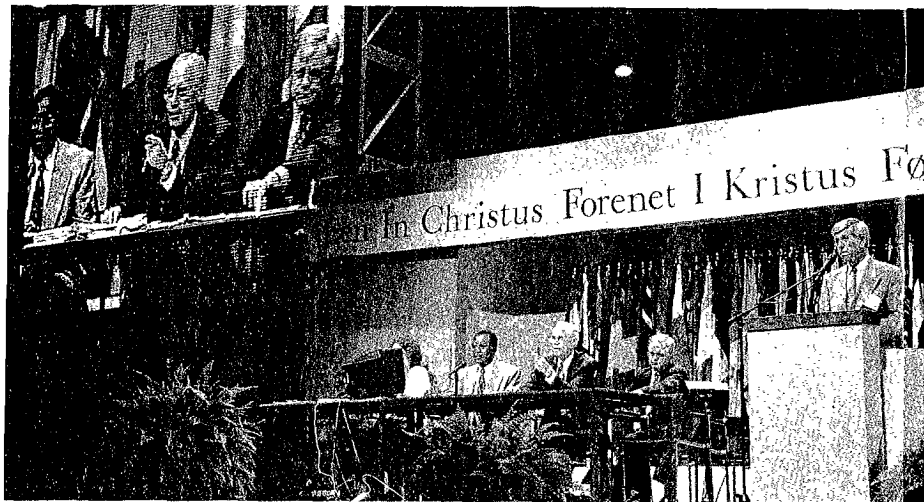
Impact volunteers will leave Utrecht with a special legacy; they have done a tremendous public relations job for the Adventist Church. "Many people I talked with didn't even know where the Adventist church was here in Utrecht," said Kendel. "We specifically decided to have some of the meetings in the Adventist church so that people would become acquainted with it." The Utrecht Adventist church is planning follow-up seminars on who Adventists are, following the General Conference session.

Ultimately, it is the youth volunteers who benefit the most from sharing their faith on the streets.



By Mike and Kris Stevenson, a pastoral team from Spencerville, Maryland.

Images of the Session



1. To facilitate session business, several individuals are on the platform for each meeting, including a vice president as chair, members of the GC secretariat, a parliamentarian, and a recording secretary.—Photo by Myron Widmer

2. Behind two sets of double doors and under tight security the GC session Nominating Committee meets many hours a day.—Photo by Joel D. Springer/R&H

3. Thousands of Adventists crowded into the main hall on Wednesday afternoon to observe the debate on women's ordination.—Photo by Joel D. Springer/R&H

4. More than 60 individuals hurried to the "for" and "against" microphones when debate opened on women's ordination. Because of time constraints, only about half were able to make their two-minute speeches (three if translated).—Photo by Joel D. Springer/R&H

5. Delegates from Inter-America pray for divine guidance before deciding on their new officers.—Photo by Joel D. Springer/R&H

6. By having bright red voting cards issued to delegates, voting at this GC session has been speeded up and made more accurate.—Kurt Fattic/ANN

7. North American Division president A. C. McClure presented North America's request to allow divisions the right to choose to ordain women.—Photo by Joel D. Springer/R&H

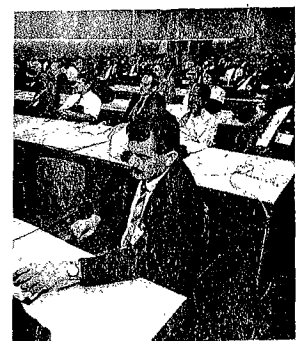
8. Ruth Cortes, lay delegate with the Bolivian Union, urged that if church leaders anywhere were negligent in caring properly for the church's money, that they be held accountable.—Photo by Joel Springer/R&H

9. South American delegates applaud Gerhard Damsteegt's presentation during the discussion of women's ordination.—Photo by Stefan Schnull

10. Herizon Saggia (left) and John Nyamwanda (right) talk with another delegate from the East Africa Union as they break into small groups in their caucus.—Photo by Eric Stubbaker/ANN

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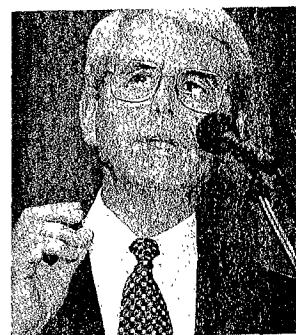
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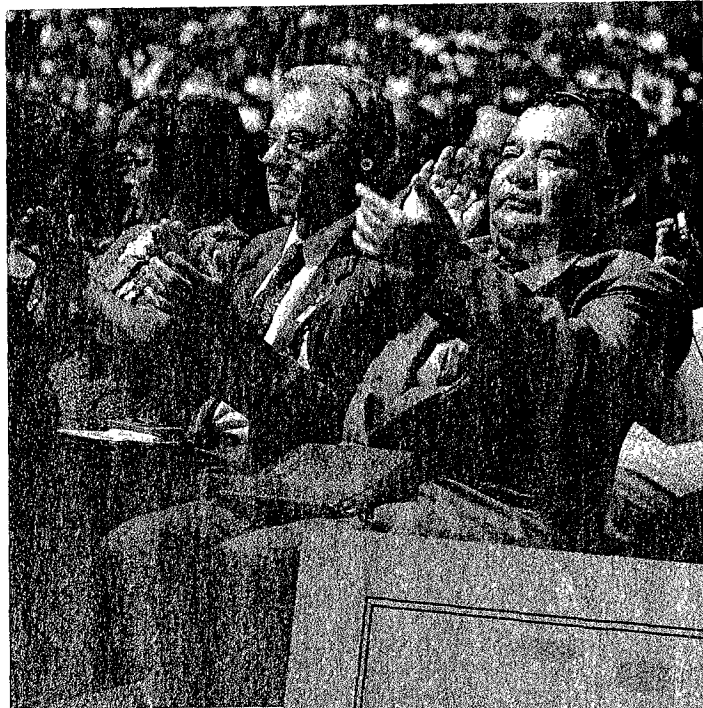
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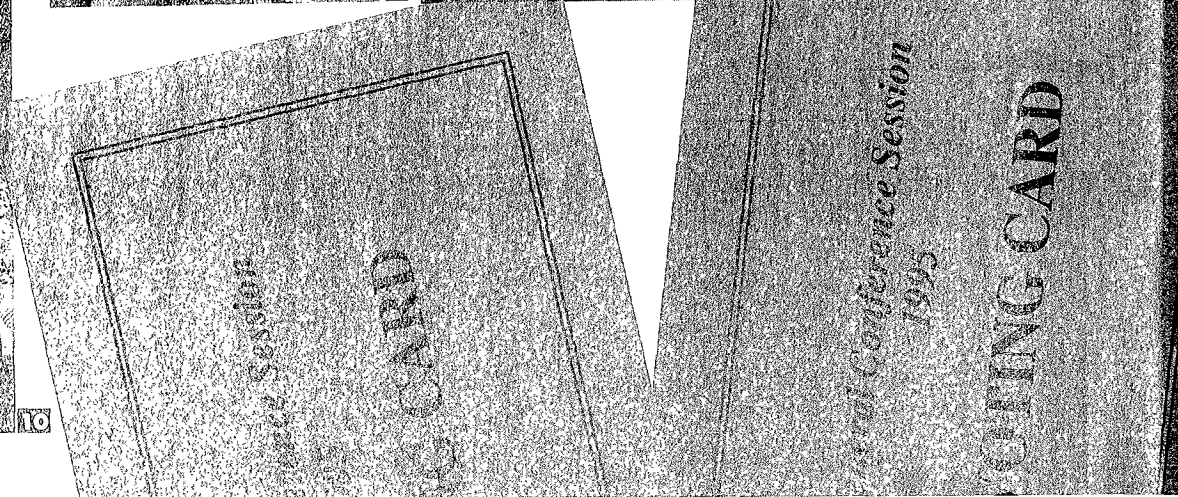
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10



Park (pärk) *n* : a place protected by fixed boundaries and a bunch of thou-shalt-nots, enjoyed by children and treasured by grownups.

Sabbath (sab-əth) *n* : a park in time.



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Sunday, July 23

Twelfth Business Meeting

Fifty-sixth General Conference session, July 5, 1995, 8:30 a.m.

OSCAR T. MNGQIBISA: [Opening prayer.]

A. C. MC CLURE: I trust that you have had a restful night and that we are once again ready to set our minds to the task at hand of addressing the agenda that is before us. I am confident that the Spirit of the Lord will again be present with us and will help us to do His will this day.

The week is now half gone, which means that the number of days we have yet to do our work is limited; therefore we must proceed with care yet with dispatch. That of course does not mean that we will not conduct ourselves in the parliamentary fashion, and I want to assure you that the chair will attempt to be fair and straightforward with you, permitting the will of the body. This, after all, is the body that makes the decisions for the church. We will attempt to conduct ourselves in a way that facilitates that, and I greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Now, we are well aware that a number of issues were referred to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. That committee has met for 20 hours and heard from 75 individuals. Following the hearing of those individuals, the committee deliberated extensively and is prepared to bring their report. It is the hope of the chair that since these items have been referred and have been spoken to and carefully thought out once again by this committee, we would be willing to vote them up or down.

J. DUNCOMBE: I stand here to concur with your viewpoint on procedures, but I suggest that we receive the consent of this body to proceed in that fashion. I so move.

A. C. MC CLURE: As the chair understands the motion, it is being moved that once the item is presented by the chair and the secretary of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, there will be reasonable time provided for discussion without the opportunity to amend or refer. The body will then vote the proposal up or down.

C. B. ROCK: Just a little housekeeping in respect to an explanation of where we are and how we hope to facilitate the rest of the Constitution and Bylaws agenda. We have given some prethought to the order in which the items will come to the floor. Several have asked why are we moving around on this list. Before the session began we tried to assume the flow of debate. So we chose one or two items that we knew would require some time for discussion and tried to work through those early on, and we think we have most of them behind us now. Today we will take a number of items that we think will not require a lot of discussion. Then we will come back to you either later this morning or at our next opportunity with a few more of the more difficult items, and those, we judge, will have more necessity

for debate, such as the capitation item, the auditing item, and one or two others that aren't quite ready yet.

The other thing I would like to point out is that several of these are items that involve both what we have called a "concept statement" and a recommendation that incorporates the concept. Added together, these total 40 items, but what we really have is about 27 items. I hope this explanation will relieve us of some of our tension and reassure us that we will get through.

A. H. TOLHURST: We wish to bring to you now what you have been waiting for half the week, as we have been working in another room endeavoring to prepare the recommendations. The first item is entitled "Executive Committee, General Conference Constitution and Bylaws Amendment." Section 1 reads as follows: "The Executive Committee of the General Conference shall consist of:

"a. Those elected as provided for in Article V, Sec. 1, except the director of the General Conference Auditing Service and the associate directors/secretaries of the General Conference departments and associations.

