

Looking forward to the —

Women's Ordination Crisis: 1995

Part One of Two

It is now 1995, and we are nearing a special crisis. We write this report to alert you to it ahead of time. It will climax this summer at Utrecht, Holland—and, if it does not turn out well, an even bigger crisis will quickly follow.

Because it will have profound implications on our church, we have prepared this report.

Church leaders are trying hard to prepare our entire church for what is coming. The front cover of the first *Adventist Review* of 1995 proclaimed: "1995—Year of the Adventist Woman." The inside cover declared:

"After so many years of faithful, indispensable contributions to the life of the church, they will be honored this year. **Leaders have designated 1995 as the Year of the Adventist Woman.** The focus will be not just on women who serve as gospel ministers, evangelists, teachers, doctors, or nurses—important as their service is—but on *all* Adventist women."—*Review*, January [1], 1995, 2 [all emphasis theirs].

The truth is that this is the *Year of the Women's Ordination Crisis*, and the focus of leadership will actually be on that. Here is the story:

1973 - 1994

In the 1960s, under the impetus of the women's lib movement, Protestant churches began ordaining women pastors. Entire denominations were split over the question, and the controversy has continued on down to the present day as more and more denominational boards have voted to ordain women.

In 1973, a conference was convened, at Camp Mohaven, by women's lib advocates in the Adventist Church, to introduce the

subject into our own ranks. Twenty-nine papers were read and discussed. It was then voted to recommend that women be ordained as local church elders, and those with theological training be hired as "associates in pastoral care."

That same year, in October, a shocked Annual Council was presented with the recommendations and, after much discussion, voted to "receive" the Camp Mohaven report and to "study the matter" of electing women to local church offices requiring ordination.

In 1975, the Spring Council (1) approved the ordination of women as deaconesses; (2) ruled that they could be made elders, but "only with the greatest discretion and caution; and (3) voted that they could become assistant pastors but only with missionary licenses, and not with ministerial licenses or certificates.

That same year, the Biblical Research Institute prepared 13 scholarly papers, based on Camp Mohaven presentations. They must have been favorable to the women's lib movement, because BRI was forbidden to release them to the church membership.

In 1979, Potomac Conference (where our world headquarters is located) decided to let a woman run a local church. Josephine Benton was appointed sole pastor of the Rockville, Maryland, church, located in the vicinity of our world headquarters in Takoma Park. She served in that capacity for three years.

By 1982, a number of additional women pastors were working in the North American Adventist denomination. The first sponsorship of women pastors to the seminary occurred that year, as

Becky Lacy and Collette Crowell were sent to Andrews by Southeastern California and Upper Columbia conferences, respectively.

Before the year was out, the *Association of Adventist Women* was founded and held its first North American conference. This, and other Adventist women's organizations started later, gained for them a much more advantageous power base.

Potomac Conference again led the way when, in 1984, it permitted three women to baptize (something which, according to church rules, only an ordained minister can do). The three were Jan Daffern, Francis Wiggins, and Marsha Frost. The General Conference reprimanded Potomac for this defiance of church rules, and ordered it to rescind permission for women to baptize—which Potomac then did.

By this time, the movement toward women's ordination had greatly strengthened although, oddly enough, the great majority of church members hardly knew anything about the growing controversy.

The year 1985 brought the *First Commission on the Role of Women in the Church*. With 50 men and 15 women as members, it voted against a definite decision favoring women's ordination.

The position of church leadership consistently was to postpone the matter, while women's lib advocates urged immediate changes.

But, while most wanted to avoid confrontation, there were those who opened their Bibles—and said the matter was not Biblical. But, in the growing battle between various powers, attention to scriptural statements and patterns were gen-

erally shunted to the sideline.

That same year (1985), the North American Division, under pressure from several influential conferences, issued a document recommending that the Annual Council make sweeping changes in this matter. Specifically, it requested that women pastors with seminary training be permitted to perform weddings and baptize, as do men pastors with seminary training.

When the Annual Council met in October 1985, it rejected the NAD request. This rejection was due to the conservative stance of a number of church leaders outside North America.

The next year (1986), Southeastern California Conference took the lead in promoting women's ordination. It would retain that lead on down to the present time.

SECC voted to treat unordained men and women equally in giving permission to baptize. This constituted sweeping permission for women to perform ministerial functions throughout that conference.

