



God
ordains
Women

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, **with the women**, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren...(the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty),...

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were **all** with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon **each of them**. And they were **all** filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and **your daughters shall prophesy**, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

“And on my servants and **on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.**” Acts 1:14, 15; 2:1-4, 14-18

“In the city of Portland **the Lord ordained me as his messenger**, and here my first labors were given to the cause of present truth. After a period of despair, the blessed Saviour revealed to me his love, and brought joy and happiness to my soul. **When I was but a child**, the Lord placed upon me a burden for souls. **I worked earnestly for the conversion of my playmates**, and at times ministers of some of the churches. would send for me **to bear testimony before their congregations**. After the great disappointment, the Lord revealed himself to me in a special manner, and **bade me bear his messages to his people.**” *Review and Herald*, May 18, 1911

INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist church is currently facing a crisis that is bound to forever change the character of the church. The issue in the controversy, which is not at all a new one, is the ordination of women to the Gospel ministry as pastors and elders.

The matter has come to a head due to the action of the Pacific Union Conference of SDAs (with the support of other conferences in the North American and European Unions) deciding to ordain women as pastors, an action which has met with serious disapproval of the General Conference of SDAs. As we shall see herein, the matter turns on the question of *authority* – both in the leadership of the church at large, and in the local churches. One aspect revolves around the concept that the General Conference is the final arbiter of such matters, and not the local conferences. Another facet, and that which is the far more significant one, involves the greater issue – that of God’s delegation of *authority* in the whole male/female relationship, in the home, in the church, and in society at large. It is this subject that we will address herein.

Those who are outspoken against the ordination of women (some even within the Pacific Union Conference [PUC] itself) have put forth their arguments as though their presentations of the matter

are without fault. Among those who are foremost in their opposition are those at the independent ministry, *Amazing Facts*, headed by Doug Batchelor, who is also a pastor in the PUC at a SDA church in Sacramento, California.

Doug Batchelor, via email addresses collected through the *Amazing Facts*' website, sent out an appeal for people to sign a petition against the ordination of women in an email dated July 13, 2012. It seems obvious that, because of the respect he is held in by many who have been blessed by his and the *Amazing Facts* ministries, many are going to side with his position, and accept what is put forth by him and those with him without a substantive examination of the issue. Asking people to sign that petition amounts to nothing more than an attempt to place the voice of the people where the Voice of the Bible should be. This is especially strange, and sad, in light of the fact that Doug Batchelor not long ago told me that he did not consider himself to be a "Bible scholar."

Therefore, as we are admonished to "prove all things: hold fast that which is good." (1 Thes. 5:21), we will herein review the points they raise, not only in light of the traditional understanding they attach to them, but also from certain perspectives they are overlooking or not even considering.

But, before we address their points, we will take a fresh look at what the Bible has to say about the Gospel ministry as it existed in New Testament times, and certain changes it went through during the "falling away." This is most important in determining whether the current structure and practices of the SDA ministry are after the Bible example, or whether they still contain some elements that only have their roots in the customs and traditions that were brought in during the "falling away" – when, after the time of the apostles, the "little horn" of Daniel 7 had power to "wear out the saints" and thought to "change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25).

Of course, we pray that the readers will lay aside all preconceived ideas on the subject, and allow the Holy Spirit to be their sole counselor and final judge of the matter.

In order to get a clear picture of the Gospel ministry in the early church, and especially as it concerns women, we need to consider the context of the times of Jesus' first coming and

THE ATTITUDE OF JEWISH MEN TOWARDS WOMEN.

It is generally understood that at the time of Christ's birth the nation of Israel was at the lowest state in its long and turbulent history. This is especially true in regard to the way their men thought of the standing and rights (or lack thereof) of women. The Jewish men, though, were certainly not alone in their general attitude towards women.

The Jewish men have even somewhat codified their disdain for women in something known as *The Ten Curses of Eve*. Within the various renditions of that list were the thoughts that women were not to be seen in public with their heads uncovered, were to be virtual prisoners in their houses, and were not believed in matters of testimony. Also, that they were not to be taught Torah (religious instruction) beyond an understanding of the practical aspects of Torah, and the rules necessary in running a Jewish household.

Yet, on the other hand, rabbinic literature contains some statements that may be seen as laudatory of women. The Talmud states that:

- * Greater is the reward to be given by the All-Mighty to the (righteous) women than to (righteous) men.
- * Ten measures of speech descended to the world; women took nine.
- * Women are light on raw knowledge — i.e. they possess more intuition.
- * A man without a wife lives without joy, blessing, and good; a man should love his wife as himself and respect her more than himself.
- * When Rav Joseph heard his mother's footsteps he would say: Let me arise before the approach of the divine presence.
- * Israel was redeemed from Egypt by virtue of its (Israel's) righteous women.
- * A man must be careful never to speak slightly to his wife because women are prone to tears and sensitive to wrong.
- * Women have greater faith than men.
- * Women have greater powers of discernment.
- * Women are especially tenderhearted.

From these things we see that in the days of the early church there were widely varying views concerning women among Jewish men, such as there is today among men in general. Many of those praise-worthy attributes mentioned above certainly would be of value in the Gospel ministry.

In his email, Doug Batchelor gives a link to a web site named Christ or Culture (<http://www.christorculture.com/>). It is their basic position that the reason why the PUC and others in the North American Division of SDAs want to ordain women pastors is due to cultural/societal influences (women's lib and women's rights), rather than Biblical principles.

But, what they aren't taking into consideration is that we are in the times of the restitution of all things and that God is working to restore the co-dominion Adam and Eve had before the fall. So, while the devil is doing his best to counterfeit and frustrate that work, God has His own agenda that will prevail though the gates of hell be set against Him.

In one of their web site's sections ("12 Interesting Facts about Leadership in the Bible" – dated June 12, 2012), they present twelve points in support of the idea that only men should receive ordination as pastors. We will address those points later, as there are other matters to first consider – those being, What is the significance of ordination? And, What is the purpose of the Gospel ministry?

In another section ("What is Ordination?" – dated May 30, 2012), they present the following concerning what they believe "ordination" to be –

"Ordination is defined as 'the investiture of clergy with *pastoral authority* or *sacerdotal power*.' The practice of ordination in the modern era is drawn from biblical examples, where specially chosen men were set aside and consecrated as priests, apostles, or pastors, and spiritual authority was publicly recognized and conferred upon them **to administer the sacred rites of the church**—such as **baptism**, solemnizing

a marriage, **administering the emblems of the Lord's supper**, and overseeing the proclamation of the Word."

Therein we find what it is that is really at the heart of the matter. It is well known that the Catholic Church limits its priesthood to men (though it was not always the case) because they say only men can represent Christ in His office as priest. They, along with Protestants, do that so as to invest those men with "spiritual *authority*" to perform marriages, baptize people, lead out in the Lord's Supper (which varies widely from denomination to denomination), and other such "sacred rites" that they deem to be the work of the Gospel ministry.

"The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are two monumental pillars, one within and one without the church, Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God." Manuscript 271/2, 1900

Though those at the *Christ or Culture* website say that "[t]he practice of ordination in *the modern era* is drawn from biblical examples," we will see that such is not the case in regards to two of the above listed "sacred rites" – baptism, and the Lord's Supper. That is, in the case of baptism, the issue of who has the *spiritual authority* to officiate at it, and in the Lord's Supper, the supposed *spiritual authority* exercised in the performance of it, and the results thereof, are not based on any "biblical examples," but, rather, on later innovations that crept into the church. The significance of these things should not be underestimated because of the radical changes the church went through during the "falling away," and that the "reformation" begun by Luther and others, and those who followed after them, was still in progress at the time the Advent Movement began, and is ongoing today.

"The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. **It is to be continued to the close of this world's history.** Luther had a great work to do in reflecting to others the light which God had permitted to shine upon him; yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. **From that time to this, new light has been continually shining upon the Scriptures, and new truths have been constantly unfolding.**

"Luther and his co-laborers accomplished a noble work for God; but, coming as they did from the Roman Church, having themselves believed and advocated her doctrines, **it was not to be expected that they would discern all these errors.** It was their work to break the fetters of Rome and to give the Bible to the world; yet **there were important truths which they failed to discover, and grave errors which they did not renounce.**" *The Story of Redemption*, p. 353

To see if its practice "in the modern era" is truly based on Biblical examples, we will first look at

BAPTISM.

While it's common among Catholics and Protestants, alike, for their priests, ministers, pastors, and in some cases, even elders, to baptize people, they, with very few exceptions, prohibit those who are called *deacons* from doing so. Therefore, we will look at what the Bible has to say about *deacons* and baptism to see if what we have been given to understand about them, their work, and their

spiritual authority is truly found in the Bible. We are looking into this issue concerning *deacons* and their biblical *authority* because the term is applied to both men and women in the New Testament relative to the ministry of the Gospel.

The word *diakonos* (deacon), in its varied forms, appears 30 times in the New Testament, and is translated “minister(s)” 20 times, “servant(s)” 7 times, and “deacons” 3 times in the KJV. It is applied to **Jesus** (Rom.15:8), Paul and Apollos (1 Cor. 3:5), Timothy (1 Tim. 4:6), Tychicus (Eph. 6:21, Col. 4:7), Epaphras (Col. 1:7), and **Pheobe, a woman** (Rom. 16:1, 27).

Concerning Jesus being a *deacon*, it is written –

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister [*diakonos – deacon*] of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,” Romans 15:8

Many of the more modern translations use the word “servant” in that verse rather than the word “minister.” But none of them use the most direct transliteration of the Greek word, that being “deacon.” Why? Because using the most direct translation (*deacon*) in reference to Jesus would undermine the “modern era” thinking in regard to the true biblical order of the ministry.

The variations (minister[s], servant[s], and deacons) in English translations of the word *diakonos* (deacon) give different shades of meanings to the word so that Paul’s original usage of the word has lost its consistency. That is, it is certainly true that Jesus was both a *minister* and a *servant*. It is, though, equally true that He was a *deacon* in Paul’s undefiled usage of the word in relation to the Gospel ministry.

When those who read or heard Paul’s letters read to them in Greek, they would not have thought that he was speaking of Jesus, himself, Apollos, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Phoebe (a woman) in the sense of them all equally being anything other than *ministers*, *servants*, *deacons* in the Gospel ministry, and certainly not a *lower order of clergy*, or *laymen*, as is the notion held concerning *deacons* in the “modern era.”

Jesus said,

“...whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *minister* (*deacons*).” Matt. 20:26, Mark 10:43

So, whether he or she is a leader of a local congregation, or the worldwide church, we would do well to do as Jesus said and “let him [or her] be your *deacon* (*minister*).” Even those known as “elders” today are nothing more than overseeing *deacons* (*ministers*).

SEVEN DEACONS?