"b. Presidents of union conferences, presidents of union missions, presidents of attached unions, past presidents of the General Conference holding credentials from the General Conference, the president-executive director of Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, the president of Adventist Media Center Incorporated, the editor of *Adventist Reivew*, the president of Adventist Risk Management Incorporated, the president-executive director of Adventist World Radio, the president of Andrews University, the director of Archives and Statistics, the director of Biblical Research Institute, the president of Christian Record Services Incorporated, the president and the secretary of Ellen G. White Estate, the director of Geoscience Research Institute, the president of Home Study International, the director of International Health Food Association, the president of Loma Linda University, the president of Loma Linda University Medical Center, the president of Oakwood College, the president of Pacific Press Publishing Association, and the president of Review and Herald Publishing Association. Three laypersons and one church pastor from each division without regard to membership, and one additional church pastor or other front-line denominational employee for each 500,000 members or major portion thereof beyond the first 500,000 members. The above laypersons, pastors, and other denominational employees shall be selected by each division executive committee

from individuals recommended by the union executive committee." Because these changes were approved at an earlier business meeting in concept form, I would move that we approve this recommended amendment to the General Conference Constitution, Article VI [new Article VII]. [The motion was seconded.]

DEDRICK BLUE: I have a question for which I need some clarification. According to my recollection, the original language that was written in the constitution said that these people were to be elected by this body. Now this language seems to reflect that these members will be selected by each division executive committee.

A. H. TOLHURST: I think it was yesterday that we approved in concept that the unions would provide lists of candidates and that the divisions would select from those lists of candidates the persons that would fulfill the particular category of members of the executive committee.

ERIC SHEPPERD: In a similar vein, on page 6 of our General Conference Rules of Order it states that all nominations for the Executive Committee membership shall be made by the Nominating Committee. I just wanted to know whether the committee had tried to harmonize this particular provision with the rules.

A second question relates to wording denoted by asterisks. I just wanted to clear up whether the laypeople and the one member for each 500,000 are to be recommended to the General Conference Executive Committee or are actually selected by the division committee.

A. H. TOLHURST: The first question relates to the General Conference Rules of Order. I would have to say that the GC Constitution and Bylaws override anything you find in the Rules of Order in respect to the business of the church.

What we are voting on here is brought to you in harmony with, and reflects exactly, what was voted on the floor as a concept yesterday.

WILSON ROSSI: It is a pleasure for me to be here at this session as a lay member representing my country. Yesterday was a special day for God's church in the world. We made provision for these laypersons from each division to be members of the Executive Committee. So we lay members are thankful for the opportunity to stand beside those who serve the church full-time. Let us work together.

[A number of delegates continued debate on this motion.]

C. B. ROCK: The debate on the philosophy and concept ended yesterday. What we are trying to bring in now is wording that conforms to the debate. We voted a concept yesterday. The concept is clear. I don't think that it's helpful to slip back into the debate that was voted on yesterday.

A. C. MC CLURE: We are ready to vote on the motion. To pass this requires a two-thirds

vote. [Motion was voted.]

A. H. TOLHURST: We would like you now to turn to the item on division departments. It is recommended to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws to read as follows: "Divisions shall appoint departmental, association, agency, and service directors/secretaries who shall serve under the direction of their respective division presidents and executive committees. They shall also appoint associate and assistant directors/secretaries as may be needed to serve in special capacities under the direction of their respective directors/secretaries." "These appointments shall normally be made at the time of the regular General Conference session, but in no event later than December 31 in the year of the regular General Conference session." [Motion was made and seconded.]

E. O. ABBEY: Our church has five administrative levels. The local church, the conference or mission, the union, the division, and the General Conference. But only four constituent levels. The one level that does not have a so-called constitution is the division. The members comprise the constituency of the local church. The local churches comprise the constituency of the conference or mission, and the conferences or missions the constituency of a union. But the division is the General Conference in that part of the world. So the unions, not the division, comprise the constituency of the General Conference. The division has no constituency by itself. This is the constituency of the General Conference. Therefore I find it difficult to understand why General Conference workers assigned to divisions are not elected at a world session.

G. J. CHRISTO: This body has already voted to elect GC departmental secretaries and directors of departments without the associates being members of the General Conference Committee. We have accepted the concept that election at a session is desirable, because these individuals serve the world field. Division departmental personnel, however, are limited to serving in their own divisions, and preferably should be elected or appointed for a full five-year term by an expanded division committee, as is stated in this motion. I therefore support this recommendation.

O. A. TROY: More recently there seems to be a trend toward pushing departmental people further and further away from where the decisions are made. I would just like to appeal to this body to consider giving departmental individuals the same privileges that they've had in the past, of being on the same level with the associate directors of the General Conference.

A. H. TOLHURST: As yet, no decision has been reached in the Constitution and Bylaws Committee as to whether the associate auditors of the General Conference Auditing Service should be elected or appointed.

K. ALBURY: I have one or two concerns. I've been trying to digest the definition and the

explanation that was given with respect to constituency-based audit organizations. I think the chair indicated, and it was repeated by others, that divisions are not constituency-based organizations, because they are divisions of the General Conference. I'm wondering whether it would be a problem to perceive the delegates in a particular division as the aggregate delegation or constituency of all the unions in that particular division who may utilize this provision to elect their divisional leaders at the General Conference session.

A. H. TOLHURST: In the General Conference policy book there is a reference to the responsibility of the division executive committees. It's clear as pointed out here that the division executive committees are authorized by the General Conference Constitution to conduct the business of the church within the division. And so when the General Conference Constitution delegates the authority for the appointment of anybody at the division committee level, that is quite an appropriate action on the part of the session. [Motion to close debate was voted.]

A. C. MC CLURE: So we're ready now to decide on the constitutional item before us. This likewise requires a two-thirds vote. [Motion was voted.]

A. H. TOLHURST: We wish to recommend an amendment to "Director of Archives and Statistics—General Conference Constitution and Bylaws" to read as follows: "At the first Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee following a regular session, the General Conference shall appoint a director of Archives and Statistics whose duties shall be to administer the General Conference Archives and to compile and report the statistics of the world work, and who shall serve under the direction of the General Conference secretary and the Executive Committee." [Motion was made, seconded, and voted.]

The next item concerns "Term of Office." The changed article should read as follows:

"Sec. 1. Those whose election is provided for in Article V, Sec. 1, shall hold office from the time they take up their duties until the next regular session or until their successors are elected and take up their duties. Their term of office, unless government requirements dictate otherwise, is not subject to division retirement policies, which may determine specific ages for mandatory retirements.

"Sec. 2. Members of the Executive Committee provided for in Article VII shall serve from the time of their election until the next regular session.

"Sec. 3. All those who are appointed to serve the General Conference as provided for in Article VI shall serve from the time they take up their appointment until their successors are appointed and take up their duties, or until the position is terminated. The appointments provided for in Article VI shall be reviewed at the first annual meeting of the General Conference

Executive Committee following the General Conference session.

"Sec. 4. Service as outlined in Secs. 1 to 3 above may be terminated for cause as provided for in General Conference Bylaws, Article XIII, Sec. 1." [Motion was made, seconded, and voted.]

We now have a recommended amendment, "Article III—General Conference and Division Vice Presidents," that reads as follows:

"Sec. 1. General vice presidents of the General Conference shall be elected to assist the president with the general administrative work of the General Conference. In addition a vice president shall be elected to serve as president of each division of the General Conference.

"Sec. 2. The general vice presidents of the General Conference and the president of the North American Division shall, in the absence of the president, chair meetings of the Executive Committee.

"Sec. 3. The role of the general vice presidents of the General Conference, in relationship to the divisions, is as follows:

"a. To serve as liaisons between the General Conference president and the divisions.

"b. To serve as administrative resource counselors.

"c. To strengthen the bond of the world church.

"Sec. 4. The vice presidents of the General Conference elected for the divisions shall serve as chairmen of the division executive committees operating in their respective territories; shall have charge of the work in those territories under the direction of the division executive committees; and shall be designated within their respective division territories as presidents of the divisions over which they preside.

"Sec. 5. Vice presidents of the divisions may be appointed by the division executive committees, as necessary, to assist the division presidents in their administrative responsibilities." [Motion was made and seconded.]

PAUL WANGAI: I have a difficulty with the general vice presidents and the North American Division president. For practical purposes, it is true that the North American president works at the headquarters. But I think for the sake of the spirit of church unity and of seeing the church as a global church, it would be nicer to say "the General Conference vice president and a president of a division," with the knowledge that the North American Division president will be the one.

A. C. MC CLURE: Thank you very much. Please be assured that your chair will not touch that one!

EDWIN EISELE: A question on section 5. It would appear that a vice president of a division would have a similar job description to a vice president of the General Conference. If that's the case, then it would seem that these individuals should be elected by the GC session.

A. H. TOLHURST: In the divisions it is not

the intention that the vice presidents take charge of the work in the absence of the president. The vice presidents in the divisions, from my experience, are assistants to the president, but in the absence of the president, the secretary of the division is the chair of the division executive committee.

A. C. MC CLURE: We're now ready to vote on the motion. [Motion was voted.]

J. DAVID NEWMAN: Just a point of clarification on general field secretaries. We have already voted on this, but I notice that we have certain people holding dual offices. My question is Why do some people hold a dual role and others don't?

C. B. ROCK: There are certain functions, such as that of ADRA, that have such pervasive contact and effect upon our work around the world that it is felt that the leader of that operation should be given the title of general field secretary, which permits the individual not only to be directed by the board but also to be in close association with the president to whom he or she is responsible.

A. C. MC CLURE: Do we have other items?

A. H. TOLHURST: We have reference to the action of the General Conference Executive Committee that is a recommendation "to identify more specifically the authority and composition of division executive committees in the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws." We therefore direct your attention to Article XIV of the General Conference Bylaws, "Division Executive Committees."

"Sec. 1. In each division, a division executive committee shall be constituted, as hereinafter provided, for the transaction of business pertaining to the division. The division executive committee functions on behalf of the

General Conference Executive Committee in the divisions, and its authority shall be recognized by union and local organizations in matters of division administration and counsel.

"Sec. 2. The members of a division executive committee shall be the president, the secretary, the treasurer, other division officers, the vice presidents, and the field secretaries of the division; the heads of division institutions; the presidents of union conferences; the presidents of union missions; the presidents of unions of churches; the presidents of attached conferences/missions; the division departmental, Ministerial Association, and service directors/secretaries; and any members of the General Conference Executive Committee present. Other members shall include nonemployees of the church and additional representation from pastoral and teaching staff."

There were no recommended amendments to section 3; in section 4 we have made several editorial changes, including lowercasing the first letter of the words "secretary" and "president," and changing "chairman" to "chairperson." I would move the amendment to Article XIV of the General Conference Bylaws. [Motion was made and seconded.]

