

General Conference Committee Minutes on Ordination

October 21, 1921

4. That where a departmental secretary fulfills all the requirements of the gospel ministry and makes full proof thereof, ordination be not withheld because of the nature of his work.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 21, 1921, 1203
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1921/index.djvu>).

April 3, 1930

ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY AND MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS:

VOTED, That we adopt the following statement as our interpretation of the principles laid down by the full Committee in Council on the question of ordination to the ministry and the issuing of ministerial credentials:

In reviewing the actions of the denomination governing the matter of ministerial credentials and the usage of the body in relation thereof, we find that, --

1. Ministerial credentials held by the ordained minister are a certificate of good and unquestioned standing in the ministry in all the church.
2. While the credentials are issued by the employing and directing organization, local, union, or General Conference, the ordination to the ministry is not a matter of only local significance, and the credentials entitle the possessor to officiate in the ministerial office as invitation or occasion may properly offer anywhere throughout the denomination.
3. Ordination to the ministry, therefore, is the setting apart of the man to a sacred calling, not for one local field alone, but for the entire church. The man ordained in one conference is not reordained on transfer to another conference. In our practice, therefore, the ordination to the ministry in any local conference and the issuing of credentials by the conference is a matter that concerns the church in general.
4. In recognition of this fact the General Conference Committee in full council has taken action providing that the union conference should be called in counsel with the local conference in the ordination of a minister, in order to secure the widest possible counsel in a service affecting the entire church and its work. The Ministerial Manual briefly sums up this long-established counsel as follows:

“The local conference should have counsel from the union in recommending workers for ordination.” – p. 5.

5. Inasmuch as thus the union conference is held responsible with the local conference in the safeguarding of the ministry for the service of the whole church, it follows that the union conference is charged with the sharing the responsibility with the local conference for the standing of the ministry in all the local fields. The union conference is required by denominational action and practice to assure itself that credentials issued within the union territory shall indeed be certificates that the holders are in good and unquestioned standing, properly subject to invitation to any other field of service.

6. In any case where the standing of any holder of credentials is brought into uncertainty, it is the duty of the union conference to join the local conference in conferring with a purpose to clear away any uncertainty, in order that no reproach or shadow may be left to rest upon all the credentials held by the ministry. Where the matters involved are of such a character that the union and the local conference committees are unable to resolve the difficulty and announce to all a clear record for the ministry, the matter must of necessity be appealed to the General Conference, by action of both local and union committees together, or by action of one body separately, inasmuch as any shadow of uncertainty in the matter of what ministerial credentials stand for in one field reflects a shadow upon all credentials, and is a matter of general denominational concern.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 3, 1930, 1120-1123 (<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1938-10.pdf>).

October 21, 1938

ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AND THE MINISTRY:

WHEREAS, The gospel ministry is the most important work ever entrusted to mortals;

We recommend, 1. That those who are ordained to the ministry beware of the spirit of office seeking, ever regarding the preaching of the Word in soul-winning service as their chief responsibility and highest honor.

2. That it be ever recognized that while ordination to the ministry is for life, the call to administrative service is temporary, therefore, those chosen for administrative responsibility from time to time, should ever hold themselves in readiness cheerfully to engage in full-time ministerial service when called again to do so.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 21, 1938, 894 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1938-10/index.djvu>).

October 27, 1941

The following recommendation from the General Conference Officers was adopted:

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION:

WHEREAS, The ordination service is a public recognition of one's divine appointment to bear to the world the glad tidings of the gospel; and

WHEREAS, The spiritual life of the candidate for ordination should be in keeping with the holy principles of the message he is to proclaim; and

WHEREAS, Before ordination, clear, unmistakable evidence of his call to the sacred office should be seen in the fruit borne as the result of his ministry of the word of life;

We recommend, That all conference and mission committees adhere strictly to the provisions of the Working Policy as found on page 56, and hereby amended to read as follows:

“Before any ordination is carried out, there shall be a very careful examination of the candidate as to their fitness for the work of the ministry. The examination should cover the great fundamental facts of the gospel, such as the following:

“a. The present personal religious experience of the candidate.

“b. His belief in and knowledge of the Scriptures.

“c. His acquaintance with and full acceptance of the vital truths we believe we are called to proclaim to the world.

“d. His attitude toward denominational organization.

“e. The results of his previous work as a licensed preacher.

“The examination of candidates for ordination is conducted by ordained ministers only, and where there are present representatives of union, division, or General Conference, they should be invited to assist in the examination.”

J.L.McElhany, Chairman.

T.J.Michael, Secretary.

E.Zeidler, Recording Secretary.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 27, 1941, 161
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1941-10-AC/index.djvu>).

October 27, 1942

The gospel ministry is the most important work ever entrusted to men, and those who are ordained to this sacred work should beware of the spirit of office seeking, ever regarding the preaching of the word in soul-winning service as of chief responsibility and highest honor. They should recognize that while ordination to the ministry is for life, the call to administrative service is temporary; therefore, those chosen for administrative responsibility from time to time, should ever hold themselves in readiness cheerfully to engage in full-time ministerial service when called again to do so.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 27, 1942, 661
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1942-10-AC/index.djvu>).

June 14, 1943

MISSIONARY CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES:

The committee on Missionary Credentials and Missionary Licenses submitted a revised report, which was amended and adopted as follows:

We believe that the following principles should be recognized in the issuing of ministerial and missionary papers to denominational employees:

a. If the worker gives evidence of the evangelistic and ministerial gift, and if he is active in ministerial work, then, whether he serves in the field, in an institution, in a conference department, in financial or secretarial lines, or in any other capacity, he should, at the discretion of the employing committee, be granted ministerial license and look forward to ordination.

b. If the worker does not give evidence of the ministerial gift, and serves the denomination primarily along non-ministerial lines, he is to receive either the Missionary Credential or the Missionary License.

We therefore recommend, 1. That Ministerial licenses now held be renewed only to those found eligible under the provisions of the policy adopted at the 1943 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee, as follows:

“That Ministerial Licenses be granted only to those who are engaged in ministerial work and who would be expected to be ordained in due course.”

2. Missionary Credentials. That in issuing Missionary Credentials to those who do not hold Ministerial License, and who are not ordained, the following classes of workers be considered eligible:

a. Secretaries, treasurers, and auditors of local and union conferences, and the General Conference and its Divisions.

- b. Conference department secretaries.
 - c. Institutional managers and treasurers, and heads of major institutional departments.
 - d. College presidents, and principals of regular twelve-grade academies.
 - e. Sanitarium and hospital/medical superintendents.
 - f. At the discretion of the conference committees concerned, other institutional and conference workers who are bearing major responsibilities in the institution or conference.
3. Missionary Licenses. That regularly employed denominational workers, not holding other credentials or licenses, may be issued Missionary Licenses at the discretion of and by the conference which employs them or in which they labor.
4. That the names of workers holding Missionary Credentials be included in the Ministerial Directory in the annual Year Book, with a suitable designation.
5. That the Missionary License be valid only during the time the worker is actually in denominational employ.
6. That the question of renewals to experienced workers who have held the Ministerial License for a number of years, be referred to the next Autumn Council.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, June 14, 1943, 973-974
<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1943-06-AC/index.djvu>.

January 13, 1944

ORDINATION OF MISSIONARY APPOINTEES:

Inasmuch as there is prospect of the early departure of a number of the young men who are under appointment to the Arabic field, and in the view of the desirability of their being ordained before going, it was

VOTED, That the officers be asked to appoint a committee to examine the following young men, in harmony with the denominational policy, and to arrange for their ordination if ordination be indicated: Charles Crider, T.J. Jenkins, Alger Johns, Stanley Johnson, Sherman McCormick, B.J. Mondics, Lester Pratt, Neal Wilson, A.G. Zytkoskee.

Committee appointed: W.H. Branson, chairman; E.D. Dick, vice-chairman; D.E. Rebok, N.F. Brewer, W.P. Bradley, T.J. Michael, George Keough.

VOTED, To refer arrangements for the ordination of T. Ketola to this same committee.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, January 13, 1944, 1220
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1944-01/index.djvu>).

June 5, 1944

DENOMINATIONAL NEED OF MINISTERS:

VOTED, That we, the General Conference Executive Committee, being the highest authority governing ordination of ministers in the religious denomination known as Seventh-day Adventists, in order to meet the requirements of Local Board Memorandum No. 187, do hereby certify that the maintenance and rapid expansion of our world-wide work makes necessary a continuous supply of trained ministers, pastors, evangelists, missionaries and teachers of religion. If this supply of ministers should be cut off, our denominational work would be gravely impaired. The individual candidate for the ministry submitting this statement to the local board of which he is a registrant, will accompany it with a statement of his formal acceptance as a candidate for the ministry by a special examining committee established and functioning for this definite purpose in the constituent area in which such candidate is to take his theological training in a recognized denominational school.

ADMISSION TO THEOLOGICAL COURSE:

The following resolution was adopted:

In order to provide an adequate supply of well-prepared ministers, and in order to do this in harmony with Local Board Memorandum 187, amended and sent out by the Selective Service System under date of May 15, 1944,

RESOLVED, That each union conference committee, which committee is denominationally recognized as a standing committee on ordination within its territory, shall appoint a special committee, of which the local conference presidents shall be members, which shall receive for consideration the applications and supporting recommendations of young men desiring to enter the theological course in the union conference training school.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, June 5, 1944, 1439-1440
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1944-06/index.djvu>).

March 7, 1945

F.C. CARRIER:

Attention was called to the provisions of the General Conference Working Policy, page 96, paragraph 3, and in harmony therewith, it was

VOTED, To annul the ordination of F.C. Carrier, thus divesting him of all authority and privileges that pertain to the gospel ministry. His credentials have already been surrendered.

VOTED, further, that a suitable telegram be sent to Titus Frazee, President of the California Temperance Association, in response to his inquiry regarding the standing of F.C. Carrier, with a copy to L.K. Dickson.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, March 7, 1945, 1802
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1945-03/index.djvu>).

November 12, 1947

Care in Ordination of Ministers

RECOGNIZING the honor, dignity, and sacredness of the gospel ministry, that men are called of God to enter this holy calling and that a man should demonstrate his call before being ordained to this sacred office;

We recommend, 1. That conference committees recommend for ordination only those who have given clear evidence of the call of God to devote their lives to the ministry of the Word; and further, that we counsel such committees against the premature ordination of those who have not yet given full proof of such a call.

2. That committees charged with recommending ministerial credentials and licenses re-issue such papers only after careful review of the soul-winning experience and activities of the workers concerned.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, November 12, 1947, 745
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1947-11-AC/index.djvu>).

December 29, 1947

T.J. MICHAEL:

WHEREAS, T.J. Michael, who has held credentials issued by the General Conference, has, contrary to repeated counsel and advise, divorced his wife without Biblical grounds and has remarried contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures and the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and by this act has proved himself unworthy of a part in the gospel ministry,

VOTED, That T.J. Michael's ministerial credentials are hereby canceled and his ordination to the gospel ministry annulled, thus divesting him of all authority and privileges that pertain to the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, December 29, 1947, 857
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1947-12/index.djvu>).

July 23, 1950

ORDINATION OF WOMEN:

We recommend, That a small committee be appointed to study, and report on the question of the ordination of women for Dorcas work, and as Bible workers.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, July 23, 1950, 24
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1950-07/index.djvu>).

April 11, 1952

ORDINATION CERTIFICATE:

A recommendation from the union conference presidents was submitted, and adopted as follows:

We recommend, That a uniform certificate of ordination be prepared, and stocked by the Review and Herald, this to include places for the signatures of the four participating ministers and the union conference secretary, and that it be issued from the union conference office. Further, that a committee be appointed by the General Conference officers to draw up this certificate.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 11, 1952, 772
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1952-04-SM/index.djvu>).

May 15, 1952

ORDINATION CERTIFICATE:

Inasmuch as certain features of the action taken April 11, 1952, recommending a uniform certificate of ordination seem to conflict with our policy on Ordination to the Ministry as found in the Working Policy, page 61,

VOTED, That the action of April 11 be amended to read as follows:

“That a uniform certificate of ordination be prepared, and stocked by the Review and Herald, this to include places for the signatures of the four participating ministers and the secretary of the conference concerned. Further, that a committee be appointed by the General Conference officers to draw up this certificate, and that this committee be prepared to report to the coming Autumn Council.”

VOTED, That A.V. Olson, L.E. Lenheim and C.J. Coon be added to the committee that was appointed by the officers, consisting of N.F. Brewer, D.E. Rebok, A.W. Cormack and R.A. Anderson.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, May 15, 1952, 799
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1952-05-SM/index.djvu>)

September 24, 1952

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION:

A subcommittee which has been appointed to make recommendation on a certificate of ordination, presented its recommendations which after amendment were adopted as follows:

WHEREAS, It is desirable to have a uniform certificate of ordination which can be throughout the North American Division and other fields using the English Language,

We recommend, 1. That a certificate be prepared in design, color and size 6¾ x 8¾, and that the wording be as follows:

C E R T I F I C A T E O F O R D I N A T I O N
T O T H E G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y

This certifies that

having given satisfactory evidence of his call to and preparation for the sacred work of the gospel ministry, was ordained at _____ on the ___ day of _____ 19__ and is duly authorized under the provisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to perform all the functions of the ministerial office.

Officiating Ministers

Issued by the _____ Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists
_____ President _____ Secretary

2. That these certificates be printed and stocked at the Review & Herald Publishing Association.

3. That the revised Minister's Manual include in the section on "Instructions for Ordination" a statement to the effect that the ordination certificate be signed and ready to be placed in the hands of the candidate at the conclusion of the ordination service.

4. That a smaller ordination certificate be prepared for convenience, retaining the same wording, and that it be printed on a card.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, September 24, 1952, 925
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1952-09/index.djvu>)

June 6, 1954

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ORDINATION:

VOTED, To request the General Conference officers to appoint a committee to give study to requirements for ordination, with a view to presenting a report or recommendations to the 1954 Autumn Council.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, June 6, 1954, 15
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1954-06/index.djvu>)

June 24, 1954

Qualifications for Ordination. – A.V. Olson, chairman; L. e. Dickson, R.A. Anderson, W.R. Beach, R.R. Figuhr, W.B. Ochs, W.H. Branson, F.L. Peterson, D.A. Ochs, V.G. Anderson, C.J. Coon.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, June 24, 1954, 18
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1954-06/index.djvu>)

October 21, 1954

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS:

To fill the need for a statement concerning the high calling of the ministry and the qualifications that should be met before a man is ordained, a recommendation from the General Conference officers was presented, and with amendments was adopted as follows:

We recommend, That the following statement be adopted as a guide in the ordination of ministers:

The setting apart of men for the sacred work of the ministry should be regarded as one of the most vital concerns of the church. The spiritual growth of God's people, their development in the virtues of Christ, as well as their relationship to one another as members of His body, are all closely bound up with and in many respects dependent upon the spirituality, efficiency, and consecration of those who minister in Christ's stead.

The mind of the Lord concerning the qualifications for the ministry is clearly revealed in the Scriptures. Anciently, the minister was known as "the man of God," sometimes "the man of the Spirit." Detailed instructions were given to Moses concerning the qualifications of the priesthood: the priest's dress, his demeanor, his spiritual understanding being emphasized. Then, in order to keep continually before the congregation the high calling of those who served in the tabernacle, the high priest wore on his mitre the words "Holiness unto the Lord."

In the New Testament the picture is just as clear. The apostle Paul speaks of himself as a “servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1). This matter of separation to the ministry was made very clear to him by the Lord Himself when, appearing to him on the Damascus road, He said, “I have appeared unto thee ... to make thee a minister, ... delivering thee from the people, ... unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:16-18). He was delivered or separated from the people and then, as the anointed representative of God, he was sent back to the people to be God’s mouthpiece and to open their eyes to the glories of the gospel. Later, in writing of the work of the minister, he spoke of it as a “high calling.”

The spirit of prophecy says:

“A man can have no greater honor than to be accepted by God as an able minister of the gospel.”--Acts of the Apostles, p. 328.

In the Hebrew Epistle we read, “No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God.” (Heb. 5:4)

The proofs of a man’s divine call must be clearly evident before the church sets him apart by ordination.

“Ministers should be examined especially to see if they have an intelligent understanding of the truth for this time, so that they can give a connected discourse upon the prophecies or upon practical subjects. If they cannot clearly present Bible subjects, they need to be hearers and learners still. In order to be teachers of Bible truth, they should earnestly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, and become conversant with them. All these things should be carefully and prayerfully considered before men are sent into the field of labor.”--Gospel Workers, p. 439.

“A true minister does the work of the Master. He feels the importance of his work, realizing the he sustains to the church and to the world a relation similar to that which Christ sustained.... Those who hear him know that he has drawn near to God in fervent, effectual prayer. The Holy Spirit has rested upon him, his soul has felt the vital, heavenly fire, and he is able to compare spiritual things with spiritual.... Hearts are broken by his presentation of the love of God, and many are led to inquire, “What must I do to be saved?””--Acts of the Apostles, p. 328.

“The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. The evidence of his apostleship is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives.... A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry.”--Ibid.

For such work a man must indeed be called of God and give clear evidence of his call.

Concerning the examination of ministerial candidates, the Lord’s counsel to us is clear:

“There has been too little done in examining ministers; and for this very reason churches have had the labors of unconverted, inefficient men, who have lulled the members to sleep, instead of awakening them to greater zeal and earnestness in the cause of God. There are ministers who come to the prayer meeting, and pray the same old, lifeless prayers over and over; they preach the same dry discourses from week to week and from month to month The only way in which we can correct this widespread evil, is to examine closely everyone who would become a teacher of the Word. Those upon whom this responsibility rests should acquaint themselves with his history since he professed to believe the truth. His Christian experience and his knowledge of the Scriptures, the way in which he holds present truth, should all be understood. No one should be accepted as a laborer in the cause of God, until he makes it manifest that he has a real, living experience in the things of God.”—Gospel Workers, pp.437, 438.

This counsel lays a definite obligation upon the leaders in charge of an ordination service. They should plan for the examination of the candidates in such a way that this important procedure shall not be simply perfunctory, but give opportunity for a true evaluation of the candidate's fitness. Sufficient time should be made available, particularly in cases where a number of candidates are to be examined. Wherever possible the candidate should plan to have his wife present for the examination, realizing that ordination affects not only the individual but the entire family.

Undue haste has sometimes been apparent in recommending candidates for ordination. On the other hand there has also been undue delay, extending as long as twenty years or more. Both these attitudes are wrong. While no worker should be hurried into ordination, yet it is just as important that when one is ready to be thus set apart, the service should not be unduly delayed. Embarrassment has been brought to workers at times because of being unable to perform certain important ministerial responsibilities. The fact, however, that a ministerial trainee has spent four, five, or even eight years in the field, is of itself no guarantee that he is ready for ordination. One with less ability for evangelistic preaching or who reveals less aptitude than some for other lines of ministerial and pastoral work will naturally take longer to develop. Indeed, some may never qualify for ordination. Those who do not reveal particular ministerial talent and aptitude for definite public leadership should be encouraged to develop as personal soul winners, recognizing that their call is to some other work less distinctly ministerial.