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

“And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:1-7

It is generally thought that the appointment of those seven men in Acts 6 to oversee the “daily ministration” to the household of faith was the establishment of the “office” of deacons, which is understood to be a *lower order* of the *clergy*, or *laymen* active in minor functions of the ministry. Prior to that time, there was really only one “office” in the ministry of the Christian church – that being that of the apostles. Though all of the disciples (including the apostles) were active in some level of *teaching*, *evangelizing*, and even *pastoring*, there is no record of there yet being any others than the apostles who were formally *ordained* to any of those positions within the Gospel ministry. Prior to that time, it was only the apostles that had *authority*, both spiritually and temporally, in the church (see Acts 4:34, 35).

One of those seven men in Acts 6 (who many call *deacons*) was Philip, who is known to have exercised the gifts of *teaching* and *evangelism* (Acts 21:8, 8:27), along with performing miracles and casting out demons (Acts 8:6, 7). Philip also *baptized* a man (Acts 8:38), something which most *deacons* today (especially those in the SDA church) are prohibited from doing, but which *pastors* and other *elders* commonly do. The Holy Ghost chose Philip to meet with that Ethiopian, inspired him to preach the Gospel to him, and *ordained* him to baptize him.

Likewise, Stephen, who is also considered to have been one of those seven *deacons* (and the one whom Ellen White called “foremost” among those seven men [*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 97]), and who did the work of an evangelist and performed “great wonders and miracles among the people,” (Acts 6:5-54), would, by the standards of many churches today, be prohibited from baptizing anyone because he would be considered to be only a lowly *deacon* (a *layman*) – one without the *spiritual authority to do so*.

So, here we have a biblical record of someone (Philip) who would not be considered to be a *pastor* or even an *elder* in our “modern era” thinking doing that which he would be prohibited from doing today in the SDA church – i.e., baptizing someone. If such a significant departure from the “biblical example” in regard to what is considered the work of *deacons* today is so apparent from a simple review of what the Bible really has to say on the subject, it should not be surprising to find the same concerning *deaconesses* and their true *spiritual authority* in the ministry of the Gospel. The only way to understand this disparity is to look closer at the fundamental facts concerning

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

In Ephesians 4:11 we read,

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the *ministry*, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

The Greek word translated “ministry” therein is *diakonia*, and is derived from the word *deaconos* (*minister*). Another form of the same word also appears in Acts 6:1 -

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily *ministration*.”

So, those seven men who were appointed to oversee the “daily *ministration*” were truly *deacons* (*ministers*) in the strictest biblical definition of the word, but not in the way the word has been redefined since that time, and how it is held among SDAs today. The matter hinges on the issue of what kind of *authority* is recognized in the calling.

Technically, there is no such thing as the “office” of a *deacon* other than as it is applied to the work of any one of those five gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, or of the other gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28. That is, whether one is called to the work of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher, all are, in the simplest and strictest use to the biblical meaning of the word, *deacons* – *ministers*. This can be understood by examining the verses in which said “office” is mentioned.

In 1 Timothy 3:10 and 13 (KJV), the singular Greek words *diakoneitosan* (v. 10), and *diakonesantes* (v. 13), are translated into whole phrases, “let them use the office of a deacon,” and, “that have used the office of a deacon,” respectively. The words “the office of a” are not in the Greek, nor are they actually supported by the context. If the translators had not added private interpretations to their translations in order to justify the current practices of the church in their day regarding the “office” of deacons those verses would simply read as follows:

“...let these also first be proved; then *let* them *minister*, being found blameless.”
(v. 10)

“For they that *have ministered* well purchase to themselves a good degree ...”
(v. 13).

Even in the beginning of that same chapter, where Paul gives the qualifications for a “bishop” (an overseer), he is only speaking of an overseeing *deacon* (*minister*), nothing more or less.

This is most important in the context of one who is qualified to work in the Gospel ministry. That is, anyone who truly qualifies to be called a *deacon* (a *minister*) has the *spiritual authority* to fully exercise the gifts they have been given. That includes women, for even Phoebe is called a *deacon* (Romans 16:1), and thus, must have been a part of the Gospel *ministry* (*diakonia*).

At that Synod of Laodicea (363-364 A.D.), a law was enacted which reveals the progress of the falling away in which certain men were exalting themselves above others, including women, in regard to the ministry. It is Canon 20 -

“It is not right for a deacon to sit in the presence of a presbyter, unless he be bidden by the presbyter to sit down. Likewise the deacons shall have worship of the subdeacons and all the [inferior] clergy.”

The word “presbyter” therein is where we get the word “priest.” Thus, that law is saying that *deacons (ministers)* are not to sit in the presence of a *priest* unless bidden by him to do so. The whole high-minded notion expressed therein is nothing more than a perversion of what Paul said regarding “honor” due those in positions of responsibility –

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of **double honour**, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” 1 Tim. 5:17

Such was another sad step in the falling away from the principle of letting the greatest among us be our *deacon* that came from men seeking to have the “preeminence” over others (3 John 9). As we shall see as we progress herein, the desire of men to have “preeminence” one over another, especially as it applies to men dominating women, in general, and as it is relative to the Gospel ministry, has its roots in another misapplication of God’s word.

As this presentation is concerned with women in the ministry (*diakonia*), we will look further into the subject of

DEACONESSSES.

“Deaconess. A term appearing once (Rom 16:1, RSV), the rendering of the Gr. *diakonos*, here a feminine noun which means literally ‘servant’ or ‘helper.’ Phoebe is mentioned as a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchrea. The word and its usage in this text suggests that the office of deaconess may have been established in the church at the time Paul wrote the book of Romans.” *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 261

It is notable that the authors of that dictionary chose to leave out the fact that the word *diakonos* is translated “minister(s)” more than twice as many times than it is translated “servant.” Since it has been admitted that there were women who were ordained as “deaconesses” (female ministers – *diakonon*) in the apostolic church, and in many churches today, we will examine this “office” in some detail. Here is what the Catholic Church has to say about the history of deaconesses.

“There...can be no question that the deaconesses in the fourth and fifth centuries had a distinct and **ecclesiastical standing**, though there are traces of much variety and custom.... Further it is certain that a ritual was in use for the **ordination of deaconesses by the laying on of hands** which closely modeled on the ritual for the ordination of a deacon. For example the Apostolic Constitutions say: ‘Concerning a deaconess, I Bartholomew enjoin, O Bishop, thou shalt lay thy hands upon her with

all the Presbytery and the Deacons and the Deaconesses and thou shalt say: Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and woman, that didst fill with the Spirit Mary and Deborah, and Anna and Huldah, that didst not disdain that thine only begotten Son should be born of a woman; Thou that in the tabernacle of witness and in the temple didst appoint women guardians of thy holy gates: Do Thou now look on this thy handmaiden, who is appointed unto the office of a Deaconess and grant unto her the holy Spirit, and cleanse her from all pollution of the flesh and of the spirit, that she may worthily accomplish the work committed unto her, to thy glory and the praise of thy Christ." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 651 (1907-1914)

This is not in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

LICENSED TO PREACH

On pages 249-250 of the Ellen White compilation, *Daughters of God*, there is a list of thirty-one women who were "Licensed to Preach" by the SDA church between 1878 and 1910 in the U.S. and other countries. Of them it is said that,

"Some of the women listed above were *employed by the church*. Others ... were self-supporting." p. 250

To be "*employed by the church*" means that they were paid with the tithe, in accordance with Ellen White's counsel -

"Women to Receive Wages for Their Work – There are ministers' wives – Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson, and Robinson – who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, I will, in the name of the Lord, protest. **I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.**

"I know that the faithful women should be paid wages as it is considered proportionate to the pay received by ministers. They carry the burden of souls and should not be treated unjustly. – 12MR 160 (1898)." *Ibid.*, p. 106

As Ellen White was always quite emphatic that the tithe was to be strictly used for the support of the *ministers*, what are we to think of her call therein that women who do the work of the ministry should be paid by the tithe? Was she attempting to set up something that was wholly new within the Gospel ministry? That certainly was not the practice of most of the churches (Protestant and Catholic) in her day.

Yet, when we take into account that all tithe-paid ministers are only biblical *deacons*, then the women who she said were to be paid from the tithe must be, in the biblical definition of the word *deaconesses*. So, while the SDA church does ordain *deaconesses* today, they do not allow them to have the true biblical *spiritual authority* inherent in that calling to the ministry. The reason why that is involves another subject that we will look at shortly.

It appears that God was using Ellen White to restore another principle and practice in the ministry of the Gospel that had been done away with during the “falling away.” Oh, but how slow men have been to respond to God’s leading!

In the current era, the issue of ordaining women came before the General Conference in 1990, and was supported by many in the North American and European divisions. It was opposed mainly by those in the Latin American and African divisions. While some have been trying to say that those who are in favor of women’s ordination are doing so merely because of *cultural* influences, it is really those who have been opposing it who have been acting from their own *cultural* bias that primarily comes from the influence of the Catholic Church and paganism rather than the Bible. We will address this point more fully further on.

This brings us to that which brought about the redefinition of the word *deacon*, and the notion that *deacons* are somehow an *order* of *clergy* or *laymen* inferior to those specific positions mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. That is, the establishment of a distinct *priesthood* whose function is to officiate in “the Mass” – the counterfeit of

THE BIBLICAL LORD’S SUPPER.

“The Scriptural Ordinance of The Lord’s Supper had been supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.” *The Story of Redemption*, p. 334

In Ephesians 4:11, 12, Paul lists the various functions of those involved in “the work of the *ministry*” which is “for the perfecting of the saints” and “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” What is notably missing from that list is the word “priests.” One would think that if Christ had set apart certain persons (i.e., priests) to officiate in a *mystical* “bloodless sacrifice” (i.e., the Mass) or a *symbolic* “mock meal”* (the common Protestant “Lord’s Supper”) whose very words and actions invest the bread and wine taken in memory of Christ with such a special *sanctity* that any leftovers must receive special treatment, they would be mentioned in that list, but they’re not.

*Note: We are using the term “mock meal” for the common mode of keeping “the Lord’s Supper” because that is the term used in the *SDA Bible Commentary* for such, and is quite descriptive of the practice.

We are bringing up this issue of priests and ordained pastors and elders being, generally, the only ones who are thought to have the *spiritual authority* to *consecrate* the bread and wine because it is believed that only certain (ordained) males can represent Christ in His intercessory office of priest, and that officiating in “the Mass” or the Lord’s Supper is an *intercessory, priestly* act due to the presumed *consecration* of the bread and wine thereof through the words and actions of those who

lead out in it because of the *spiritual authority* they are thought to bear.

The correct understanding of this aspect is crucial in regard to the question of the ordination of women as elders or pastors. That is, the *spiritual authority* associated with the ones leading out in what is known as the Lord's Supper is a more coveted thing than any other function in the church. Were this not so, why does the Roman Catholic Church insist their *priesthood* is the only one with a true *apostolic succession*, and that they are the only ones who maintain the true *Eucharistic mystery*, to the extent that they say that all other churches are not true churches because of their lack of those things?