SUSAN SICKLER: There are certain burdens that come along with the pleasures of being the host division to the General Conference, and it seems as though this falls into that category. I believe it is an unfair burden. Section 2 states that any member of the General Conference Executive Committee can also be a member of the North American Division executive committee. We in North America are the only ones who have this privilege, in the sense that these people are there when our committee meets. The way it is

stated here, the five members who are not even from North America, who are members of the General Conference Executive Committee, could call a North American executive committee meeting and transact business. Is there any other division in the world who would live like this? And is that really the way that you expect us to exist? We have less independence than any division in the world church. In some of your divisions perhaps only two or three members of the General Conference are itinerating. I see no problem with their attending your executive committee. But they could literally overwhelm a meeting of our executive committee. And I don't think that's fair.

A. H. TOLHURST: Just a matter of clarification. The point that Sister Sickler is addressing is not part of the recommended amendments to this constitution. It's already there. It is not underlined. It is not a new addition today.

SUSAN SICKLER: However, it will be voted. And we are just perpetuating something that causes enormous resentment in our division. This is our opportunity to change that, and to remove that burden. And it would be helpful.

KENNETH WATSON: I'd like to use my two minutes to express my discomfort about the procedure in handling this particular article and all other articles that have not been referred previously to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. I think that there are very valid comments that are being made but that cannot be addressed properly, because of your statement that we cannot make amendments on any item of the constitution anymore. I would therefore really like to have a reconsideration by this assembly as to whether articles that were not referred to the committee before cannot be addressed anymore by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

A. C. MC CLURE: I believe our action this morning applied to those items that were coming back from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee only, and therefore one that is coming to the floor for the first time, such as this one, would not be subject to those restrictions.

KENNETH WATSON: In that particular case I would like to move to refer this particular article back to the committee, although I understand this is a burden to them. I really appreciate their patience.

A. C. MC CLURE: So you are moving to refer this particular item back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

KENNETH WATSON: Yes.

A. C. MC CLURE: Is there support for that motion? Do you wish to discuss the motion to refer?

C. B. ROCK: As a matter of procedure I'd like to suggest that if individuals disagree with anything that is underlined, which is the amendment to the amendment that's coming from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee as a consequence of what they have been doing



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during the quinquennial period, what Annual Council has done, that of course can be referred. But if we are now entering into a procedure in which this body wishes this committee to deal with everything that is in place in the constitution or anything that is in place historically, I suggest it be referred to the next quinquennial Constitution and Bylaws Committee. I fear that if we open this door it may not be a good thing. Maybe it needs to be changed. Maybe it shouldn't have been in there these past 30, 40, 50 years. But if we're going to start picking up things that we don't like but that the committee hasn't even talked about, we have an insurmountable problem. I would appreciate it if these referrals would deal with items that we are bringing to you. And we're not bringing to you anything that is not underlined.

A. C. MC CLURE: Dr. Rock, you have made your point, and I think it is a very good one. However, the motion to refer does not make reference to any specific issue.

The motion before us is to refer. Are you ready to vote? All those who favor the motion to refer this item back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, please signify by raising the voting card. Opposed, the same sign. It is lost. We shall continue to discuss the motion before us.

GEORGE AGOKI: This is my first time to attend a General Conference session of our church, and I feel as though I'm undertaking a pilgrimage. I seek a clarification. Is it understood that these members of the division executive committees, in relation to their attendance, are financed by the division?

A. H. TOLHURST: I'm not sure I can give an answer that applies to all divisions. But the usual procedure is that employees of the church who are members of the division executive committee have their travel and accommodation expenses paid by the organization that employs them, and that laypersons who are members of the division executive committee have their expenses paid by the division. That's the usual procedure.

GARY THOMPSON: Clarification, please, where it speaks of teaching staff. Is this educational personnel you're talking about? "Teaching staff" seems to eliminate administrators. Could that be clarified?

A. H. TOLHURST: The intention is that the selection of personnel from the educational employees of the church be provided for here. It could indeed be an administrator for a school or a college, or it could be one of those who teaches in the classroom. That was the intent of this. We could clarify this editorially if you wish.

MORTEN THOMSEN: I think it's very good that the problem of who is going to be on these committees is addressed. Roughly speaking, a typical member of such a committee is first of all a man, aged 40 to 60 approximately, who will have extensive duties in other areas as

well. I think that's a disadvantage. So I think it's good that there is provision for nonemployees of the church. That leaves room for economically experienced persons, management personnel, youth, and women.

A. H. TOLHURST: It seems that there are a number of questions arising relative to the sentence "Other members shall include nonemployees of the church and additional representation from pastoral and teaching staff." It needs to be clearly understood by the delegates that this does not restrict the choice of other members to pastors or educational staff. It can include all kinds of other people. It is not restricted to those categories that are listed there. That may help. [Motion was voted.]

SAMUEL GREEN: Is it possible for us to refer several lines to the next Constitution and Bylaws Committee for study?

A. C. MC CLURE: Yes.

SAMUEL GREEN: I would like to move that in "Article XIV—Division Executive Committees" the phrase "and other members of the General Conference Executive Committee present" be referred. And also "Five members of the division executive committee, including the chairman, shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business" needs to be reconsidered. None of the levels of the church—local church, local conference, union conference—has a quorum that's that low. I would like those things referred at this time. I move that.

A. C. MC CLURE: All right. Is there support for this motion? [Motion was seconded.] It is the understanding of the chair that that action that we previously took places the document before us, as it reads. However, the motion before us now is that the lines referred to by the mover are being referred to the standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee that will meet during the coming quinquennium, and we will hear a report from that committee at the next session five years hence. Are you ready to vote on that motion?

ROBERT LISTER: I'd like to amend the motion to include both sections 2 and 3.

SAMUEL GREEN: Since I made the motion, I would like to go along with that amendment proposed by Brother Lister.

C. B. ROCK: It just means that the point brought up by Brother Lister and Sister Sickler will be looked at during the coming quinquennium.

A. C. MC CLURE: The chair has attempted to clarify that point. What we have voted will be in effect for the next five years. This motion that is before us asks only that this matter be referred back for continued study by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee that will be meeting during the next five years and will report five years hence.

SAMUEL GREEN: That's the essence of my motion. [Motion was voted.]

A. C. MC CLURE: I thank our Constitution

and Bylaws Committee chair and secretary for the good work they've done in bringing before us these items.

The Nominating Committee will now bring us an additional report.

BENJAMIN REAVES: Our report today will be given by the vice secretary, Bob Kyte, president of the Pacific Press.

B. E. KYTE: The Nominating Committee report is as follows: President, Africa-Indian Ocean Division—Luka T. Daniel; Secretary, Africa-Indian Ocean Division—Charles Montille; Secretary, Asia-Pacific Division—Violetto F. Bocaia; Treasurer, Asia-Pacific Division—Steve A. Rose; Secretary, Southern Asia Division—James M. Campbell; Secretary, Eastern Africa Division—Bekele Biri; Treasurer, Eastern Africa Division—Jose Lizardo; Director, GC Children's Ministries Department—Virginia L. Smith; Associate Director, GC Trust Services Department—David E. Johnston; Associate Director, GC Trust Services Department—Alan W. White; Associate Director, GC Health and Temperance Department—Thomas R. Neslund; Associate Director, GC Health and Temperance Department—Stoy E. Proctor; Associate Director, GC Health and Temperance Department—Dr. James M. Crawford; Associate Director, GC Family Life Ministries—Karen M. Flowers; Associate Director, GC Department of Education—Rio E. Ganson; Associate Director, GC Department of Education—Enrique E. Becerra.

HUMBERTO RASI: I want to pay homage to an associate in the Education Department who is retiring, Dr. A. Segovia. He has provided 42 years of denominational service, 29 in the Asia-Pacific Division and 13 in the GC Education Department. It has been a pleasure to work with him and learn from his wisdom.

B. E. KYTE: Associate Director, GC Department of Education—John Fowler; Associate Secretary [for training elders and ministerial education], GC Ministerial Association—Joel Sarli; Associate Secretary [for evangelism and church growth], GC Ministerial Association—Walter L. Pearson, Jr.; Associate Secretary [for *Ministry* magazine], GC Ministerial Association—Dwight Nelson.

J. CRESS: I want to express my joy for the Education Department in gaining John Fowler, as well as our reluctance in the Ministerial Association in losing him. I also would like to acknowledge more than 10 years of excellent service to *Ministry* magazine on the part of David Newman. [The report of the Nominating Committee was moved, seconded, and voted.]

ELIZABETH STERNDAL: [Benediction.]

A. C. MC CLURE, *Chair*
MARIO VELOSO, *Secretary*
D. A. ROTH, FRED G. THOMAS, and
L. R. COLBURN, *Proceedings Editors*

Thirteenth Business Meeting

Fifty-sixth General Conference session, July 5, 1995, 2:00 p.m.

M. G. KUYENDA: [Opening prayer.]

C. B. ROCK: Welcome, delegates and friends. We will now come to order, please, and engage in the business of this afternoon session. And while we are being seated, I'd like to take a little time to lay the groundwork, and bring us up-to-date concerning the paths, that have brought us to this consideration.

The first mention of women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church on an official level occurred in 1881. At that time there were 39 delegates present at the General Conference session, and the General Conference Committee numbered three: Elder George Butler, General Conference president; Steven Haskell; and Uriah Smith. The interesting dynamic is that these 39 delegates were gathered from two countries—the United States and England. The membership of the church at that time was 16,000; 38 of these delegates were from the United States, and just one, J. N. Loughborough, came from England.

The matter of women's ordination was considered, and the following action was taken: "Resolved, that females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position may, with perfect propriety, be set apart for ordination to the work of the Christian ministry." And that is printed in the *Review and Herald* of December 20, 1881. But the action also carried the provision that in spite of the vote of the delegates assembled, the matter be referred to the General Conference Committee, the three people whom I have named, for implementation or further decision.

Nothing happened. There is no further indication, of which we know, that the General Conference Committee took this issue up and gave any formal response.

Nearly 90 years later, in 1968, the trail picks up again, when our believers in Finland requested officially of the General Conference that women be ordained. The answer came much later and involved the formulation of a study group in 1973 that met for many hours at Mohaven in Ohio (Camp Mohaven), and there, mainly with individuals from North America who were studying the issue, considered it in great detail, and continued their study through 1974. At the Spring Meeting in 1975, just prior to the General Conference session of that year, the issue was again considered in some detail. The results of the Mohaven studies were analyzed, and those discussions resulted in a decision by the world church that provided ordination, where the division found it applicable, or possible, or profitable in their situation, of deaconesses and women elders. But that did not end the process. Other study commissions were requested and organized, and functioned in 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984. And in fact, in 1984 at Annual Council it was felt that because of growing tension about what had occurred nine years earlier in 1975, something should be said about the matter of ordaining women elders, and it was confirmed in that year that local elders could be ordained in those divisions in which it was deemed appropriate.