Conference and mission presidents and executive committees should recognize a definite responsibility to foster the growth of younger ministers and should see to it that such are given opportunities where they may develop to their full ministerial capacity. Any plan that diverts the minister-to-be from his actual training and growth is to be discouraged. Injustices have been perpetrated at times when ministerial trainees possessing manual skills have been asked to spend long periods serving in other capacities to the neglect of their ministerial development. Such a plan may save the conference money, but it delays the development of the minister.

When a conference gives a young man a ministerial license it should be recognized as a pledge on the part of the conference leadership to foster that worker's growth. And when one accepts a ministerial license he should regard it as a pledge on his part to render the utmost service of which he is capable. Such a license, however, is not a commitment on the part of the

conference that ultimate ordination is assured. It merely provides the opportunity for the licentiate to prove his calling. While not all can have the same conditions under which to develop into mature ministers, yet one who is called of God will reveal his calling by his whole manner of life and the burden he carries for those who are still in the prison house of sin. Under some circumstances it is difficult to provide conditions where public evangelism as such can be carried out, but he who is called of the Lord will be able to give proof of his calling and of his aptness for the ministry as a lifework.

In some areas of the world field educational facilities are somewhat limited. If that be the case, it will naturally take longer for a minister to develop his readiness for ordination. Therefore, in consideration of all the varied conditions, it is impossible to specify any definite length of time for the training period of the licentiate. The fact that a licensed minister is assigned to overseas service should not of itself delay his ordination beyond the time it would have taken place had he remained in the homeland. His service record should be passed along to the new field and receive proper evaluation in the recognition of his development. In suitable cases, a licensed minister who is approaching ordination at the time of his foreign call, may be ordained prior to departure.

Before hands of ordination are laid upon a worker he should be given proof of:

- a. Experience in various types of ministerial responsibility.
- b. Definite call to the ministry as a lifework.
- c. Entire consecration of body, soul, and spirit.
- d. Spiritual stability.
- e. Social maturity.
- f. Clear understanding of the Word of God.
- g. Aptness as a teacher of truth.
- h. Ability to lead souls from sin into holiness.
- i. Fruitage in souls won to Christ.
- j. A cooperative attitude and confidence in the organization and functioning of the church.
- k. A life of consistent, exemplary Christian conduct.
- l. An exemplary family.

Ordination of men who have not given clear evidence of their call as soul-saving ministers must be avoided. It will always be true that some men, having been trained for lines of work other than that of the ministry, will in time give proof of their divine call to this sacred work, and the church, recognizing this, will feel called to set them apart by ordination. But such cases will certainly be exceptions. Because one holds a responsible position in the organized work, it must not be considered that he is by that fact alone eligible for ordination.

There are certain lines of work in the denomination that are not regarded as strictly ministerial, but which provide experience for some ministerial development. A college president, for example, or the principal of an academy, with young people under his care, bears the responsibility not only of their academic training but also their spiritual welfare. He is, therefore, in a sense their pastor, and in association with the Bible teacher is doing actual ministerial work.

However, his call to that responsibility is not of itself a basis for ordination. No man's position in this cause, per se, should influence a committee to set him apart to the holy work of the ministry unless, and until, he gives definite proof of his aptitude and his spiritual maturity, and has a conviction in his own soul that God has called him to the ministry as a lifework.

Workers in other capacity such as editors, secretary-treasurers of conferences, and departmental leaders may also come to the place in their service where ordination is appropriate; however, in these cases as in every other, the divine call to the ministry must be clear, before the church, acting as God's representative, separates them to the gospel ministry. Such workers, like all candidates for ministerial credentials, should have the personal conviction that God has called them to the ministry, give evidence of the ministerial call and gift, and be known widely for their piety and ability as soul winners, before their ordination is recommended and decided.

Ordination must never become simply a reward for faithful service or be considered as an opportunity to add title and prestige to a worker. Neither is it an honor to be sought by the individual, or by his family or friends on his behalf. Such attitudes and tactics seriously minimize the sacredness of the ministry in the eyes of the church.

The ministry is not merely a profession; it is a calling. It is not for a period of time until some other more attractive occupation beckons a man, but it is a lifework. Having put his hand to the plow, one is not free to look backward except at the peril of the soul. The apostle Paul, like the prophets of old, felt himself "under bonds" and he cried out, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). One who is ordained to the sacred work of the ministry should feel the same responsibility as the apostle of old. And the conference that employs him should feel a definite responsibility to see that he is free to do his God-appointed work.

The simple record of the ordination of the apostles is imperative. "And He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:13,14). The first office of one ordained to the ministry is that he should be with God. Only then is he qualified to go forth to men to preach the Word of God. One who is thus consecrated and who enjoys constant communion with his Lord will rejoice in the privilege of rendering complete service, refusing to be entangled in business for personal gain and other things of this world that he may, by the grace of God, give complete devotion to the cause he loves. Even when he reaches his retirement years, he should feel the cause of God to the same standard of life as he did in the most active years, "that the ministry be not blamed" (2 Cor. 6:3).

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 21, 1954, 110
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1954-10-AC/index.djvu>)

October 24, 1956

ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY IN MISSION FIELDS:

We recommend, That the following to sections be inserted in the Working Policy, after paragraph 3 (page 63, top):

4. In a local mission authorized by its division policy to issue ministerial credentials, the procedure shall be the same as followed in paragraph 2 for local conferences.

5. In local missions not authorized by the division policy to grant ministerial credentials, the ordination of workers to the ministry at the time of its local mission sessions or between sessions shall be by vote of the union committee in counsel with the local mission committee.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 24, 1956, 679
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1956-10-AC/index.djvu>)

October 24, 1958

That the words departmental and institutional leaders be inserted in the first sentence of the first paragraph of this statement appearing on page 9 of the 1954 “Actions of the Autumn Council.” The sentence will then read:

“Workers in other countries, such as editors, secretary-treasurers of conferences, departmental and institutional leaders, may also come to the place in their service where ordination is appropriate; however, in these cases as in every other, the divine call to the ministry must be clear before the church, acting as God’s representative, separates them to the gospel ministry.”

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS:

We recommend, That the entire statement on “Qualifications for the Ordination of Ministers” as voted by the Autumn Council of 1954, (Autumn Council booklet, pages 3-10; pages 110-114, General Conference Committee minutes) be included in the Working Policy under the section entitled “Ordination to the Ministry,” beginning on page 63. And further

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 24, 1958, 125-126
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1958-10/index.djvu>)

April 5, 1961

The committee on Procedure in Ordination of Men in General and Inter-Union Institutions presented the following recommendations which were adopted:

ORDINATION OF WORKERS IN GENERAL AND INTER-UNION INSTITUTIONS:

We recommend, That the following procedure be followed in situations in which consideration is being given to the ordination of workers connected with General or inter-union institutions or organizations:

1. The chairman of the institutional board shall take counsel with Officers of the General Conference and of the union and local conferences in which the institution is located.
2. The board of the institution in which the worker is employed shall consider the case and shall make recommendation to the union committee.
3. The union committee shall give study to the name and shall make final decision. The union committee shall also arrange for the ordination of the candidate and issue his credentials.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 5, 1961, 893
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1961-04/index.djvu>)

April 5, 1961

RE-ORDINATION OF MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS:

After lengthy discussion of the resolution presented, it was

VOTED, That the resolution on re-ordination of ministers from other denominations be referred to the Working Policy Committee for further study, with one stipulation, that ordination be required, and that the Working Policy Committee submit its recommendation to the next Autumn Council for consideration and adoption.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 5, 1961, 896
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1961-04/index.djvu>)

October 29, 1961

ORDINATION OF MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS:

VOTED, That Par. 7, pp. 149, 150 of the section of the Working Policy dealing with ministers coming from other denominations be amended to read as follows:

7. Ministerial licenses may be issued to ordained or unordained ministers of other denominations who accept the Advent message and continue in the ministry, after they have completed their period of study and ordination and have entered upon regular employment in any conference, mission, or institution. Ordained ministers received thus into denominational work shall be ordained to the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church prior to the issuing of ministerial credentials to them.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 29, 1961, 1084
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1961-10/index.djvu>)

December 20, 1962

Preface to the 1963 edition of the Church Manual:

The result was that in 1860 a church name, “Seventh-day Adventist,” was chosen, and a legal body created to hold church property. This was followed, in 1861, by the organization of our first conference, Michigan. This involved the organizing of local churches, with the members signing a church covenant, and the organizing of the various churches into one united body to constitute what we now call a local conference. Action was also taken to give ordination papers to the ministers, thus protecting the churches against imposters who might seek to prey upon them. In 1863 the General Conference was organized, thus gathering into one a number of local conferences which had by that time been created. This set the Advent Movement on a coordinated, or organized course.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, December 20, 1962, 165
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1962-12/index.djvu>)

October 22, 1964

ORDINATION--LICENSES AND CREDENTIALS:

VOTED, The following revisions in the policy regarding ordination and the issuing of licenses and credentials:

1. That in the Working Policy, page 148, par. 2 be revised to read:

“2. Where circumstances make it desirable, a candidate may be ordained between regular conference sessions, provided the union and local committees have approved his ordination.”

2. That in the Working Policy, page 66, paragraph 2 be revised to read:

“2. Missionary Credentials, issued to workers of experience or those carrying major responsibilities, not ordained, including elementary and secondary teachers.”

3. That in the Working Policy, page 67, paragraph 3 be revised to read:

“3. By the union conference to workers serving in interunion or General Conference institutions located within that union, excepting those workers who receive papers directly from the division or the General Conference; but including workers of such institutions residing outside the union where the institution is located, in which case the home union of the institution will consult with the union of the worker’s residence before issuing his papers.”

4. That page 68, paragraph 9 be amended to read:

“9. Missionaries, or those who have been in General Conference employ, and who, though in good standing, are without employment in denominational work for period of one year from the time their employment ceased, shall be referred to the union conference in which they reside, and honorary credentials may be issued to them by the union conference committee and renewed from time to time at its discretion.”

5. That paragraph 12, page 68 be amended to read:

“12. All other workers receiving benefits from the Sustentation Fund if entitled to credentials or other papers, are to receive them from the union conference in which they reside.”

6. That paragraph 13, page 68 be amended to read:

“13. Credentials and licenses shall be issued only to those employed by our conferences or missions, or denominationally owned institutions; or to those under the supervision of conference or mission committees, or denominational-institutional boards; or to those on sustentation. Ministers attending the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary or University by arrangement or approval of their employing committee, continue to receive ministerial credentials for a period up to three years from their latest employing organization.”

7. That paragraph 15, page 68 be amended to read:

“15. When workers are called to labor in a division outside their home division, their wives may be granted appropriate papers. Division committees shall determine under what condition wives of workers shall receive papers in their respective divisions.”

8. That the first paragraph under “Honorary Credentials,” page 69 be revised to read:

“Honorary credentials shall be granted to sustentation beneficiaries corresponding to the papers they held as credentialed workers while in active service. A worker holding a ministerial license issued prior to the adoption of the present policy (1947), and who at retirement was a licensed minister, may, upon retirement, be granted an honorary ministerial license.”

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 22, 1964, 792-793
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1964-10b/index.djvu>)

October 14, 1968

ORDINATION OF BIBLE TEACHERS:

Successful Bible teachers should be regarded as candidates for ordination. The General Conference Working Policy considers the Bible teacher as doing ministerial work. However, in

considering men for ordination the following guide from the General Conference Working Policy, p. 154, should be kept in mind: “Ordination of men who have not given clear evidence of their call as soul-saving ministers must be avoided.”

We recommend, 1. That committees responsible for granting licenses consider granting a ministerial license to Bible teachers who have had specific training for Bible teaching or the ministry.

2. That conference administration and controlling boards of institutions foster the Bible teacher’s growth by arranging for him to get experience in public evangelistic soul winning either in connection with his work or during the summer.

3. That where the Bible teachers have given clear evidence of their call as soul-saving ministers in public evangelistic soul-winning and in their influence and counseling on the campus and in the classroom, they should be regarded as candidates for ordination.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 14, 1968, 1191
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1968-10b/index.djvu>)

December 28, 1971

Theodore Carcich, Chairman, stated that our former concept has been that the only way to ordination was for one to possess a ministerial license. It is now understood that a person can be ordained if he is a credentialed missionary, and if an authorizing committee so indicates. A committee was appointed by the Officers to relate all those in General Conference employ in this office to this new concept in our experience.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, December 28, 1971, 784
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1971-12/index.djvu>)

October 18, 1973

73-1819
Annual Council

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

A report was submitted to Annual Council on the role of women in the Church. It was

VOTED, To adopt the following course of action:

1. That the report and recommendations from the Council on the Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, convened September 16-19, 1973, by action of the General Conference Committee, be received.

2. That the report and recommendations of the above Council, and selected papers presented to it, be made available to the divisions of the General Conference for study of this subject at the division level.

3. That the divisions giving study to the subject share their findings and recommendations with the President's Executive Advisory if possible in time for consideration at the Annual Council of 1974.

4. That the emphasis of the report upon the priesthood of all believers and the necessity of involving the total resources of the church for the rapid completion of the gospel commission be accepted.

5. That the primacy of the married woman's role in the home and family, as repeatedly emphasized in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, continue to be recognized and emphasized at all levels of the Church, in harmony with counsel such as the following from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“There is a God above, and the light and glory from His throne rests upon the faithful mother as she tries to educate her children to resist the influence of evil. No other work can equal hers in importance.”

--Ministry of Healing, pages 377-378.

“When we give ourselves unreservedly to the Lord, the simple, commonplace duties of home life will be seen in their true importance, and we shall perform them in accordance with the will of God. ... We should not feel that we are to neglect everything else, and give ourselves up to meditation, study, or prayer; neither are we to be full of bustle and hurry and work, to the neglect of personal piety.” --The Adventist Home, page 23.

6. That continued study be given to the theological soundness of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination and that division committees exercise discretion in any special cases that may arise until a definite position is adopted. This continuing study will be arranged by the President's Executive Advisory.

7. That in areas receptive to such action, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral-evangelistic work, and that the appropriate missionary credentials/licenses be granted them.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 18, 1973, 1819
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1973-10b/index.djvu>)

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ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

BIBLICAL AND SPIRIT OF PROPHECY PRINCIPLES

OLD TESTAMENT

- I. Genesis, chapter 1, stresses full equality between man and woman.
 - A. “Man, mankind” (adam) was created as male and female.
 - B. Their creation was “in the image of God.”
 - C. Male and female shared equally the divine “blessing.”
 - D. They shared the power to “subdue” the earth.
 - E. They were mutually assigned to “rule” over the animals.
 - F. They both were to be God’s vice-regents on earth (Gen. 1:26, 27).
- II. Genesis 2 confirms the compressed statements of Genesis 1, adding detail.
 - A. The woman is to be man’s “helper” (ezer). Only woman is a suitable (ezer) partner alongside and corresponding to man. She is his equal companion (Gen. 2:18-20).
 - B. God is man’s superior helper (ezer) and animals are man’s inferior helper, while woman is man’s equal helper. Therefore neither inferiority nor superiority is here indicated of woman: man.
 - C. Woman owes her creation solely to God as does man, who participated in no way in her creation.

- D. Her creation from Adam's rib indicates inseparable unity and fellowship, as well as her status as man's equal (2:21).
 - E. The literal, jubilant outcry of Adam, "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (2:23a) expresses man's recognition that she is a fitting companion equal to him.
 - F. The fact that Adam's creation prior to Eve's indicates no superiority. The inspired writer, in reporting the creation of man at the beginning (2:7) and that woman last (2:18-25), used the inclusio device of a ring composition where the first and the last parallel are equal in position. If inferiority or superiority were indicated by position, it should be noted that the creation story places priority on that which was created last, the former having supporting roles for the latter.
- III. In Genesis 3 the fall of man and the entry of sin into the world disrupts the complete and total harmony between God and man, man and man/woman, and man and the world.
- A. The inspired writer carefully distinguishes between man's new "rule" (masal) over his wife (3:16) as distinct from a slave or an animal to be "ruled" (radah) over as animal (1:26, 28).
 - B. The context of Genesis 3:16 is entirely and exclusively concerned with woman's submission in the marriage relationship.
- IV. To the degree that the husband's "ruling" function is not a part of God's perfect creation, but it is a result of sin, and since the plan of salvation and the message of the gospel are concerned with reproducing the image of God in humanity, so that Christ by his life and death will have achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin:

- A. It is then not the responsibility of the Church to bring about the reproduction of the image of God in man, to restore harmony between God and man, to establish equality and unity where there is now inequality and disunity?
 - B. Is it not then the responsibility of the Church to restore and establish the equality between men and women in those spheres of life and activity where the divine declaration of man's rulership over his wife, and the wife's submission to her husband (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:22 ff.; 1Pet. 3:1) do not apply?
 - C. Is it not significant that while the comparative number is considerably less for women, the Old Testament is not without its examples of women bearing leadership, roles, even to the office of prophetess, and can there be any higher?
- V. While no specific discussion of the matter appears in inspired writings, the fact that no woman was called to serve as a priest in Israel should be carefully considered before conclusions regarding ordination of women are drawn therefrom. We have already mentioned above the spiritual prominence granted to a few chosen women in the Old Testament. It may also be suggested that one possible reason why God refrained from calling upon women to serve in the sanctuary and its sacrificial rites was the pagan concepts associated with priestesses in the ancient world.

It is common knowledge that a key role was played by priestesses in the utterly immoral cult of the Canaanites, where the so-called "sacred marriage" was re-enacted with priests and priestesses and others. The threat of the Canaanite fertility cult to the children of Israel is clearly indicated in the Old Testament.

Another possible factor is the ceremonial uncleanness which fell upon women for a determined length of time during menstruation and after childbirth, and the restraint

which this would have put upon a woman in filling a regular course at the sanctuary or temple.

- VI. We must consider whether the limitations or practices of the Old Testament are to be fully and exclusively normative for the New Testament, and likewise whether the Old and New Testaments together are to be fully and exclusively normative to the Remnant Church. One must even consider whether all the norms prevailing in the Church during Ellen White's lifetime are to be fully exclusively the norms for 1973.

For example, neither the Old nor the New Testament has any explicit brief for emancipation of slaves. Neither did Jesus endorse fully the mosaic rules concerning divorce. Therefore great care must be exercised in carrying over from one culture or from one era to another a one-for-one equivalency of the permissions or prohibitions that prevailed at certain times and under certain circumstances.

- VII. No other ancient civilization gave to women the position accorded her by the Old and New Testaments.

New Testament

- I. What application shall be made to the roles of women in the Church today from the fact that not one of the twelve apostles was a woman?

One could consider the local conditions of travel available to the disciples, the missionary journeys, and nights spent on mountain and in forest, and wonder as to the feasibility of such a role for a woman in that day.

Conversely, great care must be taken in drawing implications out of the silences and absences of the inspired record of any period. For example, not one of the twelve apostles was a Gentile. What implication should this have for those eligible for the

ministry today? A major portion of Christ's ministry was restricted to the Jews. What implications for today?

Incidentally, who was an apostle, and how did he get to be one? Paul argues his case carefully, but what of Apollos or Silvanus or Timothy? Who, beyond these, was an apostle, and what implications, if any, would such facts have for the pattern of the divine call to the ministry today?