Baptizing by women immediately resumed in North America, as SECC began doing it. The first instance was by Margaret Hempe, who baptized two persons in the Loma Linda University church, with the backing of the pastoral staff and over 100 church board members.

Throughout the controversy, it has been the studied position of the General Conference to stall for time until a certain event happened. That event was not the magical re-writing of the Bible, nor was it clear evidence from the Spirit of Prophecy. The Inspired Writings had already been ransacked by women's lib advocates, without clear evidence supporting their objectives. That which they were waiting for was a larger number of leaders, workers, and church members favoring women's ordination. The key factor deciding the outcome would

not be Scripture, but a change in Adventist public opinion.

In 1987, tentative polls were conducted by *Ministry* magazine. Of all those polled, one group was liberal enough that a majority favored the women's rights movement. What group do you think that would be? It was Adventist Bible teachers, the ones in charge of teaching religion to our youth! Sixty-nine percent of them favored women's ordination.

In order to keep the matter stirred up, the next year (1988), Southeastern California Conference, in a specially called constituency meeting, appointed a *Gender Inclusiveness Task Force*. This commission was to study ways to accelerate enactment of pro-women's lib issues in the church.

That same year, a second major women's organization was formed: *The Adventist Women's Institute*. Its first chairperson was Fay Blix.

Before the year was out, the *Second Commission on the Role of Women in the Church* convened; this one with 61 men and 19 women. It recommended "further study" prior to making any decision on ordaining women to the ministry.

At about the same time, yet another pro-women's organization was started: *TEAM (Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry)*. Pat Habada was its first director.

Two more events occurred in 1988. The first was a report issued by Andrews University (another pro-women's ordination bastion). It found that nearly 1,000 women elders were serving in North America.

The second was a much touted report (and deservedly so) of Mrs. Cho Kuik-Nan, who, by her encouragement, had brought over a thousand persons to Sabbath School. (The report emphasized that she had personally baptized at least 200 persons in Wuxi, China.)

Two events, relating to this ever-growing movement, occurred in 1989. Under strong pressure from local conference leadership and certain wealthy local churches, the Pacific Union Conference drafted a formal paper, urging the General Conference to "eliminate gender as a consideration for ordination to the gospel ministry."

That same year, the *Third Commission on the Role of Women* met. Women were again in the minority (17), but this time it recommended that women pastors, when so authorized by their divisions, be permitted to baptize and perform weddings—but not be ordained. (Inter-America, South America, and Eastern Africa, although asked to do so, refused to send women delegates to this gathering.)

The year 1990 marked the first crisis in the church over women's ordination.

At the *General Conference Session in Indianapolis*, a lengthy and very heated discussion of the subject occurred on Tuesday, July 10. Many delegates from the North American Division were strongly outspoken in favor of women's ordination. Others from the Western and Eastern hemispheres pled with the delegates to remain with the clear teachings of the Bible.

When the vote was taken, 1,173 voted against ordaining women to the ministry, and 377 voted in favor of it.

As soon as the measure lost, some spoke strongly about the possibility of a forthcoming insurrection by certain localities in North America. Leaders were in a state of panic. But the cause was not lost. A contingency plan had been worked out, in case such an emergency would arise.

The next day (Wednesday afternoon), while many delegates were sightseeing or resting (since no significant actions remained on the official agenda), a surprise motion was made from the floor—to

authorize all unordained, licensed ministers to baptize and perform marriages! Quickly passed, this action gave the pro-women's movement a major victory. Yes, they had not obtained women's ordination, but they had obtained almost the equivalent: the right of unordained women to perform every function which an ordained minister could do. Most of the basic factors in Tuesday's vote had been reversed.

Yet, following the Session, women's lib advocates were wrathful. They had not achieved everything they wanted, and they vowed revenge if their rights were not given them by the church.

There was talk of initiating a woman's caucus. Because the blacks have one, they were able to swing the vote for the General Conference president.

Following the negative vote on Tuesday at the Session, Steve Gifford, president of Southeastern California Conference, stood up and told the assembly that, because of the outcome, SECC might go into open rebellion. He well-knew the mode of his constituency, and appeared quite willing to lead in that rebellion.