But the process continued, and in 1986 and again in 1989 major study was given by commissions com-

prised of 70 or more individuals who represented all our divisions. These individuals met together under the leadership of the world church president for detailed analysis of the question. In 1985, at the General Conference session in New Orleans, the review of the ordination of women also received detailed analysis, and that study simply eventuated in the suggestion that more study be done. So in 1990 at our world session the issue was brought to the table once more. Reports were again made from commissions that had reviewed the matter in detail, fairly and fully, and by a vote of approximately 75 percent to 25 percent of the delegates assembled, the world church body indicated that women should be given wide participation in all church activities, including soul winning and pastoral duties, but that since the church could not reach consensus regarding the matter of women's ordination, this process should not be engaged in throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And now, at this historic session in 1995, the matter is brought to us again, and we will have the specific wording of the issue in a moment; but having reviewed that trail that brings us from 1881 to now, may I suggest quickly a few points as to how we would like to handle our procedure and our discussion today.

First, may I remind you that as voted in our program, and as agreed upon at our procedural recommendations at the very first of this session, this meeting this afternoon will end at 5:00, and we'll try to hold to that as closely as possible. At that time we will vote the matter either up or down.

I want to suggest further that since this is such a sensitive issue, all delegates be seated in their division area. If you are a delegate and you are not now seated with your delegation, you should hasten to go there, so that only delegates and their spouses will be seated in these areas. If you are an onlooker or a visitor, and you are not a spouse of a delegate or a member of the immediate family, we would prefer that you sit in the areas provided for visitors.

Now, in addition, there are one or two more quick matters of logistics that you should hear. The chair is exercising the authority provided in our Rules of Order, which allows the chair to set a time limit for speakers. Obviously we don't have time for everybody to talk. But you'll be happy to know that in anticipation of this moment, we have provided two individuals who will speak to the issue formally. The first will be Dr. Gerard Damsteegt, associate professor of church history and Adventist studies at Andrews University. He will make the case against the motion, and he will take approximately 20 minutes to do so.

Then Dr. Raoul Dederen, professor of theology emeritus and former dean of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University, will make the case for the motion. These two individuals will, we hope, summarize succinctly the arguments and say much of what might be in our hearts.

After these gentlemen have spoken, we will open the floor for discussion, but the chair is requesting that since we are pressed for time and since this matter is

so clearly outlined, we take off our battle helmets and beat our swords into plowshares, and not get ourselves embroiled in parliamentary procedure.

Let's as Christian brothers and sisters listen to what North America is requesting, evaluate it, and vote our conscience.

In a moment we will call upon A. C. McClure, the president of the North American Division. He and others will be assisting him in making the North American Division case of presenting their desires to you. About 4:45 p.m. we will take a secret ballot. Again the chair is exercising a prerogative here that I hope you will accept.

Just before the ballot, our world president will have a word to say. He will be talking about the issue of where we go from here in unity and related matters. After the vote, the Secretariat of the General Conference will see that the ballots are collected and counted, and with your patience, we will give you the tabulation just as quickly as possible.

At this time I'm going to call upon the secretary of the session to read the motion that Annual Council has asked to bring here without recommendation, and after that has been read and, I trust, seconded, we will begin discussion.

Shall we bow our heads for just a moment of prayer? Our Father in heaven, we pause now even before articulating this motion, this request, to pray that You will let Your sweet peace, let the spirit of Christ Himself, rule in our hearts. May the Holy Spirit be our guide, and may the decision here please heaven, and then, Lord, may our attitudes and charity toward one another be such that the world will know that we are Your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

L. C. COOPER: The motion reads as follows: To refer to the 1995 General Conference session the North American Division request that the General Conference in session adopt provisions on ordination as outlined below:

"The General Conference vests in each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with established policies. In addition, where circumstances do not render it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender. In divisions where the division executive committee takes specific actions approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, women may be ordained to serve in those divisions." [The motion was seconded.]

C. B. ROCK: Now, Elder McClure, president of the North American Division.

A. C. MC CLURE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, fellow delegates, for this privilege of presenting before you a clear understanding, hopefully, as well as the rationale for the request that we have before us at this time. As has been noted, the request did originate with the North American Division, and was voted by the division committee at the 1994 year-end meeting. It was presented to the General Conference in Annual Council immediately following, and comes before you in an effort to help us address a problem that we feel is very real in some parts of the world. We make this request to the world church because we believe this is where this kind of issue needs to be addressed. Obviously the topic is one that has generated intense discussions in recent

months.

Much has been written, both formally and informally. We have received hundreds of letters on both sides of the issue. We have read each one carefully, and personally responded to most of those. We've studied, we've prayed, we've listened to each other and to God, because we seek to know His will. For we have no other agenda. We therefore humbly ask that you give us a hearing today, that you suspend the views you may have brought with you, and that you prayerfully seek ways to help us address a dilemma.

First, we want you to know that the North American Division is very much a part, a loyal part, of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We have an unshakable commitment to church unity. We're every bit as supportive of the mission and unity of this church as we are pleased to see so much in evidence in other parts of the world. I want to assure you that we do not wish to cause a problem. We do not wish to embarrass or to divide the body of Christ. We abhor anything that would bring dishonor upon the church, the church that we love. Our concern is linked to mission. And it is in that setting that we come to you today.

I also want to assure you that our support of the world church is not linked in any way to this issue. Whatever the outcome today, we will continue to be a responsible part of the world family and carry the share of the load that we have been blessed by the Lord to provide.

I am a servant of this church, and I will do everything in my power to keep us together. Please understand that this request is not an ultimatum, but rather a heartfelt appeal for understanding, for recognition of what we see as a significant missiological need.

Now, as a world community we have agreed on a body of doctrine that is nonnegotiable. The central beliefs of this church are anchored securely in Scripture and are not open to amendment. They are

clearly stated in the 27 fundamental beliefs, and we would ardently resist any effort to tamper with those beliefs. In the matter of theology we see no alternative to global uniformity.

In order to accomplish our mission in a large and diverse world, there are some things of a nondoctrinal nature that we allow to be done differently from one division to another. That list is a long one. I will not attempt to rehearse it here; you are acquainted with some of those issues. We're asking only that where it is helpful to the mission of the church, freedom be given to the world divisions to make such a decision.

Now, you may recall that the early church discovered that there are areas that are clearly ecclesiological—that is, concerning those matters that are not required in Scripture, but that relate clearly to how the church functions. In our church these are shaped by broad theological principles, by the Spirit of Prophecy, and are then agreed upon by the body of the church as policies. So you see, it is to these kinds of issues we are speaking.

It's these kinds of issues that Jesus, in Matthew 18:18, referred when He made that dramatic statement to the leaders of the early church: "Whoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

One further observation before we get to the heart of the matter. You will see, from the wording of our request, that we are not asking other parts of the world church to do exactly as we are doing. Our objective is unswerving fidelity to God and to His Word while still recognizing diversity within our unity.

We believe it is important to grant to each member or region of the body freedom to do that which will enable its mission. And rather than weaken the fabric of the church's structure, we believe it will strengthen it, because this will establish a precedent that anytime there is a proposed deviation from the normal practices of the church, such a request will come before this

body. So instead of leading to disunity, it provides for a maintenance of unity through a decision in this body.

We believe that gender-inclusive ordination, while perhaps not appropriate in some places, will be helpful in North America. As has already been referenced, more than a decade ago the General Conference in Annual Council voted to ordain women.

In 1984 the General Conference voted that in divisions in which it was acceptable, women could be ordained as local elders. Now, here is the wording of that action: "Voted, to advise each division that it is free to make provision as it may deem necessary for the election and ordination of women as local church elders."

You probably are aware that since that time hundreds of churches have elected women as local elders, with more than 1,000 now serving as ordained elders of local churches in North America. In addition, there is an uncounted number outside the North American Division serving in a similar fashion. For instance, Italy. In many of those congregations it would be a paralyzing blow to deprive them of those leaders.

Now, this action by the Annual Council of the General Conference that divisions be given the authority to make a decision on ordination was truly precedent-setting. I submit to you that it has not caused a significant problem for those parts of the world in which the practice has not been followed. But it has permitted North America, and some other parts of the world, to address what many see as a serious need for accomplishment of mission in their territory. And it has recognized a vast range of gifts that God has given to women as well as to men. Now, we believe it is not the intent of the world church to reverse that decision. To say those women who have served nobly, some for more than a decade, that their church no longer recognizes their gifts or their ordination would be indefensible.

Our sisters who stand with us in ministry deserve the same acknowledgment of their call that the church confers on their male colleagues. Now, I recognize that some of you may have been struggling over a concern with theological implications. I too was unclear on this matter for some time. But after much study and reading, praying and listening, I must tell you that I am a convert to this position.

If we believe for a moment that our request constituted a compromise or that it was even a prelude to a compromise, under no circumstances would you find it on this agenda. But beloved, when Scripture makes no such gender distinction, how can the church, which takes its commitment from Scripture, continue to make that distinction? In fact, when the Holy Spirit gives ministry and gifts to the church, we believe it is that church's obligation to acknowledge and affirm those gifts.

We have clear statements like this one from our prophet: "The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth. Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, to look after the young, to minister to the necessities of the poor." And then she adds, "They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands." This is another means of strengthening and building up the church.

Solutions

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 12501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600



Millie Kurtz (standing, right) has masterminded providing more than 250,000 vegetarian meals at Jaarbeurs. Kwame Sarpong (left) and Lucy Owusu-Darkwah enjoy the meals.

Now, I want to make sure that you understand the motive of the North American church in making this request. You may rest assured that it is not driven by any kind of feminist agenda.

Our motive is simple. God has given lavish spiritual gifts to the church, irrespective of gender. We need all of those gifts to fulfill the gospel commission, and it violates no scriptural teaching that the rite of ordination be extended to anyone who meets these criteria. Gender is not one of those criteria. We are not asking the other divisions to join us where it may not be acceptable. We are simply asking that you grant to each division the same permission that was granted them by the General Conference at Annual Council on the matter of ordination of local elders. We believe that it is a responsible request.

Now in closing, allow me to speak pastorally for a moment. There are those who fear that if this permission is granted, it will divide the church. I do not believe the church is that fragile. But I assure you, whatever our decision is here today, there will be some who will be profoundly disappointed; some may even fear the worst. Some may even give up on their church, whichever way the vote goes. My fellow believers, we must not allow this issue to divide us.

There are some who would draw a line in the sand and tell us that the liberals are in favor and the conservatives are against. I would submit to you that that is an artificial and erroneous distinction. The issue we are deciding here today is not who is conservative and who is liberal. Rather the issue we are deciding here today is what we believe is God's will for His church at this moment in history, and that may be different from what was right for the church five years ago. Godly men and women have debated and disagreed for centuries on decisions the church has made. My dear fellow delegates, we must use this moment to model for all who are watching how strongly Christians may disagree and still leave the debate with their arms around each other. So whether you vote today with the majority or with the minority, I hope you will see it as your role to be a healing voice so that Jesus' prayer for unity in His church may find fulfillment in our day.