One may note the parallel which inspiration draws between the twelve apostles and the twelve patriarchs, and the priestly role of the male throughout the Old Testament, whether in terms of the firstborn, the call of the tribe of Levi, etc. But since the expiration of the Old Testament system, what can be drawn legitimately from these facts in the absence of explicit inspired counsel regarding ordination of women today?

- II. Neither the Old nor the New Testament discuss the question of the ordination of women in any capacity. What argument may safely be drawn from this silence? Anything stronger than can be drawn from the biblical silence regarding the emancipation of slaves?
- III. Paul concerning women.
 - A. Almost without exception, Paul's statements regarding women are written in the context of the marriage relationship. Even there, the headship of man over woman is in the context of God's headship over Christ and Christ headship over man. If man's headship over woman, in Paul's understanding excludes woman from ordination to the ministry, what does Christ's headship over man do? In no way is the headship issue illustrated by the question of ordination. In truth, the strong

expression of the Apostle concerning the headship of the man over the woman is immediately tempered by his parallel between the love of Christ for sinful man and the love of the man for the woman (surely, within the marriage relationship).

B. 1 Cor. 13:34, 35

Could there have been some local conditions in Corinth, or practices within the Corinthian congregation, which led to the specific counsel of Paul in this chapter? How shall the counsel in chapter 14 be related to the counsel in chapter 11:13, for it is in the context of Paul's discussions of the headship of Christ over man, and of God over Christ, and of man over woman, that he considers the appropriateness of a woman praying unto God "uncovered." What explicit generalization that would involve the eligibility of women to the ministry today can be found in these words?

C. Gal. 3:28

The great emancipation proclamation of the gospel is in this verse. It looks beyond New Testament practice to that spiritual experience that would remove all barriers to the oneness of the Church and the march of the Good News.

D. Eph. 5:22

We have the same principles operative here. The counsel is to wives and husbands, which involves marriage. If anything is to be drawn from this text to prohibit women from the ministry, then what does Christ's headship over the Church (including man) imply for men and the ministry (v. 23)?

E. 1 Tim. 5:14

The counsel again is in the setting of marriage and the home, rather than of church office or church leadership roles. Can it be assumed that all the younger widows in

the Apostle's day could find someone to marry, even though that was his wish? Was there any assurance that the remarried younger widows would "bear children"? How finely shall we attempt to draw from these counsels, given at a particular time and place, to generalize over into what may be an indirectly related area, but for which there is no explicit counsel whatever given?

Logically speaking, if this text be taken to prohibit the ordination of younger widows to the ministry, would its silence regarding the fate of older widows become an automatic approval for them to be ordained to the ministry?

F. 1 Peter 3:1

Here Peter is discussing the relationship of husbands and wives, surely within the context of marriage, and it is even unbelieving husbands with believing wives. What implications could one safely draw from this counsel regarding ordination or non-ordination for women in the Church today?

1 Peter 3:7 urges, "grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life." (NASB) What implications would such a statement have for the subject under consideration?

Peter's opening words, "In the same way," show a parallelism between this counsel on husbands and wives, and the previous counsel on slaves and their masters. If this counsel (husbands/wives) can be made to apply to the question of the ordination of women, then the Christian slaveholders of yesteryear were justified in using Peter to endorse their slave-holdings.

GENERAL OBSERVATION

All could wish that the Scriptures somewhere explicitly gave us a statement of principle that would have universal application regarding the question under

discussion. The fact is that it nowhere explicitly discusses this question. For those who insist on having a “thus saith the Lord” before moving forward, presumably they will never move. But how will those same persons answer those who ask for an explicit prohibition from the Scriptures on this subject? Silence cuts in both directions. Was the emancipation of the slaves biblical, non-biblical, or something else? This may suggest that the Church today must look further to general Biblical principles, to the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy, and to the guidance of the Holy Spirit granted to His Church today.

The Scriptures are explicit on the call of women to the exalted and sacred office of prophet. They are explicit on the divine view and intention of the equality of women and men. They declare the priesthood of all believers, and call for the utilization and unification of every resource for the completion of the gospel commission. Therefore (according to the Scriptural principle of temporary sacrifice of legitimate rights for the sake of the gospel), except where local conditions and traditions would, for a time, make the ordination of women to any ministry (or their appointment to any responsibility for which they would individually be competent) a hindrance to the march of the gospel, the Scriptures cannot be marshaled to forbid such ordination or appointment. In fact, their overall principles would be in favor of them.

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

While no one has the right to project authoritatively what the Lord’s counsel would be to His Church today through such a messenger as Ellen G. White, nevertheless the vast changes in

the secular and religious world since her day only heighten the significance of the directions in which her later counsels were increasingly pointing.

I. Ellen G. White nowhere explicitly discusses the pros and cons of the ordination of women to the gospel ministry. She provides no unquestionably specific instruction or counsel on this particular matter.

II. She ever exalts the role of woman in the home and family when such is the woman's situation.

III. At the same time, she explicitly counseled ministers' wives against the adoption of one or two waifs on whom to lavish their affection, when they had the capacity to unite with their husbands in a dual ministry role—a role for which the woman should be compensated (Letter 43a, 1898, MS release #330).

IV. She explicitly counseled that certain types of ministry in which women can effectively engage should be recognized by ordination (Review and Herald, July 9, 1895, p. 271).

This fact settles the question of whether women may or may not be ordained to some type of ministry function in the work of the Church.

Whether there is any valid place for a distinction between ordination to this type of ministry, and ordination to the gospel ministry in the regular sense, has yet to be demonstrated. Her description of some women's roles is a tight parallel to her description of the regular ministry.

Again, if women are legitimately to be paid for a shared ministry with their minister-husbands, and thus “labor in the gospel ministry,” and some women are to be ordained for a work which sounds more like that of an elder or deaconess, on what revealed or logical grounds should the woman, paid for the work of a minister, be denied the ordination to her ministry which Ellen White counsels should be given to a woman in the elder/deaconess type of role?

Likewise, if the husband is ordained to the ministry, and the wife is called to “labor in the gospel ministry” with him, or what grounds should he be ordained and she not?

V. The fact that Ellen White uses the expression, “although the hands of ordination have not been laid upon her,” when speaking of these ministers’ wives working in the line of ministry, it is not a statement that hands of ordination should not be laid upon her, and can never be so interpreted.

VI. When one thinks of the conditions and attitudes obtaining in the world and in the churches in Ellen White’s day, there is little question but that a stumbling block to the progress of the message could have been created by the ordination of women to the ministry at that time. (There could well be places today where it would still be a major stumbling block, and if that be the case the move should not be made until the prevailing conditions or attitudes change.)

VII. There are two Ellen G. White statements which, in the ordinary logical interpretation of the English language give endorsement to women in pastoral/ministerial capacities. (But again, one might hesitate to call them explicit endorsement of ordination to the gospel ministry):

“ . . . the experience thus gained [in the canvassing work] will be of the greatest value to those who are fitting themselves for the work of the ministry. It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.” –6T:322 (Review and Herald, 1-15-01).

“Young men and young women who should be engaged in the ministry, in Bible work, and in the canvassing work, should not be bound down to mechanical employment.” – 8T:229.

In our general understanding of language, these two statements would place men and women alike as pastors to the flock of God and as persons to be engaged in the ministry and Bible work and the canvassing work. Elsewhere she encourages young men into these three

areas of endeavor, and so there really is no logical reason to assume that only young men should be engaged in the ministry and in the canvassing work, while young women should be engaged in Bible work and the canvassing work. Elsewhere Ellen White does not make such a clean exclusion regarding Bible work.

VIII. Another question to consider is Ellen White's counsel that medical missionaries should be set apart by ordination. (It is true that the context implies that such persons will be ministers at heart, and to a degree at least in their training.) At the same time, there is abundant counsel on the need for women as physicians, especially when they are the wives of physicians. Would there be some reason, again, to exclude the woman medical missionary from ordination, while her medical missionary-husband should be ordained?

IX. WHEN GOD CALLED ELLEN WHITE, A SICKLY YOUNG WOMAN, IN AN ERA OF CONSIDERABLE HOSTILITY TOWARD WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS ROLES, TO BE HIS CHOSEN MESSENGER (MORE THAN A PROPHET) TO HIS REMNANT PEOPLE AND TO THE WORLD AT LARGE, IS THERE ANY WAY TO SUGGEST THAT A QUALIFIED, CALLED, DEDICATED, HUMBLE WOMAN SHOULD BE DENIED THE HIGHEST RECOGNITION THAT THE CHURCH IS ABLE TO PLACE UPON THE CALLING OF GOD'S SPIRIT TO SERVICE, BECAUSE SHE IS A WOMAN—ESPECIALLY IN AN AGE MORE FAVORABLE TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES?

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. While there is need for the Church to give long-range study to the entire question of ordination to both lay and professional ministries of the Church (with 80 years to make such progress already behind us), could this fact be legitimately used as a reason to delay progress

toward recognition of wider roles for the women of the Church? Should all ordinations be held up until these questions are settled?

2. It is Ellen White's specific counsel regarding the ordination of women to a type of elder/deaconess role that calls for a modification of practice regarding ordination to lay ministries (elder, deacon), and once that level of ordination is recognized, and in the light of the further Ellen G. White counsels regarding women in pastoral and ministerial roles, what prohibition should there be to ordination to the gospel ministry?

3. Could it be that in the day when God's Church should be receiving its final touches of preparation for Eden restored, that the pre-sin equality which God designed for the man and the woman should be demonstrated more perfectly among His remnant people?

4. Could there ever be a time when there is a greater need to open all the doors and all the channels to the resources of the Church for the finishing of the work of the Lord in the earth?

5. Could it be God's intention that the emancipation of woman begun by Christ should have a terminal point before the close of probation?

6. The cultural differences prevailing in different parts of the world field would call for judicious implementation of broader roles for women in the Church, but should scarcely require that all parts of the world must await universal readiness.

7. It is not tokenism that will meet the needs of this particular hour. Neither is there a mere hankering for high office on the part of the women of the Church. But the Church may be out of touch with reality that does not see wisdom in drawing upon the resources and the counsels of its women for the completion of the gospel commission. There are many steps other than ordination to the gospel ministry which could be taken by the leadership of the Church that would galvanize

into action and renewed and deeper dedication the often long-suffering support of the silenced majority of the Church. But ordination to the ministry would show that all doors are open.

RELEVANT FACTS

1. There is a tide running in the world and in the Church, varying in its strength from culture to culture, to recognize the equality of men and women in virtually all aspects of life apart from those based on obvious biological distinctions.

2. The Church is being judged as taking action regarding this tide, whether she ignores, welcomes, or resists it. The world is watching to see whether the Church will lead in recognizing human equalities.

3. In some cultures the laws of the land are being rewritten to legalize the equality of women with men. This fact the Church can ignore at its peril.

4. In localized areas church leaders and officers are ready to move in church affairs to bring about an equalizing of the roles of women and men.

5. It is a question whether the world leadership of the Church shall lead in this matter or follow in a belated and disorderly manner. There is little time in which to make the choice.

6. It would be better for the Church to move forward in united understanding even though there may well have to be differences in application and implementation according to the local cultural differences.

7. The home and family, as divine institutions, are in great jeopardy today. The Seventh-day Adventist Church which claims to be preparing a people for the eternal kingdom and to restore them to the Edenic state dare not take any action to weaken the already-undermined

foundations of the marriage institution, the family, the home, the school, the church and the society.

8. There is no support in either the Scriptures nor the writings of Ellen G. White for the concept that a mother should abandon her family responsibilities carelessly in order to pursue a calling outside the home and family situation.

9. It is a sociological fact of the Western world that the number of years in which the average woman is involved with her family responsibilities has been drastically reduced by a combination of earlier marriages, earlier bearing of the first child, reduction in the number of children borne, and a general improvement of life expectancy. The result is that the family woman may well have twenty to thirty years after her family responsibilities have been met which she can dedicate to an appropriate calling either inside or outside the home.

10. In most countries of the world women predominate in the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist churches. One result is that many of the women never have the opportunity to assume the responsibilities of a family. To place undue emphasis, therefore, upon the primacy of the motherhood role for women may be to deepen the hurt locked in the heart of thousands of loyal Seventh-day Adventist women.

11. It is a fact that, proportionately-speaking, women hold fewer leadership positions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today than they did between twenty and forty years ago. There were more women in departmental leadership and treasury responsibilities in the various levels of conference administration than now—at least in the Western world.

12. In the highest levels of Church administration women have not yet found a place. (Witness the male supremacy among Home and Overseas officers, Union and Local conference

presidents, secretaries and treasurers. A similar male dominance is evident in institutional administration.)

13. It is difficult to avoid seeing some link between this absence of female participation in church leadership and the exclusion of women from the ordained ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

14. At the same time the universal educational opportunities available, especially in the Western world, have provided the Church with a greater reservoir of trained female competence in more areas than at any time in the Church's history.

15. Here and there throughout the world, sometimes in spite of considerable discouragement and outright discrimination, a few women have pressed their way into the roles of Bible instructors, evangelists, local elders, and very very occasionally, pastors. Some of these women have shown their God-given calling by the soul-winning success of their labors. Their success can be matched against those of their male counterparts in all respects except in the administration of the communion and that deep joy which comes from the baptism of one's converts to Christ.

16. In those parts of the world where the current climate would permit the opening of doors of opportunity to service in the Church without restriction based upon sex, it would seem that the times call for the leadership of the Church to encourage the Church to move forward judiciously, carefully, as the Holy Spirit shall lead.

17. It has to be recognized that to grant such an opening of doors of opportunity would have certain implications for modification of church polity and a plan needs to be prepared to move toward such, again as the Holy Spirit shall lead.

The fact that any change in the Church Manual calls for action by a General Conference in session, and the fact that the next General Conference session is but two years hence, would seem to indicate the desirability of giving approval to tentative moves which could lead through the intervening Spring and Annual Councils to appropriate actions at the 1975 General Conference session. To delay now is to predestine a seven-year delay in such action.

FROM: Steering Committee on Roles of Women in the SDA Church

Recommendations to HOOUP

1. That the report and recommendations from the Council on the Roles of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, convened September 16-19, 1973 by action of the General Conference Committee, be received.
2. That the report and recommendations of the Council, and selected papers presented to it, be made available on request to the Divisions of the General Conference for study of this subject at the Division level.
3. That the Divisions giving study to the subject share their findings and recommendations with PREXAD if possible in time for consideration at the Annual Council of 1974.
4. That the emphasis of the report upon the priesthood of all believers and the necessity of involving the total resources of the Church for the rapid completion of the gospel commission be accepted.
5. That the primacy on woman's role in the home and family, as repeatedly emphasized in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, continue to be recognized and emphasized at all levels of the Church.
6. That in areas receptive to such action, the theological soundness of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination be recognized, in harmony with the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy concerning comparable offices:

"Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in other methods of labor.

Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work. Place the burdens upon men and women of the church, that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness.” (Review and Herald, July 9, 1895, p. 271)

7. That in areas receptive to such action, there be a continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral/evangelistic work, and that missionary credentials be granted them pending the further study of the roles of women in the Church (see 2, 3, 8), and that the Wage Scale Committee give study to the appropriate rates for women appointed to such work.

8. That, recognizing the desirability of the Church’s moving forward in this matter in harmony of understanding under the impress of the Holy Spirit, further aspects of the Council’s report be referred to the Biblical Research Committee and the Administration of the General Conference for further study and recommendation, through PREXAD, to the 1974 Annual Council.

9. That, in the interest of Church unity, all segments of the Church be urged to work in the interim within the limits of these recommendations on the roles of women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 1973

(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1973-10c/index.djvu?djvuopts&page=3>).

October 17, 1974

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Annual Council 1973 recorded an action entitled, “Role of Women in the Church.” (See AC ’73 General Booklet, page 19; NADCA page 22). Paragraph 3 requested the divisions to pursue their study of this question and share their findings with the General Conference in time for consideration by Annual Council 1974. This request was fulfilled by the divisions. It was

VOTED, To reaffirm paragraphs 4, 5 and 7 of the 1973 Annual Council action which read as follows:

4. That the emphasis of the report upon the priesthood of all believers and the necessity of involving the total resources of the Church for the rapid completion of the gospel commission be accepted.

5. That the primacy of the married woman’s role in the home and family, as repeatedly emphasized in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, continue to be

recognized and emphasized at all levels of the Church, in harmony with counsel such as the following from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“There is a God above, and the light and glory from His throne rests upon the faithful mother as she tries to educate her children to resist the influence of evil. No other work can equal hers in importance.” –Ministry of Healing, pp 377, 278.

“When we give ourselves unreservedly to the Lord, the simple, commonplace duties of home life will be seen in their true importance, and we shall perform them in accordance with the will of God. . . . We should not feel that we are to neglect everything else, and give ourselves up to meditation, study or prayer; neither are we to be full of bustle and hurry and work, to the neglect of personal piety.” –The Adventist Home, p 23.

7. That in areas receptive to such action, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral-evangelistic work, and that the appropriate missionary credentials/licenses be granted them.

Further,

1. To record our opinion that because the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world church which includes in its fellowship peoples of all nations and cultures, and because a survey of its world divisions reveals that the time is not ripe nor opportune, therefore, in the interest of the world unity of the Church, no move be made in the direction of ordaining women to the gospel ministry.

2. To request the President’s Executive Advisory to arrange for a continuing study of the theological and practical implications of the ordination of women to the gospel ministry.

Additional suggestion for ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (74-388). See paragraph 4. (Brought in by J W Peeke at the 1974 Annual Council):

To recognize the contribution now being made by career women of the church who do not have major home responsibilities and who are capable, well educated, and deeply dedicated to the finishing of God’s work on earth, and to assure them equal opportunity for posts of responsibility at all levels of the church organization which do not require ordination.

(Role of Women – contd)

3. To request the President’s Executive Advisory to also arrange for further study of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination and that division committees exercise discretion in any special cases that may arise before a definitive position has been adopted.

4. To refer to the President's Executive Advisory for further study, additional suggestions made regarding the role of women in the church. (A copy of these suggestions is on file with the Minutes.)

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 17, 1974, 74-388-389
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1974-10b/index.djvu>).

April 3, 1975
Spring Meeting

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

VOTED, 1. That we continue to recognize “the primacy of the married woman’s role in the home and family, as repeatedly emphasized in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy. . . .” (1974 Annual Council actions, page 13, paragraph 5), and that

We also recognize that there are many women in the church without family responsibilities who are capable and free to dedicate their full time to the service of the church in many spheres and on many levels.

2. That we agree that potential leadership roles, on all levels of administration not requiring ordination to the gospel ministry, be open to suitably qualified women whose home and family responsibilities make this possible.

3. That, therefore, we request church and institutional administrators on all levels to make continuing efforts to place qualified women, as well as men, in the categories of work referred to in the preceding paragraph.

4. That the way be opened for women elected to serve as deaconesses in our churches to be ordained to this office and that the Church Manual Committee be requested to give study to a statement of the qualifications of deaconesses and suggestions in regard to a suitable ordination service.

5. That in harmony with the spirit and intent of paragraph 3 of the Annual Council 1974 action (pages 12-14) the greatest discretion and caution be exercised in the ordaining of women to the office of local elder, counsel being sought in all cases by the local conference/mission from the union and division committees before proceeding.