But, in the days that followed, General Conference leadership pled with Gifford to stay with the ship. He was hard-pressed to know what to do, for influential people in his conference were urging him to do the opposite.

On Sunday, October 21, 1990, a stormy *SECC constituency meeting* occurred. The principle item on the agenda was whether or not to defy the General Conference and go ahead and ordain women anyway. Everyone knew the decisions made there would be crucial. The outcome was something of a surprise:

(1) It was voted that SECC would not defy decisions made by higher church bodies, and that any votes made to do so would not be valid nor would they be enforced.

(2) A straw vote indicated a

majority in favor of women's ordination, but, because of the first action, it could not be implemented.

Rather quickly, Fay Blix, a southern California attorney, led out in a movement to stop paying tithes into the church! She convened a meeting, which voted to do just that. On Sunday, October 28, 1990, the board of the *Adventist Women's Institute*, meeting in Redlands, California, said the organization would accept tithes into a special escrow account "until the church treats women equally and agrees to ordain them."

Two days later, in a *Denver Post* article, Blix was quoted as saying, "We've threatened this for a long time, and we are finally realizing that the bottom line is green." She noted that AWI had a mailing list of over 10,000.

"According to the women's figures and those of the church, about 60 percent of the 6 million-member worldwide Adventist Church are women, but women hold only about 2 percent of the leadership positions."—"*Seventh-day Adventist Women Call for Tithing Boycott*," *Denver Post*, October 30, 1990.

Many in the SECC were deeply upset that Gifford had permitted that October 21, 1990 meeting to fail in achieving its goal of immediate women's ordination. So much pressure was applied, in fact, that Gifford left the presidency.

Later still, at another constituency meeting of SECC held in 1992, a very significant action was taken: It was voted to ask the conference executive committee to hold, in abeyance, the issuance of any new ministerial licenses in the conference—until the church approved women's ordination. The conference did as it was asked. Still seething over the delay, liberals in Southeastern were using this dramatic means in an attempt to force it on the church.

The ongoing campaign to promote acceptance of women's ordination continued as, in 1993, it was

reported to the church that, at a January meeting, 88 percent of the ministerial directors of North America and the senior pastors of college churches voted in favor of authorization and promotion of women pastors on a regional basis in the North America Division.

That same year, the Pacific Union Conference asked the North American Division to consider the ordination issue at its October *Year-end Meeting*. It was placed on the agenda.

Arriving at that October meeting, NAD delegates found that, by Folkenberg's request, the women's ordination item had been removed from the agenda. He instead recommended that it not be pushed forward for a positive vote until just before the crucial 1994 Annual Council.

When, shortly afterward, SECC leaders contacted Folkenberg, he told them he stood fully with them in their efforts to see women's ordination enacted, and promised that he would try to obtain agreement among division presidents, prior to the November 1994 Annual Council.

Pressure continued to mount in Southeastern California Conference to bolt from leadership controls, and begin ordaining women. In fact, it almost did. At the November *SECC executive meeting*, the vote tied at 11 to 11, to implement immediately the constituency's ordination vote!

That was such a close shave, that additional pressure, from upper-level church leadership, was applied.

Lynn Mallery (one of those who involved in producing Knoche's wild west movie) was the SECC president. He met with the conference's *Gender Inclusiveness Commission* (GIC) at its December meeting, and promised to get its pro-ordination recommendations pushed through the next executive committee meeting, slated for

January 13.

Then Mallery contacted the three women candidates for ordination to get their pictures taken, in preparation for the ordination service. He expected the executive committee to give its go-ahead.

On January 11, Mallery spoke by phone with Folkenberg, who urged delay until the 1994 Annual Council met in November.

An assortment of persuasive people showed up for the January 13 SECC executive committee meeting. GIC members urged that women's ordination be approved, so it could immediately be initiated by the conference. To do so, was said to be an act of "conscientious obedience" to God's current leading in the church.

Interestingly enough, no one at that meeting claimed that the current ban on women's ordination was "theologically correct" or more "moral" than removing the ban. The point was always that one conference should not step out of line with the rest of the denomination.

—Is no one interested in what the Bible says? What is correct "theology" and "morality," if not that which the Bible says to do? Are we to turn to our own opinions or to the world to learn our duty?