Now, in the next few moments you will hear from two highly respected Adventist scholars. I urge you to listen carefully and prayerfully, asking God for the gift of discernment, knowing His will. Let us not attack. Let us listen and respect their opinions. Let it be said that when this church came together in Utrecht around a potentially divisive matter, the Holy Spirit had His way, God made clear His will to the body, and the church, our church, the church we love, came from this debate strong, better able to accomplish its mission and more closely united than ever before in its history. I thank you. [Some of the quoted material in this speech was neither identified nor verified.]

C. B. ROCK: I wonder if the body would permit the chair to allow the gentleman at the podium just a few minutes. The former president of the division has

been asked by the present president to take three or four minutes. Would you agree with me? If you tell me to tell him to sit down, I'll have to tell my mother's youngest brother to sit down. And I don't want to do that, so I'll take a little liberty. Would you take three minutes, Elder Bradford?

CHARLES E. BRADFORD: I am speaking not just as a North American; in fact, I am speaking as a son of Africa. We are all seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I do hope that when we come to the end of our discussion the brethren can stand up and say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

I do not set an argumentative mood. I join Elder McClure because I think it is proper. I would simply say that the Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters, is the one who selects and chooses people for ministry. Ordination is not a right. Ordination is a ceremony, a selection ceremony, a recognition ceremony. God has already chosen as His minister the one who is ordained.

P. GERARD DAMSTEEGT: It is a privilege for me, brothers and sisters, to address you at this awesome occasion. Let us pray. Lord, send Your Spirit. Touch our hearts. And whatever we do, may it be to Your glory, and may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord and Saviour, our Redeemer. Amen.

Let me first of all state that I strongly support the involvement of women in God's work. Women have unique gifts needed to finish the work. They can reach people men can never reach.

Even though I cannot agree with the North American Division request, I truly and deeply sympathize with them. What is the dilemma the church is facing? Some years ago the Annual Council voted that women ordained as elders can perform all the duties of ordained ministers. Yet they cannot be ordained as ministers. And of course the result is a very unhappy one. No one really likes it. And some accuse the church of unfairness, discrimination, and injustice. How can we now together solve this dilemma and yet preserve the unity of the church?

Two options were cited by the NAD president. The first was to begin ordaining women as elders. The second was to request that each division have the freedom to ordain women as ministers. The NAD leadership has sincerely chosen the second option. They sincerely

believe that this is the way to preserve unity. Why can't I support this request? Simply because the request conflicts with three of our biblical doctrines: the doctrine of the church, the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and the doctrine of the unity in the body of Christ.

In order to understand this fully, we have to see the full implications of this request. It's not simply a matter of laying on of hands. There is good counsel in the Spirit of Prophecy that women be ordained for a special work, and they could do a tremendous work. But the issue is: ordination to what? That's the issue.

And so the present request, if approved, presents a major change in the structure of church leadership.

It rejects the generally held Seventh-day Adventist 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 positions of spiritual headship in the church, such as head of the local church, conference president, union president, and General Conference president.

What is the test of our doctrine and practice? The Bible clearly reveals in Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Now we, as Adventists, are very fortunate, because about 100 years ago, in 1888, we had a conference with lots of tensions. And there the Lord revealed that the Bible must be our standard for every doctrine and practice. It is the Word of the living God that is to decide all controversies, including the one this afternoon. And so we are dealing with a significant practice, the practice of appointing ministerial leadership in Christ's church. So therefore, friends, we are on good terms. God's Word must be our focus. We are a Bible church.

The statement is often made that the Bible doesn't say anything about it and that we can just go ahead! Does the Bible speak to the question of the right of women to occupy positions of leadership with full ecclesiastical authority? And that is a phrase that the Spirit of Prophecy associates with ordination.

Let me refer to the history of our church. Early Adventists were strongly reform-minded, and they supported reform movements, such as the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and temperance. But there is one reform movement that was opposed. Ellen White rejected the women's rights movement. Why? The prophet warned that those who felt called out to join the movement in favor of women's rights might as well have severed all connection with the third angel's message. The Spirit, the Scriptures, are plain upon the relations and rights of men and women. So does the Bible address this issue? Very clearly it does.

And so now let us look at our three major doctrines. First of all, the request conflicts with the doctrine of the church. What does the Bible teach on the relationship between men and women? Genesis clearly reveals that in nature men and women are created in the image of God. Second, Jesus reveals that before God we're all exceedingly precious. God shows no partiality,

because we're all one in Christ Jesus. Therefore, friends, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female. On this we all agree. However, are men and women the same in every sense? It is clear that the Bible teaches that all have the same value and standing before God, but that they are different in their functional roles. And the North American request overlooks this fundamental Bible teaching. First Timothy and Titus clearly present this teaching, which directly addresses our situation.

Let us look at the message in the first book of Timothy, chapter 1, because it is a timeless message for the church. Timothy was instructed to teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables that cause disputes rather than godly edification. And so the Lord provided counsel concerning how to rescue churches from division and heresy. Inspiration gave Timothy a plan, not only for the first century, but for the church until the Lord returns. Inspiration says again that these instructions are put forth so that we may know how we ought to behave in the church of the living God.

Let us now analyze in this book the principles of authority in the church. Early Christians encountered something similar to what we are facing today. In certain places women interpreted the freedom of the gospel as a freedom to exercise the spiritual headship role in the church. Paul's response was swift: "I do not permit a woman to have authority over a man." What does the Bible teach, in specifically those chapters, about God's great plan for spiritual headship? There are three major biblical arguments. First of all, we look at Christ's creation order before the Fall. Paul bases his first theological reason on Christ's creation order. Adam was formed first, then Eve. It's interesting that Jesus' actions here had nothing to do with culture specifically.

Second, Christ's order after the Fall. His second theological reason is based on the order of sin. Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Again, brother and sisters, it has nothing to do with a specific culture.

Finally, Christ's order after the cross. These role distinctions in the Old Testament that Jesus instituted are not canceled by His redemptive work. God's Word proclaims clearly in Corinthians that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Thus priestly headship of the man in the home and in the church is still in effect during the Christian Era.

Now let us look at the qualifications for an elder or overseer. What are the requirements for spiritual headship? Immediately after the admonition that women do not have the spiritual authority in the church Paul immediately points to who has the authority—namely, the elder of the church. What are the characteristics? An elder must be blameless. Second, he must be the husband of one wife. It doesn't say spouse of a husband! He is to be of the male gender. Here the Greek word for husband is *aner*, which is always a man, never a woman. So to appoint a woman as an elder based on the Bible is unbiblical. Third, and this supports the whole argument, the elder must be one who rules his house well, having his children in submission with all reverence. Why? If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? Home leadership qualifies for spiritual

headship in the church. This is not a cultural custom, but a divinely ordained principle ("as to the Lord"). And so, what is now the line of authority in the doctrine of the church? Remember what we have voted as fundamental belief 11, that the church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. So the authority structure is based on the Bible. How does it work? It's very simple.

Christ as the head of the church delegates His authority to the leaders of the church in harmony with the Bible. Then in harmony with His order of creation, Jesus assigns the position of an elder or overseer to a man, not to a woman. Any change in this divine plan for His church will result in the derailment of a mission-driven church.

My second reservation is that the request violates the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. Remember that in this doctrine it says that "the Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of his will" and "the test of experience." Frequently people tell me that Paul was biased in his culture. The real question is, friends, Can we trust the Bible writers? Yes, because God is the author of the Bible, and therefore the Bible is "the infallible authority as a rule of faith and practice." It's not affected by human prejudice or human pride. The Bible therefore is trustworthy and unbiased.

Now the question is How do we interpret the Bible? Simply: "The Word of God is infallible; accept it as it reads." We have had plenty of counsel about the 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 enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined." "True faith consists in doing just what God has enjoined, not in manufacturing things He has not enjoined." What we need as Seventh-day Adventists, friends, is submission to the Word of God, not reinterpretation. You know, friends, we are a part of the remnant church, and the remnant church is a movement at the end of time that is still to reveal the characteristics of the New Testament church, even in the authority structure of church leadership.

My third reservation is that the request destroys the doctrine of unity in the body of Christ. Our doctrine says simply, "Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope," and results in one witness to all. Did you see the connection between the revelation of Jesus in the Scriptures and the result of approving the request? What is it? It allows the use of two conflicting biblical methods for Seventh-day Adventists. One method follows the New Testament, the Protestant Reformers, the Adventist pioneers, including Ellen White. This approach favors the plain meaning of the Bible in its regulations for church leadership. The other method sets the stage for the approach of the fallen churches of Babylon since 1844. This new approach to the Bible is strongly influenced by the trends of today's culture. Male spiritual headship is not politically correct.

What are the effects of those two conflicting methods of biblical interpretation? It establishes two conflicting theologies of church leadership. Ordination will not have worldwide validity any longer, and some fields will not recognize the leadership in other fields.

Approving leads toward division, not unity; toward national churches, not a world church; and ultimately to congregationalism. For unity, Seventh-day Adventists must follow the Word of God.

What will I do? If this assembly approves this proposal, remember that God calls for unity in Christ. I will stay with the church. Where else shall I go? The messenger of the Lord says, "Stay with the ship; it will go through." It may be damaged, but I will stay with the ship. There is no better place. And you know the future for Bible-believing Seventh-day Adventists is great. Let me share with you a promise in *The Great Controversy*: "The Lord will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible and the Bible only as the standard of doctrine and the basis of all reform. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils . . . the voice of the majority—not one or all of these things should be regarded as evidence for or against points of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept we should demand a plain 'Thus says the Lord' in its support."

What about all the arguments that we constantly hear? Yes, it is good for unity, so therefore approve it. Friends, unity cannot be kept by a policy contrary to Scripture. It brings confusion and drives people to independent ministries.

Second, some will proclaim, "I had a call from the Lord. The Lord told me to lead out in the church and take charge of the whole church." Remember, not every call or gift comes from God. "Test the spirits to see whether they are of God."

What about the argument of fairness and justice? Remember, the Bible is our standard to judge what is fair and just. We must follow the Bible, not the standards of society.

And so in summary, why can I not support this request? Because it is out of harmony with three Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. First of all, it conflicts with the doctrine of the church by instituting an unscriptural structure. Second, it violates the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures by not accepting Scripture as it plainly reads. And third, it destroys the doctrine of unity in the body of Christ by introducing an unbiblical practice that nullifies the worldwide validity of ordination.

Remember, friends, that we have always considered ourselves the continuity of the Protestant Reformation. Is this still so today? When Luther, the great Reformer, was confronted with a choice between human opinions and the Bible, he said, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture I cannot and will not" change my views. From a humble beginning Seventh-day Adventists have had the same conviction. Will they still continue as successors of the Protestant Reformation and bring us to a grand and glorious climax? The actions of this afternoon will certainly reveal the true spirit of this teaching in our church. May God help us is my prayer. [Some of the quoted material in this speech was neither identified nor verified.]