While some may say that apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors should be considered among that group of "certain persons" who could *officiate* in the Lord's Supper, they would not, generally, include "teachers." But when we consider that the Greek word translated "ministry" is *diakonia*, from which we get the word "deacon," then the matter takes on a completely different perspective.

As previously stated, all of those to whom it has been given to exercise any or all of those functions of the *diakonia* (ministry), including *teachers*, are "deacons" in the purest biblical sense of the word. Yet, in most churches "deacons" are permitted to teach, but are prohibited from leading out in their version of "the Lord's Supper." They especially exclude women (*deaconesses*), even though there is ample evidence in church history that women did function as deaconesses, in the fullest sense of the word, in the early church, and do so in many churches today, but not with the *spiritual authority* they had in the early church.

CLERGY AND LAYMEN

"Deacon. [Gr. diakonos, 'servant', 'helper.'] An official of the church whose qualifications are described in 1 Ti. 3:8-13. It is generally believed that the incident narrated in Acts 6:1-6 is a record of the institution of the office, although the name 'deacon' does not there appear. As a result of complaints that the Hellenistic Jewish widows in the church at Jerusalem were not receiving their share of daily relief, 'seven men of honest report' were selected to supervise the distribution of food, clothing, etc. (vs. 3,5,6). These men did not limit themselves to these duties, but labored also in active evangelistic work (v. 8; ch. 8:5, 26-40). In certain Protestant churches today the deacons are a **lower order of the clergy** rather than **laymen charged chiefly with the temporal affairs of the church**, and may officiate as church pastors." *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 261

What is notable in their last sentence is that the authors bring in the idea of "clergy" and "laymen," even tacitly admitting that in the Adventist church deacons are only considered to be "*laymen* charged chiefly with the temporal affairs of the church." What they don't provide there is a biblical reason why the SDA church holds that view, and what are the reasons why some other Protestant churches consider deacons in a higher regard. Remember, Adventists, in general, consider those seven men in Acts 6 as being *deacons*, including Philip, who baptized a man, something which *deacons* are prohibited from doing in the Adventist church.

What is also significant in this regard is that in the latest searchable CD-ROM, *The Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings*, there are 120 hits for the word “clergy.” In the 1995 compilation, *Pastoral Ministry*, we find the following –

“From the rich treasury of her writings, the compilers of this book have brought together a selection of inspired counsels that apply most directly to the life and work of the local church pastor. Research was done by the General Conference Ministerial Association using the CD-ROM, 1990 edition, of the published Ellen G. White writings. It was discovered that Mrs. White used some derivative of the word **clergy 114 times**, minister 10,762 times, pastor 385 times, preacher 735 times, and shepherd 1,540 times.” *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 13

Of those 114 times Ellen White uses the word “clergy,” only once does she use it in reference to the SDA ministry. The other times she uses it in reference to the leadership of other churches. The other six times it appears in the newer CD-ROM, *The Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings*, it is used by those who prepared the CD in section headings. From these facts we can clearly see that Ellen White did not embrace the common idea of *clergy* in reference to the remnant church.

While the Lord has certainly ordained a certain form of *hierarchy* in His church for the service of the saints, how that *serving* is to be done and who is to do what has been subjected to the whims of unconverted, partially converted, and apostate minds. The diversity of opinions on these things within the Protestant movement shows how hard it has been to repair the breaches made in “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Most churches teach that a “deacon” cannot speak the “blessings” (or “prayers of consecration”) at their version of “the Lord’s Supper,” but, at most, may only distribute the bread and wine. Such it is in the Adventist church. We do not even consider *deacons* to be a lower order of *clergy*, but only *laymen*. Thus, because of that, they are not fit to pronounce a blessing to the Lord or give thanks for the bread and wine as did Jesus. But when we consider what the Bible truly says about *deacons*, and, therefore, *deaconesses*, the situation appears to be quite different.

It would really be a stretch to say that Philip (who is considered to have been a *deacon*) could do all of the things he did, including baptizing someone, but could not lead out in the blessings said at “the Lord’s Supper.”

The fact that the term *deacon* has been redefined is, likewise, true in regard to the true nature of the Lord’s Supper. That is, we have previously read that “the Mass” had “supplanted” the Lord’s Supper. But, how did that come about, and what was the Lord’s Supper like before that drastic change was made? Also, is the current practice of the Lord’s Supper in the Adventist church after the true biblical mode and teaching?

For one thing, our custom of keeping it only every three months comes from the custom of some Protestant churches in the 1800s when the circuit-riding ordained ministers would only come to the local churches that often, and is not based on any biblical example. So, even though many Adventist churches have pastors and ordained elders in attendance every Sabbath, we are still clinging to that man-made custom and tradition of the 1800s. We will look at these things as we proceed herein as

they are necessarily a part of the answer we must give to every man, and every woman.

The general belief is that “the Lord’s Supper” involves a “prayer” said only on or over the bread and wine of a “mock meal” which “consecrates” them, and that such was never done, nor was to be done, with any other items of foods being present. That is, that the “prayers of consecration” that are commonly said by certain men on or over the bread and wine have the same effect on them as Jesus’ words did when He “blessed” or “gave thanks” with bread or a cup of wine in His hands, and in doing such they are fulfilling His command to remember Him thereby.

Most all denominations hold that the bread and wine are invested with some sort of *sanctity* due to the words and actions of those performing the service thereby making it necessary to either preserve the leftover *consecrated* bread and consume all the wine (as in the general Catholic tradition), destroy or dispose of them, distribute them so that they all are consumed during or right after the service, or consecrate only the exact amount to be used in the service so as to not have any leftovers. Most of those traditions trace their roots to the so-called “Fathers” of the church, and not to any Bible examples of apostolic origin.

In the Adventist church it is the pervading belief that the “blessings” and/or “prayers” which are said at the “mock meal” so invest the bread and wine with a certain *sanctity* that, according to our *Church Manual*, any leftovers must be disposed of “by burning the bread and pouring out the wine.” *SDA Church Manual*, p. 125 (1976 edition). Though the specific requirement to burn or bury any leftover bread and pour out any leftover wine was done away with at the 2010 SDA General Conference Session, they are still to be disposed of in a respectful manner due to the belief that they have received some sort of special *sanctity* because of the words and actions of those who led out in the service.

It is our position that that which is called “The Lord’s Supper” in 1 Corinthians 11:20 (KJV) was simply one of the regular fellowship meals of the Christian church, which are also known as the *agape* or *love feasts*. The Greek text of that verse reads “a supper of the Lord,” not “*the* Lord’s Supper.” The *Modern King James* version has the word “the” in italics, indicating that it isn’t in the Greek text.

We also find that the apostle Paul was using the term “Lord’s *body*” (1 Corinthians 11:29 – KJV) to refer to the *congregation*, the *body* of the saints, and not to the bread broken in memory of Christ’s sacrifice and return. The word “Lord’s” is not even in many of the ancient manuscripts. They simply read, “without discerning *the body*.” Additionally, it is obvious that Paul was speaking of the *body* of believers, and not the memorial bread (the symbol of the Lord’s own *body*), for if he was speaking of the latter he certainly would have included the Lord’s *blood* as something some of the Corinthians were failing to discern.

Moreover, we find that the Jesus never, at any time, “prayed” on or over the bread or wine, nor “blessed” *them* in any way in order to “consecrate” them in the sense that such is understood to be done during the common church “mock meal” today. Our position is that the only “blessing” Jesus ever said, or any “thanks” He had ever given when people were to eat anything at all was to God, in fulfillment of the commandment in Deuteronomy 8:10, and, then, never separate from a real meal. And, at that last Passover Jesus was simply telling His disciples to include a remembrance of

Himself when they likewise “blessed” and “gave thanks” with the bread and wine of their daily meals.

The history of the change from the biblical “supper of the Lord” to “the Mass” is addressed in Parts 1 & 2 of our study, *The Lord’s Supper, From the Table to the Altar, and Back*. The specifics of Jesus’ *blessings and giving of thanks*, as recorded in the Bible, and how and why those simple things were transformed into *prayers of consecration*, to the extent that Catholic priests are said to literally transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ (transubstantiation) are addressed in depth in Part 4 (*Blessings and Thanks Giving*) of the same series of studies, which accompanies this study.

So, if the One (Jesus) who instituted the memorial blessing and eating of bread and drinking of wine in remembrance of Him was a *deacon* (Romans 15:8), why wouldn’t any others who qualify to be called *deacons* (*ministers*), including women (*deaconesses*) also be able to pronounce the blessings and give thanks at the breaking of bread and the taking of the cup?

The redefinition of the term *deacon*, and the thinking that those who were called such were quite limited in their work within the ministry (*diakonia*), came about during the “falling away” when “a supper of the Lord” was taken away from the table and brought to the altar (i.e., the Mass). That is, when some of the male “elders” (i.e., *presbyters*) came to be designated as “priests” who alone carried the *spiritual authority* to officiate at “the sacrifice of the Mass,” those others of the ministry who were not so *honored* were relegated to non-officiating positions, one of which came to be known as *deacons*.

Also at the 4th century Synod of Laodicea, two other new laws were enacted which are of note here:

Canon number 11 – **no female elders;**

Canon number 44 – **women may not approach the altar [i.e., the table].**

As the *table* of the Lord that Paul wrote about all believers (male and female) gathering around began to be called an *altar* late in the 1st century, the context of those canons becomes apparent. That is, at that time the former prejudices men held towards women were overcoming the biblical principle that there is “**neither male nor female**” in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). But, long before that time the heaven-ordained order of the ministry of the priesthood of all the saints (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) which is after the order of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:10) had been perverted into a strange amalgamation of the Levitical and Pagan priesthoods as men began to lord it over their blood-bought brethren and *mystify* the practical aspects of the Gospel and, in particular, the memorial emblems and blessings of the suppers of the Lord. That is, the bread and wine were said to literally become the body and bread of Christ, and thus containing some *mystical* properties, and the *blessings and giving of thanks* were changed into *prayers of consecration* by which the bread and wine were invested with those *mystical* properties.

Therefore, as we prayerfully reexamine this most important fundamental service so that we may have the correct understanding of it as it relates to women in the ministry, let us bear in mind

the following testimony –

“He answered, ‘Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.’ The customs and traditions so highly valued by the rabbis were of this world, not from heaven. However great their authority with the people, they could not endure the testing of God. **Every human invention that has been substituted for the commandments of God will be found worthless** in that day when ‘God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ Eccl. 12:14.

“The substitution of the precepts of men for the commandments of God has not ceased. Even among Christians are found institutions and usages that have no better foundation than the traditions of the fathers. Such institutions, resting upon mere human authority, have supplanted those of divine appointment. ...