The most convincing argument came from a committee member (David VanDenburgh) and NAD's Gary Patterson: If SECC bolted, it would probably result in the rest of the world field never approving women's ordination. "It would be a great setback for the GC going forward [in getting it approved]. People would say, 'Even the wild and crazy ones in Southeastern California reversed themselves on this issue [by rescinding their previous agreement to wait].'"

As a result of such persuasion, the previously tied vote changed to 16 to 9, in favor of postponing the ordination of women in its territory a little longer in order "to give the world church's elected leaders the

opportunity to provide the leadership for this vital issue."

That, of course, meant that, if the 1995 Session repeated the vote made in 1990, the SECC would be among the first to start an insurrection over the issue.

(At one point in that meeting, Mallery was called out to the phone for another type of persuasion. His wife told him someone had just thrown a brick through their car window, parked at home. Several days earlier he had received other harassment. He had also found a note on his car seat, which said "The Bible says no lady ministers.")

As the November 1994 Annual Council neared, all recognized that its support for the women's ordination issue would be crucial. Without it, the 1995 Utrecht Session would not likely give its vote of approval.

So SECC leaders cheered the hearts of their constituents by approval of the placement, on their late November conference meeting agenda, this item: If the 1994 Annual Council voted down women's ordination, SECC leaders would reconsider the issue (with the likelihood of immediately ordaining women). That helped the impatient ones in the conference to wait a little longer. It was also a strong signal which the Annual Council ought to recognize.

In November, church officers, from around the world convened at the 1995 Annual Council. Folkenberg had promised Mallery he would contact high-placed leaders around the world ahead of time, and try to get them on the bandwagon. SECC were told he had done his best.

As you might expect, at that meeting leaders from North America pled with overseas officers to give them what they wanted: permission for each division to separately decide whether or not it wanted to ordain women. A recurring theme in the discussions that

day was "We give you what you want; please, let us in North America have this!"

The 1994 Annual Council approved the measure, to be sent on to the forthcoming General Conference Session for final approval.

Who knows but what some of the overseas leaders may have felt that, with so many mad-as-a-hornet people in North America, they might try to cut off funds to overseas if they did not get their way. The overseas divisions may have the vote, but North America has the money.

The 1995 Session will convene in Utrecht, Holland, on Wednesday, June 28. It is presumed likely that the crucial agenda item will probably come up for a vote on Tuesday, July 4. That would give time for preliminary elections, and still a little time (three days) for other attempts if something went wrong.

It is known that the pro-ordination party will be working at a partial disadvantage, since the overseas Utrecht Session will have a higher-than-usual percentage of delegates from the developing world—where "women's equality" would be regarded as a strange issue.

According to schedule, a keynote theme of the Session will be "*The Year of the Adventist Woman*," with banners prominently displayed. What will be the outcome? We can be assured that pressure may be placed on the delegates to vote the proper way. Which leader wants one or more U.S. conferences to bolt? All know that Southeastern will brook no further delays, and it is probably the wealthiest conference in the world field. As Fay Blix said, "The bottom line is green."

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

About 1987, a copy of a major

Continued on the next tract

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Women's Ordination Crisis: 1995

Part Two of Two

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

research document was sent to the present writer. It was a fascinating publication. Every possible hint or allusion to women pastors in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy was quoted and commented on. The preface stated that the publication included earlier researched studies by others who favored women's ordination and women ministers.

Yet there was almost nothing of substance in the entire work. Remarkably fine-spun theories, yes; but essentially there is little to support a position that either the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy favored the placing of women as pastors over men.

In strong contrast, there are a number of Biblical statements which indicate that only men are to be the ministers and leaders of

the church.

There is, of course, the one exception of prophets; women prophets are very much approved in Scripture. (It is of interest that, of the 45 or so authors of written Scripture, only one was a woman. Yet through that one woman we have received more inspired counsel than from all the men combined.)

Continued on the next page

The women's lib movement, in the Adventist denomination, has become so powerful that it has spawned a variety of pro-lib organizations—all of which have started less than a decade and a half ago. Here are some of them:

Association of Adventist Women—This is the organization from which has sprung most of the others. Founded in 1982, it has convened 13 national conferences and one international conference. AAW publishes a newsletter (*Adventist Woman*), holds its annual conferences, honors an Adventist Woman of the Year, encourages the other women's organizations, but always remains neutral on the ordination and ministry issues.

Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM)—This women's organization originated in August 1988, with the specific purpose of prodding the church into "equality of ordination of candidates and treatment of ministers." It prepares promotional videos; booklets; books; lobbying; and its newsletter, *Teamwork*. In 1991, it established a *Women in Ministry Scholarship Fund*, to assist women in completing the seminary and entering the ministry. To date, seven \$1,000 scholarships have been

awarded.

Adventist Women's Institute—Also formed in 1988, AWI urges women's lib even more strongly than TEAM. It demands "justice within the Adventist Church." Through its magazine, *Ponderings*, and meetings in various localities, it seeks "to provide a forum for an independent group of women to speak freely on issues of justice and policy . . . without regard to threats of reprisal from employers or denominational bureaucracies." AWI is the toughest voice in the entire movement.

Gender Inclusiveness Task Force—Started in 1988, this is not strictly a "women's organization." As mentioned elsewhere in the text of this present report, GITF is a committee appointed by the Southeastern California Conference, in order to promote the ordination of women and related women's issues within that conference.

Adventist Women's Coalition—Formed in 1990 at a weekend retreat in Pennsylvania and convened by several different women's organizations, AWC includes AAW, TEAM, the *Bible Instructors' Guild* (BIG), and *Mary's Place*, as well as individual members. AWI chose not to join, because AWC's focus is on equal employ-

ment opportunities for women in the church. In addition, AWC maintains a harmonious relationship with church leaders, which AWI could care less about.

Office of Women's Ministries—Due to the urging of TEAM, the NAD began funding OWM. It consists of a full-time director, with an office in the General Conference building and produces a newsletter (*Women's Focus*) and books. Royalties support scholarships for women ministerial students. In addition, there are women's ministries departments on many lower church levels.

The North American Division Women's Ministries Department conducts women's retreats and helps women obtain employment.

The current director of NAD-WMD, Elizabeth Sterndale, says that, in 1993, about 100 women's retreats were held in the NAD, and attended by about 20,000 women.

Women and Men Against Sexual Harassment and Other Abuses (WASH)—Begun at the 1992 AAW national conference. WASH is concerned with sexual abuse and harassment issues. It tries to solve problems in the church which are frequently evaded.

Collectively, these women's organizations are quite powerful.

If we do not have Bible or Spirit of Prophecy support for women's ordination and women ministers, what support is there?

First, there is a current trend, in Europe and America, to place women in political office, in the hope that they will have more integrity than men do. That is partly due to the fact that Margaret Thatcher was such an outstanding leader—one of the very best in the twentieth century.

Second, there are clear-cut Spirit of Prophecy statements to the effect that women should minister to the needs of women.

Third, the culture of Western

Civilization, in our time, favors women pastors and priests.

Fourth, there have been instances, in the Adventist denomination, when women were ordained to some kind of ministry.

Fifth, in those instances in which women are placed as ministers, they do an excellent job of perceiving the heart-felt needs of women and ministering to them. The truth is that women ministering to women is an outstanding idea!

God gave us a pattern, and we should accept it. Why should we accept it? Because it is the plan outlined for us in Scripture.

If the Bible said we should have

women priests, pastors, and church leaders, then that is what we should have. It is not for you and me to decide; it is for God to decide and for us to obey.

CONCLUSION

You can expect some decided action, beginning this summer. Either approval of women's ordination and women pastors or insurrection by one or more conferences in North America.

Either way, the action will be preceded by a major battle on the floor of the Utrecht Session.

This summer, we plan to send you a report on that Session.

It is not difficult finding what the Bible says on a given topic. What does it say about Women? You will find nearly most of it in the following list. (There are some negatives here; but if you would look in the Bible under "men," you would find far more.) Look up the references in any category you may be interested in—and see what it says:

At Creation and the Fall: Gen 1:27; 2:18, 21-24; 3:1-16; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:12-15; Gen 3:15.

Relation to Worship Services: Ex 15:20-21; 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22; 1 Chron 25:5-6; Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67; Ex 35:22; 38:8; Deut 31:12; Josh 8:35; 1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11-12.

Religious Activities among Early Christians: Acts 1:14; 12:12-13; 1 Cor 11:5; 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11; Acts 16:14-15; 17:4, 12, 34.