RAOUL DEDEREN: Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer, please. Our gracious Father, You have guided this church through difficult times. You have granted us the Spirit that will open doors before us and close others. We ask You, Father, to grant us the same

Spirit today, so that we may understand Your Word. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

I suppose that by now you are quite confused. You have heard a very honest Christian tell you that after studying the Bible carefully, he has come to the conclusion that this is a very commendable motion to submit to this assembly. And you've just heard another very honest and sincere Christian tell you that after studying the Scriptures, he has come to the opposite view. No wonder you are confused. And I'll tell you why the confusion is there. The confusion is there because there is not a single statement in the Scripture that addresses this issue. That's why the confusion is there.

As you noticed, neither Dr. Damsteegt nor Elder McClure was able to quote a statement in the Scriptures saying that women should not be ordained to the gospel ministry. What has been happening? What has happened is very simple. And I hope that we are open enough to listen to what the Spirit may have to tell us today, and that is that we have been acting on the basis of inferences.

We read certain texts that we regard as truthful, and rightly so, and out of those texts that do not deal with the issue that we are concerned with, we draw conclusions that we think apply to an issue that the Bible is not concerned with. We do that quite often. Seventh-day Adventists do not hold any monopoly on the Bible. There are reasons we are in this confusion. There are differences that exist among us, between and among very sincere Bible students, and I don't think I need to establish that this afternoon. The reason there are such differences is that some among us insist on some very specific passages of the Scriptures, and rightly so. And others among us, not denying those specific passages in the Scriptures, want us also to look at the principles that flow from the development of Scriptures. Let me give you an example. How often it happens, even outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that someone will come to us, quote a specific biblical passage, such as "We are not saved by the observance of the law, but we are saved by grace," and then ask us, "Do you believe that? Is that the Word of God, or is it not?" Yes, but there are principles in the Scriptures that help us to understand that statement. Or we meet the person who tells us, "Jesus Christ nailed the law to the cross so therefore we should not be keeping the seventh-day Sabbath." That's fixing it on a specific passage and forgetting the rest of the Scriptures, which we call upon immediately by saying that this text is to be understood in the context and in the overall revelation of Scriptures.

Let me tell you, brothers and sisters, I have been around this question long enough to know, and I'll be able to show it to you if you want to ask me questions afterward, that this is where the main difference is. How can we reconcile the views of those who stick to certain biblical passages (which, by the way, do not exist) and those who look at the overall principles of Scripture to understand those passages that some regard as addressing the issue of ordination to women to ministry? The task that has been entrusted to me is to explain why I do believe, as a student of the Scriptures, that ordination of women to the gospel ministry is not in contradiction to the Scriptures.

The most powerful and consistent argument used

against the ordination of women to the gospel ministry is what is called the "order of creation." Proponents go back to Genesis and draw out of the book of Genesis statements that indicate that man existed before woman, that man was created first, and that woman was taken out of man. Therefore man holds a precedence in time (certainly) and also, they say, in leadership. How shall we apply that to ordination?

Then we move to the third chapter of the book of Genesis, when after the Fall God pronounces a judgment. Notice that the judgment falls equally upon the man and the woman, on both of them, but then comes the statement used by those who want to insist upon the headship of man over woman. I read in Genesis 3:16 the well-known statement: "To the woman God said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in child bearing.'" That has to do with the home, not the church. "In pain shall you bring forth children." That is also in the context of the family: "Yet your desire shall be for your husband. He will rule over you." It is a husband/wife relationship. And I wonder how wise it is to use the husband/wife relationship as a model to impose the same kind of headship to the man/woman relationship in general, whether in society or in the church. That is the principle that I believe happens to be at stake. As we listen to what the book of Genesis tells us, there is no doubt about it.

I would like, however, to mention to you that according to Ellen White, this did not exist at the beginning. She tells us, for instance, in the third volume of the *Testimonies to the Church*, page 484, "When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to man, but in all things she should be his equal." "In all things . . . his equal" means that we cannot speak of an order of creation. We can speak of an order of the Fall, no doubt about that. There were radical changes occurring after the Fall. However, and this is where some among us disagree from what others have to say, 4,000 years

after the Fall comes the redemption in Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Galatians 3 the apostle Paul, after telling us that although some have used the law to obtain salvation, everyone should understand that no one is justified before God by the law (for it is through faith that one is righteous), he comes to the conclusion that the distinctions that the Jews drew before the coming of Christ have disappeared, and he comes up with the well-known passage. Maybe the passage is too well known to still have much effect upon us, but I ask God that we reverently listen to what the apostle Paul is saying, for Paul tells us that what Jesus Christ has brought about is a new understanding of human relations. The cross has brought down the wall of separation on a national level, for Paul says, "Neither is there Jew nor Greek." The same thing happens on the social level. There is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

I wonder why my colleagues do not share the view that I am expressing here. Why they do not call our attention to the fact that in this passage Paul is not using for man and woman the same words that he is using in all the other passages we have heard of. He uses two very clear words that speak of male and female. Paul doesn't say there is no husband or wife. Of course Paul continues to believe that within the family, as a result of sin, we still have the distinction between husband and wife, with the husband in a leadership position. And this is what I believe he is doing when in 1 Corinthians 11, under the influence of the understanding of Genesis 3, he tells us indeed that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is her husband. The term is different here. And then he states in 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9, "The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." Here Paul is using the terms that are translated in the Scriptures as husband and wife.

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I do not believe that to use the biblical model of the husband over the wife, as a model to be imposed upon the general relationship existing between all men and all women in the church, is correct. I do not believe, as some have claimed, that the Old Testament subordination of woman to man is repeated in the New Testament, except in the context of the family.

As I said a moment ago, the large majority of the passages in Scripture dealing with man and woman deal with the relationship between husband and wife. Even in the famous passage that has been read a moment ago from this platform in 1 Timothy 2, it is interesting that my colleague did not read the rest of the text. I would like to read it to you in 1 Timothy 2: "I do not permit woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." But at the same time the same apostle tells us in 1 Corinthians 14 that the woman is to be asking questions of her husband. I suppose that in the Christian church the liberty given by the gospel to men and women probably disturbed a certain number of women, especially in Corinth and in Ephesus. It went, as we say commonly, "to their heads," and they aggressively grasped their new freedom and became an object of embarrassment in their behavior to the apostle. For reasons known to Paul (under inspiration, no doubt) and for reasons well known in the community, Paul exhorted the women not to teach over men.

My brothers and sisters, tell me, have we followed the instruction? Can you assure me that we have never transgressed that specific statement "I permit no woman to hold authority over man or to teach"? Do we not have women in teaching capacities, even if only on the Sabbath school level? First Timothy 3 states that elders are to be husbands of one wife. But it also adds that they must manage their own households well, keeping their children submissive. Brothers and sisters, are we really following that? Tell me, can you assure me that in our worldwide church we have only married elders? Are you telling me that we never bring into the eldership single men? Or men who are married but have not children? We ought to be careful as to how we understand this. We ought to listen to what the Scriptures are assuming and not necessarily prescribing. And I fully agree with Gerard when he says that the training of children and maintaining a household is excellent preparation for the office of elder, but this is not an absolute criteria even among us. Why do we make one aspect of the list of qualifications a must and feel we can do without the other? We do not even follow the instruction in 1 Corinthians 11 dealing with women, how they should behave in the church and that they should be veiled. We have decided under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that this is to be understood in the sense that Paul intended it to be understood for our generation.

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile." That was very difficult to change in the early church. There were promises; there was a covenant; there was circumcision. They knew that, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and thanks to the ministry of Paul, the early church made progress on that point.

How about "neither slave nor free"? Do you know I hear it said here by my excellent colleague, "We need a statement in the Scriptures in order to do what we do." On what basis have we decided that we should be

antislavery? Jesus accepted slavery; the apostles accepted it. They never raised a finger against it, not one. They told the slaves to be submissive to their masters even if they were Christians.

Jesus used the relationship of the master and slave in His parable without raising any question about it. We have decided there should not be slaves anymore. Where is the biblical statement? We go for the principle, and that is right. Neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free. With time I think we can understand: neither man nor woman, either.

The Bible does not explicitly address the issue of ordination of women to the ministry. I would like to see the statement. I think there is no conclusive statement in the Scriptures.

The exegesis of those passages is so divergent among us. What do we need to do? We need to bring the thing to the church, as we are doing here. The church is to decide, just as the church did in the early days in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15. The issue was circumcision. This subject was at the very heart of the Jewish covenantal relationship. There were specific passages that could be quoted by those who wanted to stay literally to the Scriptures. Specific passages of Scripture regarding circumcision said that here is a sign forever and ever for all your generations to the end of time. But there were also other passages in the Scriptures that sowed the seed and said that one day the remnant will come also from among the nations, not just Jews. The eunuch would even find room in God's household. So there were two groups of passages, the literal statement and the spirit of Scripture.

The early believers brought the issue to the church at Jerusalem. At a meeting of the council of the church, they debated. The success is found in the book of Acts. They came to a conclusion. This is what we are doing here, but we should be guided by the Spirit and try to maintain unity. Because as my two colleagues preceding me have clearly said, the unity of the church is unquestionably a revealed doctrine, and we must stay by it. This is the unity that Jesus Christ has wanted. May God help us to understand that and be guided by His Spirit as we come to a conclusion. [Some of the quoted material in this speech was neither identified nor verified.]

C. B. ROCK: I think that all of us can say thank you to Dr. Damsteegt and to Dr. Dederen. What beautiful presentations! If you have your tennis shoes on or roller skates or bicycle or whatever means you want to use to get to the mike, you may do so now. [Delegates line up at the microphones.] We'll go as far as time permits. You may want to question the North American presenters, or you may want to question the two designated position persons.

JUSTO MIRANDA: The Spirit of Prophecy could not be mistaken that in final times the foundations of our faith would be shaken. It is because of this that we listen today to two brilliant presentations. But we don't have to be afraid, because Christ goes ahead of His church. I feel that today we will maintain ourselves loyal to God, loyal to the Scriptures, and loyal to the Adventist faith.

DEBORAH HARRIS: I've tried to read much of the material on this topic, but I finally realized that it's really quite simple. I believe that when God calls you,

He ordains you. And whether or not a ceremony acknowledges that is a moot point for male and female. Something happens to you when God calls you. There is a fire. There is a drive. There is a passion. There is a sense of mission that does not need or wait for the approval of man, because you just can't help yourself. I submit that ordination is not the issue here, but rather fairness. Are we willing to be fair in dealing with those who have been called of God, be they male or female? I think that we're dealing with only a small part of a bigger problem, which is fairness in all areas among God's people. We ask for equal opportunity for free development, equal access to advantageous position, equal wages for equal work. Women should have justice as well as praise.