“But ‘every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, **shall be rooted up.**’ In place of the authority of the so-called fathers of the church, God bids us accept the word of the eternal Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. Here alone is truth unmixed with error. David said, ‘I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.’ Ps. 119:99, 100. Let all who accept human authority, customs of the church, or the traditions of the fathers, take heed to the warning conveyed in the words of Christ, ‘In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’” *Desire of Ages*, p. 398

Additionally,

“With the many warnings against false teachers, why are the people so ready to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy? There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders. They pass by the Saviour’s teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God’s word that they are light-bearers? A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world, leads many to follow in the steps of learned men; and by their reluctance to investigate for themselves, they are becoming hopelessly fastened in the chains of error. They see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible, and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the opposition of the clergy to turn them from the light. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls dare not think differently from the minister, and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, of another.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 415

It is sad to note that the quarterly *Communion Sabbaths* in the Adventist church are the least attended Sabbaths of the year. Why is that? According to Ellen White, whose words on the matter are often quoted in preparation of the service, the gatherings of the church to celebrate the Lord’s Supper are supposed to be among the highest and most joyous times the church as a body can

experience together. So, again, why do so many among us choose to avoid the service? It would be interesting to survey them as to their reasons for avoiding it. The responses thereto may even prove a blessing for all.

This brings us to what perhaps may be one of the most misunderstood and abused verses in the Bible, and the first one in the list of the twelve points the folks at *Christ or Culture* have put forth in their argument against women in the ministry – Genesis 3:16.

“1). Following sin in the garden of Eden, God established male spiritual leadership within the family and church. See Genesis 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:13.”

www.christorculture.com/portfolio-view/12-interesting-facts-about-leadership-in-the-bible/

GENESIS 3:16

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and **thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”** Genesis 3:16

Many over the ages have taken this verse as a command from God for women to subject themselves to an absolute rule over themselves in all things of life by men. That view is also quite prevalent today. They take it even one step further by saying that within it is a command for men to rule over women. But, is that really the case? There were no words spoken to Adam there, or anywhere else, in that regard.

Before their fall, Eve had a perfect love for Adam. Therefore, God telling her that her “desire” will be unto her husband must refer to something different than her having a deep affection (yearning) towards him, for she already had that before they fell. This can be understood when we take into account that the word translated “desire” has the truer meaning of “*turning*.” Also, the words “*shall be*” are in italics because they are not in the Hebrew. Thus, it would read,

“... thou art *turning* unto thy husband...”

All of the most ancient translations prior to the Latin Vulgate (circa. 382 A.D.) – the Greek *Septuagint* (circa. 285 B.C.), the Syriac *Peshitto* (circa. 50-100 A.D.), Samaritan *Pentateuch* (circa. 50-100 A.D.), and the *Old Latin* (circa. 200 A.D.) – render the word “*turning*”, or “*will turn*,” and not “*desire*” (yearning). It was later in the rabbinically influenced Latin Vulgate, when the meaning of *appetite* began to surface. Finally, in the Jewish Babylonian Targum/Babylonian Talmud (circa. 800 A.D.) the idea of *lust* became prominent in modern thinking and became the basis for the KJV translation “desire.”

Yet, while we are adhering to the meaning of the word being “turning,” we will also be using the word “desire” in our discussion on the subject as its use is needed to examine the many aspects of the common interpretation of the verse.

Because of their fall, something changed in the woman besides that which concerned her childbearing. That is, there was a change in her *thinking*. It was said to her, "...thou art *turning* to thy husband, and he shall rule over [in] thee." It was not this way from the "very good" beginning. Her "desire" (in the sense of *yearning*) was not to her husband prior to that time. Though she had the purest and fullest love for Adam and was emotionally and physically bonded to him, her primal "desire" (*yearning*) was to fulfill God's will in her in being a woman in God's image and likeness.

Her *desire* (*yearning*) was first to her Creators, and they ruled *in* her by the Spirit, by wisdom, by the power of love. She naturally loved the fact that she was for Adam, that he was equally for her, and that all of the creation was for them both. Her *desire* was to the principle of self-sacrificing love and Creators thereof, and it was that which ruled in her prior to the fall. Adam didn't *rule* over, or in, Eve before they sinned. They both were given equal dominion over the earth and the things therein, and none over each other (Gen. 1:26). Pure love was their ruler and government.

But, after their fall, God told her that she would be *turning* from her original state of having God rule over (in) her in all things, and, instead would be looking for her husband to rule over (in) her as a king does over a *subject*.

It is of note that Adam was alone when the commandment was given prohibiting the eating of the fruit of that one tree (Genesis 2:16, 17). Eve was not yet made (verses 21-23). After she was there, Adam may have told her of that commandment before God did (if not before, he surely later also related to her what he had experienced and had been told before she was there).

Therefore, Eve must have felt guilty for not giving heed to Adam's counsel (as well as God's), and would naturally have felt a need to overcompensate for her former mistake by *turning* to (*desiring* to) have him (Adam) make her decisions for her – *rule* over (in) her. This is especially true considering something that Ellen White said happened right after the fall –

"Adam **censured** Eve's folly in leaving his side and being deceived by the serpent."
The Story of Redemption, p. 38

The impact on Eve of having made such a wrong decision in listening to the tempter's voice, coupled with the well deserved *censure* from Adam, was enough to cause Eve to *turn away* from the heavenly wisdom that she previously had been giving heed to and to substitute it with her husband's counsel. That is, God was not commanding Eve to be ruled by her husband rather than be ruled by Him, but was warning her of that which was to be the inevitable result of her not having allowed the indwelling word of God to be her only *authority* in all of her decisions.

Though this might have been flattering to Adam, such was not part of his nature. That is, he was made to have dominion over the earth and the creatures thereof, not to be the mind of another. He was not made to "subdue" Eve and have *dominion* over her as he was of the earth and the things therein. He was made to *woo* her through acts of love and self-sacrifice, and she him.

Adam also was in an odd position after their fall. From then on, Eve would be looking (*turning*) to him as her ultimate *yearning*, *desiring* him to rule in her. He had just seen that he had failed in

ruling in himself, making right choices for himself, and now he had this added matter. This was not in his original “very good” relationship with Eve – **or with God, for that matter.**

The concept of now having her *turn* from their Creators to him, and him being, in her mind, a ruler over her (as a king and counselor) was foreign to his nature. Please carefully note again that there was no command directly to Adam to rule over Eve, as many men and woman have presumed and declared the case to be over the ages. The change in their relationship was in her *thinking* and not in an expansion of his *dominion*.

Moreover, Adam would now be tempted to look at her with suspicion because she had not heeded his, and God’s, counsel. This distrust of her on his part, in turn, could lead him to be tempted to try to dominate her thinking, even though his sin was greater than hers in that she was deceived, but he sinned with open eyes. The tender, pure love relationship that they were created to experience was confused by these things.

Adam and Eve had to learn to deal with their new relationship and beings. Eve’s inward changes, physically and psychologically, reminded her of their wrong choices that would be affecting their relationship. Adam’s thinking was changing also because of these things. These matters carried over in the thinking of their following generations in individual and societal relationships.

Of course, having given in to the temptation of self-exaltation that first time made it easy for it to be done again. That weakness passed from Adam and Eve to their offspring. Thus, many of Adam’s sons who could not properly respond in humility to women’s *redirected* desires have allowed high-mindedness and vain imaginings to turn them into dictators over women, contrary to the original pure nature. This is true in both society, in general, and in the church. Also, many women, with their desires *redirected*, have subjected themselves to (and have even encouraged) an absolute rulership over themselves which has never been pronounced “very good.”

Because of those errors, many women have been so ashamed for having looked to men to be more than what they were created to be, and having placed an unwarranted confidence in them, that they turn away from all men in disgust. And many men have fled from women because they can’t live up to their unreal expectations -- that being the expectation of them being a god (king) to them. This situation has also been used by men and women to wrongfully excuse their own laziness and unwillingness to deal with their own responsibilities in life. And, we naturally find all of those situations affecting relationships in the church and its ministry.

We see this sad situation particularly in cultures that have not had a Christian heritage. The greater that Jesus is allowed to flourish, the more true liberty will result for women. The model is Jesus and the church. Jesus laid down His life for the church. He is head of the church, but does not exercise that headship with *dictatorial* authority. He brings a model of leadership, which is true humility and the giving of one’s self for others.

Another interesting phenomenon relative to all of this is that, in many societies, women are not in favor of electing women to important political offices. What is generally said by them in that regard is that, due to the closer relationship they have one with another than men have with one another, they know what many women can be like in making judgments. That is, they see many

women (and, even themselves) making bad choices in relationships, being swayed by external appearances, fair and deceptive words, and self-interests, and are thus hesitant to place them in responsible political positions. But women who are truly in Christ have overcome those faults. So, while men have to overcome their particular prejudices against women in the ministry, so also do women.

The conclusion of this aspect hinges on the answer to the question as to whether or not the salvation wrought by Christ's sacrifice has brought men and women's relationships to Eden's side of Genesis 3:16 where they both had *dominion* over the creation, and none over each other. And, if not, why not? Has Christ's sacrifice opened the way for the restoration of all things except the co-dominion Adam and Eve had over the creation and left Eve's daughters with their *desire turned* from God to their husbands? If they would learn anything of God, must they ask their husbands privately at home, as many believe the case to be?

The answers to these questions are contained in the true biblical understanding of

HEADSHIP.

While Ellen White certainly upheld the general principle of man being the "head" of the woman in the marital relationship, she also made statements that show that that principle is not an absolute one. Moreover, she never used the common interpretations of certain scriptures to uphold the idea that men's voices of *authority* were to be the only ones heard in church matters, as we shall see.

Yea, the *spiritual authority* she expressed in the many testimonies she was given to bear to both men and women is proof of this fact. She didn't have to ask any man's approval for the *spiritual authority* to speak freely as the Lord directed her. Neither was she subjected to any body of men when it came to correcting doctrinal errors that were held by those who had come from the many different churches to take part in the Advent movement as it progressed with the unrolling of the scroll.

Speaking of the headship issue between men and women in the marital relationship, she says,

"Paul, writing to the Ephesian Christians, declares that the Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife, to be her protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church, and the savior of the mystical body. Therefore he says: "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church."

"The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make **this institution** what God designed it should be,—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent **the family of heaven**. The condition of society presents a sad comment upon heaven's ideal of **this sacred relation**. ...

"Neither the husband nor the wife should merge his or her individuality in that of the other. **Each has a personal relation to God. Of him each is to ask, 'What is right?'**

‘What is wrong?’ ‘How may I best fulfill life’s purpose? Let the wealth of your affection flow forth to him who gave his life for you. **Make Christ first and last and best in everything.** As your love for him becomes deeper and stronger, your love for each other will be purified and strengthened.” *Review and Herald*, December 10, 1908

Instead of saying that a wife should direct her “wealth of ... affection [her desire]” to flow forth to her husband, and ask of *him* “What is right?” “What is wrong?” (as so many who wrongly interpret Genesis 3:16 say she should do), she says that the decisions in such matters belong to God alone. That places a wholly different perspective on the male *headship* issue in the marital relationship (and, likewise, in the church) than is commonly embraced.