6. That we recognize that the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church provides precedents for women to fill roles of leadership. However, on the matter of the ordination of women to the gospel ministry we believe that the world church is not yet ready to move forward. Therefore, until this question becomes clearer we recommend that every endeavor be made to use women in the numerous positions many of them are well qualified to fill.

7. That we further recognize the considerable contribution that women have made to the church as Bible Instructors and in other soul-winning capacities, and recommend that where Bible Instructors or other women with suitable qualifications and experience are able to fill ministerial roles, they be assigned as assistant pastors, their credentials being missionary license or missionary credential.

Agenda items for the North American Division Committee on Administration were considered for the remainder of the morning session.

The 1975 Spring Meeting adjourned as 12:30 p.m.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 3, 1975, 75-153-154 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1975-04/index.djvu>).

October 16, 1975

MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS—GUIDELINES FOR ISSUING

VOTED, To approve the following guidelines for the issuing of Ministerial Credentials:

Ministerial Credentials—Guidelines for Issuing

The following are not guidelines for the ordination of persons to the ministry. Principles giving such guidance are clearly set forth in the General Conference Working Policy, pp 175-180 (NAD Working Policy, pp 191-196). These guidelines are intended to assist committees in the issuance of ministerial credentials to those already ordained, especially those whose areas of work appear not to require the service of ordained ministers.

Ministerial Credentials may be issued to

1. Workers who have been ordained to the ministry and are currently serving as
 - a. Pastors and evangelists
 - b. Administrators, department directors, department associates or assistants on General Conference, division, union and local levels
 - c. Educational administrators including elementary school principals; secondary school principals and business managers; college presidents, academic deans, deans of students, and business managers; university presidents, vice-presidents and deans
 - d. Health-care institution administrators, chaplains and assistant chaplains
 - e. Publishing house general managers, treasurers, book and periodical department managers and associates, and editors
 - f. Radio and television administrators, speakers and promoters
 - g. Others engaged in service equivalent to the preceding.

2. Ordained ministers who are engaged in Bible teaching in elementary or secondary schools, or who are engaged as deans of residence halls, or who are teaching in the departments of religion or the area of religious education in colleges and universities, or who are called to a denominational institution of higher education and whose work involves formally prepared and explicit presentations of the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. Ordained ministers who have spent the major part of their lives in ministerial work but who, after reaching the age of 60 years, choose or are obliged to work for a few years in other lines of denominational work before retiring.

Ministerial Credentials—Special Cases

1. Where because of the nature of the duties they are performing, the Ministerial Credentials of ordained workers are not continued or renewed, their ordination is not thereby invalidated, nor is any reflection intended or cast upon their lives or their service.

2. Ordained ministers who of their own choice discontinue ministerial work, or who in the judgment of their employing organizations are unable to perform satisfactorily in a ministerial role, but continue in denominational employment, are not eligible for renewal of their Ministerial Credentials, nor for a continuation of them if these are still valid beyond the end of the calendar year.

3. Ordained ministers who are teaching in areas other than referred to in I. 1-c above, would not normally be granted Ministerial Credentials unless assigned pastoral, evangelistic or other major ministerial responsibilities in connection with their school work.

4. When an employee with Ministerial Credentials is officially called to a position of clearly non-ministerial function, a letter of clarification shall accompany the call informing him if this results in non-ministerial status.

Appeal of Special Cases

1. Where union committees, particularly in regard to workers in General Conference institutions for the issuance of whose credentials they are responsible, are not clear on continuing the credentials of ordained ministers because of the nature of their work, they may refer such cases to the General Conference standing Committee on Credentials and Licenses, requesting its assistance and guidance in determining the question.

2. Since the credentials of employees of General Conference institutions are issued by the union in whose territory the institution is located, appeals on their behalf should be brought to the General Conference standing Committee on Credentials and Licenses (or a subcommittee of it) by the union. Any other appeals in connection with the application of the policy or these guidelines, should be referred to the next higher organization.

3. The standing Committee on Credentials and Licenses (or a subcommittee of it) in reaching decisions on the cases referred to it, shall carefully consider the principles set forth in

connection with ordination in the General Conference Working Policy, pp 175-180 (NAD Working Policy pp 191-196) as well as these guidelines, in an endeavor to maintain a consistent application of them throughout the division. It shall keep a clear record of its decisions and the basis on which they are reached.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 16, 1975, 75-408-409 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1975-10b/index.djvu>).

October 14, 1976

3. That the Role of the Ordained or Licensed “Non-Pastoral” Ministers be Clarified—a. The large body of ministers in the General Conference and its divisions, the union and local fields, the institutions and other types of work shall be expected to give priority of their time, talent, energy and planning to evangelistic work according to their gifts, in preaching, personal witness, and teaching. As a means of making their priority possible, more attention shall be given to the voices of lay experts in the organizational structure, so that those called and ordained to the ministry may devote themselves to the ministry.

“The state conferences must have men at their head who love and fear God,—capable men, who will learn in the school of Christ to be laborers with Him, to wear His yoke, and lift His burdens. They are to be partners with Christ in the sacred service of soul winning.: (TM 320)

“When we follow plans of the Lord’s devising we are ‘laborers together with God.’ Whatever our position—whether presidents of conferences, ministers, teachers, students, or lay members—we are held accountable by the Lord for making the most of our opportunities to enlighten those in need of present truth.” (CT 530)

b. In the General Conference and its divisions, unions, and local fields, and institutions, the spiritual leaders shall direct all other persons within their jurisdictions who earn their livelihood from the church, into soul-winning labors, in fulfillment of the inspired counsel, that all Christians be instrumental in winning souls to Christ and leading them to spiritual maturity. (When the family of full-time employees of the church engage in redemptive effort for the lost, then we can expect to succeed with the remainder of the church.)

c. The conference president shall prayerfully and earnestly, with the executive committee, the conference lay advisory council, through personal interviews with every worker, through workers’ meetings and by using the local Church Evangelism Councils, make certain that every action and plan of the conference is directed toward the primacy of evangelism and finishing the work. He is to set as the supreme goal of all phases of the work, the reaching of every person in the conference territory with the message.

d. The conference administration shall lay the foundation and create the climate in all churches to assist the pastor in developing strong lay leadership to carry those church leadership

functions which will serve to release the pastor from many miscellaneous duties, so that he can be the shepherd and soul-winning leader he is expected to be.

e. Conferences shall lay definite plans with every church, company, Sabbath School, and institution to reach every home within its territory with the Three Angels' Messages between now and the time of the 1980 General Conference Session in Dallas.

f. Conferences shall make specific plans for the follow-up of names of all persons who have been contacted through the various departmental activities of the church. One of the weakest links in our evangelistic chain is the follow-up of the multiplied thousands, if not millions, of names which have been gathered in during the past years. Immediate action must be taken to remedy this situation.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 14, 1976, 76-274-275
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1976-10a/index.djvu>).

October 19, 1976

(A-1392) WORKERS ORDAINED TO SERVE WORLD CHURCH – POLICY ADDITION

VOTED, To add a new paragraph at the end of the policy “Examination of Candidates for Ordination” (GC Working Policy, p 188) to read as follows:

Workers who are ordained to the gospel ministry are set apart to serve the world church, primarily as pastors and preachers of the Word, and are subject to the direction of the church in regard to the type of ministry and their place of service. It should therefore be understood by those accepting ordination and who are engaged in specialized ministries such as administration, teaching, and departmental leadership, that they may be reassigned by the church to pastoral, preaching and evangelistic duties.

(A-1392) ORDINATION—PROCEDURE FOR AUTHORIZING – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend paragraph 1 of the policy “Procedure in Authorizing Ordination” (GC Working Policy, p 187) as follows:

1. ~~Inasmuch as~~ Ordination to the ministry is the setting apart of the worker man to a sacred calling, not for one local field alone, but for the entire world church and therefore needs to be done with wide counsel. The following plan is the proper procedure, except in special cases where serious delay would result:

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 19, 1976, 76-320-321
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1976-10a/index.djvu>).

October 20, 1976

(X-1845) LICENSED MINISTER—ROLE AND STATUS

The licensed minister is granted his license to provide him the opportunity to develop his ministerial gift, especially in the area of soul-winning. There are circumstances in many fields, however, where it is necessary for the conference/mission to appoint him to carry responsibilities as pastor or assistant pastor of a church or group of churches. In order to help make it possible for him to bear such responsibilities, the Church Manual provides that the church or churches he is appointed to serve elect him as an elder, thus providing him with authority from the local church and opening the way to perform certain ministerial functions as outlined in the Church Manual. But in the nature of the case he also represents the conference/mission which appoints him and, in varying degrees depending on the fields involved, the field may wish to extend his responsibilities and authority delegating to him certain other ministerial functions in order to enable him to discharge his responsibilities satisfactorily. Therefore,

VOTED, To approve the following statement regarding the role and status of the licensed minister:

1. In certain circumstances the responsibility and authority of the licensed minister may be extended to include the performance of specific functions of the ordained minister in the churches to which he is assigned. This responsibility belongs to the division committee which shall clearly outline for its territory the ministerial functions which may be delegated to licensed ministers, taking into account:

- a. The length and extent of its ministerial training program
- b. The needs of its fields allowing for the distribution of their membership, the number of churches and the ministerial help available
- c. Any special circumstances that demand special consideration.

2. In delegating ministerial functions to licensed ministers the following prerequisites shall be satisfied in all divisions:

- a. The licentiate shall have completed the prescribed ministerial training requisites of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as defined by the division committee for its territory. Exceptions must be approved by the local and union committees within guidelines established by the division committee
- b. He is the recipient of a ministerial license
- c. He has been appointed by the conference/mission executive committee to a ministerial or pastoral responsibility

d. He has been elected as a church elder in the churches, or named in the companies to which he is assigned

e. He has been ordained as a local church elder.

The conference/mission executive committee shall authorize, in harmony with the division policy, what functions of the ordained minister the licensed minister may perform.

3. A licensed minister's leadership progress, professional development and spiritual growth will be reviewed annually by the conference/mission administration and executive committee.

4. A licensed minister's authorization to serve as a minister of the gospel and to perform functions of an ordained minister may be withdrawn by the conference/mission executive committee.

5. A licensed minister is ordinarily ordained to the gospel ministry after he has satisfactorily fulfilled a period of pastoral/evangelistic service during which time he has given evidence of his call to the ministry. The spiritual rite of ordination constitutes the official recognition by the Seventh-day Adventist Church of his divine call to the ministry as a life commitment, and is his endorsement to serve as a minister of the gospel in any part of the world.

(X-1845) LICENSED MINISTER—ROLE AND STATUS – IMPLEMENTATION

VOTED, To authorize the implementation of the action on "Licensed Minister—Role and Status" as follows:

1. The standing Church Manual Committee is requested to revise relevant portion of the Church Manual for presentation to the 1977 Midterm Annual Council, which, in turn will recommend to the 1980 General Conference Session a study of the modifications and amendments that will then be necessary in the Church Manual. Every endeavor should be made to hold such modifications and amendments to a minimum by leaving certain aspects of the subject to the discretion of division committees which will cover them in the division supplements to the Church Manual.

2. The General Conference Ministerial Association is requested to revise the Manual for Ministers to include the necessary modifications and amendments.

3. The General Conference Secretariat is requested to revise the General Conference and North American Division Working Policy with a view to recommending to the 1977 Midterm Annual Council the necessary modifications and amendments.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 20, 1976, 76-347-348 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1976-10b/index.djvu>).

November 11, 1976

(A-1929) ORDINATION DEACONS AND ELDERS—STUDY COMMITTEE

VOTED, To appoint the following ad hoc Ordination Deacons and Elders—Study Committee to consider questions involved in the matter of ordination of local elders, deacons and deaconesses:

Wilson, Neal C (Chairman)	Franz, C O (or designee)
Bothe, J W (Secretary)	Hancock, J H
Dower, N R (or designee)	Kozel, J C
Follett, Philip	Palmer, L R
	Wallenkampf, A V

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, November 11, 1976, 76-472 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1976-11/index.djvu>).

October 16, 1977

(A-2115) LICENSED MINISTER ROLE AND STATUS – NEW POLICY

VOTED, To insert a new policy entitled “Licensed Minister—Role and Status” in the General Conference Working Policy following the section “Safeguarding Credentials—The Integrity of the Ministry” (GC WP 190) as follows:

1. The responsibility and authority of the licensed minister may in certain circumstances be extended to include the performance of specific functions of the ordained minister in the churches to which he is assigned. The authority for extending this responsibility belongs to the division committee which shall clearly outline for its territory the ministerial functions which may be delegated to licensed ministers, taking into account:

- a. The length and extent of the ministerial training programs in its territory.
- b. The needs of the fields in its territory, taking into consideration the distribution of membership, the number of churches and the ministerial help available.
- c. Any circumstances that demand special consideration.

2. The following shall be required in all divisions as a basis for delegating ministerial functions to a licensed minister:

a. He shall have completed the prescribed ministerial training program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as defined by the division committee for its territory. Any exceptions shall be approved by local and union committees within guidelines established by the division committee.

b. He shall hold a current ministerial license.

c. He shall have been appointed by the conference/mission executive committee to a ministerial or pastoral responsibility.

d. He shall have been elected as a church elder in the churches, or named as elder in the companies to which he is assigned.

e. He shall have been ordained as a local church elder.

3. The conference/mission executive committee shall authorize, in harmony with the division policy, which functions of the ordained minister the licensed minister may perform.

4. The licensed minister's leadership progress, professional development and spiritual growth shall be reviewed annually by the conference/mission administration and executive committee.

5. The licensed minister's authorization to serve as a minister of the gospel and to perform functions of an ordained minister may be withdrawn by the conference/mission executive committee.

6. The licensed minister is ordinarily ordained to the gospel ministry after he has satisfactorily fulfilled a period of pastoral/evangelistic service during which time he has given evidence of his call to the ministry. The spiritual rite of ordination constitutes the official recognition by the Seventh-day Adventist Church of his divine call to the ministry as a life commitment, and is his endorsement to serve as a minister of the gospel in any part of the world.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 16, 1977, 77-320-321
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1977-10a/index.djvu>).

October 19, 1977

(A-2114) QUALIFICATIONS FOR ORDINATION – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the section, "Qualifications for Ordination" (GC WP 184-185) as follows:

Undue haste has sometimes been apparent in recommending candidates for ordination. On the other hand, there has also been undue delay, extending as long as twenty years and more.

Both these attitudes are wrong. Although no worker should be hurried into ordination, it is just as important that when a man is ready to be thus set apart, the service should not be unduly delayed. Embarrassment has been brought to workers at times because of being unable to perform certain important ministerial responsibilities. However, the fact that a licensed minister has spent four, five, or even eight years in the field is of itself no guarantee that he is ready for ordination. One with less ability for evangelistic preaching or less aptitude for other lines of ministerial and pastoral work than some others will naturally take longer to develop. Indeed, some may never qualify for ordination. Those who do not reveal particular ministerial talent and aptitude for definite public leadership should be encouraged to develop as personal soul winners, recognizing that their call is to some other work less distinctly ministerial.

Conference/mission presidents and executive committees should recognize their responsibility to foster the growth of young ministers and see to it that they are given opportunities for development. Any plan that diverts the minister-to-be from his actual training and growth is to be discouraged. Injustices have been perpetrated when licensed ministers possessing manual skills have been asked to spend long periods serving in other capacities to the neglect of their ministerial development. Such a plan may save the conference money, but it delays the development of the minister.

When a conference gives a young man a ministerial license it should be recognized as a pledge on the part of the conference leadership to foster that worker's growth. And when a man accepts a ministerial license he should regard it as a pledge on his part to render the utmost service of which he is capable. Such a license, however, is not a commitment on the part of a conference that ultimate ordination is assured. It merely provides the opportunity for the licentiate to prove his calling. Although all cannot have the same conditions under which to develop into mature ministers, a man who is called of God will reveal his calling by his whole manner of life and the burden he carries for those who are still in the prison house of sin. In some circumstances it is difficult to provide conditions under which public evangelism as such can be carried out, but he who is called of the Lord will be able to give proof of his calling and of his aptness for the ministry as a lifework.

In some areas of the world field educational facilities are somewhat limited. If that is the case, it will naturally take longer for a minister to develop his readiness for ordination. Therefore, in consideration of all the varied conditions, it is impossible to specify any definite length of time for the professional development and spiritual growth of the licentiate. The fact that a licensed minister is assigned to overseas service should not of itself delay his ordination beyond the time it would have ordinarily taken place. His service record should be passed along to the new field and his development receive proper evaluation. In suitable cases a licensed minister who is approaching ordination at the time of his foreign call may be ordained prior to departure.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 19, 1977, 77-389-390 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1977-10a/index.djvu>).

October 19, 1977

ORDINATION OF PHYSICIANS – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend paragraph 1, line 2 of the policy “Qualifications for Ordination” (GC WP 186) by inserting “and denominationally employed physicians/dentists” after “departmental secretaries, . . .institutional leaders.”

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 19, 1977, 77-398 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1977-10a/index.djvu>).

October 19, 1977

(X-1845) LICENSED MINISTERS – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To recommend to the General Conference Session, 1980, the following amendment to the section of the Church Manual “Licensed Ministers” (CM 185, 186) as follows:

LICENSED MINISTERS

To give young men an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, especially in the area of soul-winning, prospective candidates are granted ministerial licenses by the conference/mission. The granting of such licenses confers the opportunity and the right to develop the ministerial gift, ~~and to assist in the ordinances and services of the church such as the Lord’s Supper, baptism, and the marriage ceremony. Where there is no local elder he may, when authorized by the conference or division committee, preside at business meetings of the church but not at business meetings when members are disciplined. A request should be made to the conference president for an ordained minister to preside at such a meeting. He~~ The licensed minister is authorized to preach, to engage in evangelism, assist in a spiritual way in any church activities and to lead out in missionary work, and especially to engage in evangelism to assist in any church activities.

~~He may be elected as a local elder of a particular church and ordained as such, provided arrangements have been made with the conference. In such case he is vested with the authority of a local elder but no more. His ordination as local elder qualifies him to serve only in such churches as have elected him as their local elder, and then only on the advice of the conference committee or president.~~

~~Conference committees do not have the right to authorize a licensed minister to go from church to church baptizing or performing other church rites pertaining to the functions of an ordained minister. A conference committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ministerial ordination. Assignment of such workers to district leadership must not be made the occasion for unwarranted authorization in such matters.~~

There are circumstances, in many fields, however, where it is necessary for the conference/mission to appoint a licensed minister to carry responsibility as a pastor or assistant pastor of a church or group of churches. In order to open the way for him to perform certain ministerial functions, the church or group of churches he is to serve may elect him as a local elder. However, since he is employed by the conference/mission and appointed by it he represents it, and it may consider, in varying degrees as circumstances require that his authority and responsibilities should be extended in order to enable him to discharge his duties satisfactorily. The right to permit this extension of authority and responsibility rests, in the first instance, with the Division executive committee. Its action is necessary before any conference/mission may extend the authority and responsibility of the licensed minister. Such action shall define specifically and clearly what additional ministerial functions a licensed minister may perform, but always on the understanding that his functions as a church elder and his extended functions be always and only within the church or group of churches which he serves.

In its actions the conference/mission committee shall not go beyond that which the division committee authorizes. It shall not authorize a licensed minister to go from church to church outside of the church or group of churches of which he is a local elder, performing church rites which pertain to the functions of an ordained minister. A conference/mission committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ministerial ordination.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 19, 1977, 77-399-400 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1977-10a/index.djvu>).