Household Activities: Gen 18:6; Prov 31:15-19; Matt 24:41; Ex 35:25-26; 1 Sam 2:19; Prov 31:19-24; Acts 9:39; Ruth 2:8;

Song 1:6; Gen 24:11, 13-14, 19-20; 29:9; Ex 2:16; Isa 27:11; Ezek 26:6, 8; Matt 26:69; Jn 18:16-17; Acts 12:13-14.

Clothing and Adornment: Gen 24:65; Deut 22:5; 1 Cor 11:5-15; 1 Tim 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:3-4; Isa 3:16-23; Jer 2:32.

Queens: Isa 3:12; 2 Kg 11:1-16; 2 Chron 22:2-3, 10-12; 1 Kg 10:1-13; Acts 8:27; Neh 2:6; Esther.

Poets and Singers: Ex 15:21; Judg 5; 1 Sam 2:1-10; Lk 1:42-45; Lk 1:46-55; 1 Chron 25:5-6; Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67.

Prophets: Ex 15:20-21; Mic 6:4; Judg 4:4-5; 2 Kg 22:14-20; 2 Chron 34:22-28; Neh 6:14; Lk 2:36-38; Acts 21:9; Ezek 13:17-23.

Business, Property Rights, inheritance: Prov 31:14-18, 24; Num 27:1-11; 36; Josh 17:3-6; Job 42:15; Ruth 4:3-9.

First: Gen 3:6; Mk 15:46-47; 16:1-6; Lk 23:27-28, 49, 55-56; 24:1-10; Mk 16:9; Jn 20:14-18.

Various Personalities: 2 Sam 1:26; Isa 49:15; Lam 4:10; Judg 11:34; 21:21; Jer 31:13; Zech

9:17; Gen 24:17; 2 Sam 20:16-22; Isa 19:16; Jer 50:37; 51:30; Nah 3:13.

Marriage, Vows, and Offspring: Gen 3:16; Isa 49:15; Lam 4:10; Gen 24:3-4; Ex 22:17; Judg 11:37; Ps 78:63; Isa 4:1; Num 30:3-16; 5:12-31; Esth 1:20-22; 1 Tim 5:14.

Honorable: Ruth 3:11; Prov 11:16, 22; 12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 31:10-30; 1 Tim 2:9; 3:11; 5:2-10; Tit 2:3-5.

Dishonorable: Prov 19:13-14; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16; 30:21-23; Eccl 7:26-28; Isa 3:16-24; 32:9-11; Ezek 13:17-23; 1 Tim 5:12-13; Isa 32:9-11; Jer 2:32; Prov 6:24-29, 32-35; 7:6-27; Eccl 7:26; 2 Tim 3:6; Jer 7:18; Ezek 13:17, 23; Num 31:15-16; 1 Kg 21:8, 25; Neh 13:26; 2 Kg 23:7; Rom 1:26; 2 Kg 9:30-37; Jer 44:15-19, 25; Ezek 8:14; Hos 4:13-14;

In Relation to Man: Gen 3:16; 24:3-4; 34:6; Ex 22:17; 1 Cor 11:3, 9; 1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:10-15.

Miscellaneous: Gen 24:6-7; 31:33; Esth 2:9, 11; 1 Pet 3:7.

Rebellion over Women's Ordination — Defying the General Conference Session

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 1995, at Utrecht, Holland, the delegates attending the 1995 General Conference Session voted down women's ordination by a vote of 1,481 to 673 (69 percent against and 31 percent for).

During the discussion preceding the vote, those speaking against the proposal were predominantly African and South American. One Australian also spoke in opposition to it. Those who spoke in favor of women's ordination were primarily from North America, western Europe, and the Caribbean. Although one Asian man spoke in favor, delegates from Asia and the formerly communist countries did not take part in the discussion.

We can all be thankful that a majority of the delegates, in attendance at the 1995 General Conference Session, voted to stay with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. By a two-thirds vote, they rejected the latest fad of liberals in America and Europe—and refused to approve the ordination of women ministers in our church!

But we should not underrate the strong determination of these liberals, who are determined to follow current religious fashions instead of solid Biblical truth.

Here is the latest news of the liberal counterattack in America. We will provide you with additional reports as they become available.

ON FRIDAY, JULY 7, even before the General Conference Session adjourned, the board of the La Sierra Church approved the following statement, as a recommendation to the church's business session.