Thus, we should not be surprised to see the same in the male/female relationship in the Gospel ministry. If that principle is the true expression of husband/wife relationship (each going only to God for direction, and for *authority* to act upon His will), then how could it be any less in the Gospel ministry?

“Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an *arbitrary* control.” *Ibid.*

If such should be the standard in the marriage relationship, and the home is to be heaven on earth, and the church the extended family of believers, then neither men nor women should attempt to “exercise over the other an *arbitrary* control.” This is the same principle Paul upheld when he said,

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to *usurp* authority over the man, but to be in silence.” 1 Tim. 2:12

By taking the traditional translation of this verse, one may be led to the conclusion that much of the work of Ellen White was contrary to what Paul wrote here. It is important to note that she makes no comment on this verse or on similar ones that would tend to be used to silence a woman’s voice. The following is an example of just such a circumstance where Ellen White spoke out with heaven-ordained *authority* over a man –

“I have received letters questioning me in regard to the proper attitude to be taken by a person offering prayer to the Sovereign of the universe. Where have our brethren obtained the idea that they should stand upon their feet when praying to God? One who has been educated for about five years in Battle Creek was asked to lead in prayer before Sister White should speak to the people. But as I beheld him standing upright upon his feet while his lips were about to open in prayer to God, **my soul was stirred within me to give him an open rebuke. Calling him by name, I said, “Get down upon your knees.” This is the proper position always.**” *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. 311

Therein we find her both *teaching* men (and women) and exercising *authority* over the erring one. But, she was not *usurping* authority over the man. Taking into consideration that she was moved by the Holy Spirit to what she did at that time, along with the fact that the Lord never called her to comment on that verse of 1 Timothy 2, then it appears that the Lord was waiting for a better day to

shine His light on the subject. We will look closer into this verse in Timothy further on, as it contains things little understood by many.

Following are some other statements from Ellen White concerning the true male/female relationship as it relates to the common understanding of the “headship” of men, and the “submission” of women.

This was her counsel to a woman who was contemplating marriage as to whether or not he was the right type of man, and would she be glorifying God in choosing him –

“Is He Worthy?—Before giving her hand in marriage, every woman should inquire whether he with whom she is about to unite her destiny is worthy. What has been his past record? Is his life pure? Is the love which he expresses of a noble, elevated character, or is it a mere emotional fondness? Has he the traits of character that will make her happy? Can she find true peace and joy in his affection? **Will she be allowed to preserve her individuality, or must her judgment and conscience be surrendered to the control of her husband?** As a disciple of Christ, she is not her own; she has been bought with a price. Can she honor the Saviour’s claims as supreme? Will body and soul, thoughts and purposes, be preserved pure and holy? These questions have a vital bearing upon the well-being of every woman who enters the marriage relation.—5T 362 (1885).” *Daughters of God*, p. 183

“Wife to Keep Her Own Identity.—**A woman that will submit to be ever dictated to in the smallest matters of domestic life, who will yield up her identity, will never be of much use or blessing in the world, and will not answer the purpose of God in her existence. She is a mere machine to be guided by another’s will and another’s mind.** God has given each one, men and women, an identity, an individuality, that they must act in the fear of God for themselves.—TSB 25 (1885).” *Ibid.*

“A Passive Wife. **Let the wife decide that it is the husband’s prerogative to have full control of her body, and to mold her mind to suit his in every respect, to run in the same channel as his own, and she yields her individuality; her identity is lost, merged in that of her husband.** She is a mere machine for his will to move and control, a creature of his pleasure. *He thinks for her, decides for her, and acts for her. She dishonors God in occupying this passive position.* She has a responsibility before God, which it is her duty to preserve.

“When the wife yields her body and mind to the control of her husband, being passive to his will in all things, sacrificing her conscience, her dignity, and even her identity, she loses the opportunity of exerting that mighty influence for good which she should possess, to elevate her husband.—RH Sept. 26, 1899.” *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 25, 26

Again, if those true principles regarding the preservation of women’s individuality are so important in the marriage relationship, how could it be any less in the Gospel ministry? After all, that relationship has been held up as being the perfect illustration of the relationship between God

and mankind in the church?

“Ellen White was pleased to defer to her husband in the homelife, in social situations, in travel, and in recreation, and to tenderly care for him in periods of illness. But **there could be no compromise in letting him influence her special work and the messages she bore at Heaven’s bidding.** ... The conflict was not in their marriage, as is shown by frequent expressions of affection, but **in keeping their special God-appointed interests separate.**” *Biographical Sketches*, Vol. 2, p. 431

As the issue of *headship*, in its commonly understood application, had to take second place to the work of the Spirit through Ellen White, so it also must be in the Gospel ministry in regards to women who are called and anointed by God to fill any positions of leadership.

Before we take a fresh look at 1 Timothy 2:12-14, we need to look at a couple of other verses that also seem to wholly silence women’s voices in church. The first one is

1 CORINTHIANS 14:32-38.

“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

“And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

“What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

“But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” 1 Cor. 14:32-38

If one were to take those verses out of their context, it could lead to the conclusion that all of Ellen White’s preaching in the myriad of church settings that she did from her youth up was wholly out of the Gospel order regarding women’s preaching. The only way to understand this seemingly disparate situation is to take a closer look at that letter, remembering first that Paul was writing it in response to a letter he received *from* the Corinthians in which the author(s) had expressed his (their) understanding of numerous points that were in controversy among them and were asking Paul for his counsel on those matters.

One of the key points that will help us accomplish this is to bear in mind that much of the controversy Paul was faced with came from the *Judaizers* who were trying to force upon the fledgling church the customs and traditions of the Jews that had no foundation in the Bible. Among them was their derogatory attitude toward women in public life and religious exercise. The record shows that many of those *Judaizers* came from Jerusalem, where the Jewish prejudices were stronger than they were outside of Judea.

There are a few different opinions as to why Paul wrote what he did there. Other than the seemingly obvious thought that Paul was laying down a hard, fast rule for the Christian church, among the more common interpretations is that Paul was meeting only a local difficulty of a past age. That difficulty being that certain women were “babbling” and “chattering” in a disorderly manner, for the word “to speak” (*laleo*) often carries that sense. This is true as some of the usages of the word *laleo*, but the Apostle himself never uses this very common word in the sense of “babbling.” Rather, he uses it in this very chapter some twenty-three times aside from this instance for solemn utterances under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And, then, while there is some evidence that there were disorders in the Corinthian Church, what proof is there that that *disorder* extended even to such conduct as this among the women?

Others say that Paul refers only to women *asking questions* in Church because they are told that “if they wish to learn anything,” they should “ask their husbands at home.” We must bear in mind, though, that some of the women there may have been widows, some divorced wives, and others yet unmarried. So, who were they to ask, if such were the reason for the statement? But, the reason given for women’s silence is not because questions were being asked, or because women were “babbling” or “chattering,” but because thus “saith the law,” and “it is a shame for women to speak in Church.”

The matter comes down to this – What *law* says that women must “keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience ... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church”? Certainly nothing in the Old Testament. But that *law* was held among those Jews (mainly the Pharisees) who held to the *oral law*—“the commandments and traditions of men.”

By taking into account the whole tenor of the letter, we understand that therein Paul would often quote the proposition brought before him in the letter *from* the Corinthians, and then respond to it. For example, in chapter 6:12 are the words, “All things are lawful unto me.” This was in all probability originally Paul’s own declaration made when he was present with them; but the disorderly ones among the Corinthian disciples have repeated it as a pretext for wrongdoing. Evidently, Paul’s words had been taken out of their context and were presented to him in the letter he received with a wholly foreign meaning attached to them, and he was forced to put them back into their original context.

In response to the misrepresentation of his words, he now quotes again his own words and adds, in answer to their misuse of his words: “but all things are not expedient,” Then, he repeats his words, “All things are lawful unto me... but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Again, in chapter 8:8, he takes what are most likely his own misapplied words, “meat commendeth us not to God,” and answers (verse 9): “But take heed lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak.”

In chapter 9, the style varies somewhat. He answers them in such a manner that the reply indicates what they had said, as though it read, “They say I am not free, do they?” “They say I am not an Apostle, do they?” “And that I have not seen the Lord, do they?” and so on through several verses indicating the criticisms that the Judaizers had passed upon him. In chapter 10:23, he again reverts to their misuse of his language, “All things are lawful unto me,” repeating, the answer: “but

all things are not expedient," and yet another answer: "all things edify not."

With this situation before us, it is easy to see that the words in verses 34 and 35 ("Let the women keep silence," and on through the following verse, "let them ask their husbands at home") are not Paul's own words, but that he is quoting the statement presented to him, which was the opinion of the Judaizers at that time. We further know this because he then proceeds to basically throw the proposition back in the author's face by saying, "**What!** came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" Then he follows that with a few plain words of reproof in which he expresses the *spiritual authority* he had been given by saying, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

Such an emphatic declaration of his *authority* would naturally follow his sharp reproof of the un-Christian principles expressed towards Christian women in the letter he received. He had previously laid down the principles whereby they may "... **all** prophesy one by one, that **all** may learn, and **all** may be comforted, and the spirits of the prophets [be] subject to the prophets" (verses 32,33), so he concludes with, "Wherefore, my brethren, covet to prophesy and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."

Certainly Philips' four daughters (Acts 21:8, 9) were not prohibited from prophesying in the congregation, any more than Ellen White was. That is, they all spoke whenever and wherever the Spirit bade them to.

LET THE WOMEN SPEAK.

In prophetic vision, David saw that "The Lord giveth the word: the **women** that publish the tidings are a great host." (Psalm 68:11 *American Standard Version*). That translation is true to the gender of the text, as are the following versions -

"The Lord giveth the word; the **women** that proclaim the tidings are a great host."
Jewish Publication Society (68:12)

"The Lord doth give the saying, The **female proclaimers** are a numerous host."
Young's Literal Translation

"The Lord announces victory, and throngs of **women** shout the happy news." The
New Living Translations

There we find that not only were women permitted to preach the tidings (the "victory," the "happy news"), but commanded in the Old Testament to do so when the Gospel dispensation opened. That prophecy concerning the work of women was hidden from view for a long time by incorrect translations. The revisers have given us its true sense. Had they been willing to translate another passage with equal fairness, we should have had more light on this subject. By comparing this passage in the Psalms with one in Isaiah (40:9), we discover that they use the same word in the same part of speech in each instance, for the word translated in the Psalm, "publish the tidings."

Both are in the feminine gender, the only difference being that one word is singular and the other plural in number.