October 11, 1978

From Credentials and Licenses/PRADCO/HOOUP/GC 78AC to AEG

(A-2037) PROCEDURE IN AUTHORIZING ORDINATION – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend division L 45, Procedure in Authorizing Ordination, to read as follows:

1. Ordination to the ministry is the setting apart of the worker to a sacred calling, not for one local field alone but for the world church, and therefore needs to be done with wide counsel. The following plan is the proper procedure, except in special cases where serious delay would result:

a. The administration concerned shall arrange for a preliminary examination of the prospective candidate and his ministry.

b. The matter of ordination is then taken under careful consideration by the local conference/mission committee for an employee of the conference/mission or one of its

institutions, and by the union conference/mission committee for an employee of the union or one of its institutions.

c. In case of favorable consideration the local conference/mission committee will submit the name of the candidate with its findings and convictions to the union committee for counsel and approval.

d. The division and its institutional boards will submit names recommended for ordination to the division committee. The General Conference and its institutional boards will submit names to the General Conference committee.

2. The time and place for the ordination ceremony, including the examination of the candidate, with his wife, shall be arranged by the approving organization in counsel with the union.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 11, 1978, 78-267
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1978-10a/index.djvu>).

October 11, 1982

GCO/Cred&L/GCO/GCDOUP 82AC/GC 82AC to EG

302-82A SAFEGUARDING CREDENTIALS—THE INTEGRITY OF THE MINISTRY – POLICY REVISION

VOTED, To revise GC L 60, Safeguarding Credentials – The Integrity of the Ministry, as follows:

L 60 05 – No change

L 60 10 – No change

L 60 15 Reasons for Discipline of Ministers – 1. Moral Fall/Apostasy – Discipline shall be administered to an ordained/licensed minister in the following circumstances:

a. In the case of a moral fall in violation of the seventh commandment, including those violations involving sexual perversions, he has, by that transgression, made void his calling and/or ordination to the sacred office of the ministry.

b. In the case of apostasy whereby he falls away to the world, or identifies himself with, or gives continuing support to, any activity subversive to the denomination, and/or persistently refuses to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church, he has, by such disloyalty, proven himself unworthy of a place or part in the gospel ministry of this Church.

2. Dissidence – Discipline may also be administered in the case of a minister who openly expresses significant dissidence regarding the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Continued and unrepentant dissidence may eventually be seen by the Church to be apostasy and identified as such by the minister’s administrative organization after counseling with the next higher organization.

L 60 20 Steps in Discipline of Ministers – When discipline must be administered in the case of a minister, four aspects of his relationship to the Church may be affected: his credential/license, his ordination, his church membership and his denominational employment. The discipline and corresponding procedure for administering such discipline in relation to each of these aspects is as follows:

1. Credential/license – The credential/license of a minister who experiences a moral fall or apostatizes shall be withdrawn permanently by his employing committee, after consultation with the next higher organization. His credential/license may also be withdrawn in the case of dissidence as defined in L 60 15-2 above, after consultation with the next higher organization, but such withdrawal shall be reviewed by the committee after a stipulated period/periods which shall be determined at the time of withdrawal.

2. Ordination – a. A minister who experiences a moral fall or apostatizes has made void his ordination. This changed relationship shall be recognized and recorded by his employing organization with the approval of the respective union committee (General Conference or Division Committee in the case of a General Conference/division institution). He shall be ineligible for future employment as a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

b. A licensed minister who experiences a moral fall or apostatizes shall be ineligible for future ordination or employment as a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

3. Church Membership – The organization which has withdrawn a credential/license permanently and, in the case of an ordained minister who has made void his ordination, has recognized and recorded his changed relationship, shall inform the local church of which the offending minister is a member. It shall be the duty of the Church to administer discipline as provided for in the Church Manual in the section “Reasons for Which Members Shall Be Disciplined.”

4. Denominational Employment – It is recognized that a minister who has experienced a moral fall or has apostatized has access to the mercy and pardoning grace of God and may desire to return to the Church. Such an individual must be assured of the love and goodwill of his brethren. However, for the sake of the good name of the Church and the maintaining of moral standards, he must plan to devote his life to employment other than that of the gospel ministry, the teaching ministry, or denominational leadership.

L 60 25 Rebaptism – A minister who has been disfellowshipped from the Church because of a moral fall or apostasy, but who subsequently gives evidence of repentance, conversion and reformation of life, shall be rebaptized before rejoining the Church.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 11, 1982, 82-301-303
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1982-10/index.djvu>).

April 6, 1983

DEACONESSSES – ORDINATION REPORT

Neal C Wilson explained that the question of ordination of deaconesses has been discussed at length in the past and permission was given for it. It is felt that it is now time to incorporate the ordination of deaconesses in the Church Manual with a form of service suggested. A report will be given to the 1983 Annual Council.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 6, 1983, 83-104-105
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1983-03a/index.djvu>).

October 14, 1984

GCO/GCC/GCO/GCDO84AC/ONUP84AC/GCDOUP84AC/G84AC to NCW-GCS85

208-84GN ROLE AND FUNCTION OF DENOMINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS— COMMISSION REPORT

VOTED, To accept the full report of the Role and Function of Denominational Organization Commission as follows:

- I. Preserving the Unity of Church and Message
- II. Officers, Departments, and Executive Committees: Administrative Roles, Functions, and Relationships
- III. The Role and Function of Lay Persons on the Various Levels of Church Organization
- IV. The Role and Function of Departments and Services on the Various Levels of Church Organization
- V. The Role and Function of the North American Division
- VI. Implementation of Recommendations Made by the Commission on Role and Function of Denominational Organizations
- VII. Special Study
- VIII. Application at Local Church Level

I. PRESERVING THE UNITY OF CHURCH AND MESSAGE

- A. The Unity of Denominational Organizations and Its Maintenance

In contrast to most other churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world church. Its structure permits both a centralized structure (an authoritative and effective world headquarters with division offices) and a decentralized sharing of administrative and promotional responsibilities with many individuals and organizations on four constituency levels in all parts of the world.

Unity, “that they all may be one” (John 17:21), is basic to the nature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen G White admonished, “God wants His people to counsel together, to be a united church, in Christ a perfect whole. . . . ‘Press together, press together, press together.’” (2SM 374).

Such unity can be maintained through:

1. Adherence to a common Bible-based faith. This doctrinal faith is expressed through the “Statement of Fundamental Beliefs” approved and voted by the General Conference in session.
2. Following the counsel of the writings of Ellen G White, translating them into scores of languages, and distributing them widely. These writings are of vital importance to unity of belief, unity of standards (life style) and unity of working methods.
3. Strong evangelistic proclamation of the Advent Message in its time-of-the-end setting.
4. Developing and strengthening a universal ethos that will characterize Adventists as a unique, worldwide, evangelistic, moral, healthy, happy, caring family.
5. Faithful obedience to the Church Manual, applicable throughout the world.
6. Constitutional structures. The General Conference Working Policy should contain model constitutions for Church organizations on the various levels. These are to be followed closely and adhered to in essence at the various levels of Church organization. When a constitution is adopted or revised by an organization, it should be with the counsel of the next higher organization and in harmony with the General Conference Working Policy.
7. Strong, effective leadership with the ability to achieve the mission of the Church.
8. Proper decentralization on various levels and within each level, thus making unity and belonging to the whole more desirable and functional by relating working leadership as closely as possible to local circumstances and to a responsible constituency. Remote control easily becomes a source of frustration and division.
9. Church leaders and organizations operating the Church in their area of responsibility in full harmony with the General Conference Working Policy. Thus unity of

working methods and organization are maintained. (Church officials not able or not willing to do this should not be continued in leadership positions.)

10. One ordained ministry serving the worldwide Church.

11. One policy for the Church worldwide which recognizes spiritual gifts and provides for the setting apart of certain leaders for special responsibilities through the laying on of hands in response to God's call as it is recognized by the people of God.

B. Authority of the General Conference* in Maintaining Unity

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stepped onto the stage of history at the call of prophecy.

The General Conference is the highest organization in the administration of the worldwide Church and derives its authority from God through the people of God led by the Holy Spirit. The authority of the General Conference is the authority of the entire Church, joining together to do the gospel work and maintaining the unity of faith in all the world (See GC B 12 15).

The General Conference is not an entity apart from the churches, conferences, and unions that comprise the world Seventh-day Adventist Church. The General Conference "is the sum of all these" (See GC B 12 15). It is the main manifestation of the worldwide nature of the Church. The General Conference helps to maintain unity through:

1. Defining and upholding the faith of the Church.
2. Administrative leadership and influence.
3. Encouraging all entities and members to share responsibility for support of the world Church and finishing the work.
4. Creating policies at Annual Councils for the worldwide Church.
5. Upholding the tie-in between the levels of denominational structures.
6. Visits, counsel, promotion throughout the world by its staff.

C. General Conference Delegated Powers

The General Conference conducts much of its work through its division sections, which embrace local and union conferences/missions in large areas of the world. The divisions are the General Conference in their respective territories, and actions of the division committees are considered final, provided they are in harmony with the plans and policies of the General Conference as set forth in its Constitution, Bylaws, and Annual Councils.

The Church has delegated to the General Conference certain authority and areas of responsibility:

1. Church doctrine
2. Church Manual
3. Church polity and world Working Policy
4. Issues that have interdivisional aspects or consequences
5. Election of world/division staffs
6. The worldwide designation and sharing of financial resources as expressed in the General Conference budget, including world mission offerings
7. The acceptance of unions into the sisterhood of unions
8. The operation of certain institutions of vital importance to the Church as a whole
9. Publishing certain journals of worldwide significance to the Church
10. Preparing the various Sabbath School lessons.

D. Relationships Between Church Organizations

It is important for the unified operation of the Church that the basic levels of structure (church, conference/mission, union, General Conference/division) be maintained and kept in creative, pragmatic, and balanced relationship. The recent study, including field interviews, by the Commission on the Role and Function of Denominational Organizations clearly confirms this.

Fundamental to church unity is the local church, the organized fellowship of individual believers in each place. The conference/mission unites organizationally the churches in a specific geographic area. The union represents a united body of conferences/missions within a larger territory. The General Conference embraces all unions and churches in all parts of the world and joins together the whole worldwide fellowship of believers into a united body.

The division is an administrative unit of the General Conference, with commensurate authority to carry out responsibilities in the territory assigned to it. It is not a separate constituent level of organization. As its name “division” implies, it is a section of the General Conference, not an “association” or “joining” of church organizations, as is the case for unions or conferences.

The various levels of denominational organization provide ascending previews and reviews of leadership. Thus elected or appointed representatives can function freely, in a balanced relationship, and handle aspects of administration, coordination, and promotion that need to go no higher. This eliminates inefficiency or even failure that comes from distant control and lack of firsthand information and direct involvement.

Inter-organizational relationships are based on mutual cooperation, counsel and trust. This means that each level or organization must have the authority and ability to carry out, in harmony with the Church Manual and overall Church policy, its assigned tasks and responsibilities, without duplication on, or stifling control from, other levels.

The basic constituent blocks of the world Church are the unions. The constituent units of unions are the conferences/missions. The unions perform several vital functions:

1. Coordinate and preserve unity in beliefs, plans, policies and focus for the preaching of the gospel in the territory of a group of conferences/missions. To do this effectively, the territory and number of conferences/missions must not be unreasonably large.

2. Provide closer and more frequent contact with local conferences/missions than the General Conference/division is able to maintain.

3. Speak on behalf of the General Conference/division to the conferences/missions and their churches, reflecting the actions and recommendations of the General Conference, thus uniting the local organizations behind the world program of the Church.

4. Provide training, counsel and guidance for the personnel of the local conferences/missions and serve as a resource center.

5. Operate certain institutions (e.g., colleges) on behalf of the local conference/missions, keeping the administration of these institutions responsive to the needs and wishes of the local organizations.

6. Represent the Church officially to government, other churches and organizations, especially where several conferences in the same country or state could not do this.

7. Reflect the needs, wishes and concerns of the local conferences/missions to the General Conference in two ways:

- a. The union presidents are constitutionally members of the General Conference/division committees.

- b. The union conference/mission is the constituent body of the General Conference, and its delegates help elect the Committee, officers and department directors of the General Conference/divisions.

8. Provide back-up levels of administration and appeal.

E. Unity Between General Conference and the North American Division

Traditionally, the North American Division has been an integral part of the General Conference and administered by the General Conference. There are, of course, significant reasons for the “special relationship.”

In view of past history, current administrative and pragmatic realities, and expected future prophetic development (e.g., role of the United States in the final prophetic events), it is unwise to plan for North America’s becoming a division “like all other divisions.” North America, in the Seventh-day Adventist setting, is unique. There needs to be a close and continuous relationship between the General Conference and North America. While it is advantageous for North America to have and be perceived to have its own identity, leadership, planning and coordinated evangelism, this role and function must be exercised in close cooperation with, and within, the General Conference. The North American Division-General Conference relationship must be more than ever one of cooperation and unity.

F. World Vision as a Unifying Force on All Levels

A vision of the world task of the Church is a potent and necessary force for unity. Where a church lacks this unifying and motivating vision, church unity will eventually perish. It is thus important to hold before the membership the world Church concept, “from everywhere to everywhere,” through:

1. Continued weekly emphasis on Sabbath School world mission.
2. Exchange of workers and calls from everywhere to everywhere.
3. Volunteer service in other countries.
4. The Adventist Review, division and union papers, and other such publications.
5. General Conference and division visitation in the field.
6. Internationalization of General Conference and division staffs.
7. Regular promotion of world mission offerings, Ingathering, etc.
8. Invitation to selected union, conference and institutional leadership and pastors to visit other divisions to become acquainted with the life and needs of the world church.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 14, 1984, 84-363-369 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1984-10/index.djvu>).

October 14, 1984

OUP83SM/GCDOUP83AC/ChMan/176-83G/GCO/GCDOUP84AC/G84AC to NCW

272-84GN WOMEN (LOCAL CHURCH) ELDERS—ELECTION AND ORDINATION

VOTED, 1. To reaffirm the Spring Meeting action on the General Conference Committee of 1975 Role of Women in the Church (GCC 75-153).

2. 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.

3. To suggest that the following guidelines be used in the selection and ordination of women as local church elders:

a. The concept should be carefully examined, discussed, and properly accepted at the local church level.

b. If a church contemplates such an action, the entire matter should be discussed and approved by the conference committee after the conference administration has sought counsel from the union leadership. The negotiation between the church and the conference should occur in advance of the final decision and vote by the local church.

c. The action to elect and ordain a woman as a local church elder must not be taken unless a clear consensus exists that the ministry of a woman elder is desirable and even essential to the spiritual well-being of the local church family. It should also be the consensus of the church that a woman elder will be respected as a spiritual leader and soul-winner. The church should also express its belief that there are dimensions of spiritual service and counsel which cannot be properly fulfilled by a male elder.

d. A clear majority of the voting members of the local church must be in favor of the action. The matter should be considered at a specially called church business meeting. Every church member should be given the opportunity to vote on this issue rather than only the few who might be present at a regular meeting where routine items of business are on the agenda. Although preliminary study could be given to this question by the church board, any final action should be taken by the church in a business meeting.

e. Whatever the decision of the church, it should result in unifying the members and not be the source of divisiveness or alienation. The body of Christ, the Church, must not be tarnished in any way. In this important issue, as in all things, the name of our Lord and Saviour must be exalted.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 14, 1984, 84-386-387
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1984-10/index.djvu>).

October 15, 1984

GCO/GCDOUP84AC/G84AC to NCW-GCO G85SM 85 GCS

309-84GN COLUMBIA UNION/POTOMAC CONFERENCE REQUEST—ROLE OF WOMEN IN CHURCH

VOTED, 1. To advise the Columbia Union Conference and the Potomac Conference that their request has been carefully and prayerfully reviewed by the General Conference Officers.

2. To request the Potomac Conference Executive Committee to keep tabled the issues of ministerial licenses for women and baptism by women who are in full-time pastoral work, and who are also local church elders, until the larger issue of women in the gospel ministry is decided by the Church in harmony with the schedule outlined in 4. below.

3. To point out to those who may inquire that the issues raised by the Potomac Conference and Columbia Union cannot be resolved without deciding the central issue of women being eligible for ordination to the gospel ministry. The issues themselves are complex and many other factors are involved. However, once the central issue is decided by the Church, the other issues should be resolved by logical extension of the main issue.

4. To establish the following schedule of addressing the issues raised by the Columbia Union and Potomac Conference and the larger issue of women in the gospel ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as follows:

a. Each division will be asked to discuss the issues in preparation for a meeting of representatives from the world divisions sometime early in 1985.

b. A meeting of at least two representatives from each of the world divisions will be scheduled in connection with the General Conference Committee 1985 Spring Meeting. The meeting will be coordinated by the Biblical Research Institute.

c. The report of the meeting of division representatives will be presented to the 1985 Spring Meeting and recommendations will be referred to the 1985 General Conference Session for decision.

5. The Biblical Research Institute is requested to send to all delegates who will represent their divisions at the General Conference Session a balanced summary of the available theological positions in connection with this subject.

6. The decision of the 1985 General Conference Session will be definitive and should be accepted as such by the Church worldwide.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 1984, 84-391-392
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1984-10/index.djvu>).

October 15, 1984

ChMan/GCO/GCDOUP84AC/G84AC to FWW-85GCS

253-84G THE DEACONESS – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend CM p 94, The Deaconess, as follows:

THE DEACONESS

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches (Rom. 16:1, 2). Phebe was a servant—servant in this instance meaning “deaconess”—of the church at Cenchrea. Other references indicate that women served in the early church as deaconesses. ~~There is no record, however, that these women were ordained; hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.~~

“Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands.”—Mrs E G White, ADVENTIST REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD, July 9, 1895, page 271. The Church may arrange for the ordination of deaconesses by an ordained minister who holds current credentials from the conference.

The deaconess is elected to office, serving for a term of one year. It does not follow that the wife of a man chosen as deacon thereby becomes a deaconess because her husband is a deacon. The deaconess is to be chosen from the standpoint of consecration and other qualifications that fit her to discharge the duties of the office.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 1984, 84-399-400
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1984-10/index.djvu>).

October 15, 1984

ChMan/GCO/GCDOUP84AC/G84AC to FWW-85GCS

266-84G THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend CM p 182, The Conference President, as follows:

THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

The president of the conference should be an ordained minister of experience and good report. He stands at the head of the gospel ministry in his conference and is the chief elder, or overseer, of all the churches. He works for the spiritual welfare and upbuilding of the churches. He counsels them regarding their activities and plans. He has access to all the churches, church services, ~~and~~ business meetings, and church boards, and may, by virtue of his office, preside over the sessions of any of the churches when such a course is necessary. He has access to all church records, report books, et cetera.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 1984, 84-410
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1984-10/index.djvu>).

October 15, 1984

NADOUP/ADCOM/GCDOUP84AC/G84AC to DHB

247-84GN EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION – POLICY
AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC L 50-2, Examination of Candidates for Ordination, to read as follows:

2. The examination of candidates for ordination is conducted by ordained ministers. Ordained representatives of conferences/unions/divisions/General Conference, who are present, may be invited to assist in the examination. Where it is deemed advisable by the conference/mission executive committee, one or more lay persons may be selected to participate.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 1984, 84-436
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1984-10/index.djvu>).