Here is the text of the document they approved and sent on to the constituency of that church:

"WHEREAS we, the La Sierra University Church, affirm our commitment to and affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist world church, and

"WHEREAS we appreciate the effort made by this conference and its various committees, including the Gender Inclusiveness Commission, on the question of women's ordination,

"VOTED that the La Sierra Church prayerfully requests, urges, and expects the Southeastern California Conference and the Pacific Union Conference to honor the trust and the voted actions of the Southeastern California Conference constituents by authorizing formal pastoral ordination for women to the gospel ministry by November 1, 1995."

On Sabbath, July 15, 1995, in a special business session, the La Sierra University Church, Riverside, California, voted to approve the above statement, to which they then added the first two paragraphs as preamble.

They then sent that document as an urgent appeal to the Southeastern California Conference to defy the authority of the General Conference Session—and begin ordaining women as ministers!

These modernists are determined that nothing stop them in carrying out their plans. Clifton Reeves chaired the business meeting, with LSC Church senior pastor, Dan Smith, and pastor for administration, Bradley Whited.

The initial cause of concern arose over the fact that Halcyon Wilson, a woman pastor at the La Sierra Church for 15 years, is soon to retire. Leaders in that local church want her ordained, so that she will receive higher retirement pay. Although that was the source of initial concern within the La Sierra Church, the strong feelings of a majority of the constituency of the Southeastern California Conference, in favor of women's ordination, have been expressed for several years.

Shortly after the 1990 Session turned down women's ordination, a special SECC constituency meeting convened, and they narrowly avoided approving women's ordination at that time. The argument which stopped the movement was that leaders would try to get it passed at the 1995 Session.

But, following Utrecht, the liberals now realize they will never get this unBiblical idea approved. Every year the number of church members overseas continues to increase.

Presidents: Worldwide Divisions and Unions, and North American Division Conferences—

In this paper, you will find a report on the initial aftermath of the 1995 General Conference Session decision to reject women's ordination.

We are sorry to have to tell you that there are

liberals in North America who are determined to have their own way, in spite of what the Bible says, and what the church in Session has voted.

Please unite your prayers with ours that our churches in North America will fully return to our historic Bible-Spirit of Prophecy truths. — *vf*

ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, the Sligo Church, which is home church to many of our world leaders and General Conference associate workers, met in a formal business session—and voted to begin full-scale defiance of the General Conference Session on September 23.

Here is the document which was drafted:

“Be it hereby resolved; that out of passion for the gospel, obedience to conscience, faithfulness to mission, and commitment to the building up of the church’s spiritual and financial resources, the Sligo congregation 1) plan, for September 23, 1995, a festival service in which eligible women working in pastoral ministry at Sligo, and related institutions, undergo the laying on of hands as a public affirmation of their call to pastoral ministry; and 2) ask the Potomac Conference and Columbia Union Conference committees to offer their blessing and participation—including the granting of credentials for ordained ministry—in connection with this joyful and historic occasion.”

Copies of that document were mailed to the Potomac Conference,

Columbia Union, and General Conference. Additional copies were also sent to other conference and union presidents throughout North America, in the hope that they too would join in the rebellion.

All this may seem astounding, but, for over a decade, many church leaders in North America have placated wealthy liberals. They have repeatedly yielded to their demands for lowered standards, baptism of adulterers after a very short period of “repentance,” the wearing of jewelry, and more besides.

When faithful church members protested, they were dealt harshly with. Too often leadership thought that they would be on the winning side, if they favored the liberals.

Perhaps some are beginning to see that they made a mistake. They would have been wiser to stand with those defending our historic Bible-Spirit of Prophecy positions.

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, the Southeastern California Conference Committee held a special meeting, to consider the recommendation of the La Sierra Church that the entire con-

ference bolt in rebellion against the position voted at the General Conference Session.

Lynn Mallory, the conference president presided. Thomas Mostert, Pacific Union Conference president, was also there, along with a representative from the La Sierra Church (Dan Smith).

The entire matter was discussed at great length. But the conference officials hesitated to be the ones to take such a radical step, which would show such outright rebellion against church authority.^E

So, when the vote was taken, the decision was made to not approve ordination of women, and let a forthcoming conference constituency meeting decide the matter.