Isaiah chapter 40 opens with a commandment to “comfort” My people because their warfare is ended. Then follow the words, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness,” indicating with certainty the period to which the prophecy applies – the time of John the Baptist, and afterwards, for those words were applied to his work (Matt. 3:3; John 1:23). Then in the 9th verse occur words which, if translated with the same spirit of fairness as in Psalm 68:11, would read in English, “O woman that publishest good tidings: to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O woman, that publishest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say, unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” Thus, not only was woman, then, permitted to publish the tidings under the Old Covenant, but also she was commanded, under the Old, to do so at the opening of the New, and it was prophesied under the Old that she should do so both by Joel (see Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:16-18) and by David.

We see that this command was being fulfilled in the days of the Apostles in the fact that Priscilla (a woman), along with her husband, Aquilla, instructed Apollos in the deeper things of the Gospel (Acts 18:24-26). Also, Paul spoke of Priscilla as being a “helper” (fellow labourer). When we consider what Ellen White said about minister’s wives who labor in the Word being paid tithes, then we can safely assume that Priscilla, in her work within the Gospel *ministry*, was a “labourer ... worthy of [her] reward” (1 : Tim. 5:18).

This brings us to some verses that, besides being among the most often quoted to support the false notion that women are to be in absolute submission to all men and are not permitted to teach or have any *authority* over them, are also among the poorest translated relative to both the context in which Paul was writing and the words of the Greek text –

1 TIMOTHY 2:11-15.

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

“Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” 1 Tim. 2:11-15

Some have conjectured that because Paul had recently witnessed some great persecutions against Christians, and that Christian women were somewhat easily identifiable by the liberties they had been enjoying in their freedom from the customs and traditions of men, that he wrote what he did here to protect Christian women from persecution. That is, they believe he was saying that if they were to keep their presence low-keyed, and their voices silent, then things would be better for them.

The same misapplied reasoning is used to explain those controversial verses of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. But, in neither of these cases is the issue of *persecution* raised. In 1 Corinthians the reason

give was “*the law*,” and here it is the order of creation and Adam and Eve’s sins. But when we consider the context in which Paul wrote, these verses take on a wholly different perspective.

“The 1st Epistle to Timothy was written probably towards the close of the interval between Paul’s 1st and 2d imprisonments (c. A.D. 63-66), since he had evidently been at liberty for some time and had been visiting churches in the vicinity of the Aegean Sea. **He had recently departed from Ephesus, leaving Timothy in charge of the church there** [1 Tim. 1:3]” *SDA Bible Dictionary*, art. “Timothy, Epistle to.” [brackets added]

At the beginning of the letter, Paul tells Timothy the reason why he had him remain in Ephesus – that being,

“...that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*.” 1 Tim. 1:3, 4

The inhabitants of Ephesus, as with so many other Gentile cultures held to many “fables” and other false doctrines. From Acts 19 we learn that,

“...the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana...” Acts 19:35

This “Diana” (also known as “Artemis” — though not the “Artemis” worshipped by the Greeks) was held in such high regards there, and her worship was so much the source of great income by many in Ephesus, that when the Ephesians felt that she and they were being challenged by the preaching of the Gospel a tremendous uproar developed (Acts 19:23-41).

Thus, among the many “fables” and “other” doctrines Paul and Timothy were confronted with at Ephesus, foremost among them were those concerning Diana. Apparently, Timothy was at Ephesus when he received Paul’s letter, so it would be expected that Paul would write some things to him addressing the specific errors of the doctrines embraced in the worship of Diana that Timothy and the other Christians there were confronted with.

The cult of Diana taught the superiority of the female and advocated a female domination of the male. It espoused a doctrine of feminine procreation teaching that this goddess was able to bring forth offspring without male involvement. The cult was characterized by sexual perversion, fertility rites, endless myths, and elaborate genealogies traced through female rather than male bloodlines.

Also present in Ephesus were Jewish Gnostics who represented the first century’s equivalent of the “New Age” movement. The Greek word for “Gnostic” is *gnosis* meaning “knowledge.” Gnostics acknowledged spirit guides and combined the teachings of Diana with the teachings of the Old Testament story of Adam and Eve.

In the most widespread Gnostic version of the story, Eve was the “illuminator” of mankind because she was the first to receive “true knowledge” from the serpent, which Gnostics saw as

the “savior” and revealer of truth. Gnostics believed that Eve taught this new revelation to Adam, and being the mother of all, was the progenitor of the human race. Adam, they said, was Eve’s son rather than her husband. This belief reflected the Gnostic doctrine that a female deity could bring forth children without any male involvement.

With these things in mind, let us now turn to the Greek text itself.

“I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to **usurp authority** over the man, but to be in silence.

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” 1 Tim. 2:12-14

The translation hinges on the Greek verb translated “usurp authority” – *authentein*. The problem is that this verb is found nowhere else in the Bible. Since there are no other Bible passages that contain the word, its meaning must be learned by comparing its use in literature of the same time period. Although most translators of 1 Timothy have interpreted *authentein* to mean “to usurp authority” over a man, or “to have authority” over a man, such a translation violates both the context of Paul’s writing and the first century usage of the word in other literature.

The most common meaning of *authentein* in NT times was “to be, or claim to be the author or the originator of something.” When we use that meaning of *authentein*, Paul’s words become,

“I am not allowing [*present tense*, for that circumstance] a woman to teach nor to proclaim [women] **to be the originator of** [*authentein*] man.”

Do you see how this translation offsets the false doctrine Paul and Timothy were confronted with at Ephesus? Paul continues to counter that false notion by saying,

“Adam was formed first, then Eve.”

He says this to counter the false doctrine of Eve as **originator** of man, He then adds to his opposition to that erroneous philosophy by saying,

“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

This statement directly contradicts the notion that Eve was the “illuminator,” and carrier of new revelations.

The word that is frequently translated “silence,” *hesuchia*, also means *harmony, peace, conformity or agreement*. Therefore, in saying that a woman who has been teaching that a woman (Eve) was the *originator* of man is “to be in silence [*hesuchia*],” he is saying that “she must be in *agreement*,” meaning, in agreement with the Scriptures and with sound teaching in the Church.

Thus, not only have translators overlooked the common meaning of the word *authentein* in NT times, but they also seem to have missed the cultural context in which Paul wrote his letter to

Timothy, and the reason he was writing it -- that being, to warn Timothy of certain false doctrines and fables that were prevalent at Ephesus, such as the ones he is speaking of in the verses under consideration and in chapter 4:1-8. Yea, at least four times in this letter Paul admonishes Timothy to avoid those who "have turned aside unto vain jangling" (1:6); to "refuse profane and old wives' fables" (4:7); to withdraw from those who engage in "questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings...perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth (6:3-5); and, to avoid "profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science (knowledge – Gr., *gnosis*) falsely so called." (6:20).

Considering that much of the substance of Paul's letter was concerning false doctrines (especially those of the Gnostics and their spin on the beliefs concerning Diana) and submission to "sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:10), it is quite reasonable to conclude that Paul's statements in chapter 2 under discussion are also designed to oppose aggressively promoted false doctrines and encourage submission to the Word.

This brings us to

A REVIEW OF THE OPPOSITION'S POINTS.

As previously noted, those at the *Christ or Culture* website listed twelve points they believe are sound arguments against the ordination of women, the first of which is Genesis 3:16, which we have already addressed. In the following, we will briefly respond to their remaining points.

"2). Only men were ever authorized to officiate in the offering of sacrifice. See Genesis 8:20; Job 1:5; Hebrews 11:4."

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While in each of those references we see men (Noah, Job, and Abel) offering sacrifices, there is nothing in any of those verses that supports their bald assertion that "*only* men were *authorized*" to do such. Just because it was customary for men to offer the sacrifices in the times of those verses, there is nothing that would indicate that a woman was prohibited from doing so if circumstances necessitated it.

That is, if a circumstance arose which called for the offering of burnt offerings for a family, and the husband was a falling down drunk, or defiled in some other way, while the wife was righteous, would God have condemned her for *officiating* in the offering? What if no righteous man was around, should she refrain from showing her thanks to God in offering a burnt offering?

In the Catholic Church it is not uncommon for an ordained priest to be in an unholy state as he *officiates* in the *sacrifice* of the Mass. They get around the conclusion that his actions would not be acceptable to God by saying that it is the *office* that sanctifies the acts, and not the condition of the person *officiating* in it. By saying that, they really mean that it is the *spiritual authority* they profess to have by which they *ordained* the priest that contains a *sanctifying* factor above that of the condition of the priest himself. In other words, they are saying that "our (presumed) *authority* makes all thing right."

"3). While the Lord called on the entire nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests, only men were appointed to serve as priests for the sanctuary. See Exodus 12:3; 29:10." www.christorculture.com/portfolio-view/12-interesting-facts-about-leadership-in-the-bible/

While that is true in its context, there is nothing in the Scriptures that suggests that the male Levitical priesthood was to continue to be the rule under the Gospel ministry.

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise **after the order of Melchisedec**, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Heb. 7:11, 12

There we find the simple answer to the notion that the male Levitical priesthood continued in some manner on after the cross. That is, the *priesthood* and the *law* were "*changed*" and are now "after the order of Melchisedec." It is certainly true that that "order" is little understood or appreciated in all of its glory.

"4). Only men were anointed by God to serve as kings of Israel and Judah. One woman tried to forcibly install herself as a queen by killing her grandsons; she was later executed." See 2 Kings 11:1-13."

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Though men were anointed to be kings in Israel, both Adam and Eve were given dominion over the whole world in the beginning (Gen. 1:26, 28). Christ came to restore the "*first dominion*" (Mic. 4:8).

What is notable about the situation they point out in 2 Kings 11:1-13 is that the woman evidently did reign for six years before it was discovered that there was a son of the royal lineage still around who had a right to the throne. We don't know if she would have continued on the throne if that son was not found, but we [do not] have any record of anyone trying to dispose her during those six years because she was a woman.

What would have happened if that legitimate son was not found or did not exist, and she had a son by another man since her husband, the king, was dead? Would that son have been recognized as being of the royal lineage and the heir to the throne because she was the wife of the former king? What else would they have had to go by, unless, of course, the Lord had raised up a prophet who would have anointed a new male king from a different direct family line?

"5). The New Testament begins by tracing the genealogy of Jesus through the male lineage. (Four famous women are mentioned in connection with their husbands.) See Matthew 1:1."

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This point is wholly irrelevant in regard to women in the ministry.

“6). While Jesus desired that women share the gospel, He called only men to serve in the capacity of apostle. When Judas died, his replacement was chosen from among two men. See Mark 3:14; Acts 1:21.”

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There is no disputing those facts. But when we consider that there are at least seventeen people who were called “apostles” in the NT, the matter takes on a much different perspective - especially in light of a certain circumstance we as Adventists have witnessed. Other than the twelve original apostles, and Matthias, who took Judas’ place among those twelve, Paul was made an apostle. That makes thirteen.