April 4, 1985

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM to NCW-85GCS

175-85GNa ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

In light of a three-day study and discussion of topics such as equality in creation, divine ordering, examples of ordination in Scripture, consequences of the Pauling statements regarding women, the nature of the pastoral call, the priesthood of believers, the implications of cultural

conditioning in interpreting the Scriptures, the ordination of women as local church elders, the primacy of the home, and the ordination of women to the gospel ministry it was,

RECOMMENDED, 1. To take no definitive action at this time regarding the ordination of women to the gospel ministry

2. To maintain the Church's present position on this matter

3. To prepare further Biblical and other studies on the question of ordaining women by assigning specific topics to scholars and theologians for research

4. To assign discussion of the documents growing out of such research to a special representative committee which will be scheduled to meet early in 1988, its findings to be presented in a report to the 1988 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee and subsequently to the 1989 Annual Council at which time the entire issue will be reviewed.

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM to NCW-85GCS+85AC

175-85GNb WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH WORK

RECOMMENDED, 1. To urge that "affirmative action" for the involvement of women in the work of the Church be a priority plan with church leadership, and to request leaders to use their executive influence to open to women all aspects of ministry in the Church which do not require ordination.

2. To give special emphasis to the work of Bible Instructors, both women and men, and to urge that conference and field administrators restore this ministerial category to importance and accord it proper recognition in the work of the Church.

3. To recognize the desirability of a pastor and his wife working together as a team and the spiritual strength which will result through such combined ministry and to urge that this concept be studied further, together with the development of a financial plan and training program that would support its implementation wherever feasible.

4. To recognize that a great need exists to educate our people regarding the major roles that women may fill in the Lord's work without ordination, and to request that specific plans to meet this need be developed and presented to the 1985 Annual Council.

ONUP85SM/175-85SM to NCW-85GCS

175-85GNc MINISTERIAL ORDINATION REFORM OF PRACTICES

RECOMMENDED, To institute a reform in the Church's ordination practices for the purpose of limiting ministerial ordination only to those who perform direct pastoral, evangelistic, ecclesiastical, or other clearly ministerial-type duties.

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM to NCW-85GCS+NADCOM

175-85GNd MINISTERIAL WORKER FUNCTIONS IN NAD—CLARIFICATION

In view of the discussion regarding the functions assigned to ministerial workers in the North American Division, it was

RECOMMENDED, To request the North American Division Committee to clarify the functions of ministerial workers who hold ministerial licenses, including how such functions relate to women who serve as pastors or associates in pastoral care, and to request that a complete proposal on roles and procedures be submitted by the North American Division to the 1985 Annual Council for consideration.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 4, 1985, 85-104-105 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1985-04/index.djvu>).

October 15, 1985

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/GCO/G85AC to NCW&DHB-GCO

175-85GNb WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH WORK

The 1985 General Conference Session took an action entitled Women's Participation in Church Work (85-1120, 1121), the fourth paragraph of which reads as follows:

4. To recognize that a great need exists to educate our people regarding the major roles that women may fill in the Lord's work without ordination, and to request that specific plans to meet this need be developed and presented to the 1985 Annual Council.

In harmony with this directive it is

VOTED, 1. To utilize the Adventist Review, Ministry, Journal of Adventist Education and division and union papers as vehicles for educating our church members regarding the major roles that are open to women in the Lord's work without the need to be ordained to the gospel ministry.

2. To appoint a Women's Ministries Advisory Committee (GCC-S) to assist in implementing the publication of material referred to in paragraph 1. as follows:

Members

Holbrook, Betty Chairman (GC Coordinator for Women's Ministries)
Burton, Shirley
Fay, Jocelyn
Spangler, Marie
Rumble, Beverly
Sterndale, Elizabeth
Representatives from ethnic groups

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Select authors and articles for denominational publications which will educate the members regarding the roles open to women in the Church.
2. Encourage the preparation and publication of informative articles, series and special issues regarding women in the Church.
3. To make available to administrators reprints of articles and overruns of special issues to assist them in using their executive influence to open to women all aspects of ministry in the Church which do not require ordination to the gospel ministry. A pastoral letter from the General Conference president to division, union and college administrators will also be sent as the initial incentive in this special effort.
4. To appoint Betty Holbrook as Coordinator of Women's Ministries at the General Conference level, requesting that she meet once a quarter with the General Conference Officers to report and review problems and progress in connection with implementing "affirmative action" for women. Divisions, unions and conferences are requested to consider appropriate timing for taking a similar step.
5. To suggest that a woman be appointed by the North American Division officers to meet once a quarter with them for a similar purpose.
6. To request the Adventist Personnel System, in providing printouts of available personnel for filling positions, to draw attention in some way to women with special qualifications for particular roles, responsibilities or offices.
7. To use as one point of reference, among others, and as an evaluating instrument a tabulation of women occupying positions at the conference, union, division and General Conference levels. This should be used annually at the time of compiling material for the SDA Yearbook input to evaluate progress resulting from "affirmative action," in order to utilize more

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Recommend to the General Conference President for consideration by the General Conference Officers.
2. Work with the editors of denominational publications wherever appropriate and desirable.

fully the skills and strengths of women in the work of the Church. (A copy of the 1985 tabulation based on the 1985 Yearbook is attached to the Secretariat copy of these minutes.)

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/GCO/G85AC to NCW

175-85GNc MINISTERIAL ORDINATION—REFORM OF PRACTICES

VOTED, To reaffirm the action of the 1985 General Conference Session which reads as follows:

“To institute a reform in the Church’s ordination practices for the purpose of limiting ministerial ordination only to those who perform direct pastoral, evangelistic, ecclesiastical or other clearly ministerial-type duties.” (GCS 85-1121)

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/NADCOM/GCDOUP85AC/G85AC to NCW-G88SM+G89AC

175-85GNd MINISTERIAL WORKER FUNCTIONS IN NAD—CLARIFICATION

1985 General Conference Session Actions

The 54th General Conference Session requested the North American Division Committee “to clarify the functions of ministerial workers who hold ministerial licenses, including how such functions relate to women who serve as pastors or associates in pastoral care, and to request that a complete proposal on roles and procedures be submitted by the North American Division to the 1985 Annual Council for consideration.” (See GCS 85-1121.)

The above request was made in the context of the report of the Role of Women in the Church Committee which was also presented to the Session. That report included a recommendation accepted by the Session which reads as follows:

“VOTED, 1. To take no definitive action at this time regarding the ordination of women to the gospel ministry

“2. To maintain the Church’s present position on this matter

“3. To prepare further Biblical and other studies on the question of ordaining women by assigning specific topics to scholars and theologians for research

“4. To assign discussion of the documents growing out of such research to a special representative committee which will be scheduled to meet early in 1988, its findings to be presented in a report to the 1988 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee and subsequently to the 1989 Annual Council at which time the entire issue will be reviewed.” (GCS 85-1121)

North American Division Committee Request

The North American Division Committee met October 8 in response to the 1985 GC Session directive. There was extensive discussion regarding a new proposed policy NAD L 21, Associates in Pastoral Care—Role and Status, which would exclude “baptizing and solemnizing marriages” from the functions of an associate in pastoral care. A proposal to delete that exclusion was presented. After the discussion, NADCOM

“VOTED, To refer to the General Conference Officers for further study and counsel the proposal that associates in pastoral care be permitted to baptize and solemnize marriages, . . . : (Several suggestions follow which accompany the request.)

Counsel of the 1985 Annual Council

In the light of the position enunciated by the 1985 General Conference Session and the scheduled procedure established by the Session, which it is believed should in no way be preempted, it was

VOTED, To adopt the following action as counsel to the North American Division:

“1. To adhere closely to the General Conference/North American Division Working Policy and the Church Manual in all matters of practice pertaining to ministerial functions.

“2. To await the outcome of the process established by the 1985 General Conference Session before introducing any significant changes into North American Division policies affecting ministerial functions which relate to women.

“3. To take immediate steps to correct any practices in the area of ministerial function which are not in harmony with the General Conference policy and the Church Manual.

“4. To encourage women who aspire to serve in ministerial/gospel work to focus on the broad range of church activities open to them (see also agenda item on Women’s Participation in Church Work), but to encourage no expectation of broadened functions in the area of gospel ministry until the church has completed its study and announced its decision.” (GCDOUP 85-1093)

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 1985, 85-411-414 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1985-10/index.djvu>).

October 15, 1985

DRAFT OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION TO ANNUAL COUNCIL 1985

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

In pursuance of the action taken at the General Conference Session in July (85-1120, 1121) it is

RECOMMENDED, 1) That the Adventist Review, Ministry, Journal of Adventist Education, and division and union papers be selected initially as vehicles for educating "our people regarding the major roles that women may fill in the Lord's work without ordination" [to the gospel ministry]

2) That Jocelyn Faye, Marie Spangler, Beverly Rumble, and Shirley Burton be appointed to organize proposed special issues and series of informative and success-story articles for this purpose

3) That a coordinating group be set up, to include a representative of the president of the General Conference and two GC staff women named below, and be asked to review the selection of authors and articles contemplated in section 2 of this action, and prepare it for approval of the General Conference officers

4) That reprints of articles and overruns of special issues be made available to administrators to assist in using their executive influence "to open to women all aspects of ministry in the church which do not require ordination" and that a pastoral letter from the GC president to division, union and college administrators be the initial incentive in this direction

5) That Betty Holbrook be appointed Coordinator for Women's Affairs at the General Conference level, meeting once a quarter with the GC officers to report and review problems and progress in connection with implementing "affirmative action" for women, and that divisions, unions, and conferences consider the timing for taking a similar step; that a woman be appointed by the North American Division officers to meet once a quarter with them for a similar purpose.

6) That the Adventist Personnel System, in providing print-outs of available personnel for filling positions, draw attention in some way to women with qualifications for the particular role, responsibility or office.

7) That a tabulation of women occupying positions at the local church, conference, union, division, and General Conference level in 1985 be used as one point of reference, among others, in evaluating annually at the time of the SDA Year Book input, progress resulting from the above action toward utilizing more fully the skills and strengths of this important majority in the human resources potential of the denomination

MAJOR CHURCH ROLES

Which Do Not Require Ordination and Are Open to Women
Qualified for Leadership

Level and Position

Family

Spiritual Leader

Rationale for Selection

Basic Unit of Church and Society

Family Worship one of the greatest needs in church

Health Educator	Body is temple of the Holy Spirit
Local Church	
Elder	Presides half of Sabbath worship time
Sabbath School Supt.	Controls half of Sabbath worship time
Associate in Pastoral Care	Shares in work of pastor
Home and School Assn Pres	Visibility
Elem School Principal	"
Delegate to Conf Session	"
Conference/Mission	
Secretary	Visibility and power
Treasurer	"
Department director or associate	"
Executive committee member	"
Academy principal	"
Pastor's wife, on salary	"
Bible Instructor	"
Campmeeting speaker	"
Delegate to union session	"
Union Conference/Mission	
Secretary	Visibility and power
Treasurer	"
Department director	"
College administrator (including department chair)	"
Executive committee member	"
Division	
Secretary	"
Treasurer	"
Department	"
College Administrator	"
Executive committee member	"
General Conference	
Secretary	"
Treasurer	"
Department	"
Executive committee member	"

MAJOR CHURCH ROLES

Which Do Not Require Ordination and Are Open to Women Qualified for Leadership

<u>Level and Position</u>	<u>Prototype</u>	<u>Openings</u>	<u>Women Incumbents</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Family				
1 Spiritual Leader	Mrs. Habenicht		*	
2 Health Educator	Mrs. Murray		*	
Local Church				
3 Elder	Eunice Soper	NAD 4241	*	
4 Associate in Pastoral Care	Marsha Frost	NAD 4241	20?	
5 Sabbath School Supt.	Otis Neblett	NAD 4396	2681	61%
6 Home and School Assn Pres		NAD 1234	*	
7 Elem School Principal	Miriam Tymeson, JNA	NAD 1234	*	

8	Delegate to Conf Session			*
9	Lay preacher	Mrs Gonzalez, SCC, IAD		
Conference/Mission				
10	Secretary	---	389	YB
11	Treasurer	Helen Turner	SWR 389	YB
12	Department director	Mildred Summerton	WI x5	YB
13	or associate	Elizabeth Hudak	FL	"
14	Executive committee member	Mrs D I Coggin	TX x15	YB
15	Academy principal	Leona Burman	EMCA	YB
16	Pastor's wife, on salary	Michigan Conf. job desc		*
17	Bible Instructor	Louise Kleuser		*
18	Camp meeting speaker	Ella Stoneburner	PC '85	*
19	Delegate to union session	Janet Arms AE	CU '81	*
Union Conference/Mission				
20	Secretary	---	83	0
21	Treasurer	Agda Hansen	WNU 83	1
22	Department director	Frances Clark	SWU x5	2
23	or associate	Frieda Hoffer	CU	14
24	College administrator	Merlene Ogden	AU.A&S 91	*
25	(including dept chair)	Mrs H D Erickson	SUD	*
26	Executive committee member	Betty Ahnberg	CU x20	53
Division				
27	Secretary	Faye Reid (asst to)	IAD 10	1
28	Treasurer	Beulah Peterson (asst)	10	5
	Comptroller	Rowena Rick	FED	1
29	Department	Glenda Rolfe (asc)	FED x9	8
30	College Administrator	Maria Tumangday	FED 10?	*
31	(including dept chairman)	Mrs H D Erickson	SUD	*
32	Executive committee member	Mrs M J Imrie	AUD x30	15
General Conference				
33	Secretary	---	1	0
34	Treasurer	Mrs. M I Chapman 77-83	1	0
35	Department leader	Flora Plummer	7	0
36	or associate	Ethel Young	59	7
38	Executive committee member (AC Devotional Speaker) (GC Session Dev. Speaker)	Mrs A K Jacobson	HQ100	10

GENERAL CONFERENCE 1985

Assistant Secretary: Rowena Olson, Eunice Rozema
 Assistant Director, Archives & Statistics: Evelyn D. Osborn
 Assistant Director of Personnel Administration: Hazel Medvee

Associate Director of Communication: Shirley Burton
 Associate Director of Education: Dr. Marion L. Hartlein
 Associate Directors Health and Temperance: Iris Hayden, Elizabeth Sterndale, Irma Vyhmeister
 Associate Directors, Sabbath School: Helen C. Craig, Alice Lowe
 Director, Home & Family Service: Betty Holbrook

Elective members, GC Committee: Mrs. A K Jacobsen, Mrs. Dolores Maupin
(Two dropped out at GC Session)

DIVISIONS 1985

Administration: Rowena Rick, comptroller FED
Beulah Peterson, Asst Treasurer IAD
Martha Grassel, Adm Asst to the Treasurer, IAD
Faye Reid, Adm Asst to the Secretary, IAD

Departmental: Associate, Health: Helda Ramda AUD, Phyllis Collins EAD, Hannelore Witzig EUD, Glenda Rolfe FED, (NAD)
Associate, Education: Lorraine Felker FED, (NAD)
Associate, Sabbath School: Lynelle R Chester AUD, Patricia Bailey FED, Mrs. William L. Sharalaya SUD

Executive Committee members: Mrs M J Imrie, Mrs R Marks, Mrs K H Mead + Dep AUD; Dep EUD; Asst Tr IAD; Comt + 3 Dep FED; 2 GC NAD; Mrs Peggy Mason NED; Dep SUD

UNIONS:		<u>Administration</u>	<u>Departments</u>	<u>Executive Committee</u>
AID	Indian Ocean	--	--	--
	Nigeria	--	--	--
	Rwanda	--	--	--
	Sahel	--	--	--
	West Africa	--	--	--
	W. Central Africa	--	--	--
	Zaire	--	--	--
AUD	Central Pacific	--	--	Mrs L AhKoy
	Papua New Guinea	--	--	Norma Keno
	Trans-Australian	--	--	Blutcher, Jones, Mead
	Trans-Tasman	--	--	Maisie Fook, Fay Greive
	Western Pacific	--	--	--
EAD	Eastern Africa	--	--	--
	Ethiopia	--	--	Mrs Meheret Borru
	SE Africa	--	--	--
	Tanzania	--	--	--
	Zambezi	--	--	Mrs J Kimbute
	Zambia	--	--	--
EUD	Angola	--	--	Grassl
	Austrian	--	--	--
	Bulgarian	--	--	--
	Czechoslovakian	--	--	--
	Franco-Belgian	--	--	--
	GDR	--	--	Bischof, Voigt
	Hungarian	--	--	Fegyverneky

	Italian	--	--	Vacca?
	Mozambique	--	--	--
	Portuguese	--	--	Furtado
	Romanian	--	--	--
	S German	--	--	--
	Spanish	--	--	Casellas
	Swiss	--	--	Clerc
	W German	--	--	--
	Yugoslavian	--	--	?
FED	Central Philippine	--	Niere, Villasario	Diaz, Fuentes, Jamandre, Miraflores
	East Indonesian	--	Oliver, Mausea	--
	Japan	?	?	?
	Korean	?	?	?
	North Philippine	--	Conopio, Guadiz	Barizo, Aquino, Frias
	South China Island	--	Magarang	(Magarang)
	South Philippine	--	Flores, Camagay	(de Angel)
	Southeast Asia	--	Bassham	(Bassham)
	West Indonesian	--	Rantung	--
IAD	Antillian	--	--	--
	Caribbean	--	Modeste	--
	Central American	--	--	--
	Colombia-Venezuela	--	--	Moreno
	Franco-Haitian	--	--	--
	Mexican	--	--	--
	West Indies	--	--	Gouldbourne, Morgan
NAD	Atlantic	Cantrell	--	Brannon, Dell, Kidder, Gr
	Canadian	--	--	--
	Columbia	--	Hoffer, Brooks	Ahnb, Clem, LaT, Lind, Ware
	Lake	--	--	Fisher, Jackson, Slikkers
	Mid-America	--	--	Hendricks
	North Pacific	--	Lee	Cra Eddl Souz Tong Yamash
	Pacific	--	Patee, Matthews	--
	Southern	Beers	Marshall	Bergherm, Rushing, Socol
	Southwestern	--	Clark	(C) Patt Reese vonPohle
NED	British	--	--	--
	Finland	--	--	--
	Netherlands	--	--	--
	Polish	--	--	--
	Swedish	--	--	--
	West Nordic	--	--	--
SAD	Austral	asst trs	--	--
	Chile	--	--	--
	East Brazil	--	--	--

	Inca	--	--	--
	North Brazil	--	--	?
	South Brazil	--	--	--
SUD	Bangladesh	--	?	?
	Burma	--	?	?
	Central India	--	--	--
	Northeast India	--	?	--
	Northern Union	--	--	--
	Pakistan	--	--	--
	South India	--	1	--
Sri Lanka		--	--	--
GC	Middle East	--	--	--
	South African	--	--	--
	Southern	--	--	--

CONFERENCE/MISSION/SECTION

AID	Seychelles	--	--	--
	E Rwanda	--	--	--
	Togo-Benin	--	--	Mrs Amenyinu
	C-S Cameroun	--	--	--
	N Shaba	--	--	--
AUD	Samoa	--	--	Mrs Saloma Mulitalu
	Sepik	--	--	--
	Greater Sydney	--	--	Baldwin, McMurtry
	New Caledonia	--	--	Mariller, Waheo
EAD	S Kenya	--	--	Mrs A Nyamache
	C Lake	--	--	Mrs I Mpando
	C Zimbabwe	--	--	Mrs M Musvidziwa
	S Botswana	--	--	Mokgatle, Motsemme
EUD	N Association	--	--	--
	Belgian-Luxembourg	--	--	Mrs Jacques Ballieux
	W Saxonian	--	--	Inge Voigt
	S Bavarian	--	--	Inge Reithmayer
	W Berlin	--	--	Erika Friedl
	N African	--	--	--
FED	C Sulawesi	--	--	--
	Okinawa	--	--	Setsuko Higa, Shiko Miyagi
	C Luzon	--	--	--
	NE Mindanao	--	--	--
	C Sumatra	--	--	--
	Guam-Micronesia	--	--	Candi Santos?
IAD	E Caribbean	--	--	--
	El Salvador	--	--	Mrs Sinforsoso Alvarado
	Pacific Colombia	--	--	Mrs Elvira Duarte
	C Mexican	--	--	Irma Lemus
	Bahamas	--	--	Ruth White

NAD	Bermuda	--	--	Ellen Doublas
	Maritime	--	--	Pearl LeBlanc, J Morse
	Potomac	Proctor	--	Duke, Kurtz, Marter, Ware
	Illinois	--	M Best	Shirley Monroe
	Oregon	--	L Miller	Bauer, Bryson, McHan
	S California	--	--	Burns, Lindegren, Sanchez, Whit-
	Kentucky-Tenn.	--	Thomsen, Morse	Campbell, Socol, Walper
	Texas	--	Andrews, Williams	Coggin, Longoria
NED	E Finland	--	--	Aittala, Virtanen
	W Polish	Mrs M Czajewska- Maniecka	--	--
	Iceland	--	--	--
SAD	Uruguay	--	--	--
	Rio de Janeiro	--	--	--
	W Bolivia	--	--	--
	Parana	--	--	--
SUD	Delta	?	?	?
	Mizo	?	?	?
	Punjab	--	--	--

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 1985, Supplement
<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1985-10/index.djvu>).