SAMUEL KORANTENG-PIPIIM: I represent devout young people, particularly young women of my division. We do not believe that the ordination of women to the role of elder or pastor is biblical. How has this action of ordaining women brought unity in the North American Division? If not, how can we recommend it to the worldwide field? We are being told that even though the Bible may be silent on what is very clear, we must move as the Spirit leads. How can we test the Spirit's leading unless we test it by what the Spirit has already revealed in the written Word? I am against the North American Division proposal.

WENDALL SERRANTO: There is tremendous growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To ordain women to ministry is not to usurp the authority of men, but rather to complement and supplement.

GABRIEL BOAKYE-DANKWA: This is a church of the Bible. Therefore, if the issue of women's ordination has not been proved to us from the Bible and the Bible alone, we must reject it. We need to go back to our roots. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder and teach the whole world what we believe. We cannot allow North America to ask us to permit the ordination of women there. When a pastor is ordained he is ordained not for the local field, but for the world field.

EDUARD PABST: Mr. Chairman, you asked for fairness for the delegates. And I support that. We want fairness for the women in the church also. Therefore, I support this motion, because it's not a theological question. Today women may be ordained as deacons or elders, and I judge it fair to provide the possibility for women to be ordained as pastors, too.

PEDRO MEGO: We need to keep in mind that both men and women are God's most precious creation. He gave a responsibility to the pair, and that is the responsibility of establishing a home. In that institution men and women have a function, or a responsibility, that needs to unite them more than ever. An enemy is trying to destroy the home. I am sure that a Christian woman who is loved by her husband, who is loved by her children, will be content in preparing the new servants of God. And she knows that in sustaining the new child in her womb during the months of pregnancy and even during the first few years, nobody can replace her ministry or take her place.

REINHARD RUPP: In full harmony with church policy and our biblical conviction, since 1990 some divisions have ordained women as church elders, while others have not, according to circumstances. This obvious difference in practice and maybe understanding did not and does not destroy our unity in Christ. So it is

clearly possible to take a different stand in one question without being divided as a church. If we literally follow the New Testament, we must for instance exclude women and church members from the Communion service. Clearly the 12 apostles and only 12, all men, took part in this service.

VIOLETO BOCALA: I oppose the idea that the issue of ordination of women be decided by each division and not by the world church, because this will destroy the harmony of our worldwide organization. For example: a woman is ordained in one division. When she is in that division she is recognized as ordained. But when she goes to another division, she is not recognized. We are making second-class ordained ministers out of our women if we go in that direction.

JOSE VICENTE ROJAS: I represent teenagers and young adults in the North American Division. The Adventist intercollegiate association in North America (whose president is here) and many other young adults across our division feel very strongly about this issue. Not in any negative sense, but in love for their church. I come from North America, and I would like to say that North America is not a bad place. It is just misunderstood. We represent young people—some of the most criticized and condemned people today.

LIGIA PADILLA DE ALOMIA: I represent the laity of the South American Division. I have worked and brought many souls to the church, for which I am very grateful to God. But I believe that in order for my work to be recognized it does not require a title. I don't need any special license to win souls. We have marched in unison. Why divide ourselves now, simply for the pleasure of an earthly right? I love my Lord Jesus. And I will live for Him, and He is the only head and representative of the church on earth.

R. ROBERTSEN: In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul lists the offices of the church according to rank. Prophets are listed as being more preeminent than administrators, pastors, and teachers. The office of the apostles disappeared as they were laid to rest during the first century A.D. In the New Testament, God Himself called women to function as prophets. The word "prophet" signifies one who speaks for God. As prophets, these women were called by God Himself to occupy the highest and most important office in the church after the departure of the apostles. The Old Testament Levitical priesthood was done away with at the cross. And the apostle Peter informs his readers that the whole church is a royal priesthood.

R. ROJAS: I have always fought for family unity. I am a layman converted to Jesus Christ. For 12 years my dear wife has given me all the time I need to preach the name of Christ. We promised before God to continue preaching the gospel of Christ. We don't need titles; we don't have to graduate from a university. We need to preach Christ. This is our mission.

E. SHEPPERD: I am an attorney, and I deal with attorneys all the time. The legal environment with which I deal states that race and gender within the United States of America is not to be counted against anyone for anything that they would try to do. If the thing we were discussing here was the fact that someone was Black or from a different country, there would be very little, if any, discussion.

M. D. WALTER: I was disappointed in our speaker this afternoon in not bringing up one particular

facet of the question. We have not yet defined ordination. Ordination has its roots in the birthright, part of which was the spiritual leadership of the family and of the clan. This was superseded by the firstborn, then the Levites, and I believe that in our times it is with the pastorate. Until we can define ordination, I think we are only talking about an action, without understanding the meaning. Ordination, I believe, is a role, not a ministry.

VICKI BALLOU: I think it is important to remember that the defenders of the Holocaust used the Bible to defend their atrocities. This is not a theological issue; it is in fact a cultural issue. In some countries women can't drive cars. In others they not only drive cars but pilot commercial and military aircraft and fly in space. In some countries women cannot vote; in others they've been elected to the highest office of their nation. In some countries women not only cannot own property, they *are* property. In other nations the women are among the wealthiest in the country. The role of women is obviously cultural, and it differs from culture to culture.

LUIS G. CAJIGA: We rejoice this year because more women work in ministry. We want our lady evangelists. In Puerto Rico we have one who has won more than 1,400 souls in 11 years. Every Adventist—adult, child, youth, or woman—has been ordained at their baptism. Ellen White says that in being baptized, each one enters into the kingdom of God as a missionary. No church board, no official pastor, has to decide this. The baptism does it automatically. There are pagan customs that we must avoid. The Romans had the vessels in their temples. The Greeks had their women in temples. The Babylonians and the Egyptians and others had their priestesses, but the Christian tradition is that the priesthood is reserved for the man. Not because the woman is not capable; she can do great things. But we must watch out and avoid the customs of Babylon.

NOELENE JOHNSON: I stand here to speak in favor of the motion. I would like to remind all of us that under God we are one. We have a motto that we've been upholding this week—"United in Christ"—which means that we are one in the Spirit. I would like to make a plea for unity here, that we listen to the Holy Spirit; that we let the Holy Spirit work through us. I've heard so many spirited speeches here. I see that the Lord is blessing the ministry of those who speak against this motion and those who speak for it. This leads me to believe that maybe the Holy Spirit is not as tied up in this as we are, and that perhaps the Holy Spirit is comfortable with us, whatever our point of view. If there is one Spirit, and the Spirit unites us, the Spirit will lead us to the same place. I appeal to this body to trust the Spirit.

ANDRE MAKONG: I am not here to dismiss the role of women in the service of Christ. As a pastor active in the field, I know what kind of support and work they do in the service of the gospel. However, this evening I am grieved by the presentations that have been made by the theologians. Why only one division and not all divisions? Can something allowed for certain Adventists be forbidden to other Adventists?

Second, why does this question come up now? The Christian church has spent 2,000 years in silence on this question. I now make an appeal to the conscience

of the Adventist people around the world.

ESTELLA GREIG: There are some times that the Bible does leave out something, and we need to have the Holy Spirit help us put it in. All of us would say that there's nothing more central to the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church than the Ten Commandments. Look in Exodus 20, which says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (verse 17). Nowhere in that commandment does it say to me, a woman, you should not covet your neighbor's husband. But I read myself into that text as surely as any man who is a member of this church. I believe the Holy Spirit would have us read ourselves into the text. The Holy Spirit has worked with not just our church, but the Christian church throughout the ages.

PAUL YEBOAH: The North American Division president led us to understand that this issue is not theological but administrative. The very fact that Dr. Dederen and Dr. Damsteegt are sitting here, two of our leading theologians in this church, shows me that he believes it is theological. If it is theological, the only way we can approach it is to go back to the Word of God. Any other means will fail. Some of us strongly believe that women cannot be ordained into the ministry. Not because they are not competent or educated, or that they are inferior. We believe they are equal. The reasons are not even cultural, because when you become Adventist, the Word of God transforms you above your local culture and prepares you in faith and service. We believe women cannot be ordained, because there is not one word in the Bible to support it. God Himself never ordained a woman priest. Jesus, with all His closeness to women, never ordained a woman apostle. Paul, who spoke so well of women, never gave us direction to do that. Ellen G. White never did that. And therefore when I come here I become very uncomfortable to see that this church is spending time debating this.

R. ERNEST CASTILLO: As an Hispanic I have the privilege of working in the North American Division. I have the privilege of working with our Anglo brothers, our Asian brothers, our African-American brothers, and of course, with our Hispanic brothers. We do have certain specific and unique challenges. It is a very diverse division. The recommendation that the North American Division is bringing today is a special recommendation. The North American Division is requesting help with this special need.

GUY NEMBARD: I have found out, after 35 years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that this church's foundation is based not on scholarship, but on "salvationism." I honestly believe that we are to let God speak, and God has not spoken to us on the subject of the ordination of women. I believe if we are planning to meet Jesus someday, women, men, boys, and girls are to work together for one purpose, and that is to hasten the coming of Jesus Christ. I do not support the ordination of women, because the Bible does not support it.

RAQUEL SANTILLANA: We women feel that we are called by the Lord, and we are asking the church to recognize that call. We are not asking for special pow-

ers, because this is not what ordination means in our church. We are just asking for our church to recognize the call of God upon us.

TED N. C. WILSON: The request before us from the North American Division is a very potentially divisive proposal. The request could even be more difficult than the actual subject it wishes to address. This request could set in motion widespread factionalism within the worldwide church at a time when we must look for unity in Christ. To allow one or two divisions to deviate from the world church on a major matter could lead to widely varying church doctrine, belief, and practice. Personally I have held for many years that the ordination of women as local church elders and as gospel ministers is a theological issue and that the Scriptures do not support this practice. The subject is not about equality. There is no question that men and women are equal. I believe that we are heading into the very last days of this earth's history. I believe with all my heart that Jesus is coming soon. The devil would like nothing better than to divide and conquer this church. We know from biblical prophecy and the Spirit of Prophecy that this will not happen. Christ, the unifying power through the Holy Spirit, will lead this church on to complete victory. I implore and ask every delegate here to consider carefully the difficult consequences of splitting this church. I would respectfully urge every delegate to vote against this request from the North American Division.

ROLAND NIKEL: For some years we have been ordaining women as elders. I cannot see any differences in ordaining women as ministers. How can we say this person has the Holy Spirit and another does not?

EMMANUEL OSEI: One of the reasons proposed for the ordination of women is that of empowering women in the ministry. But I would like to call attention to what other divisions have done, where women have been empowered to evangelize, to plant churches, to preach in the churches and win souls. These women do not ask for ordination, not because of their conscience but because there is no biblical principle or practice for that. We should also learn from the early Adventist pioneers who went from North America to other countries, some even to Liberia in Africa. They went planting churches, winning souls, but they did not ask for ordination to the ministry, not because of the culture of the Victorian age, but because there was no biblical injunction. We are hearing that people are appealing to 1 Corinthians and to the American Constitution. The church is to be guided by "Thus saith the Lord." It is not a North American church. I stand here and say that you should reject the North American request.