Moreover, Barnabas was known as an apostle —

“...when **the apostles, Barnabas and Paul**, heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out ...” Acts 14:14

Ellen White, herself, accepted the fact that not only was Paul an *apostle*, but so was Barnabas —

“God communicated with the devout prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. ‘As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me **Barnabas and Saul** for the work whereunto I have called them.’ Acts 13:2. **These apostles** were therefore dedicated to God in a most solemn manner by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands; and they were sent forth to their field of labor among the Gentiles.

“**Both Paul and Barnabas** had been laboring as ministers of Christ, and God had abundantly blessed their efforts, but neither of them had previously been formally ordained to the gospel ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands. **They were now authorized by the church not only to teach the truth but to baptize and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority.** This was an important era for the church. Though the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by the death of Christ, letting the Gentiles into the full privileges of the gospel, the veil had not yet been torn away from the eyes of many of the believing Jews, and they could not clearly discern to the end of that which was abolished by the Son of God. **The work was now to be prosecuted with vigor among the Gentiles**, and was to result in strengthening the church by a great ingathering of souls. {SR 303.2}

“**The apostles, in this, their special work**, were to be exposed to suspicion, prejudice, and jealousy. As a natural consequence of their departure from the exclusiveness of the Jews, their doctrine and views would be subject to the charge of heresy, and their credentials as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw all these difficulties which His servants would undergo, and, in His wise providence, caused them to be invested with unquestionable authority from the established church of God, that their work should be above challenge. {SR 304.1}

“The ordination by the laying on of hands was, at a later date, greatly abused; unwarrantable importance was attached to the act, as though a power came at once upon those who received such ordination, which immediately qualified them for any

and all ministerial work, as though virtue lay in the act of laying on of hands. We have, in the history of **these two apostles**, only a simple record of the laying on of hands, and its bearing upon their work. **Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself**; and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was merely setting the seal of the church upon the work of God--an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office." *The Story of Redemption*, 303-304

Furthermore, **Timothy** and **Silvanus** were known as apostles (see 1 Thes. 1:1-2:6). Note therein that Paul repeatedly uses the word "we" in connection with those two men and himself being apostles.

The definition of an "apostle" is "a messenger, one sent on a mission."

That "certain circumstance" we mentioned above is that of Ellen White's position in the Gospel ministry. As Adventists we acknowledge that she had the gift of prophecy – the Testimony of Jesus. Yet, she would not claim to be a "prophet." Here is her testimony concerning that situation.

"Some have stumbled over the fact that I said **I did not claim to be a prophet**; [REFERENCE IS HERE MADE TO A DISCOURSE GIVEN AT BATTLE CREEK, OCTOBER 2, 1904, IN WHICH SHE SAID, "I DO NOT CLAIM TO BE A PROPHETESS." — COMPILERS.] and they have asked, Why is this?

"I have had no claims to make, only that I am instructed that **I am the Lord's messenger**, that He called me in my youth to be **His messenger**, to **receive His word**, and to **give a clear and decided message** in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"**Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be His messenger.** 'Your work,' He instructed me, 'is to **bear My word**. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to **bear the message** to the erring ones, to **carry the word before unbelievers**, and with pen and Voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. **I will make My Word open to you**. It shall not be as a strange language. In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the **messages** that I give shall be heard from one who has never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you.

"Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh: it is the Lord that giveth the **messages** of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth under any circumstances. Give the light I shall give you. The **messages** for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil,'

"**Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?** — Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; **and because my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies.**

"When this work was first given me, I begged the Lord to lay the burden on someone else. **The work was so large and broad and deep** that I feared I could not do it. But by His Holy Spirit the Lord has enabled me to perform the work which He gave

me to do." *Selected Messages*, Vol 1, p. 31, 32

Bearing in mind that the definition of an "apostle" is "a messenger, one sent on a mission," and that there is only one calling to the ministry that is *larger, broader, deeper* and "more" than that of a prophet - that is, an **apostle** - then on the weight of evidence of her ministry, Ellen White was, in every sense of the word, an **apostle**. So, if God ordained Ellen White to be an **apostle**, how, then, can the church deny women any position therein that carries with it a lesser *spiritual authority* than that which she was given by God if they are so called and anointed by His Spirit? Therefore, in considering whether or not a woman is fitted to be a pastor or an elder, one only needs to look at her activities, in word and deed, as it was in Ellen White's case, to see if God has already put His seal of approval upon her by giving her a commission to do that work.

"7). While both men and women were baptized, only men are recorded as performing baptisms. See Acts 8:12, Acts 8:38."
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It is interesting that the references they give show that Philip, who Adventists believe to have been a *layman*, a *deacon*, was baptizing people. When we take into consideration that, (1) Philip was also said to be an "evangelist" (Acts 21: 8), (2) an evangelist is said to be "a bringer of good tidings," (3) that Ellen White, from her childhood did the work of an evangelist in earnestly working for the conversion of her playmates, even bearing her testimony of the "good tidings" before various congregations, and, (4) that Ellen White prepared countless men and women for baptism, then she did everything a pastor would do in baptizing someone except actually going down into the water with them.

"8). The first seven deacons ordained to administrate and preach were all men. See Acts 6:3."
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As we have already addressed the issue concerning the redefinition of the word *deacon* and the distorting of their true work, it should suffice to say that Phoebe was a *deaconess*, and countless other women were also recognized as such until certain men seized the leadership of the church from Christ and the Holy Ghost and appropriated it unto themselves.

"9). As Paul went from town to town appointing/ordaining elders, he chose only men. See 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5."
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While it is obvious that men were selected to be elders (overseeing *deacons* – *ministers*), there is nothing written that says women were prohibited from also acting in that position, Again, Phoebe was a *deacon* (*minister*).

10). While two books in the Bible are named after women, most commentators agree all the books in the Bible were written by men. See 2 Peter 1:21.
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This point is wholly irrelevant in regard to women being ordained as pastors due to the fact that very few male pastors have ever written anything that has been published. Moreover, the fact that God ordained Ellen White to write so many volumes of inspired counsel, delivered thousands of sermons, and to reveal a great wealth of “hidden manna” on the Scriptures shows that God is no respecter of persons or gender.

“11). There are seven examples in Scripture of women giving birth in connection with a miracle; all these miracle babies were male children who typified Christ. The mothers are Hannah, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Manoah’s wife, the Shunammite woman, and Elizabeth.”

www.christorculture.com/portfolio-view/12-interesting-facts-about-leadership-in-the-bible/

This is just another spurious argument, and adds nothing to the matter at hand.

“12). All patriarchal blessings were passed down from the fathers to the sons. See Genesis 27:4; Genesis 48:9.”

www.christorculture.com/portfolio-view/12-interesting-facts-about-leadership-in-the-bible/

This point is also irrelevant as to whether or not God will give His Spirit and, thus, *spiritual authority*, to women in the roll of pastors and elders.

Additionally, the very fact that they use the words “*patriarchal blessings*” skews the fact that in at least two cases women were so important in God’s design to bless mankind that without them the promised blessings would not have been fulfilled. The first one, which is, without controversy, the greatest blessing in the Bible, was the one that was to come through Eve –

“And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Gen 3:14, 15

Though those words were directed to the serpent, without Eve’s involvement in the promise it could not have been fulfilled because it was to be through “**her seed**” that those words were to be realized.

“The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the fall, there was given a divine promise that the **seed of the woman** should bruise the serpent’s head. To **all men** this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God’s law. **Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation.**” *Amazing Grace*, p. 131

Eve could have taken the position of many women today and refused to have any children. But she so chose to believe the promises that when she had her first child she declared, "I have gotten a man from the LORD" (Gen. 4:1). There must have been a good reason why God said "**her** seed," rather than "his [Adam's] seed."

The second case is that of Abraham and Sarah. God was so intent on bringing forth the nation of promise through Sarah that Abraham had to learn that lesson the hard way. God was not going to fulfill the promises through his servant nor through his son by Hagar, Ishmael, but only through Sarah. There must have also been a good reason for doing that, besides upholding the principle of a man having only one wife. It certainly upheld Sarah's dignity that Abraham had compromised when he twice put her in a precarious position when he told both Pharaoh and Abimelech that she was his sister (Gen. 12:11-20; 20:2-18).

A TIMELY ISSUE

It is interesting that while this issue of women in the ministry is being so agitated, at the same time the Women's Ministry department of the General Conference of SDAs has launched a campaign in August of 2012 to end domestic violence against women called "End It Now." It is hard to imagine that God would be working to end the abuse of women in their homes, and at the same time ignore their abuse in the church ministry because all too often the underlying source of the abuse is men's thinking that they have *spiritual authority* from God to dominate women.

Some may think that it is going to an extreme to say that not allowing women to do the work of pastors or elders, and be paid for doing so (as the case may be), is a form of abuse. But how is it not abuse when the Lord puts upon a woman's heart a burning desire to formally study the Bible and prepare herself to preach and minister to others, and then be denied the ability to put her God-given gifts to use in His service because of the *cultural prejudices* of some in the church?

If the matter comes down to a woman not being physically able to go down into the water to baptize someone in the currently common mode of baptism, then what would be wrong with a man assisting in such a circumstance? Does the *spiritual authority* that is exercised in the act of baptism, the act of admitting a person into the body of Christ, hinge on the gender of the person leading out in the welcoming ceremony, or in the whole body and *authority* of the church in Christ that the one leading out is representing?

Along with an elder's or pastor's role of officiating in baptisms, another work their *office* includes is performing marriages. But, as marriage is the entering of a man and woman into a *contract* of the highest order, both *legally* and *spiritually*, and women in the past, and in the present, are recognized as being capable of rendering legally binding judicial rulings (such as did Deborah (Judges 4:4), and the women on the U.S. Supreme Court), then there is no valid reason why a woman could not perform a marriage that would be binding in heaven as it is on earth.

CONCLUSION

Now that a number of SDA conferences have decided to proceed with the ordination of women as pastors and elders, what should be our prayers concerning those women?

In the 1960s and 1970s, one of the ideas that was being promoted was that men needed to “get in touch with their *feminine side*” – meaning that they needed to become more *sensitive*, less *macho* (less aggressive in displaying an *exaggerated* masculinity and strong sense of masculine pride). At that same time, the *feminist* movement was active in calling women to be more *manly* in the sense of taking the lead in things rather than merely following others’ (mainly men’s) leading. While both of those notions were put forward in order to correct some real imbalances in society (and in marriages), the devil was able to misuse the noble principles that prompted those efforts to bring in what may be considered an even worse set of circumstances.

That is, while it became acceptable for men to be more *sensitive* than had previously been the norm, the devil came in through that open door with the notion that *effeminate* characteristics in men are the truest sign of their *sensitivity*. Similarly, while women were able to come forward and stand side by side with men in many stations of life, and, thus, bless society with the innate tenderheartedness and wisdom women can manifest, many women took that as a license to proliferate the unhealthy mental/emotional state of being motivated by feeling rather than by reason or thought known as *sentimentalism*.