October 9, 1987

CredLic/CredLic/GCO/GCO/GCDO86AC/122-86GNb/87AC to FGT

VOTED, To record that if world divisions choose to select a term which applies to individuals who carry major responsibilities or who are placed in leadership roles which do not ordinarily lead to ordination as a gospel minister, the division may request the General Conference to approve the establishment of the Commissioned Minister category for denominational workers in its territory.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 9, 1987, 87-401
<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1987-10a/index.djvu>).

October 13, 1987

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/175-85GNa/119-86GNa/GCO/87AC to NCW

110-87GNd ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY – REPORT
(Role of Women Commission)

Neal C Wilson reminded the Annual Council that the General Conference Session of 1985 mandated the establishment of a Role of Women Commission. About thirty new studies have been prepared regarding the ordination of women to the Gospel Ministry. This Commission is to meet prior to the 1988 Spring Meeting and its recommendations are to be reviewed at the 1989 Annual Council. The final recommendation is to be reviewed at the 1989 Annual Council. The final recommendation is to be presented to the 1990 General Conference Session. Approximately 75 people have been asked to serve on the Commission.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 13, 1987, 87-570
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1987-10c/index.djvu>).

April 7, 1988

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/175-85GN/119-86GN/110-87GN/88SM to NCW-89AC+90GCS

105-88GN ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY—REPORT OF ROLE OF WOMEN COMMISSION

March 24-27 approximately 80 persons representing all the Divisions of the General Conference met to study and discuss topics such as equality in creation, divine ordering, examples of ordination in Scripture, consequences of the Pauline statements regarding women, the nature of the pastoral call, the priesthood of believers, the implications of cultural conditioning in interpreting the Scriptures, the ordination of women as local elders, the primacy of the home, and the ordination of women to the gospel ministry. The group met in response to the following action taken by the General Conference in Session in New Orleans on July 11, 1985.

“VOTED, 1. To take no definitive action at this time regarding the ordination of women to the gospel ministry

2. To maintain the Church’s present position on this matter

3. To prepare further Biblical and other studies on the question of ordaining women by assigning specific topics to scholars and theologians for research

4. To assign discussion of the documents growing out of such research to a special representative committee which will be scheduled to meet early in 1988, its findings to be presented in a report to the 1988 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee and subsequently to the 1989 Annual Council at which time the entire issue will be reviewed.”

As required by paragraph 4 above, Neal C Wilson reported on the recent meeting of the Role of Women Commission on the ordination of women to the gospel ministry. Approximately forty papers which had been requested and seven or eight unsolicited papers were available for review and study. Of these papers, 20 had been prepared specifically for this meeting. Before open discussion took place the participants divided into six groups to study various areas of concern for about 5 ½ hours.

Two surveys were considered, one from the North American Division in which 12,000 questionnaires had been used, and another prepared by Arlene Taylor as a part of her doctoral dissertation. The latter was sent to (a) 200 members of the Association of Adventist Women, (b) 200 members of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Nurses (ASDAN), and (c) 200 Adventist women at large. Members of the Association of Adventist Women placed ordination of women second in priority of concerns that women have in the Adventist Church. Members of the other two groups placed ordination of women as number seventeen and eighteen among issues that concern the Adventist woman.

The commission agreed that new studies should be prepared from a biblical standpoint on the ordination of women, and from these papers a special group of persons should develop a consensus paper. This material would then be presented to the Role of Women Commission for its study.

In the minds and eyes of most of the division presidents, the biblical model supports the present stand of the Church. They find nothing to suggest that it ought to be changed. There is a feeling that the Church could become fragmented. The division presidents insisted that the Church must agree on a united policy regarding this subject. It is important to retain unity in this matter. The consensus of the group was that it is not against Scripture to ordain women as church elders and deaconesses. But the big issue is the ordination of women to the gospel ministry.

Another meeting of the Role of Women Commission is called for July 12-18, 1989 at Cohutta Springs Adventist Center, Crandall, Georgia. That will give time for the reports to be pulled together so a presentation can be made to the 1989 Annual Council as agreed at the 1985 General Conference Session. The Council will then decide the nature and details of the report that should be brought to the 1990 General Conference Session.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 7, 1988, 88-132-134
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1988-04/index.djvu>).

October 6, 1988

ChMan/GCDO88AC/88AC to CDW-90GCS

296-88G ORDINATION OF LOCAL ELDER – CHURCH MANUAL REVISION
(The Church Elder—Ordination of Local Elder)

RECOMMENDED, To revise CM 57, Ordination of Local Elder, to read as follows:

Ordination of Local Elder. – Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder has authority to function in that office. During the interim between election and ordination, the elected elder may function as church leader but not administer the ordinances of the church.

The ordination service is only performed by an ordained minister with credentials from the local conference. It may be a courtesy to invite a visiting ordained minister to assist in the ordination, but only on the specific request of the local conference officers would the visiting ordained minister conduct the ordination.

The sacred rite of ordination should be simply performed in the presence of the church, and may include a brief outline of the office of elder, the qualities required, and the principal duties the elder will be authorized to perform for the church. After the exhortation, the minister, assisted by other ordained ministers and/or local ordained elders who are participating in the service, will ordain the elder by prayer and the laying on of hands. Having once been ordained as a church elder, ordination is not required again upon reelection to office as an elder, or upon election as elder of another church, provided that good and regular standing in the church has been maintained. One who has been ordained as elder is thereby qualified to serve subsequently in the deaconate office.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 6, 1988, 88-350
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1988-10/index.djvu>).

October 5, 1989

104-GNa ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY—REPORT OF ROLE OF WOMEN COMMISSION

Neal C Wilson reviewed the history, beginning in 1973, when a group was commissioned to study the role of women in the Church and ending with the meeting in Cohutta Springs, Georgia in July of this year. Discussion followed and was continued in the afternoon. The action appears in the minutes of the afternoon session.

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/175-85GNa/119-86GNa/110-87GNa/88SM/105-88GN/
RoleWomen89/GCO/GCDOUP89AC/89AC to NCW-90GCS

104-89GNa ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY—REPORT OF ROLE OF WOMEN COMMISSION

Prior to the vote being taken, adequate time was given for a full and lengthy discussion. Neal C Wilson then gave a summary. W Floyd Bresee offered prayer after which the attendees were requested to pray in small groups. Two secret ballots were requested—the first by all attendees and the second by only members of the General Conference Committee.

The results of the two votes were as follows:

Attendees – 187 Yes, 97 No

General Conference Committee Members – 104 Yes, 77 No

VOTED, To accept the following report and recommendations of the Role of Women Commission and to refer them to the 1990 General Conference Session for approval:

The presidents of the world divisions of the General Conference reported to the Commission on the situation in their fields with respect to the ordaining of women to the gospel ministry. In several divisions there is little or no acceptance of women in the role of pastors, ordained or otherwise. In other divisions some unions would accept women as pastors, but indications are that the majority of unions do not find this acceptable. However, in the North American Division there seems to be wider support of the ordination of women.

The division presidents also reported that based upon extensive discussions, committees, commissions, surveys, etc, there exists the probability that approving the ordination of women would result in disunity, dissension, and perhaps even schism. Hence the presidents came to these two conclusions:

1. A decision to ordain women as pastors would not be welcomed or meet with approval in most of the world Church.
2. The provisions of the Church Manual and the General Conference Working Policy, which allow only for ordination to the gospel ministry on a worldwide basis, have strong support by the divisions.

The General Conference and division officers present at the Commission concur with the conclusions of the presidents.

The Commission, having listened to the arguments and presentations for and against the ordination of women; having sensed the needs and concerns of the world field; having carefully considered what is probably best and the least disruptive for the world Church at this time; and recognizing the importance of our eschatological mission, the witness and image of our spiritual family, and the need for oneness of and unity in the Church, reports to the 1989 Annual Council of the General Conference the following results of its deliberation:

1. While the Commission does not have a consensus as to whether or not the scriptures and the writings of Ellen G White explicitly advocate or deny the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, it concludes unanimously that these sources affirm a significant, wide-ranging, and continuing ministry for women which is being expressed and will be evidenced in varied and expanding gifts according to the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

2. Further, in view of the widespread lack of support for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry in the world Church, and in view of the possible risk of disunity, dissension, and diversion from the mission of the Church, the Commission recommends to the 1989 Annual Council that

a. We do not recommend authorization for women to be ordained to the gospel ministry.

b. Those who have, without regard to gender, been recognized as commissioned ministers or licensed ministers may perform essentially the ministerial functions of an ordained minister of the gospel in the churches to which they are assigned, subject to division authorization of this provision, if the following conditions apply:

- 1) The individual has completed approved ministerial training.
- 2) The individual has been called by a conference to serve in a full-time pastoral-evangelistic-ministerial role.
- 3) The individual has been elected and ordained as a local church elder.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 5, 1989, 89-384-389
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1989-10a/index.djvu>).

October 9, 1989

ONUP85SM/175-85GN/85SM/85GCS/175-85GNa/119-86GNa/110-87GNa/88SM/105-88GN/RoleWomen89/GCO/GCDOUP89AC/89AC/89AC to NCW-90GCS

104-89GNa ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY—REPORT OF ROLE OF WOMEN COMMISSION – CLARIFICATION

The Chairman expressed the need to discuss the action on the report of the Role of Women Commission. It had been brought to his attention that there is a difference of opinion among attendees at the Annual Council on the procedures to be followed in the handling of this item.

This difference of opinion is occasioned by the fact that the action of the 1985 General Conference Session on the matter of the ordination of women to the gospel ministry seems to imply first, that a report of the study of the subject would be made to the 1990 General Conference Session; and second, that clarification of the role of licensed ministers and associates in pastoral care should be made at the 1985 Annual Council.

There was an initial clarification of the second point at the 1985 Annual Council. However, the second part of the Role of Women Commission Report further addresses this same matter. Therefore it seems appropriate to assume that this item should not be included in the

recommendation to the General Conference Session but rather that it should be cared for by the 1989 Annual Council as a policy item. After a lengthy discussion it was,

VOTED, To record that it is the sense of this body that the action on item 104-89GNa, Ordination of Women to the Gospel Ministry—Report of Role of Women Commission, taken on Thursday afternoon (see GCC 89-387), October 5, 1989 be interpreted and processed as follows:

1. That the following portion of the report dealing with the ordination of women be referred to the 1990 General Conference Session for approval:

“The presidents of the world divisions of the General Conference reported to the Commission on the situation in their fields with respect to the ordaining of women to the gospel ministry. In several divisions there is little or no acceptance of women in the role of pastors, ordained or otherwise. In other divisions some unions would accept women as pastors, but indications are that the majority of unions do not find this acceptable. However, in the North American Division there seems to be wider support of the ordination of women.

“The division presidents also reported that based upon extensive discussions, committees, commissions, surveys, etc, there exists the probability that approving the ordination of women would result in disunity, dissension, and perhaps even schism. Hence the presidents came to these two conclusions:

“1. A decision to ordain women as pastors would not be welcomed or meet with approval in most of the world Church.

“2. The provisions of the Church Manual and the General Conference Working Policy, which allow only for ordination to the gospel ministry on a worldwide basis, have strong support by the divisions.

“The General Conference and division officers present at the Commission concur with the conclusions of the presidents.

“The Commission, having listened to the arguments and presentations for and against the ordination of women; having sensed the needs and concerns of the world field; having carefully considered what is probably best and the least disruptive for the world Church at this time; and recognizing the importance of our eschatological mission, the witness and image of our spiritual family, and the need for oneness of and unity in the Church, reports to the 1989 Annual Council of the General Conference the following results of its deliberation:

“1. While the Commission does not have a consensus as to whether or not the scriptures and the writings of Ellen G White explicitly advocate or deny the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, it concludes unanimously that these sources affirm a significant, wide-ranging, and continuing ministry for women which is being expressed and will be evidenced in varied and expanding gifts according to the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

“2. Further, in view of the widespread lack of support for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry in the world Church, and in view of the possible risk of disunity, dissension, and

diversion from the mission of the Church, the Commission recommends to the 1989 Annual Council that

“a. We do not recommend authorization for women to be ordained to the gospel ministry.”

2. That in harmony with the directive of the 1985 General Conference Session, the following portion of the recommendation be final with the 1989 Annual Council with the understanding that a report will be made to the 1990 General Conference Session:

“b. Those who have, without regard to gender, been recognized as commissioned ministers or licensed ministers may perform essentially the ministerial functions of an ordained minister of the gospel in the churches to which they are assigned, subject to division authorization of this provision, if the following conditions apply:

“1) The individual has completed approved ministerial training.

“2) The individual has been called by a conference to serve in a full-time pastoral-evangelistic-ministerial role.

“3) The individual has been elected and ordained as a local church elder.”

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 9, 1989, 89-429-431
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1989-10a/index.djvu>).

October 10, 1989

RoleWomen89/GCO/GCDOUP89AC/89AC to NCW

104-89GNb ROLE OF WOMEN COMMISSION—SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS

The women in attendance at the 1989 Cohutta Springs meeting of the Role of Women Commission presented certain significant concerns other than ordination that relate to the broader scope of the role of women. The following concerns were largely confirmed by the responses to the survey conducted by the General Conference Women’s Ministries Advisory of worldwide denominationally employed women who have leadership and supervisory responsibilities.

VOTED, 1. To approve the recommendation on the significant concerns of women as expressed by them at the 1989 Role of Women Commission meeting and as augmented by the survey conducted by the General Conference Women’s Ministries Advisory as follows:

a. Equality—1) Job descriptions—Develop job descriptions for all positions to assure that employees are fairly assigned and compensated.

2) Remuneration and Benefits—Assure that remuneration and benefits are applied on the basis of the position rather than gender or marital status. Encourage expressions of affirmation and appreciation which also contribute to a sense of accomplishment.

3) Employment and Termination Practices—Assure that equal opportunities exist in the hiring process and practices of the organization and develop clear and unbiased policies on termination of employment.

4) Appeals—Develop procedures which provide an appeal mechanism for employees who believe they have been inequitably treated. Ensure that such an appeal protects the employee's job security during and following the appeal process.

5) Decision Making—Include women in the decision-making process, with appropriate consideration of ethnic/national background.

6) Service Records—Assure that all employees (including part time) receive service credit in proportion to the amount of time worked. Maintain service records so that breaks in service due to parental responsibilities or spouse relocation do not penalize the employee's accumulation of service credit.

b. Development—1) Shepherdess Organization—The Shepherdess Organization needs to be emphasized and strengthened on all church levels. Where it is not possible to employ a full-time Shepherdess coordinator a suitable individual should be designated as the one who will foster programs to meet the specific needs of pastors' spouses. Budgetary provision should be made to cover travel and office expenses as needed.

2) Women's Ministries Coordinators—A Women's Ministries Coordinator to coordinate ministries for all Adventist women, both lay and denominational employees, should be employed as follows:

- a) Full-time at General Conference and division levels.
- b) At least half-time at union and local conference levels.

3) Career Paths for Women—Career paths for women should be more clearly defined by

a) Providing women with professional growth opportunities and recognizing the workload they carry with increased compensation.

b) Creating new job categories between secretary and elected positions through which women can move as they gain experience and are assigned greater responsibilities.

c) Paying special attention to the needs of pastors' spouses as follows by

(1) Developing a system of fair compensation for pastors' spouses who are part of a ministerial team.

(2) Encouraging team ministry.

d) Addressing the concerns of Bible Instructors who face problems peculiar to their specific role.

c. Respect and Recognition—Respect for and recognition of the talents of women should be facilitated by

1) Including a significant number of qualified women on committees at every level of church and institutional organization.

2) Implementing the use of inclusive written and verbal language throughout the Church in policies, publications, preaching, and teaching.

3) Developing understanding, attitudes, and practices of appropriate professional relationships between men and women through interpersonal skills seminars, lectures, media presentations, etc.

2. To record the appreciation of the Annual Council for the above suggestions and to encourage each organizational entity and each institution to incorporate women in leadership by giving study to the foregoing concerns so as to achieve the spirit and purpose of this proposal.

3. To record the following processes and recommendations to assist organizations in evaluating their status with respect to the role of women:

a. Review job descriptions for all positions, not subject to ordination, in order to ensure the way is open for the appointment or election of qualified persons regardless of gender.

b. Include women among those considered for appointment and election to positions not requiring ordination.

c. Provide the possibility of appropriate training and work experience where these prevent otherwise qualified women from being appointed or elected.

d. Include women on all committees and boards. Where committee and board membership profiles permit, at least two women should be appointed with the goal of at least 25 percent among those categories of membership where a sufficient number of women are eligible for membership.

e. Include at each constituent level a minimum of 25 percent women as delegates among those categories of delegates where sufficient women are eligible.

f. Review these recommendations and their implementation on each organizational level annually and prior to constituency meetings.

4. To record that the General Conference may authorize the Women's Ministries Advisory to seek progress reports from the world divisions.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 10, 1989, 89-506-509
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1989-10b/index.djvu>).