Some present asked that a special conference constituency meeting be convened immediately to settle the matter. But it was voted not to do so, because of the expense.

So we await the next regular meeting of the Southeastern California Conference Constituency. At that time the matter will probably be decided.

Pray that our church will not split into pieces!

It is not difficult to locate what the Bible says on any given topic. Look up the references in any category you may be interested in—and see what it says. (Although there are some negatives here, if you would look in the Bible under “men,” you would find far more.) You will not find women’s ordination.

What does it say about Women? You will find most of it in the following list:

At Creation and the Fall: Gen 1:27; 2:18, 21-24; 3:1-16; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:12-15; Gen 3:15.

Relation to Worship Services: Ex 15:20-21; 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22; 1 Chron 25:5-6; Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67; Ex 35:22; 38:8; Deut 31:12; Josh 8:35; 1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11-12.

Religious Activities among Early Christians: Acts 1:14; 12:12-13; 1 Cor 11:5; 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11; Acts 16:14-15; 17:4, 12, 34.

Household Activities: Gen 18:6;

Prov 31:15-19; Matt 24:41; Ex 35:25-26; 1 Sam 2:19; Prov 31:19-24; Acts 9:39; Ruth 2:8; Song 1:6; Gen 24:11, 13-14, 19-20; 29:9; Ex 2:16; Isa 27:11; Ezek 26:6, 8; Matt 26:69; Jn 18:16-17; Acts 12:13-14.

Clothing and Adornment: Gen 24:65; Deut 22:5; 1 Cor 11:5-15; 1 Tim 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:3-4; Isa 3:16-23; Jer 2:32.

Queens: Isa 3:12; 2 Kgs 11:1-16; 2 Chron 22:2-3, 10-12; 1 Kgs 10:1-13; Acts 8:27; Neh 2:6; Esther.

Poets and Singers: Ex 15:21; Judg 5; 1 Sam 2:1-10; Lk 1:42-45; Lk 1:46-55; 1 Chron 25:5-6; Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67.

Prophets: Ex 15:20-21; Mic 6:4; Judg 4:4-5; 2 Kgs 22:14-20; 2 Chron 34:22-28; Neh 6:14; Lk 2:36-38; Acts 21:9; Ezek 13:17-23.

Business, Property Rights, inheritance: Prov 31:14-18, 24; Num 27:1-11; 36; Josh 17:3-6; Job 42:15; Ruth 4:3-9.

First: Gen 3:6; Mk 15:46-47; 16:1-6; Lk 23:27-28, 49, 55-56; 24:1-10; Mk 16:9; Jn 20:14-18.

Various Personalities: 2 Sam 1:26;

Isa 49:15; Lam 4:10; Judg 11:34; 21:21; Jer 31:13; Zech 9:17; Gen 24:17; 2 Sam 20:16-22; Isa 19:16; Jer 50:37; 51:30; Nah 3:13.

Marriage, Vows, and Offspring: Gen 3:16; Isa 49:15; Lam 4:10; Gen 24:3-4; Ex 22:17; Judg 11:37; Ps 78:63; Isa 4:1; Num 30:3-16; 5:12-31; Esth 1:20-22; 1 Tim 5:14.

Honorable: Ruth 3:11; Prov 11:16, 22; 12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 31:10-30; 1 Tim 2:9; 3:11; 5:2-10; Tit 2:3-5.

Dishonorable: Prov 19:13-14; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16; 30:21-23; Eccl 7:26-28; Isa 3:16-24; 32:9-11; Ezek 13:17-23; 1 Tim 5:12-13; Isa 32:9-11; Jer 2:32; Prov 6:24-29, 32-35; 7:6-27; Eccl 7:26; 2 Tim 3:6; Jer 7:18; Ezek 13:17, 23; Num 31:15-16; 1 Kgs 21:8, 25; Neh 13:26; 2 Kgs 23:7; Rom 1:26; 2 Kgs 9:30-37; Jer 44:15-19, 25; Ezek 8:14; Hos 4:13-14;

In Relation to Man: Gen 3:16; 24:3-4; 34:5-7; Ex 22:17; 1 Cor 11:3, 9; 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:10-15.

Miscellaneous: Gen 24:6-7; 31:33; Esth 2:9, 11; 1 Pet 3:7.