Due to women’s natural sensitivity, it is easy for them to replace heaven-borne compassion and tender affections with that lower order of emotion - *sentimentalism* - something that is wholly out of place in the Gospel ministry.

“Our Great Example. - Christ carried out in His life His own divine teachings. His zeal never led Him to become passionate. He manifested consistency without obstinacy, benevolence without weakness, **tenderness and sympathy without sentimentalism**. He was highly social; yet He possessed a reserved dignity that did not encourage undue familiarity. His temperance never led to bigotry or austerity. He was not conformed to this world; yet He was not indifferent to the wants of the least among men. He was awake to the needs of all. - Manuscript 132, 1902.” *Evangelism*, p. 636

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.’ **The love here spoken of is not that sentimentalism, that low order of love, that attracts the affections from Christ and places them upon one another.** The love here described is pure; it arises from having the affections centered upon Jesus, making him first, and last, and best in everything.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Mission of the SDA Church*, p. 125

When *sentimentalism* is indulged by placing the affections upon one other than Christ, the

sinner is coddled, and the sin glossed over. While the one who refrains from reproving the sinner is thought of as being loving and compassionate, the devil exalts in the fact that his counterfeit religion has been substituted for the Gospel order and the sinner is left with a false sense of security.

“Christ calls upon His people to believe and practice His word. Those who receive and assimilate this word, making it a part of every action, of every attribute of character, will grow strong in the strength of God. It will be seen that their faith is of heavenly origin. They will not wander into strange paths. Their minds will not turn to a *religion of sentimentalism* and *excitement*. Before angels and before men, they will stand as those who have strong, consistent Christian characters.” *Gospel Workers*, p. 309

One of the things that can come out of an indulgence of *sentimentalism* and a desire for *excitement* is *theatrics*. It is not uncommon to see the women who are in charge of the children’s Sabbath Schools have them put on plays and other *theatrical* exhibitions during the worship hour. While these displays are going on, others are taking pictures and making movies of the event, focusing the attention on the performers, regardless of whether or not they are truly uplifting Christ and His great sacrifice. Self and vanity are exalted, and that in the very place where God has called His people to come into His very presence.

“We might see a different order of things should a number consecrate themselves wholly to God, and then devote their talents to the Sabbath school work, ever advancing in knowledge, and educating themselves so that they would be able to instruct others as to the best methods to employ in the work; but **it is not for the workers to seek for methods by which they can make a show, consuming time in theatrical performances and musical display, for this benefits no one. It does no good to train the children to make speeches for special occasions.** They should be won to Christ, and instead of expending time, money, and effort **to make a display**, let the whole effort be made to gather sheaves for the harvest.” *Counsel on Sabbath School Work*, 53

We have read Ellen White’s testimony concerning how, in her youth, she was called to testify before various congregations. It is hard to imagine that in order to bear her testimony she would have engaged in the type of *theatrical* displays that are common in Adventist churches today. Her testimony was never a *performance* or a *rehearsed* speech, but was always with a demonstration of the power of the Spirit in the word preached.

“I entreat you, brethren, to come to Christ and drink; drink freely of the water of salvation. **Do not appeal to your own feelings. Do not think that sentimentalism is religion.** Shake yourselves from every **human prop**, and lean heavily upon Christ.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Mission of the SDA Church*, p. 137, 138

There is yet another matter that women who enter the ministry are going to be faced with, which they can be quite effective in holding up the Christian standard in if they, themselves, will take up their crosses. It is one which many women in the church are in need of reform - that is, dress reform.

"Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. **Obedience to fashion** is pervading our Seventh-Day Adventist churches and **doing more than any other power to separate our people from God....**We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 647-48

"Many dress like the world in order to have an influence over unbelievers, but here they make a sad mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and **make the distinction plain between the Christian and the worldling.**" *Ibid.*, p.633

"Pride and extravagance in dress is a sin to which woman is especially prone."
Messages to Young People, p. 355

There can even be "pride and extravagance" in wearing clothing that is considered "conservative" in fashion due to the number of changes of apparel one chooses to have (see Isaiah 3:22). Men are certainly not exempt from this same indulgence.

"All should have a **special Sabbath suit**, to be worn when attending service in God's house." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 355

It is not uncommon to see an Adventist woman attend the church meetings every Sabbath, yet many months pass before she wears the same dress again. Sabbath after Sabbath she wears a different dress. While there is certainly nothing wrong with having more than one dress to wear on Sabbath throughout the year, especially as the seasons change, the idea that they are all "special" Sabbath suits is negated by the reality that wearing the many different dresses is nothing more than a fashion statement.

Moreover, there are some women who can only afford one dress for Sabbath. What effect does the one who wears different dresses every Sabbath for months have on the poorer sisters?

"On Sunday the popular churches appear more like a theater than a place of worship of God. Every style of fashionable dress is displayed there. **The poor have not courage to enter those houses of worship.**

"But the greatest evil is the influence upon the children and youth. Almost as soon as they come into the world they are subjected to fashion's demands. Little children hear more of dress than of their salvation....The outward display of dress is made of greater consequence than the adornment of the character." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 643

While she is speaking of the popular Sunday-keeping churches, the effect of over dressing and multiple changes of attire on the poor is the same for Sabbath-keepers. When we consider the effect that those things have on children, the matter becomes even more significant.

That is, not only are the poorer brothers and sisters humiliated by those who are indifferent

to the effect their multiple changes of apparel have on others, but when the children of the poorer brethren see the dissimilarity between their family's dress and that of others they look upon their own parents with disappointment, wondering why they are not as the others, who are, quite often, the more influential in the church. Thus, the children of the poorer brethren are unwittingly oppressed - something that God cannot smile upon. Thus, the door is opened to envy and evil surmising.

Speaking of Jesus as the Pattern Man, Ellen White says,

"In His dress and bearing there was nothing that betokened rank. He was apparently a simple personage, **clad like themselves in the humble garments of the poor.**" *The Desire of Ages*, p. 137

"The life of Christ, the Lord of glory, **is our example**. He came from heaven, where all was riches and splendor; but He laid aside His royal crown, His royal robe, and clothed His divinity with humanity. Why? That He might meet men where they were. He did not rank Himself with the wealthy, the lordly of earth. The mission of Christ was to reach the very poor of earth....The very foundation of His mission was **self-denial and self-sacrifice.**"...

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' We must study **the Pattern**, and inquire at every step, 'Is this the way of the Lord?' **We shall certainly make grave mistakes if we do not keep self-denial and self-sacrifice prominent before the people in every movement.**" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 177, 178

There is one last general issue that we must address which is particularly relative to the standards Christian women are called to uphold, and that which women pastors and elders will have the duty to maintain. That is, the use of makeup, fingernail polish, hair dyes, and weekly trips to the salon for the Sabbath hairdo. We know that there are some circumstances in which it would be appropriate for a woman (or even a man) to use some makeup (such as a person missing eyebrows), but to dye the hair to achieve a youthful look, or use rouge or lipstick to make up for the lack of a good blood circulation that can be had through true health reform is to be discouraged.

Both Peter and Paul wrote about the high standard those women who are followers of Christ should seek to uphold -

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." 1 Tim. 2:9

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet. 3:3, 4

"Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

"And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground." Isa. 3:25, 26

"Isaiah 3, was presented before me. I was shown that this prophecy has its application to these last days; and the reproofs are given to the daughters of Zion who have thought only of appearance and display. Read verse 25: "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war." I was shown that this scripture will be strictly fulfilled. Young men and women professing to be Christians, yet having no Christian experience, and having borne no burdens, and felt no individual responsibility, are to be proved. They will be brought low in the dust, and long for an experience in the things of God, which they failed to obtain." *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 270

So, our prayer is that those women who are being ordained as pastors and elders will, likewise, uphold the high standard, having only Christ as their example, and resist the temptation to give way to *sentimentalism, theatrics, fashion*, and everything else of the world that is opposed to the self-sacrificing character of Christ. There are, of course, many more things that we should and will pray for that they and their ministries are blessed, but we have particularly mentioned those things because women seem to be especially prone to those temptations (though men are certainly not exempt from such things).

"I am instructed to say to our people, Let us follow Christ. **We may safely discard all ideas that are not included in His teachings.** I appeal to our ministers to be sure that their feet are placed on the platform of eternal truth. **Beware how you follow impulse, calling it the Holy Spirit.** Some are in danger in this respect. I call upon them to be sound in the faith, able to give everyone who asks a reason of, the hope that is in them." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 296

"I want to speak to the ears of our people in America in every church, Awake from the dead, and Christ will give you life. Souls are perishing for the light of truth as it is in Jesus. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. Fair-weather Christians will not be wanted for this work. **The sentimental and tasteful religion is not needed for this time. There must be intensity brought into our faith and in the proclamation of truth.** I tell you, a new life is proceeding from satanic agencies to work with a power we have not hitherto realized. And shall not **a new power from above** take possession of God's people? The truth, sanctifying in its influence, must be urged upon the people. There must be earnest supplications offered to God, agonizing prayer to Him, that our hopes as a people may not be founded on suppositions, but on eternal realities. We must know for ourselves, by the evidence of God's Word, whether we are in the faith, going to heaven or not. The moral standard of character is God's law. Do we meet its requirements? Are the Lord's people bringing their property, their time, their talents, and all their influence into the work for this time? Let us arouse: 'If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. 3:1)." *Letter 55*, 1886

Are women willing and able to lead out as pastors and elders to do that greatly needed work? We certainly hope so, because men who have occupied those positions have, thus far, pretty much

been unable to do so through the way things have been done. In the past. The Lord knows what a powerful influence sanctified women can have on both men and women, and we can only pray that those who oppose women's ordination will allow Him to open their hearts and minds to receive that reality.

"We all know that the sin of many professing Christians is that they lack the courage and energy to bring themselves and those connected with them up to the standard....

"When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested. Divine power will be revealed. The church will see the providential working of the Lord of hosts. The light of truth will shine forth in clear, strong rays, and, as in the time of the apostles, many souls will turn from error to truth. The earth will be lighted with the glory of the Lord.

"Heavenly angels have long been waiting for human agents - the members of the church (male and female) - to cooperate with them in the great work to be done. **They are waiting for you.** So vast is the field, so comprehensive the design, that every sanctified heart [male and female] will be pressed into service as an instrument of divine power.....

"Let church members bear in mind that the fact that their names are registered on the church books will not save them.....

"Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as we think not the Son of man cometh.' Matthew 24:44. Go to your rest at night with every sin confessed. Thus we did when in 1844 we expected to meet our Lord. And now this great event is nearer than when we first believed. Be ye always ready, in the evening, in the morning, and at noon, that when the cry is heard, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,' you may, even though awakened out of sleep, go forth to meet Him with your lamps trimmed and burning." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 546-48

Amen! So let it be!

Doug Mitchell

Young Ellen White Cover art by Teresa Wilde

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