October 9, 1992

Cred&Lic/PolRev&Dev/GCDOUP92AC/92AC to AHT

149-92G CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES (Ministerial Employees—Ordained and Licensed)
– POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC D 05, Credentials and Licenses, section D 05 10, Ministerial Employees—Ordained and Licensed, to read as follows:

D 05 10 Ministerial Employees—Ordained, ~~and~~ Licensed, and Commissioned—1. Ministerial Credential ~~to~~ To ordained ministers.

2. Ministerial License ~~to~~ To nonordained pastors, evangelists, and Bible teachers who are on the path toward ordination. (See L 25 30.)

3. Commissioned Minister Credential—a. Where applicable, to associates in pastoral care; Bible instructors; General Conference, division, union, and local conference treasurers and departmental directors including associate and assistant directors; institutional chaplains; presidents and vice presidents of major institutions; auditors (General Conference director, associates, area and district directors); and field directors of the Christian Record Services, Inc. These individuals should have significant experience in denominational service, usually not fewer than five years, and demonstrate proficiency in the responsibilities assigned to them.

b. It is recommended that an appropriate commissioning service be conducted when an employee is granted a Commissioned Minister Credential.

c. It is not the practice to ordain an individual holding a Commissioned Minister Credential.

4. Commissioned Minister License—Where applicable, to employees listed in paragraph 3, with limited experience (fewer than five years).

Cred&Lic/PolRev&Dev/GCDOUP92AC/92AC to AHT

151-92G CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES (Teachers) – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC D 05, Credentials and Licenses, section D 05 17, Teachers, paragraph 1-b, to read as follows:

b. Commissioned Ministry of Teaching License—Where applicable, to licensed/certificated teachers/educators with not fewer than three years of satisfactory service, who have ~~demonstrated~~ a commitment to long-term service in the Seventh-day Adventist system of education, who support the fundamental beliefs of the Church, and whose lifestyle is consistent with acceptable Adventist Christian behavior.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 9, 1992, 92-160-161 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1992-10a/index.djvu>).

October 6, 1993

ChMan/ADCOM/GCDOUP93AC/93AC to CBR-95GCS

161-93G THE CHURCH ELDER, ORDINATION OF LOCAL ELDER – *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual* page 57, The Church Elder, Ordination of Local Elder, to read as follows:

Ordination of Local Elder—Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder has authority to function in that office. During the interim between election and ordination, the elected elder may function as church leader but not administer the ordinances of the church.

The ordination service is only performed by an ordained minister with credentials from the local conference. It may be a courtesy to invite a visiting ordained minister to assist in the ~~ordination, but only~~ ordination. However, only on the specific request of the local conference officers would ~~the a~~ a visiting ordained minister or a retired ordained minister conduct the ordination.

The sacred rite of ordination should be simply performed in the presence of the ~~church;~~ church and may include a brief outline of the office of elder, the qualities required, and the principal duties the elder will be authorized to perform for the church. After the exhortation, the minister, assisted by other ordained ministers and/or local ordained elders who are participating in the service, will ordain the elder by prayer and the laying on of hands. Having once been ordained as a church elder, ordination is not required again upon reelection to office as an elder, or upon election as elder of another church, provided that good and regular standing in the church has been maintained. One who has been ordained as elder is thereby qualified to serve subsequently in the deaconate office.

MIN/ChMan/ChMan/MIN/ChMan/211-92G/ADCOM/GCDOUP93AC/93AC to CBR-95GCS

111-93G TRAINING AND EQUIPPING OF LOCAL ELDERS – *CHURCH MANUAL*
ADDITION

RECOMMENDED, To add a new section, Training and Equipping of Local Elders, to page 58 of the *Church Manual* following the section entitled, Ordination of Local Elder, to read as follows:

Training and Equipping of Local Elders—The Ministerial Association, in cooperation with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of local church elders. While the pastor has the primary responsibility for training local elders, conferences/missions/fields are encouraged to schedule periodic meetings designed for training them. In order to support a pastor-elder team relationship it is recommended that pastors also attend these meetings. Leaders of companies who function in the place of local elders should also be invited to attend.

ChMan/ADCOM/GCDOUP93AC/93AC to CBR-95GCS

160-93G THE CHURCH ELDER, TO COOPERATE WITH THE CONFERENCE – *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual* pages 59 and 60, The Church Elder, To Cooperate With the Conference, to read as follows:

To Cooperate With the Conference—All church officers, including the pastor and elder, should cooperate fully with the conference officers and departmental directors in carrying out all local, union, division, and General Conference plans. They should inform the church of all regular and special offerings, and should promote all the programs and activities of the church.

The elder should work very closely with the church ~~treasurer~~, treasurer and see that all conference funds are remitted to the conference treasurer at the close of each month. Personal attention should be given to seeing that the church clerk's report is sent promptly to the conference secretary at the close of each quarter.

The elder should regard all correspondence from the conference office as important. Letters calling for announcements to the church should be presented at the proper time.

The ~~elder~~ head elder, in the absence of and in cooperation with the pastor, should see that delegates to conference sessions are ~~elected~~, elected and that the names of such delegates are sent to the conference office by the clerk.

~~As a wise counselor, help should be given~~ The elder should give counsel and help to officers in the church to measure up fully to their responsibilities in cooperating with the conference, in carrying out all plans and policies, and in seeing that all reports are accurately and promptly forwarded.

ChMan/ChMan/ChMan/209-92G/ADCOM/GCDOUP93AC/93AC to CBR-95GCS

109-93G INDUCTION SERVICE FOR CHURCH OFFICERS – *CHURCH MANUAL*
ADDITION

RECOMMENDED, To add a new section, Induction Service, at the end of Chapter 6 of the *Church Manual*, page 71, to read as follows:

Induction Service

All newly elected officers of the local church may be included in a service of induction conducted by a minister holding a current license or credential. If no minister is available, an ordained elder of the local church may conduct the induction service.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 6, 1993, 93-80-84
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1993-10a/Index.djvu>).

October 9, 1994

NADOUP/NADOUP/94YE/GCDOUP94AC/94AC to ACM-95GCS

305-94G NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION REQUEST – ORDINATION

VOTED, 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 committees take specific actions approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, women may be ordained to serve in those divisions.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 9, 1994, 94-347
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1994-10C/Index.djvu>).

October 8, 1996

WM/ADCOM/GC&Div96AC/GCDO96AC/96AC to AHT(DIV)

204-96G HUMAN RELATIONS – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC B 17, Human Relations, to read as follows:

B 17 Human Relations

[non-relevant content omitted here]

B 17 10 Official Position—~~1. All persons should~~ The world Church supports nondiscrimination in employment practices and policies and upholds the principle that both men and women, without regard to race and color, shall be given full and equal opportunity within the Church to develop the knowledge and skills needed in for the building up of that church, the Church, and all service and positions of leadership Positions of service and responsibility (except those requiring ordination to the gospel ministry*) on all levels of church activity should shall be open to all on the basis of qualifications without regard to race. the individual's qualifications.

~~2. 1. Membership and office in all churches and on all levels must~~ the local church, and at various levels of administration, shall be available to anyone who qualifies, without regard to race. race, color, or gender.

~~3. 2. The appointment of church pastors~~ individuals to serve as Bible instructors or chaplains, or in departmental or pastoral responsibilities, shall not be limited by race or color. Neither shall these positions be limited by gender (except those requiring ordination to the gospel ministry*).

~~4. 3. In educational institutions there should~~ shall be no racial bias bias on the basis of race, color, or gender in the employment of teachers or other personnel nor in the admission of students.

~~5. 4. Hospitals and other health care institutions should~~ shall make no racial distinction on the basis of race, color, or gender in admitting patients or in making their facilities available to physicians, interns, residents, nurses, and administrators who meet the professional standards of the institution.

~~6. 5. All organizations and institutions shall provide employment and advancement opportunities without regard to race or color.~~ race, color, or gender to persons who qualify.

~~7. 6. Employment opportunities, membership on committees and boards, and nomination to office shall not be limited by race or color.~~ Neither shall these opportunities be limited by gender (except those requiring ordination to the gospel ministry*).

~~8. 7. Where racial problems of race, color, or gender exist, workshops and seminars on human relations should be conducted. If advisable, conferences/missions, unions and/or divisions may form a committee to address issues in human relations.~~

8. The commitment of the Church to fair and equal treatment of men and women, without regard to race or color, shall be reflected in employment practices and policies regarding hiring, layoff, discharge, training and promotions, and remuneration. Benefits and allowances

for individuals and families shall be established by each division based on the principle of fairness, and without gender bias.

9. Administrators, departmental directors, pastors, educators, local church officers, and others in positions of leadership in the Church ~~are urged to~~ shall uphold this position and support these principles as a part of the gospel and ~~our~~ God's special message for the world.

*The exception clause, and any other statement above, shall not be used to reinterpret the action already taken by the world Church authorizing the ordination of women as local church elders in divisions where the division executive committees have given their approval.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 8, 1996, 96-263-264
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1996-10b/index.djvu>).

October 5, 1997

NAD/PolRev&Dev/ADCOM/GC&DivSec97AC/GCDO97AC/97AC to AHT(DIV)

187-97G CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC E 05, Credentials and Licenses, to read as follows:

~~E 05 Credentials and Licenses~~ Denominational Employees
Classification and Accreditation

[non-relevant content omitted here]

3. Licensed ministers are on the path toward ordination to the Gospel ministry. (See L 25.) It is not normal practice to ordain an individual who has not been classified as a licensed minister. (See L 25 30 and L 35.) Commissioned ministers holding licenses or credentials are not normally on the path toward ordination to the gospel ministry.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 5, 1997, 97-311-312
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1997-10/Index.djvu>).

October 4, 1998

PRE/GCDO96AC/211-96G/134-97G/98AC to AHT(DIV)

124-98Gm MINISTRY A CALLING – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC L 35 55, Ministry a Calling, to read as follows:

L 35 55 Ministry a Calling—The ministry is not merely a profession; it is a calling. It is not for a period of time until some other more attractive occupation beckons a man, but it is a lifework. Having put his hand to the plow, he is not free to look backward except at the peril of his soul. The apostle Paul, like the prophets of old, felt himself “in bonds” (Col 4:3), and cried out, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor 9:16). A man ordained to the sacred work of the ministry should feel the same responsibility as the apostle of old, and the conference that employs him should feel the responsibility to see that he is free to do his God-appointed work.

The simple record of the ordination of the apostles is impressive: “And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:13, 14). The first office of a man ordained to the ministry is that he should be *with* God. Only then is he qualified to go forth to men to preach the Word of God. A man who is thus consecrated and who enjoys constant communion with his Lord rejoices in the privilege of rendering complete service, refusing to be entangled in business for personal gain and other things of this world in order that, by the grace of God, he may give complete devotion to the cause he loves. Even when he reaches his retirement years he should feel the call of God to the same standard of life as he did in his most active years, “that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Cor 6:3). (See also Total Commitment to God declaration, A 10 15.)

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 4, 1998, 98-182
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1998-10b/index.djvu>).

September 29, 1999

Excerpt from G. Ralph Thompson’s Secretary’s Report:

When these laymembers talk about being involved in the Church’s program, they are not talking about getting membership on various committees of the conference or the union or the division or even the General Conference—though many of them serve at those levels—but they are interested in doing the work that has been given to us to share our faith. They are challenging the pastors to loose them and let them go. They witness in public crusades and various outreaches. In business meetings and in conference sessions they let their voice be heard on what they think about various programs, but they are part of the conference’s program. Almost 50 percent of all the soul winning in the conferences and unions is the result of lay participation. More than 30 percent of those lay preachers and witnessing groups are made up of women. Talk about the power of women who are given an opportunity to witness, they have it! I have listened to some powerful preaching and presentations by the women of the Church. We spend a lot of time and energy in some parts of the world discussing the issues of the involvement of women and the ordination of women. These are interesting topics. Let me tell you, I was thrilled to see how the women and men, the laity, join hands with the ministry as a cooperative team to get the work done!

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, September 29, 1999, 99-80
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1999-09-10ACb/Index.djvu>).

October 4, 1999

SS&PM/ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO99AC/99AC to LCC-00GCS

202-99G LICENSED MINISTERS – *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Ministers and Workers in Relation to the Church, pages 121 and 122, Licensed Ministers, to read as follows:

Licensed Ministers

To give young men an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, especially in the area of soul-winning, prospective candidates are granted ministerial licenses by the conference/mission. The granting of such licenses confers the opportunity and the right to develop the ministerial gift. The licensed minister is authorized to preach, to engage in evangelism, to lead out in ~~missionary~~ outreach (missionary) work, to assist in any church activities.

There are circumstances in many fields, however, where it is necessary for the conference/mission to appoint a licensed minister to carry responsibility as a pastor or assistant pastor of a church or group of churches. In order to open the way for him to perform certain ministerial functions, the church or group of churches he is to serve may elect him as a local elder. However, since he is employed by the conference/mission and appointed by it he represents it, and it may consider, in varying degrees as circumstances require, that his authority and responsibilities should be extended in order to enable him to discharge his duties satisfactorily. The right to permit this extension of authority and responsibility rests, in the first instance, with the division executive committee. Its action is necessary before any conference/mission may extend the authority and responsibility of the licensed minister. Such action shall define specifically and clearly what additional ministerial functions a licensed minister may perform but always on the understanding that his functions as a church elder and his extended functions be always and only within the church or group of churches which he serves. (See p. 48.)

In its actions the conference/mission committee shall not go beyond that which the division committee authorizes. It shall not authorize a licensed minister to go from church to church outside the church or group of churches of which he is a local elder, performing church rites which pertain to the functions of an ordained minister. A conference/mission committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ministerial ordination.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 4, 1999, 99-397-398
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC1999-09-10ACd/Index.djvu>).

April 19, 2000

SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE ACTION REGARDING ORDINATION/COMMISSIONING

In a statement released by Alfred C McClure, President of the North American Division, the officers of the division wish to make clear that the position of the church in North American has not changed from that which was printed in the Adventist Review following the vote of the 1995 General Conference Session. At that time it was stated that the church in North American would not break ranks with the decision of the world Church with regard to the ordination of women. "We continue to stand by that position," explained McClure.

In recent days a news notice was released reporting on a vote of the Southeastern California Conference to issue the same ministerial credential to both men and women pastors.

"While we are supportive of efforts to end discrimination," stated McClure, "the policy of the North American Division and the General Conference is that a minister is ordained to service in the world Church and carries a credential reflecting that privilege. A minister who has not been ordained is issued credentials that are more limited in scope. The Church does not recognize an 'ordained-commissioned' ministerial credential such as that voted in Southeastern California and the North American Division officers urge that no attempts be made to blur the line between ordination and commissioning."

During discussion which followed the above clarifications, it was made clear that the General Conference maintains its commitment to the actions of the 1990 General Conference Session, and the 1995 General Conference Session relating to the ordination of women to the gospel ministry; and to the General Conference Working Policy E 05, Credentials and Licenses, in which are clearly identified the licenses and credentials which are authorized and recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the people to whom they may be issued. The General Conference does not recognize any initiatives which move outside of these official positions.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, April 19, 2000, 00-14
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC2000-04/Index.djvu>).

June 13, 2000

GCC to CBR-IBMTE

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE FOR TEACHERS OF FUTURE MINISTERS

VOTED, To refer to the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (GCC-B) the concern that those who teach future ministers have prior pastoral experience which would lead to ordination before they assume responsibilities as professors.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, June 13, 2000, 00-46
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC2000-06/Index.djvu>).

July 7, 2000

SS&PM/ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO99AC/99AC/202-99G/00GCS to MV

180-00G LICENSED MINISTERS – *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Ministers and Workers in Relation to the Church, pages 121 and 122, Licensed Ministers, to read as follows:

Licensed Ministers

To give young men an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, especially in the area of soul-winning, prospective candidates are granted ministerial licenses by the ~~conference/mission~~ conference/mission/field. The granting of such licenses confers the opportunity and the right to develop the ministerial gift. The licensed minister is authorized to preach, to engage in evangelism, to lead ~~out~~ in missionary outreach (missionary) work, and to assist in any church activities.

There are circumstances in many fields, however, where it is necessary for the ~~conference/mission~~ conference/mission/field to appoint a licensed minister to carry responsibility as a pastor or assistant pastor of a church or group of churches. In order to open the way for him to perform certain ministerial functions, the church or group of churches he is to serve may elect him as a local elder. However, since he is employed by the ~~conference/mission~~ conference/mission/field and appointed by it he represents it, and it may consider, in varying degrees as circumstances require, that his authority and responsibilities should be extended in order to enable him to discharge his duties satisfactorily. The right to permit this extension of authority and responsibility rests, in the first instance, with the division executive committee. Its action is necessary before any ~~conference/mission~~ conference/mission/field may extend the authority and responsibility of the licensed minister. Such action shall define specifically and clearly what additional ministerial functions a licensed minister may perform but always on the understanding that his functions as a church elder and his extended functions be always and only within the church or group of churches which he serves. (See p. 48.)

In its actions the ~~conference/mission~~ conference/mission/field committee shall not go beyond that which the division committee authorizes. It shall not authorize a licensed minister to go from church to church outside the church or group of churches of which he is a local elder,

performing church rites which pertain to the functions of an ordained minister. A ~~conference/mission~~ conference/mission/field committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ministerial ordination.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, July 7, 2000, 0-1255-1256
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC2000-06-07GCSa/index.djvu>).

July 7, 2000

[Changes made to *Church Manual* on church offices]

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, July 7, 2000, 00-1108
(<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC2000-06-07GCSc/index.djvu>).

October 15, 2003

STW/MIN/PolRev&Dev/ADCOM/SecTreC/GCDO03AC/03AC to LRE(DIV)

254-03G EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION – POLICY AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend GC L 50, Examination of Candidates for Ordination, to read as follows:

L 50 Examination of Candidates for Ordination

1. Before any ordination is carried out, there shall be careful, unhurried, and prayerful examination of the candidates as to their fitness for the work of the ministry. The results of their labor as licentiates should be reviewed, and the examination should cover the great fundamental facts of the gospel. Before the church sets a man apart by ordination he should have given satisfactory evidence of:

- a. A call to the ministry as a lifework,
- b. ~~His~~ A belief in and knowledge of the Scriptures,
- c. ~~His~~ An acquaintance with and full acceptance of the vital truths we believe we are called to proclaim to the world,
- d. ~~Experience~~ An experience in various kinds of ministerial responsibility,
- e. Entire consecration of body, soul, and spirit,

- f. Spiritual stability,
- g. Social maturity,
- h. ~~Aptness~~ An aptness as a teacher of truth,
- i. ~~Ability~~ An ability to lead souls from sin into holiness,
- j. Fruitage in souls won to Christ,
- k. A cooperative attitude and confidence in the organization and functioning of the church,
- l. A life of consistent exemplary Christian conduct,
- m. An exemplary ~~family~~ family,
- n. Being a model steward in tithe and offerings,
- o. An understanding of and adherence to church principles as set forth in the Church Manual.

2. The examination of candidates for ordination is conducted by ordained ministers. Ordained representatives of conferences/unions/divisions/General Conference, who are present, may be invited to assist in the examination. Where it is deemed advisable by the conference/mission executive committee, one or more ~~lay persons~~ laypersons may be selected to participate.

Source: General Conference Committee Minutes, October 15, 2003, 03-388-389 (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCC/GCC2003-10AC/index.djvu>).