HUMBERTO RASI: I want to ask you, Brother Chairman, if your watch is running. In the introduction you indicated that at 4:45 p.m. you were going to call for some closing statements and a closing action. My point of order is to remind you of your statement and to suggest that individuals that are now waiting are probably going to repeat the points that were made earlier. I think the majority of the delegates have already reflected on this issue, have arrived at a certain decision. Let me urge the chair to bring the matter to a close.

C. B. ROCK: The chair hears. The chair wants to

state that his watch is running, and so is his heart, and it's because of that that I shall now ask the gentleman at the "for" mike to speak, and that will at least even up the presentations. We are holding off as long as possible, but you are not just nudging the chair, you are shoving him, and he understands. But we will hear from the gentleman at the "for" mike before that vote is taken.

BENJAMIN REAVES: As I prayerfully and carefully consider this matter under discussion, the North

GG SNAPSHOT



Worn out by long hours, John Olatunde from Nigeria catches a few winks in the hall.

American Division is simply requesting to follow the initiative of Paul. I hear concerns about fragmentation, but Paul makes it clear that our oneness is in Christ. Ethnic, social, and sexual distinctions are not to be the basis of exclusion or inclusion. Nor are those distinctions to be the basis of superiority or inferiority in any way. At Oakwood College we train hundreds of students, male and female, for ministry. They graduate exhibiting equal gifts and equal commitment. I am convinced that as this world church moves toward the climax of history, its full, united impact can be made only as the gifts of the Spirit, exhibited by every member of the body, are recognized, affirmed, and utilized in every area of church organization, ministry, and practice. I speak in support of this request of the North American Division to allow every church member to fulfill whatever ministerial calling their gifts and the Spirit's guidance lead them to embrace.

HUMBERTO RASI: I wish to move that we follow the outline you suggested at the beginning and that we accepted when we came to this discussion. I move that the discussion cease. And I suggest that we have a

short period of prayer before we vote.

C. B. ROCK: The motion is that the debate cease. Is it supported? It is not debatable. We will now vote, and if it passes by two-thirds, we shall govern ourselves accordingly. [Motion to cease debate was voted by two-thirds majority.]

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: Vienna, 1975, General Conference session. Many of you seated here were present. You can remember that beautiful city. You can also remember how long ago it was. The world has changed a lot since Vienna. Some things have slipped from memory, faded from view. A younger generation is here—some of them were not even born when we met in Vienna, and they've heard about that General Conference session secondhand. They've heard about the debates. But those debates somehow seem distant. Those discussions were somebody else's agenda, not theirs. It seems true to them because they believe their elders, but it was still somebody else's agenda.

It was the year A.D. 31. The Lord had just died and ascended, and the disciples were told to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They could not go and complete the commission. They were not permitted to preach unless they had the unction of the Spirit. And in order to receive that power, they had to remain until they were in one accord. It was a never-to-be-forgotten day. The power that flowed through the apostles was dramatic. There were many converted the next day, and this little struggling band who had an inferiority complex suddenly saw their numbers swell to thousands. They could hardly believe their eyes. All because of the power of the Spirit. They documented the occasion. And then they went out. They reached out into Jerusalem, into Judea, into Samaria. Stephen died, and they went beyond the border into the uttermost parts of the earth, and they ran into problems.

Years passed. As they confronted the Gentiles, the meaning of what it meant to follow Christ needed to be revisited. About 20 years passed. About the same time since Vienna. They came back to Jerusalem. They came back to discuss something that was biblical, that was dogma, that was doctrine, that was truth, but they were not quite sure what to do with it. What impresses me is that after the vigorous debate, of which the Scripture gives only a faint glimpse, they were able to take a potentially divisive issue, take a position, and leave and carry out their mission. Their power was not reduced simply because they disagreed. There's one reason I believe the Lord was able to do that. There's one reason the Holy Spirit was able to be poured out through individuals that had different opinions. One reason: they loved each other. The apostle makes it clear that one of the characteristics of love is that you care more about somebody else's opinion than your own. I hope you heard me. A successful marriage is one in which one spouse is more interested in the happiness of the other than in his or her own happiness.

It was with fear and foreboding that some of us foresaw the approach of this debate this afternoon. I must tell you that I am pleased at the process and the decorum with which we have each expressed clearly our opinions. I take them as all honest, valid representations of the speakers' respective opinions. I am concerned that the positions we hold reflect the kind of

selflessness that is demanded by the example of love of our gracious Lord, that He saw us as more important than Himself. We have each told the world what our respective opinions are, and we pride ourselves on holding our opinions close and cherish them in our individualistic societies. But I submit that the time has come for us to hold our own opinions up against that standard that I have just mentioned, up against the will of God, and the love of our neighbor, and the ability to accomplish the mission that God has laid upon us as a result of the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying our message. There is no one, male or female, ordained or unordained, who will contribute anything to the mission of this church unless it is accompanied by the Holy Spirit. And I would submit that it is time, before we vote, to submit cherished opinions to the Word of God, to His Spirit, to the high plateau of selflessness in which we consider the pain of our brother and sister more important than our own. And I invite you to pray with me.

Gracious Father, we have seen this day approaching for some time now. It has been a cause for apprehension, worry, and concern. It is so easy to foresee doom, gloom, schism, and divided opinions, and some a divided church. Lord, we know that this church is bigger than our opinions. We know that this message is mightier than this vote, for the cross of our Lord will triumph. You are going to come soon regardless of this vote. We are commissioned to proclaim the glorious news of assurance of salvation in Jesus and the glorious news of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in our own lives, but Father, forgive us wherein we have permitted our cherished opinions to be imposed on You so that our ideas might serve as egotistical obstacles that impede our hearing ability. Father, this afternoon we want to be in one accord. We may have diversity of opinion, but Father, may our diversity be based on a careful consideration not only of our ideas but of those who may think differently. Help us not to be judgmental of them. Help us to recognize that we might be at fault. And Lord, help us to break our hearts in humility before You, because otherwise, Father, we will be channels that obstruct the impulses from on high. And Lord, this afternoon we cannot leave here feeling that some group won and some group lost. We must be able to leave here with the assurance that regardless of the decision, Heaven won. We need to go from here in one accord committed to that which is most important, being one in Jesus at the foot of the cross, having a task to do, to warn a world of Your imminent return. Father, answer our prayer, we plead. In Jesus' name, amen.

C. B. ROCK: Thank you, Mr. President.

GABRIEL BOAKYE-DANKWA: Mr. Chairman, will you please explain or restate the motion? Some of us are confused about it.

C. B. ROCK: Let us take a moment and read the motion again.

L. C. COOPER: The item is a request from the North American Division that the General Conference in session adopt provisions on ordination as outlined below: "The General Conference vests in each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with established policies. In addition, where circumstances do not render it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of

qualified individuals without regard to gender. In divisions where the division executive committee takes specific actions approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, women may be ordained to serve in those divisions."

J. H. ZACHARY: I don't know whether this is an appropriate point of order, but you have not told us whether this motion requires a two-thirds or 51 percent majority to pass.

C. B. ROCK: This is a majority vote.

J. H. ZACHARY: Fifty-one percent?

C. B. ROCK: I am so counseled by the parliamentarian.

J. H. ZACHARY: That may be too divisive. I wish it were two-thirds.

C. B. ROCK: Well, some may wish it were 75 percent, but we will go by the rule of parliamentarian on this one. I understand we have a musical item that's going to be presented while the ballots are collected and counted.

LINDA SCALES MERCER: Actually, we're going to sing a few songs while we're waiting. We're going to begin with "All Hail the Power," which is number 1 in your delegate songbook. [Part of the song was sung.]

C. B. ROCK: Before we sing the next stanza, Dr. Beach, has a number of guests with him, I see. May we meet your guests?

B. B. BEACH: I was kind of taken by surprise. Once in a while it happens to me. Usually I'm accused of taking the brethren by surprise. But sometimes it works the other way. One of the blessings of a General Conference session is to have a number of guests in our midst, leaders of other denominations, or other world organizations, or Christian world communions. Some of them have come and already gone. A few have not arrived yet, so they kind of come in relays. I would just like to take the opportunity of asking these special guests that are here in front right now to stand so that you can take notice of where they come from. The three that are here are from the Netherlands representing the old Catholic Church, the World Baptist Alliance, and also the World Council of Churches. We're very happy that these gentlemen are here with us, and we ask them to stand. [Applause.] We also have about 20 observer delegates or observer guests from a great variety of Christian communities. And we're honored that they have come and spent time witnessing and communing with us. Thank you.

C. B. ROCK: Thank you. We are recipients of some heart-wrenching news. Mr. President, maybe you would like to explain to the delegation. Always in the midst of business or even joy and recreation there comes sadness. And we are once again afflicted in that way.

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: Many of you are acquainted with Dr. Robert Pierson. Dr. Pierson was president of our university in Rwanda, the University of Central Africa, and is now working in the Africa-Indian Ocean Division office, a delegate to our session. A few moments ago he received some tragic family news. Just a little while ago in an automobile accident in the United States, three of his grandchildren died. You can imagine the grief. It is hard to comprehend the grief that a family goes through at a time

like this. I think it would be very appropriate if we would invite Elder Mittleider, who just brought me this news, to ask for God's comfort on the Pierson family.

K. J. MITTELEIDER: Shall we stand together? Our heavenly Father, words are so inadequate in a time like this to express what we desire, especially for the Pierson family. You know the work that they have done. You know their dedicated lives and the lives they have influenced. Today they have suffered a terrible tragedy in the loss of their three grandchildren. Be with them right now. Sustain them. And as brothers and sisters in You may we also be there to comfort and sustain. We're so thankful for the church family that makes us as one, and that we are all brothers and sisters together. We're also thankful for the knowledge that one day soon Jesus is going to come and restore that which has been laid to rest in Him. But Lord, right now it's so hard. The separation seems so final. And grant, Lord, that Your peace, Your comfort, Your power, will sustain them right now. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. [LINDA SCALES MERCER led the congregation singing until the chair was ready to announce the ballot count.]

C. B. ROCK: Thank you. We have the results of the balloting, and it has been observed, and probably rightly so, that while this is an exciting, rather emotional issue, the result should not cause us to explode into any demonstration that might make evoke an "us" against "them" kind of feeling as we leave here. So please be restrained as much as you can.

Total number voting: 2,154. Of that number, 673 voting YES, and 1,481 voting NO. Thank you. The church has spoken. Shall we stand?

R. A. ZEEMAN: [Closing prayer.]

C. B. ROCK, *Chair*

L. C. COOPER, *Secretary*

D. A. ROTH, FRED G. THOMAS, and

L. R. COLBURN, *Proceedings Editors*

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